

Time of Eden and Elves

A Spartan's War Chronicles: Book 1

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CHAPTER ONE

The torrential downpour of rain smashed against the metal and glass of the lone terminal building at the far corner of the Southern Utah Air Force Base. Mountains surrounded the secure facility on three sides, the lone runway extending out of sight to the north. Once used for the testing of experimental aircraft, the base was now mainly deserted. At least to the cursory glance of anyone who might be passing by and saw the buildings.

The base in actuality was very active, most of its facilities being underground, and therefore hidden from casual view. The two very large and odd-looking aircraft were parked close to each other on the tarmac, three hundred meters from the terminal itself. They were odd shaped aircraft, looking like massive wasps in their design. They had short stubby wings on each side with box shaped pods attached to each wing, their landing gear looking almost like clawed feet rather than wheels. Under the bubble nose of each aircraft was a large wicked looking chain gun of some sort that now sat dormant. Directly behind where the cockpit was on the top of the craft was another small bubble that ran back about six meters from the nose of the craft. Under that bubble could be seen a small map table of some sort and two couches against the wall of the upper deck room.

There were portable lights set up all around the aircraft at roughly a hundred meters distance, illuminating the heavy security that surrounded the two aircraft in an eerie glow. There was a ring of heavily armed guards standing at fifty meter intervals all around the craft, the rain not bothering them at all as they walked slowly along the perimeter, their eyes always trained outward. They were dressed in black fatigues and wore balacavas over their heads, hiding all but their eyes. Their rain drenched gloved hands clutched the silenced weapons they carried, the HK74 which was the newest version of the venerable HK MP5, and fired a devastating 10mm caseless round that was tipped with a pin drop of liquid explosive. There were small one man crane trucks moving large crates on wooden pallets into the bellies of both aircraft, driving up the sloped ramps into the dimly lit interiors of each ship. The security teams around the ships were exceptionally alert, their wicked looking HK74 sub-machine guns equipped with integral silencers and laser sights. The weapons hung from quick action slings, the gloved firing hands of the team members wrapped around the pistol grips, their fingers on the trigger guards. These were not ordinary Air Force security troops. They were perhaps; the most elite and lethal unit in the United States military, and they took nothing for granted.

Several hundred meters outside that inner ring of soldiers were half a dozen heavy gun Hummers. These particular vehicles, heavily armored and mounted with chain gun turrets, manned by equally alert members of the same security force, could destroy targets up to medium size tanks. Far in the distance, they could see the black out lights of another dozen Air Force gun Hummers slowly patrolling the perimeter of the tarmac, gun Hummers that were crewed by the same breed of soldier as the ones closer to the aircraft but assigned to the Air Force's Special Operations Wing.

The men and women inside the terminal paid no attention to the activity going on outside. They could not have cared less. They wore a mixture of civilian and military dress, and almost all of them had drinks in their hands. They were senior officers in all the services and the junior Senators and aides of the more important men and women gathering at this remote terminal. The work that was going on outside the terminal in the driving rain was below them and not any of their concern.

Except for the tall, heavily muscled young man dressed in Navy whites and standing in front of the large window just outside the lounge. His keen dark brown almost black eyes swept the tarmac below him, seeing the work that was going on three hundred meters from the terminal as if it was happening right outside the window. The young man's thick black hair was cut short, his skin deeply tanned. He looked like a man who spent most of his time outdoors, and in truth, he was. His uniform bore the three solid gold stripes of a full Navy Commander on his sleeve and his shoulder boards. The uniform fit his muscled form like a glove, as if he had been poured into the uniform. The seven rows of brightly colored ribbons on the left side of his chest were topped by a gleaming gold Navy SEAL "Budweiser" Trident, the official unit designator of the United States Navy SEALs.

Commander Martin Hunter was a unique young man among men, who commanded a unique SEAL team of men and women. All sixty-four of his team members were part of the failed military program to create genetically enhanced soldiers in the early 21st century. In late 2035, a dozen military and civilian scientists, some of the finest minds in gene research, were given the go ahead to put their genetic engineering minds together and begin the Genome Program. Using altered DNA sequences, they were able to breed genetically

improved soldiers. These soldiers would have three times the endurance and strength than normal soldiers. They would be able to fight longer and harder than normal men and women without rest. Each of the military branches was given five units of seventy-two genetically enhanced men and women. Martin and his team were the first group to be born and bred from the scientist's test tubes. They were assigned to the Navy to be raised and schooled. From a very young age, they were trained and schooled in small unit operations and tactics. They were given the finest hand-to-hand combat training believed to exist in the Navy SEALs, all of their instructors being seasoned combat veterans. By the time they were eighteen they had officially been designated SEAL Team 12, and were activated as a unit.

In the course of the next fifteen years, they conducted fifty-nine operations in three separate wars. During that span of time, they suffered only eight members killed in action. They became known as the Team that could not fail. During that time, they earned the respect of every other SEAL Team, and were accepted into the small family of Navy SEALs. They were also the most successful of the Genome units in the military, and drew rave praise from the scientists who created them. The Genome program was a huge success initially, but the scientists never counted on the stresses and horrors of war and constant action. In the eleventh year of active duty existence for the Genomes, the problems began happening.

They began in the Marine units first. The Genomes began to disobey orders and conduct unsanctioned missions. Dozens of them began to mentally snap and go on bloody killing rampages. After three years of trying to determine what the problem was, and hundreds of humiliating and painful experiments, the Genome Program was officially closed, and all the remaining Genomes were secluded for further testing and elimination.

Specially trained teams from the government called "Sweeper" teams were used to eliminate the Genome soldiers determined to be unstable. Only SEAL Team 12 and one unit from the Air Force survived the Genome Purge, as it came to be known. The members of SEAL Team 12 were subjected to countless tests to try to determine why they were different. No instance of mental degradation had occurred within their ranks, and all of their members remained fit and in command of their facilities. The same was found for the Air Force's unit of Genomes, and again... no reason was ever determined. Since no reason was ever found and the need for their advanced skills and experience were needed they were returned to active duty. It was only seven months ago that Martin learned that his Team had been selected to be the new Security Force for a new base that was completing activation. This base was in a place none of them had ever been.

EDEN was on the moon.

EDEN was a sprawling base under control of the United States, but allowing many in the International Community to be part of its eight thousand-member crew. SEAL Team 12 was in charge of all security operations on EDEN thanks to a senior Admiral who had worked with Martin during the Central American War, and now was Commander of EDEN.

Martin was thirty-four years old now, his six foot two, two hundred twenty pound frame still just as hard and muscular as when he was eighteen. He bore the scars of five Purple Hearts received during the many missions they had conducted, yet he remained steadfastly loyal to his country and his Team. His genetically enhanced eyes focused on the SEAL closest to the terminal, and he saw his teammate as if he was only a few feet away, though to anyone not looking through enhanced vision devices, they would see only darkness and driving rain.

Martin Hunter had worked hard and long to obtain the status he now held. There had been times over the course of the years when he had questioned who and what he was, for his abilities far outweighed what any of the scientists had envisioned they would, in many more ways than they knew, but those questions had never affected his duties as Team Leader. He looked out for his team, and they looked out for him. He had been told by the man who had created him that the animal DNA that he and two others had been grafted with was that of a wolf, and over the course of the following years Martin had come to consider his SEAL Team his wolf pack, his family unit. He never revealed to anyone that it was he and the two others within his unit that had saved their fellow team members from the Genome Purge. It was something within their blood, something that had changed them even more than what the scientists said it would, and once they realized that Genomes were snapping and going crazy, and that they were not affected by this defect, they agreed to make the rest of their team members like them, in order to save them. Very few individuals outside of his SEAL Team, the man who had raised and created them and their commanding officer knew what he and his people could do, and they worked very hard to keep it that way.

“How goes the loading Chief Roberts?” Martin asked casually, as if he was talking to the window. His eyes however were focused on the senior Chief who stood apart from the others on the tarmac.

The SEAL on the tarmac did not turn at the voice of his commander in his head. All of SEAL team Twelve was equipped with transmitters and receivers implanted just under their skin along their jaw lines and the ridges of their ears. It allowed them to communicate openly and keep their hands free for other matters.

“We’d be done by now if it wasn’t for the fact we had to unseal and repack four crates Skipper.” The man replied.

“Explain.” Martin told him.

“Some tech head basically ignored our instructions on stowing his gear. The crates were not sealed properly. We had to crack them open and repack six thousand pounds of equipment. Mostly research stuff it looked like.” Roberts replied.

“Assigned to whom?” Martin asked.

“Manifest said a Lieutenant Commander Peterson.” Roberts answered. “I’d like to take the young Lieutenant Commander out back and take from his hide what we had to repack. Some of that equipment was pretty advanced Skipper.”

Martin was quiet for a moment, his eyes staring into the darkness. “How much longer until the load out is complete?” He inquired finally.

“Give us another forty minutes Skipper and we’ll be set.”

“You got thirty.” Martin said quickly. “I want to be boarding by 0100. The weather report says this storm will let up by 0300 and I want to be gone before it does.”

Martin saw Roberts nod his head. “Aye, Skipper. We’ll get it done.”

Martin turned when he sensed and smelled the presence of another person behind him. Due to his genetic engineering Martin and the members of his team all possessed an animal acute sense of smell, sight and hearing. In fact all of their known senses were much more acute than the normal human and it made it next to impossible to sneak up on them. It also allowed them to do many things others could not, including tracking individuals by their scent alone over great distances. He turned slowly, knowing only a member of his team could move quiet enough to get this close to him. He smiled when he saw his third in command.

“Sneaking up on me Master Chief?” He asked.

The six foot six Master Chief grinned from ear to ear as he stepped up to Martin, his ebony skin gleaming in the light of the terminal. His bald head reflected the intense light of the florescent fixtures fitted into the ceiling. He had been born three minutes after Martin, coming from the same batch of Genomes that the entire team had been chosen from, and he had been the first that Martin had saved on that moon lit night.

“I don’t think I could do that Skipper, even on my best day. Danny might... but I’m still trying.” He spoke with a grin. He held out the small automatic in the belt holster. “I got her tuned up for you. She’ll knock down a gnat at a hundred yards.”

Martin took the weapon with a nod and slid it around to the small of his back where he lifted his jacket and clipped it to the belt on his pants. He pulled his jacket back down and to the untrained eye; it looked as if nothing was there. “I appreciate it Master Chief.” He spoke.

“That’s what we are for, sir!” He replied chuckling.

Martin looked at the crowd through the doorway. “You had a chance to mingle?” He asked turning fully to face the large window from which he could view the men and women inside the lounge.

“I checked out the manifests on everyone.” He nodded slowly. “They all seem to check out ok.”

Martin detected the change in the Chief’s tone of voice and looked at him. “They *seemed* to check out ok?” He asked.

“There are about three dozen men and women. All of them are listed as technicians of some sort. They just don’t fit the profile of a Tech head Skipper.” The Master Chief answered.

“Explain that to me.” Martin asked.

The Master Chief shrugged. “They move like killers, very confident of themselves and their ability to deal with anything. And their eyes give them away as something other than mere technicians.”

Martin met his eyes, “Your opinion Master Chief?”

“If I had to guess, I’d say they were a Sweeper Team Skipper.” The Master Chief replied without hesitation.

Martin's face did not betray his reaction at hearing that, "A Sweeper team?" He spoke calmly. "Why would someone send a Sweeper Team to EDEN?"

"I don't know Skipper. I thought they had disbanded all the Sweeper Teams when they restored us to active duty. That's what they told us anyway." The Master Chief spoke.

"It would seem that is not the case." Martin said evenly, trusting that Tony knew exactly what his senses were telling him. "Have someone keep an eye on them Master Chief. Discretely."

The Master Chief nodded and stepped closer so that his voice would not carry. "You want me to tag them Skipper?"

Martin returned the nod. "And rig their quarters as well Tony. With the new TAP transmitters. I don't want them found. I want to know why a Sweeper Team is coming to EDEN."

"You don't think the Admiral...?"

Martin shook his head quickly. "No. He wouldn't request a Sweeper Team be deployed to EDEN. I trust him Master Chief, and he trusts us. He knows what we are and what we can do for the most part and he's never betrayed us... and he's always covered our asses."

"Then who Skipper?"

Martin was about to speak when the noise from the men and women gathered in the lounge grew slightly softer, at least to their enhanced hearing. They turned to see two men and a woman in a Navy uniform come in the opposite door. They knew immediately who the tall middle-aged man, his face was plastered across the evening news almost every night, and he was well known in the political circles of Washington D.C. Martin was still trying to figure out how he managed to wrangle a trip to EDEN.

The Master Chief detected the slight stiffening of Martin's body when the women came into full view. Tony turned and took a longer look at the young women. Even in the unflattering Navy uniform, she was drop dead gorgeous. She stood about five foot three and looked to be about a hundred and fifteen pounds. Her Persian red hair was shoulder length, longer than Navy regulations allowed, but she had it pulled into a tight ponytail and tied up. She had high regal cheekbones, and soft full red lips. He could see her eyes from across the room, a unique and brilliant gleaming jade green in color; they were unlike any eyes he had seen on a woman before. The color of her eyes highlighted and contrasted with her deeply tanned skin, and the light makeup she wore only accented that contrast. Her uniform could not hide her full, firm breasts and lean muscular legs under the Navy skirt. Her legs were long for someone of her height and as she turned slightly he saw that they connected to a perfectly shaped and muscled ass. She walked with the confidence of a pro and he noticed how most of the men in her immediate area turned to stare at her with lust in their eyes.

"Who is she Skipper?" The Master Chief asked, his eyes still watching her.

"Her name is Anja Peterson." Martin replied slowly, his voice carrying with it a hint of deep feeling. A note of feeling that was quickly squashed. "Commander Anja Peterson of the Naval Investigative Service."

The Chief's head snapped around to look at him. "She's NIS?" He asked stunned.

Martin Hunter nodded. "Oh yeah, their top operative depending on who you ask. They call her the "Ice Queen"." Martin spoke, his voice holding something in it that Tony had never heard before. "Remember that intelligence briefing we got last year, the one that listed the operation to eliminate the head of the Russian mafia? SEAL team Seven supported the op and conducted the extraction?"

"Yeah. It was a smooth Operation from what I know. No problems in or out." The Master Chief replied.

"She's the one who did the target." Martin spoke evenly. "I talked with Commander Williams after they returned stateside; it took her four months to get in deep enough to get the target's attention. When she did... the guy got sloppy, falling all over himself to do what she wanted."

The Chief looked at Anja from across the small lounge. She carried herself with an almost regal grace, as if she knew she could get anything she wanted. The chief turned back to his officer. "You got to admit boss... looking at her does get your juices to flowing. How could you not want that body next to you in the rack?" The Chief spoke.

Martin grinned knowingly. "She speaks three languages fluently, including Russian. Her mother was Russian. She has a Degree in Biology, and a Master's in Genetic research. She has used her looks and her body on more than one occasion to secure completion of a mission. And outside of her duties as well, to garner favor with the desk pukes at NIS to move her forward quicker and get her what she wanted for her genetic testing research."

The Chief looked at Anja again, watching her as she made her way towards them. He saw the males in the room turning to look at her and drink in her sexuality. She knew she was gorgeous and that men wanted her, and she used that knowledge to perfection. The men in the room, including the married ones, would give a years pay for one night with her, and she knew it.

“So why is she coming to EDEN, Skipper?” The Chief asked.

Martin looked at him. “I was told she was coming to evaluate us Chief.” He answered with a smirk. “To make sure SEAL Team Twelve and our genetically improved asses are in ship shape order.”

“What the hell does that mean?” The Chief asked, his face wrinkling up.

“It means that she’s coming here to insure that we are still a stable portion of the US military.” Martin told him. “And that none of us has blown a mental gasket.”

“You serious Skipper?”

“Deadly serious.” Martin spoke, all humor gone from his voice. “The Admiral got wind of this about two months ago. The NIS is unsure if putting our team in charge of EDEN’s security was a good decision. They prodded a few Senators to authorize this investigation. And they put their top agent on it.”

“Commander Peterson?”

Martin nodded with a small smile. “She’s the hatchet man. She’s come to see if we are still stable components of the Navy and if we can be trusted.”

“What a load of shit, Skipper!” The Chief spoke. “There ain’t nothing wrong with our people! You sound like you know her well boss. What’s up with that?”

Martin nodded slowly, remembering that night so many years ago as if it was only yesterday. Even half way across the room, Martin could still pick out her sweet honey scent from the dozens of other in the room. “I know her, or I thought I knew her.” He replied softly. “Right now she is working directly for Senator Graham on this. He’s that greasy looking bastard standing to her left, the same Senator Graham that has wanted to can our overworked asses for years. That’s his son, following along with her, drool pouring from his mouth.” He explained. “Apparently the two of them are engaged.”

“That drugged up sleaze bucket is engaged to her?” The Master Chief echoed. “He doesn’t look like he’d know what end to put it in.”

Martin chuckled. “I agree whole heartedly.”

The Chief saw Anja look their way and he saw her face change as she turned and headed directly for them. He looked at Martin, smiling. “I’m out of here, sir. I’ll let you deal with her!”

Martin smiled back. “That Russian Mob boss Chief?”

“Yeah?”

“I got a copy of the autopsy from a friend. She popped him as he was filling her tight little body with his little Russian sausage.” Martin made the shape of a gun and pointed it at his forehead. “One 40mm round between the eyes as he was popping inside her according to the lab reports. They found semen from an unidentified female mixed in with his all over the sheets on the bed.”

“Christ that’s cold Skipper!”

Martin nodded. “That’s why they call her the Ice Queen Master Chief.” He said, turning back to see Anja’s stunning jade green eyes looking at him from less than six feet away.

Twenty-nine year old Anja Peterson stepped up to Martin, a dazzling smile on her face, her eyes bright and alive. Martin felt his own heart skip a couple beats looking at this woman in front of him as her scent filled his nostrils once more. A scent only he and his people could detect. Every man, woman and child had their own unique scent, and telling them apart came like second nature to Martin and the others now. Anja’s scent however, her scent was one Martin would never forget, as he had burned it into his mind and had ever since that night.

“Commander Martin Hunter.” Anja spoke, her voice soft and seductive. “Your reputation precedes you Commander.” She held out her hand to him.

Martin took her hand gently, dreading that this day had come now. He had hoped to never have to see Anja again, especially not after the night they had shared. It seemed fate wasn’t going to allow him that. “So does yours Commander Peterson.” He spoke calmly. “So does yours.”

Anja Peterson smiled at him, her green eyes twinkling. “It’s been a long time Martin.” She spoke softly.

“Yes, it has Anja.” Martin replied, not returning her smile. “Not long enough it seems.”

Anja stared at his handsome face as the memories of that night flooded back to her. She was a newly promoted lieutenant in the NIS, and had just been assigned her first mission. She was to track and expose a traitor at a State function in a foreign embassy. She did not know that Martin had been assigned to security for the Ambassador to cover his mission, which was essentially the same as hers. He was there to take the traitor into custody and interrogate him. They had not known each other before that night, but they had spotted each other from across the crowded room and been instantly attracted to one another. When he had approached her Anja had been struck by his imposing physical form and expected him to be another knuckledragger Navy SEAL. She had met them before, always so arrogant and sure of themselves as if their shit did not stink, yet none of them had a wit of common sense about them. Martin was dressed in his Navy uniform, and she noticed the SEAL Trident right away, and she was wearing a very sexy and stunning red cocktail dress. They had chatted briefly, and Anja was taken aback by his casual demeanor and quiet humor, and they had exchanged phone numbers before going their separate ways within the embassy. There was something about him that had drawn her like no other man she had met before. He didn't react as so many did when confronted with a beautiful woman. He was respectful and polite and didn't stare at her tits, which her dress showed off quite spectacularly.

Anja Peterson was not yet cleared for information into the Genome project, and she did not know what Martin Hunter was at that point in her life; but based on everything that had happened to her since their night together, she didn't know if that was a good thing or a bad thing. They had ended up taking down the traitor in the foreign ambassador's office as he was beginning to transmit secret documents via computer. After a brief fight with the man and his two cohorts, their mission was successfully completed and a traitor to their nation was in custody.

Anja invited Martin back to her apartment in Washington to celebrate the mission completely on an impulse. He had accepted and they had gone back to her brownstone. They drank an excellent wine and talked with each other for over an hour, something Anja had almost never done with a man, before the sexual energy that was building between them took over. Anja didn't remember how they had ended up in her bed, only that they had, and it led to the most exquisite and pleasurable evening she had ever experienced even to this day. Anja knew she was beautiful, and knew that she could get any man to do her bidding. She knew what she wanted when it came to sex, and she got what she wanted for the most part.

With Martin Hunter however, it had been very different. He had taken control almost immediately, his lips and tongue extinguishing any protest she might have had with toe curling kisses, that didn't so much make her melt in his arms as they had brought out her desires more intensely. His hands had explored every square inch of her body, trailed shortly afterwards by his warm tongue. He brought her to climaxes that were more powerful than any she had ever felt, yet left her yearning for more. He met her demanding need with an equally demanding persona. His body was sculpted muscle, he was built larger than any man she had had before him, and even to this day, no one had matched his size in that department. Anja was no virgin by any means, but even the men that were larger than the norm didn't know what to do with their cock. To them size was everything, and nothing else mattered. Martin not only had a huge cock, but he knew exactly what to do with it to make Anja sing like she never had before.

Anja found herself exploring his body as well with her lips and tongue, something she had never done with any man. She found herself enjoying the power she had over his body, but also the ability he had over her to use it. They had shared each other's bodies well into the early morning, until she had finally collapsed from total exhaustion. When she awakened several hours later, he was gone, but he had left her a single rose with a note asking if they could see each other again soon. Anja found herself wanting to see him again. They had many things in common with each other, more so than the men did in her three previous private relationships. He left a private number where she could reach him, and she noticed it was a number with the same prefix as most Virginia based SEALs, yet she mused about it all day. She enjoyed her career and her job, and did not want a relationship to tie her down or ruin that. It was ultimately a visit by her father, a Vice Admiral, that convinced her what to do. In addition, her father got her clearance and then informed her of what Martin Hunter was, and what the Navy unit he commanded was made of.

Anja took almost a week to research Martin Hunter and the Genome project as much as her clearance allowed her too. When she finally worked up the nerve to call Martin and tell him there could never be anything between them, the Central American War was three days old, and Martin Hunter and SEAL Team 12 had

already deployed. She never heard from him again, but the memories of that night came flooding back as she looked at him. She had followed his career as much as possible over the last seven years, but always kept quiet about their brief but very intense relationship.

“You don’t seem happy to see me.” She said, her green eyes twinkling.

“Should I be?” Martin asked. “I know why you are here Anja. I don’t like it; not one bit. There is nothing wrong with me or my people, and you know it.”

“What do you mean?”

Martin stepped closer to her. “Don’t insult my intelligence by feigning ignorance Anja. You are too intelligent for that. We both know who you work for, and why you are coming to EDEN.”

“I’m just following orders Martin.” Anja spoke sweetly.

“Were you following orders back then too? Your father’s orders maybe?” Martin threw the jab at her for some reason which he could not fathom.

Anja’s eyes narrowed slightly. “That... that isn’t fair Martin!” She hissed softly at him. “You... you never told me you were a Genome!”

“Pardon me, but if I remember correctly, and I *am* a Genome mind you, so my memory is perfect, I don’t recall you wanting me to stop what I was doing so you could ask that question.” Martin spoke in a low voice. “If I had told you, would it have mattered then?”

Anja met his dark eyes, deep pools of mystery that she had stared into for quite a few hours on that night. “It might have.” She finally blurted out, knowing it was a lie.

“So if I had told you I was a Genome you wouldn’t have slept with me?” Martin asked, his voice tinged with anger.

Anja’s face flushed even under her deep tan, and her eyes narrowed even more. “You should have told me before we... before...”

“Before we ended up enjoying ourselves too much?” Martin asked in a soft voice so that only she could hear him, but the anger was still there. “Forgive me, but it didn’t cross my mind at the time, and you didn’t seem to be complaining or be in any rush to have me stop what I was doing. I thought we were having too much fun. I guess I was the only one actually enjoying myself.”

Anja regained control of her racing emotions and looked at him. “I have a job to do, Martin. I hope you don’t get in my way.”

“Get in your way?” Martin chuckled stepping closer to her, so close in fact that Anja could smell his musky mint aroma. She had commented to him that night about what aftershave he wore because it smelled so good, and he had replied that he didn’t wear aftershave. “I’m EDEN’s Chief of Security Commander. As long as your job doesn’t interfere with my duties, we should get along just fine.”

“I have orders from...”

“Anja, there you are.” The male voice spoke from behind her interrupting what she was going to say.

The young man that had entered the lounge with her stepped up next to her and slipped his arm around her waist possessively. He was extremely handsome and of medium height, and was wearing what looked to be a two thousand dollar suit. His blond hair was neatly cut, his blue eyes dull with too much alcohol and drug use.

Anja forced a smile and pushed his arm from her waist as casually as she could. “Kevin, I’d like you to meet Commander Martin Hunter.” She spoke.

Kevin Graham, son of the most anti-genome senator in the country and a well-known junkie, looked at Martin, “Ah... the Genome.” He said.

Martin smiled at him, and had Kevin been more intelligent he would have seen the smile as what it was; a predatory grin from a wild animal about to strike, “Yeah... the Genome.” Martin said.

“Martin, this is Kevin Graham. Senator Graham’s son.” Anja explained quickly, seeing the look on Martin’s face and recognizing it for what it was. Anja however mistook the reason it was there, and for that matter so did Martin.

Martin folded his arms across his chest as Kevin held out his hand. “Yes, I know who he is.” Martin spoke maintaining control of his emotions. Seeing Kevin put his arm around Anja had sent a surge of anger through him and he didn’t know why. “I didn’t realize he was coming on this trip.”

“Senator Graham felt it would be a good experience for him. Kevin is campaigning for the 19th district in Virginia.” Anja told him.

Martin glanced at the Master Chief who was standing over to the side motioning him over. “That’s very nice. I wish you luck. I have work to do, if you’ll excuse me.” Martin glanced quickly at Anja before turning and heading for where the Master Chief stood.

Anja watched him move through the mass of men and women with confidence and grace. She smiled to herself as she remembered how she had reacted to his body against hers. The heat of his skin and the power of his body, it was almost as if he had some sort of unique aura that caused her to desire him so much. Or was it her own desire for him that made her react the way she did? Even after all this time Anja thought to herself, looking at his broad back, that one night they had spent together caused her to become damp between her thighs. It was going to be a very interesting assignment she thought.

“Arrogant asshole,” Kevin muttered drawing her attention, “Typical Genome.”

Anja looked at him, her smile fading away. “Don’t ever grab me like that again.” She growled at him in a low voice.

Kevin looked at her. “Like what? I’ve grabbed you like that before. In much, more public places. We are engaged, remember!”

“I am not a trophy Kevin!” Anja spat at him, the anger she was feeling very new and very intense. It was almost as if she was angry that Kevin had put his arm around her in front of Martin. “And you will not treat me like one! Is that understood?”

Kevin smiled. “Relax Anja.” He told her. “I only wanted to put the Commander in his place. He is a Genome. They are known to be volatile and explosive. I wanted to put him in his place right away, so you don’t feel threatened.”

Anja shook her head and smiled a sad smile. “Believe me, the last thing Martin Hunter feels threatened by is you.” Anja was beginning to regret saying yes to Kevin when he asked her to marry him six months ago. She had done so to advance her career and to make her father happy. He was worried she would be led astray by events that were happening in the military, and felt marrying Kevin Graham would solidify her position within the Senator’s entourage, and give her a leg up when she left the Navy. Anja hated having Kevin paw her body at odd times to prove his manhood to others, and having sex with him was revolting to her, even when she was drunk.

Kevin took her hand. “C’mon, my father is expecting an initial report of contact with Hunter.”

Anja let him lead her back through the mass of people, quietly thinking how Kevin would surely get his ass handed to him if he tried to pull the same stunts with the Genome soldiers as he had with everyone else he knew. It brought a smile to her face picturing Martin hanging him over a railing somewhere putting his arrogant ass in its place.

Martin and the Master Chief stood to one side of the line that was formed to walk through the three metal detectors. Each of the Raptor Jump ships could hold two hundred and fifty people in the part of the cargo hold that had been configured for airline seating, and these were the last groups of technicians and scientists that would be joining EDEN’s eight thousand-member crew. Martin turned when he heard his name called. He watched as Admiral William H. Wallace III walked up to him with another man who Martin recognized right away.

Senator Richard Graham was one of the most senior Senators within the US government. He was Chairman of several committees, including the Intelligence Oversight Committee. He was also the most vocal anti-Genome man in the government, and made sure everyone knew that. He was a man of medium height with gray just touching his brown hair. He wore what appeared to be a three thousand dollar suit, just like his son, and was impeccably groomed. The Admiral was holding his arm as they came up to where he and the Master Chief stood.

Admiral Wallace was a man that Martin would follow to hell and back. He was a true leader of men who had worked his way up in the ranks because of what he had accomplished in his career, and not because of some political connections. He was a tall muscular man, with just a touch of white hair on his mostly bald head. A man in excellent physical condition, who had lobbied hard to get SEAL Team Twelve this post on EDEN. Martin didn’t know why, and never really bothered enough to ask, but Wallace had always been there to look

out for him and his team over the years, earning him Martin's trust and respect. There was something about the Admiral that made him feel relaxed and comfortable whenever he was in his presence.

"Martin..." He spoke stopping in front of him. "I told Senator Graham I would introduce you before we boarded. Senator, this is Commander Martin Hunter, EDEN's Chief of Security."

Richard Graham hesitated before extending his hand to shake Martin's outstretched one. He looked at him quickly. "So you are the Genome Commander?" He asked wiping his hand on his pants after shaking Martin's hand. This did not go unnoticed by Wallace or Martin.

Martin couldn't help but grin as he saw Anja approach from behind the Senator with his son. He nodded. "Yes sir." He replied, "Sequence One; Batch Number nine eight three four one."

Richard Graham looked slightly surprised. "You remember your batch number?" He asked, clearly taken aback.

Martin nodded. "Yes, sir; It's kind of hard to forget, when it's tattooed to the inside of your thigh." He replied.

Anja's eyes narrowed slightly at hearing this. She did not remember any number tattoo on the inside of Martin's thigh, and she had willingly and quite happily spent enough time between his legs to notice. Of the sexual partners she had over the years, Martin was the only man Anja had willingly sucked off, and she had done it on more than one occasion that night as she remembered, each time with delightful gusto.

Martin was the only one who noticed her reaction and he inwardly grinned to himself, knowing what must be racing through her head.

"So you believe you have the security of EDEN well in hand, Commander?" Graham asked.

Martin nodded. "Yes, sir, EDEN is the most secure facility the United States has right now. And not just because she is several million miles away. We have state of the art systems installed and my men, as well as the rest of EDEN's security force, are intimately familiar with all of them."

Graham nodded, as if he wasn't in the least bit interested, "Very well." He said.

Admiral Wallace realized that the conversation wasn't going to proceed anymore and motioned with his hand. "Senator, if you'll follow me, the loading ramp to our jump ship is further down the terminal."

Graham nodded and turned to walk with the Admiral. Martin looked at Anja and Kevin as they came up to him. Kevin had a smug look on his face.

"Can I help you?" He asked.

"We are ready to board." Anja said.

Martin glanced at the Master Chief quickly before looking back to her. "I believe the line for boarding is back there." He spoke.

"We have special clearance Commander." Anja said. "You know that."

Martin shook his head. "No one has special clearance unless I give it. Everyone has to pass through the detectors before they board. All this information was in the packets that were handed out, along with your security passes." He looked at her, and then at Kevin, "Which I don't see, by the way."

"What security passes?" Anja asked.

"They were in the packets given to you when you entered the terminal as I told you." Martin explained. "Without those security passes you will not be allowed to board."

"I gave... I gave them to my assistant." Kevin stuttered.

"Then I would suggest you find your assistant and get them back." Martin spoke. He could barely hold back the grin as Kevin turned and started down the long line of men and women looking for his assistant. He turned back to Anja who had taken a step closer to him.

"Playing games Martin?" She asked, her voice cold.

Martin shook his head. "Me? Play games? I wouldn't think of it. You have just forgotten how to follow instructions." He told her.

"I was promised your full corporation!" Anja hissed at him. "Are you going to let what happen between us begin interfering with how you follow orders?"

Martin's smile faded and he glared at her. "What happened between us Lieutenant Commander Peterson is ancient history; you saw to that!" He told her. "I have long put it behind me. What you need to do, is realize that we operate like any other military facility, and we have rules that need to be followed. If you can't handle

that, I suggest you let the good Senator know, and we can find someone to take your place. The next scheduled trip back to earth is in four months!”

Anja bit back her sharp reply, knowing that to argue with him now would do no good. She took a deep breath and forced a smile to return to her face.

“Will that be all, sir?” She asked sweetly.

“That’s all. Dismissed.”

Anja spun around smartly and followed Kevin to find their security passes. Martin turned as the Master Chief came up next to him.

“Is it smart to piss her off Skipper?” He asked. “She does have the Senator’s ear.”

“What’s Admiral Wallace’s rule for facing the enemy Tony?” He asked.

The Master Chief smiled. “Keep them guessing.”

Martin nodded. “Keep them guessing. Moreover, that’s what I intend to do with the good Commander Peterson. Keep her guessing.”

“She’s got smarts as well as beauty Skipper.” The Master Chief said. “She’ll catch on real quick.”

Martin nodded. “Maybe, however, by then we’ll be on EDEN, and there won’t be a thing she can do about it. The Senator is only staying for a few weeks. She’s assigned for the full year.”

The Master Chief grinned. “You didn’t?” He asked.

Martin nodded with a smile. “It pays to have friends in low places Chief. You know that. I had MILPERSEN permanently assign her as an attachment to SEAL Team 12. She’ll be with us a while.”

The Master Chief broke out in a booming laugh. He shook his head. “Now I know why I don’t play poker with you skipper. You are devious.”

Martin nodded, “Only when I’m in battle Master Chief. Only when I’m in battle.”

They both were laughing as they turned back to watch the procession of people into the waiting Raptor Jump ships.

Martin moved through the upper deck of the Raptor Jump ship making his way forward to the cockpit as men and women were settling into their chairs. He barely glanced at Anja and Kevin who were sitting together, and he did not see her eyes linger on him for a long moment. He passed through the small doorway into the spacious cockpit and saw the two pilots prepping the ship for takeoff. He glanced at the small door and debated whether to go upstairs into the observation lounge for take off, but decided against it and settled into the engineering seat behind them.

“How goes it folks?” He asked.

“Four minutes.” The pilot answered, turning back to look at him. He wore a Marine Corp flight suit with gold oak leaf clusters on the shoulder boards. “All our guests got their seatbelts on Boss man?”

“We’re secure in the back.” Martin replied, settling into the chair at the computer station behind the pilot.

The Major glanced through the open doorway and looked at the long rows of seats now occupied by men and women. “Man, I hate transporting REMFs.”

The female co-pilot chuckled and looked at him. She wore Captain’s bars and a Marine Corp flight suit as well, “C’mon Ben.” She spoke. “We need to work on your social skills.”

The pilot, Major Benjamin O’Connell, looked at her with a grin. “Can we start with you?” He asked, wagging his eyebrows. “I might need extra training Tina.”

“We’ll see big boy.” Tina Winston said in reply. “We’ll see.”

Martin shook his head at the antics of the pair. They were the best damn flight crew he had ever worked with. They had taken him and his team into some of the nastiest places on earth, and always came back to get them. Even when they were ordered not to. They were also very much an item, almost never apart even when they weren’t flying, and there were rumors that they would end up getting married in the next year or so.

“Ramp coming up,” The voice on the intercom spoke from the back.

Both Ben and Tina became all business from that point on. Ben turned back to the consoles that were wrapped around him on three sides. They looked like something from a science fiction movie of old.

“Ok, bring the engines to max thrust.” Ben spoke his voice cool and calm, “Stabilizers to full extension.”

“Stabilizers at full,” Tina spoke, her hands seeming to fly across her equally space age consoles, “Engines spooling to max power. Bringing the navigation array online, and activating defensive systems.”

The Raptor Jump Ships were equipped with the most advanced offensive and defensive systems known to exist. They could fly invisible to all known radar due to the advanced reflecting armor coating the skin of the craft. The heat from the engines was vented and cooled before it ever reached the air. They were affectionately referred to as RAPTORS by the pilots and co-pilots because of their awesome capabilities and firepower. Martin secured his form in the seat and flipped several switches on the console in front of him. The screens came alive with the faces of the men and women in the back.

“How many lose their lunch?” Tina asked, not looking up from her console.

“I say thirty.” Ben spoke, his eyes focused on his own screens.

Martin chuckled and shook his head. “I got 50 that say only ten blow chunks.” He spoke. “Most of the people coming up this time have already undergone heavy G training.”

“Damn!” Ben muttered. “That’s too bad.”

“Why complain?” Tina asked. “We spent three hours cleaning up the cargo area after the last flight up. The smell made me sick myself. Twice.”

Ben laughed. “You should have heard her cuss you Marty.” He spoke.

Martin turned in his chair. “Me? Why was it my fault?”

“You didn’t tell us that over half were fresh from the academy, and had no heavy G training. They lost it six minutes into the flight!” Tina complained. “We had to fly fourteen hours with the air filters working triple time.”

Martin smiled as he turned back to the screens. He centered one screen on Anja and Kevin, who were speaking quietly together. She looked like she had a very bored expression on her face. Tina glanced back at just that time and saw him gazing at the stunning young woman on the screen.

“Someone you know?” She asked.

Martin nodded, “A long time ago.” He said softly, “A long time ago.”

Ben turned quickly and saw Anja on the screen. He whistled loudly. “Wow! Look at those...”

Tina punched him in the shoulder hard enough to shut him up. “Don’t you finish that statement big boy!”

“Ow!” Ben exclaimed. “What did you hit me for?”

“Just fly the damn ship!” She spat.

“Is this jealousy I detect dear?” Ben asked, turning back to his controls.

“I’ll show you jealousy buster. Wait till we get back to EDEN.” Tina growled, but with a small smile on her face.

“Raptor Two, Raptor One, ready to depart!” The voice on their com spoke.

Ben nodded, “Raptor Two confirm. We are ready to depart! Lead us out of here Robby.”

“Raptor Two roger, we are lifting off!”

Martin turned and looked out the small windshield as Raptor One lifted into the air with a blast of its powerful engines. He watched as Ben and Tina pulled on their flight helmets and then Ben took the controls and did the same.

“Raptor One, we are airborne and on your six. Rotating ten degrees to come up under your aft wing. Let’s keep it tight until we clear the atmosphere Robby.” Ben spoke into his helmet mic.

“Roger that Major. Initiating atmosphere entry in thirty seconds. Throttles to seventy percent power. Activating Reflector armor and flight tracker. Say goodbye to earth for six months folks!” The voice spoke.

Martin was still amazed at the speed in which they ascended into the clouds. In ten seconds, he could see nothing but tiny specks of light on the ground, and then they were hidden by clouds as they entered the atmosphere.

Ben flipped a switch on the console, “Good morning everyone and welcome to Raptor flight. One-way service to EDEN. Please do not leave your seats until the word is given. We will be entering the atmosphere in twenty seconds and the ride will be quite rough for another forty seconds. Hope no one had anything to heavy to eat before we left. Barf bags are in the arms of your seats, so please use them. Flying time to EDEN is thirteen

hours and forty-nine minutes from now. Enjoy the flight. And any complaints should be directed to Commander Hunter when we reach EDEN.”

Martin laughed and waved at Ben’s back. “Thanks Ben.” He spoke.

Ben smiled, “Always a pleasure boss.”

The two ships of Raptor flight entered the atmosphere of earth heading toward their new home on EDEN.

The Earth they would return to would never be the same.

Anja sat in her seat going over the packet that was handed out to them in the terminal. Kevin had predictably lost all the contents of his stomach upon taking off, and once the flight had smoothed out, he had begun drinking. Now, six hours into the flight he was passed out from five glasses of straight bourbon, and snoring lightly. Anja pulled the two security badges from the folder and looked at them. Her eyes grew dark and she looked toward the cockpit. She kept the badges in her hand and got to her feet, tossing the packet onto her seat as she moved into the aisle. She marched directly toward the cockpit holding the badges in front of her. She could see the backs of at least one of the pilots as she got closer, and she heard the laughter come from the cockpit as well.

Anja burst into the cockpit to see the two pilots talking with one another, the female with a smile on her face as she leaned against the back of the co-pilot’s seat. She turned and saw Martin sitting at the console, reading from a chart and drinking a cup of coffee. The female pilot got to her feet.

“Can I help you?” She asked.

Anja turned and looked at Martin as he lowered the chart and met her eyes. She ignored Tina and tossed the two security badges onto the table in front of him. “I was told I would have Level Six security access on EDEN. And Senator Graham’s son would have level Six as well.”

Martin looked at her as he lowered the chart completely to the top of the table, his dark eyes unreadable. “Who exactly told you that?” He asked.

“Senator Graham assured me I would have the proper clearance!” Anja snapped, her temper rearing its ugly head, “As would Kevin. You need to correct this! Right now!”

Martin set the mug of coffee on the small table and looked at her closely. He picked up the two badges and held them out to her. “Senator Graham does not dictate to me what level clearances I issue Anja. As Head of Security that is at my discretion, and only Admiral Wallace as the authority to override it, which to my knowledge that has not occurred in this instance.”

Anja crossed her arms under her full breasts, completely unaware of the seductive pose she was striking. “You will change the clearances now Commander Hunter. If you don’t, the minute we land on EDEN I will go directly to Senator Graham and have you relieved of duty, for disobeying orders.”

Tina looked at Ben and shook her head as she settled back into her flight seat. She seen senior officers with more guts than brains go up against Martin verbally over something they felt was wrong. In every case, Martin had slapped them down in as much time as it took for them to formulate the thought. Ben grinned and shook his head as well as he turned back to his instruments and sipped his own mug of coffee.

Martin’s expression did not change as he got to his feet and stepped alongside Anja. He didn’t see Anja close her eyes quickly as a wave of desire swept through her. A wave of overwhelming desire for Martin, and that stunned her. Martin touched the control panel and the cockpit hatch slid shut with a hiss. Martin stepped back and looked at Anja, who still wore a smug expression on her face. He towered over her five foot three height, but she held her ground admirably yet quite arrogantly.

“Well?” She snapped.

Martin looked at her as he fingered the badges in his hand. “What is your rank Anja?” He asked her in an even voice.

“Excuse me?”

“I asked you what your rank was.”

“You know damn well what my rank is!” Anja snapped, not understanding what this was leading up to.

Martin nodded. “Yes! I know what your rank is. And the last time I checked Lieutenant Commander Peterson, I was a full Commander, which means in case you have forgotten, I outrank you.”

“What does this have to do with...?”

“At ease Lieutenant Commander!” Martin barked.

“You have no right to...”

“At ease,” Martin almost shouted, causing Anja to take a step back and bang into the bulkhead of the ship. Martin was in her face before she had time to recover. “If you say another word, I’ll have the Master Chief lock you in the hold of this ship until we reach EDEN! Exactly who do you think you are to come in here and spout off to me? I decide who gets clearance on EDEN! Me! Not you! And for damn sure not Senator Graham! I don’t care what your mission or purpose is. You are still a member of the active duty Navy, and you will follow regulations. If you had looked hard enough at these badges before letting your ego overrule your brain, you would see that yours is a temporary clearance until you assumed your position on EDEN.” He glared at her, his dark eyes nearly obsidian in color and they made Anja feel very small at that moment. “As for the good Senator’s son, I have no intention of allowing your two bit drunken, drugged up boyfriend any kind of access anywhere on EDEN. He has a criminal record for Christ’s sake!”

“Kevin doesn’t have a criminal record!” Anja spoke defending him for some reason, but her response was delivered much less forcefully now.

“You should probably take a harder look at your dear fiancée Anja. He does have a record... and I will not allow him access to any secure areas of EDEN. Period! Senator Graham can scream to the president for all I care. It won’t matter to me or to the Admiral. I answer to him... and his next superior is the President of the United States. Senator Graham does not factor into my Chain of Command at any level thank God.” Martin took her hand and slapped the badges back into her palm. “I suggest you take these and go back to your seat before you step way over the line.”

“Martin... I...”

“Save it! You keep talking and you’re going to sink your budding career before it ever gets started.” Martin spoke.

Ben looked at Tina out of the corner of his eye and grinned, except Tina wasn’t looking at him. She was staring out her side window with a look of utter horror on her face.

Ben followed her gaze and his eyes flew open, “Holy Shit!” Ben screamed, dropping his mug of coffee and reaching for his flight controls. “Tina! Full power!”

Tina was frozen in place as she stared at the massive asteroid bearing down on them. It filled her window entirely now, gases and smaller asteroids trailing along behind it.

“Tina!” Ben screamed again, “Full Power!”

His voice was enough to snap her out of her trance and her hand flashed forward to slam the throttles all the way forward to max. Martin and Anja had turned to see why Ben had screamed, only to witness the massive asteroid filling their view.

“Oh my god,” Anja muttered.

Ben shoved his flight stick all the way over to the left as the gravity leading the asteroid hit Raptor Two, sending Martin and Anja slamming hard into the bulkhead. Martin absorbed most of the impact and it was enough to knock him silly as Anja’s head collided with his jaw. The massive g-force from the turn pushed them against the bulkhead as the Raptor went into a turn it was never designed to endure!

The last thing Martin heard before the heavy Gs forced him to black out was Anja and Tina praying softly before they too succumb to the massive pressure.

CHAPTER TWO

Tina’s voice is what stirred Martin from his fog of blackness. He was jammed up against the navigation computer and he felt a weight on his chest as his eyes regained their focus. He saw the mass of red hair stirring on his chest and ignored the throbbing from the back of his head as the picture of the massive asteroid popped back into his memory. Anja was stirring on his chest, her body haphazardly sprawled across his, her navy regulation skirt hiked quite far up her tanned thigh. He had absorbed the brunt of the impact, cushioning Anja’s fall, and if not for his genetically engineered triple dense bone structure, his skull would have cracked open upon impacting with the navicomputer. Martin grasped Anja’s arms.

“Are you hurt?” He asked.

Anja lifted her head slowly. “Yes damn it! My head hit your jaw!” She snapped back, with no regard that his jaw had probably saved her from snapping her neck.

Martin grunted in contempt and unceremoniously dumped her off his body and got to his feet. Anja’s butt hit the deck with a thud and she let out a gasp.

“All you had to do was ask me to get up!” She nearly yelled, all the while holding her sore head.

Martin grasped the back of the two flight chairs to steady himself and could see nothing but stars out the cockpit window. Both Ben and Tina were engrossed in their consoles and did not notice that he was awake and moving again.

“Report,” He spoke.

Ben’s head snapped around and Martin saw the deep gash over his left eye, though it looked as if the bleeding had stopped. He saw Martin’s look and waved his hand. “It looks worse than it is.” He spoke. “You took the brunt of that slam into the navicomputer. How’s your head?”

Martin nodded, running his hand over the back of his skull, “Sore... even as hard as my head is.” He replied. “What the hell happen?”

Ben pointed out the left window and Martin followed his motion. He could still see the huge asteroid as it moved away from their location. He also caught a glimpse of RAPTOR ONE maintaining station slightly behind them, “That happened.” Ben replied pointing to the massive asteroid “Crept up on us out of no where. Our sensors didn’t even pick it up. Don’t know why yet.”

“We didn’t pick it up because it’s composed of hardened gases. Our sensors registered the increase in gases, but since we’ve never seen anything like that before, they didn’t equate it to a threat.” Tina spoke from her console.

“Not a threat!” Martin exclaimed. “The damn thing is nearly as big as an aircraft carrier! How is that not a threat?”

“Our instruments are calibrated for solid objects.” Tina explained looking at him. “Not gases that form huge rocks.”

“Is the ship ok?” Martin asked.

“Aside from the large dent and blown board from your stone head, we’re fine.” Ben replied with a grin, even though he winced when he chuckled. He was going to have a massive head ache from knocking his skull on the overhead console. “You were only out for about three minutes. If you hadn’t been chewing out the Lieutenant Commander and were in your seat, you would have been fine.”

Anja struggled to her feet leaning against the damaged console, “Very funny.” She said, her voice dripping with contempt.

Ben turned on her then, in no mood for games anymore. “No it’s not funny Commander. Now take your tight ass back into the passenger area and next time you want to come into my cockpit, you’d better ask fucking permission! You copy that?!”

“Yes... sir.” Anja replied, wisely keeping her mouth closed and she slowly moved back through the open hatch into the passenger area.

Martin chuckled and looked at Ben, “Nicely done.” He said with a smile and patting Ben on the shoulder, “Any injuries in the back?”

“The Master Chief is checking.” Tina replied as Martin moved back to his chair.

“Do we have Coms with RAPTOR ONE?”

“Just an initial inquiry as to our condition,” Tina replied. “They were higher and to our front so they missed the thing altogether.” Tina spoke.

The bald head of the Master Chief came through the hatch just then and his eyes found Martin. “Skipper we got a couple of broken arms and some minor scratches, nothing serious. The onboard medics are handling it. I did a quick once over of the hull too, and our integrity seems ok.”

Ben nodded, tearing his eyes from one of the screens. “That’s what I’m reading too Master Chief. I’m having trouble raising EDEN though.”

“Chief... check the transmitter.” Martin ordered, switching on his two screens and seeing the medics moving among the badly shaken passengers.

The Master Chief nodded, “Aye Skipper.” He spoke before ducking back out of the hatch.

“Admiral Wallace is hailing Marty.” Tina spoke up.

Martin reached over and flipped several switches on his panel, and the face of Wallace appeared on the small screen. “RAPTOR TWO SIX actual.” He spoke.

“Martin?” Admiral Wallace’s voice came through the com system, his face on the screen. “Everyone ok over there? You guys took a nasty tumble.”

“We’re secure sir. My head put a rather large dent in the navicomputer, and we may have lost our long range transmitter, but we are in one piece thanks to Ben and Tina.” Martin answered.

“Any injuries to report,” Wallace asked.

“Nothing serious Admiral, a few broken bones and some scratches,” Martin answered. “Only those people who were not secured in their seats were injured. We never even saw it coming sir. Our instruments didn’t pick it up.” Martin said.

“Neither did ours. I’ve spoken with Colonel Wilson on EDEN. They tried to contact us, but apparently the gases interfere with long range communications. They are apparently tracking your asteroids’ momma with photo drones now. It’s going to pass between the earth and the moon in roughly eighty hours.” Admiral Wallace told him, “Nothing to be concerned about though according to our people.”

“I’ll make sure we don’t have any ships up at that time sir.” Martin told him, looking at the screen.

Wallace nodded, “Very well. Major O’Connell, please return to formation for the flight to EDEN.”

Ben nodded. “Yes sir.”

“RAPTOR ONE out.”

Martin turned as the screen went black. “I really hate fucking flying.” He said.

MOON BASE EDEN

MARE ORIENTALE BASIN

WESTERN FRINGE OF THE LIGHT SIDE ON THE MOON

Formed in the moon’s infancy, the Mare Orientale was formed by the impact of a massive meteor. In satellite images and from the surface of earth it looked like a giant bullseye with three distinct rings. Built in the outer center of the inner ring was EDEN.

Fully six square miles, the sprawling base was home to nearly eight thousand men, women and children; Scientists, teachers, researchers... all of them occupied positions on EDEN, which they now called home. Martin was always in awe on the approach to EDEN. He’d seen it several dozens times before, but it never ceased to inspire him to look upon what man could accomplish. He could see the transport tunnels with the tram trains as they raced at over two hundred miles an hour between the huge sections of the base.

EDEN was split into half a dozen clusters of domes and buildings, built in a pseudo circular pattern. Almost everyone worked in the huge center clusters which housed almost all of the research companies and their labs as well as the assorted foreign government embassies and compounds. The living clusters were nearly as large, and the furthest from the center as to provide some semblance of normalcy. The other four clusters housed the other needs of the city sized base to include schools, stores, restaurants and all the necessities of normal life.

Martin was in command of not only his sixty-four member SEAL Team, but also EDEN’s internal security force of ninety three men and women. Martin watched as Ben brought RAPTOR TWO in low over the docking cluster. He could make out three of EDEN’s remaining fourteen RAPTORs on their respective landing pads. Further out on the docking ring were the two of the massive Mark Nine personnel transports. Each was capable of moving nearly 2000 men and women at a time off EDEN in case of emergency. Another four similar craft were on 24 hour standby at the base in Utah.

Ben brought his ship in and spilled power just as he was touching down. Everyone on board felt the landing gear set onto the docking pad and the engines begin powering down. Ben turned to his panel and hit a switch.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I’d like to welcome you to EDEN. Please allow the medical personnel to move the injured off before you begin to disembark. Everyone will need to file through Decontamination, so there is really no reason to rush. I do apologize for the rough few minutes we had, but thank you for flying RAPTOR

air. As I stated when we departed earth, any and all complaints should be directed to Commander Martin Hunter. And thank you again for flying RAPTOR Air.”

Martin shook his head as he got to his feet and looked at Ben. “I can always count on you Ben.” He said.

Ben and Tina chuckled as they continued their post flight shutdown of all systems. Martin grabbed his shoulder bag and made his way aft of the cockpit. He could see the men and women filing orderly out of the two entrances and into separate decontamination centers. There was one for civilians and one for military personnel. Martin didn’t hurry as he filed off the jumpship and soon he entered the brightly lit and large decon room. The military personnel had begun to line up in rows as Martin entered. Anja waited by the door and came up to him immediately.

“Was it necessary to separate me from Kevin?” She asked. Her tone was more respectful, but Martin could detect the anger in her words.

“I don’t make the regulations Commander. All military personnel are to go through a separate decon unit.” Martin explained.

“May I ask why?”

Martin looked at her. Her green eyes were bright and ever so beautiful. “You’ll find out soon enough.”

Martin brushed past her and moved to the front of the room where he set his bag on a conveyor belt. He turned to the gathered men and women, “If I could have your attention please.” He waited until the voices quieted and all eyes turned to him. “The decon room holds twenty at a time. You will go through from lowest rank to highest since most of you are techs and you need to report to your stations immediately. Once inside the room, please remove all your clothing and pass them through the individual containment cylinders. Your clothes will be decontaminated and you can retrieve them upon exiting the chamber. What this chamber does is remove any bacteria that any of us might have brought from earth. The process is quick, and quite painless, but you will get a quick shower and blow dry. All those above the rank of Lieutenant will go through the chamber last with me. Please place all your bags and other equipment onto the belt here and you can pick them up on the other side. The first twenty may proceed into the chamber.”

Martin turned and went to the wall panel as the first twenty personnel made their way into the room. “Raptor Three, you copy?”

“Affirmative Two Actual,” The voice answered immediately.

“The chief sent ahead some tag requests. Has that been accomplished?”

“Tags are in place and singing Skipper. Welcome back.” The voice replied.

“I want someone monitoring our birds 24/7 Three.”

“Already dialed in Skipper,” The answer came.

Martin saw Anja come up next to him out of the corner of his eye. He didn’t look at her and continued to talk. “Very well; keep me apprised of the situation and advised if needed, Two Actual out.” He turned to Anja. “What is it now Commander?”

“I wasn’t aware of the decontamination procedures.” She spoke.

“Standard procedure for all flights arriving from earth Anja,” He told her. “That is in the packets passed out to all personnel. Perhaps you should read more than the first page.” Martin answered.

“The females are not separated from the men?” She asked.

Martin shook his head. “That would require too much time and effort on my part. Besides, we’ve been an integrated military for near a hundred years now. No one is going to care what you or I look like. They are too tired.”

“That still does not address the need to have separated decon units for men and women. You need...”

Martin held out the electronic pad to her. “Here.”

Anja took the pad. “What’s this for?”

“File your recommendations and I’ll run them past the Admiral. Other than that... you are shit out of luck. This procedure is approved, and of the thousands of women that have passed through this chamber... you are the first to have made an issue of it.” Martin shook his head and brushed past her. He stopped a few feet away and turned back. “And Commander...?”

Anja turned to look at him, her eyes flashing with anger, “Yes, sir!” She snapped, contempt dripping from her words.

“Make sure the recommendation is in the proper format.” Martin turned away and moved up next to where the Master Chief stood a very large grin on his face.

“Asshole,” Anja muttered under her breath.

“That he is.” The female voice behind her said softly. Anja turned quickly to face the young blond woman. Her hair was short and she wore the uniform of one of Martin’s SEALs with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. “But he’s the asshole that you want backing you up when your sorry ass is hanging out in the fire. Remember that. You might need it someday. And while you may think you are all that honey, I’ve seen and had better than you.”

Anja blushed red as the young woman pushed past her and headed for the decon room already pulling her fatigue shirt off.

Anja Peterson was used to being among people who considered her to be a cut above the rest because of her beauty and position. When they looked at her, they saw a confident woman with the looks to make men melt, and the intelligence to get things done. She did not get that sense from the men and women present in the decon room, standing among them completely naked, her body exposed for nine pairs of eyes to see, not one of them looked in her direction even briefly. They chatted amongst themselves as if she didn’t even exist. Anja knew she was beautiful, and she kept her figure in excellent shape with martial arts and regular workouts. Her breasts were high and firm and easily a 36C cup, topped by quarter sized nipples that were upturned and looking for attention. Her abdomen was flat and lean, with some muscle definition showing. Her hips were slim and accented what many called her best feature, which was her tight firm ass. Her abdomen sloped down to the small landing strip of soft red hair she had above the entrance to her center. Her thighs were muscular to a degree and fit perfectly on her long legs. Some had referred to her as a Greek Goddess when it came to her looks and body, and she had used that to her advantage over the years. Among these five men and three women, she actually felt inferior.

The young blond woman that had commented to her had a body hardened by battle and constant action. Her breasts were also quite firm, though not as large, with strong thighs and legs. Though she was obviously a natural blond, there was no hair between her thighs, and none anywhere else on her body except for her head. Looking at the others in the room, all genomes, they shared the same trait as her. She had been surprised at first that Martin had no pubic hair, but quickly grew accustomed to it, and now she realized it must have been the same for all the genomes. The other two women, a short brunette and very tall black woman, it was the same, muscular firm bodies, but the only hair was on their heads. The men, to include Martin and the enormous Master Chief that was always at his side it seemed, were all heavily muscled, but not in any overdone way. They all looked in the epitome of physical condition. She noticed scars on all of the men and women present, and even a very large scar along Martin’s lower back that had not been there during their night together.

There was no sexual innuendos made among the men and women, and not one of them even glanced at her. These men and women were hard professionals, and they held too much respect for each other to behave in that manner. Were there relationships among the genomes? She was certain of that. Men and women, even genetically enhanced men and women still had the same urges. Yet these men and women would not openly show it to anyone they considered an outsider.

And Anja was very much an outsider, even though she wore the same Navy SEAL trident on her breast. Anja had killed before, but it had always been deliberate and planned out. She had never seen combat in the same way as the men and women in this room, and for that she was not considered an equal to them.

For the first time in the four months since she discovered she had this mission, she began to doubt her ability to pull off what the senator wanted from her.

Anja sat in the chair next to her bed that evening staring at the sleeping form of Kevin. The initial orientation had gone quickly and everyone had been assigned and escorted to their new quarters. They were sparse quarters, just a bedroom, a small living room and kitchen and the bathroom. She had immediately made plans to visit the many shops in the Entertainment Cluster to try and make it more to her liking. Kevin had

shown up shortly after she had unpacked and they had gone to dinner, and then returned. She had not wanted to have sex, but Kevin insisted and Anja endured another hour of his slobbering body against hers. Now, she sat in the chair wearing only a button done shirt, staring at Kevin and thinking how she had ever let the Senator talk her into this mission.

Seeing Martin again after all these years had immediately sent a warm tingle through her loins. He hadn't changed in the least and she still considered him the most ruggedly handsome man she had ever met. She had found herself reliving that night on several occasions during the trip here, and it troubled her to a great extent, because it was almost as if she could still feel his hands and lips on her body, making her scream in one raging climax after another.

Anja got up from the chair and walked softly into the small kitchen. She pulled a mug from the cupboard and dropped a small brown cube into the bottom. She placed it into the toaster oven sized box and touched several buttons. There was a flash of light inside the metal container and then a gentle beep. Anja opened it and took out the steaming mug of coffee. She added a small amount of sugar and walked into the living room where there was a computer terminal. She settled into the high backed chair and looked at the screen.

“Peterson, Anja. Lieutenant Commander, access 9185.4.”

**_GOOD MORNING COMMANDER PETERSON_
HOW MAY I ASSIST YOU**

The voice of the computer was male, but leaning quite heavily to the feminine side. The computer's reply also appeared on the screen in bold blue type.

“Is it possible to access EDEN's database?” She asked.

**_THAT IS POSSIBLE COMMANDER. YOUR SECURITY CLEARANCE HAS BEEN
UPDATED IN MY DATABANKS_**

“What is my clearance Level?” She asked.

YOU HAVE A LEVEL 5 SECURITY ACCESS COMMANDER

Anja shook her head frustrated. Even after their confrontation she thought Martin would cave into her threat to involved the Senator and grant her a Level Six clearance. It appeared that was not the case. “I was supposed to receive a level Six Clearance.”

**_I'M SORRY COMMANDER. LEVEL SIX AUTHORIZATION IS LIMITED TO SIX
INDIVIDUALS_**

“Which six would that be?” Anja asked as she sipped her coffee.

**_ADMIRAL WALLACE, COMMANDER HUNTER, MASTER CHIEF BROWN, CHIEF
PETTY OFFICER COLLINS, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ANDERSON, AND_**

“Two enlisted men have a higher clearance than EDEN's Assistant Medical Director?” Anja said.

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER COLLINS IS A FEMALE COMMANDER

“What does Level Five Access give me?” Anja asked in a bored tone. “I would imagine just about everyone else has level Five Clearance right?”

**_YOUR CLEARANCE ALLOWS YOU TO ACCESS ALL INFORMATION IN EDEN'S
DATABASE AS WELL AS MILITARY FILES RELATED TO ANY PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO
EDEN_**

YOUR CLEARANCE ALSO HAS A SPECIFIC CLUSTER WHICH GIVES YOU ACCESS TO MEDICAL FILES OF ALL RELATED GENETIC PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO EDEN AS PER YOUR REQUEST

ACTUALLY COMMANDER, ONLY NINETEEN INDIVIDUALS HAVE LEVEL FIVE CLEARANCE ON EDEN

“Senator Graham specifically requested I be granted a Level Six Clearance.” Anja spoke softly. “Why was that not acted upon?”

IT WAS ACTED UPON COMMANDER. AND THE REQUEST WAS DENIED.

“Denied? Denied by whom?”

EDEN’S CHIEF OF SECURITY. COMMANDER HUNTER

Anja sipped her coffee slowly, her mind working. “Please display Commander Hunter’s military records.”

WHAT SECTION WOULD YOU LIKE TO REVIEW COMMANDER PETERSON?

“His entire file,” Anja replied, somewhat exasperated that the question was asked.

I’M SORRY COMMANDER, THERE ARE SEVERAL SECTIONS OF COMMANDER HUNTER’S FILE WHICH YOU ARE NOT AUTHORIZED TO VIEW

“I thought I had access to all military records for everyone assigned to EDEN?” She asked.

THAT IS CORRECT COMMANDER, HOWEVER THE SECTIONS TO WHICH I AM REFERING ARE CODED AT LEVEL SEVEN CLEARANCE. AND HAVE BEEN SEALED BY ORDER OF USSOC

“Sealed?” Anja commented to herself. “Now that is interesting. The military doesn’t seal very many records. Very well, display all records that I am authorized to view.”

**_SEARCHING_
RECORDS FOUND. DISPLAYING**

Anja sipped her coffee as Martin’s military records began to appear on the small screen. There was an incredible amount of information and she skipped through much of it because it was standard military paperwork and therefore unnecessary to what she wanted to see. Her eyes grew more attentive when his records began displaying his decorations and awards, as well as quite a bit of information in regards to operations he had been involved with. She leaned forward and set her coffee down.

“Wait! Stop! What is this?” She asked, her finger touching the screen, “Operation Lily Dragon? I’ve never heard of that.”

**_SEARCHING_
OPERATION LILY DRAGON WAS CONDUCTED DURING THE LAST WEEK IN JUNE 2093. MOST OF THE RECORDS OF THE MISSION, TO INCLUDE OBJECTIVE AND RESULTS, ARE COMPARTMENTALIZED AT LEVEL NINE
THE RECORDS WERE SEALED BY VICE ADMIRAL WILLIAM WALLACE III, ACTING CHAIRMAN OF THE PAC/FORCES AT THE TIME**

“Are there any records of this operation? If PAC/FORCES were involved, it had to have taken place in the Western Pacific Theater. And that would have been at the height of the conflict with Japan.” Anja spoke.

NO RECORDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUR LEVEL OF CLEARANCE COMMANDER, I’M SORRY

“Now that is interesting.” Anja said to herself. She sat back in her chair, her mind racing through quite a few scenarios, and how she could complete what the Senator had asked of her.

As Anja sat in her quarters and tried to devise different means to her end, one of the objectives of Operation Lily Dragon was currently in the midst of a mind blowing orgasm induced by the man currently nestled between her thighs.

Yuri Tanaka was twenty-seven years old, of Japanese descent, and currently the center of attention of the lover she hadn’t seen in nearly a week. Her waist length black hair was splayed across the sheets of their bed, her skin slick with sweat. Her hands grasped the sheets tightly, nearly pulling them from the mattress. There were drops of sweat pooling between her firm 34C breasts, her brownish nipples erect and hard as pencil erasers. Her breathing came in short gasps as she came down from the intense orgasm her lover had just produced from her, his tongue now slowly tracing the sensitive lips of her drenched center. It was the third such orgasm he had given her in less than an hour, and the sheets were becoming soaked in her juices. She took deep breaths, trying to get her racing heart under control before her lover did what she desired him to do more than anything.

Yuri felt his weight shift on the bed and she lifted her firm tight ass off the mattress as much as she could to allow him the prize he sought. She felt his powerful hands grasp her hips and then the heated touch of his massive organ against the entrance to her womanhood. She opened her eyes and looked at his handsome face, her juices still clinging to his lips.

“Do it!” She gasped.

Yuri threw her head back and cried out in ecstasy as her lovers’ pulsing manhood slid into her already burning center of desire. Her hands left the sheets to grab tightly to his massive shoulders as he plunged into her depths until she felt him strike home, burying himself with a groan completely inside her. She wrapped her long tanned legs around the small of his back, locking her ankles behind him, and threw her arms around his neck, pulling him down for a passionate kiss that caused her toes to curl in. He had been away for six days, and the warmth and tightness of her womanhood clutched him tighter than he had expected. Yuri felt his muscles tense under her hands and she broke their kiss quickly, grabbing his face in her hands.

“Yes!” She gasped. “Yes!”

Her lover did not disappoint her and he groaned loudly in release. Yuri’s eyes rolled into the back of her head as she felt him grow impossible large inside her. She could feel his passion seethe the length of manhood and erupt in her depths. He groaned once... twice... three times... each blast of his passion causing another staggering orgasm to trigger inside her. It was unlike anything she had ever felt before in her young life the first time they had made love. Her lover buried his face in the shallow of her throat, his tongue dancing across her skin as he continued to fill her with his passion.

Yuri held him tightly, their passion mingling together coating their lower bodies, as her dark eyes stared off at the ceiling. His weight above her made her feel incredibly safe and wanted. She felt his hands slid underneath her ass and clutch her to him tightly as he tensed one last time. Her own tongue traced the side of his face and her fingers clutched his powerful back.

“You... you missed me... I take it?” She finally was able to stutter as she caresses his head.

Martin lifted his face from her delicious skin and met her bright brown eyes, a smile splitting his face. “What gave you that idea?” He asked.

Yuri kissed him deeply, tasting her juices on his lips and tongue and not caring for an instant. He returned her kiss with equal passion and hunger. He rolled over on the bed, pulling her with him, his manhood still buried deeply within her body. Yuri groaned softly into his mouth as his hands cupped her firm ass and held her in place on him. She lifted her face from his and tossed her sweat soaked hair to one side as she traced

his face with a finger tip. She could still feel his still rock hard manhood in her and she had a twinkle in her eye as she looked at him.

“We are not done are we?” She asked in a teasing voice.

Martin took her face in his large hands and kissed her deeply. “Not by a long shot.” He replied. “I missed you quite a bit.”

“Then...” Yuri groaned, feeling him flex his manhood inside her. She would be pleasantly sore in the morning, but she would trade that feeling for nothing in the world. “Then what are you waiting for?”

Yuri sat on the side of the bed nibbling a piece of fruit as she watched Martin dress. She wore one of his uniform shirts that fell nearly to her knees, the sleeves rolled up to her elbows. She had pulled her long hair into a tight pony tail and it fell across one shoulder. Yuri watched in silence, content to gaze upon the man who had saved her life. Martin had provided them a sanctuary at huge risk to himself, in a time when they would have been killed on sight. This man, who over the course of the last two years, she had fallen completely and totally in love with.

Yuri Tanaka was the product of the Japanese government’s attempt to create their own genome program. She stood only five foot four and a hundred and ten pounds dripping wet, but with the exception of Martin and one or two others on SEAL Team Twelve, she was perhaps the most lethal individual on EDEN. She had been trained from age five in the martial arts and some of the more arcane Japanese magical arts dating back four hundred years. Her skill ranked her on the same level as some of the most famous Japanese Ninjutsu Masters in history. She had completed dozens of very sensitive and dangerous missions for her government before they chose her to be the first to attempt to pass on the genome abilities during normal child bearing. She had been artificially inseminated with an embryo and began to carry the child. As any mother to be knows, she became very protective of her unborn child, and when the Japanese government decided to terminate her and the child after several violent genome outbreaks, she did what any mother would do.

Yuri ran.

She had been able to contact a friend in the United States embassy in Korea. The war between the US and Japan was winding down, and it had been costly for her country, but she knew the only place she could even remotely be safe was in the US. Martin and his SEAL team had been in Japan for four months wreaking havoc and spreading fear among the Japanese military even though they were being hunted by some of Japan’s finest. Martin and seven of his team were selected to extract her from Japan at all costs. The US government deemed her pregnancy a marvel and wanted to explore her at all costs. It was an even exchange in Yuri’s eyes if they got her safely out of her country.

And upon meeting Martin that first night in the pouring rain under a bridge in old Tokyo, Yuri had been smitten. It was a feeling she was not familiar with and it took her a few months to realize what exactly she was experiencing. It had not taken her long after that to request that Martin be assigned to her, and the US government was happy to comply. When he was assigned to EDEN, it was determined she and her two year old daughter would accompany him as well. Martin had been the first man to explore her body in the ways he did. He was by far the largest equipped she had ever had, the pleasant soreness between her thighs attesting to that, but what he made her feel with his size and his incredible tongue more than made up for any soreness she experienced. She wasn’t so sure that the soreness wasn’t from the intensity of her orgasms more than his size. They had been sleeping together for nearly two years, and she was more than adjusted to his exceptional size. In fact, his size was what made her feel his own orgasms so intensely, and caused hers to be more electrifying. Martin fit inside her like the finger of a tight glove, causing her to feel every pulse of his manhood inside her, thereby heightening her own passion.

“... Yuri?” Martin’s voice tore her from her sexual thoughts.

“Huh what,” She asked looking at him.

Martin knelt down in front of the bed. “Are you ok?” He asked.

Yuri smiled. “I’m fine.” she answered. “I’m just reflecting on what you make me feel when you make love to me.”

“I hope it’s good.” Martin said with a grin.

Yuri smiled and pulled him close with her arms while seductively sliding her legs up his sides. “Nothing could be more exquisite.” She told him. She kissed him softly.

Martin looked at her, marveling at the brightness of her eyes. “Yuri... I...”

She put a finger to his lips stopping his words. “No.” she said. “I know what you are going to attempt to say. You don’t need too. That I am the only woman that occupies your thoughts and your bed is more than enough for me. I love you enough for the both of us.”

Martin looked down, his hand tracing her thighs. “I wish... I wish...”

Yuri lifted his face even with hers again and kissed him deeply. “You need not try to explain Martin. I already know all that I need too. You say it every time you kiss me or hold me in your arms, and every time you make love to me. I am more than content with that. And in time... perhaps I can help show you what it is.”

Martin smiled. “I would like that.”

“I know.” Yuri told him with a smile. “Now go... you have your work to do. I understand Commander Peterson is among those assigned to EDEN now.”

Martin turned and looked at her. “How do you know that?”

Yuri smiled. “I have my sources.” She answered.

Martin nodded. “She came in last night with us.” He told her as he leaned over to lace up his boots.

“And how did that go?” She asked him.

“It went fine.” He said looking at her strangely. “Why do you ask?”

“You’re the one who told me what happen between the two of you.” Yuri said. “How she made you feel. Is there anything I need to worry about?”

Martin chuckled. “Nope. She’s is just as arrogant and pompous as you said she was when she interviewed you on earth.” Martin said.

“Good... I didn’t want to have to fight for your affections.” Yuri said.

Martin got up and leaned over kissing her softly. “You are taking Yuriko for her appointment with Walter right?”

Yuri nodded. “I’ll be back tomorrow evening. And then I expect to remain in bed for the entire weekend.” She spoke with a seductive grin.

Martin smiled “That should be fun. You’re sure you’ll be back here tomorrow evening right?”

Yuri nodded. “We’re taking the first transport back. It leaves right after her appointment at 1000 hours.”

Martin leaned forward and kissed her deeply once more. “I will see you then.” He turned and headed out of their bedroom before Yuri could see the strange look in his eyes when his thoughts turned to Anja.

Yuri watched him leave their bedroom, and Martin didn’t see Yuri’s eyes change from their dark color to cobalt blue when she blinked. They remained that way for several seconds before she blinked again and it was gone.

The Command Center for EDEN was a huge circular room with dozens of stations monitoring everything from the air temperature inside the station, to the activities of the RAPTORS on the pads, and the techs moving around them. In the center of the room was a massive holo projection of Earth and the moon’s orbit around earth. There were techs at all the stations with junior officers walking among the staff with data pads in their hands.

To one side of the command center was another large room with a granite table forged from an enormous boulder on the moon. The room could be seen from the command center but there was a massive sound proof glass partition between the two rooms. The high backed chairs surrounding the table were currently filled with most of the senior officers of EDEN in the morning briefing with Admiral Wallace. On the table were coffee and tea mugs and an assortment of breakfast Danish.

“...seems to be settling in fine.” Colonel Wilson reported. He was EDEN’s Executive Officer, and an ex-army Delta Commander. He was a no nonsense type officer who looked after the men and women under his command. He had been in command of two missions in which SEAL Team 12 had taken part, and he was a firm supporter of Martin and his team. “Everyone has their quarters and I haven’t received any complaints as of yet.”

There was some soft chuckling around the table. Everyone knew that Frank Wilson hated being contacted for minor problems in regards to living quarters when the people could just walk to the entertainment cluster and purchase nearly anything to fix it.

Admiral Wallace shared the chuckle and lowered his coffee mug back to the table. He turned his eyes to where Anja sat quietly, hoping to slip out of this first staff meeting without having to say anything. Anja had been to her new lab before coming to this meeting and found it to be even more advanced than her lab on earth. Anything she could have imagined or dreamed for was in this lab. She had her own staff of five men and women, and they were in the process of getting everything up and running. Anja was unaccustomed to the casual atmosphere of the EDEN senior staff. While working with the NIS or Senator Graham's staff the meetings were always so formal and stiff necked. No one spoke out of turn, or without permission, for fear of being chastised.

"Commander Peterson?" Admiral Wallace spoke directly to her.

Anja looked at him, "Sir?"

"What do you think of your facilities here on EDEN? Do they meet the requirements for what you need to accomplish?" Wallace asked.

Anja nodded, "Very... very much sir." Anja replied quickly. "I was surprised actually. I didn't think EDEN was set up with a gene research station."

"Most of what we do is experimental Commander Peterson." Wallace replied. "We have every lab you could possibly think of somewhere here on EDEN. We like to keep our options open. Have you met your staff?"

"Yes sir. They seem very capable. However, I would like to have another officer assigned to assist me." Anja said.

"What's wrong with Petty Officer Thurman?" Martin asked, looking at her. He kept the question very neutral and without any hint of emotion.

"He's a Petty officer." Anja replied tartly looking at him as if answering a stupid question from a child.

Half a dozen pairs of eyes turned to where Martin sat to gauge his reaction; a reaction that did not come, to their surprise. Martin was not known for accepting arrogance in any way shape or form. "Petty Officer Thurman finished tops in his gene research class, out of three hundred and fifty-seven students. He has a Masters in Gene Therapy, and five years of hands on experience. He also knows all the members of my team by name, which makes him ideal to assist in your research. What else exactly do you require?"

Anja blinked quickly. She hadn't thought to read the files on her staff, and Martin had just made her look like a fool because of it. "I... I wasn't aware of his qualifications." Anja finally spoke.

"Christ... neither was I skipper! And I play poker with him." The handsome young black man next to Martin blurted.

The comment had the desired effect and even Martin broke into a grin at his XO's words. He looked at Dan Simpson, the XO of SEAL Team Twelve and perhaps Martin's closest friend, and shook his head. "That's why you wanted me to dock his pay?" He spoke.

That brought another round of chuckles from the gathered men and women, and everyone could see Anja relax slightly. Thirty-three year old Dan Simpson leaned forward at the table and looked at Anja. He had a smooth face, with bright brown eyes, and caramel colored skin. His head was entirely bald, the bright lighting in the conference room reflecting off his skin. Anja could also see the muscular form under the fatigues he wore.

"I can vouch for him Commander Peterson." Dan said with a friendly smile. "He's got his all his wires and gadgets straight."

And Anja promptly proceeded to stick her foot in her mouth and make a bad impression to everyone in the room. "I would prefer an officer Admiral." She spoke, looking at Admiral Wallace. "While I appreciate the Petty Officer's experience, I prefer someone I am familiar with. And someone who is not biased towards SEAL Team 12 in any way."

Martin looked at Admiral Wallace, and the only outward appearance he gave was a calm demeanor. However Martin had known him long enough to recognize the slight darkening of the eyes.

"Will everyone excuse the Commander and I?" Bill spoke softly. "Please submit your daily reports via data mail."

Bill sipped his coffee as the other officers in the room got to their feet and gathered their files. Martin and Frank were the last ones in the line for the door and Admiral Wallace waved to them. "Frank would you and Marty remain please."

Martin and Frank stopped and let the door close in front of them. They moved back to the table and took seats. Anja looked at them and then turned to Bill.

"Commander Peterson... perhaps it's me, and I can be a cranky bastard at times, but I get the sense from you that you do not want to be here." Bill said.

"Admiral... I'm here to do a job, nothing else." Anja replied.

"And your job would be what Commander?" Bill asked, rising to his feet and walking to the counter on the far wall to pour himself more coffee.

"Excuse me sir?"

"Tell me what your job is, please."

"Sir, you know why I am here." Anja stated slowly. "I have been tasked with examining all members of SEAL Team Twelve to ascertain if they are fit for duty."

Wallace returned to his seat and looked at her. "And what exactly would you say is your definition of fit for duty?"

"I don't understand the question sir?" Anja looked confused, not seeing the bomb that was heading for her head.

"Let me re-phrase that." Wallace said. "What exactly is Senator Graham's definition of fit for duty? The definition you have been instructed to examine for."

"Admiral... I am not at liberty to say what my instructions from Senator Graham are." Anja said.

William Wallace smiled and looked at her. "Yes. I can imagine what your instructions are Commander Peterson."

"Admiral... what does this have to do with my directive?" Anja asked.

"I spoke with Admiral Prescott at NIS before you were assigned to EDEN Commander. Would you like to know what her assessment of you is?" Wallace asked.

"I'm... I'm not sure what relevance that has on the current situation sir." Anja replied cautiously.

"Admiral Prescott told me you were a fine officer." Wallace spoke ignoring her. "That you were extremely intelligent and very knowledgeable in your field. She said you were a competent field agent with two or three high profile assignments under your belt that you completed satisfactorily. She also told me you were a snotty little pompous bitch who would use whatever means she could to advance her career, including flaunting your obvious physical charms. She also said that you would steam roll anyone in the way of you completing an assignment." Wallace sipped his coffee and set the mug down before looking at Anja. "Not exactly a glowing recommendation from a former commander is it?"

"Admiral... Admiral Prescott and I did not... we did not see things in the same way. The mission, in my opinion took priority over everything." Anja tried to explain.

"So regardless of orders to the contrary from Admiral Prescott, you followed directives coming from a civilian office? Senator Graham's office if I'm not mistaken." Bill asked. "Some would say that your priorities are confused Commander. One of your decisions cost the lives of seven foreign nationals working with the US military. Those seven men and women had families."

"I was following orders Admiral." Anja spoke.

Bill nodded. "You were following orders from an individual outside the mission chain of command Commander. The only thing that saved you from court martial was Senator Graham's intervention."

"Yes sir, that is correct."

"And you went to work for his office right after that as his personal head hunter." Bill said.

"I was assigned to Senator Graham's office at his request sir. And none of this has anything to do with my mission here Admiral." Anja spoke. She didn't see Frank look at Martin out of the corner of his eye and shake his head.

"Senator Graham's request you say? Let me give you a little information on Senator Graham. The last two members of the military that were assigned to him in your capacity are now serving in Somalia as Embassy security." Wallace told her. He slid the data pad across the table to her. "I did a little checking of my own before allowing that political hack and his addict son on my base. Then I had a vid/con with the President. He and I are

old war buddies in case you didn't know. Seems he's not real happy with Senator Graham for starting this witch hunt to begin with. See... I have a little problem with Senator Graham starting an investigation on a unit under my command without letting me know, and moving a Sweeper Team to Eden without my permission kind of sticks in my ass too. Especially when the unit he wants investigated has nine of the thirteen most decorated men and women in the armed forces serving in it; especially when the commander of that unit has fought in places that would make your dear Senator Graham and yourself puke if you or he ever breathed the air." Wallace got to his feet and moved closer to Anja, sliding one of the chairs out of the way so that he could perch on the edge of the table.

"A... a Sweeper team," Anja said looking at him. "I am not aware of any Sweeper Team being on EDEN."

"They transported up among the techs with your group." Martin spoke now. "The Master Chief can smell those bastards a mile away. It's no coincidence they came up on the same transports as you and Senator Graham."

"I have no idea what you are talking about!" Anja snapped.

"A word of advice Commander Peterson..." Bill continued from his new spot on the table. "Your little witch hunt here will not turn up what Senator Graham hopes it will. He has you chasing ghosts. But that's ok, cause when his little six week stay here is all done... he will go back to earth and be a thorn in someone else's side. You on the other hand... well your ass belongs to me for the duration of your one year tour up here on EDEN."

Anja's eyes went wide, "A year? Admiral... there must be some mistake; I am slotted to return with Senator Graham in six weeks. I am scheduled to attend the War College in two months!"

Wallace shook his head. "Not any more. I pulled some strings and got you assigned for the full year. I suggest you change your holier than thou attitude, or you will find it to be a lonely one year."

Wallace stood up and smiled at her. "You're dismissed Commander." He turned his back on her as she slowly got to her feet. She was in a daze at what she had just heard. She needed to speak with the Senator as soon as possible.

Martin and Frank watched as she darted quickly from the command center. Martin turned to Bill. "Admiral... you realize she'll go straight to Graham and start complaining. He's going to come after you then."

Bill nodded and smiled. "I'm counting on it. She has the makings of a good officer Marty... she just has lost her way. You might not see that, but that is what my gut is telling me. I need you and Frank to help me bring her back into the real world."

Martin nodded. "I'll do what I can sir, but I got a feeling I just made the top of her shit list."

"Better you than me Marty!" Frank said barely able to contain his laughter.

"Good. Between the three of us, we'll make her an ideal officer yet."

Martin chuckled. "That's if she doesn't shoot us first."

Frank couldn't contain himself any longer and broke out into a fit of laughter. Martin and Bill joined in shortly after.

Martin was right, and Anja marched right into the Senator's quarters and saw Kevin eating breakfast with his father. Richard Graham wore a silk robe over satin pajamas and was almost daintily sipping his coffee.

"Good morning Anja." He spoke from the couch without getting to his feet. Kevin looked at her and grunted with a mouthful of English muffin. "What can I do for you?"

"I just came out of the morning brief with Admiral Wallace!" Anja spat. "Did you know he pulled some strings and got me assigned up here for a full year? Did you know that?"

Richard looked at her. "I just became aware of it this morning." He lied.

"I can't stay up here for a year!" Anja spat. "I do not fit in with the people up here. You told me you could get me into the War College Richard."

"Anja... you need to calm down." Graham spoke. "I am already working on it. What else did you learn at this meaning?"

"He has staff meetings every morning. Nothing of great importance, just reports from the department heads." Anja replied. "He's also aware of the Sweeper Team that you brought up."

Richard looked at her. "Excuse me?"

"Don't insult my intelligence Richard." She spoke. "Did you actually think you could get a Sweeper Team onto EDEN without them knowing about it?"

Richard looked at Kevin. "Kevin... there are some data pads in the office. Would you retrieve them for me?"

Kevin Graham nodded like the robot he was and stood to conduct his father's bidding. Richard got to his feet and moved closer to Anja. "You need to remain calm." He told her in a low voice. "The Sweeper team is insurance."

"Insurance for what," Anja asked. "I'm tired of playing games with you Richard. When you brought me into your office you said you could help my career. So far... all I've gotten is slobbered on by Kevin and fucked by you whenever you want. When do I get something?"

"Anja... as soon as this genome issue is settled... you'll get everything you want. I promise." Richard said, reaching up to stroke her cheek.

Anja stared into his eyes and knew she was being played... but she was in too deep now. "I'll do what you want." She told him. "But as of this moment the sex store is closed until I get something in return. Is that clear?"

"Anja... you..."

"I'm dead serious Richard." She snapped. She held up the data pad. "This is what I have so far from EDEN's computer database. What you do with it is not my concern. I'm going to my lab... because you can be damn sure they'll be watching me."

Anja spun around and marched out of the quarters. She began walking towards the tram train and took the data pad Admiral Wallace had given her from her coat pocket. She wasn't going to read any of the information on it, but after seeing Richard and not believing a word he said, it was time to start looking out for her own interests. She didn't see Richard watching her as she walked, or Kevin come up behind his father.

Richard Graham looked at his son. "We may have a problem developing." He stated simply.

WALTER REED MEDICAL CENTER EARTH

Yuri looked at the doctor wide eyed in disbelief.

"Pregnant?" she gasped. "There... there must be some mistake. I... I can not... Martin can not possibly get me pregnant."

The older doctor smiled in genuine warmth and nodded his head. Walter Carson was the head of the US Genome Program, and had been working closely with Yuri since her defection to the states. He had grown to think of her as one of his children, as he thought of all the genomes that had been created with his technology. He knew Yuri was in love with Martin, and he had been the one to help her realize what she was feeling, as well as encourage her to pursue Martin if that was what she wanted. He knew they had been sleeping together for almost two years, and now... what was not suppose to happen... had indeed happen. Yuri had become pregnant without the assistance of any artificial means. And while it was a joyous moment for him, he knew that perhaps others would not be so comfortable with the idea of genomes being able to breed.

Walter nodded and took her hand. "Almost six weeks." He told her.

"Walter... how is that possible? I thought... I thought we were unable to have children without artificial insemination." Yuri said.

"It's possible... because you are evolving Yuri." He replied. "All life finds a way sooner or later. It appears Martin's DNA has mutated along with yours and made child bearing possible."

"I'm... I'm going to have his child?" She said softly, her hand going to her stomach.

"I thought you would be happy." Walter spoke, seeing her concerned look.

Yuri looked at him. "Happy? Walter... yes... of course I'm happy." She said. "What... what do I tell Martin?"

"He is still trying to grasp the concept of love?" Walter said, pulling up the roller chair.

Yuri looked at him. "How did you know that?"

Walter smiled. "While I consider all the genomes in our program my children in a way, I've only been really close to three; Martin, Dan and Julie. They just related to me more than the others, perhaps because they were the first. They still come to me for advice occasionally. I know them pretty well. I've talked to Martin about his feelings for you Yuri."

"Wait... maybe we shouldn't be talking about this." Yuri said.

Walter smiled. "I won't reveal anything personal, don't worry. I will say this however. He may have trouble expressing what he feels Yuri, but do not question for a second that you are the center of his life right now, you and Yuriko."

Yuri couldn't help but force a smile at Walter's words. His statement made her shudder inwardly with fear. "Thank you."

Walter smiled and got to his feet. "Come with me." He said.

Yuri stepped nimbly from the table and followed the older man down the well lit corridor to a private office. He entered in a code and the door slid open, Walter proceeding into the room. Yuri followed and for the first time since she had known him she saw a different part of the doctor who had been so kind to her.

The office was very neat and large, with comfortable furniture and a view of Washington outside the large window. Yuri also took in the numerous pictures of elves dotting the walls, as well as several sculptures on the tables and his desk. The oil paintings all depicted scantily clad elves of every description, and they looked quite expensive. Walter turned and saw her admiring one of the paintings and he smiled.

"I have a healthy imagination and an interest in elves. I have since I was a boy. They fascinate me." Walter said.

Yuri smiled. "So I see. What is this one depicting?"

Walter stepped up next to her his eyes on the painting. "Elves were considered the noblest race of beings in legend and myth. This painting is of the High Elf Queen sparing the life of a Wood elf." The painting showed an exquisitely beautiful dark skinned elf holding her sword at the throat of the equally handsome male elf.

"According to legend, several years after this painting, the Queen married this surface elf you see and the races were finally reunited after three thousand years."

"Elves were immortal?" Yuri asked.

Walter nodded. "They could still be killed in any manner of ways, but their life spans were endless. You and Martin and the remaining genomes are the closest thing to them in history."

Yuri looked at him. "How do you mean?"

"Elves... especially the High elves... were said to be warriors unequalled. Aside from their exceptional beauty they followed a strict code of honor. They had a caste type system of ruling, in which a Matriarch Mother ruled the clans until she died. While you and the others are not immortal, all of you could easily live to be several hundred years old." Walter told her.

Yuri looked at him surprise in her eyes. "You are joking!" She gasped.

Walter shook his head and turned to go back to his desk. "Not in the least. All of the original genomes were engineered with age slowing bio-agents, along with their animal DNA. They are in your blood system as well. For all practical purposes, you and the other genomes could live several hundred years as I said. I even had a symbol in the elfin language tattooed on the back of Martin's shoulder since he was the first."

Yuri nodded. "I've noticed that. I asked him about it once. He said it was a tattoo that he had gotten, along with the others." She answered.

Walter nodded with a smile. "That is how he explains it to spare me any adverse reaction here if they find out I tattooed government property." He settled into the high backed chair behind the desk. "Mind you I wasn't happy when he went out and had all those flame tattoos added to his body."

Yuri grinned. "I find them rather sexy." She said. "And they fit his personality." She settled into the chair across from his desk. "Walter... is the animal DNA that Martin and the others were given the reason they did not come apart in the same way as the other genomes?"

Walter took a deep breath. "I believe it is the largest factor, yes."

"I asked him about it once and he would not go into great detail." Yuri said.

Walter nodded. "They were the only batch to receive animal DNA. I did not foresee their ability to change as they are able, but I believe that is the reason they were not affected by the same DNA breakdown as

the other genome units. I believe it's also the reason they have survived this long and taken only light losses on their missions."

Yuri nodded. "He has told me a few stories of how they had to change in order to survive. I don't doubt that."

"I was going to try and base the later batches on the elves you see in the paintings and statues, but the government pulled the project before I could begin tests." Walter said.

"You were going to try and make elves?" Yuri asked with a smile.

Walter grinned and nodded. "They would be perfect." He said. "All of them would be beautiful, and almost irresistible to human males and females. Martin and his team are unique. They are not completely human, yet they are not completely genome anymore either. They have evolved over the years, and that is why I believe you have become pregnant. The Air Force unit that guarded you when you first arrived and that guard you when you come to earth; their unit is the only other genome unit not to be affected by whatever destroyed the others."

"I don't care how it has happen." Yuri spoke stiffly. "That I will have his child is what is important to me."

"We need to keep your pregnancy quiet Yuri." Walter said his face and voice becoming serious now. "I'm quite sure that there are people not yet ready to accept the fact that genomes can breed. I've already adjusted my files to reflect your pregnancy. It states that you were artificially inseminated with this child. No one can know the truth. Not right now."

Yuri nodded. "I understand."

Walter smiled and took her hand. "Yuriko should be done with her tests. Why don't we walk down there and get her so you can catch your transport back to EDEN."

Anja capped the test tube of blood and looked at SEAL Team 12 Petty Officer who sat on the table with no shirt. She had spent the better part of the morning drawing blood from the team members for studying, and doing quick but thorough exams. All of them bore the scars of countless battles over the years and these she noted and compared to their files, which were quite extensive to begin with.

"You're all done." She spoke to him. "Thank you."

Anja turned to make some notations on a data pad as the Petty Officer got up and put his shirt on as he walked away. She turned back around to conduct her next exam and came up short when she saw the sweat coated upper body of Martin's second in command, Daniel Simpson. She recognized him from this morning at the meeting.

"Sorry... I just came from the gym." Dan Simpson spoke as he settled onto the table.

Anja looked at him, her eyes narrowing. "You couldn't shower first." She spoke with some hostility.

"I was under the impression you wanted to do this quickly Commander." Dan replied in the same tone. "I wasn't going to interrupt my normal routine by waiting in line. I'm here now."

Anja shook her head, "Fine. Please stand up."

Dan stood in front of her and she realized her was considerably taller than her, at least the same height as Martin if not a couple inches more. His upper body was coated in sweat, the bright light in the lab reflecting off his caramel colored skin. Anja couldn't help but notice the extremely sculpted muscles of his abdomen and chest. All of the genomes in Martin's team were in superb physical condition, yet some of them, to include Martin, were exceptionally well defined. Anja took note of the many scars on his chest, and one particularly nasty scar along his lower abdomen. As her hands touched his skin to get him to move his arms or turn around, Anja felt her skin becoming flush and warm while the medic assisting her finished taking his blood sample and turned to the small table.

"How... how did you get this?" She asked, tracing the scar on his lower abdomen. "It doesn't seem to resemble any sort of knife or shrapnel wound."

Dan chuckled a little bit. "It's from the busted end of a steel pipe." He replied. "I got careless with a group of prisoners during a mission into Basra. We were supporting the Iraqi forces in a snatch and grab op. One of the prisoners happened to bust off a piece of plumbing and thought he'd use it to bash my head in."

“I’m glad... glad to see he didn’t succeed.” Anja said. She looked into Dan’s light brown eyes and saw a twinkle in them.

“So was I.” Dan answered. “Are you feeling ok?” He asked, noticing the flushness in her cheeks.

Anja nodded. “Yes... it just... it suddenly got warm in here.”

“That’s my fault. Sorry.”

Anja looked at him. “What do you mean?”

“Genome body temperatures tend to run higher than normal humans.” Dan told her. “I thought you knew that.”

“Yes! Yes... of course I knew that.” Anja turned quickly so he could not see her cheeks grow even more flushed. A vision of Dan’s sweaty body on top of hers flashed in her mind and she felt herself grow moist at her center.

“Doc... you sure you’re ok?” Dan asked again, concern in his voice.

Anja nodded quickly. “Yes. Yes... I’m fine. I need to go.” She said before setting the data pad down and leaving her lab.

“Is she ok?” The female voice asked.

Dan turned and looked at the stunning, short haired woman come up to him. Her skin was a little darker than his, like a deep rich caramel, her hair shoulder length. Her fatigues did little to hide her very curvy figure. She stepped up to Dan, her hand going around his waist, her chin resting on his shoulder.

“I guess so.” Dan told Petty Officer Julie Collins.

“You like her don’t you?” Julie asked her fingers stroking his shoulder.

“I don’t think she’s as bad as Marty makes her out to be.”

Julie smiled. “She seems like she is holding an awful lot of pent up emotions in?” Julie said gripping his arm. She and Dan had been an item for a number of years now, and they cared deeply for each other, but both knew that something was missing from their lives.

“I think she is in way over her head and is treading water pretty hard to keep her head above the surface.” Dan spoke thoughtfully. “The Senator and his druggie son have twisted her head pretty good.”

“Shame really.” Julie said. “She is irresistible to look at.”

Dan nodded slowly and looked at her. “You’re attracted to her too aren’t you?” He said.

Julie looked at him. “Who wouldn’t be? She’s gorgeous.” She told him with a smile. “I saw my little pet twitch when she touched you.”

Dan grinned as he draped the towel over his shoulder. “Ah well. You still have me.”

Julie smiled and nibbled his shoulder. “Yes... and that makes me very happy too.”

Admiral Wallace looked up from his desk as Senator Graham marched into his office without permission or welcome. He was turned out in an impeccable suit and tie, as was Kevin, who followed closely behind him. Richard came to a halt in front of the Admiral’s desk, as if waiting for him to offer him a chair. Wallace leaned back in his chair and smiled.

“Good morning Senator. To what do I owe this visit?”

Graham settled into the chair without being asked as if he owned the place. He smoothed out his pants and looked at William. “I believe we need to have a talk Admiral.” He said.

“Regarding what Senator?”

“I am on a fact finding mission Admiral. You are aware of the reasons for this visit, and also why Commander Peterson is here. I have the authorization from the Senate Armed Services Committee; and the Joint Chiefs. I’m confused as to why you are putting up barriers to everything I have requested.” Graham spoke.

“And what barriers are those Senator?” Wallace asked.

“The access to areas of EDEN granted to my son and I to begin with. The issues with Commander Peterson not getting the corporation she has requested. I could go on if need be.” Richard explained. “I only need to make a vid call Admiral... and I will get everything I want.”

Wallace chuckled. He reached across his desk and turned the flat screen monitor to face Graham. “Please Senator, by all means do so.”

“Admiral... we were promised your complete cooperation in this matter!” Graham spoke more firmly. “Do I need to call your superior officer?”

“As I said Senator... please do. You’ll have to route your call through White House Signals though. My direct superior is the President of the United States. I don’t believe he has anything on his schedule today.” William told Graham with barely a concealed grin. He got up from his desk and moved to the counter. “Can I get you some coffee?”

“I don’t drink coffee.” Graham retorted.

“Sorry... that is all I have to offer you.” William said. He poured himself a mug and then returned to this chair. “Allow me to give you some information Senator. EDEN is my base. The President selected me... I answer to him directly. Not to the Armed Services Committee and most definitely not to you. In regards to the Security Access granted to you and your son... well that was the decision of my Security Chief... which I fully endorsed. Your son has a criminal background Senator, whether you want to admit it or not. He will not be allowed access to any secure areas of this base for any reason. Period! Your clearance allows you access to most of the areas on EDEN... with an escort of course. If you are upset because you are not free to roam this base as you do the Senate Office Building... well I’m not losing any sleep over that. As for Commander Peterson... she will receive everything she asks for within reason, and I believe her exams have already begun on Team Twelve. She will not be granted access to areas that are not within her realm of influence. And since she is an active member of the US Navy, the *US Navy* decided to have her fulfill her commitment to the Navy actually doing something for which she was trained. Not working in your office as one of your personal hatchet agents. If you have a beef with that... I suggest you take it up with MILPERSEN. Now... if I’m not mistaken... your tour of the medical and training facilities is starting in twenty minutes. I wouldn’t want to hold you up.”

Graham came to his feet, his back ram rod straight. “This is not over Admiral Wallace.”

William looked at him. “Yes... I’m afraid it is Senator.”

Graham spun around and stormed out of the office, Kevin dragging along behind him like a dog. William shook his head as he lifted his coffee mug to his lips.

“I fucking hate politicians!” William muttered.

Anja walked through the corridors of SEAL Team Twelve quickly. Everyone she saw was doing something, whether it be working out, working on their weapons, a computer or relaxing in the spacious lounge. Not all of the Team members were present she knew, as there was a squad at the firing range. Some heads turned to watch her as she walked though the area heading for Martin’s office, but most just acted indifferent to her. She entered the office area and saw the door to Martin’s office and strode toward it. Ever since her examine of Commander Simpson this morning, she had felt warm and agitated. It was a sexual rush through her skin and it scared her quite a bit, but it also excited her intensely.

Anja could hear Martin talking as she got closer to the door and she slowed down to try and pick up who he might be talking to and what he might be talking about. She stopped just outside his door and saw him speaking to the incredibly attractive oriental female on his screen.

“They are not letting us depart Martin.” Yuri’s face was on the screen. “They are concerned we won’t make it back before the leading edges of that comet come into range. They want to wait until it passes before we return.”

“I know. I just got done talking with Tony, and he informed me. I was hoping we could be together tonight.” Martin answered her.

Anja saw the Japanese woman smile on the screen. “When I get back... we’ll stay in bed for an entire day to make up for it.”

“I’ll hold you to that.” Martin said.

Yuri chuckled. “That’s not something you could keep me from even if you tried.” Her face changed slightly. “Go secure Martin. Use our personal channel.”

Martin reached out and manipulated his console quickly. The screen fluttered then refocused on Yuri. “What’s wrong?” He asked.

“Walter gave me some news this morning.” Yuri said.

Martin immediately sat up in his chair. “Are you sick? Is something wrong with Yuriko?”

Yuri smiled brightly. “No nothing like that. It’s...” The screen went fuzzy and then refocused on Yuri’s face. Anja could see the look of confusion on her face and she watched as Martin tried to adjust the screen.

“It has to be the comet’s interference Yuri.” Martin said. “I’m losing you.”

“I’ll... tomorrow... I... you.” With that the transmission ended.

Martin slapped the screen in frustration and flipped a switch. “COM Officer?”

“COM Officer here Commander, go ahead.”

“My signal just fuzzed out on me in mid transmission.” Martin spoke.

“I know sir. It happened all over the station. Interference from the comet is disrupting all communications. Admiral Wallace has ordered all available power to be directed to one beam so we can maintain communication with EDEN control for as long as possible. I’m sorry sir.”

Martin sighed, “Very well. Let me know when station wide Coms is back.”

“Aye sir.”

Martin turned in his chair and looked back to the set of datapads on his desk. He picked one up as Anja composed herself and entered the office. “Do you normally eavesdrop on private conversations?” He asked not looking up from the data pad.

“Excuse me?” Anja asked.

Martin looked up at her and sat back in his chair. “Anja I smelled you coming down the corridor. Enhanced senses remember?”

Anja’s face turned crimson under the tan and she squeezed her hands together. “Why didn’t you say something?” She demanded.

“Last time I checked this was my office.” Martin replied. “And contrary to what you and the good senator believe, I have nothing to hide.” Martin got up and moved around to pull the chair out. “Have a seat.”

Anja sighed and moved to the chair, settling into it as Martin returned to his chair. She watched him sit down, the feeling of warmth and sexual desire returning to her even stronger than this morning in the Medical Center with Lieutenant Commander Simpson. “May I ask who... who that was?”

Martin looked at her. “Her name is Yuri Tanaka. She’s Japanese and a member of EDEN’s crew. She works in the Physics lab.”

“You... you seem to be much closer than just normal co-workers.” Anja inquired.

Martin sat back in his chair. “And why exactly would that interest you Anja?” He asked. “Are you jealous?”

Anja’s brow furrowed, “Certainly not!” She exclaimed.

“Then there is no need for you to know more.” Martin spoke. “What can I do for you?”

“I don’t want to be enemies Martin.” Anja said softly, the tone of her voice saying much more.

“Neither do I Anja, but your mission here does not equate to us being friends.” He told her.

“How do we change that?” Anja asked.

“Unfortunately I don’t think we can.” He replied honestly. “You... you have moved on with your life and in many ways so have I.”

“I never meant to hurt you Martin.” She said meeting his dark eyes and feeling a surge of desire for him sweep through her, as strong as it ever was on that night.

Martin nodded slowly. “I came to realize that after a year or so.” He told her, wanting to say so much more. “I don’t harbor any bad feelings towards you Anja, but right now we are on two different teams it seems. And neither of us likes to lose.”

“Did you recommend to Admiral Wallace that I get stationed here for an entire year?” She asked him.

Martin shook his head quickly. “No. I had nothing to do with that. That was entirely the Admiral’s doing. And that is the truth.”

Anja stared at him for a long moment before nodding her head. “Fair enough, I believe you.” She got to her feet. “You have not made an appointment for your physical, and I have a slot open right after lunch. I expect to see you there Commander. 1330 hours sharp!”

Martin nodded, “Fair enough.”

Martin watched as Anja turned, and he had to admire how she filled out her uniform and how her ass swayed when she walked. He remembered vividly every detail of her body, and how she felt in his arms. Martin shook his head silently and thought of how he felt about Yuri. There was no doubt that she meant a great deal to

him, and she was a hellion in their bed, but did he love her? Yuriko had taken to calling him daddy, and though he didn't know how he felt about that, he allowed her to do so and even conducted himself in that manner at times.

Did he love them? That was a question he was unable to answer.

Anja pulled away from the microscope in her lab and realized it was getting late. She hadn't seen a patient in over three hours, and all of her staff had already gone for the day while she reviewed the results of the blood work. She had unbuttoned her uniform shirt due to the heat in the lab and looked around for the temperature controls. She slid off the stool and walked over to the console and her eyes widened slightly when the display told her the temperature in the clinic was a cool 72 degrees. Why was she burning up then? She had tried to suppress the fever building in her all day, even dismiss it, but she could feel her blood pulsing in her veins, and her skin was moist to the touch, not to mention that she was very damp between her thighs, and she could hardly withstand the urge to go back to her quarters and fuck Kevin's brains out. The only thing stopping her is that she hated him, and she didn't know what was happening to her. It had started almost immediately after being in the same room with Lieutenant Commander Simpson late this morning. She remembered the flashback of the vision she had this morning, his hard body wrapped around her and pounding his huge manhood into pussy. The vision had happened twice more during the day, but each time after that it was Martin pounding her silly not Daniel.

Anja went to the collection of blood samples taken from the Team members and quickly pulled the results of the tests she had for Dan Simpson. She had chosen a selective battery of tests to be run on the blood samples, all of which her staff had completed very efficiently. As her eyes swept down the results she could detect nothing out of the ordinary at first glance, and that led her to only one conclusion. Anja snatched the data pad from her desk and stormed from her office.

Dan answered the door chime to his quarters while trying to read the datapad in his hand. He didn't even look up as he opened the door and he never saw the open palmed slap that connected with his unprotected and unprepared cheek.

"You sonofabitch," The feminine voice yelled as he staggered back more from the surprise than the force of the blow. His dark eyes grew darker and he ground his teeth in anger as he turned to look at who had just hit him. His eyes grew wide.

"Commander Peterson!" He said with a stunned look.

"What did you drug me with you bastard!" Anja snapped.

"What? What the hell are you talking about?" Dan spoke befuddled.

"Don't take me for a fool!" Anja barked; her green eyes narrowed and alive with anger. She had stepped into the room now and the door closed behind her. "You drugged me with something and I want to know what it is!"

"What in the hell are you talking about woman?" Dan gasped for the second time. "What do you mean drugged you?"

Anja came up short at that and stared at him. "You... you didn't put something in your sweat?"

Dan looked at her shocked. "Why the hell would I put a drug in my sweat?"

"There are... there are drugs that are extremely powerful aphrodisiacs." Anja told him, moving her hand across her forehead. "They..."

Dan looked at her. "Are you ok Doc?" He asked.

Anja took notice for the first time of the way he was dressed. He was shirtless as he was earlier today, with nothing on but a pair of loose boxer shorts. Her eyes took in the finely toned arms and shoulders and the abdomen that rippled with muscles. Her eyes also took in the outline of what had to be an extremely large cock, and she felt herself become even wetter between her thighs. Her abdomen tightened as she felt a rush of sexual energy wash over her. She could see his face, and the sweat that was beginning to spread across his ebony skin. She blinked several times, feeling the sensation of desire become even more powerful. Dan stepped up to her

slowly a small smile on his face. She backed up slowly as he advanced towards her, a lustful look on his face now.

“What are... what are you doing?” She stammered.

Dan reached up and touched her face gently, Anja’s eyes closing briefly as sensations of lustful desire washed over her. “I... I didn’t know.” Dan said softly, his dark eyes clouded over with the own lust that had suddenly surged through his body.

“What’s happening?” Anja asked as he stepped even closer to her, towering over her by a good eight inches. He was so close now she could smell him and the musky aroma of his body. It smelled faintly of caramel.

Anja felt him lift her into his arms as if she weighed nothing at all, and push her back against the wall, her face even with his. She could see the sweat on his face now, the desire for her in his eyes. And it was matched only by her desire for him. Anja surrendered completely to what she was feeling and dropped the pad she was holding to crush her lips against his. She wrapped her long muscular legs around his waist as her tongue sought out and found his. She kissed him forcefully, wanting to take what he offered her, and for a few moments she succeeded. Then Dan exerted himself and he deepened the kiss, his tongue driving further into her mouth, dominating her. His eyes opened wide when he realized Anja’s tongue was very long, and somewhere in his sexually charged mind he estimated the length of her delicious tongue at almost four inches. Anja groaned deeply in need into his mouth as her body came alive with feelings she had never experienced. She felt Dan reach for her white uniform blouse and rip it away easily, exposing her large breasts to his searching hands. She moaned as his ebony hands mauled her 36D tits, pinching her nipples until she was practically screaming into his mouth. She gasped when he broke the kiss and his lips descended to her right tit and took a good portion of her flesh into his mouth. Her head went back when he sucked hard on her nipple, his teeth grazing the sensitive bud and pulling on it. She could feel his hands pulling at her skirt, and she just held onto his broad shoulders as he ripped that away as well, leaving only her thin white thong panties.

Anja yelped in surprise when he dropped quickly to his knees while holding her against the wall. He draped her legs over his shoulders and took in the site of what he wanted. The front of her thong was damp with her juices, and Dan inhaled of her scent. He could see the outline of her incredibly excited pussy behind the fabric. The small triangle of red hair above her aroused and exposed clit only served to excite him more and he reached up, pulling the thong away in one yank, hearing her gasp in surprise and clutch his bald head.

Dan stared at the prize before him and decided that it had to be just as beautiful a pussy as Julie’s was. And the soft red hair above her engorged clit only made it all the better. Dan leaned his head forward, the tip of his nose brushing the outer lips of her soaked pussy causing Anja to nearly jump out of his arms. Her breathing was coming in short gasps, and she held his head with a strength that belied her size. She was trying to shove her pussy into his face and pull his head toward her at the same time. He inhaled her aroused sexual state one final time before doing what Anja so wanted him to do. He closed his mouth over her pussy and began sucking her clit hard.

Anja’s eyes flew open wide and her head went back as she screamed out her orgasm. Her stomach muscles tightened and her thighs quivered, locked around his head. Her body shuddered in the throes of passion as her juices flooded into Dan’s mouth and he drank her essence eagerly. His large hands still pawed her ample tits, squeezing and pinching her nipples, causing the sensations to continue to rock her as she came explosively. Her red hair had fallen from the tie she was using and now cascaded past her shoulders and was quickly becoming saturated with her sweat. Her head came forward, her breath staggered and so very near to hyperventilating. Anja hadn’t cum like that since Martin had eaten her pussy so long ago. Her mind asked if they had taken lessons from the same person, but she had no time to contemplate that thought as Dan stood back up while keeping her level with him again. He looked into her wide emerald green eyes and smiled. His lips were coated with her juices and Anja drew him down to her face for a deep hard kiss, surprising him with her eagerness, as she tasted herself on his tongue and in his mouth and didn’t care a wit.

Anja’s eyes popped open when she felt the probing at the entrance to her soaked pussy. Somehow he had removed his boxer shorts while he was sucking her pussy, and the head of his immense cock was begging for entry into her tight cunt. She broke their kiss and glanced down between her thighs in shock. She saw the huge black cock poised to enter her, the massive head pressing against her drenched pussy lips, the veins along its easily foot long length extended and pulsing in passion.

“God... Danny no... you’re too big!” She gasped. “I... Ahhhhhh,” Anja’s head flew back again, banging into the wall as the head of his massive ebony cock pushed into her.

Dan grimaced as he pushed just the head of his burning cock into her tight pussy and stopped. His powerful arms held her hips tightly, as he felt her velvet heat engulf his cock head. Anja’s breathing caused her chest to heave in exertion, her nipples now rock hard and protruding proudly. It was too much for Dan and he lowered his head to her right tit and took it into his mouth as he sank more of his cock into her. She was even tighter than Julie was and Julie had an enormously tight hot pussy.

“So... so fucking tight,” He gasped, his forehead cushioned between her breasts, his fingers digging into her hips.

Dan was barely able to control himself as her moist heat accepted him. He held her shuddering body as Anja shivered in orgasm, her sweet juices coating his thick cock. He had only three perhaps four inches in her and she was already cumming. Her orgasm provided more than enough lubricant for him as he felt her juices running down her thighs and onto his own legs, and he pushed more of his cock into her with a grunt, sinking nearly six more inches into her before stopping again. Anja’s head whipped back and forth, her fingers digging into his powerful arms, her legs locked tightly around his waist. Her red hair was soaked in sweat now from both their bodies and it stuck to his skin as she tossed her head from side to side.

Anja suddenly grabbed his head hard and stared at him with a powerful need. “All of you Danny!” She gasped. “I want all of you! Fuck me!”

Danny was not one to disobey an order and he gripped her hips and slammed himself forward while pulling her down towards him. Anja screamed in a mix of pleasure and pain as she felt him slam his twelve inches of pulsing black cock fully into her depths, his heavy balls banging against her ass cheeks. She wrapped her arms around his head and screamed into his shoulder as Dan reached a part of her that only Martin had ever touched. His massive ebony cock was buried so deeply within her, filling her as only one man had before him. She felt him tense in her arms and then his cock grew inside her, causing her eyes to go wide as she felt his cum boiling up through his length. She could feel his huge cock swell even larger as his cum raced up the length, Anja feeling everything inside her because her pussy was wrapped so tightly around his cock. His hands crushed her ass to him and he held himself there, as he unloaded a massive load directly into her depths. His explosive climax triggered another orgasm within her as he pumped his large load of cum into her belly and Anja cried out again in ecstasy as her burning body responded to his ministrations. They stayed like that, locked together for what seemed like hours until Dan’s cock stopped twitching inside her. Anja could feel his cum filling her belly and running down her thighs, her eyes wide at the amount he had unloaded into her.

Dan pulled his head away from her delicious tits, their bodies drenched in sweat and he met her gaze. Her jade green eyes were alive and bright, and the contrast in their skin color kept him as hard as iron deep inside her incredibly tight pussy. He looked down between their bodies, her soft triangle of red hair saturated with their combined cum, and pressed deeply against his hairless groin. He looked up again and looked into her beautiful eyes and leaned forward to kiss her. Anja responded to his gentle kiss, her tongue dancing joyfully across his lips and teeth, her hands clutching his hard muscular body to her. She reached up with her hands and pulled his head away, running her fingers over his bald head, his ebony skin shiny with sweat.

“Please Danny... please tell me we aren’t finished.” She gasped.

“Finished?” Dan told her with a smile. He flexed his huge cock inside her and his smile grew wider when she groaned in delight. “We’re just starting Anja. We’re just starting!”

Dan pulled her away from the wall, Anja grasping his shoulders too late as she bottomed out on his massive cock. She screamed in delight as Dan carried her into his bedroom, each step he took causing a mini orgasm inside her as his huge cock struck home time after time. When he lowered her to the bed she was gasping in unabashed glee, and that was before he started to fuck her with soul stealing deep strokes of his huge ebony cock. Anja was putty in his arms and she knew it.

Julie Collins moved down the corridor with a grace and confidence common to those who knew her. She had just gotten off duty and was looking forward to spending time with Danny relaxing in their quarters.

Julie was SEAL Team 12’s senior Communications specialist. If there was something she didn’t know about communications, then it hadn’t been invented yet. And she was also the alternate hand to hand combat

instructor for the team. Her five foot nine body looked to be something carved from a woman's fitness magazine. She had long satiny legs and a slim waist that accented her full firm 34B breasts and flat abdomen. Her short curly dark hair fell to just above her shoulders, framing a lean beautiful face with full sensuous lips and light brown eyes. Her skin was a shade darker than Dan, almost the color of dark caramel, and she loved the contrast of their skin when their bodies were pressed together.

They had been lovers for as many years as she could remember, and she knew every intimate detail of his rock hard body and his huge cock. Whenever he bottomed out inside her tight pussy it caused her to quake with orgasms time and time again. He was not the only lover she had ever had, but he was by far the most attentive of what she wanted and needed. And while she knew he had had other lovers as well, none of them had ever been able to take his monstrous cock as deeply into their throat as Julie had. And she relished every inch of his thick pole with delight.

Julie stopped several meters from the door to their quarters as her enhanced sense of smell picked up something. Her eyes grew large when she smelled the scent of Dan's passion so strongly, but it was the other, sweeter smell that caused her eyes to go even wider. She recognized that smell from earlier in the day, and the scent was even sweeter now as it reeked of passion and desire and orgasmic explosions. She went to the door and quietly slid her card through the slot. The door silently whished opened and she stepped in quickly to the muffled sounds of a female in what could only be described as orgasmic bliss. She didn't need her enhanced sense of smell to determine that the room reeked of sweat and sex, but her sense of smell was able to separate the mingling scents. She knew Danny's scent without question, but the sweet scent of honey was mixed in heavily with his smell and she knew that smell from earlier today.

Julie walked noiselessly into the bedroom and stood in the doorway, her own supple body immediately becoming highly aroused at what she saw and smelled. Danny's back was to her, his skin glistening with sweat. His hands were gripping Anja's hips tightly as he pummeled her pussy with his huge cock from behind. Her body was also soaked in sweat, her face pressed forward into the bed frozen in a look of continual orgasmic release, her hands clenching and then unclenching the sheets. Julie knew that look well, as that is exactly how she looked whenever Danny plowed her from behind as he was currently doing to Anja. Her juices were soaking his hips, his thick ebony cock driving into her in long powerful twelve inch strokes. Julie inhaled the air in the room deeply, her senses coming alive. Anja smelled sweeter than any woman she had ever met, and that was after she had no doubt cum over and over again already. She could tell they had been fucking each other for at least three hours by the temperature of the room and the state of the bed, yet even now, Anja's cum still smelled sweet as it spilled from her extremely tight pussy. And judging by the look on Danny's face as he plowed his thick cock into her depths, Anja was very tight.

Julie had never entertained the thought of being with another woman, it just didn't appeal to her, yet now watching her lover plunge his massive ebony cock into the red haired pussy under him, and seeing her long flowing red hair splayed across the bed, images of the two of them flashed in her mind.

She walked up behind Danny and traced her fingers across his broad back, leaning close to him. His eyes opened from concentration and he smiled up at her as she kissed him deeply, her hands running over his chest.

"Hi baby." She whispered seductively to him. "This is a surprise."

"Jules... I..."

Julie shook her head and began to unbutton her fatigues as she looked down to where Danny's cock was pile driving Anja's beautiful pussy. The lips of her cunt were stretched around his thick veiny black cock and gripped him as tightly as her own pussy did when he was fucking her. Anja was thrusting her firm, tight ass back at him on every downward plunge he rammed into her, taking his entire twelve inch cock into her luscious body, her face blissfully unaware of Julie being in the room and watching them.

Watching Danny slam his thick cock home Julie suddenly recognized where that extremely sweet smell was coming from. It was coming from Anja.

She had spoken to Doctor Carson a few years before and he had explained to her that there was an aura that wolves projected to attract females to mate. Due to their wolf genes, it appeared Danny and Martin had developed this ability, yet they were unable to control how to use it. It would not happen to every female, only those the male consider worthy of mating with, and it did not necessarily mean they would stay together. Julie

knew this aura well, as she had felt it flow over her on many occasions, and while Danny's aura could always get her ready and excited, their relationship had not progressed into something emotionally so deep.

Yet now, watching Danny fuck Anja senseless, Julie felt the effects of his aura again. Julie's body was becoming extremely excited by just watching Anja's lean muscular body as she fucked Danny's huge cock back with obvious enthusiasm and passionate need; the line of her back, and the curve of her beautiful ass, as well as her large firm tits. Julie felt her own excitement growing as she dropped her fatigues to the floor and moved to the front of the bed where Anja's beautiful face was locked in euphoric sexual bliss. Her eyes were closed tightly, her mouth open in a small circle as orgasm after orgasm was coursing through her. Julie leaned close to her ear.

"It's delicious isn't it?" She whispered softly.

Anja's green eyes sprang open in an instant and her head turned to look directly at Julie. She pushed her upper body up from the bed, exposing her huge tits to Julie's gaze and she reached back to placed her hand on Danny's powerful abdomen to try and get him to stop fucking her senseless. It was to no avail as he simply gripped her hips tighter and strengthened his plunges into her. Anja's eyes nearly rolled into her head, but through the fog of orgasmic pleasure she looked at Julie.

"Petty... Petty Officer... Ahhhhhh... I..." Anja was trying to speak, but Danny's soul robbing stokes into her pussy were making her see stars instead.

Julie smiled softly, looking at her face. "It's ok." She spoke. "I'm just going to watch."

Anja could only grunt in reply as Danny reached forward and palmed her firm tits, giving him leverage to stroke his huge black cock into her even more deeply. Anja could only watch as Julie settled onto the bed in front of them completely naked. Her own darker colored skin glistened with sweat, her breasts high and firm. Though not as large as Anja's breasts, they looked entirely delicious in Anja's eyes. Julie's legs were long and lean and muscular, and her waist was small. Her abdomen was flat and satiny and sported a pierced navel with a glittering diamond. Anja found her eyes drifting to Julie's pussy, and she was surprised to see the bald pussy with dark lips so wet. Watching Danny fuck the shit out of her was making Julie excited Anja noticed. Her pussy was leaking cum and Anja could tell it was becoming more and more aroused. Danny's hands were everywhere on her body, grabbing and caressing every part of her flesh.

This was not Kevin fucking her she realized in her enormously aroused mind. Danny was fucking her with an intensity that only Martin had surpassed. His hands and lips and tongue never stayed in one spot, as he licked and caressed and kissed every exposed portion of her supple frame. Anja closed her eyes briefly, and in her mind's eye it was Martin fucking her and not Danny. Danny's touch was exciting and passionate, but Martin's hands had made her sing in pleasure and desire even more powerful than what she was experiencing now. As she opened her eyes again and saw Julie's dripping snatch in front of her Anja surrendered to that desire once more.

Anja used surprising strength to pull Danny's hands from her tits as she fell forward on the bed. And again with surprising speed and strength she shocked Julie by pulling her long legs open and pulling her hips down towards her drooling lips.

"Anja... what... what are you doing!" Julie gasped her eyes wide, "Stop! I've never been with a woman! I've... you can't... oh my GOD! Ahhhhhh YES!"

Anja covered Julie's beautiful, oozing pussy with her lips and sucked hard on the passion and desire bloated clit. Julie immediately erupted in an intense orgasm, and Anja dug her hands into Julie's supple ass cheeks, holding her in place while she drank Julie's sweet tasting cum with no hesitation whatsoever. Julie's back was arched off the bed, her hands clenching the sheets in earth shattering orgasmic bliss as she came harder than she had ever experienced without Danny's hard cock ramming into her.

Dan took all this in with wide eyes and it was entirely too much for him to stand. The fact that Anja had her beautiful face buried in Julie's pussy and was obviously swallowing Julie's cum was too much for him. With a roar like a wild animal he rammed his huge cock home into Anja's well fucked but still unbelievably tight pussy one final time, his cum bloated balls seated firmly against the backs of her upper thighs and he exploded within her. Anja screamed into Julie's delicious tasting pussy as she felt Danny's cum blasting into her with more force than anytime earlier in the evening. Her body responded in kind, her own howl inducing orgasm as she coated his spurting and twitching ebony monster with her juices. Julie's clutching pussy was

spewing sweet tasting cum all over her face and Anja again fastened her gasping mouth over Julie's cunt so that she could drink down her sweet cum, while her own orgasm carried her to new heights.

It was over in two minutes, all of them physically spent beyond what they had expected, and the three of them fell into a post orgasmic blissful moment. Dan fell forward onto Anja's back, his cock still firmly entrenched deep in her cunt, Julie had fallen back on the bed, her chest heaving in wonderment at what had just occurred, and Anja was between them. Her blissful face rested just above Julie's now glistening pussy and she felt Danny's huge cock still buried within her. Her mind told her it would be better only with Martin's arms around her.

EDEN COMMAND CENTER

"That's it Admiral." The tech spoke turning in his chair to face Wallace and Martin. "The interference from the comet has degraded all communications now. We won't be able to talk to anyone on earth for at least twenty-eight hours until the comet clears out of the immediate area."

William nodded. "The emergency beacons are still operating though correct?"

The tech nodded. "Yes sir. Most of earth's governments moved their satellites into new orbits to avoid the comet, but it cost them most of their fuel. We'll be busy after this sucker passes."

William nodded. "So it would see. How long before it passes between us?"

"Sixteen hours Admiral." The tech answered. "And at least another twelve before it actually clears up enough that we can talk to earth."

William nodded. "Keep me informed Ensign." He turned and motioned for Martin to follow him. They left the Command Center and headed for the small officer's lounge on this level. "Did Senator Graham give you any grief today?" Wallace asked him.

Martin shook his head. "No sir. Kind of makes me uneasy." He said.

William nodded, "Me too. Is that SWEEPER Team still being watched?"

Martin nodded. "I have someone on each of the nine members, yes sir. The rest of those we suspected were actual technicians."

"Good. I want to be kept advised of every thing they do." Wallace spoke. "I understand Anja came to see you today?"

Martin nodded. "She wanted to make peace." He told him. "I agreed but told her we were on different teams and we both hated to lose."

William chuckled. "She's a stubborn wench, no doubt about that." He said. "Someone needs to fuck her brains out and make her relax a little."

Martin laughed. "Don't look at me sir!" He said in mock fear. "I did that once and look where it got me."

William laughed and clapped Martin on the shoulder. "Perhaps you should fuck her again and fix what you obviously started."

"Me?" Martin gasped.

Wallace nodded. "She's got the hots for you Marty. I don't think that has ever changed. The arrogance and angry she projects at you is her way of dealing with what she doesn't understand."

"You're kidding right sir?" Martin asked.

Wallace nodded, "Nope."

"Admiral... it was only one night." Martin said.

Wallace nodded. "And sometimes one night is all you need to know that you were meant for someone." He looked at Martin. "You still have feelings for her Marty, that much is very obvious. Just don't dismiss anything just yet, ok?"

Martin nodded slowly. "Yes... yes sir."

"You and your team have proven yourselves to me countless times Marty. Never doubt that I will support you in anything that you do." Wallace said.

Martin nodded. "I know sir."

"Good. What are you going to do with yourself while this comet thing goes by?"

Martin smiled. "The Astrometric Chief told me it was going to be quite the display. I think I might wander over to the arboretum and watch."

"I'll be in my quarters getting some much deserved sleep." William said. "Unless that thing crashes in to us, I don't want to be disturbed until after it passes us by."

Martin nodded. "I make sure of it sir."

Anja was in the process of being disturbed, but it was the most pleasurable disturbance she had experienced in several years. She had woken only a short time ago to find herself entwined with two other dark skinned individuals. Her head rested lazily on Julie's firm medium sized breasts, one of her legs draped across her lower body. She could feel Danny spooning against her from behind, his huge cock flaccid, but still large enough to send shivers of delight coursing through her at the memories of the pleasure it had given her. He was sound asleep, and Anja took it upon herself to explore the new flesh under her. She had never even thought about having sex with another woman before, yet seeing Julie's beautiful dripping pussy so close to her face, and still gripped in the effects of Danny's aura, she had proceeded to lap at the first cunt of her life. And what an experience it had been. When Julie had exploded into her mouth, her juices had tasted almost like mocha coffee and Anja had drunk them down with relish. When she had awoken still stretched upon Julie's luscious body Anja slowly wiggled and squirmed and pushed Danny off her and then she began to explore the supple dark flesh before her.

Anja's gentle and intimate caresses had woken Julie. At first she thought it had been Danny, until she looked down between her thighs and saw the mass of Persian red hair. Just as she realized it was Anja sucking gently on her aroused clit and stroking her tight ass cheeks, Julie was blindsided by the orgasm. She cried out and entwined her fingers in Anja's soft lustrous red hair and held her head in place as Anja's lips and tongue danced across the now swollen lips of her pussy and her engorged clit and drank the cum spewing from Julie's pussy. As her orgasm subsided, she felt Anja slowly work her way up Julie's taunt ebony body, her tongue licking the sweat from between her firm breasts until Julie was looking into her bright jade green eyes. Julie pulled Anja's lips to hers in the most passionate and heated kiss she had ever given anyone, and she whimpered into Anja's mouth as she returned the heat and passion. It was then that she realized what Danny had discovered in the first moments of his first kiss with this red headed vixen. Anja had an incredibly long, yet delicious tongue and it sent shivers through Julie. It did not take them long to begin exploring each other's bodies, and soon Anja was flipping around and lowering her drenched pussy over Julie's waiting lips.

Julie stopped lapping at Anja's dripping cunt and paused to admire the firmness of her ass cheeks and the neatly trimmed tuft of red hair above her fully swollen clit. She groaned as she felt Anja's insistent tongue delicately probing the depths of her pussy. Julie was amazed at how long Anja's tongue was, and she now had every inch of that incredibly warm appendage stuffing her snatch while Anja fastened her mouth over her entire pussy. Julie stared at the swollen pink lips of Anja's beautiful pussy, her lips and mouth full of Anja's sweet tasting juices. An hour ago, she would never have even dreamed about this experience, but here she was eagerly lapping away at the most beautiful white pussy she had ever seen, and thoroughly enjoying every moment. Her hands grasped Anja's tight ass cheeks and pulled that beautiful snatch down to her face again, eliciting a groan of pleasure from Anja as she sank her tongue as far into that pink pussy as she could.

Though they were both inexperienced at eating pussy, they both chose to use the same techniques that got them off, and it succeeded. Anja cried out first, shoving her spasming cunt down hard on Julie's wonderful tongue as she erupted into Julie's eager mouth. Julie didn't miss a drop, her tongue working Anja's sensitive clit even more as her honey tasting cum poured out of her pussy into her mouth and throat. It was then that Julie's eyes went wide, and to her credit she didn't remove her mouth from Anja's pussy as she felt Anja's slim finger slip into her virgin ass just as Anja sucked hard on her swollen clit. Julie lost it then as she screamed into her lover's pussy and flooded her waiting mouth with more cum than she had ever produced before. It was so much that Anja could barely keep up, and some of her cum slipped from the corners of Anja's mouth and soaked her jaw and neck.

Their arms clutched each other's bodies tightly, their mouths never leaving their places as thighs quivered and firm abdomens clenched. They drank each other's essence until there was nothing left to give. They were both coated with sweat when it was over, the sheets of the bed soaked. Almost as if reading each

other's minds they looked over to where Danny had been laying when they began. He had shifted to the far side of the large bed and was still sleeping soundly. With a soft groan Anja lifted her pussy from Julie's face and slowly turned to crawl back up her body. Julie's dark eyes were wide and very bright, and the smile that was on her face caused Anja to grin.

"Hi... hi there," Anja whispered; a very satisfied and seductive smile on her face.

"Hi... hi yourself," Julie answered. She reached up as her breathing was returning to normal and traced Anja's soft red lips with a finger, "That... that was incredible."

Anja's large green eyes were bright and seemed to become even more animated when Julie said that. "I... I thought so too." She spoke softly before plunging her face down for a toe curling kiss that made both of them shudder in post orgasmic delight. The kiss lasted for several long moments before it broke, and Anja simply rested her head on Julie's substantial tits as they both fell into a dreamy sleep curled in each other's arms.

EARTH

2546

Northern Uinta Mountains, Utah

The man stood beside the huge tree staring into the night sky, the full moon illuminating the entire area all around him. He wore a dark gray jumpsuit on his six foot frame with a flowing cloak over his shoulders, his long white hair falling around his shoulders. He held the six foot length of polished oak in his hand for support, his wrinkled skin pale even in the moon light. His deep blue eyes though were extremely bright and very alert, and belied his age. The old man turned slowly when he heard the soft footsteps behind him.

"Holy One, it is I?" The soft feminine voice reached out from the darkness.

"Come forward Tarifa." The man spoke. "You need not ask my permission."

He watched as the two figures appeared from the darkness of the forest around them, walking as if they were ghosts. He watched as they stopped in front of him and slowly dropped to their knees. They were both female and both looked to be in their mid twenties. The one on the right was the one who had spoken and was the taller of the two. Her name was Tarifa, and she was among the tallest of her people at five foot nine. Her flowing, shiny black hair fell almost to the top of her buttocks, framing an absolutely perfect face with high cheekbones and soft pouty full lips. Her face was oval in shape, and her flawless skin was evenly tanned from years of living in the sun and it gave her a distinctly exotic look.

Each of them wore tight, coal black jumpsuit like uniforms that allowed them to blend seamlessly into the night. The jumpsuits were of a design that added flexible body armor to their uniforms in critical areas, but did not hinder physical movement in the least. The uniforms fastened around their slim necks but split open in a "V" shape, and as you looked further down their enticing torsos, the tanned skin of their cleavages and abdomens was exposed for all to see as the uniforms strained against their high full breasts. The "V" ended just below their navels, and became normal again. The fabric that encased their legs was also very much skin tight, almost as if painted on, and both wore elaborate combat boots that extended up almost to their knees. The uniforms had no sleeves, and their tanned arms were exposed to the elements, but both wore fingerless black gloves and armored gauntlets that covered their skin, the gauntlets ending just below the elbows with wicked looking edges to them that could slice flesh as easily as butter.

The old man stepped closer to them and reached out with a wrinkled hand to push aside the soft satiny black hair on the side of Tarifa's head to reveal the slightly larger and three inch long pointed ears. He smiled gently.

They were elfin ears.

"Never be ashamed of what you are child." He spoke softly.

Tarifa lifted her delicate face to look at him with her dazzling sapphire blue eyes and used her hand to pull her hair around her other matching ear. She could see her Lieutenant Endith doing the same. She settled her sapphire blue eyes on the old man.

The Holy One had designed the uniforms and all of the High Elf female warriors now wore them, and had for centuries. The males wore similar uniforms, but since Elf society was not as concerned with modesty,

nearly every female had modified their uniforms and clothes to enhance their near perfect figures, and they did so shamelessly. Tarifa however had altered her uniform to be unique, and her personal guard had copied her alterations in honor of their positions. The uniform did nothing to hide the perfect shape of her hips and the fullness of her high firm 34C breasts. The flowing black cape around her shoulders hid the view of a muscular and exceptionally formed tight ass. The female who knelt next to Tarifa was her Senior Lieutenant, and matched Tarifa's beauty in almost every way, the only difference being the long shiny red hair that fell to her shoulders, and the absence of the strangely exotic aura that surrounded Tarifa.

Tarifa carried herself with an almost regal air, as well she should. Tarifa may have looked to be only in her mid twenties, but she was in fact over a hundred years old, and had been Queen of the High Elves for nearly half that time. As with all elves, she was blessed with exceptional reflexes and strength, as well as heightened senses. Though she was the product of a mother and father, as were her three younger siblings, she could trace her heritage back to great-grandparents that were created by the man she knelt before now.

A man all Elves referred to as the Holy One.

"It is almost time Holy One." She spoke softly. "Marcus's forces are getting closer."

The old man nodded and settled to the large stone beside the tree, resting his frail form before looking at her again. "I am sorry Tarifa, Endith. I'm sorry for so many things."

Tarifa looked at him oddly and stole a quick glance at her equally confused lieutenant. "Forgive me Holy One, but sorry for what?"

"I'm sorry for bringing this upon you and the others." He told her. "As with so many of my creations, they have been misused and abused over the years. My only thoughts were to try and make things better."

"Holy One you created us all those years ago." Tarifa spoke. "If not for you, none of us would exist. It was you who allowed us to prosper and grow. Make homes for ourselves, and have families."

The old man nodded. "And look what it has wrought?" He continued softly, almost as if he was ignoring her. "My attempts at helping others has wrought endless war and fighting. I sought to create perfection in the elves by making all of you so desirable to man that they couldn't resist you. I sought to bury deep the century's old notions of hiding your sexuality by making the elves perhaps the most sexually free species to ever inhabit this planet. Now so many of your sisters and brothers are dead at the hands of those I wanted to help, and oppressed by those I thought long dead. So many more turned into slaves and pleasure toys for men and others. I meant for all of you to live free and be happy, not be slaves and toys to power hungry animals and beasts."

"The High Elves are free Holy One." Tarifa said. "We live free every day."

The old man smiled. "Events are coming to a close Tarifa my child." He spoke sadly. "You can not win this war you fight; not alone. You must seek help from those you shun."

"You have said this before Holy One." Tarifa spoke. "I know what you mean, and I agree with you, but the Council of Elders does not. They believe an alliance with the Wood Elves would be disastrous. The Wood Elves have betrayed us in the past."

"You are their Queen Tarifa." The old man spoke. "You must make them see that events are happening differently. The Wood Elves chose a new Queen over a century ago and the Elders still refuse to reach out to her."

"Holy One she has allowed her warriors to raid several of our camps and murder innocents." Tarifa spoke, her voice holding distrust and anger in it. "How can she be trusted? Rumor has it she is even working with Marcus and the Alliance to wipe us out."

"Do you believe this Tarifa?" The man asked.

"I do not want too Holy One, but the evidence is very nearly overwhelming." Tarifa replied. "Just yesterday I received word that one of our border towns was massacred by the Cadre's Sweeper Assassins. They struck like creatures from the night, slaughtering everything in their path. And it was said they were led to the town by a Wood Elf assassin."

The old man sighed heavily. "Yes I know." He reached out and placed his hand gently on her shoulder. "I created the Elves in the image of myths and legends from my time Tarifa. I took from those legends and stories and gave you your strength and speed and your other abilities. I wanted to ease the burden of mankind by giving them a race of men and women that could help them to rebuild. They took my work and twisted it into darkness, creating all manner of monsters and beasts. They turned you into slaves and beasts of burden to satisfy their sadistic pleasures. I created all of you to be beautiful and nearly perfect female physical specimens,

but in my desire to do good I did not realize they would take advantage of your beauty in the ways they have done. So many of your sisters have been lost to slavery, transformed into nothing but drug addicted pleasure slaves that serve the whims of those in power. Having that knowledge within me these past four hundred years has been the bane of my existence.”

“You did not know that would happen Holy One.” Tarifa spoke. “No one could have predicted the depths to which humanity would fall after the Great Fire. And there have been some humans who we regard as friends.”

The man looked at her. “You speak of the ones in the mountains? You have not had contact with them in nearly three decades.”

Tarifa nodded. “This is true, but we have maintained good relations with those humans who live in the mountains Holy One.” Tarifa said. “But the Alliance has herded many of them to the cities now as they expand their empire. We can no longer rely on them for help.”

The old man nodded. “Those humans that live in the mountains are exceptions Tarifa. All Elves, High Elves and Wood Elves alike, were unique. Even the minor clans of elves that have been established over the years are unique. And over the years you have made them even more unique. You are warriors of the finest caliber, never doubt that.”

“Even still Holy One, we can not stand against the Alliance Cadre Assassins.” Tarifa spoke. “They are stronger and faster and crueler than we could ever be.”

The man nodded. “Yes that is true.” He said. “Have faith though. Help is coming.”

Tarifa looked at him quizzically. “What do you mean Holy One? Help from whom?”

The old man smiled. “I created your ancestors, yes. However they were not my first creations.” He told her, seeing the look of surprise on her face. “Before the Great Fire that plunged us into darkness I created others. They were the absolute personification of terror.” Tarifa watched with large eyes as he gazed into the stars for a moment and continued speaking. “They were bigger, stronger, faster and far more intelligent than the apes that exist now. They were human in a way, inhuman in others.”

“They were human?” Tarifa blurted out with undisguised astonishment. “Holy One please, I ask you to forgive my ignorance, but no human alive could match our prowess and strength.”

The old man smiled. “You are proud Tarifa.” He spoke kindly. “But do not let your pride cloud your judgment or what your eyes will show you. Time has come full circle now, and soon you will see for yourself what I speak of when I speak of them. Their leader will bear the same mark as you do on your neck Tarifa.”

Tarifa reached up slowly and traced the small tattoo on the side of her slim neck, the edges of it just poking above the collar of her uniform. She was given the tattoo at her birth and in the elfin language the symbol meant *Arfanyarasse Cundo* or High Guardian.

“Search them out. Search him out. I believe he is the one you are meant for.”

Tarifa’s sapphire eyes grew wide as she looked at him. “Meant for Holy One?” She spoke with a somewhat arrogant tone. “I am Queen of my people Holy One, and only I say who shares my bed.”

The old man smiled at her. “He is the one that will open your eyes to new things Tarifa, open your very soul to what you can not now fathom.” He told her softly. “You think I can’t see that of all the partners that have shared your bed, none of them have stirred your true passion. He will open your eyes to what it is to love. And you will return to him what he has sought for so long, but neither of you will be complete. By coming together you will set each other free. Go to the sacred site Tarifa my child. He will come there first.”

“Where will he come from Holy One?” Tarifa asked softly, this information stimulating her sense of curiosity a great deal.

Walter Carson got to his feet with a great deal of effort as an explosion in the distance announced that a battle had begun. Tarifa and Endith sprang quickly to their feet in response the echo of gunfire.

“They will come from the heavens. And he will be with them. It is almost time for the end game to begin.” Walter said softly.

Tarifa looked at Endith. “Take the Holy One to the rendezvous! I will hold off Marcus’s forces while you escape.”

“My Queen you can’t! If you are captured...!”

“Do as I instruct you Endith!” Tarifa snapped. “You must get the Holy One to safety!”

Endith nodded as she bowed her head. “I will do as you order my Queen.”

“Go now! And move quickly!” Tarifa told her.

Endith moved forward and took Walter’s arm. She turned back to her Queen. “I will wait for you at the entrance to the forest.” She spoke.

Tarifa nodded. “I will join you there.”

EDEN WEST ARBORETUM

Martin leaned against the tree in the huge arboretum. There were two such places on EDEN, most of them used for getting away and trying to feel like you were back on Earth. Martin held the tall bottle of cold beer in his hand, his eyes on the data pad. He was going over the training schedule for the next week when he sensed the additional person moving up behind him. The Master Chief was not trying to sneak up on Martin as he carried a six pack and plopped down next to his boss.

Martin grinned. “What’s up Chief?” He asked.

Master Chief Tony Brown held out the cold beer. “I figured you might like the company Skipper.” He spoke.

Martin smiled and downed the partially warm beer he had before accepting the ice cold one. He cracked open the bottle and took a long pull. “You smuggled this back from earth didn’t you?”

Tony’s face took on a look of innocence. “Skipper I’m hurt. Me smuggle back illegal booze?”

Martin couldn’t help but laugh as he took another pull of the beer. Almost all alcoholic beverages were banned on EDEN, but Martin knew many of his team smuggled back some stronger beverages from time to time. He and Tony had been together since the first day of their inception. Along with Dan and Julie, they were the very first genomes in their batch, and that fact alone made them very close friends.

“That the schedule for next week?” Tony asked.

Martin nodded. “I figure we’ll have to pull some transport duty to fix quite a few satellites after this comet passes, so I’m factoring that into our work load.”

Tony nodded and looked up to watch the huge comet that filled the clear plexisteel canopy over their heads. It was now almost all the way between the moon and earth, and its tail carried a myriad of colors and streaking lights to it. The actual comet didn’t appear to be any larger than the moon itself.

“Did you and Commander Peterson make peace?” Tony asked turning back to his friend and commander.

Martin nodded as he set the pad aside. “We know where each other stand in the scheme of things.” He said answered. “Admiral Wallace might be right. She could be a very good officer if only she wouldn’t be so damn arrogant and uptight. We’ll see if we can’t change that while she’s up here.”

“I hear she’s got a pretty wicked tongue. One of the med techs in the lab said she can cuss you in four languages if you piss her off.” Tony spoke.

Martin chuckled. “Yeah... well having a four inch tongue might give her a gift with languages.”

Tony’s eyes widened, “Four inches! Are you kidding me?”

Martin shook his head. “Not in the least Tony. I thought I was going to choke when she shoved that thing down my throat.”

“So you have...”

Martin nodded. “It was a long time ago.” He replied in a soft voice. “But it was definitely a very good night and one I would like to have again if the opportunity presents itself.”

“So Yuri isn’t the one then huh?” Tony asked.

Martin looked at him and shook his head. “We enjoy each other’s company and the sex is great but there is something about her that I can’t place. Her scent is weird and she holds back what’s in her head quite a bit.”

“You could probe her you know?” Tony spoke.

Martin looked at him. “We agreed not to do that unless it was absolutely necessary Chief.”

Martin, Danny and Julie had discovered at a young age that they were telepathic, and could communicate with their minds even over long distances. When they made the decision to save the rest of their team, a side effect of this action was that now the entire team could speak to one another telepathically. This

was something that only they knew and they shared it with no one. It had taken many years for them to learn to control it and not abuse this skill, and Martin had beat down three team members for doing just that at one point. It was a skill that had saved their lives on more than one occasion, and as they got older and stronger with this skill they found themselves using it more and more.

“I was just kidding Skipper.” Tony spoke.

Martin smiled. “Even if I wanted too... she’s got some really strong shields.” He said, “Strong enough that I can detect them without trying to read her mind.”

“That’s odd.” Tony spoke.

Martin looked at him. “Well we ain’t exactly normal Master Chief Brown.” He spoke with a grin.

Tony chuckled as he looked into the sky again. He lifted the beer to his lips and it stopped halfway up when his keen genome eyes detected something. He lowered the beer and focused his eyes more intently.

“Skipper I thought all *RAPTOR*’s were grounded.”

Martin looked at him. “They are, why?”

“Then I must be seeing things Skipper.” Tony said getting to his feet. “Cause I see a *RAPTOR* heading directly for the east landing pad trailing smoke and flying like the pilot is drunk.”

Martin got to his feet and stretched out with his enhanced eyesight until he too saw the *RAPTOR* off in the distance. The *RAPTOR* was being buffeted by powerful unseen gravitational forces being exerted by the comet, smoke pouring from its rear section.

“What the hell!” Martin gasped reaching up and tapping the transmitter under the skin of his jaw. “Control this is Commander Hunter! I’m seeing an unauthorized *RAPTOR* trying to make an emergency landing on the east pad! Can you identify it?”

“No *RAPTOR*’s are currently up Commander.” The reply was immediate.

“You think I’m busting your ass?” Martin exclaimed. “I’m watching the damn ship right now! It’s... oh shit it’s going in! Sound General Quarters! Get damage control...”

Martin and Tony could only watch as the *RAPTOR* plowed into the east pad and skidded along the metal surface before smashing into the side of the control module. The resulting explosion sent huge gouts of flame rising into the air and Martin and Tony staggered from the shockwave that rippled through the station even from their distance a mile away.

“Holy shit!” Tony shouted as the floor they were standing on began to vibrate madly causing them to lose their footing.

“Command, what the hell is going on?” Martin screamed into the com unit.

The tech’s voice was nearly drowned out by blaring alarms in the background. “Station integrity has been compromised! The explosion destroyed the inertia dampening field over that section of the compound! We’re feeling the effects of the comet’s gravity as it passes between the earth and moon!” The tech screamed. “The explosion weakened grid thirty-seven and its losing power rapidly!”

“Can you reroute power to the grid?” Martin barked.

“Negative! All controls east of section thirty-seven have been severed! Who the hell was that Command Pilot? All our *RAPTOR*’s are accounted for!”

“Get damage control teams moving to their posts,” Martin ordered. “I’m heading to section thirty-seven!”

“Shit! There it goes! Fuck!” The tech yelled just as Martin and Tony were flung to the floor once more, only this time considerably harder. “Commander, it’s having a cascade effect! The next grid is losing power rapidly! It will fail completely in three minutes twenty seconds! We have to stop the cascade before it reaches the east power core or the whole station will go!”

“Talk to me!” Martin screamed, scrambling to his feet.

“Section thirty-four sir; we can stop it there if you can reach the power conduits and transfer power to the reactor core!”

“Section thirty-four,” Martin yelled. “We can’t stop it before that?”

“Negative sir; that last explosion took down all power to the next two sections! I’m activating emergency evacuation protocols for those two sections!” The tech replied. “Can you get there Commander?”

Martin looked at Tony. “We’re on our way!”

The first explosion jarred the three lovers awake, Anja's eyes opening dreamily. Her head was still resting atop Julie's chest, and as her eyes focused she discovered she was staring directly at Julie's very firm ebony tit, her nipple very prominently standing erect. Anja's eyes sprang open wider than they had ever been as she pushed herself up. She glanced down as she realized she was totally and completely naked, the soft red hair of her still very moist pussy pressing against Julie's thigh, her exquisite body equally naked. Danny had rolled over to look at them, his own eyes bright, as Julie looked up at her and smiled seductively.

"Hi gorgeous," She said, reaching up to caress Anja's cheek.

Anja leaped from the bed as if shot from a gun, pulling the sheet with her as she saw that both Julie and Danny were just as totally naked as she was. Danny's thick cock was still flaccid, but even soft it was an impressive sight to see. The memories of the night before came flooding back to Anja as she remembered Danny fucking her brains out with that huge ebony cock, and then her torrid pussy to pussy love session with Julie. Her face turned three different shades of red and she began to back peddle out of the room.

"Oh... oh my god, what... what have I done." She gasped.

"Anja what's wrong?" Julie asked, getting to her feet a look of concern on her face. Anja saw Danny begin to rise off the bed as well, his face narrowed in a worried expression.

"No!" Anja snapped. "Stay away!"

The next explosion sent all of them hurtling to the floor, and snapped them out of their confusion.

"What the hell was that?" Danny snapped as Julie scrambled to her feet, her nakedness forgotten as she went to the com panel.

"Ghost Six to Ghost One!" Julie barked into the com panel.

Martin's voice came back almost immediately and they could all hear the screams and the sounds of flames in the background. "Julie we are moving for section thirty-four! An unidentified *RAPTOR* smashed into the east command module and triggered an integrity breach! Tony and I are moving to try and stop it! Tell Dan to mobilize the rest of the team and start moving to my location! I need you to monitor Team Coms and direct us! It's really fucking hard to see! We got smoke and fire from sections thirty-one to thirty-two! Many wounded! If you see Commander Peterson, have her get her medical clinic ready to receive seriously wounded!"

"I copy that boss!" Julie spoke, as she was pulling on her fatigue bottoms, not even bothering with panties.

"Tell Danny to bring the team in from the west! It seems to be pretty clear! I want him loaded down with engineering equipment and spot welders! We need to get the breaches sealed!" Martin's voice sounded again, "When you get set up contact me, Ghost One out!"

Danny reached for Anja but she batted his hand away. "Don't touch me!" She snapped, clutching the sheet around her body.

Danny looked at her with wide eyes. "Don't touch you?" He spoke confused. "I thought you..."

Julie took his arm. "Danny... no," She said softly. "Anja... you need to go to the medical clinic and get it ready!"

Anja looked at her and nodded slowly before moving into the living room and beginning to gather her clothes, which were torn and scattered all over. Dan turned to Julie as Anja left his quarters without another word.

"What the fuck was that?" He asked her.

"It's difficult to explain Danny." Julie replied pulling on her fatigue top.

"Julie... she came in here and... we..." Dan stopped, his voice trailing off.

Julie stepped close to him and kissed him softly. "I'll explain it all once we take care of this little problem." She said.

"Jules I'm really confused here." He spoke, his voice almost pleading. "I... I thought what happen was very... very cool."

Julie met his eyes. "So did I lover, but it may have been unintended for Anja. Remember what Doc Carson said about that aura thing you and the others can project?"

Dan nodded, "Yeah."

"I think that may have caused her to act in a way she didn't really want too." Julie spoke.

“Jules I didn’t force her!” Danny exclaimed.

“I know that lover!” She answered. “C’mon we can’t worry about this now; we have a lot of work to do!”

Admiral Wallace staggered into the Command Center just as another explosion rocked EDEN. He was only half dressed, his shirt still open and his boots untied, and he had to grab the door railing to keep from being flung to the deck.

“Give me a report!” He screamed as he staggered toward where his Command Duty Officer stood behind the Senior Chief’s station. “What the fuck happened?” William’s face took in the nasty gash his CDO had above his left eye.

The man waved it off. “It will heal sir!” He spoke. “Approximately sixteen minutes ago an unidentified *RAPTOR* appeared from the comet’s tail sir. We tried to raise her on all COM channels but she didn’t respond.”

“Was it one of ours?” William asked.

“Negative sir, all our birds are accounted for.” The CDO answered. “Thirty three seconds after she appeared the bird plowed into the East Control Module. The *RAPTOR* must have been carrying a full load of fuel Admiral because she went up like a torch. The explosion took out the entire power grid and the outer hull breach destroyed the inertia dampers protecting that section of the station. We were able to sever the control module from the rest of the grid but not before follow on explosions weakened the next section’s grid. It’s cascading now Admiral. Section thirty-six is gone as well. We’ve diverted as much power as we could to section thirty-five, but it won’t hold unless Commander Hunter can get to the grid controls in section thirty-four and reroute power through the entire system.”

“Where is he?” William barked.

“He’s almost entirely through section thirty-three now sir. There are scores of injuries and fires and he’s had to detour three times already, but he’s almost there.” The CDO reported.

“How long do we have before the grid fails in section thirty-five?” William asked.

“Forty-nine seconds Admiral,” The CDO answered. “It was my call sir! I directed him to section thirty-four. I knew we wouldn’t be able to save thirty-five or thirty six based on the rate of grid declination.”

Bill nodded his head. “Did we get the crew out?”

The CDO nodded. “Team 12 just pulled the remaining wounded from the transport tube Admiral. They are taking it back into section thirty-four with heavy engineer equipment and welders.”

William looked at him. “They are going to try and seal the breach?” He asked.

The CDO nodded. “It appears that way sir. Three senior Engineers are already moving directly behind Commander Hunter and should arrive about the same time.”

“Wounded?”

“The closest clinic was Commander Peterson’s sir. She called in four minutes ago and reported she is already receiving patients. She sounded kind of harried Admiral.” The CDO told him.

“She can consider it on the job training.” Bill said. “She’s a doctor before she’s a scientist. Dispatch all the medics we have not on duty to her location. They are to report directly to her for orders. She’s on scene and will be in command.”

The CDO nodded, “Understood sir.”

“Admiral, Commander Hunter and Master Chief Brown have reached the grid controls for section thirty-four!” The female tech exclaimed.

“Put him on COMS!” Bill snapped.

Martin and Tony skidded to a stop in the circular control module for section thirty-four. The smoke had cleared enough for them to be able to see clearly, but the heat from nearby fires was very evident. Tony moved to a computer screen and punched in some commands.

“Integrity of the section is falling fast Skipper!” He yelled. “It’s down to twenty-three percent!”

Martin moved to another console. “I’m reading three breaches in the power coupling! One is...”

The shooting sparks above Tony announced where one of the breaches was as Tony leaped out of the way cussing a blue streak as he slapped at the red hot sparks bouncing off his body. “Fuck!” Tony cursed loudly. “I found one!” He spoke.

“The other two are in the connection corridor!” Martin moved to the hatchway and peered through the door. He saw two large cracks in the connection tube, which had sealed when the next forward section was destroyed.

“Raptor One to Ghost One,” Admiral Wallace’s voice filled his surgically implanted ear receiver.

“I’m here Admiral!” Martin spoke, his voice carrying to the microscopic microphone implanted in the skin of his jaw.

“Give me a report Marty!” William asked.

“It ain’t good sir!” Martin answered. “We have three breaches sir! There are two in the connection tube and one here in the control module that Tony is working to bypass!”

“There are three engineers that should be getting there shortly!” William spoke as Martin turned and saw the two men and single woman come to sliding halts in the control module, their eyes going wide.

“They’re here sir! Danny how far away are you with that equipment?” Martin called.

“We’re just about there boss!” Danny’s voice came back, “Coming around into thirty-four now!”

“Jules you copy?”

“Five by five Skipper!”

“I need you to direct the fire crews to sections thirty-two and thirty-three on the eastern end! They need to get the fires there under control first before the heat begins to melt the insulation on the power conduits!” Martin spoke, his eyes watching as Dan led six others of his SEAL Team into the control module, staggering with engineering equipment.

“I’m on it boss!” Julie answered.

“Admiral how soon before the integrity field goes?” Martin asked.

“There’s not enough time Marty!” William exclaimed. “Get everyone out of there and we’ll shut down the reactor from here!”

“Admiral if you shut down the reactor, all life support to this entire wing of EDEN will stop functioning! We’ll lose a quarter of the base!” Martin exclaimed.

“It’s better than losing the entire base!” William exclaimed. “Get your people out of there!”

Martin watched as Dan pulled the arm of one of the engineers. “Can you fix the breaches with what we brought?”

“Yes!”

Dan turned to Martin. “We can fix the breaches Skipper!”

Martin looked at the engineer. The man shrugged. “I’d rather die trying sir! There’s no way we’d make it back before life support quit. It’s too far!”

“Ghost One to Raptor One, we are going to try and fix the breaches Admiral! We’d never make it back before life support cut out! We die either way!” Martin said.

“Damn it Marty you and the other genomes can hold your fucking breaths for six minutes! You can make it back!” William snapped.

“Yes sir! But we ain’t leaving the engineers here to die alone Admiral!” Martin replied. “They aren’t genomes and they wouldn’t survive.”

“Martin I’m giving you a direct order to evacuate that section!” Admiral Wallace bellowed.

“Sorry sir, there must be interference from the blown power couplings! I didn’t make that out!” Martin’s reply was very clear and final, “Ghost One out!”

“Fuck!” Wallace screamed.

“He doesn’t follow orders very well does he?” The voice spoke from behind them.

Bill turned and saw Senator Graham and his son standing in the doorway of the command center. “One more word out of you senator and I’ll vent you out the fucking airlock myself!” Bill growled.

“Admiral I can extend the field of the next section’s integrity grid around thirty-four’s control module!” The tech spoke excitedly. “It will only be for forty-seven seconds, but it could buy them the time they need!”

William nodded to her quickly. “Do it!” He turned to the CDO. “I want every fire suppression team we have converging on thirty-two and thirty-three yesterday! Re-route the foam lines if you have too, but put those damn fires out!”

Martin and Dan led the two older engineers into the damaged connection tube. The interior of the tube was like stepping into a blizzard as the cold of space was leaking into the tube quickly through the two large cracks. Martin and Dan carried the two pieces of replacement titanium, as they were the ones who would have to hold the hundred and fifty pound slabs of metal in place while the engineers welded them.

“Fuck it’s freezing in here!” One of the engineers gasped.

“Ignore it!” Martin told him. “Once you start welding it will heat up soon enough!”

“Here! Right here,” The engineer with Martin barked, pointing to the cracked tube that was venting into the vacuum of space.

Martin lifted the titanium replacement patch and exerting his inhuman strength, pushed the metal over the hissing crack. The engineer with Martin was older and more experienced, and even before Martin had anchored the replacement slab he was igniting the welding torch and burning it into place.

The engineer with Dan was not as experienced, but he had more guts than brains it seemed as he had his torch already ignited before they had gotten to the cracked tube ten meters past where Martin was.

“Right there,” The man echoed his older partner, and he watched as Dan moved the slab into place. Once Dan had anchored the replacement slab he went to work welding.

“No not there,” Anja barked to her team. “He’s a condition three, he can wait! This one goes to trauma stat! He’s got third degree burns over fifty percent of his body! Which clinic has the burn unit?”

Anja’s senior medic looked at her, “Northwest section!”

“How fast can we get him there?”

“We have every transport tube standing by to move the wounded Commander!”

“Anyone with second or third degree burns goes now!” Anja made the decision. “We can support the major traumas but we can’t keep the burn victims alive here! We don’t have the chambers for them! Move them now!”

“That could very well kill some of them Commander.” The medic reminded her.

“They’ll die if we keep them here.” Anja spoke.

The medic nodded. “I’ll see to it!”

“And contact the next closest clinic!” Anja called. “I want every ounce of pain killer and all healing patches that they have brought here like yesterday! If they give you any grief, tell them I’ll have Commander Hunter crack someone’s head if they don’t follow my orders!”

The medic nodded with a smile and turned to follow her orders. Anja blinked, realizing what she had just said about Martin, and once more the vivid memories of the night before with Danny and Julie came rushing back to her. She shook her head to clear the thoughts just as one of her female nurses took her arm.

“They got the feed back Commander!” She said.

Anja looked at her. “What?”

“The Admiral ordered the entire wing evacuated because he was ordering the reactor shut down to avoid an explosion. Commander Hunter and Commander Simpson refused to leave because of three human engineers. They’re trying to seal the breaches before the integrity field collapses!” The nurse motioned to the monitor, which up until a few minutes ago had been dark. It now showed a live picture of what was happening in the connection tube. Anja could clearly make out Martin and Danny holding the large pieces of titanium in place while the engineers were using welding torches.

“Martin?” Anja spoke to herself, fear filling her heart. “Danny?”

“How are we doing?” Martin called, gritting his teeth through the pain of the sparks and the heat from holding the steel plate. Even with the fire resistant gloves on, the searing heat of the freshly welded steel was causing his gloves to slowly melt.

“Thirty more seconds!” The engineer called, not looking away from his work.

“Dan!”

Danny’s face was also clenched as the identical thing was happening to his glove covered hands. “We’re working on it!” He yelled back.

Martin turned to look back at the door they had come through. “Master Chief what is your status?”

“Just finished bypassing the breach here skipper,” Tony answered. “The tech head is welding the bypass now!”

“Got it,” The engineer barked, stepping away from the now securely welded patch. Martin stepped back as well, pulling the gloves off his hands quickly and tossing them to the floor. His hands were covered in red welts and blisters and pain shot through them as he tried to bend the fingers. The senior engineer looked at his hands and his eyes widened.

“Oh my god,” He muttered.

“Forget it!” Martin barked. “Help your man finish welding!”

“Done,” The younger engineer snapped as he stepped back.

Dan did the same thing as Martin tearing the gloves off to inspect the damage to his hands.

“Admiral what is the status of the integrity field?” Martin asked.

“It’s holding Admiral!” The CDO reported with what looked to be a huge sigh on relief. “The field is holding at sixteen percent!”

“Route whatever power we can to boost the field strength!” William ordered. “Bypass through the secondary conduits if you have too!”

“We’re on it sir!”

“And get a full damage control team into the area as soon as those damn fires are out!”

Anja’s senior nurse turned from the monitor. “Commander... we should send a team to that section! They looked to be pretty badly burned!” Her eyes widened when she realized Anja wasn’t behind her anymore. She snapped her head around and caught a glimpse of Anja racing from the clinic the senior medic right behind her.

The senior nurse nodded approvingly. “You heard Commander Peterson’s orders!” She barked. “All burn victims prep for transport! We have three doctors coming in from the South clinic to assist but this is still her clinic. Let’s get to work!”

Martin and Dan had slumped to the ground of the connection tube with the two engineers, sweat pouring from their bodies from the intense heat. Tony and the others from the control module opened the door as integrity rose to twenty-seven percent and the blast of cooler air was very refreshing.

“The integrity is coming back up Skipper!” Tony reported coming over to him.

Martin nodded and looked at the senior engineer. “You guys did real well.” He said.

The man met Martin’s eyes and nodded. He hadn’t had cause before today to get to know any of the genomes on the station very well, as he didn’t quite trust them. After today and what they had done, the man made a mental note to make sure he changed his mind.

“You could have left us.” He said softly.

Martin didn’t even blink at him. “And let you guys save the day, no way!” He said with a laugh.

The senior engineer chuckled and began to laugh heartily at Martin’s words. They would have died here if not for Martin and Dan. There was no way they could have sealed all three breaches before the section breached completely and killed them. Martin had disobeyed an order to evacuate, as they could have survived

without life support for several minutes. Martin had instead chosen to remain and together attempt to save them all. It had worked, and now the senior engineer was going to be able to hold his wife and daughter again when this day was done.

Anja and her senior medic burst into the connection tube at a dead run and came to screeching halts, Anja's eyes seeking out and finding Martin immediately and then moving to where Danny sat. One of the other members of his team was attempting to treat his badly burned hands. Anja paused for a long moment, the events of the night before still vividly etched in her mind. Danny had fucked her silly giving her pleasure almost on a par to the night she had shared with Martin. The times with Kevin were already long forgotten, washed away with the countless times Danny had erupted into her clutching pussy. Unfortunately... now as she looked at Martin she felt regret and remorse for her actions and a sense of betrayal that she had never felt before gripped her. She felt as if she had betrayed Martin in some way and it made cold fingers grip her heart.

Anja went immediately to Martin and knelt in front of him, as he looked up at her. She saw his nose wrinkle just a tiny bit and she knew then that he could smell Danny all over her. She inspected his hands quickly careful not to touch the blistered areas. "Second degree burns." She commented. "The gloves saved your hands."

Martin nodded slowly the pain still fresh in his senses. Anja turned to the medic. "Give him four CCs of morphine and get him to the MED bay ASAP!"

"Roger that Commander." The medic replied.

Anja looked at him. "Martin I..."

Martin shook his head. "You don't need to explain anything to me." He said, his voice soft as he got to his feet.

Anja watched him follow the medic out of the tunnel and she turned to go to where Danny sat. Dan looked up as he felt the soft hands grip his burned ones and his eyes widened when he saw Anja's worried face. He started to pull his hands back, not knowing what to expect.

"Sit still!" She hissed at him, turning his large hands over in her smaller ones to view the damage to the same hands that had roamed her body freely and elicited numerous gasps of pleasure and contentment. Anja removed an injector spray and bandages from the small kit she had thrown over her shoulder on the way out of the clinic and she went to work.

"Anja..."

Anja looked at him. "Be quiet." She spoke. She needed to speak with Julie before anything else happened. She remembered hearing Julie say she would explain it to Danny as she was rushing out of the room. She needed it explained to her before things went further. And holding his large hands and treating them, Anja came to the realization that she did not know if she wanted things to proceed further.

THREE HOURS LATER

Admiral Wallace stood in the center of the clinic looking at the wounded that occupied the beds. He turned as Anja came up beside him. "What was the count Commander Peterson?" He asked.

"Thirteen remain here Admiral." Anja replied. "Forty-nine have been moved to other clinics. The most serious were eight burn cases and they were all transported to the burn unit in the first moments after getting here."

William looked at her. "That saved their lives I understand."

Anja met his gaze. "Keeping them here would have killed them sir. They needed immediate treatment."

"Moving them could have killed them as well." William told her.

"I made a decision sir." Anja spoke.

William nodded. "Yes you did. And it was the right one. I knew there was hope for you."

"It was only one decision sir." Anja said.

William nodded. "Yes it was, just so you remember that not all of your decisions will be correct."

Anja looked at him, her face genuinely curious. “And when they aren’t Admiral?” She asked. “What do you do?”

“Learn from your mistakes and go on.” William answered quickly and honestly.

Anja saw Julie enter the clinic from the corner of her eye and her heart quickened. “If you will excuse me Admiral, I need to see to someone?”

“Good job here Anja.” Bill said, “Excellent job.”

“Thank you sir,” Anja turned and started towards Julie who saw her and met her half way.

“Where’s Danny?” Julie asked concern in her voice.

“This way,” Anja said leading her to an office with blacked out windows. Julie looked puzzled as Anja closed the door behind them and turned to face her.

“Anja what is going on? Where’s Danny?”

“He’s fine.” Anja spoke. “Second degree burns on his hands that will heal in a matter of hours due to his genome healing process, the same for Martin.”

“I want to see him.” Julie said.

“I need answers Julie.” Anja said, only now her voice had taken a tone of pleading. “What happen to me, to us?”

Julie smiled as she remembered the events of the previous evening and how delicious Anja tasted. “I thought we were having an exceptionally wonderful time.” She said, folding her arms under her firm breasts. “And I don’t recall you being forced to fuck Danny back like you were doing when I first showed up, or grab me and start going to town on my pussy either.” She stepped closer to Anja, looking down at the shorter woman who Julie had to admit was incredibly sexy and easy to look at.

“Julie I’m not like... I need to know...”

“You taste like honey.” Julie said softly, reaching up to stroke her cheek.

Anja’s eyes closed at her touch and it sent shivers through her body. “And you... you taste like Mocha.” She said softly, opening her eyes and reaching up to hold Julie’s hand. “But I need to know how this happen.”

Julie sighed and nodded her head. “It happened to me too, seven years ago.” She said turning to go to the chair as Anja leaned against the desk. “It has to do with the wolf genes that we have grafted to our DNA. The thing is... and I asked Doctor Carson about this... it only affects one in ten billion women. It is like a feeling, a sense of well being surrounds you. The way Doctor Carson explained it to me is simple really. The Alpha male of a wolf pack uses this aura to attract females to mate with. It has something to do with the chemical composition of the female’s body and basically it removes all their inhibitions and makes them desire the male. It is not something that they can control... at least I don’t think so... and it doesn’t happen unless the female is willing. He doesn’t know the full extent of what it does; I don’t think any of them do. Maybe the Skipper... he discovered it a long time ago.”

“Several hours,” Anja asked. “But we... it was nearly...”

Julie nodded. “I know. The female wolves have it as well to a much smaller degree, but I wasn’t projecting that when we woke up. What happened between us was something we did.”

“We did?” Anja asked incredulous. “I’ve... I’ve never entertain the idea of sex with a woman before!”

Julie nodded. “Well neither have I.”

Anja looked at her. “But you are... Danny is...”

“We’re genomes.” Julie said without a hint of malice in her voice. “Yes we are... but does that make us any less human? I don’t think so.” Julie stood up and moved over to her. “You are an incredibly sexy woman Anja and without you I would never have discovered this other side to myself, and I gather neither would you.”

“But... you love him.” Anja said.

Julie nodded. “Yes I do. And I know he loves me, but that love is not all consuming. We both know that we are meant for different people. That does not mean we would not very happily wrap ourselves around your luscious body and share you. At the very least we can have some incredible sex!”

“I don’t... I don’t know if I...” Anja stammered.

“You don’t know if you can willingly have sex with two Genomes. Especially when one is a woman?”

Anja met her eyes. “I need time to sort out what happen last night.” She stated.

Julie leaned over and pressed her lips to Anja's and gave her a soft lingering kiss, her tongue dancing across her warm lips. She stroked Anja's cheek and smiled at her. "We'll be waiting if you want to give it another go."

Anja sat there and watched Julie walked out of the office. Her emotions were a huge mess and she did not know which way to go. Julie's words rang in her head however. It had been a very pleasurable evening to say the least, and part of her wanted it to happen again. However part of her still ached with a strong sense of betrayal of Martin, and that betrayal also was tinged with desire for him. Anja shook her head, her emotions very confused and she was not able to think clearly.

Her senior medic bursting into the office changed all that. "Commander Peterson! Admiral Wallace is calling an emergency meeting in the Command Shed. Thirty minutes!"

EARTH

Endith stood in the treeline of the immense National Forest, her keen eyes watching as scores of her fellow High Elves raced for the trees. Far behind them she could see the huge flying hover gunships, their massive chain cannons spewing out death beneath them and chopping dozens of her comrades to pieces. Endith blinked back tears as she and others ushered the wounded and walking wounded deeper into the forest. Many of the male elves carried wounded comrades by themselves, while the female elves assisted in groups of two or three. No one seemed to be without some sort of injury, and Endith's dread increased as she had yet to see any sign of the Queen or her personal guard.

Endith moved to the very edge of the forest and grabbed the first uninjured warrior that was heading towards her. The young female elf came up short at Endith's hand on her arm.

"Where is the Queen? I haven't seen the Queen!" Endith exclaimed.

"She led a small force south of our last position to draw Marcus's beasts away from us!" The young warrior answered. "That was several hours ago. No one has seen her since!"

Ice cold fear gripped Endith's heart and her eyes went wide. "There is nothing to the south except wasteland!"

"She ordered us to run Endith!" The young woman spoke excitedly. "She said she would lead them toward the sacred place and make a stand in the ruins there."

Endith's eyes grew even wider. "Quickly, you must gather a dozen uninjured warriors with as much equipment and weapons as they can move like the wind with. We can loop to the west through the forests and find the Queen."

The warrior looked at her as if she had gone insane. "Endith she has had hours to move ahead of us. We will never catch her before she reaches the ruins."

Endith gripped the woman's arms tightly. "The Holy One has been moved to safety! She is our Queen and we must try! Now go!"

The young warrior nodded and made her way into the forest at a run. Endith looked beyond the forest and the hills, looking south. "I will find you my Queen." She said softly. "I will find you."

EDEN COMMAND CENTER

William looked at the faces of the men and women in the room. Some of them were still dirty from fighting the fires or moving the wounded to other clinics within EDEN's compound, but they had come quickly and taken seats around the table.

"Sorry to bust up your satisfaction at solving our recent crisis, but I have been informed that we have a much larger problem." William told them.

“What could be larger than the station almost being lost Admiral?” Martin asked from his chair. His hands still wore a layer of bandages, but his genome healing ability was working quickly and the burns would be gone within another hour or so.

“This is Doctor Morrow from the Quantum Physics Lab.” William spoke, motioning to the older man with thin rimmed oval glasses propped up on his forehead. “He has some information that all of us need to be made aware of. Doctor Morrow.”

The man stood up to his full height of five and a half feet, looking pale and thin. He wore a long lab coat and carried several data pads as he moved around to the front of the table and went to the portable vid screen that had been brought in.

“Yes well... I will try to keep this as simple as I can.” He spoke activating the screen. It came alive with a graphic simulation of the comet that was finally clearing its way out of the space between the moon and earth. “When the comet was first detected several months ago, it was determined that it would pass harmlessly between the earth and the moon. For all intents and purposes it has. However, no one predicted the massive gravitational fluxes originating from the core of the comet. In layman’s terms, the moment the comet enter the gravity well of the moon, we stopped rotating around the earth.”

“And that’s bad?” Dan asked from his chair next to Martin.

Doctor Morrow nudged his glasses further up on his forehead and looked at Danny. “That’s very bad.” He replied. “While we stopped rotating around the earth, the same gravity fluxes that stopped us caused the earth to spin faster. This action disturbed the space/time continuum to such an extreme that major changes have taken place.”

“Major changes,” Anja asked as she came forward in her chair. While she was a genetic scientist by her schooling, she had kept up on many other fields within the scientific world. “What do you mean by major changes?”

Morrow lifted one of the data pads. “I’ve had our high resolution cameras taking pictures of earth ever since the comet began to clear our horizon.”

“And,” Anja continued.

“I’ll let you see for yourself.” He explained as he plugged the datapad into the screen and touched the control panel.

A view of the North American continent came onto the screen, but there was something very wrong with the way it appeared. There was a long wide stretch of water that began in the lower portion of California and extended up into Oregon that should not have been there. It effectively had created an island of sorts. Where Mexico should have been was now nothing but ocean, as if the Caribbean and Pacific oceans had come together. There were great swatches of what appeared to be burned out land in the central United States, and an entirely new mountain range that ran directly through Kansas and Missouri.

“What the hell!” Martin exclaimed looking at the screen.

“Is this some kind of joke?” Julie blurted from her chair.

Morrow looked at them. “I assure you, this is no joke. And it gets worse.” He told them. “It gets much worse.” He worked the console until the pictures were focused along the eastern seaboard of the United States. Morrow took a deep breath. “As you can see from these high resolution pictures, nearly every major city along the eastern coast is gone. Nothing remains except hulks of steel and concrete. It would appear most of them were burned to cinders.”

“Burned?” Danny asked.

Morrow nodded. “If the information we have gathered to this point is accurate, and there is no reason to doubt it isn’t, the comet’s gravity well pushed enough of its tail into the upper atmosphere of the planet, and it started what we call an Extinction Level Event. It set the atmosphere on fire.”

“Holy Jesus,” Frank Wilson muttered as he sat back in his chair.

Morrow nodded. “The burn patterns on the surface of the planet indicate that the fires swept across every major continent. There was nothing anyone could do to stop it. The large fissures you see along the western seaboard were where the San Andreas Fault line gave in to the tremendous heat being generated above and caused a cataclysmic earthquake. I estimate a quake at least 12.4 in order to cause the separation of the land masses as you now see. As the fire spread, it ignited refineries across the globe, which would account for the massive burn swatches along the lower portions near the gulf coast. There are signs of at least three major

impact craters, which indicate that parts of the comet detached and slammed into the earth. One crater is located in the Atlantic basin, one in central Asia, and one in northern Canada. I would imagine the devastation caused by such impacts was also catastrophic.”

“Wait a minute!” Martin spoke up again. “Why isn’t the atmosphere still burning? This should be happening right now! Looking at these pictures you are showing us, at first glance the planet doesn’t appear any differently.”

Marrow nodded. “That is the much worse part.” He said slowly. “I’ve checked and rechecked all my calculations, and then my staff did the same thing. The numbers always come out the same.”

“What numbers?” Martin asked.

“As I stated in the beginning of this briefing the comet’s gravity wells disrupted the space/time continuum as we know it.” Marrow spoke. “The moon stopped rotating while the earth sped up. In other words, time stopped for us, while it continued on earth.”

“Excuse me?” Frank asked.

“The reason we do not see the planet on fire and why we don’t see these natural events occurring is quite simple really.” Marrow told them. “They happened in the past.”

“Wait a minute, in the past?” Anja asked.

Marrow nodded slowly. “There is really no way to say this, but for the sixteen hours and thirty-three minutes while the comet was passing between the moon and earth time continued to go forward on earth while it stood still here. By my calculations, for every hour that passed for us here on EDEN, twenty-nine point eight years passed on earth.” Marrow saw the stunned and shocked expressions on everyone’s faces.

“Ladies and gentlemen, we have come four hundred and seventy-eight years into the future.”

CHAPTER FOUR

EDEN

TEN DAYS AFTER DISCOVERY

All of them had been awake and active for close to thirty-six hours now, and it showed in the state of their uniforms and the drawn look of their faces. They had spent the last week repairing the damage to EDEN and trying to gather as much information as they could about what had happened to them and to earth. All of them had data pads strewn in front of them, coffee pots and mugs spread all over the large table. Portable computer modules had been brought into the room to run dozens of different scenarios, all of which gave them the same result. Hundreds of high resolution photos were scattered across the table as well, ranging from photos of every country, to deep penetrating photos of the earth itself. Data pads full of results from every major sensor and radar scan that they could run were stacked sometimes six high on the table. Everyone was still trying to come to grips with the reality that had blindsided them all. Family, friends, anyone they had ever gone to school with, dated, grew up with, they were all long dead; husbands, wives, parents, children, siblings, all of them gone.

The information had been made known to EDEN’s crew of nearly eight thousand, and as they were still trying to recover from the effects of the comet’s passing and the near disaster that had occurred when the still as yet unidentified Raptor slammed into the control module, many of them had not yet stopped to consider the implications of what they had been told.

Admiral Wallace had brought in every division head on EDEN, and against his better judgment, had allowed Senator Graham and Kevin to attend the meeting they were now all gathered together again for.

Bill banged his well smoked pipe against his coffee mug and silenced the conversations that were going on around the room. “Ok... let’s get started. Everyone grab a squat.” He waited while the officers and civilian scientists all settled into the chairs around the table. More chairs had been brought in for those that had not been included in their first meeting, and Richard and Kevin now sat on either side of Anja, who did not appear happy about that arrangement in the least.

“I’ll be honest,” Wallace spoke. “I don’t have a fucking clue where to begin, so let’s start with our status here. Frank?”

Colonel Wilson leaned forward in his chair. "EDEN is fully secure." He spoke. "Repairs are continuing on damage to section thirty-four, but the integrity field has been repaired, and all the personnel with quarters in the three destroyed sections have been relocated. Thankfully those three sections were mainly used for low end experiments and were mostly empty. Sixty-two casualties, including eight critical burn victims, all of whom will recover fully thanks to Commander Peterson's quick action getting them to the burn unit."

Julie sat next to Dan on the other side of the table and she watched as Kevin reached out to take Anja's hand and squeeze it. She smiled to herself when Anja withdrew her hand quickly and gave him a very dirty look. They had not seen her very often in the last week, and when they did she was treating a patient in the MED Center. She was intentionally avoiding them they knew, and even though they understood why, both of them were disappointed.

"If I may take a moment and interrupt Colonel?" Senator Graham spoke now. "I want to be sure that it is noted in the official Command Logs that Commander Hunter disobeyed his orders to evacuate the damaged section of EDEN so that Admiral Wallace could shut down the reactor. In my opinion he put the entire station at risk with his actions."

Frank glared at Richard as he began typing into the data pad quickly. He finished within a minute and still looking at Richard he held it up. "Marty... you and Danny want to sign this?" He spoke tossing the pad down to Martin.

Martin grinned and touched the pad with his thumb before handing it to Dan who did the same with a smile. He handed it back to Martin who then tossed it back to Frank.

Frank looked at Richard. "The log is duly noted Senator." He spoke before flipping the datapad onto a pile of others behind him. "I'll make sure it gets sent out with the rest of our four hundred and seventy-eight year old logs, just as soon as we find out where to send them."

William contained the laugh he wanted to let out before leaning forward in his chair. "I understand we are all under a lot of stress, but we need to work together. We've all seen Doctor Morrow's hard figures and facts. What we need to do now is decide what to do."

"We need to find out where the government is functioning from." Richard spoke again. "And then we need to contact them."

"Infra-red scans have picked up dozens of hot spots Admiral." The CDO spoke now. His forehead was bandaged, blood still on the collar of his uniform. "We can't get an exact count, but there are what appear to be population centers in quite a few cities across the country and the world. We're picking up high altitude contrails from aircraft, but not in any great numbers and the consensus of my team is that commercial air traffic is not what it once was. There does seem to be an extensive rail system, much more than what we... what we remember, especially within the cities. Our high resolution photos have determined that these cities are advanced, as they appear similar to what we knew in many ways, but the population does not appear to be what it once was." He finished his statement.

"My initial estimates have been refined somewhat," Doctor Morrow spoke up. "But the original figures are accurate. Taking into account what our instruments here have been telling us of the damage for the last seven days, my staff and I concur that the world's population has been cut in half if not more. The infra-red scans confirm this as well."

"Good Marcus!" Richard Graham exclaimed.

"We've been trying to raise EDEN Ground Command for the last thirty-nine hours, ever since we got the main transmitter back online, but we're getting nothing." Frank spoke.

"Doctor Morrow, do you know how long would this atmospheric fire have lasted for?" Bill asked, turning to the nerdy doctor.

Morrow shrugged his slim shoulders. "It's impossible to tell, but given the depth of the burn scoring on the Earth's crust, we estimate at least two to five years." He replied. "Anything on the surface would not have lasted more than a few days. Only men and women in deep bunkers and caves would have had a chance."

"So it's not unreasonable to assume that any surviving government officials would have deduced that EDEN was also destroyed and they would not have tried to contact us?" Bill said.

Morrow nodded. "It's very likely Admiral. There is no way they could have contacted us regardless. The fire and heat would have disrupted any type of communications they may have attempted, and given the fact

that EDEN was a newly commissioned base when the comet came, it stands to reason that any survivors who knew of our existence would come to the conclusion that the comet destroyed EDEN as well.”

“The communications we have been able to pick up suggest we need to proceed with extreme caution.” Julie spoke now leaning forward. “The Raptor crash took out our most powerful receiver, but all of our secondary receivers are getting the same thing. There appears to be a conflict occurring in the Midwest part of the United States, as we are picking up a lot of traffic between military units. Nothing we have ever heard of, but they are using military call signs and speak with military precision. We are also picking up some low band transmissions that indicate unfriendly activity spread across a wide area. We’ve picked up the terms slavery and elves numerous times.”

“Elves,” Bill asked shocked. “You mean like in children’s books?”

Julie shrugged. “Nothing concrete Admiral, but those terms were used in the same sentences quite a few times. Maybe it’s a code of some sort.”

“I don’t like the fact that slavery is being thrown around like it is.” Bill spoke.

Martin nodded. “That fact alone screams that we should be careful.” He spoke. “If we are over four hundred and fifty years into the future, we have no idea what type of climate is persistent on Earth right now. We can’t just dial up who we think is in charge and say Hi we’re from EDEN, and we’re back!”

“Why not,” Richard spoke. “I am a Senator of the United States, and I’m quite sure...”

“Excuse me Senator, but did you miss the part where we came four hundred and seventy-eight years into the future?” Martin asked. “We don’t even know if the United States still exists anymore.”

“Nonsense,” Richard answered. “All we need to do is contact whoever is in charge and let them know who we are. I can do the rest.”

“What are you suggesting Marty?” Admiral Wallace asked.

“Let me take a team down sir.” Martin told him. “We’ve determined through high resolution photos that EDEN Ground Command is still there, and still intact. I’ll take a team there, and we can try and determine the current scope of what we are dealing with. At the very least we can get the needed equipment to repair our long range receiver. One Raptor and nine of my team would be sufficient. I can be back in three days time, four at the most.”

“How would you do it?” William asked.

“Hard drop right into the base perimeter; we travel light, get what information we can and have Tina and Ben come in to extract us.” Martin replied.

Admiral Wallace nodded. “That’s what we’ll do.” He said.

“Admiral I protest!” Richard began. “I don’t believe this is the best course of action.”

Wallace looked at him. “You’re not being asked for your opinion Senator.” He turned back to Martin. “How soon before you can depart?”

“I’d like to go in fresh sir. We can be loaded and flying in three hours and sleep on the flight in.”

“Then let’s make it happen.”

EDEN WEST LANDING PAD

Martin looked at Anja as she walked up the ramp of the Raptor carrying two duffels of medical equipment. He stepped in front of her.

“What are you doing?” He asked her.

Anja met his eyes, finding that very hard to do given the emotions she had running through her. “I’m coming with you.” She answered. “You need medical support, and since my primary duties have been placed on the back burner it seems, I’m available. I’m Hard Drop qualified and I graduated from BUD/S. I’m a fully qualified SEAL operator and you know that Martin.”

“You haven’t been on a Team mission since you graduated Anja.” Martin told her. “You aren’t as sharp as the rest of us. And you aren’t a genome.”

“No I’m not a genome, but I’ve stayed current in all my Quals.” She answered quickly. “I asked the Admiral for permission, but he said you had to approve it. I... I don’t want to stay here Martin.” Her voice was almost pleading him.

Martin sensed there was something about her desire to accompany them, and he also sensed she was being very honest with him. He smiled and held out his hand for her duffels. “Welcome aboard.” He spoke. “You might want to say goodbye to your fan club though.” He spoke motioning back into the bay.

Anja turned to see Kevin running up to the Raptor. She sighed heavily as he nearly skidded to a halt in front of her.

“What do you want Kevin?” Anja asked.

“What are you doing?” He asked.

“What does it look like?” Anja said. “I’m leaving.”

“My father wanted to speak with you. He’s waiting in the lounge.”

“Good for him.” Anja said. “I have things to do.”

Kevin stepped closer to her and took her arm tightly. “He did not give you permission to go with these... these people.”

Anja pulled her arm away quickly. “Don’t touch me!” She hissed at him. “I’m a Naval Officer and I have a job to do!”

“You work for my father!” Kevin snapped right back.

“I work for Admiral Wallace now.” Anja spoke. “And he gave me permission to be on this mission.”

“You requested to go on this crazy trip?” Kevin asked aghast.

Anja turned her head slowly and looked into the rear of the Raptor. Her eyes quickly found where Julie and Danny were stowing their gear, and both of them chose that moment to turn and make eye contact with her. She glanced at Martin then, who was staring at her with those beautiful dark eyes. She held his gaze for several moments before turning back to Kevin. “This is where I am needed.” She told him.

“Listen to me Anja, my father will be very upset about this! He’ll...”

Martin stepped up to them. “Are you coming with us pretty boy?” Martin asked.

Kevin looked at him arrogantly. “Certainly not, and we are having a discussion here, do you mind?”

Martin grinned. “Yes I do as a matter of fact! Unless you plan on coming with us, I need your ass off my ship!” Martin activated the ramp controls and pulled Anja back into the interior of the Raptor gently by the back of her shirt as the ramp started to come up.

Anja looked at him. “Thank you.” She spoke softly.

Martin nodded. “No problem. Why don’t you get...?” His eyes widened and Anja turned to see what he was looking at and they saw Kevin leap up onto the ramp and nearly have his head taken off as it closed behind him.

“Kevin what are you doing?” Anja barked at him.

“I’m coming with you! What does it look like?” Kevin replied looking back as he heard the ramp lock into place.

“You can’t be serious!” Anja exclaimed. She turned to Martin and saw the pissed off look on his face. “We can’t take him Martin.”

“Ben has already started pre-flight.” Martin replied looking at her. “And I want to get airborne. Danny would you find twinkle toes here a seat, and make sure he doesn’t puke on my clean deck! We’ll figure out what to do with him later.”

Dan came up to them with a small smile and took Kevin by the arm. “Right this way twinkle toes.” He spoke pulling him along after a quick look at Anja.

Anja turned to Martin, a look of disgust on her face. “I’m not going to baby sit him Martin.” She said. “He stays on the ship and out of my way.”

Martin looked at her intently. “You... you seem different Anja.” He spoke softly, stepping closer to her.

Anja held her breath for a long moment, not looking at him. His musky mint smell filled her nostrils. “We’re all different now.” She spoke quickly knowing Martin could probably still smell Danny and Julie all over her.

Martin smiled in a knowing way, and Anja felt herself blush slightly. “I don’t plan on having you baby sit him. You’re part of my team now.” He told her. “We’ll figure out what to do with him on the way.”

Anja's face became serious. "Martin... I'm sorry... I'm sorry about Yuri."

Martin's face changed quickly, becoming unreadable. He nodded slowly. "Yeah... well losing women seems to be one of my more prominent traits." He forced a small smile. "Grab a seat."

Anja turned and moved into the interior of the Raptor.

ONE HOUR TO INSERTION

The jarring of the Raptor woke Anja from her exhausted sleep, her green eyes going wide as she sprang to her feet. She saw the members of Martin's team already up and moving about, many of them were checking weapons and other equipment. She got to her feet unsure of what to do and saw Danny move around the center crate, adorned in full body armor and combat gear. His black nomex uniform had cargo pockets on the legs and additional padding and armor over every portion of his body except for his joints. His combat vest was loaded with several grenades and a large automatic in a shoulder holster. He carried the wicked looking HK74 assault rifle with what she recognized as a grenade launcher under the silenced barrel. She rubbed her eyes as he stopped in front of her.

"Good morning sleepy head." He said with a smile, flashing his perfect white teeth.

Anja looked up into the dark eyes and face of the man who had made her feel things she never thought possible only a few short hours ago.

"Danny..." Anja spoke softly. "I... I don't..."

Dan shook his head gently. "Jules explained everything to me." He told her, his voice just above a whisper so only she could hear him. "I swear to you Anja, I had no idea what kind of effect I would have on you, but I damn sure don't regret a single moment of anything that happened between us."

"Danny... you..."

"Hear me out." Dan said softly. "You may or may not believe me, but I'm going to say it anyway just so you know. I want it to happen again, and not for the reasons you may think. I'm a genome yes, but I am also a man. And I am not so stupid as to not know what I want and don't want, regardless of how I act. I have Jules... and she has me... but we both want you. And that's a fact. It's... it's not easy for me to explain it, Jules is better at words than I'll ever be, but you... you are incredibly sexy and I'd be a fool if I said I didn't want it to happen again. The decision is yours, whenever you make it, and as much as I would like you to say it's what you want as well, now is not the time." He held up the bundle for her to see. "The Skipper says you are qualified for Hard Drops, so here is your gear. Your bags have already been stowed in Julie's pod since you're riding down with her." He pulled the small hypo from his vest and handed it to her. "This is your receiver and transmitter. They are normal coms, but Jules added our personal channel to your implant chip. It's eleven. This is from her." He handed her the hypo and small pouch.

"Thank you." Anja said taking the gear, never taking her eyes off him.

Dan pulled something else from the pack he carried. "This is from me." He told her, holding out the small black automatic, and the cut down version of the silenced HK74 he carried. "I took a normal K12 and HK74 and reworked them a little. The weight and balance are the same, but they have more knock down than the standard K12 and HK that you are used too. I loaded three extra clips for the K12 for you and sized your thigh holster for the best fit."

Anja took the weapon while looking at him. "You sized it for me?" She asked.

Dan grinned in an almost embarrassed sort of way. "Anja I memorized every millimeter of your body in those few hours. I could pick your scent out of a crowd of thousands if I needed too." He told her, causing Anja to blush as well, but in the dim light of the Raptor no one else noticed.

"Thank you Danny."

Dan nodded. "Get suited up, we'll be entering the atmosphere in about twenty minutes." He told her before turning and heading forward.

“Altitude at twenty-seven thousand feet and we are in the pipeline.” Ben spoke from the left seat of the Raptor.

“Stealth systems are activated and operating at peak output.” Tina said from the right seat. “We are a ghost.”

Ben turned back to where Martin sat behind them. “Pretty standard Marty and we’ll be over the target in sixteen minutes. TOT puts you on the ground at 2045 local.”

“Nothing out of the ordinary Ben,” Martin asked.

Ben shook his head. “Aside from a slightly higher temperature when we entered the atmosphere, it was a standard flight.”

“I’m picking up a lot of com traffic.” Tina spoke adjusting her instruments. “I am marking what appears to be search radars scattered all over, mostly X-band stuff. Nothing directed at us, but from the patterns they are using I’d say they are looking for something.”

“Is there anything coming out of the target area?” Martin asked.

“Looks like two search radars well east of the base. They appear to be stationary though. I’m picking up intermittent infra red signals within four kilometers of the base, could be people or it could be animals, there’s no way for me to tell. I’ll try zooming the High Res camera in on one of the clusters Marty. I’ll patch the feed through to your station.”

Martin turned to his screen as the picture came up. It appeared to be nearing dusk, and the images were dim but very clear. He could see a small group of armed men and women running easily through the thinning trees as they neared the edge of the forest on the perimeter of the base.

“They look like soldiers.” He spoke softly. “Soldiers that are running from something and that ain’t good. Tina can you expand the view to ten kilometers.”

“Stand by.” Tina echoed, adjusting her instruments. “I’m picking up another larger cluster six kilometers behind the first. It looks like... holy shit! Is that a tank?”

Martin’s eyes had also grown wider as he viewed the metal monster moving methodically through the thin forest, knocking down trees and uprooting bushes. The tracked vehicle looked larger than a normal tank and sported a long tank gun that currently was pointed straight ahead. “That’s not like any tank I have ever seen.” Martin spoke, his eyes also taking in the soldiers that were marching on all sides of the tank. He estimated at least a company sized force. “Whoever they are, it seems they are chasing the first group we saw. And both of them are heading right for the base.”

“You want to abort Marty?” Ben asked. “We’re still thirteen minutes out.”

“No.” Martin answered. “We need to find out what is going on and...”

“Fuck!” Tina exclaimed. “Something just hit that first group! What the hell is that?”

Martin’s eyes were glued to the screen as they watched what appeared to be an armored creature similar to a bear tearing through the first group of soldiers. They were trying to track it and fire their weapons, but it didn’t appear to have any effect on the creature. Already four of their number were on the ground and looked to either be dead or have serious injuries.

“Marty that second group has juiced it!” Tina called.

Martin thought he saw a flash of long black hair under the trees and then the creature struck and the hair disappeared.

“Well I’ll be damned!” Ben exclaimed from his seat.

Martin turned from his screen. “What?”

“Just for shits and giggles I tried activating the base hanger controls by remote.” Ben spoke, his hand resting on the controls of the Raptor. “I never thought it would actually work, but take a look.”

Martin’s eyes went to the small screen between Ben and Tina and he saw the ground beginning to open slowly. Dust was rising into the air as several hundred years of dirt and leaves and branches collapsed into the underground structure, but the hanger doors opened fully.

“Power readings from the base?” Martin asked.

Tina shook her head. “Minimal.” She answered. “And I’m not detecting any infra red signatures near the landing pad either. But we don’t know about the rest of the base. Our instruments can’t penetrate the outer shell armor.”

Ben looked at Martin. “It’s your call Marty.” He said.

“Christ whatever that thing is, it’s tearing those troops apart!” Tina spoke from her seat.

Martin looked at her monitor. “Jesus!” Martin muttered.

“Is that thing a bear?” Tina asked.

“That ain’t no bear that I’ve ever seen.” Ben spoke from his seat. “Marty we…”

“Can we hit it from here with the Sabot Cannon?” Martin asked.

Ben looked at him. “Does a bear shit in the woods?” He asked.

“Do it!” Martin spoke. “Then take us in. I never did like Hard Drops but be ready for an emergency ascent.”

Ben nodded. “I like a man who knows what he wants.” He said with a smile.

Tina looked at him. “So do I… so where do I find one?” She said with a grin.

Martin and Ben both smiled at her comment. “Warm up the cannons.” Ben spoke. “Marty put one of your people in the belly turret just in case.”

Martin nodded. “I got you covered.”

TARIFA’S COMMAND PARTY

Tarifa’s head was ringing from the glancing blow of the Grizz beast. The monster’s huge paw had struck her at the full extension of a swing from one of its massive clawed arms and tossed her physically twenty meters away. The Grizz beast was a mutated creature designed to look like a bear and to hunt prey for the Alliance. The normal ones easily stood nine feet tall and almost two thousand pounds, and that was without the additional armor that the Alliance covered their hides in. Unprotected Grizz beasts would go down after being shot fifty or sixty times, but this one was in the employ of the Alliance and was heavily armored. Her weapon and the weapons of her warriors fired only small caseless 6.7mm rounds, and they did not even dent the armor of the monster. It was tearing through her party, ripping and slashing her warriors to death. Blood stained the ground around the fighting; seven of her party of nineteen already littered the forest floor, their blood seeping into the ground from horrible wounds that had disemboweled them.

Tarifa felt the terrible pain in her head and reached up to brush her armored hand across the side of her face. The back of her gauntlet came away coated in bright red blood, and suddenly Tarifa knew she was in trouble. Her vision started to blur somewhat as she slumped back to the ground on her butt, barely catching herself in time. The snarl very close to her caused her to snap her head around, her eyes going wide in terror.

The Grizz beast was only three meters away from her, rising onto its powerful hind legs and lifting its lethal clawed arm to strike her down and feast on her flesh. Tarifa could hear the screams of her warriors as they rushed towards her, trying to get the monster’s attention to no avail. All of them knew they could not reach their Queen before the beast struck.

Tarifa flinched when she heard the wet plopping sound and her eyes went even wider when the Grizz beast rose to its full height and howled in agony. She continued to watch as even over the sounds of the monster’s roars she heard another similar plopping sound and this time she was showered with the monster’s thick blood as a huge hole the size of both her fists blew out the front of its armored belly. Her eyes glanced up quickly only to witness the beast’s head explode in a shower of bone and blood, spraying her and the surrounding area with more wetness.

The Grizz beast collapsed to the forest floor, its large head blown completely off, leaving only its fang filled lower jaw hanging lifeless in the shredded mess. The monster landed only a few feet from her and Tarifa scrambled back just as her remaining warriors ran up to her.

“My Queen,” The man spoke, lowering his assault rifle and reaching for Tarifa, his hands pulling her away from the monster’s inert body and helping her to her feet.

The High Elf warriors crowded around the mangled beast; their eyes wide in complete astonishment.

“Something… something shot it!” Tarifa gasped. “It was about to… it was ready to rip me to pieces and something shot it.” She looked at the man with the smoking rifle. “You shot it?”

“I shot it many times my Queen.” He answered her, his face showing his own terror. “One of my bullets must have penetrated its armor.”

The High Elves suddenly became much more alert as their keen eyes began sweeping the darkening forest around them. Others moved to check on their fallen comrades, though it was far too late to save many of them.

“My Queen, you are injured.” The man spoke, reaching up to the side of her head.

Tarifa steadied herself with the man’s arm, as her eyes darted to where her fallen warriors lay. She moved to the first body where one of her soldiers grasped the hand of the female Elf. She was horribly wounded, her side practically ripped open, but she was alive.

“Marcus still pursues us.” Tarifa spoke now, her head clearing. “He will not follow us in the darkness however, and we must use this time to get further away. Give her a sedative to silence her and then pick her up.”

“Majesty she will only slow us down.” The man spoke from her side. “We can do nothing for her now, or any of the others. She is beyond our means to help.”

Tarifa whirled on the young warrior. “I will not leave her or the others for Marcus to find alive. He will heal them only to rape and torture them to death, if not worse. Now pick her up and let us go! We are not far from the sacred site and we will be safe there. Even Marcus will not enter the sacred site. We must hurry.”

EDEN GROUND COMMAND EARTH

The screaming of the Raptor’s engines was almost deafening within the small confines of the landing bay, centuries old dirt and dust and the recently disturbed debris from the surface blowing crazily in the man made tornado.

Ben’s hands gently caressed the controls of the Raptor as he brought the ship in slower than he usually would so that Martin could lower the ramp and members of his team could sweep the interior of the dark landing pad. The Raptor’s lights illuminated much of the landing pad, leaving only one area shrouded in shadows, and it was this area that the team member in the chain gun belly turret trained his cannons, his fingers ready to mash down on the triggers.

“Four meters,” Tina called out, her eyes glued to her instruments.

“Close the cover!” Ben called as he eased back on the throttles, the Raptor dropping even further until its landing struts touched the metal surface of the pad.

“Cover coming closed.” Tina spoke, her hand flipping another switch, which controlled the overhead door. They could hear the groaning of the steel as it moved for only the second time in nearly four hundred years. Tina looked at Ben. “That doesn’t sound good.”

Ben nodded. “I agree.” He spoke just as an enormously loud wrenching sound came from above and even over the roar of the engines it was obvious the doors had stopped closing.

“Damn!” Tina exclaimed. “They jammed up!”

“Are they fully closed?” Ben asked, not taking his eyes from his instruments as he set the Raptor down gently on the pad.

“Negative.” She replied. “It looks like they stopped about two feet shy.”

Ben shook his head. “Damn I should have thought of that. The control mechanism is probably full of rust and grit. I’m shutting down the engines. We’re stuck here now until we get the doors fixed.”

“I’m powering down internal systems.” Tina spoke. “If the doors worked then the base reactor must still be working. That means there is still power and we can plug in to recharge.”

Ben unfastened his straps. “I’ll let Marty know that the doors didn’t close fully, and start breaking out the chocks.”

Ben moved quickly into the rear of the Raptor and saw Martin and Tony standing on the edge of the Raptor’s ramp looking up at the stars that peered through the two foot wide gap in the overhead doors. The others were lined up behind them, waiting to disembark. Ben moved up next to Martin.

“Ben the overheads didn’t close all the way.” Martin spoke.

Ben nodded. "They shorted out, I know. I'm guessing it's because they haven't been used in over four centuries and they are kind of rusty. Not bad shooting with the sabot cannon huh; three shots from thirteen kilometers away?"

"So we're stuck here?" Martin asked looking at him.

"At least until we get the doors fixed." Ben answered. "There is still power to the base, and Tina and I can handle the doors. Infra red and motion sensors were blank, so unless you want to stay here longer then we planned; I suggest we start getting to work."

Martin nodded. "I agree." He said turning to Master Chief Brown. "Master Chief put Zippy and Tommy on security for Ben and Tina. Danny you take Pablo, Trina and Cody and head to engineering. See if you can get the generators online and running so we have power throughout the station. Tony, Anja and Julie are with me. We'll head to Command and see what we can find."

Danny nodded. "We're on it."

Martin pulled the hand held but powerful flashlight from his vest. He looked at the smiling pilot. "You should have killed it with one shot." He said with a grin. "Let's get moving."

"So this is the famous EDEN Ground Command?" Anja spoke as her eyes took in the expansive control room. She walked alongside Julie as they entered the command center, the massive room filled with computer consoles and chairs, as well as a huge wall monitor. It was very similar to the Johnson Space Center Museum that Anja had visited as a child.

Martin's eyes darted from shadow to shadow, his HK74 silenced assault rifle held at the ready. He heard Dan's voice fill his ear receiver.

"Skipper, we're at the generator room." He reported. "The reactor was set to the minimum setting to maintain coolant. I'm going to spool it up to one quarter power so we can activate the power grids. Stand by."

The four of them stood in the center of the control room and they could hear the low hum become just a little louder. All around them computer consoles began to flicker to life, and emergency lighting began to kick on. With the lights coming on, they could see the numerous human skeletal remains scattered throughout the huge control room.

"Skipper we are seeing human remains all over down here." Dan reported.

"Same here Danny." Martin told him as he watched Anja squat next to one skeleton. The bones were bleached almost white and covered in a thick layer of dust and she lifted the human skull into her gloved hands and looked closer at it. It was missing most of the facial bones and one entire cheekbone.

Anja got slowly back to her feet carrying the skull and she came over next to Martin. She held the skull out to him, her other hand gripped tightly around the pistol grip of her HK. "This person was shot." She told him. "It was a large caliber weapon, right through the back of the head."

"Skipper," Tony called.

Martin turned to face him and Tony lifted the dust covered .40mm automatic from the skeleton remains on the floor in front of him. "It looks like he executed the entire control room crew and then blew his brains out."

"Danny I want you to sweep the entire lower level!" Martin spoke. "Search every room, every corner. Then spool the reactor to seventy-five percent so we can bring the core online and find out what the hell happened here."

"You got it boss." Dan replied.

"Julie, you and Anja take the west wing, the Master Chief and I will cover the east. Meet back here in twenty and maintain an open com link." Martin spoke.

Julie nodded. "Will do Skipper." She said taking Anja's arm and leading her across the control center.

The man lowered the binoculars to reveal cold glittering red eyes against the pale dark gray almost chocolate color of his skin. His white hair hung down past his shoulders, the points of his elf ears sticking out from within the strands of hair. He stood next to the twenty foot long tank M100 Assault Tank, one of twenty in

his command, the moon light casting him in an eerie light. He turned to the Corporate Alliance Officer standing attentively behind him.

“We will rest here tonight.” He spoke, his voice dark and menacing. “They have entered the sacred ruins. We will give them a few hours to relax, and then send the Alliance Assassins in to wreak as much havoc as they can. Tell them they can kill whatever males they find, the female elves they can use as their playthings until they tire of them, but I want the Queen alive and unhurt. I will have the pleasure of raping that Elf bitch myself.”

“Our scouts found the remains of the Grizz beasts Colonel Marcus.” The officer reported. “It was dead, missing most of its head. Two very large entry wounds in its back as well. A large and powerful weapon was used as it punched right through the beast’s armor.”

“Interesting, I didn’t think these Elves had heavy weapons with them. Perhaps I was mistaken.” The gray skinned man brought the binoculars to his eyes again, scanning the jumble of buildings eight kilometers distant from his location. “Place our M100s on the western edge of the Battalion flank, and have our heavy mortars set up to cover the mountain valley to our east. One company to cover the mortars, one company to our rear and the remaining two companies are to dig in to our front.” He sensed that the officer had not left and lowered the binoculars to look at him. “Is there something else Colonel?”

“I... I wish only to make you aware Colonel Marcus. I do not subscribe to the myths and rumors that filter among our troops.” The man spoke.

Marcus turned back to looking through the powerful binoculars. “Speak Captain.”

“Some of the men... they are concerned about our plans to attack the Elves sacred ruins.” The officer spoke. “Our forces have not entered the ruins in nearly two centuries after the last time we tried to attack them here.”

“Yes I have heard of that.” Marcus spoke with a grin. “The Alliance lost nearly a thousand troops to unseen weapons of incredible destruction. We have the advantage this time however.”

“We do Colonel Marcus?”

“I am leading these forces and not some incompetent fool.” Marcus growled. “If the men wish to persist with this ridiculous legend I will have them butchered as an example of what not to do in my unit. Make that clear to them if you would Captain.”

The officer bowed his head deeply, “As you order Colonel Marcus.”

Marcus turned back to the distant ruins and a cruel smile crept across his face. “Oh yes Tarifa, I will enjoy using you until you are my willing servant. I will have you in every orifice of your delectable elf body more times than you can imagine. And then I will cut out your heart and eat it while it still beats in my hands.”

The Drow elf in service to the Alliance grinned savagely in the night sky.

“...secure here Admiral.” Martin spoke to the screen while leaning back in the chair of the command center. “We’re transmitting on an encrypted channel. I don’t know if they can even detect the beam, let alone crack it. From what we’ve seen so far, it’s looks to be a dog eat dog world here.”

Wallace nodded from the command center on EDEN. “Would you mind telling me how Kevin Graham found his way onto your Raptor Martin?”

“We had already started pre-flight Admiral.” Martin answered. “He leaped aboard just as the ramp was closing. I couldn’t stop him.”

“I hold you personally accountable for his safety Commander!” Senator Graham’s voice and face appeared behind the Admiral. “I’ve already talked to him, and he told me you forced him onto the Raptor, as well as Commander Peterson. I intend to bring you up on charges when you return!”

Martin maintained a straight face and cut the audio feed from the transmission as Graham ranted. “Master Chief Brown, please go and find that little prick and strip search his sorry ass until you find his transmitter. He’s got to be broadcasting on an open channel and that could very well sink our dicks.”

Tony grinned, “With pleasure sir.”

“Skipper,” Julie spoke from the chair of another console, a smile on her face. “Anja and I don’t have dicks.”

Anja couldn't help but chuckle at the expression on Martin's face and she had to turn away as Martin reactivated the audio link.

"I have Danny spooling up the reactor gradually Admiral." He said. "Once we get it to eighty percent power I'll access the core and download all the files into the Raptor's onboard computer. Figure another nine hours to spool the reactor all the way up and download the core. Ben and Tina are working on getting the overheads repaired so that we can lift off, but Ben says they're jammed pretty tight and he's going to have to do some cutting. As it stands right now, we'll be here a little longer than we first thought. We'll shoot for an extraction no later than 0730 day after tomorrow."

"Are the overheads fully jammed open?" Wallace asked.

Martin shook his head. "No sir. They jammed about two feet open. Ben has all the tools he needs here sir, and the base is pretty much intact as well. A lot of human remains, but nothing is destroyed or damaged and that's a good thing."

Wallace nodded from his chair. "Keep me informed of any developments and stay out of sight. We don't know what the situation is down there and I don't want to get tangled into anything before we know what is going on."

Martin nodded. "We'll do that Admiral, Ghost One out."

Julie watched Martin shut down the transmitter. "You didn't tell him about what we saw coming in Skipper?"

Martin shook his head. "No need. We don't know what was going on, and I'm not one to guess."

"What is above this facility Martin?" Anja asked from her chair.

Martin swiveled his chair around and looked at her. "Nothing is directly above us except the Book Cliffs. An abandoned Reserve Air Force Base is three miles away via underground tram." He answered. "We took off from the same airfield eleven days ago."

"There is an underground tram on the base?" Anja asked curious.

Martin nodded. "We used the base as cover. It was a complete facility with personnel and families and such. The tram runs on a track from here to directly under the base head quarters building."

"Does the tram still work?" Anja asked.

Martin shrugged. "If there is still power I would imagine it does. We always used Hummers to get back and forth since the tram runs alongside the wall. The Hummers were faster." Martin's eyes lit up. "Hey that reminds me. We had surveillance cameras set up all over the base." He turned to Julie. "Julie can you activate the base surveillance grid. Let's see what it looks like up there."

Julie turned to her console and began to operate the computer. Martin and Anja moved their chairs over as the computer screen changed and Julie's hands deftly typed in commands.

"Ok, power grid coming online now!" Julie spoke. "We..."

**SECURITY BREACH, SECURITY BREACH.
NORTH QUADRANT, NORTH QUADRANT.
SECURITY FORCES RESPOND.**

"What the hell." Julie exclaimed. "The computer is saying there has been a security violation in the northern quadrant of the base. That would be the office complex."

"Is it picking up something from before maybe?" Martin asked.

Julie shook her head. "According to this, the breach occurred ninety minutes ago."

"Can you get a fix?"

"Let me try localizing the breach." Julie spoke working the console. "Looks like it's coming from the old administration offices in the E block area. Let's see if the cameras are still working."

The picture went fuzzy for several moments then the screen cleared and they had a picture of a long hallway. The dusty floor was evident even in the black and white video, and it appeared as if all the doors in the hallway were open.

"Hey I remember this hallway." Martin spoke. "The office at the end used to be the base personnel office."

“There!” Anja gasped pointing to the screen as three figures appeared from one of the offices. There were two women and a man, and they appeared to be looking for something, and they were all armed with small weapons that appeared to be sub machine guns of a kind that Martin had never seen before.

“Can they see the cameras?” Martin asked.

Julie shook her head. “All of them were inside light domes identical to the actual light fixtures.”

“Switch to the room they just came out of.” Martin spoke. “It looked like the procurement office.”

Julie typed in the commands on the computer and the picture changed quickly to a large expansive room, old filing cabinets and chairs scattered about and turned over. There were also twelve men and women in the room that they could see on the camera, as well as what appeared to be some injured ones as well.

“Fifty bucks this is the group of soldiers that was being attacked by that overgrown bear.” Julie spoke.

Martin shook his head. “No bet here.” He spoke, his eyes never leaving the screen. “Looks like they got at least four wounded.”

“They’re being awful relaxed for a group that was fighting not too long ago.” Julie commented.

“Maybe they think they’re safe.” Anja spoke.

Julie looked at Martin. “Or maybe they don’t know that second group was on their trail.”

Martin nodded, “Could be. Either way it doesn’t…”

“Look at that!” Anja gasped, her voice filled with genuine surprise this time.

Julie and Martin could only gawk at the screen as the camera zoomed in on a man and a women talking. Though the camera was black and white, you didn’t need color to see that the ears of both the man and women were considerably larger than normal ears, and they ended in pointed tips.

“What the hell.” Julie exclaimed. “Who the hell has pointed ears?”

“They look like… they look like Elves.” Anja spoke. She watched as both Martin and Julie looked at her as if she’d lost her mind.

“Elves,” Martin said with a grin. “You mean like Santa’s little helpers?”

“What was that children’s story, Snow White and the seven Elves?” Julie asked with her own smile.

“Asshole,” She barked at Martin, a small grin wanting to spread across her face. She turned to Julie.

“And it was Snow White and the Seven Dwarves Julie.” She spoke sweetly, her eyes gazing upon Julie in such a way that Julie’s stomach did little flips. “Elves were a huge part of Earth legend dating back several thousand years. They were part of many European cultures’s lore, including England and France.”

Martin looked at her, still with a smile on his face. “And how do you know so much about them?” He asked.

Anja ignored him, and continued speaking. “They were considered a very honorable race, and exceptional warriors. It is said they populated the entire planet at one point. I loved Elves when I was a little girl, and read hundreds of books on them.”

“But they are just a myth, right?” Julie said. “They are nothing more than just a fantasy and legend right?”

Anja nodded. “They are supposed to be.” She said. “But it appears they are not so fictional as I first thought. Julie didn’t you say some of the transmissions we were picking up mentioned elves?”

“C’mon!” Martin said exasperated. “You don’t honestly think they are really Elves do you?”

“I think we have to go based on what we see.” Anja spoke. “And without a complete examination, we shouldn’t assume anything. We’ve come almost five hundred years into the future. We have no idea what has happen.”

That statement sobered Martin up quickly, “Point taken.” He spoke. “As long as they remain on the base and don’t discover the entrance to the tunnel we leave them be. The Admiral ordered we avoid any contact with anyone, and that’s what we are going to do.”

Martin slid his chair back to the console he had been sitting at. “Jules why don’t you and Anja wander down to the galley and see if there is anything left that we might be able to eat.”

Julie got to her feet. “I like the sound of that idea.” She said slinging her HK74.

Martin waited until they had left the control room before moving back to Julie’s station and looking at the monitor again. He used the zoom mode on the camera to bring it in closer on the men and women who occupied the floor in the large office. They were eating and drinking and talking amongst themselves just as any soldiers would do. The movement in the background caused Martin to adjust the camera and pan it to the right.

He stopped it on the young woman that was peering out the broken window to the north. He used the controls to zoom the camera in, and his interest grew as he noticed the extremely long hair, and the fullness of the body, as well as the provocative uniform she had on. Martin moved the camera in closer, and even in the black and white of the video he took notice of the brightness of her eyes and the sensual curves of her cheekbones and face. Her long ears pointed up from her head, parting her black hair, but they appeared to be the most natural item to her face.

Martin continued to watch the video, unaware that Tarifa was the female Elf he was watching.

“Julie... what was Yuri Tanaka to Martin?” Anja asked.

Julie and she were going through galley’s cabinets looking for food that was not expired and looked safe to eat. Julie turned to look at her and leaned against the counter as Anja came up to her.

“Yuri and Martin are... were lovers.” She replied. “Why do you want to know?”

“The realization that we have come so far into the future and that she is dead does not seem to affect him as much as I thought it would.” Anja said.

Julie nodded. “Martin, Danny and I were among the very first genomes in the Batch program.” She told her. “Unfortunately for them, they did not attend some of the schools that the others did and did not associate with many outside the Genome Program. They have had less time to develop and understand the emotions they feel.”

“So they... they can’t feel emotions?” Anja asked.

Julie shook her head quickly. “No not at all. They can feel emotions. They just never learned how to process the emotions in the beginning, at least not the emotional boundaries for a relationship. They’ve come a long way believe me.”

“Danny... Danny seems to be able to express what he feels.” Anja said.

Julie nodded with a grin. “That’s because of me.” She answered. “I’m very expressive, Doctor Carson told me that I was based on a Hollywood actress he loved growing up, and due to our relationship, and Danny has been able to learn how to adapt more quickly. He still has trouble expressing how deep something is to him in words, but he will show you in his actions. The Skipper was learning. Yuri was good for him in a sense. He has opened up quite a bit in the last three years.”

Anja nodded. “Yes I noticed that.”

“I think Yuri loved him,” Julie continued. “And I think Martin cared for her a great deal, but I don’t think he loved her.”

“Why?”

“I don’t think she was the one.” Julie said.

“What do you mean the one?” Anja asked.

Julie nodded. “I would really like to be around when the Skipper falls.” She said. “It will definitely be a sight to see.” Julie looked at Anja for a long moment. “You care for him don’t you Anja?”

Anja looked at her, jade green eyes wide. “What? No... I... I don’t know.” She answered quickly.

“Then why ask the questions about him?” Julie asked.

Anja turned her back to the counter and lifted herself up to sit on it. “I... I think it helps me to better understand.”

“Understand what?” Julie asked clearly interested.

“I... after what happen between us I should feel awkward being around you and I don’t. I’ve never... I’ve never let myself let go like that. I’ve never even entertained the thought of being with another... another woman.” Anja said looking at Julie. “Yet with you... and with Danny it was different. It was so... so alive and real. I haven’t felt anything like that since...”

“Since the Skipper rocked your world?” Julie asked with a smile.

Anja looked at her stunned. “You... you know about Martin and me?” She gasped.

“You are all we heard about through the entire Central American War girl.” Julie answered with a chuckle. “Marty just about drove us all batty. No one has ever affected him like that, not even Yuri.”

“He... he talked about me?” Anja asked clearly surprised.

“Non stop,” Julie said with a smile.

“He hates me for what I did.” Anja said softly. “I can feel it in his eyes whenever he looks at me.”

Julie moved closer to her and reached out to touch her face. “Hate is a strong word Anja.” She said softly. “Marty is a very complex man... and the only one who truly understood him I think is now dead. Doc Carson was like a father to us all, but for some reason he was especially close to Marty.”

Anja looked at her. “So what do I do?” She asked softly. “I don’t know what to do.”

“I’ll be honest with you,” Julie said. “I would like very much to explore this thing we have discovered, and I know Danny would be thrilled with having two women lavishing attention on his big cock,” Julie chuckled when Anja blushed deeply. “And if you think I had thoughts about being with another woman you’d be wrong?” Julie asked softly moving even closer to her. “You were the first for me too you know. Danny and I are comfortable with each other Anja... but we both know that we’re not meant to spend the rest of our lives together. I think what we have makes us stronger actually, because not only do we share the same bed, but we are best friends too. Are you having regrets about what happened between the three of us Anja?”

Anja met Julie’s dark eyes and shook her head. “Not a single one.” She answered honestly and without hesitation. “And that is what’s strange. I... I can’t bring myself to admit it openly, but I want... I want it to happen again.” Anja looked directly at her, “With both of you.”

“Then follow your heart.” Julie told her.

“Just like that,” Anja asked. “What will Martin... what will Martin think?”

“There is nothing keeping you from enjoying yourself while you sort out what you and Martin might and might not have.” Julie said. “That may be selfish to say on my part, but it’s true.” Julie stepped between Anja’s dangling legs in a blink, using her genome strength to grab her tight ass and pull her close to her own body. Julie covered Anja’s soft lips with her own and kissed her hard and deep, driving her tongue between Anja’s lips in a passionate and needed soul stealing kiss. Julie felt Anja melt into her arms and groan and then her arms were sliding around Julie’s waist pulling her even tighter as she met Julie’s deep searching tongue with that incredible four inch honey tasting appendage that Julie and fallen in love with the moment it flicked across her pussy.

Anja dropped her hands to Julie’s own tight muscular ass and gripped it, pulling her even closer, her need of this gorgeous woman fueling her strength. Her action also elicited a groan of desire from Julie, and the depth of their kiss increased, surprising both of them with its intensity and longing.

After what seemed like several long minutes they parted, saliva trailing from both their lips, their tongues dancing together as if wanting and needing more. Their hands did not move as they stared at one another, feeling each other’s breathing and the beating of their hearts slamming into their chests. Julie dipped her head to Anja’s neck, her tongue flicking across the hollow of her throat, tasting her skin. Her hands urgently unfastened Anja’s combat vest and unzipped the top of the fatigues. To Julie’s delight, Anja had not worn a bra and as her large tits burst into view, Julie covered one of Anja’s nipples with her mouth and sucked hard.

Anja gasped in passion, her hands going to Julie’s head and entwining her fingers in her dark hair, thrusting her chest out to Julie’s soft lips and talented tongue. Julie pulled her closer by her firm ass, switching to her other nipple and coating that with saliva as well, pulling on the erect nipple with her teeth gently and hearing Anja groan in desire. Anja’s desire almost overpowered her common sense and she pulled Julie’s head up. She looked at her with glittering green eyes.

“You sexy bitch,” She spoke in a husky voice and then she kissed her hard, driving her tongue deeply into Julie’s mouth. Julie’s eyes went wide and then closed in blissful pleasure and she responded to the kiss with equal passion and desire.

It was a long moment before they broke the kiss this time, neither of them wanting to part, but knowing they had too. Julie leaned forward further, her lips going to Anja’s ear. “I’ve always found that if you follow your heart then things will eventually work themselves out.” She whispered. She pulled her head back and looked at Anja. “Do what you want Anja... not what you think someone else wants. If you and Martin are meant to be together... then it will happen. Live your life your way.” She looked at her and Anja detected the glint of mischievous thoughts in them. “Are your panties as wet as mine?”

Anja’s smile lit up the room and she nodded with a girlish chuckle. “God they’re soaked.” She replied.

“We better stop this before we end up on this counter screaming our heads off and the boys all come running to watch the show.” Julie spoke. She leaned forward and kissed Anja gently and with great feeling, caressing her soft cheek. She stared at her once more. “Do what you feel is right Anja and we’ll be waiting.”

She said softly. Julie reluctantly pulled herself from Anja's arms. "Let me see what I can find in the way of food. You know how men are when they don't have enough to eat."

Anja nodded and watched as she turned and walked into the pantry portion of the galley. Anja shifted her butt on the counter, feeling the wetness between her legs and knowing that Martin and Danny and the other genomes were going to be able to smell her excitement on her. Anja took a deep breath and nodded. She didn't yet know what she felt for Martin, but she did know she wanted to explore what she had discovered with Danny and Julie, and especially Julie. She had never imagined herself desiring another woman, but she did desire Julie in a big way. She wanted to explore that and she made the decision to do just that.

Anja nimbly jumped off the counter, zipping her uniform back up and refastening her combat vest, her decision made. She was about to take her first steps into a whole different world, and she could hardly stand the anticipation.

Tarifa stood by the window in the office building, her thoughts not at all good. She had hoped to lead Marcus and his Corporate Alliance dogs away from the Holy One, and then disappear into the forest. That had not been the case, as he had hounded her and her diminishing party ever since those first hours. They had come half way across the entire state, and to the only place she thought would be safe.

The Elf Sacred Ruins.

Her people were exhausted, both physically and mentally. Elves they may have been, but they were not inhuman. And Tarifa feared their plight was not over. She had always made it a point to never be caught out in the open, or trapped like an animal. Marcus had been after her for three decades, and her memories of the four days she had spent in his clutches before her warriors had rescued her forty years ago was still a vivid nightmare. He had raped her brutally and without regard for almost the entire time of her captivity. He was like a rutting bull, and he did vile things to her, and when he grew tired he gave her to his men to use while he slept.

Tarifa shook those thoughts from her mind. She would kill herself before allowing that to ever happen again. Yet now, she felt the noose was closing around her. She was without the usual massive numbers of High Elf warriors she traveled with since her capture so long ago, and she had brought them to a place where they could not run any further. The Book Cliffs were far too massive to try and climb down or go around, and the sacred ruins were sitting directly in the path of them. Tarifa knew that Marcus would attack the ruins looking for her, regardless of the legends of mass slaughter that had taken place when Alliance forces had attacked the ruins before.

Tarifa feared she had run herself and her followers into a death trap and there was no escape. None of her people looked hopeful, and the only one who seemed in the least bit relaxed was the male Elf who had saved her from the Grizz beast. He kept looking at her with a lustful stare, and Tarifa knew what was on his mind.

Tarifa let the tears come from her sapphire eyes, for she knew what lay in their future.

Martin turned from the monitor as Tarifa's tears began to fall and Danny and the others came into the command center. He casually flipped the monitor he had been watching off as he settled back in his chair.

Danny settled into the chair across from him and set his HK on the console while unzipping his fatigue top and removing his combat vest. "Reactor is running smooth at eighty-six percent Skipper. Cody has already started downloading the core information to a portable data storage unit so we can link it to the Raptor."

Martin looked at him. "Why couldn't we do a direct connection?" He asked.

Danny leaned back in the chair. "Tina didn't want to take the chance of corrupting the Raptor's systems with whatever the core collected over the past four hundred odd years."

Martin nodded. "I never thought of that. Do we have enough data storage units?"

Danny nodded. "I found four more in the computer lab. I checked them out and they work fine. That's going to be a lot of information boss. Time stamp on the last data entry is 2287."

They both turned as Julie and Anja came back into the command room followed by Pablo, Kevin and the Master Chief. All of them had their arms full of rations.

“We hit the jack pot!” Julie exclaimed. “I managed to crack the code on the galley’s locked warehouse and we found a veritable treasure of old rations that have a shelf life of... well forever.” She dropped the pile in her arms on the table, as did Anja and the others. “Some of this stuff is pretty good too.”

Martin and Dan came over and they all began sifting through the pile of rations. Julie stepped over next to Danny and held out the package. “Here you go lover.” She spoke.

Danny took the brown plastic container and read the contents, his face lighting up. “Beef stew! I loved these things in basic!” He spoke, beginning to tear open the package. Julie smiled and looked at Anja and winked. She didn’t see Dan’s head come up and look at her strangely.

“What’s that smell?” Danny asked.

Julie looked at him. “What smell?”

“I know that smell.” Dan said. “It smells like...” Dan’s eyes went directly to Anja, who did everything she could to maintain a straight face and keep from turning a bright red. After what seemed like a long, non-breathing moment Dan bent over and nuzzled Julie’s neck. “It’s you Jules.” He said. “You smell like honey.”

Julie smiled at his show of affection, and her eyes went to Anja at the word Danny used. They had both tasted Anja’s passion, and they both knew it was Danny’s way of telling Anja he could smell her scent all over Julie.

“I smell like shit in a barrel!” Julie popped with a smile. “Now eat your food big boy!”

Danny grinned and looked over to where Anja stood, and his eyes grew a little wider when he saw Anja wink at him. Danny looked at Julie, who also saw this display, and she smiled up at him her eyes bright as they realized that Anja had made her decision. Martin had witnessed the entire exchange, and he looked at a blissfully stupid Kevin Graham as he tried to figure out how to open the ration pack. Martin smiled to himself and went to sit in his chair, unsure of what he felt at seeing the obvious affection Anja was showing Danny and Julie.

The soft chirping alarm brought them all too full alertness, and Julie discarded her ration pack to move to the station she had been sitting at earlier.

“It’s another security breach Skipper!” She spoke as she took in the information from the computer screen, “Northwestern Quadrant! I estimate at least seven individuals by the number of motion sensors tripping.”

“Can you get any video?” Martin asked moving over to her side.

“Checking... It looks like they are coming in around behind the others we discovered earlier.” She said.

“Others...? You found other people on the base?” Danny asked.

“I’m switching to an exterior feed in that sector.” Julie spoke, her hands moving over the console. “I’ll put it up on the main screen.”

Martin and the others turned to look at the huge screen as it came alive with dimly lit buildings and an abandoned street. Rusted and twisted vehicle frames littered the street in both directions.

“It looks like they are headed for the Air Wing BAQ offices.” Julie spoke. “They can infiltrate into the main building from there.” She looked at the screen. “There... got them!”

They could all see the seven shadowy figures moving very professionally directly towards the building Julie had said they would.

“Can you get closer?” Martin asked.

“Working on it,” Julie spoke, adjusting the camera until they saw it moving in closer on the lead figures.

“What the fuck is that?” Master Chief Brown exclaimed.

All of them stared at the picture Julie had frozen on the screen. The man they were looking at was definitely human, but his face looked horribly misshapen, and two very large fangs protruded from beneath his upper lip.

“I don’t suppose they are dropping in for a friendly visit huh?” Julie asked to no one in particular.

“Do the Elves know they’re coming?” Martin asked, causing heads to turn in his direction.

“Elves... did you just say elves?” Kevin spoke.

Julie shook her head. “They’re fat dumb and happy Skipper! They got only two sentries out, and the first of these things is almost on top of them.”

They turned back to the screen and saw the first two creatures move with lightning reflexes around the corner and they fell upon the two Elf sentries before they were even aware they were dead. One of the creatures

took the first Elf in his hands and simply twisted the woman's slender neck viciously until her head was torn from her body. The second one had used a savage looking blade, and was now watching with an amused expression on his face as the male Elf slowly slid further down the large blade, his blood splashing wetly on the floor below him in copious amounts.

They all were silent, and no one turned to the sound of Kevin falling to his knees and vomiting the contents of his stomach onto the dusty floor.

"Danny, is the Tram powered up?" Martin asked.

Dan turned to his friend and Commander, knowing what was going through his head. "Yes, but I got something that will get us there quicker. Pablo got three Hummers primed and running in case we had to make a quick exit. We can be there in four minutes."

"Skipper we aren't supposed to get involved." Julie spoke, attempting to be the voice of reason, but not doing a very good job.

Martin looked at her. "Anja, we might be coming back with wounded, can you make the infirmary workable?"

Anja nodded quickly. "I'm on it!"

"Jules stay here and give us a blow by blow. Danny, Trina, and the Master Chief are with me!" Martin lifted his silenced HK74 and headed for the exit.

Betrayed!

Tarifa was dazed, unable to focus her eyes through the blood that dripped into them. She could hear the screams of pain and battle from her fellow comrades, but was powerless to go to their aide. The Alliance Assassins had appeared like phantoms within their ranks, seven of the deadly genetically engineered killing machines falling upon them without warning. Tarifa had been about to leap into the battle when something smashed against the back of her head, dropping her to the floor. She had felt herself dragged into another room while her fighters died, and then she was flipped over and her uniform was forced open, exposing her perfect 34D breasts to the male Elf who now knelt above her, a vicious grin on his face. His fist slammed into her face again, dazing her even more as he pulled at her uniform, forcing it down past her sleek hips, exposing her tanned skin to the rough and dusty surface of the floor.

The Elf worked quickly, his lust at seeing her delicious body exposed to him, blinding him to all else. He finally pulled one leg of her uniform off, and he saw the thin strip of soft black hair above her small pussy.

"What are you doing?" Tarifa gasped, trying to push him away as her senses slowly returned to her. "I... I am your Queen!"

"You're a bitch!" The elf yelled, punching her in the face again, splitting open her lips and causing stars to renew their dance in her eyes. "Marcus is rewarding me well for helping him! The first part of that reward while the Alliance wipes out your precious soldiers is that I get to fuck you like the whore you are!"

Tarifa cried out in pain and humiliation as the male elf plunged his hard cock into her tight dry pussy. She could hear his grunts as he thrust deep with no regard for her pain or discomfort. He grabbed her arms as she attempted to strike him and he slammed them to the floor.

"This is your place Queen Tarifa!" He yelled, ramming his cock deeper into Tarifa's extremely tight cunt, and grunting with the effort. "You are nothing more than a street whore to be used!"

"No! Why... why are you doing this?" Tarifa gasped, tossing her head back and forth in agony and humiliation.

"Why? Credits of course," The elf grunted as he plowed forward. "And the chance to fuck my untouchable Queen senseless!" He laughed. "You like it don't you Tarifa?" He gloated, mistaking the glint now evident in her sapphire blue eyes.

Tarifa's eyes flared angrily. She had always had long legs for her height, and she had spent hours upon hours toning and building her leg and ass muscles, until now she was regarded as having the finest ass of any High Elf alive. The hours of training also gave her legs incredible strength, and with a savage glint in her eyes she locked them around the small of the back of the elf male raping her. His eyes went wide when he felt the painful pressure in his back and he looked down into her face and saw not the humiliated Queen of the High Elves, but the fanged snarl of a hellion.

“NEVER,” Tarifa growled, clenching her stomach muscles and squeezing her legs even tighter.

“What... what are you doing?” The man gasped, his face now filled with pain.

“Killing you dog,” Tarifa growled again, wrenching her arms free of his grasp and reaching up to rake his face with her nails.

Tarifa never had a chance to complete the action her mind was intent on conducting, and her eyes widened when she saw the Alliance assassin appear behind him. The assassin grinned savagely as he gazed upon her.

“She seems to be too much for you elf.” He spoke with a chuckle.

Tarifa’s eyes went even further when she heard the new screams from the other rooms, only these screams were not coming from her soldiers. She saw the Alliance assassin’s eyes widen and he turned quickly, only to stagger back just as quickly. When his body turned she understood why. Protruding from his misshapen head was the black hilt of a strange looking knife. It was firmly imbedded in the assassin’s skull and had killed him instantly.

Tarifa’s eyes grew even wider when she saw the black clad apparition appear behind the male elf who was still attempting to unlock the death grip her legs had on him. He was attired in black from head to toe, the only thing visible were his gleaming dark brown eyes. Tarifa watched as if events were in slow motion as he reached forward, grabbed the male elf above her by his jaw and the back of his head, and twisted viciously. There was almost no effort as Tarifa heard the snapping of the traitors’ neck.

Tarifa rolled to the right as the howl filled the room, dragging the body of the now dead officer with her as another Alliance Assassin charged the black apparition from behind. Tarifa watched as the man, it had to be a man, moved with speed unlike anything she had ever witnessed. He dropped into a crouch as the Assassin swung the heavy blood stained blade, and the assassin lost his footing when his blade connected with nothing but air. The black apparition straightened up to his full height, which had to be over six feet by Tarifa’s estimate, and snapped out with a powerful kick that connected to the assassin’s knee. She winced as she heard bone crunch and pop, and she watched as the apparition stepped in closer to the falling assassin and hit him with the heel of his palm directly in the chest area. Tarifa again winced as the blow crunched more bones and caused the assassin to stumble back.

“I smelled you coming from a mile away you ugly motherfucker!” The apparition spoke now, his hand filling with the strange looking hand gun. Tarifa heard two shots, both of the rounds from the K12 pistol striking the assassin between the eyes with deadly precision.

Tarifa managed to extract the dead elf from her body and was now staring at the man as he turned back to her. She watched his deep brown eyes gaze upon her lush naked figure with absolutely no emotion before he leaned down and picked up her uniform from the floor where it had come off in her roll. He stepped up to her and squatted down, his eyes never leaving her face she noticed.

Martin reached up and pulled the nomex hood back, letting it drop and dangle behind his shoulders. He heard Tarifa gasp and returned his eyes to her, being very careful not to gawk at her completely naked and utterly divine body. He let his eyes gaze upon her face, focusing mainly on her incredible ears, and the tattoo on her neck, which looked to be identical in every way to the tattoo he wore on the back of his shoulder. Though one of her ears was stained with blood from the blow to her head, they looked very real, and very delicious. Martin shook that thought from his head, surprised at where it had come from, but he reached out slowly to try and touch her uninjured ear. With reflexes he didn’t anticipate Tarifa slapped his hand away and pushed back from him. Martin looked at her face again, taking in the incredible sapphire eyes gazing upon him with a mixture of fear and bewilderment. He inhaled deeply and detected the scent of fear wafting from her pores, along with what he determined was her normal scent. That was what he focused on, and burned into his brain. She smelled distinctly of peach, even amidst the smell of blood and death all around them. His eyes once more went back to the tattoo and wondered how she could possibly have the exact same tattoo as him.

Tarifa held her breath in her chest as this man gazed on her. He was very tall, and taking in the way his black uniform fit him, incredibly muscular. She had never seen eyes like his before, liquid pools of dark brown that caught and held her. His lips appeared soft and delicate and they were slightly parted allowing her to see the tips of his canine teeth, which had lengthened to almost three quarters of an inch. Tarifa gasped as he moved with the speed of a striking pit viper, far faster than any Elf she had ever seen, causing her to press back up against the wall, as his face came within an inch of her. She closed her eyes, fearing the worst, and heard him

breathe deeply almost directly next to her ear, then moving to her throat where his lips grazed her skin. Her eyes popped back open when she felt his face move away and she watched him as he held out her uniform. He set it on the floor in front of her.

“Skipper...?” Julie’s voice interrupted Martin’s thoughts from his ear implant.

“Go!” Martin spoke.

“Boss... the fighting must have alerted the others. Another group of those ugly things is moving on your location. Looks like about twenty of them.”

“How long do we have?”

“They’ll be all over you in five minutes, tops.”

“Copy,” Martin looked at Tarifa. “More of these things are coming. I am not here to hurt you, but if you want to live you need to come with us.”

“Who... who are you?” Tarifa asked softly.

Martin smiled, “The good guys.” He withdrew his K12 from the holster, causing Tarifa to flinch a little, and he set it on top of her uniform on the floor. “It’s got sixteen shots left and it kicks a little. Pull yourself together and follow me.”

Martin turned quickly and headed into the other room.

Tarifa entered the next room clutching the pistol Martin had given her in her small hand. She stopped when she saw three others dressed like him standing to the side of the windows, and only nine of her soldiers left, four of them seriously wounded. All of her people were watching the much taller and muscled members of Martin’s team, to include the brown haired female with fear and something akin to awe. Even Tarifa had to admit what she had seen was unbelievable. They had cut through a squad of Alliance assassins like a sickle through wheat.

“Skipper we can’t stay here!” Danny spoke from the far window.

“Jules is there another entrance to the tunnel?” Martin asked quickly, Tarifa looking at him oddly.

“There’s an emergency hatch eighty meters to your east!” Julie answered into his question. “Better hurry Skipper.”

Martin turned to Tarifa. “We need to go.” He spoke.

“Who are you?” Tarifa asked him again.

Martin stepped up to her, towering over her five foot nine height by a good six inches. “You have a choice. Stay here and die, or come with us. Make it now. We’re leaving.”

It really was no choice at all and Tarifa nodded her head. The reason why she felt she could trust this man escaped her, but for the moment it didn’t matter. They were no match for Alliance Assassins without these strange men and women.

“My wounded... I can not...” Tarifa began to ask, but seeing Martin and the others in his team pick up the four seriously wounded Elves stopped her. Martin met her questioning eyes.

“We don’t leave anyone behind.” He spoke. “Let’s go.”

Martin stood next to the ventilation shaft entrance disguised to look like a water fountain. The pool around the smashed fountain was filled with rancid water, the stench nearly unbearable. Julie had slid the large fountain aside by computer command from the control room, had already unlocked the hatch. Now, Danny and Trina were on the floor of the tunnel below helping as Ben and Martin lowered down the injured Elves as quickly as possible. Once all four of them were down, the other Elves simply began to jump into the hatch and drop the thirty feet to the tunnel below.

“Shit Skipper hurry up!” Julie’s voice sounded calm but Martin could detect the urgency. “They’ve cleared the building you were in and are spreading out to search. Two of them are heading right for you! Twenty meters and closing from the west!”

Martin looked at Tony and Tarifa watched as he used silent hand signals to communicate. Her small hand clutched the pistol, her keen eyes looking into the darkness for the approaching Assassins. She turned back

to look at Martin but he was gone, as was the other of his unit. Her eyes met the lone female elf on the other side of the entrance, her weapon clutched in her hands. She shrugged in shock and exhaustion. Tarifa looked back out into the darkness when she heard the muted grunts, and her eyes caught the shapes of two others approaching. She brought up the K12 ready to fire, but her eyes widened when Martin and Tony appeared dragging the corpses of two assassins with them.

Her eyes were wide as she gazed from the dead bodies back to Martin.

“We can’t leave them to announce where we disappeared to can we?” He spoke, seeing her questioning look. “Danny, there’s dead meat coming down!” Tarifa watched him effortlessly haul the dead assassin into the air and drop the body into the hatch. Tony did the same with similar ease, and then he snatched the remaining female elf’s arm, gathered her close to his body and leaped into the hatchway.

“You like rides?” Martin asked pulling Tarifa to her feet.

“Rides... what... what do you mean?”

Martin gathered her into his embrace before she realized what was happening, and he stepped off into the darkness of the hatch.

Danny watched as first Martin landed on the tunnel floor and then the female with the long black hair. “Close it up Jules.” He spoke into his mic.

Martin looked at Tarifa, who had pushed away from him during their controlled fall, and landed with the grace and agility of a cat two feet from him. Martin watched her waver for a second, and he reached out to catch her as her eyes rolled up into her head and she passed out. His hand came away from the side of her head coated with her blood, her head wound from earlier obviously worse than she had expected. That she had made it this far without collapsing was incredible.

Martin turned to Danny who read his thoughts and pointed to the three Hummers coming down the tunnel at them.

“Our rides here Skipper.” He said.

Martin lifted Tarifa’s body into his arms as if she weighed nothing, and he got into the front of the Hummer, holding her close to him as the others got loaded.

The infirmary was not that large due to the hospital that was located on the air base not too far away. It was more a trauma center that could stabilize patients before moving them. There were six beds in the center, and five of them were now occupied. Anja had been able to set up what equipment she had brought, as well as clean up the infirmary to make it at least presentable. She had found plastic encased sheets for the beds, and after cleaning up as much as the dust as she could, she now had patients in the beds.

Martin stood with her by the door to the infirmary, the others watching from outside the glass window.

“They’re going to survive.” Anja told him. “All of them. Their wounds are healing rapidly, almost as if they have an accelerated healing system like you and the other genomes. Even the female with the torn up side will heal.”

Martin waved his hand by his ear looking at Tarifa on the bed “And what about the ears?” He asked.

Anja smiled. “They are very real.”

“You want to explain that to me.” Martin said.

“I can explain it with two words.” Anja told him, “Genetic Engineering.”

Martin looked at her wide eyed. “You mean they were made?” He spoke.

Anja nodded. “I ran some quick tests on the blood I drew from them. The results indicate that all of them are second or third generation and the high levels of red blood cells indicate they were born normally, but they all stem from genetic engineering.”

“So you’re saying that someone made them after the world fell apart?” Martin asked. “Who the hell would make Elves?”

“In many ways they are similar to you and the rest of the Team, albeit not on as large a scale.” Anja spoke. “Enhanced musculature structure, enhanced senses and reflexes. Look at them Martin, they’re all beautiful, even the men. I think they were designed for a purpose.” She said looking at him.

“They were made as slaves?” Martin asked knowing what she was hinting at.

Anja shrugged. "Anything is possible, but based on the scars I've seen on a few of them, and the transmissions we were picking up, I wouldn't be surprised." She said. "We really don't know anything about what is happening now, and so far from what we've seen it doesn't look very nice."

"Yeah I'll agree with you on that one, but who would make them to be slaves? That seems very... cruel." He said shaking his head. "I had Tony bring the bodies of the two uglies we dropped down the tunnel. And the other Elves that weren't injured are in the galley eating all of our rations. They love the things. Think you can take a look at them too?"

Anja nodded. "I'll finish up here and take a look. They'll be waking up soon at the rate their bodies are healing, what do we tell them?" She looked at him.

"I have no idea." Martin replied.

"Have you contacted the Admiral?"

Martin shook his head. "He's going to be pissed, that much I know. That's why I want to have as much information as we can get before I talk to him."

"I'll do what I can." She told him. Martin nodded and looked at her intently. Anja returned his gaze evenly. "What?"

"I'm not so dense as to not remember what you smell like Anja. I can smell you all over both Danny and Julie. And your scent is all over them." He said softly, watching her face.

"Martin... I... it's very hard to explain. I..."

"Anja," He spoke as he stepped up close to her, his musky mint smell very prominent in the enclosed space and it surprised Anja that she would be able to detect it so easily. "They... they are like family to me Anja. Please... I just don't want to see them hurt."

Anja met his eyes with and nodded. "Martin... I did not mean to hurt you. I was frightened by what you were."

Martin looked at her and smiled. "You don't know the half of it." He told her. "Just be sure this is what you want."

"What... what do you want?" Anja asked him.

Martin met her stunning jade green eyes. "I want you and them to be happy." He replied softly.

"What about you?" Anja asked.

"What I want is irrelevant." He told her.

Anja nodded slowly. "I am sure Martin." She said softly; regret filling her at what Martin did not say.

"Good." Martin said. "Then I won't mention it again. Get those reports to me as soon as you can."

Anja nodded as she watched Martin walk out and she turned to walk over to Tarifa's bedside. The stunning young female elf stirred and her eyes fluttered for a moment, but remained closed. Anja moved back to the counter and began running another test and didn't see Kevin come into the infirmary.

Kevin stood in the doorway, his eyes wide as he gazed upon the sleeping forms of the elves on the medical beds. He came fully into the room and Anja saw him then and turned.

"Kevin what are you doing in here?" She asked getting to her feet.

"I didn't believe it when I saw the others." Kevin spoke. "But it's really true. They are elves."

"Kevin you need to leave." Anja told him as he came closer to Tarifa's form, his eyes hungry at the way the sheet clung to her body.

"I heard you talking to Hunter." He said. "So someone made them to be slaves' huh?"

"You were spying on me?" Anja asked angrily.

Kevin looked from Tarifa to the other female elf and shook his head. "They... they all have the perfect model body, did you notice that?"

Anja rolled her eyes. "No Kevin, they were injured; it wasn't the first thing that came to mind. You really need to leave now."

Kevin looked at her, "Why Anja? Why are you so eager to get rid of me?"

"You shouldn't be in here. These people are injured and..."

"Elves," Kevin spoke.

Anja stopped. "What?"

“They aren’t people, they are Elves.” Kevin told her, turning to look at Tarifa’s sleeping form again. Anja knew what she saw in those eyes and she didn’t like it one bit. She stepped forward and got between him and the bed.

“You will leave now.” She told him more forcefully.

“Or you’ll do what?” Kevin asked with a smirk.

Anja’s hand closed around the butt of the K12 in her thigh holster, and her eyes took on a decidedly evil glare to them; a glare that Kevin had never seen before. “If you do not leave right now Kevin, I will physically toss you out of my clinic onto your pathetic ass!”

Kevin gazed at her in surprise. “Where is this coming from?” He asked. “We’re engaged Anja, you can’t treat me like this.”

Anja smiled at him. “No... we are no longer engaged Kevin. And you and your father will no longer get to fuck me whenever you want. We are done; finished; kaput!” Anja dug into her pocket for the ring she had worn up until a few hours ago. She flipped it at him, watching as he caught it awkwardly.

“It’s that black genome bitch and her boyfriend isn’t it?” Kevin spoke. “I’ve seen you talking to them! You were getting real close to them.”

Anja smiled. “You have no idea how close I’ve gotten to them.” She told him.

Kevin’s eyes grew wide. “You’ve... you’ve fucked them?” He asked incredulously. “You actually let them touch you?”

Anja smiled sweetly. “Not only touch me.” She said. “They fucked me senseless! Something you are incapable of doing. And I can’t wait to have Danny’s big black cock stuffing my pussy again; all the while I’m happily slurping away at Julie’s tight cunt!”

“That’s... that’s disgusting!” Kevin hissed.

“Maybe to you... but you don’t matter anymore.” Anja told him. “Now I’ll give you five seconds to turn your sorry ass around and get out of here.”

“Or what...?” Kevin barked. “You’ll have your new boyfriend come in and beat me up?” Kevin’s eyes grew wide when he was suddenly looking down the barrel of Anja’s K12 only an inch from his tip of his nose.

“He won’t have to.” Anja spoke coolly. “There won’t be anything left of you to beat up after I blow your fucking brains all over the wall behind you.”

Kevin Graham was only a bully when he could brow beat a person. The only reason he was able to treat Anja as he had the last few years was because of his father. He knew without a doubt that not only could she kick his skinny ass with ease, but he also knew she had killed before in a very cold blooded means. And looking at her now, he had no doubts she wouldn’t hesitate to kill him.

“This... this isn’t over Anja.” He said.

“Oh yes it is Kevin.” She told him.

Kevin glared at her but he turned slowly and left the infirmary. Anja exhaled deeply in relief, but she was proud of herself. She would have done exactly what she threatened Kevin she would do. Anja holstered her K12 and turned slowly to look at Tarifa. She saw her eyes flutter quickly and Anja smiled.

“He’s gone; you can stop pretending you are asleep.” Anja said.

Tarifa opened her dazzling sapphire eyes and looked at Anja as she sat up slowly holding the sheet to her naked breasts. She looked at Anja, who simply stared right back at her.

“Where... where am I?” She asked.

“You are safe.” Anja said, putting her hand on the young woman’s bare shoulder.

“Who are you? What is this place?” Tarifa shot the questions out rapid fire, and Anja smiled gently.

“I will answer as many questions as I can, but right now you need to calm down.” Anja told her. “No one is going to hurt you.”

“You are human!” Tarifa snapped, glaring at her. “Why should I believe you?”

Anja was somewhat taken aback, and she took her hand away. “I don’t know, perhaps because we are the ones that saved your life, and the lives of your friends.”

Tarifa’s eyes softened a little, and her face lost most of its hardness. “Forgive me.” She said quietly. “Our dealings with humans have not been so friendly in the past. Where... where are you from, the Western settlement?”

Anja looked at her. "Excuse me, the Western Settlement? What is that?"

"It is the largest city of humans on this side of the Big River. They are not part of the Alliance and maintain their independence from them." Tarifa spoke looking at Anja oddly. "How can you not know that?"

"I think you might be surprised at what we don't know." Anja spoke. "You... you don't get along with them I take it?"

Tarifa looked at her strangely, seeing how Anja was gazing at her "You... you have never seen one of us before?" She asked. "How is that possible? Elves make up over sixty percent of all the slaves on the planet. How is it you have never seen one of us?"

"That's a long story." Anja replied. "A very long story. Who were those creatures after you?"

"They were Alliance Cadre Assassins." Tarifa replied. "They are the most lethal of all the Alliance troops; pure killing machines." Tarifa looked at Anja, her eyes wide as if she had just remembered something. "That man... he... he killed two of them so easily. The others finished the rest. How... how is that possible? No Elf has the strength or speed to stand with an Alliance Cadre Assassin and live, let alone a human. How is that possible? Who are you people?"

"Perhaps you should get dressed." Anja said. "I cleaned up your uniforms as best I could. It might be easier to let you see and then try to explain."

"...out of your mind?" Admiral Wallace nearly yelled. "Marty this is a major fuck up."

Martin winced outwardly as he watched the Admiral on the monitor. He got up and paced his office, which he was in alone thankfully.

"Admiral I couldn't stand by and watch while they were slaughtered." Martin told him. "Whatever those things were, they would have torn through them like they weren't there."

"Elves...?" Wallace spoke, shaking his head. "This just keeps getting better and better." He returned to his chair. "We've been intercepting communications from something called the Alliance. From what we've been able to figure out, they seem to be the ruling government. We've intercepted video transmissions from some of the cities as well. They're talking about slave auctions and brothels, all having to do with these elves. And some other really nasty shit that I won't get into now."

"So they are the government?" Martin asked.

Wallace nodded. "It appears so. You should have seen the look on Graham's face when he found that out. I thought the man was going to blow a load in his shorts. He demanded I arrange for him to contact these people."

"Jesus, I hope you told him to go sit on a fucking screw sir!" Martin replied, coming forward in his chair. "Whoever these people are, they are some seriously deranged and cruel individuals if what we are hearing and have seen is any indication. There's a large force of these Alliance morons combing the air base as we speak. Some of the elves that weren't hurt in the attack told me they've been enslaving elves for decades."

"They have been doing it for centuries." The female voice spoke, causing everyone in the room to turn around.

Anja stood with the female elf that appeared to be the leader. She wore her uniform, and though Anja had been able to remove the blood and dirt from it, there were still several tears in the fabric. Martin looked quickly at the cleavage of her firm breasts, as well as the smooth skin of her flat muscular abdomen. His eyes took all this in within seconds and then his eyes went to her face. Her sapphire eyes were very bright, and looking directly at him.

"Admiral... this is... this is the leader of the group we stumbled across." Martin spoke.

"My name is Tarifa." She spoke confidently. "I am Queen of the High Elves."

Martin nodded and turned back to the screen. "She's Queen of the High Elves Admiral." He spoke.

"You are mocking me." Tarifa snapped, glaring at Martin.

Martin met her defiant gaze and shook his head. "I apologize if it seems that way, but a lot has happened to us the last few days, and it's all quite a bit to take in."

"Who are you people?" Tarifa demanded. She noticed that while Martin's canine teeth were slightly longer than normal humans she had met, they did not have the length that she had seen during the fighting.

“That would be exceptionally hard to explain young lady.” Wallace spoke from EDEN. “I can assure you though; we are not your enemies.”

“So you say.” Tarifa spoke almost arrogantly. “You are humans, why should I trust you?”

Martin looked at her, his gaze hardening slightly. “Gee, maybe because we just saved your asses!” He exclaimed.

“Do not speak to the Queen in such a way!” The second female elf appeared, moving up next to Tarifa.

“Great!” Martin spoke shaking his head. “Another country heard from.”

Tarifa held up her hand to the young woman. *Voilal, they know nothing of our ways.* She said in her native elfin language.

We should not trust them my Queen. They are human barbarians. They could be waiting to turn us over to the Alliance Assassins. Your capture would make them very wealthy my Queen.

Martin’s eyes went wide when he realized he understood every word they had just spoken, and he noticed Danny and Julie visibly react as well.

“I do not lie!” Martin snapped, causing Tarifa and the young woman to look at him in stunned surprise, as well as everyone else in the room with the exception of Danny and Julie.

“Marty... you understood them?” Wallace asked in shock.

“I understood every word Admiral.” Martin spoke, his eyes never leaving Tarifa’s stunned face.

“So did I sir.” Dan spoke up now.

“Me too,” Julie spoke

“They think we are lying to them Admiral.” Martin spoke, his eyes locked on Tarifa. “And that we are barbarians. That was a good one by the way; very original. They think we are going to turn them over to these Alliance idiots.”

“Marty this isn’t helping?” Julie spoke up from next to Danny.

Martin looked at her and took a deep breath. “Admiral I’m going to check on the status of the overheads. I’m sure you and the Queen here have much to discuss.”

“Young lady, if you don’t mind taking a seat. Marty we are back on a regular rotation it seems, and we have two hours nineteen minutes before we pass to the dark side. We won’t be able to contact you until you are enroute back here.” Wallace spoke. “Your extraction is still on schedule?”

Martin nodded. “Yes sir.”

Wallace nodded. “Then we’ll see you in twenty hours.”

Martin watched as Tarifa moved to the chair in front of the smaller screen to speak with Admiral Wallace.

“You alright Skipper?” Dan asked stepping over to him.

Martin nodded slowly. “This is a lot to absorb Dan.” He said.

“You got that right.” Dan spoke. “How do we know what the hell they were speaking? It didn’t sound like any language I’ve heard before, and between the three of us we speak ten of them.

“I don’t know, but the sooner we are out of here the better.” Martin muttered as he headed for the landing pad. “This place is starting to give me a headache.”

Marcus stood in the room, his cruel eyes taking in the carnage that had taken place. One assassin lay in the middle of the floor, the gaping hole in his forehead leaking whatever they had for brains onto the floor. Marcus knew it was a bladed weapon, but the strength to strike it through the reinforced bone plates of the assassin’s head had to be tremendous. The second assassin was slumped against the wall, very little remaining of its head. The right knee looked horribly twisted in another direction, his senior officer inspecting the body. The male elf informant was also dead, his head nearly torn from his body, his eyes open in pain and death and facing almost completely behind him. His pants were tangled around his ankles, exposing his shrunken male organ for all to see.

The next room was no better, as the bodies of Elf warriors and the remaining assassins were scattered all over. The Elves had fought well, but the assassins had cut through them easily. However, whoever had killed the Alliance assassins were not Elves, this much Marcus knew.

He watched as his senior officer rose and looked at the medical data pad before turning and walking over to him.

“It is most unusual Colonel Marcus.” He spoke.

“I’m sure it is.” Marcus spoke. “The Elves did not do this.”

The man looked at him. “No my Colonel Marcus they did not. This assassin’s entire chest cavity has been shattered. Medical scans indicate every rib and his whole breast bone were broken with a single blow. The bone splinters shredded all of his internal organs. The bullet to his head was not necessary.”

Marcus bent over the male elf that had been raping Tarifa. “The condition of this male elf’s body indicates he was killed with a great deal of rage. The fool was actually trying to rape the Queen when he was killed. I knew we should not have trusted him.”

“Our patrols can find no trace of the remaining elves Colonel. And two of the Alliance assassins that we sent in the second wave have disappeared.” The man reported.

Marcus stood back up and cocked his head to the side, “Interesting.” He spoke.

“Colonel...?”

“Their bodies were taken.” Marcus said turning to look out the broken window as the sun began to rise over the mountains. “Whoever killed these Assassins must have taken the bodies to cover any escape route they were using. The two missing assassins must have stumbled upon their means of leaving the ruins, and they were killed. It is a tactic I would have used.”

“Your orders Colonel Marcus...?”

“They will not be within the ruins.” Marcus spoke. “And given the ability of the Elves, and the way they can move, I would surmise they are long gone from here.”

“Yes Colonel.”

“Order our forces to withdraw to the west and set up an advanced base.” Marcus said. “We will rest there until full morning and then we will return to the capital.”

“You do not wish to pursue the Queen Colonel?” The Captain asked surprised.

“To what purpose...?” Marcus asked softly. “We are in High Elf territory, and their forces would conduct hit and run attacks against us until they whittled us down to nothing. Trapping her here was the best chance we had, but this idiot thought more with his dick than his brains.” He kicked the body of the male elf savagely. “We will have other chances. She can not hide forever, and if our Alliance with the Wood Elves is ratified, she will be dead in a few months.”

“We make an Alliance with the Wood Elves Colonel Marcus?” The Captain asked. “Why?”

“We have been pitting them against each other for years.” Marcus replied with a smile. “The Ministers have been very clever. We’ve conducted raids against both tribes and insured the other was implicated. The Wood Elves are worthy soldiers Captain, and there has always been a culture of mistrust between the two factions. We are just getting the help of the stronger of the two tribes for a time. When we have destroyed Tarifa and her followers, we can turn on the Wood Elves.”

The Colonel grinned. “And then we will enslave them Colonel?”

Marcus matched the smile, “Of course. No one stands against the Alliance for long, no matter how strong they are; no one.”

Tarifa sat in the galley of EDEN Ground Control with the remaining members of her detachment. She had spoken with the human officer Admiral Wallace, for nearly two hours, and to say she had come away very confused and even more suspicious would be a complete understatement. She sat with her back against the wall, her knees pulled up to her chest as the others of her detachment faded in and out of much deserved sleep. Tarifa however could not bring herself to close her eyes, for every time she did she replayed the same scene in her head; her attempted rape by the betrayer in her detachment and the subsequent rescue by the one she now knew as Martin.

The Admiral had told her that Martin had disobeyed his orders to remain unseen to rescue her and her troops. And in the few moments immediately after he had killed the second Alliance Assassin, Tarifa had been completely exposed for his eyes to see. Yet those eyes had never left her face for a moment. Tarifa remembered when he had pounced so fast she could not follow his movements and gotten so close to her she could feel his

lips graze her throat, and even in that moment of terror, the touch of his lips on her skin had sent shivers through her.

Tarifa got to her feet slowly and after glancing at her sleeping soldiers she made her way out into the corridor. She followed it as she had earlier and came to the control room where she saw the dark skinned woman sitting at the console.

Julie didn't turn her head from the monitor, but she smelled Tarifa enter the room. "Are you going to stand there, or sit down?" Julie spoke.

"Forgive me." Tarifa spoke.

Julie turned and looked at her now. "Forgive you for what? I smelled you coming down the corridor sweetie. I'm just monitoring the action going on top side."

Tarifa came forward slowly, "Action?" She asked.

Julie nodded. "It seems the troops that entered the base after we snatched you and your friends are pulling back to the west." She explained.

Tarifa looked surprised. "They are leaving?"

"That's what it looks like." Julie replied. "We'll continue to monitor their movements, but they didn't leave anyone on the base that I can detect."

Tarifa lowered herself into the seat next to Julie. "I did not think Marcus would give up so easily." She spoke.

"Marcus?" Julie asked.

Tarifa looked at her. "He is a senior Commander in the Alliance; a cruel vicious man. I was his prisoner once, many years ago. I escaped. He relishes the day he captures me once more."

"Doesn't sound like a very nice guy?" Julie said.

"He is not." Tarifa replied. "He is a monster, just like those he commands." She watched Julie for a long moment, saying nothing. Julie finally turned to her with a smile.

"If you have something to ask, go ahead and ask." Julie spoke.

"You... you are not like your Admiral Wallace." Tarifa said.

"What do you mean?" Julie asked her, turning in her chair.

"Elves... all elves have increased visual insight. Humans... normal humans are seen by elves with a specific aura surrounding them; an aura that is light green in color. Your aura and that of your comrades is different." Tarifa explained to her. "It is darker, more earth tone in color. You and the others are not completely human like the red haired female."

Julie shook her head. "No we aren't." She said. "We are commonly referred to as Genomes. Ten of us here and another forty-two on EDEN were genetically engineered as soldiers. There was once thousands of us, but some issues came up with how we were created, and now we are all that is left."

"And that man... the tall one, he is your leader?" Tarifa asked.

Julie smiled. "You mean Marty? Yes."

Tarifa pointed to Julie's teeth. "Your teeth are similar to his, only not as long. Why is that?"

"When we were engineered, all of us had a very small portion of animal DNA fused with our cells. That DNA gave us our enhanced senses, speed and strength. One of the side effects was the teeth." Julie spoke grinning. "In moments of extreme emotion, they tend to lengthen, but for the most part they stay the same size. That animal was a wolf."

"And the one you... he is your mate?" Tarifa asked.

Julie chuckled. "Danny? I guess you could call him my mate in a manner of speaking."

"And your leader... what of him," Tarifa asked.

"The same as the rest of us, though I think they added large and grouchy traits to his mix." Julie answered with a laugh. "That's why he's always so grumpy."

Tarifa found herself smiling at the infectious attitude of this young woman. Julie leaned forward in her chair.

"Listen... we have been through a lot the last few days." Julie told her. "We are still trying to come to grips with the fact that we've come nearly five hundred years into the future. Everything, everyone we knew is gone. Just like that. Add to that, we come here to discover that there is a new species on the planet we called

home, a species that in our time lived only in legend and myth. It's quite a bit to absorb. Martin is not usually as ill tempered as he is now. And you could stand to not be so arrogant yourself you know."

Tarifa sighed softly. "It is a trait that was passed to me by my grandmother, and one that I can't seem to get rid of. I do not like that part of myself, but when you are Queen to over nine million High Elves across the planet, it is a part that I need."

Julie nodded slowly. "Well I can understand that." She said. "I can also say that taking that tact with Martin is the short trip straight to his bad side. He disobeyed orders to come to help you, and I'll tell you something else." She waited until Tarifa was looking directly at her. "Martin has disobeyed orders only one other time in his life, and that was to save the lives of men he knew. I don't know why he decided to help you, but you obviously have some sort of pull on him."

"I do not understand how?" Tarifa spoke. "I do not know him, and I do not consider him to be an equal. He is nothing more than a soldier... perhaps a very good one, but a soldier none the less." Tarifa knew immediately that she had said the wrong thing.

Julie shook her head. "And that is why he doesn't like your tight ass!" She spoke forcefully. "Maybe you ought to consider that if it wasn't for him, you would still be getting raped by your boyfriend, and then gang banged by all of his friends, and maybe even worse. You know something, you may be drop dead gorgeous, but you don't have a lick of common sense about you. You don't know us! And we don't know you! But as far as I can tell, the only one judging anyone here is you!" Julie got to her feet.

Tarifa came to her feet as well, her face angry. "You have no right to talk to me that way! You know nothing of my people or me, or our... or our ways!" Tarifa snapped.

Julie nodded. "You're right about that. And so far I'm not impressed."

"I don't... I don't know him..." Tarifa spoke, her face a mass of confusion now. "Our... our law dictates I must... reward him for saving my life."

Julie looked at her. "That's why you are being such a bitch? You have to give him a reward?"

Tarifa shook her head. "You don't understand. I do not have a mate... therefore I must reward him... by allowing him to... allowing him to bed me."

Julie's eyes grew large. "Excuse me?"

"Our laws dictate that if the life of an unmarried Queen is saved by an individual, a man, she must allow that man to take her for a night." Tarifa explained.

"You're kidding right?"

Tarifa shook her head. "I wish I was. Several of my party has already asked if I planned on going through with it. They are younger like me, and do not agree with many of the laws that have been in place for centuries. Many of those laws were put in place to insure that our race never died completely, as barbaric as some of them seem. I have tried to change many laws, but my efforts have only been partly successful. As long as the Council of our Elders has as much sway over our people as they do, the old ways will continue."

"And that is why you act the way you do around the Skipper?" Julie said.

Tarifa nodded slowly. "He... he frightens me." She said softly, looking at her. "In... in the room, right after he killed Paler, the elf who was raping me, I was... I was exposed to him, yet his eyes never left my face. His eyes... I've never seen eyes like his. They were so expressive... so savage. He got close to me... so close to me... I thought he was going to hurt me... but he only took a deep breath. I still do not understand what happen, but in my experience... men do not just dismiss a naked female elf. We were made... we were made to be the ultimate pleasure slave for humans. It simply is not done. Men can not resist us."

Julie smiled. "Martin isn't just any man Tarifa." She said. "And as you have noticed, he is not totally human either."

"That is what frightens me." Tarifa said.

"Listen, why don't you just talk to him?" Julie told her. "You might be surprised at what you find. And I know for a fact that he will not do anything to you, regardless of what your law says."

"You sound so sure of that." Tarifa asked.

"I am." Julie replied. "Trust me on this. He's right down that corridor in the landing pad. Go talk to him."

"You will allow me to walk freely?" Tarifa asked.

“Why not? You are not prisoners here, and I’m too tired to guard you even if you were.” Julie answered. “Right that way. Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m going to grab some shut eye.”

Tarifa entered the landing bay quietly, walking with her usual Elf ability to be very stealthy. She saw Martin working at a table against one wall of the bay, his back to her. Her eyes took in the large overhead doors that looked to be jammed open above the strange looking flying craft sitting quietly on the large pad. Tarifa was no stranger to flying machines, as the Alliance had many of them, but none looked as this one did. Most of the flying machines were used to hunt her and her people, but this machine looked much more deadly.

Tarifa stopped where she was and continued to gaze at Martin. He had unzipped his uniform, and the top portion was now loosely tied around his waist. He wore a black tank top, and even from where she stood, Tarifa could see the definition of the muscles in his arms and shoulders. She was also able to see the lines of tattooed flame that extended from under the shirt, down his arms and across his shoulders. He was so unlike the male elves and other human men she had seen. The male elves were lean, but no where near as heavily muscled and the majority of the humans she had seen were in relatively good shape but nothing like the sort of body Martin had. Tarifa could remember the books she had read as a child, and the bodies of the ancient gods, and as she gazed at Martin that is what she saw. The most perfect male body she had ever seen in her life. And for the first time in her life, Tarifa felt a powerful sexual rush of warmth pass between her thighs as she gazed at a man.

Tarifa heard a man’s voice echo within the bay, and an older human walked down the ramp of the flying machine. He said something to Martin who spoke back to him. Tarifa watched the human then walk underneath the flying machine inspecting something under one of the short wings.

“You don’t have to hide in the shadows.” The voice said from next to her, causing Tarifa to yelp and whirl around, her hands coming up defensively. Her eyes went wide when she saw Martin standing only three feet from her.

“By the gods,” She gasped.

“Sorry about that.” Martin told her sheepishly. “I tend to walk rather softly.”

“Softly...?” Tarifa exclaimed. “More like a ghost.” Tarifa exclaimed.

“I smelled you the moment you came into the bay.” Martin said. “I would prefer you didn’t hide in the shadows. You look much better in the light.”

Tarifa looked at him with surprise in her eyes as he motioned to the table he had been standing next to working at. “I... I did not mean to disturb you.” She told him.

Martin shook his head. “You’re not disturbing me.” He said. “I was actually going to find you and apologize to you for the way I acted. We’ve had to deal with a lot the last few days, as I’m sure Admiral Wallace told you.”

“He thinks very highly of you.” Tarifa spoke as they reached the table.

Martin nodded and he pulled out the stool for her next to the table. “We’ve been working together for quite a while now.” He said as Tarifa sat down, her eyes never leaving his face. He was very easy to look at, as he was the most beautiful man she had ever seen. His features were solid and strong; his skin was deeply tanned, very similar to hers. His cheeks were starting to show a five o’clock shadow of growth that Tarifa found so appealing in men. Male elves never had facial hair unless they had it grafted on later in their lives, and to Tarifa it was something unique and sometimes incredibly soft. And Martin’s facial growth appeared to be at the incredibly soft stage. It was his eyes that Tarifa found so fascinating. Looking into them was like staring into a primeval forest that was daring you to enter and discover its forbidden secrets and pleasures.

And it’s most horrible dangers.

“What can I do for you?” Martin asked her.

Tarifa had to shake her head to clear her thoughts, which were decidedly un-Queen like as she had been imagining herself wrapped around Martin’s body and screaming in perverse delight.

“Hmmm... I’m sorry, what?”

Martin smiled. “What can I do for you?” He said again. “You wanted something?”

Tarifa looked at him, waves of feelings she had never before experienced washing over her. “I... I came to offer... I came to offer my apology.” She finally was able to blurt out.

“Well... that hurt didn’t it?” Martin said.

“My manner can be a bit terse at times.” Tarifa replied, not able to look at him.

“I’m guessing as Queen you don’t have to say you are sorry very often huh?” Martin said, looking at her.

The way he said that caused Tarifa to look at him. His words were not spoken in a hostile or aggressive tone, but one more of questioning. She shook her head slowly. “No.” She answered finally.

Martin had to grip the side of the bench he was standing next to in order to keep from taking the breathtaking elfin beauty in his arms and conquering her being. Tarifa was stirring sensations inside him that only Anja had been able to conjure, and it took every bit of will power Martin had to not let his animal instincts overwhelm him. Her peach scent was flooding his brain, and driving him nearly crazy with lust, and the way her sapphire eyes gazed on him made it even worse.

Unknown to Martin he was having almost the same effect on Tarifa, as she had suddenly become very warm, and her pussy was becoming wetter by the minute as she sat so close to him. The way his eyes gazed on her with a loving hunger caused shivers to course through her body. No man had ever looked at her as he did.

Martin took a deep breath and turned to the table in front of him. “I... I reworked some weapons from the armory for your people.” He spoke, motioning to the dozen HK74 assault rifles and K12 automatic pistols laid out on the table.

Turning away from her and telling her about the weapons saved both of them. Tarifa blinked her eyes several times as the sensations he had caused to course through her began to subside. “I’m sorry... what?”

“The weapons your people are carrying are not very good with stopping power or range.” He told her.

Tarifa took a deep breath and nodded. “We are only equipped with what we can buy from several human merchants and what we can steal. The Alliance has confiscated most of the other weapons, and they have factories to build more.” Tarifa told him. “The human settlement in the west has a massive armory, but what they ask for in exchange for weapons is too large a price to pay.”

Martin looked at her, “Slaves?” He asked.

Tarifa nodded. “They want female elves to work in their brothels and pleasure houses; something I am not willing to give them.” She answered.

“Good for you.” Martin spoke.

“You... you made these for us?” She asked, looking at him.

Martin nodded. “Did the Admiral invite you to EDEN?”

“You speak of your base on the moon? Yes he did.” Tarifa replied. “I’m sure it will be a site to see. I’ve looked into the stars many times at night and wondered if life existed off earth.”

Martin smiled gently. “I’ve asked myself that very question quite a few times.”

“Is the trip long?” Tarifa asked him, her eyes open wide in wonderment.

“Just under fourteen hours.” Martin answered. He looked at her, and seeing the way her eyes glowed in the dim light of the landing bay was too much for Martin.

Tarifa let out a soft female squeal when Martin lifted her into his arms, and covered her lips with his own. Her small hands went to his chest as his warm tongue drove past her lips to meet her own tongue in a blinding moment of delight. She felt a burning sensation ripple through her, as if every nerve in her body was lighting up, and her eyes closed slowly as she reveled in the blissful surges of pleasure that coursed through her. No man had ever kissed her before this moment, and Tarifa could not help the wetness that spread to her pussy. She was experiencing sensations that were unknown to her before now, all of them stemming from a kiss. Oh but what a kiss it was, as she clenched her fists in a fit of indecision on whether to wrap her arms around his shoulders and melt into his arms, or to beat him as hard as she could for taking her against her will.

Or was it against her will?

Martin made the decision for her. His eyes opened wide as he kissed her deeply, and he could smell her excitement. She did smell of peaches, and it was even sweeter smelling in her excitement, yet that was what triggered his mind to take over. He did not want to force himself on this stunningly beautiful woman, and if he allowed himself to swim in her scent any longer, the animal that he always kept in tight control would come out.

Martin took her face in his hands gently as he broke the kiss. He caressed the top ridge of her ear, tracing it up until it reached the point, drawing a sigh of bliss from Tarifa.

“I’m sorry.” He whispered.

Tarifa lowered herself onto the stool as she heard Martin leave the bay quickly. She could feel her drenched pussy even through her uniform, and she brought her fingers to her lips in shock. Her eyes were wide, not believing that a simple kiss had done this to her. She had come so close to responding to him with a wanton willingness that it frightened her. He had taken her breath away with a simple kiss, making her weak kneed and soaked between her thighs. She had never let any man kiss her before, as they usually smelled of alcohol or tobacco, yet Martin's tongue had tasted faintly of mint, and it had set her body ablaze.

Ben and Tina watched Tarifa from the ramp of the Raptor with large smiles on their faces.

"Wow! How come you don't kiss me like that?" Tina spoke with a mischievous smile.

Ben looked at her with a smile. "You mean the kind that leaves you weak kneed and dripping in anticipation?"

"Those are the ones."

Ben stepped over to her, pulling her close to him. "Then prepare yourself woman."

MEDICINE BOW MOUNTAINS NORTHERN COLORADO SEVENTY-SIX MILES NORTH OF DENVER

"We traveled only at night my Queen, to avoid detection." The male Elf officer spoke, bowing his head and reporting from one knee. "The Alliance forces pursued Queen Tarifa's forces from the battle in the North, while we escorted the Holy One here. Her senior Lieutenant met us with the Holy One, while the Queen's own unit led Marcus and his units to the south to cover our escape."

"She led these forces herself?" The female voice asked the tone of surprise clearly evident.

"It would appear that way my Queen." The male elf replied.

"You brought the Holy One here... but why?"

"I asked him too." Walter Carson spoke as he entered the cave chamber.

The chamber was large, and his voice carried a small distance, but the unmistakable tapping of his walking stick on the ground carried much further.

"Holy One," The female voice echoed quietly, and the long silky platinum blond hair of the Queen of the Wood Elves appeared from the shadows as she dropped to one knee.

As with Tarifa before him, Walter stepped up to her slowly and touched her head. "You need not bow to me Dysea."

The platinum hair didn't move. "You are the Holy One." She spoke softly.

Walter turned to the male elf that had been making his report and the three male guards near the entrance to the chamber. All of them had their heads bowed. "Leave us." He spoke as he moved to the small chair to the side of the glittering polished white marble throne chair. As he settled into the chair, he noticed they were finally alone. "Look at me Dysea." He spoke.

The platinum blond head came up, and Walter was looking into the deepest emerald green eyes he had ever seen. Dysea was Queen of the Wood Elves, and had been for over a century. She was born ten years before Tarifa, thus making them the closest in age of any ruling Queens before them. While Tarifa was a tanned dark haired goddess, Dysea was completely opposite with long flowing platinum blond hair that reached to the small of her back and softly tanned skin. Walter had to inwardly complement himself on the beauty that the female elves possessed. He had engineered them to be nearly irresistible to human men with their near perfect figures and seemingly submissive nature, but he knew that while the female elves were very submissive with the men they took as their mates, they were anything but submissive when it came to protecting those they cared for.

He had created the elves to be open in regards to their sexuality, not afraid to enter into relationships of any sort. He made them to be quite possibly the most sexually free species to ever inhabit the earth. He had not intended for them to be turned into slaves.

Dysea matched Tarifa's beauty in every way; they were just completely opposite in their looks. They were both the epitome of perfection, with the figures that drove human men mad with desire, and both Tarifa and Dysea had developed their leg and ass muscles to give them near perfect matching asses. Dysea wore a pure white dress that covered her shoulders and extended down her arms in sleeves, but from the fastened neck collar

of the dress to just about mid way over her abdomen, she wore a black mesh like material that did nothing to hide the outline of her large and very firm 34C breasts. The dress had a thick white strip down the remaining portion of her abdomen that connected to the lower part of the dress that was nothing more than white panties and three floor length strips of white cloth. Her almost knee high white boots completed the very alluring outfit. While Tarifa was deeply tanned, Dysea was a beauty with only a light tan to her skin from her frequent trips to the surface.

Walter had to smile inwardly to himself once more. He had forgotten that the Wood Elves were much more open about their sexuality than the High Elves, even more so than he had intended them to be and the clothes they chose to wear reflected this.

“Your dealings with the Alliance will backfire on you.” Walter spoke.

Dysea’s green eyes flashed in surprise and she saw the man she knew only as the Holy One smile. “You... you know of our talks Holy One?”

“Did you think you could keep it from me child?” He asked in an amused tone. “I saw their representative basking in the attention of two elves in the next chamber when I arrived.”

Dysea’s mind was thinking quickly, but she could not come up with a statement before Walter smiled gently. “Tarifa and the High Elves are not your enemies Dysea. They are your sisters and brothers.”

“Holy One they raid and murder my people at any opportunity that arises!” Dysea countered with passion in her tone.

“The Alliance is turning you against them using lies and agents.” Walter told her. “You know as well as I that they want nothing but to enslave all elves to their whim. To be used in whatever manner they deem.”

Dysea nodded slowly. “Perhaps Holy One, but they will find that the Wood Elves are not so easily controlled and subjugated.”

Walter stood up slowly. “When I first created your ancestors, it was with the purpose of helping men; helping them to rebuild our shattered world. You could do things they could not, go places they could not. Your beauty and the beauty of your sisters and your brother elves were meant to inspire them and give them reasons to go on.” He shook his head. “Instead they enslaved you, and twisted my creations into monsters for their conquest. I do not want to see that happen to you nor any of the elves Dysea.”

Dysea got to her feet, standing to her full height of five foot seven, her platinum hair falling to the middle of her muscular and toned ass. “We would fight them to our dying breath Holy One.” She spoke.

Walter nodded. “Yes I know, but that is not what I want to see. It has already begun you know. They are hounding Tarifa and the High Elves mercilessly, hunting her and her people. When they are finished with them, they will come for you.”

“My pact with the Alliance will give us weapons and equipment that will allow us to fight them Holy One.” Dysea spoke.

“And in return, you will help them to destroy your brothers and sisters.” Walter spoke, turning to look at her. “Have you been raiding camps and murdering High Elves Dysea?”

Dysea looked at him wide eyed. “Certainly not Holy One! That is not something I would allow, regardless of what the Council of Elders desires!”

Walter nodded. “Ah yes, The Council of Elders.” He spoke returning to the chair. “Tarifa has the same problems with her Council of Elders. It seems that I made a mistake when I formed the governments of your societies. The Council of Elders for both you and Tarifa are part of the problem, and not part of the solution.”

“Yet they hold a large sway over my people Holy One.” Dysea spoke.

“So it would seem.” Walter spoke to himself. “I wonder why that is?”

“What do you mean Holy One?” Dysea asked, confused that he had not directed his last statement to her.

Walter met her gaze. “Events are changing Dysea.” He spoke, getting to his feet and walking up to her. He reached out and touched the tattoo on the side of her slim neck. “You bear a unique mark for a reason Dysea.” He said softly. “And soon you will discover two others with matching tattoos, and you will need to make decisions that you have never thought of. It will be those decisions that you and the others make that will decide the fate of the Elves and mankind. I ask that you explore what the Alliance has told you before proceeding further with your plans for a pact with them. Tarifa and the High Elves are not so different from you and the Wood Elves.”

Dysea snorted most unladylike. “Holy One they are beneath us! They smell different and they act different. They consider themselves above us in so many ways. The Wood Elves are much more expressive in everything we do, and the High Elves are repressive by their very nature.”

Walter smiled. “Do you know this to be true? Have you witnessed this yourself?”

Dysea paused for a long moment. “Well... no Holy One, but all the reports from the Council... and our scouts...”

“Are wrong,” Walter spoke flatly. He took her hands in his, causing Dysea to smile up at him with adoring eyes, the eyes of a child looking at their adored parent. “As I said, events are changing rapidly now. An individual has come to earth, another of my creations from a past long ago. He is a warrior unequaled Dysea, as are those that travel with him. Even your vaunted Wood Elf Rangers are but children to them. Tarifa has met him already; I can feel it. You must seek them out Dysea. Only the three of you will stand a chance of insuring that elves and all those that are enslaved will be free. Only the three of you can convince the humans not aligned with the Alliance that you are not possessions to be traded and sold like cattle. Only the three of you together stand a chance of changing the face of the world, as we know it. But you must seek him out.”

Dysea looked at him. “Holy One... do you suggest I leave and travel on the surface to find this strange man and the Queen of our rivals?”

Walter nodded. “Yes.” He told her. “If you do not, then all I have tried to build... all you have tried to build... will be lost forever under the boot heel of the Alliance.”

“The Council will never agree Holy One.” Dysea spoke. “You must know this.”

“I do. That is why I am coming with you, and why we must not tell them what you are doing.”

“You ask me to go against the will of the Council of Elders?” Dysea asked aghast.

“I ask you to seek the one you were meant for, even more than Tarifa, this man will call to you in a way unlike any you have ever experienced. It is he that keeps you from taking others into your bed while filling your dreams.” Walter spoke.

“Holy One... how do you... how do you know who I take into my bed and what I dream of?” Dysea asked somewhat surprised.

Walter smiled. “Do you think it is a secret that no man has shared your company or your bed in almost a hundred years?” He asked reaching up out to caress the tattoo on her neck again. “This is something you have to do Dysea, and you must use the intelligence I gave you to make your own decisions. Leave the Council of the Elders to me.”

“And if I refuse?” Dysea asked.

“Then we have already lost.” Walter spoke softly. “And no matter what you do, you and every Wood Elf that remains alive will become slaves to Alliance rule.”

CHAPTER FIVE

Tarifa’s Lieutenant Endith and the six remaining High Elf warriors with her lay on the forest floor, watching as the moon began to rise. They were on the edge of where the Book Cliffs met the timber of the Uinta Mountains. They had begun their journey three days before with thirteen in their party. At certain locations Endith had detailed an elfin warrior to remain behind, and return to report their progress. They had traveled quickly and quietly through the forests, looping far around where Marcus’s forces had camped. They had begun leaving this morning, and now their advance base was deserted. Endith had led her remaining force towards the sacred ruins, and they were coming in from the west. Endith knew that in another three kilometers they would be among the ruins of the old Air Base as the Holy One referred to it.

The timber around them now was scattered and tall, with the exception of the large clearing directly to their front. Endith used the infra-red binoculars she carried as she scanned the clearing, her mind racing. The ground showed recent signs of a huge heat source, scorched leaves and blown twigs lying all over around them, yet she could find nothing that indicated what had caused the heat surge. She lowered the field glasses one last time and turned to the male elf that was lying next to her.

“I can detect nothing.” She said softly.

“The heat pattern does not conform to anything we know the Alliance has. Their flying machines leave great swatches of burned ground all around them, but nothing this precise and targeted however.” The male replied.

“You think it was a flying machine?” Endith asked. “How could it land here, among the tress?”

“The pattern of debris indicates that whatever craft landed here were very large and using powerful thrusters. To scatter the twigs and leaves like they are... it...”

They both turned as the female elf settled to the ground next to Endith. “Senior Lieutenant we have discovered something you should see.”

“What?”

“We were sweeping the clearing for mines as you ordered but...” The female paused in mid-sentence.

“Well... but what?” Endith spoke becoming slightly exasperated. They had been moving for so long and even she was tired and worried about Tarifa.

“You should see this for yourself Senior Lieutenant.”

Endith looked at the male elf who shrugged his shoulders, “Very well.” Endith spoke getting to her feet.

The female elf led the two of them out of the treeline and almost halfway across the clearing where two more elves were kneeling. Endith stopped next to them, her blue eyes going wide as she saw the faint light coming from the two foot wide gap in the ground. It extended for nearly the entire length of the clearing and was a perfect straight line. She lowered her hand to the ground and brushed aside the first layer of dirt and leaves before her fingers brushed against something smooth and metallic.

“Metal.” She whispered quietly.

“There is a flying ship below us.” The female elf told her in a whisper. “And what appears to be some sort of hanger bay. We saw humans moving around this flying ship. Endith, it is unlike anything I have ever seen.”

Endith moved closer to the edge and peered into the dimly lit bay, seeing only the huge shadow that the Raptor was casting. Her trained eyes deducted how far it was to the surface of the floor that she could see.

“It looks like twenty-five feet.” She spoke quietly. She turned to the scout. “You saw humans?”

The elf scout nodded, “Two; a male and female. They seemed to be working on something near the back of the flying machine. They went inside the flying machine and have not come back out.”

Endith looked at the cloudy sky overhead before answering. “The acid storm will be here in less than an hour. We will drop down and subdue these humans. This hanger will provide protection from the storm.”

“You do not wish to kill the humans?” The scout asked.

Endith shook her head. “They may be able to provide us with information. I have not been able to pick up the Queen’s locator beacon in nearly fifteen hours, and they might be able to tell us something.”

“Endith are you sure the Queen was not taken by Marcus?” The male asked.

Endith looked at him and shook her head. “We would still detect her beacon.” She replied. “It is inside her, implanted into the skin on her hip. It is completely undetectable. It is something only a few others and I know of. It would not just stop working. Something is blocking the signal. And this hanger would be the right thing to do it with.”

“I will gather our force.” The male elf spoke.

“Quickly, we must get under cover before the storm hits.” Endith spoke. “It appears it will be a very large and deadly one.”

Endith sat on her elfin ass looking up at the business end of the large automatic, blood trickling from the corner of her lip, her blue eyes very wide and filled with a mixture of fear and shock at the human female that held the weapon.

Endith and her warriors had dropped soundlessly to the floor of the hanger below them, the twenty-five foot drop only a fraction of what she and her elfin soldiers were capable of. The dimly lit hanger bay was silent as she motioned two of her soldiers into the rear of the strange looking flying machine to subdue the two humans that were working as if they had heard and seen nothing.

That had been far from the case.

Her two warriors had taken four steps up the ramp of the Raptor when black clad apparitions appeared all around them, moving with a speed none of them had been prepared for, or had ever seen. Endith heard grunts of pain, saw two of her soldiers leave their feet, heard weapons hitting the metal floor and as she moved to react, a hand appeared from the side as if by magic. The open palm strike to her jaw sent her spinning, stars flashing before her eyes. When she didn't fall, a follow up blow to her midsection doubled her over in pain as all the air in her lungs left her. She went to her knees, gasping for breath and stars still dancing in her head. As her fingers closed around the pistol grip of the small sub machine gun that dangled from a strap on her shoulder she froze as she felt the cold steel of a large pistol pressed to the back of her head.

"That would not be wise." The female voice spoke calmly.

Endith lifted her head slowly to look into the calm serene eyes of the human female, who was crouched in front of her, the K12 never wavering from its point of aim between her eyes. Endith saw the human male, directly behind the female, another larger rifle also holding steady on her chest, a red laser cutting through the darkness of the hanger bay and centered above her heart.

Endith looked around slowly, seeing all of her warriors covered by either the black clad apparitions or unconscious upon the cold steel of the floor. Two of her fastest warriors were in the clutches of two of the strange soldiers, gleaming steel blades from knives pressed tightly to their throats.

Endith turned and her eyes went a little wider when she saw the tall heavily muscled human walking towards her. She blinked several times before realizing that this intimidating man was not entirely human as his aura told her. He squatted in front of her, his dark eyes apprising her carefully.

"It's not entirely appropriate to attempt to kill someone when you first meet them." Martin told her.

"Let's just whack them and call it a day Skipper!" Dan's voice echoed in the bay.

Endith's eyes darted to where Danny was kneeling on the back of one of her male elfin warriors, the large sub machine gun pressed to the back of his head, his face twisted in a grimace of pain. Slightly behind him, a dark skinned female held Endith's fastest scout by her throat, the blade of the knife against her tanned skin. She had kicked the scout in the leg, dropping her to one knee and effectively ending their battle in four seconds.

"I agree!" Trina spoke from the other side of the Raptor's landing gear, her HK74 jammed into the back of the head of the male elf beneath her boot. "I don't much like being a target!"

Endith's eyes went slowly back to Martin, who had never taken his eyes from her. "Who... who are you?" She finally was able to croak out the words.

"The better question here is who are you?" Martin spoke.

"Endith," The female voice echoed loudly across the bay.

Endith's eyes darted behind Martin and she saw Tarifa run into the bay, only to have the red haired female stop her with an outstretched arm, her other hand filled with another of the automatic pistols.

"My Queen, you're alive!" Endith gasped the relief in her voice very evident.

"Endith what are you doing here?" Tarifa asked, not willing to push past Anja's outstretched arm for fear of what Martin's men would do.

"We... we followed you my Queen." Endith spoke slowly. "There is an acid storm coming outside, and when we discovered this underground hanger we came to investigate. We lost your signal fifteen hours ago my lady! I thought these... I thought these humans might know something."

"Martin she is my Senior Lieutenant!" Tarifa exclaimed. "She only thought to protect me!"

Martin turned back to look at Tarifa, his eyes studying her face. He motioned with his head to Anja, and she dropped her arm from Tarifa's waist so that she could come forward. Tarifa walked directly up to him as he rose to his full height. She looked at him almost shyly.

"Please... they are my soldiers." She spoke, reaching out almost tentatively to place her hand on his chest. Tarifa could feel his heart beating against her hand, even through the body armor he wore. This did not go unnoticed by the others in Martin's team or Endith, yet their faces remained locked in stern snarls. "Please." Tarifa spoke softly.

Martin nodded slowly. "Let them go." He ordered. "Ben... is the overhead fixed yet?"

Ben looked at him from where he stood. "We finished it right before our guests showed up!"

Tarifa's eyes had never left Martin's face. "If it is an acid storm you must close the overhead doors to keep your ship from being damaged. They last for several hours and the acid they expel is very corrosive to metal."

"Ben!" Martin called.

Ben was already moving. "Closing them now Marty."

Martin turned from Tarifa's gorgeous sapphire eyes. "Anja, get your bag and make sure our new friends are patched up."

Anja had holstered her K12 and she nodded, "On it."

Danny helped the male elf to his feet, the male Elf's face a mixture of utter relief and confusion now that Danny's two hundred and fifty plus pounds of muscle was off his back.

"This acid storm; how long will it last?" Martin asked.

Tarifa looked at Endith. "Endith, how large was it?"

"One of the biggest I've seen this year my lady?" She answered, getting slowly to her feet. "This one is larger than the storm last month."

Tarifa turned back to Martin. "Normally they last for only a few hours, but the large ones, as this seems to be, could last up to ten hours. The storm we had last month lasted for twelve hours, so potentially this one could last even longer."

Martin nodded slowly before turning to head for the command center, Tarifa's hand falling away from his chest. Endith stepped up to her quietly.

"My... my Queen, what... what is going on?" She asked. "Who... who are these people? Their auras are not completely human, and they move with speed and reflexes that surpass even the Elfin Weapon Masters."

Tarifa looked at her and smiled as she embraced her Senior Lieutenant and her friend. "It is a long story Endith. The Holy One Endith; did you get him to the rendezvous coordinates?"

Endith nodded. "Yes my Queen. He is safe."

Tarifa nodded. "Good." She took Endith's arm. "I have much to tell you my friend."

Tarifa sat with Endith in the hanger bay as they shared one of the rations that Julie had provided to them. They had been speaking for close to six hours now, Tarifa filling her most trusted aide and friend in on everything that had happen since they had parted.

"...Council must hear of this Tarifa!" Endith spoke. "You must return and tell them."

Tarifa shook her head quickly. "No!" She said. "I have already accepted this Admiral Wallace's invitation. I will not back out of that now."

"Tarifa the Council will think you have been captured or killed. They will begin the process to select a new Queen within a week's time." Endith told her. "You must know that it will give them no greater joy then to have someone they can control as Queen. You must return!"

"Endith... Martin... these people can help us in ways we can not begin to imagine." Tarifa told her. "This is an opportunity I can not allow to slip by."

Endith looked at her without speaking, her eyes lingering on Tarifa. "You... you are taken by him?" She exclaimed.

Tarifa's eyes widened. "What? What do you mean? No I'm not."

"I have served you for nearly forty years Tarifa, and never once have I seen you gaze upon a man as you looked at him earlier." Endith spoke.

Tarifa looked away from her friend quickly. "He is... he is intriguing Endith" She said softly. "There is... there is something wild about him that draws me like no other."

"What did he do? Did he force himself on you my Queen?" Endith asked beginning to get to her feet.

"NO!" Tarifa exclaimed. She looked at Endith, grabbing her arm before she got too far. "No! Endith... he saved my life!"

Endith nodded. "As you have already told me, I know. And according to our laws you must submit to him as a reward, which I know you will not do because you think the law is just as ridiculous as I do. Now what else happened Tarifa?"

"He... Endith... he kissed me." Tarifa said looking at her.

Endith's eyes went wide at this knowledge. "He kissed you?" She gasped. "You mean with... with his lips?"

Tarifa looked at her sternly. "Do you know of any other way?" She asked
"He kissed you with his lips!" Endith exclaimed.

Tarifa grabbed her hands. "Endith please! Be quiet!"

Endith looked around quickly, embarrassed that she had spoken so loudly. She turned back to her Queen and friend. "He kissed you?"

Tarifa nodded. "I... I have never been kissed before Endith." She said softly. "It was... it was divine. It was almost too much. I could not stop the sensations that ripped through me. I became so wet he had to have smelled my excitement if his senses are as acute as the others tell me."

"What happen?"

Tarifa looked at her. "I... I don't know. He just stopped and rushed away."

"He... he just stopped?" Endith asked amazed. "Tarifa... no human is able to resist female elves."

"He is not entirely human." Tarifa told her. "He has incredible control over his emotions. I could feel the animal within him bursting to get out, to take me right here on the floor of this hanger bay. And I wanted him too. Oh... did I want him too Endith. The... I feel pulled to him sexually like no one before in my life. I've never felt this way for any man."

"You hardly know him Tarifa!" Endith spoke.

Tarifa nodded slowly. "I know, and that is the only thing holding me back." She replied honestly. "It is the only thing keeping me from throwing myself into his arms and submitting to him in any way he desires. I can't explain it Endith."

"Tarifa... the Holy One said... he said you would meet the one you were meant for." Endith spoke.

Tarifa looked at her and shook her head. "This is not him." She answered softly. "I feel drawn to him sexually yes, but he is very different Endith, and that is why I must go." She said. "I must go to discover who and what these people are and to see if Martin... if Martin is the one the Holy One said." Tarifa looked at her. "You must return and tell the Council what is happening."

Endith's eyes went wide. "I will do no such thing!" She exclaimed. "I am not going to leave your side. What would I tell the Council? That you are trying to discover if these non-humans are going to be allies? They would laugh me out of the chambers. I can send Domac. He can be trusted completely, and we need only tell him what the Council needs to know. Is there some way we could contact him if the Council proceeds without consulting you?"

Tarifa looked at her. "I will ask Martin." She spoke softly. "With their technology, I'm sure they have a transmitter that can reach the moon."

"Is it wise to trust this man Tarifa?" Endith asked. "This could all be an elaborate plot to capture you. To enslave you and parade you before our people in chains like some harem girl."

Tarifa looked at her for a long moment. Those very thoughts had gone through her mind quite a bit, right up until the time Martin had kissed her. That one breath stealing kiss had changed her outlook considerably. "I... I can trust him Endith. It's... it's almost as if I can feel him inside me. He would never harm me, and I sense he would never allow harm to come to me. It is very strange Endith, as if..."

Tarifa's words were drowned out by an alarm that began ringing in the hanger bay. She and Tarifa came to their feet quickly, ready for action.

"We must go this way, quickly!" Tarifa spoke taking Endith's hand.

Tarifa led Endith into the Command Center where they found Julie in the chair working the controls, while Martin and the others were gathered around.

"... three hundred meters and closing," Julie announced.

Martin picked up Tarifa's peach scent as she entered the Command Center and he turned to look at her. "I thought this was an acid rain storm." He spoke.

"It is." Tarifa replied.

"Does anything normally move in large numbers during these storms?" Martin asked.

"Only..." Tarifa's eyes widened. "By the Gods no, it must be Nomads!"

Martin's eyes narrowed. "Why do I get the feeling that I'm not going to like what you are about to tell me."

"Acid Nomads," Tarifa explained to him. "They are beasts that the Alliance discarded as failed experiments. Their genetic structure allows them to resist the rain. They are the only beings that can traverse these storms without having their flesh stripped from their bones."

"And why exactly did the Alliance attempt to create them?" Anja asked.

Tarifa met her eyes. "At one point last century, my people discovered a secret way into a lush valley in The Wastes."

"What a minute, The Wastes?" Julie asked. "What the hell is that?"

"It is an area that was made up of the states of Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri and the lower half of Colorado before the Great Fire." Tarifa told them. "Due to the many nuclear weapons and power plants in those six states, when the Great Fire began, it literally saturated this entire area with poisonous radiation. My people found a very fertile valley within The Wastes, but the only way they knew to reach it was to cross The Wastes, and it is filled with Acid Storms that make the one above us pale in comparison. They attempted to create a monster that could survive the storms. They created the Acid Nomads."

"Why did the Alliance discard them?" Dan asked.

"We left this valley after a decade." Tarifa told them.

"Why?"

"The scientists among our people determined that the valley would surrender to the influence of The Wastes in a matter of months." Tarifa explained. "Six months after we departed, the storms began, and in a matter of weeks, the entire valley was gone."

"And these Nomad characters can travel around in this stuff?" Martin asked.

"They are impervious to the rain and the storms." Endith spoke now. "They are horribly deformed and some have said they are cannibals, and they eat the flesh of the dead."

"Gee... they sound like pleasant enough folk." Pablo spoke from the chair he occupied.

"They're moving into the vacant buildings on the southwest end of the base Skipper." Julie told them. "I have limited camera feeds from that section because it was mostly base housing and training rooms; nothing sensitive at all."

"How far does that put them from us?" Martin asked.

"There's an emergency escape tunnel a hundred and twenty meters from where they are setting up." Julie replied. "According to the databanks, it's listed as a five ton statue of a horse that sits in a covered courtyard. It puts them three clicks from the main tunnel, but it's a direct line shot."

"Have you or Tina been able to analyze this acid rain?" Martin asked turning to Ben where he stood next to Tina.

"It's composed mainly of sulfuric acid vapor." Tina answered quickly. "The Raptor's armor plating may or may not be able to withstand the vapor long enough for us to make the upper atmosphere, but unless we are in a pickle, I wouldn't want to try."

"And if we try and the vapor melts the armor?" Master Chief Brown asked.

Tina shrugged. "That depends on how high the storm is. If we are above ten thousand feet, we'll decompress and freeze to death. If we're below ten thousand feet we'll basically come apart at the seams and burn in."

"That's comforting." Danny spoke from where he sat on the edge of the table munching on the power bar.

"What are our odds?" Martin asked.

Tina looked at Ben and then shrugged. "My best guess is thirty/seventy." She answered. "It depends on how concentrated the vapor is."

"Jules... how many are you picking up?" Martin asked.

"I don't know if it's accurate Skipper, but sensors say at least a hundred, possibly more." Julie replied.

Martin nodded, his mind going over options in his head. "That gives them the advantage. Ok... everyone stay sharp. I want someone on the grid all the time monitoring the sensors. If they so much as get close to the tunnel entrance I want to know about it." He turned to where Trina and Cody were sitting. "Trina, you and Cody get down to that intersection and booby trap the shit out of it with whatever we have."

The young female and male nodded, picked up their weapons and headed out. Martin looked at the others. "Pablo, take one of the weapons I reworked for the Elf soldiers and do the same for the others. If push comes to shove I want them to be able to knock the bastards down, not piss them off with the weapons they have."

Pablo nodded and got to his feet heading for the armory.

"And if they get in boss?" Tony asked. "Then what do we do?"

"Then we load everyone into the Raptor and start praying." Martin answered with a grin.

HIGH CAPITAL NORTH OF DENVER

Dysea looked at the Alliance officer as he entered her receiving chamber with the pompous strut of a human. He ignored her guards, his eyes wandering lustfully over her body without regard for her position. He stopped much closer to her throne than any elf would have dared, perhaps to show Dysea that he was above fearing her position or status.

"Your guard told me you wanted to see me." He said casually, brushing the sleeve of his uniform.

"I need you to deliver a message." Dysea spoke.

"And what would that be?"

"I am postponing the signing of our treaty for a period of three weeks." Dysea told him, seeing his body go rigid and his eyes turn dark.

"May I ask why?" The officer asked, though Dysea could detect the hostility in his voice. "I was under the impression that your Council of Elders already approved the signing."

Dysea's emerald green eyes narrowed and she leaned forward in her chair. She still wore the same dress as when she had met with the Holy One, only now she had opted for a waist length jacket that hid her large tits from the hungry eyes of the Alliance officer, though she did note that his eyes kept drifting to where her legs were crossed demurely, but only the panties hid the thin platinum blond strip of pubic hair from his eyes.

"I am Queen of the Wood Elves Captain. And I will decide what is best for them. The Council of Elders may have approved the signing, but only I can sign the document. And I want three more weeks to review it." Dysea said.

"My superiors will want a reason for the extension." The Alliance Captain spoke. "What do I tell them is the reason for the delay?"

"You may tell them that the Queen of the Wood Elves wants more time to review the document to insure that her people are getting a fair deal." Dysea answered him sweetly.

The man looked at her. "You have had ample time to review the documents." He spoke. "Why choose now to delay the signing?"

"I wish it." Dysea told him, getting to her feet. "That is sufficient enough for your superiors. The Wood Elves do not take orders from the Alliance. That is what you will tell them. And in three weeks, if I decide there are no changes to be made, I will gladly sign the treaty and we will destroy the High Elves together."

The Alliance captain breathed an internal sigh of relief. The Elf bitch had no idea what they were planning, and she would not suspect the betrayal when it hit her. He smiled thinking of the blond haired Queen of the Wood Elves screaming out her pain and humiliation as he fucked her deep in her perfect ass. He nodded his head.

"I will so inform my superiors." He said.

Dysea smiled. "Excellent." Dysea watched him as he turned to leave, and she waited until he had reached the doorway, "Oh and Captain?"

"Yes your majesty?" He asked turning back to look at her.

"Your presence here is tolerated due to our future partnership." Dysea told him. "However, my warriors are not here to entertain you at your leisure. As of today, you will bed no more Wood Elves. Is that clear?"

The captain looked surprised. "Your majesty... I..."

"Touch another one of my elves Captain and I will cut your shriveled cock from your body myself and pin it to my wall!" Dysea growled.

The Alliance captain saw the look in her eyes, and the cruel smile that split her lips and he nodded slowly. "As you wish your majesty, but I will have to inform my superiors of your decision."

Dysea smiled. "You may do as you wish, but my warriors will serve under you no more."

The captain nodded, his jaw clenched tightly, and he turned and left the throne room.

Dysea waited for several moments, watching the doorway, relishing in the look on his face. She turned only when Walter stepped from the ante chamber and came towards her, as did her most trusted aide. The male elf was taller than most, and an extremely accomplished warrior with unmatched skills in unarmed combat. His blond hair was almost shoulder length, his brown eyes alert.

Dysea looked at him. "Leland I need you to select ten warriors; the best that we have. I want them in full combat equipment and standing by in an hour."

"As your order my Queen," He spoke. "I must say however, the Council of Elders will not be pleased with your decision to postpone the signing of the treaty."

Dysea nodded. "I know, and that is why we must move quickly. I want our two best forensic scientists to accompany us as well. Saddle fourteen of our fastest horses, and prepare them to travel."

"Where are we going Dysea?" He asked.

As Dysea's most trusted and closest aide and friend, he was one of only a handful that she allowed to refer to her by her name. Leland and she had grown up together, as close as any brother and sister, and while nothing ever became sexual between them, he was Dysea's first and only choice as her senior aide when she was chosen as Queen.

Dysea looked at Walter for a long moment before answering. "We are going to The Roan Plateau my friend. It is the location of the last attack on our people by the High Elves, only four days ago."

Leland didn't bat an eye and he bowed his head. "I will see to it my Queen."

Dysea waited until she was alone with Walter before speaking. "I hope you are right Holy One." She said softly. "If the Council learns that I am doing this, they will call for me to forfeit the throne."

Walter smiled. "I am right Dysea, and you believe me yourself, or you would not have ordered the trip." He held his arms out to her.

Dysea stepped up to him, folding herself into his embrace without blinking. "What... what are they like Holy One?" She asked softly.

Walter smiled as he stroked her head. "Tarifa is proud like you, with raven black hair and eyes the color of sapphires. She is an accomplished warrior, but she lacks your tempered and refined skill. She is naïve in many ways, but like you she is extremely intelligent. She will need your help and council in the days and months ahead, and you will need hers as well. She is the most gifted person I have ever known when it comes to being politically astute. I believe you will find you and she are very much alike, in more ways than you could possibly imagine." Walter finished that statement with a twinkle in his eye that Dysea did not see.

Dysea looked up into his wrinkled face, her emerald green eyes bright. "And the one you call Martin?"

"Martin... Martin is unique." Walter said with a smile. "Of all my original creations, he is the one who remains closest to the beast within himself, the raw unguarded emotions that he allows to flow through him unchecked. He can control that beast within himself with amazing clarity of mind. In battle... in battle he is the most frightening force of nature you will ever witness. He and Tarifa, along with yourself will be the pillar upon which you can build the future. Only together do you stand a chance."

"If we win," Dysea said.

Walter nodded slowly. "Yes... if you win."

"Will he believe me?" Dysea asked.

"He'll believe you." Walter told her. "I have left something for him that he will find. It will explain as much as I was able to learn by the time I left the message for him."

"And that will be enough for him?" Dysea asked.

"He will believe you because of what he will feel for you." Walter spoke softly, "Though he will undoubtedly be fighting that feeling because he does not understand. The message I left for him will help him. And he will believe, because I am going with you." Walter held up the data pad to her. "You should view this before we leave."

Dysea took the small pad from him. "What is it?"

"A message similar to what Martin will view." Walter spoke, "For you?"

Dysea looked at him. "Me? Why?"

"Of the two of you Dysea, you have seen far more than Tarifa, and with that you have experience she will not have. As I said, she is very naïve in many ways. I believe you will better handle this information than she will at this point. I'm hoping perhaps you will be able to help her with what she will discover." Walter explained. "Or perhaps she might be able to help you."

"In what way could she help me?" Dysea asked quickly, her tone of voice suggesting that she did not need Tarifa's help.

Walter smiled. "You will discover that when the time is right child."

"You have much faith in me Holy One." Dysea said softly.

"It is well earned child." Walter bent down and kissed her forehead. "I will wait for you with Leland."

EDEN GROUND COMMAND NINE HOURS INTO THE ACID STORM

"...don't know what it is Skipper." Julie spoke as Martin settled into the chair next to her. "I was doing a records search and it just popped up really. It's coded to you."

"Me?" Martin asked. "I never had any records in the core here."

Julie shrugged. "The encryption matches yours. Only you can open it."

Martin shrugged. "I'll check it out." He said. "Why don't you get some sleep? Tina has been watching this storm on the Raptor's passive radar, and she says it looks like it will break up in another hour or so, at least enough for us to leave."

Julie nodded and picked up her HK as she headed out of the center.

Martin worked the computer keyboard and the large monitor came to life with the symbol of the EDEN project. He entered in his encryption code and sat back in the chair lifting the mug of steaming hot instant coffee to his lips, as he scanned the computer screens in front of him.

"Hello Marty." The voice nearly boomed from the monitor, causing Martin's eyes to widen and freeze on the large monitor. The face of Walter Carson was on the screen, though much older than he remembered. Martin hadn't seen Walter in the two years leading up to the comet, and now the white haired man looked even more fragile than he did the last time Martin saw him.

"I bet this is a shock to you my boy." Walter's image continued. "My guess is you never expected to see me alive again. Of course, whether I'm still alive now is up for debate since I have no idea how long it will take Jules to find this file once you arrive. I know you better than anyone Marty, and I knew you would come here first once you discovered what has happened. I will try to explain, but know that I have encoded most of the history since the Great Fire, which is what we now call the passing of the Comet by the way, into four separate computer data files. Jules should be able to find them relatively easy enough once you tell her they exist. What I am about to explain to you is the short version. As I stand here and record this the year is 2546, and by my calculations, the moon will have regained its normal rotational cycle around earth. I'm guessing that it has only been a maximum of thirteen days since those on EDEN have returned to normal time, if that is what you wish to call the time we live in now.

"As you no doubt have already discovered, the comet caused massive destruction and loss of life on a planetary scale. No real numbers were ever recorded, but it is estimated that the planet was depopulated by more than half. There was a total breakdown of communication and every other service we had come to rely so much on. It was our Armageddon Day. I was among several thousand that were evacuated at the last moment by the remaining leaders of the government and dispersed to dozens of underground sites that would be able to survive the fires in our atmosphere. You are probably asking how I managed to survive as long as I have. During the five years that the atmosphere burned I designed and created suspended animation chambers, or SAC's as we called them. It was decided that enough would be built so that the senior scientists could jump forward in time so to speak as things began to improve. We would sleep for ten years and then remain awake for ten years trying to pull the world out of the abyss.

"My attempt at helping the human race turned into a colossal failure. I... I used my skill in genetic engineering and created a whole new race of beings. With the knowledge of what you and the others went

through I thought I could create the perfect being. Of course I also threw in my own personal touch, and the results were Elves. Just like in the legends and fairy tales of our time, I created Elves. They were faster and stronger than normal humans, with a varying degree of higher resistance to diseases and the natural elements. My intention was that they would assist the human race in rebuilding our shattered planet. Unfortunately that did not turn out, as I had desired. I made them almost too perfect this time. The female Elves were the epitome of physical perfection in every way. They were all beautiful and extremely desirable. My hope was that the remaining humans would eventually turn to mating with them and produce children. A mix of their genes would insure that humans and Elves would be able to survive long into the future.

“Instead, the powers that be, those that remained of the government took to using the Elves as slaves. The more that I created; the more were bought and sold as slaves. It started among the Black Market and eventually wound up being the norm. They were used for everything from forced labor to common whores in brothels and on street corners. During my third sleep period, things became even worse. When I awoke again I discovered that a new government had formed, and it was their decision to mass produce the Elves as a commodity to be bought and sold world wide. I also discovered they had created horrible monsters from my work. Creatures unlike anything we have ever seen on this planet before. The politicians and scientists that raped my work while I slept reaped the rewards and not the common man. There was little I could do to fight this openly. I decided to become subversive and fight them in ways they could not discover. It wasn't easy at first, but once I discovered that the moon was continuing to spin faster than earth, and slowing down each year I decided I would prepare for what I hoped would be your return.

“You will meet many new species upon your return to earth Martin. The good ones were creations of mine, the bad ones created by evil men bent only on advancing themselves. By 2104, I estimated that the Elves outnumbered the remaining human population world wide, and that is part of the reason they were and are so persecuted and kept down. The Elves did not know how to fight back at first, and it wasn't until 2106 that I had the chance to change that. I was working on a new batch of Elves and in that batch I instilled the will to fight back. It started with only a few dozen, but soon it grew and grew and became large enough that the government began slaughtering those they did not control. Those that survived escaped into the mountains and the caves and became known by the name given to them in legends, High Elves and Wood Elves. Many more groups have popped up over the years, but the High Elves and the Wood Elves remain the largest of the groups.”

Martin watched as Walter took a long drink of water, his own coffee forgotten and cold on the edge of the console. So engrossed in the monitor as he was, Martin's mind did not register Tarifa's scent as she came into the command center and stopped. Her face wore an expression of shock as she recognized the man she knew as the Holy One on the screen.

“The government eventually formed itself into what is now called the Alliance, and they have ruled with an iron fist for the last three hundred and twenty years.” Walter continued. “Unbeknownst to the powers that be, I was able to give the Elves the ability to reproduce in their genetic makeup, something that I was unable to do with the first few batches. I knew that you and the others would be returning Marty. And I knew that given your nature, you would not allow what was happening to continue. You will have allies Martin. I did not want to play god Marty, but after seeing what was happening, and what it would lead to, I had no choice. Each genome on EDEN will have an Elf counterpart here on earth. They will be drawn to one another, and they won't be able to explain it. They will know it when they meet the elf meant for them. It will not be automatic Martin. I only instilled in the selected elves an urge if you will, that will make them drawn to each other. If a relationship forms, it will have to proceed as any relationship does. If the selected elf is in love with another, or already married, then a relationship will not form. I made them strong willed Marty, and completely devoted to whomever they choose to share their lives. I could not bring myself to force it upon them. Like you, they are all my children in a fashion. I am telling you because you are their leader, and you are my very first. Of all of them, you will understand the best of why I have done what I have done.

“I have left this for you in the files of what used to be EDEN Ground Command. I was discovered as working against the government about fifteen years ago, and with Tarifa's help I was able to escape. I have been on the run since, shuttling between the High Elves and the Wood Elves for protection and shelter. They think of me as some sort of Holy man, which you and I both know is not true, but I love them all just as much.

“Tarifa is the Queen of the High Elves Martin. It is my hope that you meet her first, as she leads the largest clan of elves in North America and perhaps even what remains of the planet. She is an extremely

beautiful young woman Marty, and equally intelligent. She can be the rock you need to begin rebuilding what has been destroyed.” Walter paused once more and took another drink of water. “The Queen of the Wood Elves is Dysea. You will not mistake her for someone else when you see her Martin, for she is the one I hope you will begin rebuilding your life with. Tarifa and Dysea are Queens of their respective elfin people, but there is a Blood Feud between them that must be ended. It is a feud, which was started and is being controlled and manipulated by the Alliance, I’m certain of that. I am hoping to convince them that their brothers and sisters are not the enemy, but I have been unsuccessful so far. Only together can the three of you defeat the evil that abounds on earth before it plunges all of us into darkness. I am leaving in a few hours with Tarifa and her soldiers and moving north before the Alliance forces that are hounding us arrive. With luck we will make it. I can only hope I live long enough to see you and the others Martin, for there is so much we need to discuss. Find me Marty; find Tarifa and Dysea. It is the only hope for our planet; the only hope for our future.”

Martin watched as the screen went black and the recording stopped. He suddenly became completely aware again, and Tarifa’s scent was overpowering. He turned in his chair to see her standing only a few meters away, a look of astonishment on her beautiful face. Martin sighed heavily.

“How much did you hear?” He asked.

Tarifa looked at him. “I... I knew much of the history of our people.” She spoke softly meeting Martin’s eyes. “I did not know he knew you would come. Or that he... he manipulated my people in the manner he has admitted.”

Martin stood up and stepped over to her, Tarifa’s eyes watching him closely. “Look... this is...”

Tarifa’s hand closed around the K12 pistol in the holster and her eyes narrowed. “I will not submit to you!” She spoke firmly.

Martin looked surprised. “Submit to me?” He asked. “What the hell do you mean?”

“You... you are not human... and I will fight you with every fiber of my being!” Tarifa snapped. “I will not let you harm my people, I don’t care what our laws dictate!”

Martin moved faster than Tarifa could counter, and one of his hands grasped her hand that was palming the K12, while the other grabbed her jaw. Her eyes flew open in surprise when she realized she couldn’t move her head. Martin leaned close to her, his own eyes flashing in anger.

“I have no intention of taking you against your will!” Martin snapped loudly, his anger real. Tarifa’s eyes went wide when she saw his eyes blink and change right in front of her from the deep dark brown color to menacing orbs of intense yellow/gold outlined in black. She watched wide eyed as three quarter inch long fangs burst from his gums and lengthened into existence. “I don’t... I don’t even like you! I think you are a pompous spoiled bitch with a serious ego problem.” Martin’s hand left her jaw in a blink, pulling his own K12 from its holster and extending it out to the side. Tarifa followed the movement with her eyes, and they grew wide when she saw Endith frozen in the motion of swinging the metal bar because the barrel of the K12 was pressed to her forehead.

Martin looked at Endith, his yellow orbs wide and full of anger now, “Sloppy, very sloppy!”

“Release... you will release my Queen!” Endith barked.

Martin ignored her and turned back to Tarifa. “You are right Tarifa. I’m not human... I’m something Walter created more than five centuries ago. I am not your enemy, no matter how much you think otherwise. You have another choice to make Tarifa. You can return with us as you planned, or you can stay here and rot. I don’t care either way.” Martin released her and returned his K12 to its holster, his eyes and teeth returning to normal once more in a single blink. “Make up your mind quick, because when this storm breaks we are leaving.”

Dysea walked quickly past the two guards that stood watch by the rarely used entrance to underground caves. She had changed into a uniform similar to the one her soldiers now wore. It was a dull black jumpsuit of a design almost identical to the one Walter had made for the High Elves. Like Tarifa, Dysea had altered her uniform to more suit her personal style. The skin tight black pants were tied on with stitching that extended up

her shapely legs. The top had only a small portion of flesh showing, but it was centered over the cleavage of her breasts, while all of her arms and shoulders were bare. The long black cloak she wore was draped around her shoulders and would protect her from the sun and the elements.

Walter watched her strode out confidently and walk directly up to him. She looked at him with her stunning emerald eyes before leaning up on her tip toes and kissing his cheek softly.

“Thank you Holy One.” She said softly.

Walter was somewhat surprised and his face registered that fact. “I... I did not expect this reaction from you Dysea.” He said in reply. “I was expecting anger... hatred.”

“How could I hate you Holy One? You are truly the father of us all, regardless of how it came to be.” She spoke calmly. “I understand your intentions, but I also understand the reasoning behind those intentions. Your actions have never been for personal gain or with malice in mind. I may... I may see you in a different light now that I know what I know, but as far as I am concerned, you are still our creator and our Holy One.”

“You don’t know how much that eases my heart Dysea.” Walter told her, squeezing her hands.

Dysea smiled brilliantly and kissed his hands. “We must go now. Before the Council of Elders discovers what the true purpose of this trip is for.”

Walter nodded. “Will you try to be objective and see things for how they may not appear?”

Dysea looked at him. “I would not be doing this if I was unprepared to accept what you are telling me.”

“Then we must hurry.” Walter spoke, moving for his horse. He stopped and turned back to her taking another data pad from within his robes. “Perhaps you are ready as well to see this.”

Dysea looked at him as she took the data pad. “More surprises Holy One?”

“No. Just some information you might find helpful in the days ahead.”

EDEN

NINETY-SIX HOURS AFTER RAPTOR TWO’S RETURN

Tarifa sat in the main officer’s lounge of EDEN with Endith. All of them had been in awe of what they had seen so far on the base, as none of them had ever expected to leave the millions of square miles of forests and mountains they called home. Tarifa immediately took a liking to Admiral Wallace. He was sincere, knowledgeable and he was honest. She took an immediate dislike to the man known as Senator Graham. She quickly learned he was a political animal, and the few hours she had spent with him and the Admiral around the table discussing what the situation on earth was, she began to not trust the man. His son Kevin was almost as bad, openly leering at her and making disgusting gestures. She had hardly noticed him while they were on the surface, but now it appeared he felt more secure and could do as he wished because of his father.

Tarifa and her elves were given free reign within reason in this section of EDEN, but most had chosen to remain in the quarters provided to them. Tarifa had no doubts as to why either. Even as she and Endith sat her in the lounge, the looks of lust and desire filled the eyes of every man in the room.

The item that bothered her the most was the fact that she had not seen Martin since they had arrived four days ago. Their departure from EDEN Ground Control had been orderly and quick. He had not spoken to her since their encounter, or during the fourteen hour flight to reach EDEN. Upon arrival, he explained the procedures for decontamination in a very businesslike voice, and while he and the others of his team went through the decon process together, Tarifa and the elves were allowed to go through one at a time to avoid embarrassment of any kind. Upon learning of the decontamination procedure, Tarifa was aghast to find she *wanted* to go through with Martin and his team. She *wanted* to see him naked in all his glory. She had dreamed of him the night before in her quarters, seeing herself screaming out her desire in his arms. Tarifa knew that part of the explanation for how she was reacting was because of what the Holy One had done, making certain elves drawn to these Genomes as he called them, but there was something else entirely.

Tarifa had acted arrogantly after seeing the message the Holy One had left for him. She had reacted in the way she would toward any human male who showed an interest in her. Yet Martin was very different. He could have taken her in the hanger bay that night. In her state she would have willingly submitted to him, as aroused as she had been, and done anything he asked. He had stopped his actions before his own animal instincts could take over. That is what endeared him to her more than anything did. That and the fact he treated

her as an equal, unlike the Senator and the others she had encountered and even more so than her own Council of Elders.

“What are you thinking Tarifa?” Endith asked quietly.

Tarifa looked at her. “I’m thinking that this Senator Graham would like nothing better than to align with the Alliance. He is an evil man Endith, and I do not trust him.”

“But Admiral Wallace controls this base.” Endith spoke.

“But for how long?” Tarifa said. “You have seen the way we are looked at by many of the humans here. It is no different then back on earth. We are seen as playthings. Freaks to be used however they wish. I’m beginning to think coming here was a very bad idea.”

“Then what do we do?” Endith asked.

“We must...” Tarifa stopped when she saw the two armed humans come into the lounge and head directly for their table.

The two men stopped and looked down at her. “Miss we have orders to escort you to the Command Briefing room.”

“What? Why?” Tarifa asked. “I was under the impression that I would speak with the Admiral again tomorrow.”

“Senator Graham is ordering this miss, not the Admiral. Please come with me.” The man motioned to the door, and his voice made it clear he would brook no opposition. Tarifa and Endith got to their feet. “Your aide is to be escorted back to her quarters.”

“She is my aide.” Tarifa said. “As Queen she is entitled to go where I go.”

“You are not Queen here miss, and we have different ways of doing things.” The guard responded, taking her arm in his hand. “Please come with me now.”

Tarifa resisted the urge to send the man flying across the room and she gave an almost imperceptible nod to Endith before the guard led her out of the lounge.

ADMIRAL WALLACE’S PERSONAL QUARTERS

“What’s going on Admiral?” Martin asked as he settled into the chair.

Wallace followed him into the room and poured himself a drink at the small wet bar. He turned back to Martin and moved to the couch, sitting on the arm of it. “We have a problem Marty.” He said.

Martin leaned forward in his chair. “I’m listening sir.”

“Senator Graham has been very busy in the two weeks since we discovered our situation Marty.” William spoke. “While you were gone it appears he was able to go behind my back somehow and gain access to a secure communications array which he then used to contact this Alliance Dictatorship.”

Martin’s eyes went wide and he came to his feet when Wallace told him this. “Admiral, I mean no disrespect, but why didn’t you tell me this when we first got back?”

“I wasn’t absolutely sure until this morning Marty.” He answered. “Frank found out through his contact in the civilian research labs. That was the array Graham used. It was confirmed this morning when we got a transmission from a Minister Deval representing this Alliance government.”

“They contacted us?” Martin asked stunned.

Wallace nodded. “They insisted on speaking with Graham, and are implicit in their statement that this Tarifa and everyone with her are war criminals. They are demanding we return them to their custody.”

“Admiral you can’t seriously be considering this.” Martin said. “Can you?”

“It gets worst.” Wallace told him. “Apparently, Graham has spent the better part of the last six days politicking the entire base, and informing them of what has happened. He is also stating that this Alliance dictatorship is the legitimate government of the United States and that I am refusing to communicate with them.”

“EDEN is a military facility sir, why should what he says matter?” Martin asked.

“The day before you returned I had to have security break up a demonstration on the main promenade that was demanding we open communications with this Alliance government.” Wallace answered. “Graham

organized the demonstration, and he was also clever enough to tell those involved that I would order security forces in to break it up.”

“He’s turning the civilian crew to his side.” Martin spoke softly.

Wallace nodded. “He sure is. And quite effectively I might add.” William sipped his drink. “I also discovered that the Sweeper Team he brought aboard has gone underground. We don’t know where they are, or what they are doing. Somehow they’ve managed to disable the tracking devices we put on them, and their quarters have not been used in several days.”

“Then you can bet they are mixed in with the civilian crew and doing whatever Graham tells them to do.” Martin said.

“No bet here.” Wallace replied. “I’ve ordered extra security on all sensitive locations, but since half our security force is civilian, I don’t know who we can trust.”

Martin looked at him. “Tarifa and the elves will be in danger Admiral?”

“They’ve been locked down in their Quarters and told to keep a very low profile.” Wallace answered. “I have Marines outside their quarters.”

“Admiral… he’s going to make a play for control of the base.” Martin told him.

Wallace nodded. “That’s what it’s looking like.”

“Admiral… you’ve seen my report.” Martin spoke. “This Alliance government makes Hitler’s regime look like girl scouts in comparison. Slavery, Genetic experimentation, do we want to be associated with that?”

“Apparently Graham does Marty.” Wallace said. “He’s power hungry. He’s been that way all of his life. He figures if he can hand EDEN over to these people he’ll get a whole lot in return.” Wallace held out the data pad. “You better read this.” He waited until Martin took the pad before continuing. “He’s planning on bringing you up on charges of kidnapping and assault in regards to his son. He’s also planning on having Danny and Julie arrested for imprisonment and rape.”

Martin looked at him, “Rape?” He gasped. “You must be joking, the rape of whom?” His eyes grew larger, “Anja?”

Wallace nodded. “Yes, according to the eyewitness account of his son.”

“Admiral, whatever happened between the three of them was not rape. I talked to Anja on the surface sir. She was a very willing participant in whatever took place, of that I can guarantee you.” Martin said.

“Are you sure Marty?” Wallace asked. “She came to EDEN with a completely different agenda. How can you be sure she has done this complete turn around? You’d better find out, and do so quickly. The arrest warrants will be issued this afternoon, and I have to act on them due to the seriousness of the charges.”

Martin came to his feet. “I’ll find out Admiral. Trust me.”

Anja was currently kneeling at the foot of the bed, her small hand wrapped around the base of the rock hard twelve inch, pulsing black cock in her face. The debriefing had been torture, six hours of endless questions, most of them from the Admiral and Colonel Wilson, all the while sitting between Julie and Danny. Anja could sense Martin’s eyes on her from the back of the room, and it was almost as if she could smell Danny and Julie so close to her. They had maintained a professional attitude throughout the entire briefing, never once looking at her with more than professional courtesy.

Julie had been right Anja thought as she made her way back to her quarters. She did not know what she felt for Martin anymore. So much time had passed since that night, and there was something different about him ever since they had gone to earth. Standing under the spray of the hot shower, Anja decided to let the chips fall where they may. She had discovered two people, who wanted her company, and together they had discovered a unique and very exciting way to entertain each other and as far as she was concerned there was no reason she could not explore that. And while having Danny was a pleasant side track, Julie was who Anja wanted to explore.

She had gone to Danny and Julie’s quarters and for the next three days and nights they had ravished each other to the point of exhaustion. She and Julie would simply use Danny in whatever way they could until he was spent and sleeping and then they would spend hours simply exploring each other’s body in an erotic and sensual experience that left them both trembling from the intensity.

Now Anja's green eyes were focused on the towering cock in front of her. She hadn't bothered with clothes when she had awoken sprawled across Danny's broad chest, and simply crawled her way down to the foot of the bed as Julie nimbly turned her body and lowered her already dripping pussy over Danny's face. Anja looked at Julie, her eyes filled with desire, and Julie smiled dreamily back at her.

"Go ahead... go ahead lover!" Julie gasped. "You've... you've wanted to suck his big cock for days. Do it!"

Anja leaned forward and extended her four inch long tongue, licking slowly around the shiny black head of Danny's cock. The towering pole was pulsing with heat in her small hand, the veins running the length of his cock standing out in all their glory. She heard Danny groan as she swabbed his cockhead with her warm tongue, and precum oozed from the slit in the tip, coating her tongue. Anja's eyes closed, as she tasted him, relishing the nutmeg flavor of his cum. It happened without warning, and the picture of her sucking Martin's thick cock that night sprang into her head, and then suddenly she was not sucking Danny's cock, but Martin's equally prodigious manhood. It was there for only a moment and then it was gone and she leaned forward more, her heels pressing into her naked ass, and her own pussy literally pouring juices out of her and down her thighs constantly.

Anja's soft lips engulfed Danny's cockhead, his legs stiffening considerably as she swallowed the first four inches of his thick cock with little trouble. Her small hand stroked the remaining eight inches slowly and lovingly, her other hand moving up to caress his huge cum filled balls, as she held the four inches in her mouth, bathing the thick shaft with her talented tongue. Her lips were stretch wide around the shiny black shaft, her eyes wide as she looked down the length of what remained outside her mouth. She had sucked Kevin's cock many times, mainly so she wouldn't have to let him fuck her, and she could swallow his small thin five inch cock with little problem, but she hated when her nose was buried in his pubic hair because of the faint odor his body had. His father was no better, though slightly larger in the cock department at roughly seven inches, but both of them had thin cocks, and no where near the huge girth of Danny's ebony monster.

Anja breathed deeply through her nose, extending her tongue along the pulsing shaft as she swallowed more of Danny's cock. Her nipples were painfully erect and hard, and tears were forming in her eyes, but there was no way she was going to stop now as she plunged her face forward another two inches until the huge head of his cock hit the back of her throat. Memories of sucking Martin's thick shaft flashed into her head again, causing her pussy to convulse and release her juices in a shivering orgasm. Martin had the same thickness of Danny, but she remembered easily the musky mint smell he had. She had measured his huge cock while he slept; amazed that she had gotten all but two inches of his cock into her throat. It had also been the first time she had ever wanted to suck a man's cock, and now that experience with Martin was paying off as she felt Danny's cock pulsing in her mouth.

Julie watched Anja with a mixture of awe and pleasure as Danny's tongue danced wonderfully over her pussy. Her red headed lover had over half of Danny's cock in her mouth, her small hands still stroking the exposed portion of his shaft and his huge balls. She was having quite an effect on Danny with her cock sucking, as his tongue would stop moving, his hands gripping Julie's ass cheeks tighter the more of his cock Anja swallowed. Julie knew what pleasure sucking Danny's thick monster could bring, and she smiled as Anja's excitement filled the room with her sweet honey aroma, knowing that Anja's pussy must have been drooling cum down her tight thighs. Julie reached out with her hand, placing it gently on the back on Anja's head.

"More Anja baby," Julie groaned. "Take some more! I know you can do it! He's delicious isn't he?"

Anja glanced over at Julie with intoxicated eyes, pushed herself higher with her knees and with a soft gagging sound and a deep breath, pushed downward even further onto Danny's thick shaft. Anja felt another orgasm slam into her when his huge cock entered her throat, and within seconds her pussy was pouring juices down her thighs in what seemed like buckets. Anja brought her head back several inches, her tongue dragging along the underside of Danny's cock and she heard him hiss in pleasure, his powerful thighs flexing. She could feel his cum filled balls in her hand begin to tighten and she knew he was nearing the point where he would feed her what she so desired. Anja wanted all of him however, she wanted him to blast his cum directly into her belly, and she wanted to feel her lips smashed against his groin. She took a deep breath once more and plunged her face downward and didn't stop until her lips mashed against his hard abdomen.

Danny nearly tossed Julie's dripping pussy from his face, his hands ripping at the bed sheets as he felt Anja's beautiful lips anchor around the base of his massive cock.

“Ohhh... fuck!” He nearly screamed.

Danny’s aroused mind was on automatic now as his large hands went to Anja’s head and he sank his fingers into her silky red hair, pulling her face tighter against his groin, the whole of his twelve inch black cock buried in his lover’s throat. He glanced up quickly to see the red hair and soft lips covering his cock, and then Anja looked directly at him with those dreamy green eyes and he knew he was done. The small hand that had been stroking his shaft reached quickly around to his powerful ass and squeezed his cheeks; while Anja’s other hand palmed his huge balls, milking them, urging the load of cum in them to come out. Danny didn’t see Julie slid off the bed and move quickly to where Anja knelt. Julie could smell cum pouring from Anja’s sweet pussy and she wasn’t about to waste it as she got on her back and slid her face under Anja’s dripping snatch. She grabbed Anja’s tight ass cheeks and pulled them down, her lips fastening onto Anja’s pussy as she hungrily drank her lover’s heavenly juices.

Danny’s eyes nearly blew open when he felt Anja’s finger slide up his asshole, and he lost total control then. His hips lifted from the bed, his muscles tensed to the breaking point, and his orgasm exploded out of him.

Anja’s mind erupted in joy as she felt Danny’s cock expand in her throat, and his cum begin racing up its length. She extended her long tongue out of her stuffed mouth and throat, her nose pressed tightly to his groin, and she lathered his huge pulsing balls with her hot tongue. This caused Danny to gasp even louder, and grasp her head tighter. Anja exploded in another more powerful orgasm just as Danny’s cock erupted in her throat. She vaguely felt Julie lapping away at her pussy, keeping her on the very edge of the pleasure abyss as Danny’s hot cum flooded her belly. Using what strength she had left Anja lifted her face from Danny’s groin far enough to taste his delicious cum. She clutched the six inches of ebony shaft soaked in her saliva that was no longer buried in her tight throat with her hand, pumping the thick shaft as she swallowed gleefully. She was right, his cum did taste like nutmeg, and she wasn’t about to let a drop of it escape her lips.

Danny’s eyes had rolled into the back of his head, his cock still pumping what seemed like quarts of cum into Anja’s sweet mouth. His chest heaved in exertion, his bald head sweaty and coated with Julie’s pussy juices. His hips heaved for the last time, as his drained balls finally stopped. He hissed in pleasure as Anja sucked hard for every single drop, her small hand continuing to stroke the length of his thick shaft that was not trapped within her lips.

Danny sat up quickly, his hands pulling Anja’s head away from his groin. With effortless ease he lifted her onto his chest and fell back onto the bed, pulling her surprised lips to his own for a kiss that caused her eyes to roll into her head, and her toes to curl in delight. He pulled her body tightly to his, her large tits crushed against his hard chest, her pussy dripping cum all over his lower abdomen. Julie worked her way up the bed slowly, a satisfied smile on her face as she kept licking Anja’s cum from her lips, as a cat would do. She lowered her body against the sweaty bodies of her two other lovers, blissfully watching them share the kiss.

Anja’s mind was far from thinking about anything at the moment, so charged with pleasure as it was, but she knew without a doubt that Martin flashing into her thoughts while sucking Danny’s cock was an omen. An omen of her future perhaps, but right now she just wanted to experience new things that she had never attempted before, and she had two very willing partners to try them with. She could feel Danny’s softening, but still incredibly huge cock resting against the insides of her thighs, her pussy still leaking cum all over his powerful abdomen as well as his cock. This was not where she belonged, Anja knew that, but for the moment and until she could fasten her mind around her relationship with Martin and what that would mean to her, this spot would do very nicely.

Tarifa looked at the smirking face of Senator Graham from across the table, but kept her face void of any emotion. He was going over something on a data pad, his son standing to his side and behind him, and leering at Tarifa with undisguised lust in his eyes.

“It appears Miss Tarifa... that you were not entirely forthcoming with us when we first talked.” Richard spoke finally, setting the data pad down and looking at her.

“I don’t understand.” Tarifa said. “I left nothing out.”

“Oh but you did.” Graham spoke. “You left out the part that you are a fugitive from the legal and recognized government of the United States.”

“There is no United States anymore.” Tarifa stated. “The Alliance was neither elected nor chosen as the government. They have gained power through fear and barbaric acts of slavery and oppression!”

“You and the other elves that you are supposedly Queen of, led a violent revolt against their government when you no longer wished to be participants. That makes you a fugitive.” Graham spoke calmly.

“We were slaves!” Tarifa nearly shouted. “We were beneath even the animals that live. We were used as forced labor and whores to fill their brothels and work farms!”

“That was the purpose of your creation, by your very words.” Graham continued. “To serve humans in whatever capacity we saw fit.”

Tarifa’s blue eyes flared. “That is slavery Senator! Your United States outlawed slavery several hundred years before the Great Fire!”

“The Great Fire as you call it apparently changed all that.” Graham told her. “You and every elf like you were created to serve us! To help humans rebuild! When you decided you did not like what we had you doing you decided to revolt! And if my information is correct, you killed several hundred civilians in the process; as well as countless soldiers of the Alliance over the years in brutal raids and savage attacks.”

Tarifa came to her feet. “We are fighting for our existence!” She yelled. “We are fighting to be free!”

“Which is irrelevant at this point,” Graham told her. “I have been in contact with a Minister Deval, who apparently knows you quite well. He has asked that we detained you and your fellow elves until such a time as we can arrange to have you transported back to them for punishment.”

“You can’t do this!” Tarifa pleaded. “You have only seen things for four days! Even Martin has told you what the Alliance is like! They...”

“So you are on a first name basis with Commander Hunter are you?” Richard said with a smile, “How quaint. Commander Hunter’s report has been disregarded by the new civilian council of EDEN. He is after all, no different from you. He is a tool, as all genomes of our time were. He is being brought up on charges of dereliction of duty as well as others, so he will have no say in this matter regardless. You and your fellow elves will remain under guard and will do as we say until such time as we meet with representatives of the Corporate Alliance to decide your fate. I have informed them of the small damage we have sustained here on EDEN, and they have given me permission to use you and your elves how I see fit.”

“I wish to speak with Admiral Wallace!” Tarifa exclaimed.

“He has no say in this matter. He is a military officer who follows the direction of the civilian leadership. Right now that is me.” Richard spoke getting to his feet. “Minister Deval was also kind enough to inform me of your so called elfin strength and agility, and also how to defeat those talents. He said most of you were too trusting.”

Tarifa saw the look he gave to one of the guards behind her and she whirled faster than any human could to face the man, but it was already too late. The butt of the rifle was already moving and crashed into her face, causing her knees to buckle. Tarifa felt hands catch and hold her as something crashed into the back of her head, causing stars to flash into her vision.

“Minister Deval also told me about the pleasure one can have with a female elf.” Graham’s voice filled her clouded brain as she felt hands ripping away her uniform. “He told me that all of you have very tight pussies, and with the proper instruction give the most incredible blowjobs.”

Tarifa felt herself being lowered to the desk in the room, the metal cold against her now bare skin, as the remainder of her uniform was stripped from her. Her legs were looped with some sort of rope and tied to legs of the desk painfully.

Richard Graham stepped between Tarifa’s silky thighs unbuttoning his pants. “I intend to see just how accurate the Minister was in his descriptions. I was also made aware that you are quite deadly with your legs, so as you can see I have taken proper measures.” Graham stepped up to her, his steel hard seven inch cock in his hand. He rubbed it against Tarifa’s dry pussy, feeling the incredible heat. “Oh yes... I think I’m going to enjoy this.”

Tarifa screamed as Richard Graham shoved his entire cock into her in one painful lunge, thereby sealing his fate and the fates of those in the room with him. He ignored Tarifa’s wails of pain and protest and proceeded to brutally rape her.

EDEN

NINETY-NINE HOURS AFTER RAPTOR TWO'S RETURN

Julie answered the chime on their door dressed only in a tank top and chewing the piece of apple that, moments before, had been grazing against Anja's soft cunt lips. They had moved into the living room of their quarters and were now enjoying coffee and fruit together. Dan now wore a pair of dark boxer shorts, while Julie and Anja each wore one of his tank tops, which left little to the imagination on either of them. Dan was sitting with his back against one of the arms of the couch, Anja curled up on the couch. Julie had been lying between Anja's legs, and none of them had been embarrassed in the least that their hands wandered over each others most private parts as any lovers would had they been in the same position.

"Skipper what's wrong?" Julie spoke in surprise as Martin walked into their quarters without asking, the K12 clutched in his hand. She swallowed the apple she was chewing and followed him into the room, almost walking into the back of him when he stopped and saw Danny and Anja. Julie saw him visibly relax as she moved around to the side, but she knew something was wrong. She could smell the anger and indecision pouring off of him in waves. Danny and Anja quickly noticed him, and saw him return the K12 to the holster. Danny came to his feet, while Anja leaned forward on the couch her green eyes wide and pulled the t-shirt past her knees, suddenly very embarrassed at having Martin staring at her in this compromising position, and with two of his best friends. That sense of betrayal swept through her stronger now as she averted her eyes from Martin.

"Marty?" Dan asked as he stood up, moving slightly to stand in front of Anja, his own alarm at being seen by his closest friend and the man that he considered a brother rising. Not to mention that it was quite possible Martin still had deep feelings for Anja. "What's going on?"

Martin was looking directly at Anja, the look on his face one she had never seen before. It was very menacing and promised pain and death. "Tell me one thing Anja." He spoke softly as Anja got to her feet slowly. "Tell me this is not all part of a very dirty game you and Graham are playing."

"Martin... what are you talking about?" Anja asked, stepping a little closer to Julie, not at all liking the tone of Martin's voice. "What game?"

"Senator Graham and his snot nosed punk son!" Martin snapped. "Tell me you are not involved with them."

"Skipper... what are you talking about?" Julie asked, also sensing and smelling the anger that was pulsing through Martin's body. She stepped closer to Anja in an instinctive move of protection. "Anja's been here with us since we got back."

Anja suddenly knew what was happening. Something had happen that had caused Martin to act this way, and she had a pretty good idea of what it was considering her experience with Kevin and his father. She drew herself up to her full height of five foot three and crossed her arms under her breasts. "I have no idea what you are talking about, and I wouldn't let that rat fuck son of a bitch touch me again if he was the last man on the planet. I've been here since we got back."

Martin didn't have to ask her what she was doing, as he could smell the scents of all three of them in the room, and it was thick with passion and heat. His body relaxed even more, yet his mind screamed betrayal. He beat that thought down, knowing he had no claim over Anja and his face softened as he heard Anja say what his senses were already telling him.

"We have a problem." He finally spoke. "Graham has filed charges against Dan and Julie for imprisonment and rape."

All of their eyes went wide, but only Anja could speak. And her voice was filled with undisguised rage and hatred. "That slimy... no good... cock smelling son of a bitch!" Anja nearly screamed, turning to look for her uniform.

"Skipper you have got to be kidding?" Julie asked.

Martin shook his head. "Senator Graham is making a play for control of the station. While we were gone he was rallying the civilian portion of the station against Admiral Wallace. He also established a line of communication behind the Admiral's back."

"He established a line of communication with who Skipper?" Dan asked knowing he wasn't going to like the answer.

“The people in charge of the assholes we met on the surface.” Martin answered.

This statement caused Anja to come up short from trying to pull on her uniform, and all of them stared at Martin. “That’s not funny boss.” Dan said.

“The same people who created those creatures I did autopsies on?” Anja commented. “That’s insane!”

“Skipper, he did this in only the four days we’ve been back?” Julie asked astounded.

“He may be a politician, but he for damn sure ain’t stupid.” Martin answered shaking his head. “He started the minute we discovered what happened. According to the Admiral, he’s established a temporary civilian council that is solidly behind him. He’s keeping the Admiral on a tight leash and the Sweeper Team has gone underground. He’s drafted his own security force of civilian men and women, all loyal to him, and he has slowly been taking control of the station. The only reason he isn’t fully in charge now is because the Admiral has EDEN’s security teams guarding all the sensitive locations. I doubt that will remain like that for very long.”

“Jesus, it’s a fucking coup!” Dan spoke.

“And you know what he thinks of us.” Martin said. “He’s got charges outstanding on me as well as you two. He’s going to take us down one by one. I think the man has snapped.”

“He was already a fucking loon!” Anja told them. “And his son is even worse! Trust me I know!”

“Yeah well we need to come up with a plan quick.” Martin said.

“A plan for what Skipper?” Julie asked.

Martin looked at her. “The Admiral is not going to be able to stop this. Graham already has his claws into the civilian population of the station. The Admiral told me that when they found out we were returning with Tarifa and the others, he got three requests to use the female elves in a brothel one of the new council members wanted to set up to relieve stress. And he wanted to put the male elves to work in the sections that needed repairs since the crash.”

“Oh man it’s coming apart.” Dan spoke.

“It sure is, and we are going to be right at the center of it.” Martin told them.

“What are we going to do Skipper?”

Martin looked at them evenly. “We’re leaving EDEN.” He said finally.

EDEN

ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT HOURS AFTER RAPTOR TWO’S RETURN

Admiral William Wallace moved quickly down the corridor of EDEN, nodding and smiling to those he passed, even though he was sick to his stomach. He had just left the Senator’s office, and had to restrain himself at what he had seen. The smirking bastard was dressed only in a robe, and his son and two guards were dragging Tarifa’s limp, naked form from the lounge adjoining Graham’s office. Even the brief glimpse he had seen caused him to shudder. She was badly beaten, her uniform torn to pieces, her face and hair covered in what appeared to be drying cum. That she had been repeatedly raped was obvious, that Graham was so calm and relaxed about it was what made him sick.

“They are made for our use Admiral.” Graham had said. “You should try it. I don’t believe I’ve ever had a tighter piece of ass in my life.”

Wallace had listened to what Graham told him, agreeing to everything, trying to buy time for Martin’s escape. Now he was striding towards the genome training area under the false auspicious of informing the other genomes they were being ordered to stand down. Wallace had no intention of telling them to stand down.

He entered the code for the training room and stepped into the darkened space. As the door slid closed behind him, the bright lights exploded on, and he found himself staring at a dozen HK74 assault rifles. Wallace didn’t blink.

“Where’s Marty?” He asked.

The weapons came down instantly and several of the genomes pointed to the rear section of the room through the door. Wallace marched away, the genomes returning to what they were doing. In the small planning room, Wallace found Martin hunched over the table with Ben, Danny and the female elf he knew as Endith. They turned when he came in.

“Admiral?” Martin spoke.

“Graham has moved faster than we anticipated. Four of the Sweeper Team agents have taken down communications and primary access to the computer core and reactors.” Wallace spoke. “This is rapidly moving toward his total control. You need to get the Elves and your team off EDEN Marty.”

“We’re working on that now sir.”

“I’ve already spoken to Ben and Tina. None of the Raptor crews want anything to do with that asshole Graham. They are prepping all the Raptors for departure quietly. Some of the civilian ground crew has gone to Ben and let him know they are not happy about what Graham is doing, and that there are others who feel the same way. They know everything is about to explode, and they were telling him they are not involved.” Wallace said.

“Will they let us leave?” Martin asked.

“Marty they want to go with you.” Wallace spoke. “Ben is prepping two Mark Nine transports for departure as well.”

“How many people are we talking here Skipper?” Martin asked.

“Several hundred at last count according to Ben.” Wallace spoke. “You have to take them Martin; if you leave them up here they’ll end up getting hurt.” He held out the data pads. “These are the new Command Codes to EDEN’s primary weapons grid, and the Heavy Weapons Storage Site. You’ll have to use the secondary command access codes, but take everything Martin. You got about twelve hours before the shit hits the fan, and all hell breaks loose. I can’t be seen helping you if I am going to stay up here and keep him from doing as much damage as I think he will.”

“Admiral he’ll have you killed if he discovers you helped us in any way. Or that you are holding him back.” Martin spoke.

“The man has snapped Marty. He thinks he’s a god now, and someone needs to stay here and attempt to keep him in check.” Wallace said.

“They took Tarifa.” Endith spoke urgently.

Wallace looked at Martin. “She’s been raped Martin. I saw Kevin and a couple of his goons dragging her out of the office lounge when I went in to see Graham. I don’t know where they took her.”

Martin’s face tightened. “I’ll find her.” He said with barely concealed rage in his voice. “Julie is stripping the communications warehouse, and Anja is discretely taking as much medical supplies as she can get. I got six Raptor’s shuttling the team to the secondary command site in shifts to keep anyone from getting suspicious.”

Wallace shook his head. “It won’t last Marty. Get the elves and all your people to the secondary sight through the tunnel as soon as possible. I got a feeling that things are going to go bang within a few hours. I can lock down the tunnel to the secondary sight from Command, and Ben will get the Raptors and Mark Nine’s clear to pick you up. Find your friend and get the hell out!”

“Yes sir!”

Martin watched Wallace leave and turned back to the others. “Master Chief, get the teams moving. Advise Major Anderson that anyone who wishes to go better meet us in the pre-arranged areas or we leave without them. Have Bravo squad get to the Heavy Weapons Site and strip it bare. Anything we can’t take with us, have them disable it.”

“On it Skipper.” Tony spoke turning away and heading out into another room.

“Danny contact Anja, have her meet us at the junction of section nineteen and twenty.” Martin spoke. “Let Jules know that whatever she’s got will have to do, and to start heading for the secondary tunnel.”

Martin looked at Endith as Dan turned to speak into his implant. “I will find Tarifa.” He told her. “I will find her and get her back. And I will kill anyone who has harmed her. I need you to get your people armed and let them know to follow whatever instructions my people give them to the letter. We know this station and can get around blindfolded in the dark. They have to trust us Endith, or none of us will live through this day.”

Endith had to gasp at the look she saw in Martin’s eyes. It was one of murderous rage. It also stunned her that he knew her name and used it with respect and firmness. She reached out and touched his arm. “I will tell them.” She spoke.

Martin nodded and looked at Dan. “Anja’s on her way Skipper and Jules and Cody are almost finished in the Com warehouse and will move in five.”

“Danny you’re with me.” Martin spoke as he holstered the K12 and picked up the HK74 and headed for the door.

Anja came up behind Martin and Danny with Julie and two elves in tow and saw where they were squatting at the junction of section nineteen and twenty. It was a little used portion of the base, the dimly lit corridors attesting to that. Martin was squatting down slightly in front of Danny when Anja touched his arm and he turned to her. His eyes took in the two elves and he looked at her with questions in his eyes.

“They were helping Julie and came with her.” Anja answered his unspoken question with a low voice that was almost a whisper. “Danny what’s going on?”

“That asshole Graham raped Tarifa, and the Admiral saw his son dragging her away. Martin is tracking her.” Danny whispered back. “They came this way because no one uses this portion of the station anymore.” He turned back to where Martin was absolutely motionless in the corridor.

Martin remained completely still, allowing his senses to guide him. Tarifa’s scent he would never forget and he could smell her as if she was next to him. He could also smell the fear and anger that was coming from her pores, and that smell fueled the animal within him. There was a mission they had conducted in the jungles of Panama where Martin had tracked an assassin for fifty miles through the thick humid jungle, and did so with ease. Following Tarifa’s scent now was child’s play to him. He clenched and unclenched his fists, trying to keep his anger in check, but the closer they got, and the more her frightened scent filled his nose, the harder he found it to reign in his emotions.

Martin turned slowly and saw that Anja and the others had arrived. He motioned silently with his hand at Danny, who nodded.

“They’re in the section conference room.” Dan told the others quietly.

“How many,” Julie asked.

Dan met her eyes. “Eleven.”

“Danny... we should...” Julie began but stopped as she saw Martin move off at a dead run when the decidedly female scream filled the empty corridor. “Fuck!”

They all broke into runs to follow Martin.

Kevin laughed as if a man possessed as he slammed his hard cock into Tarifa’s extremely tight cunt for the third time in as many hours. He had watched as his father brutally raped her for nearly an hour, finally crying out as he filled her with his cum. He had beaten her during the entire rape to keep her compliant and unable to resist. Then it was Kevin’s turn, and he did the same as his father, brutally taking Tarifa. The guards followed, forcing her to suck their engorged cocks, and brutally taking her pussy. When his father had her a second time, he told Kevin to take her and use her, to break her in as their new slave. He had gathered another half dozen men loyal to his father and brought her here to continue to rape. Tarifa’s clothes had been torn from her completely now, and she was exposed for all of the men to see. Bruises covered her upper body, a particularly large one announcing that her shoulder was separated.

As Kevin slammed into her, one of his men was brutally raping her mouth, plunging his hard cock between her lips while viciously pulling her silky hair. She was covered in dried cum and blood, while the others in the room laughed and joked, pawing at her exposed breasts and nipples, making it a point to hurt her as much as possible. Her cries of pain had turned to soft whimpers now, as she tried to detach her mind from what was happening.

Tarifa’s time in Marcus’s rape chambers had been much, much worse than what she was enduring now her mind told her. She only had to hold out until they were done using her and then she could escape. Yet her mind kept going back to Martin’s face, so handsome and beautiful. Her only thoughts now were how badly she had treated him, and how this would not be happening if not for her own actions.

Tarifa did not become aware of the huge echo in the room, or the sudden rush of air announcing the door to the conference room being blown in until Kevin stopped his sadistic pumping into her sore pussy. Her head

turned slowly, her sapphire eyes focusing on the figure in the doorway as the guard's cock slipped from between her bruised lips. A tiny smile split her bloody lips.

"Martin..." She gasped, though no one heard her.

Martin stepped through the haze of smoke and dust and came to an abrupt stop at what he saw. His dark eyes froze in the grasp of horror and Martin only had to look once around the room before he allowed the beast within him to burst forth.

Anja followed Danny into the room, Julie and the elves right behind her. She came up short instantly for two reasons and her blood froze. The first reason was what she saw, and the anger and hatred that flashed through her mind at what was obviously happening. The second reason was what she saw happening to Martin right before her eyes.

Martin's face had changed into a vicious snarl, his dark eyes becoming large yellow orbs outlined in black. His canine teeth had extended to nearly three quarters of an inch in length, his skin becoming even darker than the normal tan he had. His face lengthened, turning into a short snout. His body became much more thickly muscled and he grew nearly six inches in height as dark black hair burst out over parts of his body, covering his exposed skin with a thin layer of fur, and the howl that split the air caused her to cringe as she watched him leap across the ten meters between him and Kevin in a single blink.

"Berserker!"

Danny's voice echoed beside her and Anja's head snapped around, her eyes growing even larger as she watched the same transformation that had taken place with Martin overtake Danny. His face changed, lengthening into a longer snout, large deadly fangs sprouting from his lips, blackish brown hair bursting out from beneath his uniform. With a howl similar to Martin's, Danny dispensed with the weapons that had occupied his hands seconds before, and scooped up the nearest guard to him, the man's eyes wide in terror at the snapping jaws and massive claws that proceeded to rip into his flesh. A flash of more ebony skin to her left made Anja whirl and witness Julie leap onto the back of another guard, her fingers now sporting two inch long claws, her own face distorted and more savage in nature, short black and white hair covering her skin. Long white fangs protruded from her jaw, her eyes like Martin and Danny's, yellow orbs outlined in black. Those claws ripped out the man's throat with no effort, blood fountaining across the floor in front of him. Julie let out a softer more feminine howl, if it could be called that, and leaped from the falling body to the next nearest guard who was frozen with his pants half down. He fumbled for the pistol on his pants, looking up just as Julie landed upon him, her claws ripping his face to shreds.

Kevin Graham had time enough to step back from between Tarifa's legs before Martin was upon him. Kevin's eyes were wide in terror as Martin grabbed him by the throat with one clawed hand and lifted him nearly eight inches off the floor, his half naked body flying across the room before slamming into the opposite wall. Kevin squealed in pain as his shoulder and three of his ribs were crushed like dry twigs from the force of the impact and he slumped to the floor.

Anja could only watch in terrified awe as Danny swung one guard in his hands as if he was swinging a baseball bat. The man's head was already a crushed melon from impacting the unyielding steel wall, and blood flew in all directions as Danny used the lifeless body to pummel two more men to the floor. The two female elves stood behind Anja with the same look of disbelief at what they were witnessing. Anja watched as Martin stepped up to Kevin, his clawed hand now lifting him effortlessly by his throat, pinning him to the wall. Kevin stared into the yellow and black eyes that Martin now had with unabashed horror. The dark black hair covering Martin's face and neck gave him an absolutely terrifying look.

Martin leaned closer to Kevin, his fangs extended beyond his lips now in a wicked snarl that one would normally see only from an attacking wolf, and not from a human being.

"It's time to die little man!" Martin growled with undisguised rage.

"No! Wait! I'm sorry... I..."

Kevin Graham never finished his sentence as Martin's face snapped forward and the teeth filled snout tore into the flesh of Kevin's throat. Blood bubbled forth from his mouth, his eyes bugging out of his head, his arms and legs twitching. Anja watched as if in slow motion, frozen in her spot, as guard who had recovered his wits enough to pick up a steel chair slammed it across the back of Martin's head, paying the ultimate price as

Martin dropped the twitching body of Kevin Graham and spin around in half a blink. His clawed hand slashed out, ripping open the man's chest so deeply that blood showered across Martin's uniform. As he started to fall, Martin drove the palm of his hand into the man's face, crushing his nose and driving the cartilage deeply into his brain. The force of the blow also shattered his neck and tossed him across the room to slam into the wall. His body dropped to the floor, eyes open in death, with blood leaking explosively from his nose, mouth and ears.

Julie landed on the end of the conference table, her claws bloody as the body of the last guard she had ripped open fell to the floor behind her. Danny launched the now unrecognizable body of the man he had been swinging across the room, leaving four pulverized dead guards on the floor around him. The body hit the wall with a sickening crunching noise and fell to the floor.

Just as quickly as it had begun it was over, and Anja watched their features return to normal in a matter of seconds. She still wore an astonished expression on her face as Martin moved to the table where Tarifa lay. He tore off the top of his uniform without thinking, exposing the tank top he wore underneath, and delicately draped it over Tarifa's near naked form. He looked at her badly beaten body and face, his own face twisted in anguish, his hands gently lifting her head to look at him.

"Ta... Tarifa are you...?" He spoke softly.

Her beautiful eyes opened slowly and she looked at him. "I... I knew you would come." She spoke softly. "Somehow... somehow I knew."

"I will always come for you." Martin told her without really knowing why, but knowing it was the truth, "Anja!" He yelled looking up.

Anja snapped out of her stunned stupor and rushed to the table, her medical kit coming off her shoulder before she reached the edge. She passed the portable medical scanner over Tarifa's body quickly. "She has some deep bruising and lacerations, but no internal injuries!" Anja spoke looking at Martin wide eyed. "Martin... Martin what did I just see?"

"We have to go!" Martin spoke quickly and ignoring her question. "Danny is it clear?"

Danny had taken up position by the door, the HK74 now back in his hands and he turned instantly, "Clear Skipper!"

"Inform the Master Chief we are inbound from the tunnel!" Martin said, sliding his arms gently under Tarifa's body.

"We... we will carry the Queen!" The male elf protested; his eyes wide and his hands shaking as he stepped forward, his eyes never leaving Martin, and looking at him with a great deal of fear.

Julie got between him. "Now is not the time." She snapped. "The Skipper can move faster and longer carrying her than you. We need to go!"

Martin lifted Tarifa with no effort into his arms, her eyes fluttering open. "Where... where are you taking me?" She asked softly.

Martin looked into her eyes. "Someplace safe." He replied softly, breathing deeply of her peach scent. He closed his eyes and pressed his face to her hair, not caring that her hair was caked with the dried cum of at least five different men, all men who were now very dead in the most violent and savage of manners.

"Danny you lead us out!" Martin called finally. "Julie you got the rear! Kill anything that gets in our way!"

Anja shared a quick look with Danny before he disappeared into the corridor. She turned to look at Julie, who was watching her closely. She detected the questions in Anja's eyes, the fear and the hesitation to speak. Julie stepped up to her, lifting the HK to her hip.

"We are still the same people lover." She spoke softly. "No matter what we can do, never doubt that. We can talk later, but now we need to get out of here." She motioned Anja forward to follow Martin and the elves, and Anja grabbed her bag and fell in line.

SECONDARY COMMAND SITE

ONE HUNDRED AND TEN HOURS AFTER RAPTOR TWO'S RETURN

The Raptor's engines were idling at quarter power, the sound deafening even in the confines of the massive hanger bay. As they entered the bay, Martin and the others saw three Raptors lifting off and moving for the massive overhead doors that were opening above them to reveal another set of huge doors. Once above the first set of doors, they began to close until they came back together with a loud sealing hiss.

"Raptors Nine, Ten and Eleven are away." The voice echoed in the huge bay.

Endith and Ben came sprinting down the ramp of the single remaining Raptor and ran over to meet them. Martin stopped a little behind the group as Endith came up to him. Her face took on a look of horror as she stopped in front of him.

"My Queen," She gasped.

"Who is on the Raptor?" Martin asked looking at her. Endith reached out to touch her Queen's bruised cheek. "Endith look at me!" Martin barked, snapping her out of her horrified expression. She looked up at him. "Who is on the Raptor?"

Endith shook her head quickly. "There is... just... just... a small group of your technicians and those elves who came with Tarifa and I."

"Take off your uniform top." Martin directed her. "I don't want anyone to see her like this."

Endith did, as she was told without question; quickly stripping out of her top revealing that she wore nothing underneath, her breasts tanned and very firm. She draped the uniform top over Tarifa's legs as Martin held her. Tarifa's head was tucked into his chest, one of her hands pressed against Martin's abdomen. Anja did not think and removed her fatigue top, handing it to Endith from where she stood next to Martin. She at least still wore Danny's tank top.

Endith looked at Martin, her green eyes turning hard. "The... the monsters who did this? They are...?" She asked.

Martin met her eyes. "They are dead." Martin told her, looking at Ben as he came up slowly, "Status?"

"We're... we're ready to beat feet Marty." Ben said looking at him. "The Admiral... the Admiral didn't make it?"

"The Admiral is staying." Martin told him, causing the others to look at him. "He is staying to try and minimize any damage Graham may do."

"They'll kill him if they find out Martin." Ben spoke.

"Martin nodded. "The Admiral knows the risks."

"Well Graham's got security moving through the tunnel towards our location now. I ordered everyone up and the ships are already enroute to the surface. The Admiral was able to disable the weapons grid and tracking radar before they could bring them on line, but he wasn't able to seal the tunnel."

"Vent the tunnel." Martin ordered with no hesitation.

"Martin that will... that will kill those men!" Anja spoke from beside him.

Martin met her gaze evenly. "They should have thought about that before they did this!" He growled. He turned back to Ben. "Tell Tina to vent the tunnel and let's get the hell out of here!"

"Where are we going Marty?" Ben asked. "We have no friends down there, and the Mark Nine's are full of civilians; men, women and children. The Admiral said we needed to look out for them!"

"EDEN Ground Command." Martin said.

Ben shook his head. "The place is crawling with those Alliance assholes, and it won't hold thirteen hundred civilians!"

"Thirteen hundred," Martin gasped wide eyed.

Endith looked at him. "I will show you a place." She spoke. "It is large enough for all of your people and the Alliance does not know of it."

"Why should we trust you?" Ben asked.

Endith looked at Martin before answering. "You have saved our Queen that is why."

Martin nodded. "Let's go." He spoke moving for the Raptor.

Tarifa awoke with a start, her eyes popping open to the dimly lit interior of what she remembered to be the inside of a Raptor. She could see sleeping figures all around her, most of them human and elves, but the darker green of genomes scattered throughout. She lifted her head slightly and realized she was lying on several

blankets that had been spread out on the web seats under her. She was extremely sore, and the memories of what had happened came rushing back, as well as the memories of Martin rescuing her yet again. She reached up to feel her hair, and was startled to find it slightly damp and smelling of strawberries. It was then she noticed she wore the dark uniform similar to what the genomes wore. Her keen eyes could see Endith slowly making her way towards where she sat, and she remembered the escape they had made from EDEN, or at least all that she could.

Tarifa looked at her as Endith settled onto the bench. "My Queen, how do you feel?" She spoke.

"Where are we Endith?" Tarifa asked.

"We have left the moon My Queen." Endith reported.

"What of our people?" Tarifa asked quickly, starting to rise but a wave of nausea swept over her and she sat back down.

"The human doctor Anja gave you something to help you sleep my Queen. She said it would make you nauseous when you first awoke and to remain seated for a few minutes." Endith told her, taking her arm. "Our people are safe, all of them. Martin... Martin's team got all of us out. My Queen... you..."

Tarifa looked at her, understanding in her eyes. "I have been raped many times before Endith, I will be fine." She touched her hair again. "Who bathed me?"

"Martin did my Queen." Endith replied, seeing Tarifa's eyes widen at this knowledge. "He refused to allow anyone to touch you in your condition, at least until you were clean. He carried you into the small shower and washed you before bringing you back here to us with the clothes you now wear. We dressed you my Queen."

"Martin... Martin bathed me?" Tarifa asked almost too quietly. "He did not..."

"My Queen... he was fully dressed the entire time. When he brought you from the shower his entire uniform was soaked. He ordered everyone forward until he was finished, and only then allowed them to return back here. Some of the human technicians arranged the bed you were sleeping on." Endith told her.

"What took place Endith?" Tarifa asked. "All I remember is Graham telling me he had contacted the Alliance, and that we would be his slaves until they had established a more direct means of communicating with them. He said he had spoken with Deval!"

Endith nodded. "He forcibly took control of the station my Queen. There were several battles, but the ones like Martin... the genomes... were able to escape along with over a thousand men, women and children who were against Senator Graham. We are heading back to earth. I have directed them to the ruins of Old Las Vegas Tarifa. The old military base the Holy One took us to when we were children. It is large enough to hold all of their people and the Alliance never ventures that far into our territory."

"He... he saved me again Endith." Tarifa spoke softly.

"My Queen I spoke with the two elves that were assisting the dark skinned genome called Julie. They were with him when he found you. They told me what happened. He... he became..." Endith looked at the floor.

"What Endith?"

"They said he changed into a monster." Endith told her. "The genomes Julie and Danny changed as well. They... they all changed. The men who were... the men who were raping you did not survive. They... they had become part animal, with claws and fangs. Their strength and speed was like nothing they had seen, even from a Grizz Beast. They said he was enraged over what was being done to you and it was as if he went insane. And they were able to change at will, for when the men were dead, they returned to normal immediately."

"I spoke with... Julie before we left. She said all of them had animal DNA genetically grafted to their own. It is what allows them to do what they do, and why they are not entirely human." Tarifa spoke. "I did not know they could actually change."

"My Queen... did I do the right thing?" Endith asked. "Should we fear these men and women? Their abilities far exceed anything we as elves could do. Just the few on these ships alone could destroy us all."

Tarifa looked at her. "They have risked all that they know to save us." Tarifa spoke. "They did not have to come to our aide the first time, and they most certainly could have left us on the station with that beast Graham. No... I believe we may have found the one thing that will help us in our battle against the Alliance. They will be hunted now too, and something tells me they will not like that one bit."

Endith looked at her and nodded slowly. "I see your point."

“Where is Martin?” She asked, her eyes searching the sleeping bodies all around them.

“I believe he went into the space where they fly this machine my Queen.” Endith spoke pointing to the cockpit.

Tarifa turned her eyes to the cockpit and got slowly to her feet, the nausea gone now. “I need to speak with him.” She said.

ROAN PLATEAU

Dysea looked at the remains of the village that occupied the entrance to the cave at the base of the mountain. The fast running creek moved past directly to the east of the village, disappearing into the thick forest all around them. They had arrived a few hours before, and her troops had set up a small camp, while the two forensic technicians went to work gathering any type of information they could. Blood still stained the walls of many of the one story structures built from rocks taken from within the cave. Dysea had seen only pictures of what had happened here, bodies of the men, women and the children slaughtered like simple hogs, lying scattered all around. Their bodies had been mutilated horribly; body parts severed from their limbs with edged weapons, or shot dozens and dozens of times.

Walter stepped up to stand next to her and she looked up at him. “It... it is hard to remain objective after seeing the pictures of what happen here Holy One.” Dysea spoke softly.

Walter nodded. “I know. I saw the pictures as well child, and that is precisely why I don’t believe this act was committed by Tarifa’s forces. You don’t know her as I do Dysea. She is a warrior yes, but in all the battles I have seen her in, never once has she committed or allowed to be committed the acts of savagery we saw done here.”

“Elf weapons were used Holy One.” Dysea said. “All the bodies were killed by either our caseless ammunition or by elfin edged weapons.”

Walter nodded. “Or it was made to appear that way.” He spoke. “You told me you would try to be objective.”

“And I will be Holy One.” Dysea said. “It is just very difficult when we are actually here.”

“I know child. I know.” Walter spoke.

They turned as one of the scientists walked slowly up to them, her face looking confused. She stopped in front of them, “Majesty.”

“What have you found Tomea?” Dysea asked.

“It is odd milady.” She answered. “I was one of the original team sent to investigate and collect the bodies of the dead. We were told by the Council only to collect the bodies and determine what weapons were used to kill them and nothing more.”

Dysea glanced at Walter before turning back to the young female elf. “Continue Tomea.” She said.

“Milady I have researched all the battles the High Elves have participated in against the Alliance. At least all of the battles we know about, and the information we have on those events indicates they fight very similar to us. They use their speed and reflexes to be precise and accurate.” Tomea looked at her now. “I brought the data pads from my lab milady, the ones that showed the positioning of all the bodies as we found them. The pictures do not match what we are finding.”

Dysea’s brow furrowed. “I do not understand.”

“The blood spatter and condition of the ground around where we found many of the bodies indicates they were not killed in the positions we found them in.” Tomea told her. “They were placed in the positions we found them but they were killed somewhere else.”

“You did not discover this when you were first here?” Dysea asked.

“As I said milady, the Council’s direction was explicit, to simply gather the bodies and discover what killed our people.” Tomea replied with an almost embarrassed look.

“Tomea!” The male voice echoed from across the village, causing them to turn toward the sound.

“Brator has found something!” Tomea spoke breaking into a run toward where the young elf stood. Dysea and Walter followed her and they covered the distance to the young elf quickly. His face was paler than normal and Dysea knew something was wrong.

“I... I found something.” He gasped, motioning them to follow him. Brator led them a short distance into the forest. “I discovered a blood trail from the nearest structure there. It appeared as if it had been covered with leaves and dirt. There has been no rain in this area for over a week and it was easy enough to follow.” He stopped and motioned with his hand. “I found this.”

There was an audible gasp from both Tomea and Dysea at what they saw. Spread out before them was an area that had been cleared out and used for what appeared to be an execution area. There was dried blood everywhere, on the leaves and tress all around them. Several large stumps had been dragged into the small clearing and their tops were saturated with blood and the marks of edged weapons.

Tomea shook her head slowly. “This is where they were killed.” She said softly. “It looks like... it...”

“An Execution Arena,” Dysea finished the statement for her. Dysea’s green eyes were burning in rage.

“Milady...” Tomea spoke again. “This act was not committed by High Elves.”

Dysea looked at her. “Concentrate your investigations on this area.” She ordered. “I want to know who killed our people.” She turned away quickly and started back to where they had established their small camp.

Walter followed her, sensing the seething anger that was pouring from her. “You must remain in control Dysea.” He spoke from behind her.

Dysea stopped and spun around to face him, her face a mask of anger. “Two hundred and nineteen men, women and children were butchered here!” She snapped.

“Tarifa and the High Elves did not commit this act Dysea; even you must see that now.” Walter said calmly.

“Perhaps not Holy One.” She answered, regaining control of her emotions. “It appears you may have been correct. If that is indeed the case, then I want to know who did. And then I will have vengeance.”

“You may not like what you may find Dysea.” Walter spoke. “Have you considered that?”

Dysea met his eyes. “Yes I have.” She replied. “And whoever is responsible for this atrocity will answer to me, no matter who they are!”

RAPTOR TWO THREE HOURS FROM EARTH

Tarifa entered the cockpit of Raptor Two slowly, her eyes wide in amazement at the myriad of instruments and advanced controls. She could see the stars out of the cockpit window, as well as the blue/green planet in front of her that was earth. She saw Tina turn in her co-pilot’s chair, Ben asleep in the pilot’s chair next to her. Tarifa came fully into the cockpit, Tina’s eyes watching her carefully.

“That... that is earth?” She asked.

Tina nodded with a smile. “That’s earth.”

“It looks... it looks so peaceful.” Tarifa said softly.

“Yeah... well looks can be deceiving.” Tina told her.

Tarifa looked at her now. “I was... I was looking for...”

“Marty’s up top,” Tina told her, motioning to the small circular stairway to her right, “The observation deck.”

“Is he alone?” Tarifa asked.

Tina smiled. “Last time I checked he was.”

Tarifa looked away almost shyly. “Thank you.” She said softly, before moving for the stairs. The stairs were similar to what she had seen in old pictures that the Holy One had given her about the large planes that used to traverse the skies. She wound up the stairs twice and found herself in a room where the top portion of the ceiling was nothing more than an open glass container that allowed you to see the billions of stars all around. There was a small table in the center of the room, with two couches along the wall. Another small door was in the back of the room as she stepped fully onto the observation deck. She saw where the glass window stopped and became metal again, extending back along the length of the top of the Raptor.

She froze when the small door in the rear opened and Martin stepped out toweling off his face. He was shirtless, and Tarifa felt a sexual rush course through her looking at his broad hairless chest, and the tightly packed abdomen of muscles. Black flame tattoos spread out from his abdomen to his encompass his chest, and

spreading out under his arms. They were similar to the flame tattoos that extended down his arms and across his broad shoulders. When she was able to tear her eyes from his bare skin she found he was looking directly at her, and in the dim light of the observation deck his eyes appeared to be softly glowing.

“I thought you were still sleeping.” His voice interrupted her thoughts.

“I’ve... I’ve been awake for a short time.” She answered, moving closer to him. “I was talking with Endith.”

“Tarifa... I...” Martin began.

Tarifa used her elfin reflexes to cross the small room to stand in front of him in a single eye blink. Looking up into his face, she placed her finger on his lips to stop his words. “You... of all people... have nothing to apologize to me for. You have saved my life again. Why did you do this Martin? Endith told me what took place. You could have taken the others and left, yet you risked your life and the lives of others to come and rescue me. Why?”

Martin looked at her, her sapphire eyes nearly taking his breath away. Her peach scent filled the room, and he inhaled deeply, allowing it to course through him. “It... it was the right thing to do.” He spoke finally.

Tarifa smiled gently. “You are not a very good lair Martin Hunter.” She said.

Martin looked at her. “I... I didn’t want to lose you.” He said finally.

Tarifa looked at him and at that moment she knew what she wanted. She wanted Martin. She wanted him to purge all the vileness from her body, and make her feel like a complete woman again. “Kiss me Martin.” She said softly.

Martin’s eyes grew a little wider. He shook his head slowly. “I can’t.”

Tarifa stepped closer to him, her hands sliding down his broad chest and around his waist. “Kiss me Martin.” She said again, looking up at him, her eyes bright and clear.

“Tarifa... I can’t do that.” He told her, his voice almost pleading.

“Why?”

“I... I don’t know if I will be able... able to stop this time.” He told her honestly.

“You... you are the first man who has ever kissed me Martin Hunter.” She told him softly. “And I... I don’t want you to stop.”

Martin looked shocked at her words. “Tarifa... you were just... what they did to you? I... I couldn’t stop it in time. I... what you are asking...”

“What I am asking Martin, is for you to make love to me.” She told him, her voice husky with passion now. “Right here... right now... to purge them from me, from my soul. I’m... I’m asking you to... to make me whole again.”

Tarifa gasped in surprise when he lifted her into his arms, crushing her to him. She had no time to think as he covered her lips with his own and kissed her. Oh did he kiss her. Tarifa locked her legs around his waist, and wrapped her arms around his shoulders, her whole body igniting in burning heat and need.

Tarifa groaned into his mouth as her body shuddered in a soul conquering orgasm from just a single kiss.

EDEN

ELEVEN HOURS AFTER MARTIN’S ESCAPE

Richard Graham looked at the remains of his son and the men with him and tried not to vomit all over the room. It had taken them nearly eight hours to recover from the acts of sabotage that the genomes had committed to aide their escape. Only one of the remaining five Raptors was flyable, the other two Mark Nine transports also disabled. The entire weapons grid of EDEN had been taken offline and infected with a virus so the turret based lasers could not fire on the traitor’s ships as they fled. Admiral Wallace, who had been discovered in his private quarters beaten and unconscious, was livid with anger over what the men he thought he commanded had done. At first Graham had thought Wallace had been involved, until he was discovered beaten and bloody, his command codes stripped from him. When Richard had seen him again, he had not changed out of the bloody uniform and was directing the technicians in the Command Center with shouts of anger as they tried to get the weapons back on line. Graham considered himself an excellent judge of character,

and he knew that Wallace was fully on his side now, and the sight of him squatting over the remains of his son and the other guards shaking in obvious rage confirmed it for him.

“...vicious brutal motherfucker,” Wallace finally spat as he got to his feet and turned to face Graham.

“What... what did this William?” Graham asked his own face ashen and pale.

Wallace stepped up to him slowly. “It was Hunter.” He said.

Graham looked stunned. “Hunter! But... it looks like... it looks as if they were torn apart by animals!”

Wallace nodded slowly. “They were... in a sense.” He answered slowly turning to face Graham and make the lie seem truthful. “Martin and his team have the ability to transform into versions of the animal that were grafted to their DNA. Martin and the others animal counterpart was a wolf; they can partially transform themselves into humanlike versions of these animals and do incredible damage, as you can see.”

“This... this is not something that was commonly known.” Graham spoke. “You knew this?”

Wallace nodded. “It was not made public knowledge because it was deemed that Hunter and his team had complete control over when they could transform, and to what extent. That decision was made far above my pay grade Senator.”

“I thought you trusted this man?” Graham asked him.

“I did Senator, until he came into my quarters and beat me senseless.” Wallace spoke heatedly. “He betrayed me, and nearly disabled the entire base in the process. All because of some pretty piece of ass!”

“I want charges of murder drawn up for his entire team!” Graham spoke. “Once we get the station repaired, how soon until we can go after them?”

Wallace shook his head. “We only have one Raptor capable of flying. The others need new avionics and a complete purging of their systems. Ben and Tina helped design the Raptors, and they knew just what to do to fuck them up good.”

“Can we contact the Alliance to go after them?” Graham asked.

Wallace looked at him. “Do we want to let them know how damaged we are sir?” He asked. “We can give them the transponders for the craft that have escaped, but we shouldn’t make them aware of what damage we have suffered up here. It might weaken our position to do so. And it would not allow you to negotiate with them from a position of strength.”

Graham nodded slowly. “Yes... I see your point Admiral.” He said. “And I agree with you. I have to say... you seem to have changed your tone where Hunter is involved.”

“To be honest Senator, I’ve only trusted him to a point. And now that he has fucked me over, I want him to pay.” Wallace growled.

Richard Graham smiled. “So do I. Stick with me Admiral, I’ll have you fully on my team in no time.”

“What about the body of your son Senator?” Wallace asked. “What do you want done?”

Graham looked at the bloody body of his only son and shrugged. “He was a fucking weakling anyway. Burn his body with the rest of these idiots.”

Wallace nodded. “I’ll have a full report of our readiness for you in two hours Senator.”

Graham nodded. “Excellent. I’m going to contact this Minister Deval and have a talk with him in regards to our future relationship.” He saw Wallace start to say something and held up his hand. “Don’t worry... I will say nothing about our condition or capabilities. As you said, negotiating from a position of strength is much better.”

“May I suggest you ask him to supply some of those elves to assist in the more dangerous repairs Senator?” Wallace spoke. “If they are as gifted as we have been led to believe, then we can use them to conduct the more dangerous repairs.”

“That is an excellent idea Admiral.” Graham said with a cruel smile. “Report to me when you have what you think you need.”

RAPTOR TWO

Tarifa’s eyes were open wide, her body flush and hot. Her shimmering black hair was spread across the end of the couch, her breath coming in deep gulps. She was completely naked; her firm, tanned 34C breasts standing proud. Her nipples were almost painfully erect and covered in Martin’s saliva. Her fingers were

entwined tightly in Martin's dark hair, and she was in the process of experiencing something that was totally new and wondrous to her.

Tarifa could feel Martin's warm breath on her utterly soaked pussy, his warm tongue slowly licking up the outside of her cunt lips. She had protested at first as Martin's lips and tongue had left her breasts. Her tits were extremely sensitive, and he had driven her to the edge nibbling her burning nipples while his hands squeezed and cupped her breasts. No man had ever manipulated her tits as Martin had and his sharp fangs drew gasps of pleasure and delight as he dragged them softly over her nipples. Tarifa had protested when he descended lower down her abdomen, his tongue leaving a trail of soft kisses and nibbles on her skin. She had tried to pull his face back up, but Martin had pinned her arms to her sides with his strong grasp. A flash of fear had coursed through Tarifa, until that is, she felt his warm moist tongue drag gloriously across her engorged clit, and her entire world exploded.

Tarifa's cry of pleasure was muffled as she bit her bottom lip; the power of the second orgasm Martin gave her collapsing all her barriers, causing her supple body to arch off the couch as she erupted in orgasm. His soft lips had fastened over her spasming pussy and he had drunk her juices as if he was dying of thirst. He did not stop there once she had collapsed back to the couch her chest heaving in unimaginable bliss. His lips and tongue continued to dance across her sensitive pussy and clit, alternating between soft nibbles and licks, and his warm tongue plunging deeply into her dripping snatch. Tarifa had not even recovered from her first orgasm, before a second even more powerful one caused her to shudder almost violently in his grasp and reward him with more of her sweet juices which he hungrily lapped up.

Martin was nearly beyond control as he stared at the beautiful pussy in front of his face. It was open like a butterfly now, dripping with Tarifa's peach tasting cum, and one of the most beautiful sights Martin had ever seen. His mind was thrown back years to a similar sight of even more beauty in his eyes, the soft Persian red hair above the erect clit and proud pussy lips.

The thin line of perfectly trimmed black hair just above her erect and stimulated clit only added to the beauty of Tarifa's pussy, and Martin had buried his nose in that soft hair more than once since beginning his feast. He was ready now, having freed himself of his combat boots and pants, and his thick twelve inch cock was throbbing almost painfully. The single long vein that traversed the length of his pulsing shaft was standing out prominently, the head of his cock flared and leaking pre-cum. Slowly Martin dragged his tongue back up Tarifa's quivering body, tracing every contour of her abdomen and her perfect tits. He dipped his head to the side of her face, his tongue trailing along the edge of her elfin ear all the way to very point, eliciting gasps of pleasure from Tarifa, her hands clutching his shoulders. It was then he discovered that the ridges of her ears were an erogenous zone.

Tarifa's eyes grew large when she felt the head of his huge cock graze her erect clit and he dragged the entire length of his throbbing shaft slowly over her clit as he teased her ear. Tarifa wrapped her arms around his back, her eyes wide in astonishment and wondering if his huge cock would ever end, and hoping it never would. Her eyes finally closed in bliss when she felt his hot heavy balls press against her dripping pussy. And then he began to drag his thick cock back down her clit, and Tarifa had to grit her teeth as another orgasm ripped through her. Her nails dug into his powerful back, her elfin strength causing Martin to hiss in her ear until he was looking at her with blazing dark eyes filled with nothing but passion and want.

Tarifa kissed him hard, shoving her tongue between his lips to do battle with his own tongue. It was a battle she quickly lost, as his warm tongue possessed her. She took his face in her hands, pulling his lips away from her while she still had some semblance of control. She felt the huge hot head of his cock press against the entrance to her cunt, parting her pussy lips ever so slightly.

"Martin it's... you are too big!" Tarifa gasped as he lowered his face to her throat, his fangs nibbling her skin.

Martin raised his head to stare at her, his eyes now the same yellow and black orbs, as they had been when he had rescued her. Tarifa knew then he had allowed the animal in him to come out. He smiled at her, his fangs clearly evident. "I won't hurt you!" She heard him say as the huge head of his cock pressed against her slippery cunt lips. Tarifa's eyes grew huge, her mouth opened and her lips forming a circle as she felt him slowly push more of his massive cock into her.

The total wetness of her cunt allowed Martin to slide four inches of his thick cock into her blazing hot and velvety pussy. Tarifa's pussy clamped down on his cock with incredible strength and he gasped in pleasure,

his mouth open and his fangs extended to their full length of nearly a full inch. The tightness and heat of her pussy brought back intense memories of another feeling and as those flash of that equally beautiful face burned its way across his brain it was entirely too much for him and with loud grunt Martin's cock erupted inside her. Tarifa eye's rolled back into her head as she felt him explode into her depths with a force unlike anything she had ever felt. His boiling hot cum flooded her belly, triggering an orgasm so intense it dwarfed the others before it. Her sweet juices splashed wetly over his erupting cock, and without any resistance at all, she felt Martin's entire twelve inch cock slid into her depths until his heavy spurting balls planted firmly against her ass cheeks. It was at that moment that Tarifa became whole. The rapes she had endured in her life, the slobbering idiots who had drooled over her, even the male elves that had tried to please her, all of them passed into nothing as Martin's cock reached into her depths and filled her with his essence. Tarifa felt no pain as the largest cock she had ever seen, let alone feel inside her, bottomed out within the depths of her clutching pussy and sent her into a land of pleasure she never dreamed could exist.

The only thing she was aware of at the moment was the continually erupting cock inside her and her own orgasm that was gripping her with such intensity she thought her muscles were going to rip through her skin.

And then Tarifa screamed in wanton bliss, no longer caring who heard her.

Martin joined her, an almost wolf like howl escaping from his throat as Tarifa's powerful legs clamped together at the small of his back and her arms went around his shoulders. The heat and tightness of her sweet pussy was too much for his control to bear, and when her cunt began to milk his thick cock he howled.

Endith burst into the cockpit of the Raptor at the sound of Tarifa's scream. No one else had awakened due to his or her own exhaustive sleep, and only Endith had heard the rapturous cries. She saw Tina pulling the door to the observation deck closed just as she entered a small smile on her face.

"The Queen," Endith gasped.

Tina looked at Ben, who was still sleeping soundly and then back to Endith. "Something tells me that your Queen does not want to be disturbed at this moment." She said.

"The beast is killing her!" Endith exclaimed.

Tina turned to a small screen on the console and activated it. "Tell me something. Does this look like he's killing your Queen?"

Confused Endith stepped to the screen and her eyes flew open. She saw her queen underneath Martin's naked body, her legs locked around his waist while her hands seemed to be trying to draw him closer to her. Her face was contorted into a blissful mask as she showered Martin's shoulder and the side of his face with kisses and bites.

"What... what is he doing to her?" Endith asked almost stupidly.

Tina smiled. "If I had to guess, I'd say he is banging the crap out of her." Tina turned the monitor off and took her arm. "I gather from your expression that you have never... you've never had a man make love to you?"

Endith looked at her shyly. "My duty has always been to protect the Queen. I... I never had time for such... experiences."

Tina's eyebrow went up in a thoughtful manner. She had never entertained the thought of sex with another woman, but this elf Endith was very hot looking, and she and Ben had always talked of spicing up their love life. "Let's talk Endith."

Martin was still as hard as steel buried deeply inside Tarifa's tight pussy as he lifted his head from where he had buried it in her hair when he had started to cum. He opened his eyes slowly to look at Tarifa, hoping not to see pain and anger. He had lost control and plunged into her depths more quickly than he had intended as he blasted his cum into her. When he looked at her face, she was looking up at him with a dreamy smile, her lips wet from his kisses and her own saliva.

"Hi." He said softly, unable to think of anything else at the moment.

Tarifa stared into his eyes and saw what she had always sought to see in a man's eyes. She saw an adoring love and passion, and all of it directed at her. "Hello." She answered him back with the sweetest smile she could muster.

"Tarifa... I..."

"I want more." Tarifa told him firmly, looking directly into his eyes.

"Ex... excuse me?" Martin said.

"I want... I want you to take... to take me again!" As if to emphasize her request Tarifa clenched her pussy muscles around his belly filling cock, and she grinned almost wickedly when Martin groaned loudly.

"Tarifa... you... I..."

Tarifa, using her elfin strength and taking him completely by surprise, pushed Martin off her chest and into a sitting position. His hands went instinctively to her ass cheeks and held their groins together as she pushed him back onto the couch. Tarifa groaned as his massive cock sank even deeper into her blazing hot pussy, and her head fell to his shoulder as she quivered in a tiny orgasm from just that small motion. She was impaled so deeply on his immense shaft that her tight ass was resting atop his equally large balls. She clutched his shoulders, sitting on his cock while the orgasm passed slowly, once more coating his thick shaft with her juices. Finally she brought her head up and gently took his surprised face in her hands, kissing him deeply. She made it a point to crush her firm tits into his powerful chest, her sensitive nipples pressed into his hot skin and sending small shivers through her.

Tarifa drew back from their kiss, trailing her moist tongue across his lips sensuously, relishing in the taste of her own pussy juices on his lips. She looked at him with wide sapphire eyes that projected her own hungry passion.

"You... you have purged me Martin Hunter." Tarifa told him. "You have purged me of all men who have ever taken me against my will."

"I... I just did the same thing!" Martin told her confused.

Tarifa shook her head quickly. "No... you did no such thing!" She spoke caressing his face. "You freed me from the fear."

Martin closed his eyes, partly from Tarifa's clenching pussy and the pleasure it sent crashing through his brain, and partly because he was ashamed he had lost control. "I lost control Tarifa." He said finally. "I let... I let the beast within me take over."

Tarifa smiled at him. "Do you honestly believe I would be... I would be sitting in your lap with your beautiful cock still inside me... if you had forced me?" She asked.

"I..." Martin could not put into words what was going through his head.

Tarifa saw his confusion and remembered the words of the Holy One in the transmission he had left for Martin. *She can be the rock you need to begin rebuilding what has been destroyed. The Queen of the Wood Elves is Dysea. You will not mistake her for someone else when you see her Martin, for she is the one I hope you will begin rebuilding your life with* Tarifa knew at that moment what the Holy One had meant. This man that had so possessed her, he was the future, and whether they would remain lovers or move on to others, they would always be together. Tarifa took his hands from where they rested on her ass and placed them on her tits, holding them to her firm melons.

"That beast inside you is what purged me Martin." Tarifa spoke, holding her hands over his on her breasts. "Now I want that beast to possess my very being and set me free."

Martin's eyes grew a little brighter at her words and he leaned forward slightly, flexing his cock inside her. Tarifa smiled at his action and moved her hands to his face where she stared into those eyes that had so enthralled her from the moment she had met him.

"Possess me Martin!" She gasped at him. "Make love to me until I am screaming in your arms. Fuck me until we can no longer move!" Tarifa saw his fangs begin to extend again his eyes changing color and she smiled as he took his hand from her tit and replaced it with his warm mouth, "AHHHHH... yes!"

Tarifa yelped in surprise when Martin flipped them over on the couch, keeping her impaled around his cock. She watched him with dreamy eyes as he brought her legs forward and in front of him, confusion on her face until she realized he was turning her around. Tarifa whimpered as she allowed him to rotate her body in front of him, his huge cock sending ripples of delight surging throughout her burning body. He turned her until she was on her knees in front of him, her pussy already leaking cum around his firmly buried cock. She clutched

the back of the couch and turned her face to look at him, smiling when she saw his eyes had changed again to black with yellow pupils. She hissed in disappointment as he slowly withdrew his huge pulsing cock until only the enormous head remained inside her. She pushed back against him, trying to swallow his shaft again, and she moaned when he held her still. She felt him lean forward next to her head and his hand brushed her silky black hair from her pointed ear. She felt his warm breath next to her ear and she shivered when his tongue extended and traced her ear lobe. Tarifa would never discover how he knew that her elfin ears were an extremely sexual pleasure point, at least not this night.

“Take me Martin!” She gasped loudly.

“I will!” Martin whispered into her ear.

Tarifa felt him reach under her arms and grasp her breasts in his hands, her nipples crushed against his strong palms. Martin gasped into her ear before tightening his grip on her breasts and plunging into her depths in one powerful and soul stealing thrust.

Tarifa’s eyes nearly bugged out of her head as Martin slammed into her deeper than he had ever been before, and she screamed out her joy as the most powerful orgasm she had yet to experience erupted within her like a volcano bursting from the earth. His huge cock reached a place inside her that it had not yet touched, and when it did, Tarifa lost all control herself. She fucked him back as hard as her elfin strength would allow, their hips coming together in loud slapping noises and his now cum filled balls banging against her thighs. This was nothing like Tarifa had ever imagined. It was so powerful, so intense and so animalistic that it was driving her into a sexual frenzy.

Martin’s eyes were closed tightly, his mouth open and his fangs in full extension as he grasped Tarifa’s hips and stroked into her in powerful twelve inch plunges. He had never felt heat and silky wetness like this only once before, and her pussy was contracting around his huge cock in continual orgasms. He had only been thrusting into her for a few minutes and Martin felt that familiar surge through his balls and stomach. He clenched his teeth and pulled her up to him in one final will destroying plunge into her tightness. When Tarifa’s arms reach over her shoulders to clutch his head, Martin let go.

“Fill me Martin!” Tarifa cried out as she felt Martin’s cock grow impossibly huge inside her and erupt. Tarifa’s eyes rolled into the back of her head again when his first blast inside her clutching pussy triggered her own earth shattering orgasm.

The force of Martin’s strokes into her depths drove them both to the floor, and Tarifa felt his weight upon her back, his cock spraying his cum into her belly, their hips locked together. His hands took hers as they settled to the floor and Tarifa rested her head in his embrace as Martin continued to empty searing hot cum into her, and her own pussy spasmed in one raging orgasm after another.

It did not stop until Tarifa felt Martin bottom out inside her one last time, the last of his cum filling her. She felt Martin pull her tightly to him, his arm wrapping around her chest so that his hands could cup her breast. He curled up into almost a fetal position, Tarifa’s body mirroring his, his huge cock slowly softening inside her. Martin made no move to extract himself from her body, oblivious of their combined cum soaking both of their lower bodies, and only pulled her even closer to him. This action made Tarifa smile seductively and she felt his lips touch her ear.

“Are... are you ok?” He asked softly.

Tarifa’s smile grew even larger and she nodded her head without opening her eyes. “I am simply divine.” She told him in a whisper. She sighed in contentment as Martin pulled her even closer and it was then they drifted into a peaceful sleep.

Endith sat on the arm of Tina’s command seat, watching intently as Tina explained the controls of the Raptor to her. Ben had woken up to see this happening, and rose to get coffee for all of them, and allowed Endith to sit in his chair. She had sat wide eyed in the pilot’s chair until Ben had returned with three mugs of coffee, one of which he handed to a surprised Endith. She watched him closely as he returned to his seat, but quickly realized that he and Tina were not the same as the humans she had dealt with in the past. They joked freely with each other, and seemed to share a special relationship that Endith had not seen between a male and female human before. Ben did not treat Tina as an inferior or as if she was beneath him, but as an equal.

“How... how long have you known the... Commander?” Endith blurted out.

“Who Marty...?” Tina asked. “Jeez! What’s it been Ben, nine or ten years?”

“Eleven.” Ben replied. “Remember... we dropped them off on the Iranian freighter in the middle of winter in the Bering Sea. It almost froze the fuel lines it was so cold.”

Tina smiled. “That’s right! We’ve been working exclusively with Martin and his team for the last nine years. We take them where they need to go, and we bring them back.”

“It... it does not seem to bother you, knowing that he is not like you.” Endith said gently, probing for a response.

“You mean that he is a genome?” Tina asked, looking at her.

Endith nodded slowly. “I apologize if I have offended you.”

“There’s nothing to apologize for.” Ben told her. “You will find that most of the Raptor crews, and many of the humans on the transports are not like what you are used to Endith. Besides having someone save your life kind of over rules the normal reaction.”

“He saved your life?” Endith questioned.

“He saved both our asses.” Tina spoke. “We had just dropped them off for a mission in Saudi Arabia. Our bird took fire and we went down hard. Ben broke both his legs and I broke my arm and some ribs. We were in pretty bad shape. And the bad guys were bearing down on us hard. It was a black operation, so no one knew we were down, and no one was going to come for us.”

“They would have left you to die?” Endith asked surprised.

“That was the nature of our business back then.” Ben explained. “We accepted it.”

“What happened?”

“Martin disobeyed orders.” Tina told her. “When he found out we had gone down he disregarded his mission orders and came for us. He and his team carried us out of the country over two hundred miles of desert and rock. Took us almost two weeks, but he wouldn’t leave us behind.”

Ben nodded. “The powers that be were not happy at all. They tried to get Martin in a court martial, but that didn’t pan out. They busted him down a rank though, which he earned back in three months.” Ben finished with a chuckle. “Marty may be a genome, and not completely human, but there is no one you’d want on your side more than him. He’ll go right to the wall for you if he thinks you’re right. He doesn’t have many friends outside of the team, but Tina and I, and most of the Raptor flight crews, well we would follow him straight to hell if he asked us too. He’s saved many of them as well.”

“It does not bother you that... that he changes. That he becomes...” Endith stopped when they looked at her.

“You mean that he can change into something resembling a wolf?” Tina finished her question for her. Tina smiled and looked at Endith. “We are not like the humans you know Endith.” She said. “Martin has saved most of our lives at one point or another. We would do anything for him because he cares about his people. We had our differences sure, but the humans before... before the comet came were much more tolerable than they appear to be now.”

“Look at you.” Ben spoke with a grin. “You’re not human. You’re an elf! You are something that from where we come from only existed in books and movies. You hang around Martin long enough you learn to expect the unexpected. If everything you have told us is true, and we have no reason to doubt it one bit after what we have seen so far, then we aren’t going to be inviting these Alliance pricks over for dinner anytime soon trust me.”

“But elves... we were made for the purpose of serving humans. The Holy One created us to... female elves were created to be irresistible to human males. The Holy One hoped that if we mated and produced children, it would extend the longevity for the entire planet.” Endith told them. “You... don’t seem affected in any way.”

Ben looked at her. “How do you know that?” He asked.

“You have... you have not looked at me in... I mean...” Endith shook her head in frustration.

Tina smiled and placed her hand on Endith’s arm. “We are affected Endith.” She said softly, “Both of us.” This announcement caused Endith’s eyes to grow larger. “However, we have enough will power and self control to not act like humans you are used too.”

“Yes sir!” Ben spoke. “I think your ears are damn sexy, and the ways your eyes kind of catch the light, and you have a killer body that...”

“Ben!” Tina warned with a smile on her face.

“That’s almost as good as my lovely co-pilot here.” Ben finished his sentence quickly.

Endith couldn’t help but smile at their playful banter and she looked at Tina. “You... you both find me attractive?” She asked softly.

“Yes.” Tina answered her honestly. And for Tina it was quite a revelation as well. “But we are also nothing like the humans you are used to. Give us time and we’ll show you that. All of us.”

“That... that sounds very intriguing,” Endith told her. “I will...”

The quiet beeping caused Ben to sit up in his seat and turn fully towards his controls. “Well look at that... someone is trying to track us.”

Tina also turned to her controls, her hands moving quickly and efficiently over her consoles. “I’m picking up three search radars! They haven’t painted us yet, but our range is decreasing!”

“Type?” Ben asked.

“They look like old style X-band TA systems!” Tina spoke calmly.

Ben turned as another beeped sounded. “Shit! They’re trying to track our transponders!”

“Something isn’t right though!” Tina exclaimed. “They aren’t synching up!”

“Screw it!” Ben spoke. “Raptor Flight this is Raptor lead! Pull your transponders! Take them right out of the circuit boards!” As he spoke, Ben was reaching between their two seats where he flipped open a small panel and Endith could see the small box device with what appeared to be a handle on it. Ben took the handle and pulled. “Fuck! It’s jammed!” Ben snapped, putting both hands on the handle and trying to heave.

“Shit!” Tina spoke. “Ten seconds before the transponder locks us!”

Endith reached down and took hold of the handle on the box and used her elf strength to yank the box out of the panel it where it was being obstinate about coming out. Ben looked at her as she held it out to him with a small smile. Tina looked at her, then at Ben and they both smiled.

“Thank you.” Ben spoke.

“You’re welcome.” Endith told him.

“Why don’t you go upstairs and get Martin and your Queen.” Ben said. “We’ll be entering the atmosphere in about fifteen minutes.”

Endith nodded and moved to comply. Ben looked at Tina for a brief moment before turning back to his controls.

“What happens now?” Tarifa asked in a soft voice.

Martin sat on the carpeted floor with his back against the couch. They had gotten half dressed and Tarifa wore only her fatigue top, while Martin wore just his pants. She sat between his legs, leaning up against his chest. At Tarifa’s question Martin lowered his head and nuzzled her ear, inhaling her scent.

“I don’t have the foggiest idea.” He told her honestly.

“Your Admiral left you in charge of these people Martin.” She spoke, her hand stroking his bare arm. “You must protect them. If Graham contacted Minister Deval as he said, they will come looking for you.”

“This old base we are going to?” Martin asked. “Is it secure?”

Tarifa nodded. “It will be for a time. It is on the very edge of High Elf territory.” She replied, turning in his arms to look into his handsome face. “And very few people of any kind venture into the area. How long will you be able to last with the supplies from your ships?”

Martin thought about that for a moment. “Six months at the most.” He answered. “And that’s if we ration everything.”

Tarifa looked at him for a long minute. “I know of a place.” She told him finally. “It is close to our main community, hidden in a deep valley. The Alliance has been unable to find it because they fear coming into the Timber. My people are at their strongest in the deep forests and Timber. It has adequate requirements of food and water, and enough space to establish the beginnings of a colony, at least initially. Your people will need more however.”

Martin nodded. “I was going over the manifests of the people who left EDEN before you interrupted me.” He told her with a smile. Tarifa blushed even under her dark tan, and she snuggled closer to his chest. “Many of the men and women who left were tops in their fields, all kinds of scientists and research people.”

“There are dozens of human settlements west of the Zone.” Tarifa spoke. “Some of them are more open than others, but none of them have dealings with the Alliance.”

“Yet they all have slaves?” Martin asked.

Tarifa nodded her head slowly. “It is what... it is what we were created for Martin.”

Martin shook his head. “No... you were created to help the human race survive.” He said. “Not become slaves to their every sadistic whim.”

“Will you allow me to help you?” Tarifa asked him.

Martin looked at her surprised. “Of course I will.” He answered. “I have never been in charge of so many people. This type of position is very new to me. You are a Queen to millions of elves. I would be foolish to not accept your help and council.”

“It will bring you against those that are our enemies Martin.” Tarifa spoke softly. “There are people who would not normally be against you.”

Martin took her face in his hands and looked deeply into her eyes. “I do not believe in what the Alliance has done, nor do I have sympathy for those who accept that way of life. If they are your enemies, then they are my enemies.”

Tarifa kissed him hard, her hand reaching up to stroke his face. They both heard the door slid open and Martin detected Endith’s scent come up the stairs.

“My... my Queen,” Her voice reached out tentatively.

Tarifa closed her eyes in disgust at the interruption and turned. “I am here Endith.” She spoke.

They watched Endith walked fully onto the deck, but neither of them made any move to cover themselves, or the fact that they had obviously been having sex. To Endith’s credit, she didn’t bat an eye.

“Tarifa... Ben asks that you and the Commander join us on the flight deck.” Endith spoke. “We will be entering the atmosphere in a few minutes.”

Tarifa nodded. “We will be down in a few minutes.” She said.

Endith nodded, and turned quickly making her way back down the stairs in a rush. Tarifa looked at Martin, his eyes bright.

“There is no way we could just fly off into the stars I suppose?” She asked.

Martin smiled and got to his feet pulling her with him. He enveloped her in his arms and kissed her deeply.

“One day we will have what we both seek, no matter what it is or with who.” He told her. “I promise you that.”

Tarifa smiled. “I will hold you to that Martin.”

CHAPTER SIX

ROAN PLATEAU

Dysea’s guards had cleaned out the small structure for her to use, washing down the blood stained floor and ventilating the smell of death from the home. Dysea now sat at the main table, her eyes focused on the small screen of her mobile data receiver. Plugged into the data slot was the pad the Holy One had given her just before they left. Dysea had spent the last two hours reading all the information on the pad, almost all of it relating to Martin. The last portion of the data chip was information on Queen Tarifa of the High Elves, and her rise to position of Queen. Dysea now had a small picture of both of them up on the screen side by side and she gazed at the photos as she sipped the steaming mug of tea.

Dysea had only seen pictures of Tarifa that were taken from a distance, but she was always able to recognize her due to the billowing raven black hair she had. Now, seeing the close up photo the Holy One had given her, she could put an actual face to the name. Dysea had to admit, Tarifa was exceptionally beautiful, even for an elf. Her face was exotic looking, and her sapphire colored eyes were large and bright. She had an almost identical figure to her, but Dysea estimated her breasts were slightly larger than Tarifa’s. They both had the elegant and supple curves that human men and even elf men found nearly irresistible. Dysea suddenly found herself wondering what Tarifa looked like without clothes on, and that thought stunned her. Looking at Martin’s photo caused Dysea to fidget in her seat. She could tell he was tall, and his bio said he was over six feet and

over two hundred pounds. He looked heavily muscled, even wearing the dark uniform that he was wearing in the picture, yet it was his eyes that caught her. She had never seen such deep brown eyes before. They shimmered in the light of the picture as if they had a life all their own.

“Milady...?” The male voice broke her concentration and she turned to the doorway of the home to see Leland.

“What is it Leland?” She asked, casually shutting down the portable computer.

“Milady we have word from one of our agents in the Alliance capital.” Leland told her coming forward into the room and holding out the datapad. “A messenger delivered it to us a few moments ago. He came directly here, per your orders that the Council not be informed of your whereabouts.”

Dysea took the pad and activated it reading the report as the information came up on the small screen. Her eyebrows furrowed slightly and she looked up. “Send for the Holy One Leland.” She ordered.

The male elf nodded and stepped out of the house as Dysea continued to read. Within three minutes Walter was entering the house and she turned to face him. Walter saw the look of confusion on her face.

“What is it Dysea?” He asked.

“I just received a report from one of our agents within New Richmond.” She told him. “He is a high placed mole, and would not have risked this transmission without cause. What does it mean Holy One? EDEN discovered and active, Alliance has established contact with human named Graham. Intercepted coded transmission containing the phrase Genomes have escaped with Queen Tarifa. Will attempt to clarify and informed you of additional information.”

Walter took the pad and read the contents quickly. “This is not good.” He spoke. “EDEN was the name of the base on the moon that you saw in the cube I gave you. It appears the Alliance has discovered it exists and is active. Graham is the name of a Senator from my time that was on the station at the time of the Great Fire.”

“And Genomes have escaped with Tarifa?” Dysea said. “That is what Martin and the others were called isn’t it?”

“Yes.”

“And it appears Tarifa is with them, whatever that means.” Dysea spoke. “Escaped? Escaped to where?”

“Somehow Martin must have already contacted her, and she accompanied him back to EDEN.” Walter spoke. “It would have been Martin’s first plan, to come here and discover what they could once they returned to normal time.”

“There were reports of Tarifa’s forces clashing with Alliance units led by Marcus in the west.” Dysea told him.

“That was us. She sent me on ahead and took a small force to lead Marcus and his animals away from our location.” Walter spoke. “Somehow she must have come in contact with Martin and his team while they were on the surface.”

“It would help to know what it is they were escaping from.” Dysea spoke. “We will have to wait and see if my agent can obtain any further information.” Dysea looked as Leland led the Tomea into the house.

“Leland?”

Tomea stepped forward before Leland could speak. “Milady I have finished a preliminary investigation into the clearing we found.” She spoke.

“And what have you discovered.”

“I don’t know who or what killed our people milady, but I can tell you one thing with the utmost certainly... this act was not committed by High Elves.” Tomea told her confidently.

SALMON RIVER MOUNTAINS IDAHO 300 MILES NORTHEAST OF BOISE SIX HOURS AFTER LANDING

Martin knelt on the ground at the edge of the large clearing that held the two massive Mark Nine transports and seven of the nineteen Raptors that had escaped EDEN with them. The other twelve Raptors had landed in a similar clearing a quarter mile to their west near a fast moving stream. Tarifa stood respectfully

behind him while kneeling or sitting on the ground in front of him in a semi-circle were three dozen human men and women who had held seniority while on EDEN. Tarifa and the elves with her party had assisted in offloading enough equipment for Anja to establish a small trauma center that was now being used to give medical check-ups to the civilians. The elves had been surprised at the reaction they received from the mostly human refugees. They were accepted almost without question, and it was not a feeling the elves were used too. There were the looks of desire from many of the men and even some of the women when they gazed upon the male and female elves, but from what Tarifa and the elves could determine, these men and women, even though they knew what the elves had been designed for, respected them enough to not act on any urges they might have had. It also helped that a female elf had shown the amazing reflexes and speed of her species when a mother was carrying her children down the tall stairs of the transport. While wrestling with several items, her three year old son had slipped from her grasp over the railing, and it was only the speed of the female elf that saved the boy's life. She had leaped from the stairway and got under the small child in time to catch him.

Hundreds of men and women had witnessed this act, and it only confirmed to the elves that these men and women were different. They were treated with respect and as equals before, but they were kept at arms length because most people were not curious enough to come forward and speak with them. When the female elf had saved the child's life, the floodgates opened, and greetings and handshakes were exchanged among hundreds of them.

"...don't know how long we are going to be here." Martin was explaining to the gathered men and women. "Some of you know me, many of you do not, and for those who don't my name it is Martin Hunter and I am a Genome." He saw the looks pass between some of the civilians, but nothing that was openly hostile. "Apparently we all felt the same way," Martin continued. "Or you would have stayed on EDEN and watched Senator Graham turn it into a dictatorship. We will work on finding permanent living quarters for everyone, but right now, this is going to be the safest place for us. This earth is not the same as we once knew it, and we all need to be extra careful. I have three points where everyone can be issued a weapon for protection." Martin saw the looks on some faces and held up his hand. "I know many of you are scientists and civilian techs, but as much as I would like to be able to protect all of you all of the time, I'm not superman." Martin looked at them and flashed a smile. "Ok... maybe just a little."

Tarifa noticed that his easy going manner and the small joke had the desired effect and many of the men and women began to relax. She stood behind Martin and simply watched him. He had confidence in what he said and he always conveyed a positive attitude even though he knew they were in a perilous situation. Tarifa could not help how her eyes followed the outline of his muscular arms and back, and she remembered how they made her feel when she was wrapped in those same arms.

"Commander Peterson has set up a small trauma center near Raptor Two. That's my bird." Martin was telling them. "I suggest you all get to see her within the next day or so just to be safe. This beautiful young lady here," Martin motioned to Tarifa behind him, "is Tarifa. She is the Queen of the High Elves, and she will be leaving in a few hours to try and get us some better accommodations. It seems they weren't expecting guests."

This brought another round of soft chuckling and laughter. A hand went up in the back of the group and Martin looked at the nerdy scientist. "Yes?"

"So it is true what we heard on EDEN? There is a population of real live elves here on the surface? Just like in the books we all used to read as children." The young man asked.

Martin looked at Tarifa, who up until this point had allowed her flowing raven black hair to cover her ears. She now drew that hair back and pinned it behind her very elfin like ears, as she stepped up next to Martin. "It is true." She spoke. "We were created after the Great Fire, which is what you know as the comet passing between earth and the moon. The man who created us modeled us after the elves of his time and legend." Tarifa took a breath before looking at them. "Forgive me... I have only just discovered how we were truly created, and it does take some getting used too. Our... our purpose, as our creator meant us to be, was to assist the survivors of the Great Fire by doing things humans were not capable of. We were made with increased strength and endurance, allowing us to work harder and longer to ease the burden on humanity. Somewhere along the decades that followed, we became seen as possessions and slaves. When the existing government decided it was ok to enslave my people, we decided we would not let them. We have been fighting ever since."

"How many elves are there?" A woman asked.

“There are elves of all kinds across what remains of the planet. It just so happens the two largest factions are here in what was once the United States. I am Queen of those referred to as High Elves. The man who created us, we refer to him as the Holy One, he established our form of government to be similar to what the elves in your books and legends had. It is not exactly the same, but it is similar as I said. We make our homes and villages in the mountains and forests. It is mainly for our protection, as the ruling government does not often venture into the deep timber and mountains. It is here where we are strongest. The other faction lives mainly in the plains and uses caves as well as forests to live. They are referred to as Wood Elves. Our relationship with the Wood Elves is tenuous, as we do not see eye to eye on many things, but they fight the same battle we do. We do not want to be slaves. There are dozens of elfin breeds if you will, across the globe, and some have been brought here to this land as slaves.”

“Are all elves as gorgeous as you baby?” A man called out.

Everyone noticed Tarifa’s eyes darken just a little bit, but the smile remained on her face. Tarifa did see many of the men and women present roll their eyes and shake their heads at the comment from the man, which again showed her that these people were different. The men and women noticed that Martin had begun to rise from his kneeling position, but Tarifa’s small hand on his shoulder stopped him.

Tarifa looked at the man from where she stood. “Female elves were created to be perfect in every way.” Tarifa spoke looking at the man. “The Holy One had hoped that humans would take us as wives and we would have children. In his mind this would make our children stronger and better able to adapt to the world we now lived in.” Tarifa bent over and picked up the small stone almost casually. She moved it around in her hand as she continued, looking directly at the man who had asked the question. “What he failed to account for was the seemingly inbred arrogance of some humans. Unfortunately, those in charge saw a way to gain the upper hand over others and decided they would make us slaves instead. They now force female elves to live in squalor in brothels and whore houses that are used and regulated by the government. Even those who are not part of the Alliance government regard elves as nothing more than property.”

Tarifa’s hand flashed out with elfin speed and the stone she had been holding whizzed through the air with deadly accuracy. The man who had called her baby staggered back as the stone impacted his jaw, snapping his head around and making him see stars.

“We are not however, the property of anyone!” Tarifa snapped. “All we want is what you want, and that is a chance to live in peace and raise our children. And we do not take kindly to disparaging remarks, as I’m sure you do not as well.”

“Can you tell us numbers?” The nerdy young man asked.

Tarifa smiled and shook her head. “I’m sorry... that is not something I will reveal.”

“You have children?” Another woman asked.

“Do I have children personally?” Tarifa smiled and shook her head. “No, but that will change someday, but to answer your question, yes there are many children among my people. And I imagine among the Wood Elves as well.” Tarifa answered. “They have a Queen like the High Elves, but I have never met her.”

“How old are you?” Another question was tossed out.

Tarifa blushed at the question. “I am considered very young by elf standards.” She replied.

“You look like you are in your mid twenties.” The woman who had asked about the children spoke from the front row.

“I am one hundred and twenty-seven years old.” Tarifa told them, seeing the looks of astonishment on their faces. “The oldest among my people is nearing four hundred years old.”

Martin got to his feet. “Ok... I’m sure you all have lots of questions, but Tarifa needs to return to her people soon. You are the senior men and women in the group, and I expect you to lead by example. My team member Julie is waiting to give all of you assignments that you can distribute and handle yourselves. Do not take it upon yourselves to suddenly become gods in a new land, because that is not something I will tolerate. We need to work together in this, or none of us are going to make it. That’s it... let’s get to work.”

Martin turned to look at Tarifa as the men and women began to get to their feet and break up and he spoke softly into his implant. “Cody there is a Sweeper moving away from the gathering here; kind of nerdy looking with glasses and brown hair.”

Martin heard his ear piece cackle. “I got him boss.” Cody’s voice responded.

“Mark him and take him out earliest.” Martin spoke.

“I copy that Skipper.”

Martin looked at Tarifa, her eyes full of questions. “Is there trouble?” She asked.

“Someone who would like to cause trouble I’m sure.” Martin told her. “He won’t be around long enough to do anything however.”

Tarifa nodded her head in agreement. “Good.”

“How far do you have to go?” Martin asked.

“Our city is in the next valley over.” She answered stepping closer to him as they moved behind some stacked crates. “Technically, you are in our territory already and I’m sure our own scouts have no doubt reported back seeing the ships land. That is why I must go.”

Martin reached up and caressed her face. “When will you be back?” He asked.

Tarifa looked up at him, her hands pressed to his chest and her eyes gazing at him with undisguised desire. “I will return as soon as I am able Martin. I wish to continue what we have discovered as well.”

“So you want children huh?” He said to her with a smile.

Tarifa looked at him shyly and kissed him. “There will come a day when I will have children, yes. But do not worry... one of the advantages the Holy One gave to female elves is the ability to regulate our systems very well. I will not become pregnant.”

Martin took a small silver coin like object from his vest and gave it to her. It resembled a medallion and glittered in the sunlight. “It’s a waterproof transmitter and receiver. It has a twenty kilometer range. If you need to talk to me, press the red button. It’s already set to a channel in my implant and as long as I am in range I will pick it up.”

Tarifa smiled and closed her fingers around it tightly, reaching up on her tip toes to kiss him again. Martin lifted her into his arms easily and Tarifa wrapped her arms around his shoulders as the kiss deepened.

“Ahem!” The voice interrupted their moment.

Martin lowered her back to the ground slowly and they saw the male elf smile gently and bow his head. “Forgive me milady, but we are ready.”

Tarifa nodded and squeezed Martin’s hand. “I will see you soon. I promise.”

Martin nodded with a smile and watched as she turned to the male elf and they began sprinting into the forest with the other elves spread out around them. Martin felt a strange emptiness in his chest as he watched her disappear into the trees, but then he turned and saw the massive job ahead of him. He looked at the Master Chief who walked up next to him.

“Let’s get busy Master Chief.” Martin exclaimed.

Martin didn’t noticed Anja standing by the ramp of the Raptor and watching him. She had seen everything, and had also felt the sliver of jealousy course through her.

ROAN PLATEAU

“I have determined that all of our people, with a few exceptions were killed in this clearing Milady.” Tomea told her. “We discovered drag marks that had been covered up, but due to no rain for several days, once we removed the top layer of leaves, they were easy to discern. The exceptions were the patrol guards Milady. They were killed with 6.7mm rounds, the same as the High Elves weapons, but the bullet strikes were careless and random.”

“Random?” Walter asked.

“We have known for some time that the High Elves have been running low on ammunition for their weapons.” Tomea spoke. “The human settlements will only accept elf slaves in exchange for ammunition, and that is something Queen Tarifa will not barter. They have learned to become precise and absolutely perfect shots with their weapons. High Elves would not shoot a target fifteen times, as one of the guards was hit.”

Dysea lifted her tea as she listened in silence. “Go on Tomea.” She spoke.

“The one other thing that I found is quite possibly the most important Milady.” Tomea said. “I took shavings from the stumps that were found to dismember our people. In the shavings I found shards of metal. As you know, all High Elf bladed weapons are forged with a titanium/iron alloy. Their weapons are extremely sharp and rarely lose an edge, since they are refined with lasers, and they are almost impossible to break.”

“Their blades would not leave shavings.” Leland spoke from where he stood against the wall. “I have used High Elf blades Milady; they are perfect in every way. We have even begun to retool our own Smiths to use their process.”

Tomea nodded. “Leland is correct my Queen. The composition of the steel consisted of aluminum and nickel. This act was not committed by High Elves Milady. Someone else attacked this village and attempted to make it look like Tarifa’s forces. They did an outstanding job of it as well, which means they were well trained, but they expected rain to wash away most of the evidence before anyone discovered what they did.”

“And the Council directed that only the bodies were to be recovered.” Dysea said softly. She looked at the Holy One for a long moment. “Thank you Tomea. Continue gathering any evidence you can, and catalog all of your findings.”

Tomea bowed her head, “As you order Milady.”

Dysea watched her leave the small home and then turned to where Walter sat. “The Council knew!” She hissed.

“We don’t know that Dysea.” Walter spoke.

“There is no other explanation. Why order that only the bodies be recovered? Why not investigate the scene as we have done?” Dysea’s emotions were coming to the surface, and Walter knew that of the two Queens, Dysea was the more emotional one, at least when it came to anger. “There is something else at work here Holy One. I can feel it.”

“That is the answer we must discover.” Walter spoke.

Dysea looked at Leland. “Where was the last attack prior to this one Leland?” She asked.

“It was three weeks ago just north of Jackson Wyoming Milady.” He answered almost immediately. “It was on the very edge of High Elf territory. It was nearly identical to this attack Dysea, in every way.”

“Where is our nearest storage site with Hoppers?” She asked.

“There are three captured Hoppers at our site in Grand Junction.” Leland replied.

“Contact them. I want one of the Hoppers here in the morning to pick up half our party. Tomea will accompany us. The others will return to the Compound and say nothing to no one about where they have been.” Dysea spoke.

Leland nodded. “We will be going very close to High Elf territory Dysea. Is that wise?”

“What are you thinking Dysea?” Walter asked.

“I want to investigate one more site where our people were butchered.” She told him. “Now that Tomea knows what to look for, we can do so quickly and spend as little time as needed so close to High Elf territory.”

“Then what will you do?” Walter asked.

“I intend to find out who is behind these attacks and why they are pitting us against Tarifa’s forces Holy One. And I want to know who on the Council knows what is going on.” Dysea answered. “For when I discover them, I will personally flay them until they are on the verge of death before I give them to the elements.”

They turned as Leland motioned the young elf into the home. “It is another transmission from our spy in the capital Milady.” He spoke holding out the pad.

Dysea read the pad before handing it to Leland and looking at Walter. “Our spy has discovered that there has been some sort of coup on this EDEN base. Commander Hunter escaped with almost two thousand men and women. He is now wanted by the Alliance for the brutal murders of this Senator Graham’s son and nine other men. Apparently Tarifa was with him, and their ships were last detected entering the atmosphere before they were lost.”

“Wanted by the Alliance?” Walter asked.

Dysea nodded. “According to this, the Alliance has open negotiations with this Senator Graham and they have established a temporary treaty. Commander Hunter and the genomes are wanted alive, as well as Tarifa and a dozen elves that were with her. If they were lost entering the atmosphere...”

Walter shook his head. “They deactivated their transponders so they could not be tracked.” Walter told her. “Martin and those with him are not fools. They are all combat experienced men and women, forged in some of the most vile hell holes of the time they came from. What you and the other elves have seen pales in comparison Dysea. We should try to contact him.”

“Holy One we don’t even know where they are.” Leland spoke.

Walter nodded. "Yes I know, but we should use some assets that we do have to try and discover his location."

"I will direct two technicians to begin monitoring all unused communications traffic, but until we know what is happening here, I can spare no more." Dysea spoke.

Walter nodded. "Direct them to scan the low band frequencies Dysea." He told her. "If Martin communicates with anyone, it will be very low band and highly encrypted."

Dysea looked at Leland and nodded. He returned the nod and headed out of the home. She returned her gaze to Walter. "Can he help us Holy One?" She asked.

"We need to find him first." Walter spoke.

SALMON RIVER MOUNTAINS HIGH ELVES RULING CAPITAL MOUNTAIN CITY

Two days later

"...have to tell me sister!" The dark haired female elf spoke as she waited for Tarifa to come out of the adjoining room where she was drying off her body from the steaming spring shower. "The rumors are spreading like wildfire through the entire city. They've even reached as far as Pacifica."

Tarifa stepped out of the shower room, her sapphire eyes wide. "Pacifica!" She gasped, holding the towel around her body and gazing at her younger sister. "You jest!"

Tarifa's youngest sister Zaala shook her head, her dark eyes bright and animate. That they were related was easy to determine as Zaala had the same hair and figure of her older sister, with the same facial features and contours. "It is the truth!" Zaala exclaimed.

"What are they saying?" Tarifa asked as she began to dress.

"That you were saved twice by a man who is half Wolf, and who came from the moon. That he is nine feet tall, and that he claimed you for his own." Zaala spoke. "Even mother and father are coming from Salem to get the real story."

"No!" Tarifa spoke looking at her sister.

Zaala nodded. "It is the talk of our people. You will not be able to deny it for long. Too many of those who were with you have spoken about it."

Tarifa sat on the edge of the bed next to her sister. "What have they said Zaala?" She asked softly.

"That this man and the people with him are different." Zaala replied. "That they are even older than the Elders, and they sheltered you and the others. Rescued you and returned you to us." Zaala looked at her sister. "They say he looks at you with unabashed love and desire in his eyes, and that he killed nine men in seconds to save your life. That he wiped out a full squad of Alliance Assassins as if they were children. They... they..."

"What?" Tarifa asked.

"They also say they heard you screaming out his name in passion." Zaala told her.

Tarifa blushed quickly even under her dark tan and she looked away from her sister, her hand going to the silver medallion that Martin had given her. She had added a glittering silver chain to the medallion and had not taken it off since she had returned. Zaala saw this and smiled. "So it is true." She said. "Oh don't torture me sister. Tell me!"

Tarifa looked at her with a small smile. "They are called Genomes." She told her, taking her hands. "They were genetically engineered to be the finest soldiers in their time before the Great Fire. Martin and his team were feared by many for their skill and prowess."

"His name is Martin?" Zaala said smiling. "Tell me of him Tarifa. Did he make you scream his name in passion?"

Tarifa grinned. "You have a one track mind Zaala."

"I've never screamed any man's name in passion." Zaala told her. "Most of the elves I've bedded were terrible lovers anyway."

"Zaala you are so bad!" Tarifa exclaimed.

“Don’t change the subject sister!” She said with a smile. “Tell me! Is he very large?” She asked with wide eyes.

Tarifa smiled and shook her head. “He is not nine feet tall.” She said. “I’d say he stands about six foot two or six foot three. He is...”

“That is not what I meant Tarifa!” Zaala spoke, playfully grabbing her hand.

Tarifa looked at her with a girlish smile and she lifted her hands palms facing towards each other until they were about a foot apart. “He is this big.” Tarifa said.

Zaala’s eyes grew wide. “Tarifa now you are jesting with me!” She looked at her sister. “Aren’t you?”

Tarifa shook her head slowly and with a dreamy smile as the memories of what Martin’s cock had made her feel caused her skin to feel warm. “He is so thick Zaala. I thought I was going to split apart.”

“It did not hurt?” Zaala asked amazed.

Tarifa shook her head quickly. “He... it...”

“What sister? Tell me!” Zaala asked urgently.

“He kissed me Zaala!” Tarifa said.

“Kissed you? That is all?”

“Zaala... I... I have never kissed a man.” Tarifa told her. “It was so powerful, so passionate. He... he possessed me with his kisses.” She looked at her sister. “He also... he used his lips and tongue... on my...”

Zaala’s eyes grew even wider. “He licked you? Down there?”

“Zaala I was so wet when he finally entered me... all I felt was this blissful sensation as he filled me completely.” Tarifa told her. “It was divine.”

“He didn’t force you?”

“No!” Tarifa told her. “Zaala I wanted him from the first moment I saw him. When I look at him, it is almost as if I need him to live. When I was wrapped in his arms I never felt more loved and protected. He refused to even allow me to clean him. When he caresses my skin he ignites fires within me that I am powerless to control, fires that only he can extinguish.”

Zaala held up her hand. “Enough!” She spat with a smile. “I hate you! Does he have a brother?”

Tarifa laughed and squeezed her sister’s hands. “You are so bad!”

“You must know that mother and father will demand to meet him Tarifa.” Zaala said. “He is the first man to share your bed that they have not approved.”

“I am a hundred and twenty-seven years old.” Tarifa said. “I can decide for myself who shares my bed and who doesn’t. Martin will share my bed as often as he likes, at least until the time fate takes us in different directions.”

Zaala looked at her. “What do you mean sister?”

Tarifa looked at her. “He is different Zaala.” She replied softly. “There is a beast inside him, a beast desiring to get out. I do not think... I do not think even he knows who and what he truly is.”

“How can he not know what he is?” Zaala asked.

Tarifa looked at her sister. “I saw him change into something up there that was fearful and frightening Zaala, yet it is something he controls with his will alone. I do not know if the others with him besides the ones I saw can do this as well, but something inside me tells me I did not see everything.”

“Yet you let him have you?” Zaala spoke. “Why?”

Tarifa smiled. “Because he is very handsome... and I wanted to.” She replied. “That is usually how it is done.”

Zaala’s face turned serious. “There are some on the Council that are not happy you led them here and allowed them to remain in the next valley.”

Tarifa nodded as she took the dress and started to pull it on over her naked skin. “Those humans among his group are not like any we have ever met.” She said. “They accepted us without question and helped us to escape imprisonment and worse. They come from an age where slavery was not allowed, and it disgusts them that humans have resorted to it once more. Elves existed only in their legends and myths, so it is understandable that they view us with curiosity, but many of them have known Martin for years and they seem to expect the unexpected.”

“What will you tell the Council?”

“That Martin and those with him could be powerful allies in our war with the Alliance.” Tarifa said. “And we should make every effort to see that we extend to them the hand of friendship.”

“Do you think they will listen to you?” Zaala asked.
Tarifa looked at her. “We shall see.”

The chamber was well lit with nearly three dozen glowing orbs all around the large room. Twelve high backed chairs occupied one side of the massive polished granite table, with water pitchers and data pads neatly stacked beside the five male and four female elves that occupied the chairs. They were the oldest and wisest of the High Elves, and as such had seats on the Council of the Elders.

The Council of Elders was a body of government for the elves that made the laws and sat in judgment of those who broke the laws. All of them wore elaborate robes, the female members wearing provocative dresses that left little to the imagination. Many of them were over three hundred years old, yet none of them looked older than fifty. They were elected to the Council of Elders for life appointments and aside from the Holy One himself and Tarifa, they were considered central to the High Elves way of life. They were also very controversial, as many of the younger elves that were Tarifa’s age and younger had begun to rebel against many of the laws that had been in place for centuries.

This was Tarifa’s realm. She was an accomplished warrior without a doubt, but her skill in politics far surpassed her fighting skills. She had been elected Queen with the highest popular vote of any Queen in history, giving her unprecedented influence and power. She had instituted many changes that had been looked on warily over the years, but had made the High Elves even stronger in the long run. Most knew her as someone of unquestionable honesty and integrity, but she was also considered to be someone you did not wish to cross. In her reign as Queen, the High Elves had increased their number by three fold, building eight new cities and opening diplomatic talks with many of the free human cities. While they traded supplies and equipment, Tarifa never once would consider trading her people’s freedom for more advanced weapons to fight the Alliance. The autonomous human cities were too powerful for the Alliance to defeat with direct military confrontation without taking massive losses in men and equipment, so they allowed them to go about business as long as it didn’t interfere with any Alliance controlled territory east of the Big River.

The Elves however were a different story, and the Alliance routinely conducted military operations against High Elf strongholds. Tarifa knew that her feelings for Martin aside, an alliance with those that followed him would only make the High Elves more self sufficient and provide them the tools to better defend their homes and strongholds. She only hoped that the Council felt the same.

Tarifa watched the senior Council member and Chief Minister set the data pad on the table and turn to look at her.

“We have reviewed the reports you have kindly given to us Majesty.” The Chief Minister spoke. “We do have some questions, but first allow me to say we are all extremely pleased that you have returned to us safely and unharmed.”

Tarifa nodded at the man. “Thank you Chief Minister.” She answered. “It is good to be home.”

“I must say, we were all a bit distressed that you took it upon yourself to lead Marcus’s forces away from the Holy One. You could have allowed a Lieutenant to do this you know.” The Minister spoke.

“I could have.” Tarifa nodded. “However Marcus would not have followed unless he knew he had an opportunity to capture me. The Holy One’s safety mattered more than my own.”

The Minister nodded. “Of course you are right.” He said.

“And you encountered this...” He made it a point to look at the pad before continuing. “You encountered this Commander Hunter at the sacred ruins?”

“As my report indicates Minister, there was a traitor among my party. He was able to signal Marcus’s forces and they sent an Alliance Assassin unit who subsequently attacked our position within the ruins yes.”

“And that is when this Hunter person appeared and dispatched the Assassins. Rather easily as your report indicates.”

Tarifa nodded. “There were others with him, but yes.” She told them.

“And it was shortly after this that you discovered Commander Hunter and the others came from a base on the moon that was thought destroyed during the Great Fire?” The Minister spoke.

“I do not understand the physics of the incident, but apparently when the comet passed between the earth and our moon; it caused the moon to essentially stop spinning as it orbited the earth, while our planet went faster. This in some way caused time to move much slower on the moon than it was here on earth.” Tarifa told them, trying to explain it to them as Admiral Wallace told her. “The moon’s rotation did not come back into sync with the earth until recently, and that is when Martin and the others came to earth.”

Tarifa noticed that several of the Elders gave her odd looks when she spoke Martin’s name with such familiarity, but she had already decided she would not hide her relationship with him in any way.

“And this is also when you took it upon yourself to return with him to this base on the moon.” The Chief Minister spoke.

Tarifa nodded. “Yes.”

“You do realize your Majesty that any new political contacts must be approved by this Council.” The Minister spoke.

“I was not in a position to inform the Council of my actions. You received the messenger we sent back before leaving informing you of my decision to go.” Tarifa said. “I determined that Martin and his superiors could very well turn out to be allies against the Alliance.”

“A prospect that did not go as you had planned.” The Minister spoke almost arrogantly. “This alone should tell you that the Council of Elders should have made the decision and not you.”

“Chief Minister I am Queen.” Tarifa spoke, her words firm. “The last time I read our constitution; military decisions are the arena of the Queen and not the Council of Elders. At the moment I made the decision, I was in a military situation and not a political one. I was well within my rights to do as I did.”

“And yet that decision almost cost you your life as well as the lives of the others within your party.” The Chief Minister replied, his words just as firm. “And it resulted in you being sexually assaulted by half a dozen humans at least. This is all in your report to us your Majesty.”

“I am well aware of my report to you and this Council Chief Minister Raloo!” Tarifa snapped. “I wrote it! If you have some issue with me Chief Minister, may I suggest we get it out in the open now so that it does not fester?”

The attractive female elf leaned forward. “Please your Majesty, the Chief Minister is only attempting to express the worry and concern that we all had for your safety.”

Tarifa looked at the woman. The Council of Elder’s Minister of Justice was known to be a supporter of Tarifa’s and a friend to her father. She was also fair and impartial to everyone, regardless of his or her status. She was a tough woman who had fought for decades before being elected to the Council. She had sided with Tarifa on many issues, and also sided against her on some others, and it was one of the reasons that Tarifa respected her so much.

“Minister Thalami speaks with great wisdom your Majesty.” Another of the Elders spoke. He was the youngest of the Council at three hundred and fourteen years old, but he was also an avid supporter of Tarifa and all her policies. “All of us were greatly concerned for your safety. Minister Raloo only wishes to see you safe.”

Tarifa took a deep breath and nodded her head. “I understand that.” She said.

“Then you must understand our concern for what you were thinking when you allowed this Commander Hunter and those with him, including over a thousand humans, to set up camp so close to our capital?” The man continued. “This action, after the events on the moon dictates that we question what you were thinking.”

Tarifa looked at him closely and saw in his eyes only the honest concern she had always known him for ever since joining the Council. “I do understand your concern and questions Minister Treblar.” She spoke. “I supplied you with the information given to me by the human Admiral Wallace, as well as a copy of the message the Holy One left for Martin.”

“Yes we have reviewed it extensively.” Treblar spoke. “All of us are concerned as to why the Holy One himself did not tell us this. Why would he not inform us of beings he created before the Great Fire? Especially beings that have the obvious skills and abilities you have described to us. They are able to alter their very bodies to take on the forms of animals that are still considered to this day to be extremely dangerous. Their strength and speed far surpasses that of any elf, and we are generally considered to be superior to humans in every way. They are soldiers with a skill that surpass even those of your father’s own Elite Dragoons.”

“I do not presume to know why the Holy One does what he does.” Tarifa said calmly and with no hostility. “And neither should anyone on this Council. It was the Holy One who created us, and it was the Holy

One who started this war on our behalf against the Alliance. I can only guess that perhaps he thought them to be dead and there was no reason for us to know about them.”

“They are not dead however.” Ralao spoke looking at Tarifa. “And now we have made a new enemy, and potentially a more deadly enemy than even the Alliance.”

“Commander Hunter is not our enemy!” Tarifa spoke. “He saved the lives of not only me, but all my soldiers with me. And he did so without question or regard for what would happen to him.”

“He could also prove to be a new ally perhaps?” Thalami spoke from her chair. “Dismiss this we can’t.”

“We have only the Queen’s word to prove that.” Ralao spoke. “And if what the Holy One says in his message is true, then the Queen could very well be bias. It is written in her own words that she felt pulled by this Hunter. Draw to him.”

Tarifa’s eyes flared briefly and she opened her mouth to speak but never got the chance.

“Does this Council now challenge my daughter’s integrity?” The male voice bellowed from the back of the room.

Tarifa’s mouth snapped shut and she watched the shadowy figure come into the light and all the heads at the table turned. Tarifa hid the small smile that split her lips when she saw the male elf step into the light, the very attractive and much shorter female elf beside him.

“War Master Tareif!” Thalami exclaimed as she came to her feet. “Mistress Palina! We were not aware you had come to the capital.”

The male elf stepped even further into the light, his uniform bearing gold shoulder boards, and glittering silver clusters on them. His cloak was dusty from traveling, his dark hair hung almost to his shoulders, and braided tightly in three rows on either side of his face. His face was deeply tanned from years of exposure to the sun and elements, but his sapphire eyes were blazing points of light. He was tall for an elf, at five foot ten, and the resemblance and height Tarifa inherited from him was uncanny.

The female elf stood proudly beside her husband, and one had only to look at her mother to see where Tarifa got her exceptional looks. She had the same enticing figure as her daughter, and it was not hard to see why she had given birth to nine children during her two hundred year marriage to the man she still looked at with love every day.

“I do not need to announce where I go to anyone!” Tareif’s deep voice spoke. “When we learned our daughter had returned safely to the capital, I gathered my finest Dragoons and came to see her. What I find is the Council of Elders questioning my daughter’s integrity. When did it become commonplace for the Queen of our people to be questioned in such a way?”

“War Master... it is not as it seems.” Thalami spoke.

“Isn’t it? Perhaps you should explain it to me then.”

Tareif was a legend among the High Elves and a man not to be trifled with. He had trained over half the High Elves army personally, and many of the senior officers had served under him at one point or another. He had won countless battles against the Alliance, even when he was heavily outnumbered. It was well known that he had taken it upon himself to school his daughter in the arts of war, and it was one of the reasons she had been elected Queen with such a margin of victory. There were only four officers with more knowledge and experience in war than Tarifa, and all of them served her father.

“We were only expressing to the Queen our concern for her safety and her actions in the last few days.” Thalami spoke.

“If even half the rumors that are spreading among our people are true, then the allies we have waited so long for have finally appeared.” Palina spoke softly next to her husband. “Are we in such a position of power that we can simply dismiss them?”

“We do not dismiss them.” Ralao spoke now getting to his feet. “We question the way they have been obtained. We know nothing of these... Genomes they are called or the humans with them. The Queen has admitted in her own words that she allowed one of these Genomes to bed her!”

Tareif moved with a speed that belied his age, and in a blink he was standing in the Chief Minister’s face, a scowl etched into his features. “Tread carefully with your words Chief Minister, for it is my daughter and your Queen about which you speak!” Tareif growled. “It is my understanding of our law that she must submit to any man who saves her life. A law that you started centuries ago I might add, and a law most of our younger people and many of our older citizens see as no better than how the Alliance conduct themselves. It is

also obvious to me that you failed to read her entire report. When this Hunter person saved my daughter the first time, he had an opportunity to take my daughter by force and he did not.”

“He did not know of our laws at the time!” Ralao spoke.

“That is of no matter to me, and if what my daughter has said is true, and I do not doubt my daughter, this man would have refused even had he known.” Tareif spoke. “That he did not act like the animal you seem to think he is speaks volumes of his honor. That he could have escaped this EDEN station and left my daughter at the mercy of those pigs and he did not says even more. And the fact that he killed every single scum who violated my daughter and our Queen is all the information I need to make a decision.”

“She led him here to Mountain City!” Ralao nearly yelled, “To our very capital! They have set up a compound in the next valley! The Alliance has declared them enemies and his presence here threatens us! We do not even know what he and his people are doing right now because she left him alone.”

Tareif shook his head. “Your lack of military knowledge and Intelligence gathering never ceases to amaze me Ralao, even after all these years. Tarifa contacted me within four hours of landing in the valley, with this Commander Hunter’s permission. Regardless of what she may feel for this man, using coded words that only she and I know, she ordered me to dispatch our best scouts to maintain a constant vigil on the newcomers. I did so immediately, and they have been watching this Hunter and the humans for two days now. And that does not include the three elves from her own command that she left with them. Do you think my daughter is a fool?” Ralao looked stupefied, and he was unable to speak. “The Holy One’s reasons are not for us to question and Tarifa knows this. It is she that the Holy One confides in and she alone. If there was something we should have known, he has always told us. Nothing he has done has ever put our people at risk. To question him now is heresy.”

“And yet he is now with the Wood Elves.” Ralao spoke, though his words were much more subdued.

“This is the order of things and has been for centuries. The Holy One travels and spends equal time with all his creations.” Tareif said softly. “That Tarifa arranged for him to be spirited to safety with the Wood Elves means nothing. Or would you rather he now be in the hands of the Alliance?”

Treblar stepped forward next to Tareif. “War Master Tareif I believe the experience of almost losing our Queen has shaken us somewhat. Please... perhaps we should recess for now until tempers cool.”

“Father, Minister Treblar is correct.” Tarifa spoke, stepping forward and taking her father’s arm. “We can adjourn until later today, and at that time I will suggest to the Council that they appoint two members to accompany me back to Martin’s camp and they can determine for themselves if he is a friend or foe.”

Tareif looked at his daughter and nodded, “A fine idea.” He said.

Treblar nodded his head, a new respect for Tarifa in his eyes, “A fine idea indeed.” He spoke. “Your majesty... you have not seen your parents for some time, may I suggest you visit with them, and the Council will select two members to accompany you when you return. We will do nothing without your consent except decide who will travel with you.”

Tarifa nodded and slid her arm around her father’s waist. “Thank you Minister Treblar, I believe I will take you up on that offer.” She looked at her father, “Papa?”

Tareif looked at her and smiled. “Lead away! I’m starving! Politics make me hungry!”

Ralao didn’t see the smiles from several of the Council Elders at Tareif’s words, but neither did they notice that his eyes burned with hate as Tarifa led her parents out of the meeting chamber.

“Ugh! Papa you’re crushing me!” Tarifa croaked with a smile as her father gripped her in a bear hug embrace, lifting her from her feet.

Palina watched smiling, her arm around the waist of their youngest daughter. Tareif set his oldest daughter down and held her at arms length, as if searching for injuries of any kind.

“Papa I am fine.” Tarifa spoke squeezing his arms, “Really.”

Tareif looked at her now. “That was the craziest stunt you have ever pulled!” He scolded her now that they were alone and in private. “Have you completely lost your marbles?”

Palina cluck clucked and pushed her husband away hugging Tarifa just as tightly. “Quiet Tareif, you’ll make a scene.” She said, kissing her daughter’s cheeks and looking at her with her dark eyes. “You are truly fine?” She asked.

Tarifa smiled and nodded. "Yes mama, truly."

Tareif looked around Tarifa's small living quarters. "Bah! Where is the wine? Don't they have wine in the capital?"

Tarifa smiled and squeezed her father's arm. "I keep it in the next room Papa!" She said. She smiled and watched her father stalk off in search of a glass of wine. She turned back to see her mother staring at her. "What?"

"You are not injured Tarifa? He did not hurt you?" Palina asked again.

"She's in heat mama." Zaala spoke with a sly grin. "But definitely not hurt."

"Zaala!" Tarifa exclaimed looking at her sister but blushing red.

"So the rumors that we have heard are true?" Palina asked her. "Tarifa... did this man... force you to..."

"No!" Tarifa spouted. "By all that is holy... I gave myself to him! I practically had to assault him to make him come out of his shell!"

"Tarifa... you hardly know this man." Palina said.

"No... that is not true." Tarifa said speaking softly. "I feel like... I feel like I've known him all of my life. It's as if he and I have always been together in some way. It is... it is something the Holy One did to all of us."

"But to let him bed you...?" Palina spoke.

Tarifa smiled as she looked at her mother. "It was exquisite mama." She said.

Palina grinned. "You will have to tell me when your father is not around." She said softly. "The Holy One... what..."

"The Holy One," Tareif asked coming back into the room a large goblet in his hand. "What do you mean, what about the Holy One?"

Tarifa looked at her father. "I will explain everything." She said. "But first papa, I never contacted you to send scouts to spy on Martin."

Tareif looked at her sheepishly. "No. I sent them immediately after discovering you had returned to the capital."

"Papa!" Tarifa spoke firmly. "You had no right!"

"I am your War Master Tarifa! I had every right." He replied.

Tarifa sighed heavily. "You... you are right. I am sorry. I could have handled Raloa though." She said.

Tareif nodded. "Of that I have little doubt!" He told her with a smile. "But ever since I stole your mother from him all those years ago I have always relished the opportunity to spar with him whenever I can. He is so predictable."

Tarifa chuckled and hugged her father again. "You are a bad man papa." She said shaking her head.

"Yes... so your mother continues to tell me even after two hundred years of marriage!" Tareif said wagging his eyebrows.

"Papa," Tarifa nearly yelled.

"Tareif...!" Palina exclaimed, stepping forward to slug her husband in his shoulder. "Our children do not wish to hear of our escapades! You hush now!" Palina took her daughter's hands and directed her to the couch. "Tell us Tarifa. Tell us everything."

"There was really no need to dispatch scouts papa." Tarifa told him as she settled onto the couch next to her mother. "I left Endith and two others with Martin's group and I have talked to them each evening."

Tareif grinned. "That's my girl." He said pulling up the chair.

"I am less concerned about the political as I am about this fellow Martin." Palina spoke. "I want to hear about him."

Zaala laughed from where she sat. "And what a story it is!" She said.

EDEN REFUGEE COMPOUND

Anja looked up when Martin entered the make shift clinic they had set up in the belly of one of the Mark Nine's. Anja had spent the better part of the last two days treating minor injuries and making sure that the men, women and children were inoculated against every known disease. She had no idea what sort of diseases

roamed the world now, but it made her feel a little better knowing that the people with them were protected against what they knew about. The small clinic was empty now, as Anja was simply compiling the information onto several data pads for filing and storage. She watched Martin come in and pull up the chair next to her where he promptly sat down and just stared at her.

Anja tried to ignore him, and she succeeded for a few moments before tossing down the pad and looking at him. "What?"

"How are you doing?" He asked her.

"I'm fine." She snapped. "I've done over seven hundred physicals in the last three days and my eye balls are about to start shriveling up, but other than that I'm just ducky."

"Doesn't sound like it." Martin said.

"Martin what do you want?" Anja asked.

"It's eating away at you Anja." He said softly. "I can see it written all over your face."

"They... they should have told me!" She finally retorted.

"And how exactly do you tell someone you are sharing a bed with that you can change into a humanoid version of the animal whose DNA was grafted to yours?" Martin asked her.

"What... what they did..." Anja began.

"What they did is what they have always done and that is back me up." Martin told her. "If you want to blame someone blame me. I'm the one who lost it and initiated my change first. Listen... it is part of who and what we are Anja. We don't change often, but yes when we do it is not a pretty sight what we are capable of doing. Our ability to change has saved our lives on countless missions, and is the reason we are still here now." He explained to her. "I am not ashamed of what I am, and neither is Danny and Julie or any others of my team. They are not any different than they were three days ago Anja?"

"That is why your team wasn't affected by the Purge." Anja said looking at him. "The other teams couldn't change like you."

Martin chuckled softly. "You don't know the half of it." He said.

"Then tell me." Anja told him.

Martin looked at her. "Initially it was just me, Danny and Julie. And yes... we made it so the others would not be affected by the disease that ravaged the Genomes."

"How...?" Anja asked quickly.

"That doesn't matter now." Martin said. "What matters is the here and now. And you are avoiding them like they have the plague. They are the same people Anja. They haven't changed have they?"

Anja looked at him and slowly shook her head. "No."

"You have changed though." Martin said. "You aren't the Anja Peterson who came to EDEN."

"Did they send you here?" She asked quickly.

Martin shook his head. "I sent them out on patrol so we could have this little talk." He told her. "You've become a fine officer and a good friend. I don't like seeing my friends in pain. We live in a different world now Anja, one that we are new to. A world where we are going to see a lot of strange things if what we've seen so far is any indication. It's time to let go of what you know and embrace what you don't know."

"When did you suddenly become a shrink?" Anja asked.

Martin shrugged. "I had a talk with Tina. She told me what to say." He said with a smile.

Anja burst out laughing at the expression on his face and felt all the unease of the last three days simply evaporated into nothing. After a long moment, her face became a little more serious and she looked at Martin. Familiar feelings rushed through her being so close to him, and they were not at all unpleasant. In fact they were down right wonderful. "What... what do you want Martin?" She asked.

Martin looked at her. "Me? We are talking about you."

Anja shook her head quickly. "Um... I mean what do you think I should do?" She said.

Martin met her jade green eyes and fought down the urge to crush her to him and take what he so desired was his. "I... I think you should do what you want." He spoke finally.

"And... and you don't have a problem with me sleeping with them?" Anja asked him, mentally kicking herself for asking that stupid question.

"That... that is none of my business Anja." He replied not able to meet her gaze. "They are good people... and if you are comfortable... if they..."

“Thank you Martin.” Anja said smiling, reaching out to touch his cheek and feeling the stubble beginning on his skin. Anja suppressed the shiver that rocketed through her just by touching his skin. “I... I saw you with... Tarifa. She’s... she’s very beautiful.”

Martin nodded. “So are you Anja.” He told her.

Anja’s eyes grew a little wider at his comment and then he got to his feet quickly. “I need to check the work logs.” He spoke. “Just remember what I told you ok. We might just be out of the war business.”

Anja laughed softly and shook her head. “Don’t quit your day job. I wouldn’t count on that.” She told him.

Julie lowered her combat vest to the ground outside the tent she and Danny shared, but her eyes were fixed on the duffel bag and vest leaning against the pole of the tent. She reached over to it and turned it over to see Anja’s name stenciled into the fabric.

“Danny?” She called softly.

Dan turned to look at her as he lowered his gear to the ground and saw her holding up Anja’s vest. They both looked at the entrance to the tent and moved closer to the opening. Danny pulled back the flap and what they saw made both their hearts sing. Anja was lying across their sleeping bags, wearing only a t-shirt and her panties. She was clutching the large blanket they used tightly to her chest, her face peaceful as she slept soundly for the first time in three days.

“It took her some time to accept it.” Martin’s voice spoke from behind them.

They turned and saw Martin squatting on the ground a short distance away. “Marty?” Julie asked.

“What we are capable of doing frightened her a little. It wasn’t something she expected to see. She’s good people guys.” Martin said. “Make sure you don’t hurt her.”

They watched Martin stand back up and then walk off into the night around them. Julie looked at his back until she could no longer see him even with her wolf vision. *He still loves her*, Julie thought to herself. She turned at the movement and followed Danny into their tent and quickly removed their fatigues. Danny stretched his body out on one side of Anja as Julie lay behind her. Anja stirred and her eyes fluttered open.

“Danny?” She said softly, looking into his face.

“I’m here Red.” He spoke settling next to her.

“Julie?” Anja turned her head looking for Julie.

Julie spooned against Anja from behind and lowered her face over Anja’s shoulder. “I’m here lover.” She whispered into her ear.

Anja’s eyes blinked rapidly. “I’m... I’m so sorry. I...”

Danny put a finger to her lips silencing her words. She looked at him, her green eyes blurry with forming tears but so very bright. “We should have told you.” He said softly.

Julie draped her long legs over Anja and kissed her neck gently as Danny enveloped them both in his arms. “Tonight we sleep.” Julie spoke. “Tomorrow we can talk. Right now we just want to enjoy smelling you back with us.”

Anja’s face beamed as she smiled. She nuzzled her head against Danny’s chest and closed her eyes again. Danny looked at Julie and saw the single tear rolling down her cheek as she smiled in happiness. Danny smiled as well and the three of them fell into a contented sleep.

WOOD ELVES CAPITAL

The Alliance captain leaned casually against the cool wall of the cave while smoking the foul smelling cigarette. His eyes kept going to the bevy of female Wood Elves who were sitting at several tables outside the small café shop that had been built directly into the side of the mountain. This level was closest to the surface, and he could feel the wind moving through the tunnels and hitting his face. He hated staying underground with these savages, yet his orders were clear, and the blond haired Wood Elf Queen would be his reward. The captain

didn't turn his head as he heard the figure move up on the other side of the wall. That side was shrouded in shadows, and it was impossible to tell who was standing there.

"Have you discovered her location yet?" Roger Thorn asked.

"One of the soldiers she sent back had an unfortunate accident when he returned and broke his neck." The voice said. "We attempted to treat him, but there was nothing we could do."

"And this is of importance to me why?"

"He was sworn to secrecy, but with the right drugs he told us everything." The voice spoke. "The rider returned from the Roan Plateau, the sight of the last attack by your special unit. He said she departed two mornings ago for the village on the border of High Elf territory that your unit attacked last month."

"For what purpose...?" Thorn asked. "The sites were purged and the only clues left were the ones we left implicating the High Elves in the attacks."

"Dysea found something." The voice continued. "Something she was not happy about, and that is why she has gone to the village in Wyoming."

"She will find nothing." Thorn said again.

"The soldier indicated it was some information that exonerated the High Elves. He was not privy to the information, but it was enough for her to go to Wyoming." The voice said. "You give Dysea too little credit my friend. She is as cunning as she is beautiful. The Holy One told her something, and she is acting on it."

"So... the good Doctor Carson is traveling with her?"

"He is... and our mutual employer has suggested an accident now would be perfect so that we may elect a Queen more amiable to the Alliance. And it will also eliminate a certain doctor that has been a thorn in both our sides for quite a number of years." The voice said.

"Does our employer have any suggestions as to how he wishes it to appear?" Thorn asked.

"Only that she was killed by the High Elves. You may fuck her as often as you like, but she must not be found under any circumstances."

The Alliance officer nodded again. "I think I can arrange that." He said with a wicked grin, "How soon?"

"Our employer would like to see it done within the next week if possible." The voice told him softly. "I can provide data if she moves again. She is using one of our Hopper craft now for transport."

"Excellent. Consider it done." The Captain said.

"Very good, text me with any information you may need. The usual frequency will suffice."

The Captain smiled and didn't bother checking to see whom the voice belonged to. He was too good an agent for childish stunts like that. He had a mission now, and a mission he was going to enjoy.

WYOMING

THIRTY-NINE MILES NORTH OF JACKSON

SOUTHERN TIP OF JACKSON LAKE

Dysea stared across the calm surface of the lake as the sun began to set in the horizon. It cast a red glow across the sky, which reflected brilliantly over the water. They had been here in this place for the past day, Tomea collecting evidence while her remaining five soldiers and Leland apprehensively stood guard. None of them had ever been this close to High Elf territory before, and it was trying their nerves. It had taken Tomea only six hours on the site of the village to know that the High Elves had not committed this attack either, and now all she was looking for was some sign of who would do such a thing and try to blame elves. Dysea already had a good idea in her mind, and it did not please her in the least.

Dysea felt the Holy One approaching her from behind and she turned to watch him come up next to her.

"It's beautiful." She said softly.

Walter nodded. "Yes it is." He agreed.

"This is what my people are missing." She said to him. "They are missing the beauty of such simple things as sunsets and the fresh air blowing against our skin."

"You could always change that Dysea." Walter told her. "There is no need for the Wood Elves to remain underground and hidden in the forests. Half of your villages are built above ground, and all you need do

is move them all out of the caves. I never intended you to be different from Tarifa and the High Elves. And now I can't even remember how it all came to be."

"Leland told you?" She asked.

Walter nodded. "He did." He replied. "What is going through that head of yours Dysea?"

"Why would the Alliance conduct attacks in such a manner? Why go through all the effort to destroy our villages and make it appear as if the other did it?" Dysea asked.

"I think you know the answer to that." Walter spoke.

"They're using us aren't they?" She said looking out over the water. "They are using us to destroy the High Elves by offering us a false treaty."

"They know that only the Wood Elves can go into the deep timber, to the heart of the High Elf domain and be victorious." Walter spoke. "And they will not simply bombard the cities because of the high concentration of natural resources Tarifa had the cities built on. They know the Wood Elves are more militaristic and their training superior to the High Elves. If they supply you with the weapons needed, there is a strong possibility you would defeat them."

"And then they would turn on us despite this foolish treaty the Council of Elders wishes me to sign." Dysea spat.

Walter nodded. "That is my guess." He answered. "The Wood Elves are smaller in number than the High Elves, and even though you would no doubt gain victories against them, in the end they would overwhelm you."

"And we would all be slaves again." Dysea said with a snarl. "And the cycle would be repeated once more."

Walter nodded solemnly. "Yes."

"Some of the Elders must be entwined in this plot." Dysea spoke heatedly. "There is no way the Alliance could do this without some support from the Elders."

"I'm afraid the possibility of that is also very real." Walter told her. "And if the Alliance has penetrated the Wood Elves Council of Elders, it is safe to assume they have done the same with the High Elves."

"Would Tarifa see this?" Dysea asked looking at him.

Walter nodded. "I believe so yes. Both of you have unique skills Dysea. Tarifa's skills reside mainly within the political realm, while yours are more military related. She is an excellent warrior, and you an excellent politician don't doubt that, but each of you has your strengths. I would imagine she has her suspicions."

Dysea turned back to the lake surface. "The Hopper's sensors can detect infra-red signatures twenty kilometers away. We will remain here until Tomea is able to determine with no doubt who conducted these attacks." She looked at him. "When I return to the capital, I want to have proof, and then I will find the traitor on our Council. And they will pay."

REFUGEE VALLEY SALMON RIVER MOUNTAINS

Tareif and Palina watched with wide eyes from the backs of their horses as their daughter led them into the refugee camp. It had taken them only three hours to traverse the distance to where Martin had established the compound, and even Tarifa was amazed what he had accomplished in that time period. They could see the neat rows of large tents that had been staked into the ground, with quiet running generators powering the lights and computers that men and women had set up. Tarifa had forgotten that most of the men and women who had escaped with Martin were the best minds of EDEN's crew, and they had used their minds and their hands to put together this temporary base. The Mark Nine transports were the center of the compound, as that is where Anja had set up the lone medical clinic. Spaced at even intervals all around the huge diameter of the perimeter were the Raptor transports and at least one heavy weapon. They covered the two layers of triple strand razor wire that surrounded the compound. At one end of the compound they could see sixty or seventy men and women training under the watchful gaze of three of Martin's team.

They had not been challenged when they got close to the compound, and the six of them and twenty Dragoon soldiers had been able to ride directly into the camp through the wide opening in the wire fences. There was a large stump by the entrance and the three genomes guarding the entrance nodded to Tarifa as they rode by, but ignored the others. They passed dozens of humans as they made their way toward the two Mark Nine's, and received smiles and waves.

Tareif nudged his horse closer to his daughter's and leaned over. "I had imagined a huge sprawling mess with no organization." He spoke quietly. "And they... they are not gazing upon us as if we are freaks."

"I told you Papa, these men and women are different." Tarifa said with a smile.

Tareif dropped back to ride next to his wife who looked at him, her eyes wide. "I've never seen anything like it." Palina spoke.

"They have no security! No guards!" Tareif spoke. "This Martin Hunter character does not appear to be the military mind that our daughter led us to believe."

"Behave Tareif." Palina spoke turning her head as the horses came to halts because Tarifa had reined her mount in.

They followed their daughter's action and dismounted from their horses as the red haired young woman in black fatigues came walking up to her. An automatic pistol was strapped to her thigh, and the large assault rifle was slung across her back.

Anja forced a smile at Tarifa as she saw her eyes searching the area for Martin. "He's on the other side of the transport." She spoke keeping her voice even. "They are rigging a long range transmitter."

Tarifa smiled and took her hand without thinking or noticing the look Anja gave her, motioning to the half dozen horses loaded with equipment. "I was able to bring most of the items you requested, but many of the medicines we do not have access too. Our chief physician suggested herbal remedies and gave me a list of what you can use and how to mix them. He said they are not as powerful, but they do the same thing."

Anja nodded. "Thank you Tarifa. It will fill out our stocks."

Tarifa took her mother's hand. "Anja this is my father Tareif and my mother Palina. I have brought two members of our Council of Elders, and that smirking dark haired girl is my youngest sister."

Anja nodded. "I am Commander Anja Peterson." She spoke looking at them. "Welcome to... well welcome to your valley."

Palina smiled and took an immediate liking to Anja. "You... you are human?" She asked softly, seeing the aura Anja projected but detecting something faint and almost unnoticeable.

Anja nodded. "Yes."

Treblar stepped forward. "You have built all this in only three days?" He asked.

"Many of the men and women who left EDEN with us were tops in their fields, Scientists and researchers and inventors. They know how to get things done." Anja answered. "And Martin likes to be prepared for everything. Come with me and I'll take you over."

They fell in behind Anja and began to traverse the distance to the transports, which towered above them. None of them had ever seen such a massive flying craft, the front of the transport was flipped up revealing the cavernous interior of the ship, easily two hundred meters long, and the rear of the craft was also opened to the sunlit sky.

As they came around the front of the transport all of them stopped at what they saw, their eyes going wide.

"We should stop here until they get it anchored." Anja told them. "It has already fallen twice."

There were six Genomes holding thick ropes tied to the hundred foot high steel pole as they lifted it into the air. All of them were shirtless, their skin glistening in sweat, and their muscles rippling in effort. In the middle of the six was Martin, easily discernable by the black flame tattoos that decorated his chest and back. They could see the ropes stretching out from the top of the transport and Tareif looked surprised to see the shirtless male elf, one of the soldiers his daughter had left, holding one of the ropes, while two male humans were anchoring him on top of the transport. Standing near the bottom of the pole was the short female elf, another of the soldiers Tarifa had left no doubt, and she was holding the long black cable and waiting to pounce.

Palina stepped closer to her daughter, who was gazing at Martin's sweaty body with desire. "Which one is he Tarifa?" Her mother asked, "This Martin Hunter?"

"He is in the middle." Tarifa replied. "He has the tattoos on his chest and back."

Palina followed her daughter's motion with her eyes and her breath caught in her chest when she saw him. He was huge, easily over six feet tall, and the muscles in his arms and shoulders were bulging in effort, the rope looped around his arm several times. His abdomen could be described only as perfection, the "six pack" clearly defined and ripped in a way Palina had never seen before. Zaala had come up next to her sister and mother, her eyes also focused on Martin.

"By the gods Tarifa, he's... he's... huge!" Zaala spoke with a large smile. "And so very dreamy."

Palina looked at her daughter, her dark eyes scolding her. Zaala became quiet but continued to watch while Anja stood to the side and could only smile.

"Go!" Martin's voice barked out, drawing their attention back to what was going on, "Now!"

He had been yelling to the female elf with the black cable in her hand, and she sprang into action milliseconds after Martin had yelled for her. She gripped the bottom of the pole and began to scamper up the smooth surface with no effort in the least. It took her only a few seconds to reach the top of the pole, and she secured the black cable to the top before turning and using her elfin strength she heaved it to where the human female and Endith stood on top of the transport. They caught it easily, and the female elf slid down the pole quickly.

"Anchor it!" Danny bellowed from where he stood next to Martin, his own arms and shoulders rippling in effort.

A dozen human men and women rushed forward with long stakes and heavy hammers to anchor the ropes that the Genomes were holding. In less than three minutes, the steel pole was solidly anchored into the ground, and the gathered elves, humans and Genomes shared a shout of victory as Anja motioned Tarifa and the others forward.

Martin turned quickly when he detected Tarifa's peach scent and his dark eyes lit up. He gazed at her for a long moment, taking in the way the light blue shirt she wore tied just underneath her beautiful breasts, leaving her abdomen bare, and the way the black pants clung to her hips and long legs like a second skin. Martin also saw the others with her, and quickly deduced by their similar scent that they were related to Tarifa in some manner, as was the tall male elf with full body armor on. Martin also realized that this was not a social call, and he straightened his pants as best he could, brushing off the dirt and leaves and looked around for where he had tossed his t-shirt.

This did not go unnoticed by Tarifa or her mother, and Palina hid the smile she wanted to express. This young man was not just muscles and good looks, she concluded. He somehow knew that this was an official meeting and was now trying to at least make his appearance presentable. She watched as he failed to find his shirt, took a breath and simply stepped up to them his broad chest glistening in sweat.

"Good day Commander." Tarifa spoke, forcing herself to use her most professional voice. Her mother was the only one who noticed this and she saw Tarifa clenching her hands behind her back in an obvious attempt to not throw herself into this young man's arms. Palina was very surprised at this, as she had never seen any man affect her daughter as apparently this Commander Hunter did.

Martin bowed his head slightly to Tarifa. "It is good to see you again your majesty." Martin spoke, controlling his own voice Palina saw.

"Allow me to introduce Chief Minister of Justice Thalami, and Chief Minister of The Interior Treblar, of the Council of Elders." Tarifa spoke motioning to where Thalami and Treblar stood slightly behind and to her right.

"I hope you'll forgive my appearance." Martin told them. "We have been attempting to put up our long range transmitter all morning."

"There is no need to apologize." Thalami said with a friendly smile. "We understand you have duties."

Treblar stepped forward and looked at the towering steel pole. "I noticed you were using the elves that the Queen left with your group."

Martin nodded. "Yes sir. I needed someone to scale the pole to attach the cable to the top, while someone held the pole steady from the top of the transport. Lieutenant Radama offered to steady the pole from above and Lieutenant Vowel offered to attach the cable."

Treblar looked at him. "And your people could not have done this?"

“We could have, yes.” Martin spoke calmly. “However, Vowiel is considerably lighter than any of my team, and her agility on the pole was perfect. Radama did the work of four humans by holding the pole steady from the top with his strength.”

“The Queen told us there were close to sixty of your kind... Genomes I believe she called you... in your team.” Treblar said turning to face Martin. “Would you mind if I asked where they are if you are using elves to assist you?”

“They offered to help, I accepted their offer Minister.” Martin said calmly.

“That does not answer my question.” Treblar spoke.

“No sir it doesn’t.” Martin replied. “I have fifty-three Genomes in my team sir. Six of them have been tracking you since you left your city gates, and the others are on different patrols throughout the area.”

“You’ve... you’ve been tracking us since we left the city?” Thalami asked shocked. “How is that possible? We were at a gallop for a full third of the trip here.”

“He is bluffing.” Tareif spoke from behind his daughter.

Martin turned his head to look at the grizzled elf. He was a soldier by anyone’s standard with the way he carried himself. “You stopped to relieve yourself approximately thirteen miles from the city sir. When you did you pissed on one of my people. She was not at all happy about that. Would you like me to tell you how big your dick is as proof?”

Tarifa and her mother could barely contain the laughter that threatened to escape their lips, and Zaala simply stared at Martin in disbelief. She had never heard anyone talk to her father in such a way.

Martin stepped up to Tareif. “You are Tarifa’s father. It’s an honor to meet you sir. I see where she gets her eyes.” Martin turned to Palina and bowed his head to her, holding out his hand. “And you are her mother. I see where she gets her beauty.” Palina took Martin’s outstretched hand with a shy smile and he brought it to his lips where he softly kissed the back of her hand, “An honor to meet you ma’am.”

“My daughter, the Queen...” Tareif spoke putting particular emphasis on Queen, and causing Martin to turn back to him. “She spoke highly of you and your skill. I have seen nothing to substantiate her claims.”

“Papa...!” Tarifa snapped, her eyes growing angry as she glared at her father.

“Tareif...!” Palina followed suit.

“It is the truth!” Tareif barked. “They have no security out! We rode into their camp without challenge! If I was an Alliance Assassin I could have wiped out half their force before they knew what hit them. As it is, he leaves himself undefended to the point that my small force of twenty Dragoons could easily take this entire compound.”

“Martin this is War Master Tareif.” Treblar spoke. “He is our most senior Commanding Officer, and he is also the Queen’s father as you have already noticed.”

Martin smiled and clasped his hands behind his back. “With all due respect sir, if you were one of those ugly fuckers we ran into a few days ago, you would have been dead six miles ago. Master Chief!” He called.

“Target!” The Master Chief spoke into his implant.

Martin stepped closer to Tareif. “There is a little red dot between your eyes right now. A dot that tells exactly where the 20mm sniper round will impact when it is fired. All of you with the exception of Tarifa have the same dots. Look around if you like.”

Tareif allowed his eyes to travel to where Palina stood and he saw the small red dot centered between her dark eyes. Thalami and Treblar, as well as the twenty Dragoons with them all had similar dots as well. He looked back to Martin.

“I said my people were on patrol, sir. I did not say where.” Martin told him with a smile.

“I see no defenses here except for the wire. A true leader would defend his base and make any enemy pay for it with blood.” Tareif spoke, though his confidence was slightly shaken.

“Yes they would.” Martin said. “Deploy!” He barked into his implanted radio mic.

Tareif and the others watched with amazement as men and women appeared from almost everywhere and within ten seconds the entire perimeter was manned and every heavy weapons platform was warmed up.

“Shield!” Martin snapped.

They again watched in amazement as the shimmering blue field sprang to life from the top of the two Mark Nine transports and extended to encompass the entire diameter of the compound. Tareif looked at Martin.

“A level two Force Shield.” Martin spoke. “It is strong enough to repel all types of shrapnel, and disable any type of electronic device when passed through. One of my tech heads came up with the idea and it took him four hours to install. Pretty shade of blue isn’t it?”

Tareif only grunted in reply and Palina stepped to her husband and took his arm. “We are impressed Commander.” She said.

“We are not in any way shape or form like the humans and other people you have dealt with in the past sir. All I ask is a chance for us to prove it to you. I put together a place where we could talk with some refreshments.” Martin said, motioning to the closest Mark Nine. “We have only rations at the moment, but the coffee and tea is fresh.”

“You knew we were coming?” Treblar asked surprised.

“As I said sir, we’ve been tracking you since you left your city.” Martin replied. “When I was informed Tarifa was with you I assumed one of two things was going on. You were either coming to meet with me, or you were using her to gain entrance to our compound knowing I would not harm her.”

“And what if it was the latter?” Treblar asked.

Martin smiled and they all noticed the slightly extended fangs protruding from his mouth. “Well sir, then you would be dead and Tarifa would be with me, and it really wouldn’t matter would it?”

Treblar couldn’t help but laugh and nod his head. “You are very right Commander, very right indeed.”

“Please... I don’t much care for pomp and circumstance. And considering the situation I find myself in, my rank no longer applies now does it? My name is Martin.”

“With the Queen’s permission I humbly accept your invitation.” Treblar said.

“Minister Treblar has my permission of course.” Tarifa spoke, taking Martin’s arm and glaring at her father with a look that would have dropped a Grizz beast in its tracks.

“This way please.” Martin said.

“...so your Admiral Wallace remains on this station on the moon?” Thalami asked Martin.

They were sitting on the top deck of the transport in the small conference room. Martin had washed quickly and put on his fatigue top, much to Tarifa’s disappointment, and he now sat at the table with them. They had been talking for nearly four hours, with Martin telling them everything that had happen since coming to earth. He left out the part about him and Tarifa on the Raptor however.

Martin nodded. “He was able to insinuate himself within Graham’s trust, and he still continues to feed us information on a low frequency band every few days.” He told them. “His last report spoke of a meeting with this Minister Deval of the Alliance. They have been able to repair three of the five Raptors we left and are bringing him up to EDEN.”

“And you trust this man?” Treblar asked.

“We would not have gotten off the station without his help.” Martin replied. “Yes I trust him.”

“You realize that your actions have made you a wanted man by the Alliance.” Treblar told him.

Martin looked at him with a smile, “Really?”

“They are offering five million credits for delivering you to them.” Treblar said.

“Only five million...? Jeez... I feel unwanted.” Martin replied sipping his mug of coffee. “I guess I’ll have to work on that.”

“You don’t seem concerned.” Palina asked genuinely curious as to why.

Martin looked at her. “I have been at war for the majority of my adult life ma’am.” He answered slowly and with great respect everyone noticed. “In the time we came from I had prices on my head from nearly every major terrorist organization on the planet, not to mention several countries. It doesn’t really bother me in the least.”

“Your actions however have broadened the intensity of the Alliance’s attention on our people.” Treblar told him.

“Would you have preferred I let those Alliance fuckers have Tarifa?” Martin asked with more heat in his words than he intended.

“Well no of course not!”

Martin nodded. "I didn't think so." He said. He got to his feet slowly. "Forgive me but I am not a diplomat in any way. What I have seen and heard in the last few days leads me to the conclusion that I want nothing to do with this Alliance government. They are lower than even cockroaches as far as I am concerned. If remaining here puts your people at greater risk, then all I ask for is some information about areas that I can take these people and be able to protect them and I will gladly leave. I've never commanded this large a group of people and many of them are not fighters. I'm learning as we go."

"You... you would just leave?" Palina asked surprised and seeing the look on Tarifa's face.

"I had thought we could teach each other quite a bit." Martin replied. "But if by us being here, Tarifa and your people are in greater danger, yes we will leave."

"Please Martin do not be so hasty." Treblar told him. "This is a matter for the entire Council of Elders to decide, and it can not be made overnight. Would you accept an invitation to our city so that we can discuss this more fully?"

Martin nodded. "I suppose it wouldn't hurt."

"Excellent! Would we be able to remain here for this evening and we can return to our city early in the morning?"

Martin turned to Danny. "Dan... we have anymore tents?"

"We can put one up in no time Skipper." He answered getting to his feet. "We can strip a few cots from the transport so the ladies don't have to sleep on the ground."

Martin nodded. "Take care of it Danny." He turned back to Treblar. "We have set up one tent and turned it into a galley of sorts. Some of my techs are pretty good cooks and they have offered to cook for everyone. I believe they are serving dinner at seven this evening."

"You seem to have things very well organized Martin." Palina told him.

Martin chuckled. "I have good people, and they do the most work. Please feel free to talk to anyone you wish. I need to contact the teams I have on patrol, so if you'll excuse me."

"You really have men patrolling the mountains?" Tareif asked, his surprise not completely hidden.

Martin nodded. "They are patrolling the mountains north and west of here. I assumed since your city was east I would keep them away from the area to avoid any accidents."

"Why not keep everyone inside the perimeter?" Tareif asked.

"You should know as well as I do War Master that you should always remain vigilant if you wish to survive." Martin spoke.

Tareif nodded grudgingly. "This is true." He finally said.

Martin smiled and looked at Tarifa for a long moment. Palina saw the look that passed between them, and then Martin turned and headed down the stairs.

"...believe we can trust them." Thalami spoke, looking at the others who sat around inside the large tent. "Does anyone disagree?"

All of them had spent the rest of the afternoon and early evening mingling among the humans and Genomes within the perimeter. It was a new experience for all of them. There was not one instance that any of the humans had been anything other than polite and down right friendly. It was not something they were used too, and only Endith, Radama and Vowiel seemed to be at ease with it. Tareif would admit it to no one, but after viewing the defenses of the compound, and seeing the very businesslike manner of the Genomes he encountered and talked with, he concluded that these Genomes would make powerful allies, and the humans with them could prove invaluable in their expertise.

Thalami and Treblar spent most of their time asking questions of any human they could find, and not once was any question refused. They had been offered refreshments and even food from men and women who did not even know them, yet extended the hand of friendship.

Treblar sat back in the chair he occupied. "I admit I was very wary when we first arrived, but after what I have seen, I am leaning very strongly towards agreeing with you Thalami."

"I've been trying to tell you that." Tarifa spoke, exasperation in her voice.

"Milady, our visit here only strengthens your argument." Thalami told her. "For my part it was not because I didn't believe you Milady... it was because I wanted to see it for myself."

“We must remember that these men and women are from a different time.” Palina spoke now. “Slavery to them is just as abhorrent as it is to us and with the skills that some of them have, they could make powerful allies indeed.”

“War Master Tareif?” Treblar asked looking at him. “What is your assessment?”

Tareif looked at him as he sipped the tea. “I can not speak for the political side of things, but militarily... I could hit this compound with four legions of my Dragoons and artillery support, and we would still not win. Did you look at their eyes? The Genomes especially, have an almost fanatic loyalty to Hunter. The humans... the humans may be the lynch pin. Hunter did not have to follow his Admiral’s orders and take these people with him. They know that. He and his Genomes could have survived anywhere on this planet had they chosen. He brought these people with him because he knew it was the right thing to do. They have no idea what their future holds, but as long as Hunter leads them, they know they will prevail.” He looked at Treblar, “My assessment? We would be fools to turn them away.”

Tarifa could stand it no longer and got to her feet. “Did I miss something here?” She snapped. “I was elected Queen! Does anyone care to hear my assessment, or does anything I say matter anymore!” She turned quickly and ran out of the tent, tears forming in her eyes.

Zaala moved to follow her sister but Palina shook her head. “Zaala let her go!” She spoke rising to her feet. She looked at the others who had surprised expressions on their faces. “She has been through a lot these last few days.” Palina said. “She will be fine. I will see to her.”

Palina moved to the front of the tent and stepped outside into the cool night air. The stars were out in full force, casting their brightness through the trees and into the huge clearing that was now the compound. Palina’s eyes went wide when she realized Tarifa was not outside the tent. Her sharp ears caught the sound of a female voice and she reached out into the night with her keen elf vision to see Tarifa holding the hand of Martin as they ran towards the transports with a speed no human could match.

Palina smiled gently to herself and realized that this was what her daughter needed right now. To be a woman and let desire and lust take control. She turned as the Dragoon Guard appeared from the darkness.

“Is everything alright Mistress?” He asked.

Palina nodded. “Yes Captain, everything is fine. Have you seen anyone nearby?”

“No one Milady,” The Dragoon replied. “The Genomes raised the shield around the compound and I doubt even a full brigade could get past their perimeter.”

“So a walk under these beautiful stars is safe?” She asked, already knowing the answer. If Martin was able to come this close to their tent and take Tarifa from under the noses of the finest troops her husband commanded, they had nothing to fear.

“Very safe Milady, I just came out to share a pipe. The rest of us are already bed down.”

“Thank you Captain.” Palina did a slow count to sixty and then began walking a slow path towards the transports.

“Ahhhhhhh!” Tarifa gasped softly as she sank completely down on Martin’s pulsing, rock hard twelve inch cock. She grabbed Martin’s head, entwining her fingers in his hair and pulled his face away from where he was sucking hard on one of her sensitive nipples.

“I... I have missed... missed you so much Martin!”

Martin gripped Tarifa’s perfect ass in his hands and pulled her down tightly on his cock, flexing his buried meat inside her while clenching his teeth. This action caused her to dig her sharp nails into his shoulders almost painfully as her eyes fluttered, “Almost... almost as much as I... have missed you.” He hissed.

Tarifa looked into his gorgeous eyes, her face contorted in pleasure. “More!” She nearly screamed before covering his lips with her own and plunging her tongue into his mouth. She rocked her hips forward as she kissed him, wrapping her arms around his head. The base of his huge cock was rubbing abrasively against her engorged clit and it was driving her mad. Martin lay back on the soft blankets he had spread over his small lean-to, pulling Tarifa with him and feeling her breasts flatten against his bare chest. Her hard nipples burned against his skin, the velvety warmth of her pussy exactly as he remembered. He took her face in his large hands, stroking the tips of her elf ears and seeing her face smile and her body shivered at the sensations it caused when he did that. He pushed her silky hair from her face and ran a finger over her soft moist lips.

“You are so beautiful.” He said softly.

Tarifa looked at him, feeling his throbbing cock so deeply inside her it made her head pound. She still could not believe she could accept all of his enormous size within her. Even the smallest of motions when he was buried this deep caused orgasm after orgasm to course through her. She had practically thrown him to the ground in his lean-to and pulled his pants from him before he had time to speak. She tore her own pants from her body and grasped his hot, steel like shaft in her small hands and poised her already soaked pussy over the huge head. When she felt her cunt open to accept the large head, it was as if her pussy had conformed to his exact dimensions. As she sank onto his pole she felt every thick inch and pulsing vein against the walls of her overheated pussy and she knew then she could not survive without Martin. The sex between them was unlike anything she had ever imagined yes, but she knew theirs would not be a lasting relationship. Something pulled at Martin... something or someone far stronger than her.

She looked at him, stilling her hips on top of his, his cock anchored inside her. “You... you said you would leave me Martin! Why?”

Martin gripped her face tighter, his own expression becoming more serious. “I... I can't lose you Tarifa.” He spoke. “If... if my presence here puts you in danger, I don't... I don't want that.”

Tarifa nearly began to cry at his words, and she shook her head quickly. “Let me decide what puts me in danger Martin. I am quite capable of handling myself.” She told him. “I have practically a full company with me even when I go to clean myself.” She said with a grin.

Martin chuckled and pulled her face to his and kissed her quickly. “I bet that is something to see.” He said.

Tarifa looked at him her eyes darkening. “I'll give you something to see.” She said and lifted herself from his chest. Her hands pushed against his chest keeping him from sitting up. “No!” She gasped. “I am Queen... you will stay there!”

“Tarifa I... Uhhhhhhh,” Martin grunted and his hands slapped onto the ground next to them when Tarifa clenched her pussy muscles around his shaft, her silky thighs pressing tightly to his naked hips.

Martin looked up into her face and saw her sapphire eyes alive with passion and desire. She smiled down at him and reached up to cup her 34C breasts in her hands, lowering her head slightly and extending her tongue to lick her own nipple. “Be still Martin.” She told him seductively. “Tonight I will show you why female elves are so desired.”

Tarifa laid her hands along his powerful abdomen and began to ride Martin for all she was worth. She lifted her hips until only the tip of his massive cock was inside her and then drove herself down upon him, impaling herself deeper and deeper each time. Sweat began to pour from her face and trail down between her breasts, and her breathing was coming in short gulps as she used all of her strength to draw out their pleasure as much as possible. She squeezed her pussy muscles every time she withdrew, her mouth open in delight as she felt every pulsing vein on his thick shaft. She was shuddering in a continual orgasm, her pussy juices pouring out of her, drenching his manhood and lower abdomen in her sweet cum. She looked at his face, seeing his eyes closed tightly, the muscles in his neck extended as he tried to control himself and give her as much pleasure as she could stand.

“No... no Martin,” She gasped between clenched teeth. “Don't... don't hold back! Fill me... fill me with your cum! Fill me!” She almost screamed, moving her hips faster, slamming them down on his huge cock in almost a blur.

Martin's eyes popped open and Tarifa was momentarily shocked enough to stop plunging her pussy down on him. His eyes stared up at her and she watched them change from liquid dark brown color to the yellow and black orb. She gasped when she felt his huge cock expand within her, its pulsing heat penetrating her even deeper. The massive head of his cock ballooned and Tarifa felt his boiling cum racing up the entire length of his cock. Just as Martin erupted into her pussy with a force greater than their time together on the Raptor he sat up, driving his cock far up into her belly. Tarifa's eyes rolled into the back of her head as her pussy lips spread and wrapped around the base of his massive pole and she felt the first explosion from his cock blast deeply into her womb. His lips covered her left nipple and he sucked painfully hard, his fangs biting down, but not enough to break the skin, and that sent Tarifa into her own explosive orgasm.

“Yes!” She cried weakly. “Yes!” Leaving one arm wrapped around Martin's shoulder, Tarifa reach down behind her to find his seething balls, bloated and planted snugly against her firm ass cheeks. She cupped

his balls in her hand and felt cum erupting from them in spasms. She dragged her manicured nails across the tight skin on his large nut sack and heard Martin hiss in delight. His next eruption into her pussy caused her to squeeze both her arms around his shoulders and clutch his sucking mouth to her breasts as her orgasm ripped through her very being, taking her breath away.

It was over far quicker than either of them desired and Martin nuzzled her throat, his fangs nibbling her skin in delightful nips that made Tarifa smile in contentment and hold his head even tighter. His hard cock was still buried within her, but it was slowly softening. Martin's hands clutched her ass, with no intention of letting her rise from him, not that Tarifa had any desire to change their position in the least. She milked his thick cock with small squeezes of her pussy, eliciting small gasps from Martin whenever she did that.

"I... I don't suppose we could stay like this forever?" Tarifa whispered to him.

Martin looked up into her face; his eyes now back to normal and his fangs only slightly longer than normal. "Nothing would make me happier." He told her, burying his face into her sweat dampened hair and inhaling deeply.

"We can't do that can we?"

Martin looked at her again, taking one hand off her ass to push some long strands of her black hair from her face. "No."

"I've had a dream Martin. It is a strange dream. I see you and me, and a beautiful blond elf. And I see children; many children." Tarifa told him softly. "I can feel her love, for you. Ever since I met you I can feel her almost as if she is a part of us." Martin looked at her oddly and she reached up to stroke his face, her sapphire eyes bright. "What is it?"

"I have had the same dream Tarifa." He told her. "Every night since we first met it is the same dream."

"That is no coincidence Martin." She told him. "We are having the same dream for a reason. The... the Holy One said there is another for you; and that together we would set each other free."

"And that frightens you?" Martin asked.

Tarifa shook her head. "Strangely, no it doesn't. There is someone for me out there. I have not found them yet, but if by being with you, helping you to find this blond elf brings to me what I desire, we both win in the end don't we?"

Martin nodded slowly, "And until then?"

Tarifa grinned. "I suggest we continue to share these wonderful meetings."

Martin grinned and chuckled softly once more. "I kind of like that idea too." He said.

"Martin... what if the Holy One made another for the both of us?" Tarifa said.

Martin took her face in his hands. "We'll cross that bridge when or if we ever come to it. Agreed?"

Tarifa nodded slowly, her fingers caressing his shoulders. "I must get back before I am missed." She said disappointment clearly in her voice. "If my mother or father discovers I came here to be with you they would be very upset. I am supposed to be a Queen... not some sex hungry vixen."

"Hey... there is nothing wrong with sex hungry vixen!" Martin said, causing her to look at him.

"With you... no there is not." She said with her own smile as she began to extract her body from his.

Tarifa kissed Martin deeply outside his lean-to as he held her suspended in his arms. She had taken one of his fatigue tops because Martin had shredded her blue shirt trying to get it off her. He lowered her to the ground slowly and smiled sheepishly.

"I'm sorry about your shirt." He said.

Tarifa smiled and kissed his nose. "I like yours better anyway. I can smell you on it, and it soothes me." Tarifa saw his eyes change quickly, and then return to normal. His smile had faded as well. "Martin... what is it?"

"Your mother is not far away. She's watching us." Martin told her quietly.

Tarifa made no move to remove her hands from where they rested on Martin's bare chest, and she leaned forward to place her head there as well, a sigh of disappointment escaping from her lips.

"You can come out of the shadows mother." Tarifa spoke loudly. "We know you are there." Palina's figure took shape as she walked from the front of the transport slowly. "How long have you been there mother?"

Palina stopped and looked at them. "I've been here long enough to hear what I needed to hear." She replied. She stepped forward and removed the shawl she wore from around her shoulders. "Come Tarifa, we must get you back before your father realizes you are gone." She draped the shawl over Tarifa's shoulders effectively hiding Martin's fatigue top in the dim light.

Tarifa turned to look at her. "Mother I..."

Palina shook her head. "You do not need to explain anything to me Tarifa. I have been and still am a female elf and I am not unknowing of the desires that run in your blood daughter. Your secret is safe with me child."

"Mama..."

"Go on now! Before your father notices you. Zaala waits for you by the side of the tent." Palina spoke. "Go!"

Tarifa turned and kissed Martin softly one last time before turning and moving quickly off into the night. Palina watched her daughter until she was gone and then turned slowly back to Martin. He was watching her with those eyes, his face unreadable.

Palina looked at Martin and spoke softly. "Her position does not grant her very much freedom, and even less emotion Martin Hunter. I...you have given her back her virtue and her inner strength. I thank you for that."

Martin stepped up to her and looked down into her face. "I can not begin to explain what I feel for Tarifa ma'am." He said softly. "It has taken me all of my life to begin to understand the emotions that I feel." He saw Palina look at him.

"I do not understand." She said.

"The Holy One as you call him, he was like a father to me." Martin said. "I was the first of my kind, and some things were left out when I was born. The ability to understand emotions was one of those things. It wasn't done on purpose, it was simply forgotten. My interaction with others throughout my life has taught me to understand what I feel. I can not put into words what I feel... but I can tell you this. I would gladly give my life without a second thought if it meant Tarifa would be safe. I do not know what the future holds for either of us... but I do feel that we will always be there for one another."

Palina gazed at Martin for a long moment, knowing he meant every word he had just spoken. "I believe you would Martin Hunter. I believe you would." She said. "You must hide your liaisons with Tarifa for now. It would seem you need each other now, if for nothing else than the touch of another."

"Palina... I did not..." Martin started to say.

Palina shook her head. "Your words are not needed Martin. I have seen for myself what type of man you are. And you are not entirely human either. We are elves Martin... and the Holy One created us to enjoy sexual relations with another who stirs us, not hide them or be ashamed of them. At this moment in time, the two of you have found a rock of sorts anchoring both of you, and that rock is each other. The physical pleasure is merely a way for the two of you to deepen that relationship."

"I will never hurt her." Martin said.

"I know. I must get back before Tareif sees that I am gone as well." Palina spoke. "I hope we see more of you Martin Hunter." Palina turned and headed back quickly towards their tent.

Tarifa and Zaala were still outside the tent when she returned and Tarifa came up to her immediately. "What did you say to him mother?" She asked.

"Now is not the time." Palina told her.

"I want to know what you said to him mother!" Tarifa asked again, her voice a little louder.

"What's going on out here?" Tareif's voice interrupted them. He pushed aside the tent flap and looked at them.

Palina stepped in front of Tarifa and looked at her husband. "Is it so difficult to understand that I am having a mother to daughters talk with my children Tareif? Go back inside husband, we will be in shortly."

Tareif grunted and did as Palina told him. Tarifa gripped her mother's arm.

"Mama," She pleaded.

Palina looked at her and touched her face with a warm smile. "You must hide your meetings with Martin Tarifa." Her mother told her. "It will cause problems with the Council. They will think he is using you."

"Mother he is not!" Tarifa insisted. "I go to him because I chose too. He makes me feel... he makes me feel..."

“He makes you feel normal. Like a woman again?” Palina said with a smile. “Your soul mate will come in time daughter. For now... enjoy your liaisons with Martin. You deserve to be normal as well.”

Tarifa looked at her surprised. “I... I did not think you would tell me that mama.” She said.

Palina smiled. “I was your age once Tarifa and I have not always been married to your father. And he is very handsome.”

Tarifa looked at her mother stunned, “Mother!” She exclaimed.

Palina chuckled and tucked her arm under Tarifa’s. “So tell your mother... how is he in bed?”

MOUNTAIN CITY

To call the capital of the High Elves enormous would be an understatement. As Tarifa led Martin and the others up to the front gate, they could clearly view the city stretching as far as they could see. Much of the city was built into the trees themselves, while a good portion also occupied the ground. There were massive bridges spanning hundreds of feet across, and huge walkways that circled upwards around the centuries old trees. There were parts of the city that had metal and concrete foundations, and others still that appeared built from the very roots of the trees themselves. Impressive would not have been a word that described it well enough and it showed on their faces, making the Dragoon soldiers smile to themselves. The Dragoons had seen many impressive things at Martin’s compound, and seeing his reaction to their city told them he was not as arrogant as they had first thought.

Tarifa, her mother and half the Dragoons went in one direction, with Tarifa casting a longing look back at Martin. He smiled to her, and did not pay attention to where he was going. The thick low hanging branch hit him square in the face and knocked him backwards out of the saddle to land on his back. Tarifa and her sister had been watching and they both burst into laughter, as well as the Dragoons that had remained with them. Even Martin’s team could not contain their laughter, and watched their Skipper sit up on his ass, a very embarrassed grin on his face.

Martin looked up at them. “Not much of a horseman I guess.” He spoke a huge smile splitting his face and then he was laughing along with the others.

This did not go unnoticed by the Dragoons or the elves that had seen his mishap, and it showed them that Martin could joke about himself easily, and did not think of himself superior.

Martin had brought eight members of his team, including Anja. They had been the first to come to earth, and they almost always worked together. Anja had become their defacto medic, and by now everyone knew she was sleeping with both Danny and Julie, and while that did not bother them in the least, to a man and women they all knew she was still madly in love with the Skipper. All of them wore complete body armor and carried their weapons slung across their shoulders. It apparently was not uncommon to move about on the planet heavily armed, and the elves did not seem at all bothered by the fact they were all very heavily armed.

Their horses were led away by half a dozen elves and they entered into a large lift near the main entrance. Martin’s eyes expertly took in the defensive positions and the weapons emplacements that were set up, his face showing no emotion. He knew his team was doing the same. One of the very first things they had been taught was how to survey an objective and how to make it more defensible. The lift carried them straight up at incredible speed, and they realized it was powered by what sounded like a hydraulic platform. Radama had returned with them and he saw Martin’s surprised expression as they ascended.

Radama had learned a great deal in the three days he had spent with Martin and the Genomes, as well as the humans. He was a Lieutenant in the Queen’s Royal Guard, and one of the most highly trained elfin warriors within their ranks. He realized three things in the first few hours walking with Martin around the compound. He learned that Martin abhorred any type of pomp, and most of his team and many of the humans called him not by his rank, but by his name. He learned that the man he walked with was the quintessential warrior, and Radama learned that his combat training was completely inferior to what these Genomes knew and were capable of doing. Knowing that Radama had set out to learn all he could, and he was ecstatic when he realized the Genomes were more than willing to teach him.

“The lift is controlled by a central control computer located on the third level.” He spoke, stepping up beside Martin.

“How many levels are there?” Martin asked.

“Nineteen total, but that includes the very top level which extends above the trees and is nothing more than observation and landing platforms for the air ships we have. We can raise and lower them if Alliance aircraft are detected by our radar.” Radama answered.

“Your defensive arrangements are excellent.” Martin told him honestly. “Who designed them?”

“I did.” Tareif answered gruffly from behind them.

Martin turned to look at him. “Impeccable sir.” He said.

“Lieutenant Radama, you will reveal nothing more to our guests unless specifically given instructions to. Is that clear?” Tareif spoke.

Radama bowed his head to Tareif, “As you order War Master.” He spoke.

Martin met Tareif’s glaring eyes with a calm gaze of his own, completely unafraid of the man. “It was meant as a compliment sir.” He said.

“I do not need your compliments on my defensive positions Commander.” Tareif barked. “You know nothing of me or my people and their capabilities. You are an outsider!”

Martin nodded slowly. “Yes I am. An outsider who can tell you if you trim back the branches on some of the trees you can set up the mortars you have to cover the entire valley as well as a three mile perimeter around this city.”

Tareif’s eyes widened, as did the eyes of several Dragoon soldiers and Radama. “How... you know nothing of our defensive capabilities! What you say is nonsense!”

Martin smiled. “The markings of a 120mm mortar make very distinct marks in any surface where they sit, sir.” Martin told him. “So far I’ve seen nine...”

“I’ve marked six.” Danny spoke.

Martin smiled again. “That’s fifteen mortar positions we have detected and we’ve only been here twenty minutes. I assume you use them for direct fire support of the wall, and that you have enough of them to circle the city. As I said... if you cut some of the branches from above say a third of the positions, you can cover the entire valley as well as a three mile perimeter around the city and triple your defensive capabilities.” Martin shrugged. “But that is just an observation from an outsider.”

Martin turned back around to face away from Tareif, his face emotionless to everyone. Tareif could only stand there, his eyes still wide but growing angrier by the minute.

Martin looked around the quarters he and his team had been provided and he could only smile. The large central room was very well furnished with several couches and chairs and a small counter bar in one corner. There were half a dozen smaller doorways off the main room that led to small but comfortably furnished sleeping rooms. There were four windows, and a door that led out to a balcony. The room was circular in design, and was built into the tree they were in, but also equipped with very modern amenities.

Martin looked at Radama as he stood in the doorway with a smile at the reaction of the others of Martin’s team as they set about exploring the room. “Thank you Radama.” He spoke.

“The Queen apparently does not share her father’s distrust of you Martin Hunter. She ordered you be escorted here. These are the finest guest quarters that we have in the city, and only the most honored of elves have ever stayed here.” Radama told him.

“What about you Radama?” Martin asked.

“I have seen first hand what you are capable of Martin Hunter, as well as saving the life of the Queen I am sworn to defend. You earned my trust the moment you killed those who assaulted her on your station.” Radama told him. “Milady asked that you be allowed to settle in and then she requested that I escort you to the Grand Chamber to meet the Council of Elders.”

Martin dropped his pack and nodded at Radama. “Let’s go.” He said, “Master Chief, will you make sure the children don’t break anything?”

Tony smiled from where he stood and nodded his head, “Got it Skipper.”

Martin left his HK leaning against his pack, but still had the K12 strapped to his thigh, as well as a large fighting knife strapped to his other leg. Radama motioned him out into the corridor and they began walking towards the sunlight at the far end.

“Do you have relations with any of the human settlements Radama?” Martin asked.

Radama shook his head. “There are several smaller human settlements that do not agree with the way elves and others are enslaved and used, but they are powerless to stop it. They sit in the shadow of more powerful settlements and are protected by them, and so must conform to their laws.” Radama replied. “The Queen has forbidden all contact with human settlements for this reason. She will not trade our people or any elves into servitude or slavery just for arms and ammunition. We have learned to become expert weapons masters, with blade and guns.”

“This forest and these mountains must be overflowing with natural resources.” Martin said.

“They are.” Radama told him. “There is gold and minerals and all types of resources that the humans need. They are becoming bolder in their forays into our land, taking what they can not produce themselves. We beat them back when we find them, but our territory is vast, and what many do not know is that not all of our people are warriors.”

Martin nodded. “That is usually the case.” He spoke softly.

“The Alliance will not come into the deep timber and mountains after us.” Radama spoke. “Every time they have we have slaughtered them. But each battle has losses, and slowly our army is shrinking in size until we can no longer cover all of the human excursions into our lands.”

“What do they do to your villages if they are discovered?” Martin asked.

“Those they do not kill are sold into slavery after they are broken.” Radama answered.

Martin looked at him. “Broken?”

“The females are raped repeatedly until they are near insanity. Then they are injected with a very addictive drug that keeps them submissive. They use this drug to then control the females, most of them ending up sold to slavers in the large cities of the Alliance east of the Big River.” Radama answered.

“And what happens to the men?” Martin asked.

“They are beaten and whipped and subjected to even more horrible tortures.” Radama answered. “Some are raped as well and turned into sex slaves for the Alliance citizens who prefer men over women. Most are sold into forced labor camps and relegated to working the most dangerous mines that are left and they are used as beasts of burdens on the Western Island.”

“The Western Island... what’s that?” Martin asked.

Radama nodded. “It was once called California, but after the Great Fire caused a massive earthquake, a chasm was created and the ocean rushed around the land and formed the Western Island.”

“What’s on the Western Island?” Martin asked him.

“It is where all of the slaves are processed.” Radama answered. “From the Western Island they can be sent anywhere in the world on the big ships or flying craft. It is maintained by the Alliance, but everyone uses it. At any given time there are thousands of elves and other new species waiting for shipment.”

“Wait a minute... new species?” Martin asked him surprised. “You mean like that thing you call a Grizz beast?”

“Yes. They were designed to hunt whatever they are programmed to hunt.” Radama answered. “There are rumors that some escaped the genetic facility due to their intelligence. They supposedly escaped into The Wastes and were never heard from again. The radiation that saturated The Wastes denied access to it for hundreds of years. It is only recently, the last sixty years or so, that anyone has been able to go into the area. It is here that the Alliance discovers some of their fiercest monsters, mutated by the radiation”

“Exactly how old are you?” Martin asked him.

Radama smiled, “One hundred and fifty-three.” He replied. “But I am young by elf standards. The oldest among us has four hundred and forty-one years. He was one of the first created by the Holy One. He served on the Council of Elders until he stepped down last year due to illness. It appears however, Martin Hunter, that you and your team are now older than even our oldest Elder.”

Martin grinned. “Yeah... I kind of guessed that.”

Radama motioned through the double doors they had arrived at. “Inside you will find the Council of Elders. They are similar to what in your time would be called a Senate.” Radama grinned when he saw Martin roll his eyes. “Each one represents one of our twelve major cities, as well as the surrounding smaller villages and towns. Ministers Treblar and Thalami you have already met. Some of them you will find to be openly friendly, others not so friendly.”

“I get that a lot.” Martin told him with a smile. “Is Tar... the Queen with them?”

Radama did not allow the smile he felt show on his face. Radama had heard the howls of pleasure from his Queen on the Raptor, and he had seen flashes of the incredible attraction between them as well. He nodded. “The Queen presides over every meeting of the Elders. She will be present.”

“Ah... cool.” Martin said turning as the doors opened and another Royal Guard came out dressed very similar to Radama.

“The Council will see you now.” He spoke.

“We will talk again Martin Hunter.” Radama said.

Martin nodded. “I’d like that.”

Martin watched him turn and head back down the corridor, and then he looked at the new guard who was directing him inside the room. Martin shook his head.

“Man I hate politicians.” He muttered to himself before walking into the room.

EDEN

She opened her eyes to the glare of false light and the feel of soft clean sheets against her skin. As her eyes focused she was able to make out more detail of the room she was occupying. There were pictures of strange men on the wall, as well as a long bookshelf filled with what appeared to be ancient copies of writings in pristine condition. Her oriental features were quite obvious due to the darker color of her skin, and the slight slant of her brown eyes. Her shiny black hair had been washed and now smelled slightly of cinnamon, and was splayed across the pillow. She was naked underneath the full length white sheet, and she clutched the sheet to her very firm breasts, the coolness of the room causing her nipples to stand out prominently against the fabric. She sat up quickly, her mind clearing even more and she remembered the strange looking flying craft that had picked up her and twenty of her fellow elves from the Alliance’s finest brothel in New Richmond. They had flown into the sky and landed many hours later at an unknown place. The Alliance Minister Deval had been traveling with them, and all they knew was that they were being offered as gifts to new allies.

Anisa turned her head quickly when the door to her right opened and the tall human exited what appeared to be a bathing room. He was clad in Khaki pants and black boots, his upper body bare. She took in the graying hair on his chest and his almost entirely bald head. He was lean for a human, not overly muscular, but Anisa could tell he was in superb physical condition. He lowered the towel from his face and she saw his eyes settle on her. Anisa had to hold back the gasp, as his eyes were the deepest blue she had ever seen.

“You’re awake?” Admiral William Wallace III spoke tossing the towel over a chair and moving to the side of the bed.

Anisa scampered to the far side of the large bed as he sat on the edge and held up his hand.

“I am not going to hurt you.” Wallace spoke softly. “I know the hatred and mistrust you have of humans, and I now know why, but I can assure you I will not hurt you.”

Anisa bowed her head, “As you say Master.” She spoke timidly.

“My name is William Wallace or Bill for short. My name is not Master.” He told her.

Anisa looked at him, sensing something very strange about this human. His weathered hand reached out slowly and gently took her chin, lifting her face to look at him.

“Don’t do that.” He said to her.

“You... you are my Master. It is forbidden to look at you directly!” Anisa spoke quickly, casting her eyes downward again. She heard him sigh heavily. “May I ask... may I ask where I am Master?”

“These are my quarters on EDEN.” Wallace replied. “You arrived two days ago with that sick Alliance bastard Deval.”

“My Lord you must not speak of the Minister in such a way!” Anisa spoke quickly, expecting the slap at any moment.

“I’ll speak about that perverted sonofabitch however I like.” Bill responded. “He makes me sick. What is your name?”

“I am called Anisa Milord.” She answered.

“Are you hungry?”

Anisa felt her empty stomach begin to growl with hunger. It was unlike anything she had felt at any time in the past fourteen months of her captivity. She reached up to a spot on the back of her neck where the drug dispenser was, only to discover it was missing. The dispenser was something all slaves had implanted upon their capture. The drug that was pumped into their system made them more docile and unresisting, but it also acted as an appetite suppressant, and Anisa had grown accustomed to it.

“It’s gone.” Bill spoke softly, getting to his feet. “I had it removed. I also had you pumped full of a detox solution to purge the drug from your system. That’s why you are still groggy and weak. Your natural elf healing ability will begin to assert itself soon enough.” She felt him settle back to the bed and hold out the shiny red apple. “You need to eat to regain your strength, but you need to start slowly.”

“Milord... I... I don’t understand.” Anisa told him, her voice quivering in fear.

“You came here two days ago with Minister Deval. This facility is called EDEN and it is on the moon. He brought you and twenty others as gifts to the man who now controls this station. You were offered to me as part of that gift.” Will told her. “I accepted as a way to earn and keep his trust.”

“You... you are my Master then.” Anisa said.

“No I am not. I don’t own you! Nobody owns you.” Bill said. “Look at me.”

“It is not allowed Milord!” Anisa said.

“Look at me!” Anisa took a deep breath and slowly lifted her face towards him; her eyes closed tightly, expecting the blow to come from any direction. “Now open your eyes.”

Anisa felt the tears well in her tightly shut eyes. “Milord... please, it is... I...”

“Open your eyes Anisa.”

Anisa dropped the sheet, exposing her firm breasts and smooth flat abdomen. “Please Milord... I will do whatever you wish. I will suck your cock! I... I am considered an expert at sucking cock Master! Or you can fuck me! Whatever you desire, but please...”

“Open your eyes!” Bill spoke more forcefully now. “And stop talking like that!”

Anisa’s eyes popped open at the obvious command tone of his voice, and she saw him holding something in his arms. It looked like a bundle of clothes that rested in his lap and his blue eyes gazed at her. She watched those eyes take in her nakedness; saw the flash of desire in them, and then it was gone. He leaned over and brought the sheet back up over her nakedness.

“Listen to me. I am playing a role.” Bill told her. “You are now part of that role. I will not hurt you, or force you to do anything. That part of your life is over now. I got these clothes for you. I understand that slaves are not allowed to be fully clothed, but I did the best I could in trying. I hope you like them.” Bill set them on the bed in front of her, and drew back his hands. “I had a female friend bath you, but if you wish to shower, it is through that door. I’m going to make you some breakfast so that you can regain your strength.”

“You... you don’t wish to take me?” Anisa asked with clear surprise in her eyes.

“No. Breakfast will be ready in about twenty minutes.” Bill answered her. He smiled at her before getting to his feet and walking out of the room without a second glance back at her near naked form.

Anisa sat on the bed dumbfounded and staring at the door as it closed behind him.

MOUNTAIN CITY

“I would personally like to extend to you the gratitude of this entire Council for your actions in saving the life of Queen Tarifa Commander Hunter. On two separate occasions I might add.” Treblar was speaking from his chair.

Martin was shown into the Council of Elders Chamber and offered the single chair on the end of the table. The row of twelve Ministers sat along the right side of the table, while Tarifa occupied the single seat on the left side. Martin had to force himself to look away from Tarifa due to the dress she was wearing. It was a floor length white mesh dress that hugged her body like a second skin. The dress ended at her neck in a choker collar, and the brief glance he had before sitting down told him it was split very high up on her lean muscular thigh. The dress also did not do much to hide her firm breasts, and only a small patch of material hid her sweet

tasting nipples from plain view. The same nipples he had sucked and nibbled on the night before. Tarifa had smiled inwardly to herself, knowing the reaction she was having on Martin, yet she admired his control.

Martin looked at Treblar and nodded his head. "I am glad I was able to help sir." He finally spoke.

"As Minister Thalami and I explained to you yesterday during our visit to your encampment," Treblar went on. "This Council is willing to hear your petition for remaining within High Elf territory."

Martin looked at him puzzled. This was not discussed yesterday. "Excuse me sir, my petition?"

"Minister Treblar, as well as others of this Council, wants to know why we should allow you, a human, and nearly two thousand other humans, permission to remain within the safety of our domain." Raloa spoke now, the tone of his voice undoubtedly hostile.

"We escaped EDEN, as Queen Tarifa has no doubt told you. I am now responsible for over a thousand men, women and children." Martin said. "I need to insure their safety."

"You are humans!" Raloa spoke the word as if it was a vile thing. "Who are residing in the next valley, only six hours riding from this very city? Very convenient if you ask me."

Martin stared at the man. "I understand the situation that you and you people have had with humans in the past sir, but I don't understand where your distrust of my particular group comes from. We have only just arrived in this time period, to discover that a race of beings we thought to be only myth and legend now existed. We have seen some things that none of us could have possibly imagined, and we are still in a state of shock. What exactly have we done to earn your distrust?"

"You are human!" Raloa spoke. "That is enough."

"I and the other members of my team, we are only partially human sir." Martin told him. "As you no doubt already know from the Queen and two of your own Ministers who visited us, and I'm quite sure have already discussed with you. We are genetically engineered humans, all of us designed as soldiers during my time period. And all of the men and women who came from EDEN with us are non-combatants; scientists, doctors, researchers."

"We know what you are Commander." A female elf spoke now. She was lighter in skin tone, with flowing brown hair and shiny brown eyes. "That is what concerns us."

"And you are?"

"I am Chief Minister of Medicine Carina, Commander Hunter." She answered.

Martin nodded his head to her in a show of respect, which did not go unnoticed. "Ma'am if you will forgive me, I am not a politician. I'm what we used to call an Operator. I was Chief of Security for EDEN, an International base on the moon, when the comet came. I understand you call it the Great Fire, but to me it is just a frigging comet that ended up tossing us over four hundred and fifty years into the future. I don't know the mechanics of how... and to be honest... I don't want to know. Quantum Physics gives me a headache." That statement caused several of the Elders to smile. "I am a soldier ma'am... I came down here with my team, looking for some answers and lo and behold, we find that things are really fucked up. We discovered that people who like to play god have invented some really nasty critters that just happen to smell as bad as they look. We discovered that there is now a large population of Elves across what remains of the planet, a race of men and women that as I said existed only in children's books in our time and they are now used for any number of reasons to include slavery and forced labor. Things that did not exist where we came from, and were not tolerated. We also discovered that the government we used to serve has evolved into these Alliance idiots, and they have helped the one political asshole we had on EDEN to gain control of that station and force us to leave." Martin took a deep breath. "Now I find myself in command of more men and women than I have ever been asked to command, men and women I might add who do not agree in any way with the assholes in charge of this Alliance government, and I need to keep them protected at all costs. With all due respect, the least of your concerns is what I am."

"Do you think us fools Commander Hunter?" Raloa asked.

Martin looked at the man. "I don't follow sir."

"Do you think that we do not know what you are?" Raloa pulled the data pad from his robe. "We have an extensive library Commander, a library that I have spent the last two days in researching records, records that date back five hundred years. Do you want to know what I discovered?"

Martin folded his arms across his chest. "I'm sure you are about to tell me." He said.

“The Holy One... the man you know as Doctor Carson... the man who created the elves, left us an extensive library as I said. In those records were the unrestricted files on every member of your team, yourself included, as well as the entire history of the Genome program.” Ralao spoke.

Tarifa looked at Ralao, her sapphire eyes suspicious. The Holy One had never told her about any such records, and he would have shared this information with her.

Martin shrugged his broad shoulders. “I don’t see what relevance that information would have now. That’s ancient history it appears.”

“It is relevant Commander, because it shows what you and your team truly are.” Ralao said.

“What are you getting at Chief Minister?” Thalami asked, leaning forward in her chair.

“I’m trying to show that we can not trust this man, or any of those with him.” Ralao spoke.

“By doing what exactly Chief Minister,” Tarifa asked calmly. “Commander Hunter has shown he is no friend of the Alliance. They have a price on his head of five million credits, and a price on the head of all the men and women in his team. Whatever history you have discovered has no bearing on why we sit here now.”

“I believe it does your Majesty.” Ralao spoke. “Commander Hunter... how many men have you killed in your lifetime?”

Martin met his eyes. “Why does that matter?”

“It matters a great deal.” Ralao said. “Please answer the question.”

“I don’t keep count.” Martin told him.

“According to these records you are personally responsible for the deaths of seven hundred and nineteen men and women.” Ralao told him. “How does that make you feel?”

“I was genetically engineered to be the best soldier the United States government could produce.” Martin said. “I did not choose my way of life, it was forced upon me by others. From the day I was sixteen years old I was fighting in one war or another because there were people who did not like our way of life.”

“Did you enjoy killing them Commander?” Ralao asked.

“Chief Minister you are out of line!” Treblar snapped from his chair.

Martin smiled at the man, and the smile sent shivers down the backs of many present. “Chief Minister Ralao is it?” Martin asked. “You have a hard on for me, that much is obvious. I don’t particularly care why you dislike me so much since I have never met you before today, and that fact by itself tells me you are not the person you want everyone to think you are. My past does not matter sir. What matters to me now are how do we make a life for ourselves now, and how do I take care of the people that have been entrusted to me.”

“Commander Hunter, I believe what is the foremost concern of everyone at this table is how do we know we can trust you?” Carina spoke again. “There have been many times in the past that we have offered humans and others safe haven within our lands, and they in turn have betrayed us. It is not something we take lightly.”

“As well you shouldn’t.” Martin said calmly. “But what you should consider is this. Put yourself in my position for a moment. You have been warped forward in time to find everything and everyone you ever knew is gone. The environment has changed... the people have changed, and the one place you thought was safe is now in the hands of a seriously deranged shit head that seems to think he fits right in. You discover a race of people who seem to have their shit together and are organized and discretely friendly, not to mention they outnumber you five hundred to one. You have technology you can share as a way of showing them that you are friendly, but they just want to lump you into the same category as the rest of the assholes they have dealt with through the years.” Martin got to his feet to the surprise of all the Ministers. “You should consider that.” He said. “As I told Ministers Thalami and Treblar... if you don’t want our friendship... then all I ask is for information on an area where I can take my people and try to live out our existence. You want to judge us... then judge us for who we are... not for who you perceive us to be based on bad experiences. You never know... you might be surprised.”

Martin turned to the shocked expressions on their faces and headed for the door. Ralao leaned forward. “We are not finished Commander.” He stated.

Martin stopped and looked back at him. “Yes we are Chief Minister.” He turned back around and looked at the guard by the door. The man nodded his head to Martin in a show of respect and pushed open the door.

Tarifa watched Martin walk out, pride swelling her chest at his words. He had spoken the words with deep feeling and honesty and she could tell they had shaken all the Ministers right to the core.

EDEN

Wallace could not help but smile as he watched Anisa put away five eggs and six slices of bacon, along with three large pancakes and four slices of toast with butter. He had heard the shower running for a long time, while he cooked her breakfast and she had finally appeared dressed in the clothes he had gotten for her. The outfit was a dark blue floor length dress that was practically transparent. The dress did nothing to hide her very firm upturned breasts, her nipples pushing against the fabric. Wallace would not admit to her that he found her almost irresistible, and it had taken all of his will power to not accept her offers to him while she sat on his bed naked from the waist up. He could not bear the thought of having her completely exposed underneath the sheer dress, so he had obtained several pairs of panties from Commander Peterson's old quarters because he thought them to be nearly the same size, the lone exception being that Anja had much larger breasts. The panties Wallace saw seemed to fit her perfectly.

Anisa finally had to stop eating because she felt as if she would explode. She had spent quite a bit of time in the shower scrubbing her body in the steaming hot water, attempting to purge herself of the vile stench of the men that had raped her over the last fourteen months. Now that she was no longer being fed a constant stream of the addictive mind drug, she had regained many of her elfin talents as her normal metabolism began to reassert itself. When she finally looked up from the plate, she saw the human man watching her with a gentle smile and holding a mug of coffee in his hand.

"Forgive... forgive me." She said quickly wiping her mouth with the cloth napkin.

"Forgive you for what?" Bill told her. "You were hungry."

Anisa looked cautiously around the room and she heard Bill chuckle to himself. "No one is watching you Anisa, of that I can assure you."

"Who... who are you?" She asked haltingly. "What is this place?"

Bill smiled and got to his feet. "Let me show you."

Anisa watched him walk to the bare wall across the room and touch several buttons. She heard a soft humming sound and a three meter section of the wall lifted, revealing the blackness of space, the gray color of moon landscape, and the blue green colored planet in the distant background. Anisa got to her bare feet slowly, her eyes wide as she came over to the wall.

"Is... is that earth?" She asked in a soft voice.

Bill nodded. "It sure is. It's beautiful isn't it?"

Anisa nodded slowly. "It's... it's breathtaking."

"Until you remember what is happening down there." Wallace spoke softly, turning to go back to the table.

Anisa turned to watch him sit back down. "This... this is a test isn't it Master?" She asked softly.

"I asked you not to call me that." Wallace spoke, taking another sip from his mug.

"I... I was given to you. You are my owner now. Of course you are my Master." Anisa said, moving closer to him. "I am your servant. I will do whatever you ask of me Master." She got down on her knees next to him. "What will you have me do?"

"There is something I want you to do." Wallace told her.

"Anything Master... do... do you wish me to please you with my mouth? I... I have been told I am very good at that as I said. I will do anything." Anisa said.

Bill took her by her arms gently and prodded her to her feet, standing in front of her. He was easily eight inches taller than Anisa, and he estimated she barely topped five foot three. "What I want you to do is think." Bill told her.

Anisa looked up at him slowly, her dark eyes filled with questions. "My... My Lord... I don't understand." She said. "Please... I do not want to be punished. Tell me what it is you desire of me."

"I want you to think." Bill said again, moving her to the chair and gently making her settle back down while still looking up at him. He pulled his own chair closer to her as she watched him. "Have you stopped to wonder why I removed your drug dispenser?"

Anisa looked at him and shook her head slowly, realizing for the first time that she was actually free of the mind controlling drug. She could feel her elfin system rapidly regaining her normal strength and abilities. Realization slowly appeared in her eyes and she looked at Wallace.

“Who are you?” She asked.

“I told you... my name is William Wallace the Third. I was once commander of this station until a certain Senator Richard Graham led a coup of sorts against me. I helped some of my people rescue a young lady named Tarifa, and they escaped...”

“Tarifa,” Anisa spoke quickly. “She... she is the Queen of the High Elves. She is very well thought of by all elves across the planet because she fights the Alliance.”

Bill nodded. “Yes she is. I assisted my people in getting her off this station, and I made a decision to remain behind. I have been acting a part since that first day, so that I could gain the trust of the man in charge. When you and the others were brought aboard, your Minister Deval gave you to me as a gift in the hopes of furthering our relationship.”

Anisa’s eyes narrowed slightly. “He is not my Minister!” She spoke softly.

“Yes... well he has a position of power within this Alliance government.” Wallace told her. “And I intend to use that to regain control of my base.”

Anisa’s eyes filled with understanding now and she looked at him clearly. “You... you want me to help you?”

William nodded slowly. “Yes I do. That is the reason I had the dispenser removed and your system purged of the drugs. I may not be in command anymore, but I still have many friends here on EDEN who follow me and think the same way I do.”

“Why... why should I trust you?” Anisa asked. “You are human! They have done nothing but enslave my people for centuries; used us as nothing more than sexual objects or expendable labor! For that matter... why should I believe anything you are saying? This could all be an elaborate plan to speak out against the Alliance, and then I would be given to the Alliance Assassins to be endlessly raped and beaten.”

William nodded. “It could be... but it isn’t. In your drugged state I could have raped you myself, countless times in the last two days. I did not. Instead... you are rapidly regaining your strength and your mind is becoming clearer as your system recovers. If I was trying to do as you say, why would I remove the drugs from your system? Even for your small size, your elfin strength is far greater than mine is. You have the speed and reflexes I could never have. Why exactly would I want a fully healed female elf helping me if I wasn’t telling you the truth?”

William got up and went to the small counter and took the red disc from the case. He held it up for Anisa to see. “What is this?” He asked.

“That... that is my ownership disc.” She answered.

William nodded. “Yes it is.” He spoke. Anisa’s eyes went wide as Wallace crushed the disc in his hand, breaking it into three pieces. One sharpened edge cut his palm deeply and blood rushed out over his skin to drip to the floor.

Anisa sprang to her feet, taking the cloth napkin from the table and going to him, wrapping it around his hand tightly. “What... what are you doing?” She gasped at him.

“I’m trying to prove to you that I need your help.” William said. “I am not your Master, or your owner. I’m asking you to play a role, just as I am so that we can drive the bastards from my station. When I have control of my base back, I will insure you can go wherever you wish, and I will take you myself.”

“You... you are asking me to fight the Alliance.” Anisa said.

“Yes I am.”

“Many have died attempting the same thing.” She told him.

Wallace nodded. “I have no doubt about that.” He said. “But they have never met a man like me. I don’t like to lose. In fact, I fucking hate it. You have a choice to make... you can decide to help me... or you can attempt to escape, in which case I will help as much as I am able without cutting off my own arm. If you manage to escape, and they recapture you, you will be a slave again. And I don’t want to imagine what they would do to you.”

“If you are discovered... if I am discovered helping you, it will be no different.” Anisa said.

Wallace nodded. "Perhaps, but at least if you help me, together we might be able to save hundreds of others, your people as well as mine."

"You are either very brave or very foolish." Anisa spoke looking at him.

William chuckled. "Yeah well I guess coming four hundred and seventy eight years into the future kind of makes you a little crazy; or senile; or both."

Anisa looked at him, her eyes confused. "I don't understand. What do you mean you've come into the future? How is that possible?"

"It's a long story." William said.

"It appears we have nothing but time, since I have decided to help you William." Anisa replied.

Wallace nodded. "Good... for a minute there I thought you would consider me a crazy fruitcake."

Anisa allowed the small smile to split her lips. "That is still a distinct possibility." She told him.

William laughed as he moved back to his chair. "Sit down. This is going to take a while."

Anisa did as he asked and moved to the chair next to him.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HIGH ELF CAPITAL MOUNTAIN CITY

Tarifa entered her private office with several aides behind her, to include her father and mother. She was not happy, and it showed in her walk and the set of her jaw.

"I want to know where Raloo obtained those records." She stated firmly.

"Milady... he has stated they were in the library archives." The female aide told her.

Tarifa settled into the chair behind the large desk and shook her head. "I am Queen." She said. "I have been through every archive in the library and never once have I ever come across records such as Raloo presented today."

"Tarifa he did say that he was given the records by the Holy One." Palina said.

"And that is how I know he is lying." Tarifa said. "In all the years that a Queen has ruled our people, the Holy One has never left records for anyone but the Queen. It is the way he set it up mother. Any information he wished to pass on to our people he gave first to the Queen. Then she would take it to the Council of Elders. Never in nearly five hundred years has he done it any other way. He has told me that himself. It was his way of ensuring the Queen never lost her appeal or power."

"What are you suggesting?" Palina asked her.

"I'm not suggesting anything." Tarifa said. "Raloo takes me for a fool. He has been on the Council for so long he thinks he should rule, and that he is so much smarter than everyone else, especially some silly female like me. He got those records from somewhere, and it wasn't from our archives."

"His logic does appear twisted." Tareif said, settling into the chair across from his daughter's desk.

"Why would he outright turn away an ally that could prove decisive in our war with the Alliance?"

"It makes no sense." Tarifa said turning to one of her aides. "I want discrete inquiries made. I want to know the whereabouts of Minister Raloo the entire time we were at Martin's encampment. Whom he spoke to, and what he did."

"How far do we press Majesty?" The male aide asked.

"Go as far as possible without exposing yourself or any others to him." Tarifa replied. "He has been acting very strange these past few months and I'm beginning to tire of it."

"What do you suspect daughter?" Tareif asked.

Tarifa looked at her father. "I suspect something, but until I have facts to prove me right, I will say nothing." She answered.

"Tarifa you don't actually believe an Elder on the Council is plotting against you do you?" Palina asked.

Tarifa looked at her mother. "Yes I do, maybe more than one mother." She replied. "Many of them have not been happy with the bills I have gotten passed. They have vetoed some of them, only to have a referendum by the people reverse their veto."

“You are talking treason Tarifa.” Her father told her.

“I don’t know what I’m talking about.” Tarifa spoke. She looked up as the military aide knocked and entered the office. He marched directly to her desk, not even pausing to honor Tareif. He carried a data pad in his hand.

“The report you requested Majesty.” He spoke.

Tarifa took the pad from him. “No one knows?” She asked.

“We conducted the investigation in complete secrecy Milady.” The officer replied. “Only five of us know its purpose.”

“Thank you Captain.” Tarifa spoke turning to read the pad.

“Tarifa what is it that you are doing?” Palina asked, her eyes going to the young officer and then back to her daughter.

Tarifa looked up at the man. “This information is accurate?” She asked disbelief in her voice.

“Our senior forensic scientist confirmed the results himself Milady.” The officer replied.

“The results are completely accurate.”

Tarifa turned to look at her mother and father her face ashen white, “By the gods.” She spoke softly.

“Tarifa what is wrong?” Palina asked, leaning forward in her chair.

“The attacks on our people this past year,” Tarifa told them. “All this time we have thought it was the Wood Elves.”

Tareif nodded. “It was the Wood Elves.” He said. “We have found evidence of Wood Elf weapons and tactics used.”

Tarifa got to her feet and looked at the military aide. “Tell them.” She said softly before going to the small counter behind her desk and pouring herself a glass of wine.

The Elf Captain looked at Tareif. “All the outward signs indicated that the villages were hit by Wood Elves War Master Tareif. It was all left for us to see. Wood Elf weapons, footprints, even portions of their uniforms, left in plain sight so that we would not need to suspect anyone else.” He told them. “After the attack in Billings, the Queen secretly ordered me to lead a team of forensic scientists to the village there.”

“The attack on the village in Billings was done over a month ago.” Tareif spoke. “There have been three attacks since!”

The Captain nodded. “We visited each site after the attacks War Master, after the bodies of our people were taken away by the advance patrols and the Hoppers. We returned from the last site only this morning, our mission done all in secret.”

“But why do this?” Tareif asked, “For what purpose?”

Tarifa looked at her father. “Papa... what if I told you that the Wood elves were not responsible for those attacks.”

Tareif’s eyes went wide and he came to his feet. “These attacks on our people were brutal and savage daughter. To stand there and say they were not committed by the Wood Elves is bordering on treason itself.”

“They weren’t.” Tarifa told him confidently.

“War Master, our team went over every site.” The Captain spoke. “We put together the finest forensic people we could find, a team drawn from Pacifica and right here in Mountain City. These attacks were made to appear they were committed by the Wood Elves when they were not. Whoever conducted them were very good at what they do, hiding their true identities, using only Wood Elf weapons and tactics, fighting as the Wood Elves do. They wanted us to think it was the Wood Elves War Master.”

“But why...?” Palina asked.

“To initiate a war between the Wood Elves and ourselves mother.” Tarifa answered.

“What would a war between us and the Wood Elves accomplish for anyone else?” Palina asked. “It would...” Palina stopped talking, as the answer came to her and her eyes grew wide.

Tareif was much quicker on the uptake when it came to matters like this, and his face was angry and he clenched his fists tightly, “The Alliance.” He hissed.

Tarifa nodded slowly. “They want to start a war between us and the Wood Elves.”

“To what end?” Palina asked again.

“They know that while we outnumber the Wood Elves, Dysea’s warriors are much better trained than the majority of our forces.” Tarifa said. “And while the Alliance has never been able to come into the deep

timber and defeat us, they know the Wood Elves can. They can infiltrate our cities and wreak havoc on our defenses and our military. Humans we would detect easily, but Wood Elves disguised as High Elves we would not.”

Tareif nodded slowly. “While it pains me to admit it, Tarifa is right. The Wood Elves are exceptional warriors, and only my Dragoons would be able to match against them. They could cripple us in a matter of weeks. And then the Alliance could march right in and destroy us.”

“We must inform the Council!” Palina spoke up. “They must know!”

Tarifa shook her head quickly. “No!” She exclaimed. “It was the Council that ordered the sites of these attacks cleared so quickly. They ordered that only the bodies were to be gathered and returned. They specifically instructed that no other action was to be taken.” Tarifa sipped her wine. “No mother... I don’t intend to inform the Council. At least not until I find the traitor or traitors on that Council and make them beg me for death.”

Tareif grinned at his daughter. “And then I will spread their remains across several hundred miles of land to be devoured by the animals of the mountains.” He growled.

Dysea sat up quickly instantly awake, her hand curling around the blade that always rested beside her when she slept. Her eyes found Leland as he entered the abandoned house. The men and women who had lived here were long dead, their blood staining the ground outside.

Leland approached her quickly but silently, his eyes wide. “We have company.” He whispered to her.

Dysea reached for her rifle as she stood up. “Is it High Elves?” She asked.

Leland shook his head. “They are too noisy. I suspect Alliance troops.”

Dysea looked at him, “Alliance troops! Here?”

“We have been discovered my Queen.” Leland told her.

“How many are there Leland?” Dysea asked quickly.

“I estimate at least a company.” He replied gravely.

Dysea shook her head to clear the remaining thoughts of the dream she was having from her head. A dream of her nestled between Tarifa’s satiny thighs eagerly lapping away at her peach tasting pussy, while Martin pounded his huge cock into her from behind. Her dreams were becoming more and more vivid, and she found that she was not at all appalled at the idea of sleeping with another woman. She squeezed her thighs together feeling the wetness there as she reached for her weapon.

“Why did we not detect them?” Dysea asked, chambering a round into her rifle. “The Hopper’s instruments should have detected any approaching craft.”

“Not if they landed outside its twenty kilometer range and walked here Milady.” Leland replied.

Dysea looked at him, “Alliance Assassins! It has to be! Only they could cover that much territory in such a short time.” She gasped. “Get the Holy One! We must withdraw!”

“Withdraw to where?” Leland asked. “We can not go east or south. The Holy One will never make it through the mountains to the north. The only way we can go is west, and that takes us directly into High Elf territory. And the mountains there could very well kill us all!”

“It’s that or we die here Leland!” Dysea spoke. “Quickly, if they are Alliance Assassins, they could be on us at any moment!”

HIGH ELF CAPITAL MOUNTIAN CITY

The objects of Dysea’s dream were currently in a situation themselves, though their situation was considerably much more pleasurable.

Radama had quietly escorted Martin to Tarifa’s private residence high above the main portion of Mountain City. Her home was large and built securely between six towering oak trees that reached hundreds of feet into the air and had bases that were easily forty feet in diameter. A private lift was the only access to her

home, and the entrance was guarded by two elves of the Royal Guard that were quite large for elves, and very stern looking.

Tarifa's bed was a mass of tangled sheets and pillows now, as Martin had spent the last two hours causing her to shriek in passion. Her naked body was stretched out on her bed, the satin sheets cool against her skin, but the throbbing cock in her small hand was extremely hot and rapidly getting harder. Martin lay on the bed, his hands folded under his head as they gazed at each other.

"You're insatiable." He told her with an adoring smile.

Tarifa smiled and ran her tongue along his neck and jaw. "I can't help it." She told him softly. "You are addicting."

Martin used one hand to smooth back her wild hair and he kissed her softly. "You are addicting, and intoxicating and exceptionally delicious."

"I want to taste you Martin." Tarifa said her voice husky as she gazed at him with her smoldering sapphire eyes.

"I'm at your mercy Milady." He told her with a smile.

Tarifa squeezed his thick shaft and grinned wickedly as it throbbed in her hand. "You are ready for more I see. I will have to fix this for you."

"Well... I'm not going to stop you." Martin said.

Tarifa's eyes were wide in renewed sexual energy, and she lowered her head to his broad chest, her lips teasing his nipples as she slowly nibbled and licked her way down his rippled abdomen. She twisted her body opposite of his on the bed, stretching her legs out alongside his head until she was gazing at the now pulsing and fully erect cock in her hand. She could not even get her entire hand around the shaft because it was so thick, and as she moved her face closer to his cock she could only feel awe at its size and wonder again how she was able to take Martin's cock so deeply inside her.

Tarifa stretched out her tongue as her hand gripped the base of his huge pole and she used just the tip to trace up the entire length of his thick shaft to the flared and engorged head. She heard Martin hiss in pleasure, and his hands came from underneath his head to grip the bed on one side, and begin stroking her long leg on the other. Tarifa smiled and inched closer to his cock, inhaling the musky mint aroma of his pulsing meat. She pressed his cock to her face, closing her eyes in bliss as she gently stroked his pole. The pleasure she was getting from sleeping with Martin was beyond anything she had experienced up until this point in her life. Her mother had been right... she had denied herself for so long because of her duties as Queen; and now all that frustration she was working out with Martin. She was going to savor every thick inch of his cock and sink as much of his huge shaft into her throat as she could without passing out.

She started at the base of Martin's cock, using her tongue to lather his apple sized hairless balls until her saliva coated them completely. She brought one of her hands up to cup his soaked nuts, her nails delicately tracing the outline and tight skin. She switched to his throbbing shaft and again used her tongue like a cat, licking the entire length of his cock, up and down, soaking it with her saliva. On her last, long torturous lick she came to the flared cockhead and slipped her warm mouth over it.

Tarifa felt Martin's leg stiffen and she heard his gasp of delight as her hot mouth engulfed the head of his pulsing cock. Tarifa's eyes were wide as she looked down the thick shaft and realized just how large Martin was. Twelve inches did not seem that big, at least not until you had the large cockhead between your lips and you were staring down the length of his thick shaft. Using her tongue, Tarifa bathed his cockhead in her saliva, as she inched more of his cock between her lips. Her own body was on fire, her nipples burning into the skin of Martin's muscular thigh, and her pussy beginning to get very wet. Tarifa jacked his cock with one hand while using her other to manipulate and squeeze his balls. She could feel them expanding as they churned and readied the prize she so desired. Tarifa tossed her head from side to side, her raven black hair splaying over Martin's lower abdomen as she forced another three inches of his huge cock into her mouth. She could feel every vein of his thick pole, and her tongue never stopped working, stretching out in front of her lips, lapping at the ridge on the top of his cock, as her face descended further down.

Tarifa fought down the overpowering urge to gag when the huge head touched the back of her throat. She gripped the base of his cock tighter, holding him still as she breathed deeply, small tears forming in her eyes. She strained her head upwards, and inhaled deeply through her nose before forcing her lips further down on his cock. As another two inches of Martin's throbbing cock slipped between her lips and into her tight throat

Tarifa felt him grab her legs and lift her hips slightly. She gagged as this action caused another inch of his steel hard pole to further invade her tight throat and she was about to pull back until she felt his lips close over her dripping pussy tightly and suck hard on her enflamed clit.

Tarifa started to cum, her orgasm ripping through her unchecked. Without thinking she pushed her head forward and down and engulfed the last four inches of his thick cock into her tight throat in a single breath and gulp. She didn't stop until her soft lips spread out at the base of his cock; her small nose buried his nutsack. Tarifa wanted to drink his essence, to suck it completely out of him. She had his cock so far down her throat she could feel the throbbing head nearly ready to explode. Her thighs quivered and her toes curled as she felt his thick cock expand within the confines of her velvety throat. She felt the thick veins that extended the length of his cock begin to pulse madly, and her hand that cupped his huge balls felt the surge of boiling cum as it began its rise through his massive pole.

Tarifa was cumming continuously now, her sweet juices running into Martin's lapping mouth and across his face. As she felt the boiling cum rise through his thick shaft she exploded again, whimpering loudly with his thick cock buried so deeply in her throat. Martin suddenly went completely rigid, his hands reaching for and finding her head. Tarifa closed her eyes in sexual ecstasy as his hands held her head tightly against his groin while he came deep into her mouth and throat. His first eruption of blast furnace hot cum unloaded directly into her belly, spreading a warm sensation throughout her entire being. She felt his hands lift from her head and grasp her tight ass cheeks as he continued to lap away at her drenched pussy. Tarifa wanted to taste him and she pulled her head off his cock a few inches, keeping her lips tightly sealed around the madly twitching pole. The next blast of cum hit the back of her throat and tongue, and Tarifa's eyes closed dreamily as she swallowed. That his cum was so sweet and thick flashed through her mind before the third eruption caused her to swallow quickly to keep up with the massive flow. Tarifa knew Martin came powerfully, his cum filling her to overflowing every time he emptied into her pussy, so she kept up her swallowing so as not to lose a single drop of his delicious load.

Tarifa's eyes sprang open wide and she cried out around the huge shaft between her lips as she felt Martin's large finger slip easily into her virgin ass and his lips clamped tightly around her battered clit. Her lower body shuddered in his hands as she experienced one of the most powerful orgasms he had yet given to her, and some of his cum spilled from her lips to leak down his shaft. Tarifa dug her nails into his thighs as she moaned loudly in pleasure, but she kept her lips locked around his pulsing cock until she felt the last surge of his cum splash onto her tongue. She savored the flavor before hungrily swallowing it down, allowing it to fill her warm belly. She quickly pulled his cock from between her lips and let her face drop onto his groin, his softening cock resting against her cheek as she clenched her pussy in the throes of her own extremely powerful orgasm.

As her orgasm subsided Tarifa felt Martin pulling her body back up to him. He got her turned around and rolled over atop her, kissing her deeply much to Tarifa's surprise as she still had traces of his cum on her lips. It didn't seem to bother him in the least, and Tarifa tasted herself on his lips as well as they shared the kiss. When they parted, Tarifa wasted no time in using her tongue to lap up the remaining traces of her own cum from Martin's face, truly tasting herself for the first time and finding it not at all unpleasant.

"You... you are incredible." He whispered to her as he nibbled her neck, his fangs slightly extended.

Tarifa smiled happily, her nails dragging gently along his powerful back as she stretched out one of her long legs to curl around his hip.

"You taste quite good Martin." She whispered in his ear, licking her moist lips to emphasize her words. "I will have to do that much more often. It's very filling."

"But only if I can have you as well." He told her, rolling over until she was on top of him. Her silky hair spilled across his shoulders, her breasts crushed against his hard chest.

Tarifa dropped her head to his chest, her fingers caressing his rib cage in long strokes, and she sighed contently. "That is an arrangement I would be most satisfied with." She said.

Martin pulled her even tighter to him, his arms completely engulfing her body, and Tarifa smiled dreamily in response as she slowly drifted into a wonderful sleep. Martin kissed her head gently and followed her moments later.

Dysea and the six soldiers with her ground to a halt near the base of Thor Peak. They had traveled fast and as quietly as they could for the last two hours, abandoning the Hopper near the village. To take the short range hover craft would have been suicide, as the Alliance would have either shot them with a missile, or followed them to wherever they eventually stopped. All of the elves with Dysea were sweating and drawing deep breaths. This had been the longest run any of them had ever made with the exception of Dysea and Leland, and while most of the terrain was clear enough to navigate; it was very mountainous in the area.

Dysea settled next to Leland at the rear of their small group, tightly gripping her assault rifle. "Are they still on us?" She asked.

Leland nodded. "No more than two miles back. They are not pressing, just moving along at a rapid pace."

"They are toying with us," Dysea spoke. "Herding us until we are too tired to fight them; and then they will attack."

Leland lowered the wrist mounted map locator he wore. "The Holy One can not continue Dysea." He said softly. "He is not an elf. In excellent physical shape he may be for his age, the fact remains he is old and can not move like us."

Dysea's eyes narrowed. "Are you suggesting we leave him?"

"He would understand Dysea." Leland spoke. "He knows this very thing. If we have to move at his pace, they will catch us and we will die."

"Never...!" Dysea hissed loudly. "I will not leave him for the Alliance animals to find! Never...!" She whirled away from him before Leland could continue and went quickly to where Walter was thirstily downing a full canteen of water. He looked at her as she came up to him.

"Dysea..." He started.

Dysea took a cloth from her belt and bathed the sweat from his forehead, "Rest Holy One." She said softly.

"You have to leave me child." Walter spoke. "I am slowing all of you down. They will catch up to us."

"I will not leave you to those barbarians Holy One." Dysea spoke. "I will carry you if I have to."

"Child... you must survive. You have greater things still to achieve in your life." Walter told her.

Dysea shook her head. "I do not care about what you say of this Martin and Tarifa!" She spat. "I will not leave you to die at the hands of our enemies, and something tells me that they would not either! The Alliance would torture you until you begged them for death. I could not live with that Holy One." She looked into his face to see his eyes wide. "Holy One... what is wrong?"

"That's it." Walter spoke.

"What is it?"

"Martin." Walter replied. "I need to contact Martin."

"Holy One, we don't even know where he is?" Dysea spoke. "How could you contact him?"

"He had Tarifa with him when he escaped EDEN." Walter spoke. "He would have returned her to Mountain City."

"The High Elf capital, are you sure?" Dysea asked.

Walter nodded. "Yes. His first priority would have been to set up a secure encampment for the men and women he had with him. He would not abandon them."

"How does that help us Holy One?" Dysea asked.

Leland had moved over to them now and was listening closely. "Mountain City is deep in the Salmon River Mountains Holy One. That is hundreds of miles away." He said.

Walter nodded. "I know... but if I know Martin he would have set up some sort of long range transmission tower by now. That tower would extend the range of his team's implants and radios by a factor of twenty. I have the same type of implant... I just haven't used it in many years. We would be at the extreme range of the tower, but it's worth a shot." Walter cocked his head slightly and turned to Leland. "Your locator antenna Leland, attach it to my vest. The implants were designed to use our body's own electrical currents to boost the signal's power."

Leland did as he was told without question. It took him only ten seconds before kneeling back in front of Walter.

Walter touched his jaw and took a deep breath. "This is The Creator to The Prodigal Son. Respond."

REFUGEE ENCAMPMENT

“...know you wanted to spice up our love live Tina, but are you sure this is the right way?” Ben asked. He and Tina sat in what was now the Communications center aboard one of the Mark Nine Transports. He held the mug of coffee in his hand and looked at the blond head of the woman he had been together with for going on ten years now. Ben looked at her for a long moment, and realized that even though she was ten years younger than his forty-five years; she had never even shown an interest in another man.

Tina turned from her seat and looked at him with a smile. “It’s not another man Ben.” She told him. “I don’t need another man.”

Ben looked confused. “Ok... you lost me.” He said. “What are we talking about then?”

“Endith you bone head!” Tina spoke.

Ben’s eyes sprang open, “Endith?” He exclaimed. “You’re joking right?”

“What? You don’t find her attractive?” Tina asked.

“That... that’s not it! I... I’m very confused here.” Ben said.

Tina turned in her chair. “Why do you think she was helping us so much the past few days? She stuck her tits in your face enough times! She likes us Ben!”

“Us?” Ben asked.

Tina nodded. “I talked with her quite a bit while you were playing tough guy with the boys! She’s attracted to both of us. Her position as Tarifa’s senior lieutenant has not allowed her to explore her own sexuality, and when she saw Marty banging the crap out of Tarifa on the observation deck, she almost went into heat right there.”

“And... and you are ok with this?” Ben asked.

Tina shrugged. “I’d be lying if I said I never thought about being with another woman.”

“Tina... I’m old enough to be her dad.” Ben said.

Tina laughed. “She’s an elf Ben. She may look twenty-one... but she’s really a hundred and seventeen years old.” She said. “And if you want to get technical... you’re over four hundred years old, and I’m close to that mark.”

“Wait a minute... have you and her...” Ben asked.

Tina blushed slightly, her blue eyes gleaming. “We... kissed.” She said. “It was very nice.”

“I don’t need another woman Tina.” Ben told her seriously. “I’m very happy with you.”

Tina moved next to him and knelt next to his chair. “I know that silly.” She said. “And I am very happy with you, very happy Ben. I just thought it might be something different for the both of us. I know Endith is very up for the experience.”

“She told you that?” Ben asked surprised.

Tina laughed. “Yes she did.” She replied. “I get the feeling that these elves we have met are considerably more open about their sexuality. You can’t tell me the thought of two beautiful women sucking your big cock doesn’t turn you on baby. I know you to well for that.”

Ben looked at her. “So now I’m big?” He asked.

“I didn’t want to stroke your already overly large ego dear.” Tina said. “But you are the biggest I’ve ever had.” She said sweetly.

“What about surfer Joe in Maui?” Ben asked. “You know, before we got together. I heard you talking to the other female pilots and you said he was huge.”

Tina laughed and sat herself in Ben’s lap. “Yeah he was; a huge bore!” She told him, kissing his cheek.

Ben looked at her, his eyes turning into mock anger. “I should punish you for lying to me all these years.” He said.

Tina waggled her eyebrows. “Is that a promise?”

“You are a very...”

“This is The Creator to The Prodigal Son! Respond.” The words burst out of the radio console, causing both their heads to jerk around toward the panel.

“What was that?” Tina asked climbing off Ben’s lap and going to the console. Ben moved to another station next to her.

“It’s a weak signal!” Ben spoke, his hands moving over the panel.

“This is The Creator to The Prodigal son! Respond Please!” The male voice blasted from the speaker again.

“Juice the power.” Tina snapped, her fingers typing furiously on the keyboard. “I’m trying to triangulate the signal.

“We’re at eighty percent power!” Ben spoke. “I’m searching the databanks for those call signs!” His fingers were flying over his keyboard with incredible speed, and his eyes widened when the reply came back. “Tina will you take a look at this!”

Tina turned from her screen and looked at what Ben was pointing to. Her own eyes grew wider.

“Marty?” She spoke. “I’ve never heard Marty go by The Prodigal Son.”

“The Creator to the Prodigal Son, please respond! It is Alpha Gamma Three nine one! Repeat, Alpha Gamma three nine one! Respond please!”

Ben looked at Tina, “Contact Marty now!” He ordered.

Tarifa’s body was stretched out on top of Martin’s, her hands slowly wandering over his hard muscles as she traced the tattoos on his chest and rippled abdomen. She felt his fingers caressing the back of her shoulder and down her spine with a gentleness that she had come to love. They were both resting and simply enjoying what time they had left before Martin had to leave. Tarifa knew this time together with him had been what they had both needed to keep from going crazy with all that had happened in the last few weeks. They both needed someone to reach out to and be with, and discovering each other was a godsend. They needed no words to express to each other what they both felt, and words would have only ruined the peaceful moment for them both.

It wouldn’t last.

Tarifa felt Martin sigh heavily and take a deep breath, his chest rising and falling. She turned to look at his face as he spoke.

“Raptor One here! Go!”

“Martin its Tina,” Her voice filled his ear implant. “We’re picking up a low band transmission from the border of Wyoming and Idaho in the Teton Mountain range. Originating call sign is The Creator! They are trying to contact The Prodigal Son! We looked it up Marty and that is you.”

Tarifa saw Martin’s face freeze in place and he sat up quickly. “Martin, what is wrong?” She asked, rising up in the bed next to him.

“The Creator, are you sure?” Martin gasped. “What else?”

“Positive Marty, and there was something about an Alpha Gamma three nine one.” Tina replied. “We can’t find that code anywhere in the data banks Marty.”

“That’s because it’s not in the data banks!” Martin told them. “It’s an emergency code that only one other person in the world knows. Patch it through Tina, quickly!” Martin climbed from the bed heedless of the fact that he was completely naked. Tarifa gazed at his body quickly feeling a renewed surge of desire, but knew that something was happening and they did not have the time. “A map Tarifa, I need a map!”

Tarifa’s eyes were wide, but she clutched the sheet to her body as she moved to get the computer map chart from her living area.

“You’re patched through Marty!” Tina’s voice rang out in his implant.

“Creator this is The Prodigal Son! Responding to Alpha Gamma three nine one! Repeat! Creator this is The Prodigal Son!”

Walter shook his head as Leland and Dysea looked at him. “I’m sorry... I thought for sure he would be monitoring all the low band frequencies. I’m sorry!”

“Leland we must establish a defensive perimeter around that large rock!” Dysea spoke quickly. “If we are to die, let us take as many of them with us as we can.” Her head snapped around when the Holy One grabbed her arm.

“Creator this is The Prodigal Son! Responding to Alpha Gamma three nine one! Repeat! Creator this is Prodigal Son!” Martin’s voice echoed in Walter’s ear implant.

Walter grabbed the small team radio on Leland’s vest and turned the knobs on it quickly. The radio crackled with static and then they heard Martin’s voice as well.

“Creator this is The Prodigal Son! Damn it Walter will you respond!”

“Martin my boy, you don’t know how good it is to hear your voice.” Walter spoke.

There was a pause and then the voice came through again. “Tina, lock onto this signal and jack the power to full! Walter, are you there?”

“Martin can you hear me?”

The third time was a charm as Martin’s voice came through as if he was standing next to them on the radio. “Walter! Where are you?”

Walter’s face showed an enormous amount of relief on it. “Martin there is not much time to explain my boy. We are being pursued by some rather unpleasant individuals with an assortment of rather nasty things on their minds. Is there any way you can assist us?”

“How many are in your group?” Martin asked.

“There are seven of us total!” Walter replied.

“Tina, are you and Ben monitoring?” Martin’s voice spoke.

“Copy that Skipper!” The strange female voice replied.

“Warm up two Raptors! Have Beta Team load out and you and Ben pick me up here on the top platform! Make it happen like yesterday Tina! Yesterday!”

“We’ll see you in ten minutes boss!” Tina replied.

“Walter is there anyplace you can get to that will provide you protection?” Martin asked.

Martin looked at Tarifa as she brought the computer map chart back into the room. “Lock onto frequency 69387.2.” Martin told her. “It’s low band.”

Tarifa settled onto the bed next to him and began punching in the coordinates. Her eyes grew wide. “That’s our territory!” She said. “Walter is the Holy One’s given name isn’t it Martin?” She saw Martin nod at her words. “How is he back in our territory? Endith told me she made the transfer to the Wood Elves with no problems.”

“Martin... I’m not even sure where we are.” Walter’s voice replied.

Martin leaned over Tarifa’s shoulder, looking at the chart. He could see the small red dot, which signaled their position on the map. “Can you enter the frequency so you can hear and talk too?” Martin asked her.

Tarifa nodded and her small fingers keyed in the numbers on the small control panel. Static burst from the map chart and then she heard Walter’s voice come through.

“Martin did you copy that?” Walter asked.

“I copied sir. We’re trying to find a safe place for you to be picked up.” Martin explained.

Tarifa pointed. “Here!” She exclaimed. “Holy One you must get across Moran’s Canyon and down the other side. We have a small defensive encampment at the base of Traverse Peak!”

“Tarifa my child, is that you?” Walter’s voice asked.

“Yes Holy One! You must hurry!”

“Tarifa I have six Wood Elves with me!” Walter spoke. “We were investigating the attacks on Wood Elf villages and discovered some very interesting things! The short version is that the Wood Elves did not commit the attacks on the High Elf villages. I need to know if they will be safe!”

Tarifa didn’t hesitate. “I have already made that same determination Holy One. I give you my word Holy One!” She replied. “Where you are concerned, we are brothers and sisters all, no matter Wood Elf or High Elf! They will be safe!”

“Martin how soon can you be there?” Walter asked.

“It looks like it’s a little over two hundred miles sir! I’ll be there guns blazing in less than an hour!” Martin answered. “Can you hold?”

Dysea looked at Walter, a new set to her beautiful jaw. “We will hold!” She barked.

“Then get moving whoever you are!” Martin ordered. “And if he dies... I’m coming for you! I’ll contact you when we are in the air!”

Martin looked at Tarifa. “I have to go.” He said, searching for his clothes.

“Martin... I will go with you.” Tarifa spoke, setting aside the map chart and taking his arm. “This could be what I have been seeking. I am coming with you.” Tarifa said, getting to her feet and moving to the control panel on her bedside table. She pressed a button.

“That isn’t necessary Tarifa.” Martin said, pulling on his pants.

“Yes my Queen?” Radama’s voice came over the com almost immediately.

Tarifa looked at Martin as she spoke. “Radama, the Holy One is in danger! Have my father prepare,” Tarifa saw Martin hold up ten fingers before continuing to dress. “Have my father prepare ten Dragoon soldiers. His finest, with full armor and weapons and then meet us on the north platform.”

“At once Milady,” Radama replied.

Dysea looked at the small radio in stunned surprise after hearing Martin’s threat. She glanced up to Walter.

“I see we are not the only ones who care deeply for you Holy One.” She said. “He threatened me.”

Walter smiled as he got to his feet. “He is stubborn and brash. And he absolutely hates to lose.” He told her. “You will like him.”

Dysea felt the smile cross her face. “I think I just might.” She said turning to where Leland looked at her. “Quickly, Leland lead us out! We must get to Traverse Peak within an hour!”

Tareif led his Dragoons onto the platform high above the city. They were all heavily armed and wore full body armor. He spied his daughter as they sprinted from the elevator lift and he headed for her.

Tarifa had changed into her own combat uniform with full body armor, but she now wore a K12 holstered to her thigh, and was holding an HK74. She had tied her raven colored hair into a tight pony tail that came around her left shoulder to curl under her throat. Tareif came up to her, a confused look on his face.

“Tarifa what is happening? Radama said the Holy One is in danger.” Tareif spoke.

“Yes papa.” Tarifa answered. “Martin received a transmission from the Holy One saying he and a small group of Wood elves were fleeing from Alliance troops. They are in High Elf territory! We are going with him to rescue the Holy One.”

“Hunter received this transmission?” Tareif asked, “Where?”

“That is not important.” Tarifa answered, looking at the Dragoons as they approached. “The Holy One has requested our assistance. There will be at least six Wood elves in his company. They are currently fleeing from what appears to be a company of Alliance troops, probably Alliance Cadre Assassins. The Wood Elves are not to be considered hostile, and you will treat them all with respect! Is that clear?”

Tarifa saw the nods from all the Dragoons. “Our weapons will be ineffective against Alliance Assassins daughter.” Tareif said softly. “You know this.”

“Our weapons yes, but not the weapons that Martin had made for us.” She replied. “When we board their flying craft, we will be given weapons that are very effective against Alliance assassins. I have seen them myself.”

“Tarifa... I understand you trust this man.” Her father said. “But I still have my own suspicions child. We need to...”

“Tarifa we go in two minutes!” Martin yelled to her from where he knelt with Danny and Julie and the others in his team, as well as Radama and Endith.

Tareif's eyes went wide when he heard Martin use her name so casually, and he went from looking at Martin to where Tarifa stood quite proudly and completely unashamed. "I have no suspicions Papa." She said softly. "And you should trust me on this."

Tareif watched his oldest daughter turn and head back to where Martin knelt. He looked at his Dragoons who also had heard Martin speak so familiarly. "This goes no further!" He snapped. "Speak to no one of what you heard or will hear. If you do I will kill you myself. Is that clear?"

The Dragoons nodded instantly. Their heads turned as they heard the low roaring come from beneath them, and suddenly one of the black insect looking ships called Raptors appeared menacingly from the side out of the clouds and slowly settled to the platform.

"We go now!" Tareif yelled over the roar, and he and his men followed Martin and the others into the belly of the Raptor.

Anja walked along the center of the Raptor's main aisle among the elves and Martin's team. "...cut two of these ugly bastards open!" She was saying. "They are hard to kill... but not impossible. The HKs will take them down like anything else, but if you get in close it's another story." She looked at Tareif and the other elves. "They are stronger than you, so don't try to go one on one. You have the advantage of speed regardless of what you think. Your reflexes will save you. If you get in close to them, switch to your bladed weapons." She held her hand out to the nearest Dragoon soldier motioning for the large knife at his side. He removed it from the sheath and handed it to her. Anja held it up. "Your bladed weapons are finer than anything any of us have ever seen, we all agree on that, including Martin, and trust me when I say he has used almost every bladed weapon known to man. If you get in close, find a way to get behind them and strike for the back of the head. Their armor is weakest there, and any of us could drive a blade into their skulls. Hit them there and they'll drop like sacks of shit!"

Anja saw many of the Dragoons look to where Martin was standing near the front of the Raptor looking at the monitor with Danny and the Master Chief. She handed the knife back to the Dragoon soldier with a nod.

"You are human." The Dragoon said his statement not a question.

Anja nodded. "Yes I am."

"You will fight beside us on the ground?" He asked.

"I will fight right next to you." She replied. "All of us will."

"Why?"

Anja looked at him, "Because it's the right thing to do." She answered.

"War Master Tareif!" Martin spoke from the front.

Tareif turned and saw Martin motion him forward. Tareif looked at his daughter as he got to his feet and they both moved forward to where Martin was standing.

"You know this area?" Martin asked, "this encampment?"

Tareif nodded. "Very well." He answered.

"We have two teams and your detachment of Dragoons War Master," Martin told him. "Walter... the Holy One... they are at the encampment and digging in. What is the best way to spread our forces out for maximum defensive capabilities?"

Tareif looked at the map on the large monitor and fell immediately into his role as a commander of troops. "The east side is the most heavily fortified. Tell the Holy One to move his group to the bunker there." Tareif spoke confidently. "I recommend we put one force down on the south perimeter and one in the northeast. The heavy weapons will cover each corner, and we can move to reinforce the east from either position."

Martin nodded. "Ben!" He spoke into his implant. "Have Raptor Three put down in the northeast of the encampment! Deploy north and south from there!" Martin looked at Tareif as he spoke and saw the man nod in agreement. "Take us in right over the south end."

"Copy that Marty," Ben's voice sounded.

Martin looked at the Master Chief. "Spin it up Master Chief. It's time to bust some heads." He spoke.

Tony and Danny grinned, "Aye Skipper!" He turned to the back of the Raptor. "Pablo! Spin it up!"

Tareif turned and watched the dark skinned genome get to his feet and reach behind him to a panel. He flipped some switches and Tareif winced quickly when music began to blare from speakers situated all around the interior of the Raptor.

Tareif and his daughter watched with smiles slowly creeping across their faces as the Genomes in Martin's team began to move with the beat of the music as they prepped for the mission. There were no vocals to the music, but the tempo and pitch of the instruments indicated it was a song meant for heading into battle, which was what they were about to do. Tareif watched his Dragoon soldiers as they simply viewed the genomes prep their equipment, all of them moving in sync with the music. Soon he saw their own bodies begin to soak in the high pitch rhythm and loosen up. Some of his finest troops began to move their heads in tune to the music, smiles forming on their faces as they carefully inspected and got familiar with their new weapons.

Tareif turned to Martin who had a very large smile on his face. Martin met his eyes and bobbed his head. "This is our war cry!" Martin told him.

Tareif turned back to look at his soldiers and he saw Anja going to each one of them, issuing out injectors, explaining to them and pointing to their ears and jaws. He turned again when the attractive dark skinned genome female tapped him on the shoulder. She held out the injector to him and one to Tarifa.

"These are microscopic communications implants!" Julie spoke loudly. "The receiver is for just inside your ear, the transmitter for your jaw. They are painless when injected. It will allow you to communicate with all of us. We'll be using channel ten for this op! Just speak out loud and tell it what channel and you will go to that one automatically."

"Is this necessary?" Tareif asked.

Julie looked at him, her eyes bright. "When we go to war sir, we move fast and hard. Anyone in our way gets cut down, and anyone who can't talk to us gets left behind." She smiled. "I can remove them after the mission if you want sir, but you might be surprised."

Tarifa did not hesitate and took the injector. She lifted it to the inside of her ear and pressed the trigger. There was a slight hiss and her face winced quickly, but then it was gone. She loaded the transmitter and then did the same, with the exact same results. Tarifa looked at him, "Papa?"

Tareif sighed and then did exactly as his daughter had done. In ten seconds the small communications implants were inside his body, and his eyes opened wide as the voice traffic on Channel ten came into his ear as clear as if he was standing next to every one on the Raptor. He could hear his troops talking and he could hear the genomes as they prepped. He looked at Tarifa who wore the same amazed expression as the rest of his troops and himself.

"Papa... this is amazing." Tarifa echoed as she stood next to them.

"War Master... our command channel is nineteen." Martin told him. "That is reserved for you and I alone."

Tareif looked at him. "All I need do is speak the channel number and it will change?" He asked.

Martin nodded. "Yes sir, pretty neat huh?" Martin waited for Tareif to turn back around and he stepped up close behind Tarifa and bent next to her ear. "Our channel is twenty-six, you delicious tasting she-elf you."

Tarifa smiled at Martin's words and felt him step back as her father turned around to face her. He saw the smile on his daughter's face and glanced at Martin's back. He gently took her arm and pulled her off to the side. "You have told no one he speaks our language Tarifa. Why?"

"I didn't feel it was necessary." Tarifa replied.

"He called you by your name Tarifa." Her father spoke softly. "You are Queen of the High Elves child... you can not have a relationship with this man."

Tarifa looked at her father as her eyes narrowed. "I will have a relationship with anyone I choose father." She said firmly. "Martin... Martin and I enjoy each other's company. There is nothing wrong with that."

"Tarifa... I... I have already promised your hand in marriage," He stated bluntly. "His name is Telan, and he is an officer in my Division. He is a fine young man Tarifa and he has risen up through the ranks quite easily. His family is one of the more powerful families in Pacifica. You will like him."

Tarifa looked at her father, her eyes wide and suddenly becoming very angry. "Papa you had no right!" She exclaimed in as low a voice as she could.

“You are my oldest daughter!” Tareif hissed. “I had every right. It has been the custom of our people for centuries. He will be arriving in Mountain City tomorrow to greet you.”

“I will not allow you to do this Papa.” She stated.

“You have no choice!” Tareif spoke. “You may be Queen... but you are still my daughter, and you will abide my authority in this.”

“Does Mama know what you have done?” She asked.

“Your mother knows our customs and will abide by them as well.” Tareif told her.

“I will not...” The bouncing of the Raptor caused Tarifa to stop talking and turn.

“Six minutes people,” Martin called out.

Tarifa turned back to her father. “This discussion is not over with War Master Tareif!” She hissed mightily at him, surprising her father with the venom in her words.

Tarifa turned her back to him and walked to where Martin stood viewing the monitor. He looked down at her and smiled warmly, and she returned the smile.

“Three minutes!” Ben called from his pilot’s seat. “I’m reducing power to two thirds! Spool up the Sabot Cannon! Extend rocket pods!”

“Copy that!” Tina spoke from her left seat. “Sabot cannon coming online now, and the rocket pods are extending and locked!”

“Tina?” The female voice called from behind them.

Tina turned in her chair and her face grew brighter, “Endith!” She called.

Endith came fully into the cockpit and came right up to Tina’s chair. “The Queen has suggested I remain onboard and facilitate the coordination between our groups.”

“Sounds like a good idea to me.” Tina replied with a genuine smile, her blue eyes bright. “I missed you the last couple of days.”

Endith smiled shyly, her tanned skin blushing ever so slightly. She leaned over quickly and planted her soft lips on Tina’s in a warm and passionate kiss. Tina’s eyes went a little wider at Endith’s boldness, but they closed quickly in joyful bliss as she felt Endith’s tongue push into her mouth and tease her own quivering tongue.

“Ahem!” Ben’s voice interrupted them. “Ladies... excuse me; I’m trying very hard to fly my ship here.”

Endith smiled and looked at Tina as they parted; both of their lips moist. “I have missed you as well.” She said softly. She turned quickly to Ben and leaned over, pressing her firm breasts into his shoulder as she kissed his lips, surprising him with her boldness and the softness of her lips. “I have missed you too Benjamin.” She told him softly.

Ben looked at her quickly and saw her radiant face and bright blue eyes. “Take... take the engineering chair.” He managed to stutter out the words.

Ben looked at Tina as Endith moved behind them and settled into the engineering station. Tina smiled at him and turned back to her controls.

Dysea and Leland searched the skies above them for any sign of the approaching craft, but all that greeted them were the usual noises of the night. Dysea turned back to where Walter sat at the back of the small building, away from the windows and the two doors.

“Holy One... you are sure they will come?” She asked him, the tone of her voice almost desperate. “The Alliance is almost upon us!”

Walter looked at her. “Have faith Dysea.” Walter said with a smile. “Have faith. They will be here. Martin does not give his word and not keep it.”

Leland looked at his wrist mounted motion sensor chart and shook his head. “It’s too late!” He snapped. “The Alliance is here! They are entering the outer perimeter! They’ll be on us in...”

The loud buzzing noise shook them out of their thoughts and they whirled to see dozens of Alliance Assassins being chopped to little pieces not a hundred meters from them. The monstrous roar that followed

announced the entrance of Raptor Three into the battle, and they watched in awe as the insect looking craft flared briefly over the clearing to the north of them, its noise belching gouts of flame that coincided with the buzzing noise. More of the Alliance Assassins were mowed down in the three second burst, their blood seen splashing wetly all around the bodies as they did a macabre dance of death in the flash of light from the Sabot Chain gun. They watched in stunned silence as the ramp in the back came down and ten figures dressed all in black leaped from the end of the ramp even though it was still twenty meters high in the air. All of the ten figures landed cat like on the ground below them and brought weapons up to their shoulders, squeezing off bursts from their HKs even as they dashed for their positions.

Another roar turned their attention away from the new arrivals as a second Raptor came in impossibly low over their building, its ramp already open, and the nose of this ship also flaring brilliantly, filling the air with the distinct buzzing sound and mowing down even more Alliance troops.

Walter smiled from the back of the room. "Martin does know how to make an entrance into battle." He spoke with a small chuckle.

Dysea had no time to reply as bullets began to slam into the wall of the building they were in, and all of the windows shattered.

"Go! Go! Go!" Martin screamed as he led his team and the Dragoons charging from the ramp the second Ben set them down in the clearing.

Ben held the controls of the Raptor tightly, keeping the engines throttled at full power. Bullets began to bounce off the light armor of the Raptor, causing them to flinch. Ben turned his helmeted head to the side with clenched teeth.

"You want to fire at me you ugly fuckers!" He screamed. "Eat this!"

The Sabot Cannon tracked with Ben's helmet, and he mashed down on the trigger of his control stick only six feet off the ground. A three second, one hundred round burst was all it took to shred the four Alliance Assassins that made the mistake of firing on the Raptor.

"Got you, you ugly bastards!" Ben screamed. "Ha! Stick your head up again you stupid motherfucker! I send you straight to hell!"

Endith could do nothing but look at Ben's back and smile in unabashed adoration.

"Empty!" Tina snapped; her helmet glued to the monitors between her legs. "We're empty!"

"Pulling up," Ben announced as he yanked back on the stick, pulling the Raptor into a gut wrenching climb. "Raptor Three this is lead. Establish a rotating perimeter flight! Five hundred feet! Anything that is not radiating... kill it!"

"Affirmative Lead," The pilot of raptor Three answered.

"Endith... all our people should have small infra red patches on their uniforms. Switch your cameras to night vision and track any enemies you see. Our people will show up as orange dots. I'm releasing the Sabot Cannon to your control." Ben spoke.

"The Dragoons are not wearing your uniforms!" Endith spoke with fear in her eyes.

Tina shook her head. "No worries! All the weapons we gave them have the same patch. Anything that does not appear orange on your scope and it's moving... it's a bad guy!"

Endith grinned savagely and she flipped up the secondary trigger grip for the Sabot Cannon. "I will enjoy this." She muttered to herself.

Alliance Captain Roger Thorn ducked behind the thick tree as another hailstorm of large caliber rounds punched into the tree and the ground all around him. He looked calmly at the Alliance Assassin officer that lay next to him.

"They have received support!" The Assassin reported his fanged face deformed and particularly ugly.

"So I see." Thorn replied almost nonchalantly.

"We estimate one squad of Dragoons and at least twenty of these strangers."

"Not to mention the two air ships ripping us to ribbons!" Thorn nearly screamed now.

“They have different weapons!” The Assassin yelled back. “My men are being killed!”

“You fool!” Thorn yelled. “Bring up the anti-air rockets! Have your men charge the building where Dysea is! They will not fire on us if we hold her and Carson!”

“As you command,”

Thorn watched the Assassins roll off to his right and bolt to his feet to relay the orders. “Fucking stupid beasts,” He swore, looking at the four human officers who crouched with him. “I will never understand why we utilize these beasts! They are all dumb as rocks!”

The four officers grinned at his words.

Martin was on one knee, his HK ripping out three round burst after three round burst, every burst ripping into an Assassin soldier and bringing them down. The Dragoon soldiers under Tareif were firing madly; suddenly caught up in the fact they had weapons that could kill these monsters. While their shots were not as accurate as the genomes, they were bringing down the assassins at a steady rate.

Martin’s wolf like eyes detected movement to his left front and he came to his feet quickly to get a better look. Tarifa had been laying only a few meters away and saw him stand, her eyes going wide.

“Martin!” She screamed. “What are you doing?”

Tareif heard his daughter’s voice and turned from directing his men to see Martin standing perfectly still, Alliance rounds whizzing by his head and impacting tress and the ground all around him. His eyes opened wide at this display of courage.

“Tareif they’re flanking the Dragoons!” Martin screamed, looking at Tarifa’s father now. “Danny you take half the team and hit them before they can get into position!” He snapped into his implant.

Tarifa turned to see this and saw movement of her own, headed directly for the building where the Holy One was hiding in.

“They are charging the Holy One’s position!” She yelled, rising to her feet and sprinting toward the building.

Martin whipped his head around in time to see her, and saw why she had headed toward the building. “Shit! Beta leader, looks like about forty are charging the target building! I’m moving to intercept, provide cover fire!”

“Beta Leader copies Skipper!”

Dysea and Leland watched as the team that had landed to their north altered their fire and began to pour down a rain of death upon the Alliance troops that were charging from the front. She and her team fired as well, but their weapons were of little good against the heavy body armor the Assassins wore, causing only a few to lose their balance and fall, but not kill them. A last ditch fusillade of fire dropped at least a dozen of the Assassins, but Dysea counted five that had made their way into the trench that ran directly to the building they occupied. She whirled around and looked at Walter who clutched the handgun in his hand.

“Forgive me Holy One!” Dysea spoke. “We have failed!”

The reinforced heavy wood and steel door splintered under the impact of two Assassin boots and Dysea screamed, leaping at the first one to enter the room, her twin fighting blades appearing in her hand.

Thorn entered the bunkered building quickly and spied Dysea on the ground at the feet of the Alliance assassin. She was barely conscious, her face bloody from a vicious backhand by the soldier she had attacked. Both of her blades protruded from his upper body as he stood there, but they did not seem to bother him in the least. The other elves in the room lay about, broken and bloody, Leland lay in the corner, unconscious and bleeding from several tears in his flesh. Two Alliance Assassins held Walter between them, their fanged grins apparent in what they saw as a victory.

Thorn bent over and viciously pulled Dysea up by her platinum blond hair, jolting her back to full consciousness. She screamed in pain, reaching for where his hands held her hair. Thorn punched her savagely in

the stomach before she could react and then hit her again in the face, cutting her flawless cheek with a rough knuckle.

“Hello Queen Bitch!” He growled yanking her head back even further. “I’m going to enjoy fucking you in your tight ass until you beg me to stop!”

Dysea’s eyes flared and she spit into his face. “Fuck you!” She screamed.

Thorn wiped away the spittle mixed with blood and smiled. “No! Fuck you!” He shoved her to the floor and kicked her viciously in the side, smiling in cruel satisfaction as he heard at least two of her ribs break.

“Captain behind you,” One of the Alliance Assassins yelled.

Thorn didn’t hesitate and ducked quickly as the body flew over the top of his back. He caught a glimpse of raven black hair as the female elf executed a graceful leap over the prone body of Dysea, dropping to the ground and rolling cat like back to her feet to face him. Thorn stood back up and turned to see Tarifa squatting three meters away, clutching the small handgun in her fist. He raised his hand to stop his Alliance Assassin from killing her with his rifle and he laughed.

“Oh now this is poetic.” He spoke. “The Queen of the High Elves has come to try and save the Queen of the Wood Elves!”

Tarifa’s eyes widened at his words and her eyes went to where Dysea lay. Her emerald green eyes were focused on her, her lips and face bruised and bloody, but there was no mistaking who she was. She was the female elf from hers and Martin’s dreams, and there was no mistaking it. Tarifa tore her eyes from Dysea’s and glared at Thorn. “You will pay for what you have done!” She barked at him. “I know what you have done!”

“Do you now Queen Tarifa?” Thorn spoke. “And what is that?”

“You and your creatures have been butchering our people, and blaming the other! You have been trying to start a war between our people!” Tarifa spoke firmly, without an ounce of fear in her voice or her eyes.

This briefly registered in Thorn’s thoughts before he answered. “So you have figured out our little plan I see.” He told her. “That’s shame for you really, a plus for me. This is my lucky night, I capture the Queens of both the Wood Elves and the High Elves and I can fuck you both until my hearts content. How grand is that?”

“You will not have her! Or me!” Tarifa hissed. “I promise you that?”

Thorn laughed, “A bold statement from someone in your position, since I have the both of you and the so called Holy One.”

Tarifa smiled at him in the dim light. “Shoot the Assassin to the Holy One’s right Queen of the Wood Elves.” She spoke loudly, not breaking her eye contact with Thorn.

Dysea looked at her, and blinked her green eyes in response. Her fingers closed around the handgun that Tarifa had placed in her hand when she had leaped over the top of her. Her quick movement had hidden the transfer from the eyes of Thorn and the Alliance soldiers in the room.

Thorn laughed the sound hideous in the small room. “Shoot my men with what?” He asked laughing. “She is beaten and broken!”

“Dysea of the Wood Elves did not become Queen by allowing a pig like you defeat her so easily!” Tarifa said with an evil smile. “Now!” Tarifa barked. She dropped even lower into a crouch and brought up the K12 in her fist, just as Dysea rolled over and ignoring the searing pain in her chest brought the K12 up in her hand.

Thorn’s eyes went wide as the two shots thundered in the confines of the small room, and the heads of both of his Alliance Cadre troops holding Walter exploded like over ripe melons, showering the wall and Walter with bone and brain matter. Thorn could only stare in awe as Tarifa dropped the K12 and withdrew the High Elf fighting knife from her belt. She leaped at the surprised Alliance Assassin, catching hold of his armored shoulder and using her momentum to pivot around behind him. Thorn’s mouth opened in warning, but it was far too late as Tarifa drove her blade into the back of the Assassin’s head with all of her considerable elf strength. Thorn watched as the point and at least an inch of the now bloody blade exploded from the Assassin’s left eyeball, and he slumped to the floor dead.

Thorn brought up his weapon and leveled it at Tarifa, while savagely kicking Dysea in the shoulder. He grinned with cruelty as the kick dislocated her shoulder and the K12 dropped from her now useless hand as she cried out in agony once more.

“Can you beat a bullet Elf Queen?” He growled looking at Tarifa. “I think not.”

Tarifa smiled just as cruelly. "I don't need too." She spoke, "Goodbye Captain! May your corpse rot in Hades for all that you have done in your pathetic life?"

Thorn saw her eyes look behind him and he began to turn, bringing his weapon around. He was far too slow.

Martin brought his large fighting knife up in a one handed grip, the tip of the blade piercing Thorn under his jaw and ramming through flesh and bone to impale his brain. Martin picked up the human officer and stepped close to his face, Thorn's eyes already closing in death. Martin bared his fully extended fangs in a vicious snarl.

"I can't say it's been fun asshole." He growled. Martin lifted his K12 and shoved it into Thorn's chest and pulled the trigger seven times, each large bullet tearing a chunk from Thorn's already limp body.

Martin yanked his knife free and allowed his last three rounds to literally send Thorn's body flying across the room to impact the wall, his blood staining the concrete as he slipped to a sitting position.

Tarifa dashed to Walter as he lowered himself slowly to the ground. "Holy One, are you injured?" She asked.

Walter looked up at Martin as he saw the first of his "adopted" children walk over to him slowly. He had changed Walter thought quickly, and he felt the strange aura Martin was projecting outward. *He will soon discover his past, Walter thought. And then events will begin to shape the future.* Walter did not know what to expect from Martin; surely anger, hatred and confusion. He saw Martin's fangs begin to shorten until they were only a quarter of their full length and Martin looked at him with his dark eyes and smiled. Tarifa moved away from them and went to the unconscious form of Dysea.

"Hi ya Doc...!" Martin said with a smile, holding out his hand to Walter. "We need to have a beer and cover a lot of ground!"

Walter smiled in relief and gripped Martin's arm tightly. "Indeed we do my boy. Indeed we do." He said as Martin pulled him easily to his feet. "I suggest we depart this place first. How is Dysea?"

"She is badly injured Holy One, but she is alive." Tarifa spoke, gently brushing Dysea's blond hair aside. She looked up and her eyes went to Martin. "Martin it is her." She spoke.

Walter looked at Tarifa after her words, and then to Martin as his face changed to one of worry as he moved to where Dysea lay.

"She is the one from our dreams Martin." Tarifa told him. "The one meant to be with you. She is the Queen of the Wood Elves."

"You've... you've been having dreams of her?" Walter asked, rising to his feet slowly.

Tarifa looked at him. "Yes Holy One, both of us. Ever since we..." She looked embarrassed, but that passed in an instant. "We've been having dreams of her ever since Martin and I became lovers." Tarifa finished proudly, looking at Martin with respect and desire in her sapphire eyes.

Walter's face looked surprised, but the sounds of gunfire shook him out of it. Martin needed no urging and he quickly scooped Dysea into his arms. "We aren't out of this yet. C'mon!" He moved to the door of the building. "Raptor Lead this is Raptor One. I have the package and we are ready for pick up."

"Copy that Raptor One." Ben's voice filled Martin's ear implant.

"All teams converge on my location!" Martin ordered. "War Master Tareif... provide cover fire as the Dragoons pull back, we'll cover you from our location."

"We have shifted positions Commander!" Tareif's voice came back. "Half my Dragoons are closer to you. It would be better if we retreated on the second flying machine. It hovers above us. The other half can retreat with you."

"Raptor Three you copy that?" Martin asked.

"Aye Skipper, I'm right above them... and we'll be more than happy to give them a ride home."

"War Master, I'll bring your boys and girls home safe. You do the same for mine." Martin said.

"It will be done." Tareif answered quickly.

"Ben why don't you bring it in baby, right in front of me if you would," Martin spoke as he cradled Dysea's body in his arms and headed for the door.

"Stand by Marty, we're inbound!" Ben's voice replied.

“Everyone is aboard!” Tina called out.

“Give me power!” Ben called as he pulled back on his control yoke and the Raptor began to climb into the sky.

“We are passing through seventy percent!” Tina called, advancing the throttles forward.

“What’s the status of Raptor Three?” Ben asked.

“The second ship is climbing away already.” Endith replied. “They have cleared the trees and... wait... by the gods... missiles! I have missiles coming right at us!”

“Fuck!” Ben yelled. “Give me full power Tina! Countermeasures! Fire the damn countermeasures!”

“Where... I don’t know where they are!” Endith screamed, turning to look at Tina, “Where?”

The Raptor slewed violently to the right, throwing Endith out of her chair and into total blackness.

The Alliance Assassin lowered the launcher and looked at his partner doing the same. “One still climbs!” He spoke.

“The missile only struck its wingtip.” The second missile launcher Assassin replied in disgust.

“We must track the second ship! How many of our brethren live?”

“Only thirteen,” The second replied.

“We attacked with nearly a hundred!” The first spoke in disbelief.

“They were not using Elf weapons! And they did not run when we closed to hand to hand range! They attacked us like wild men. The strangers were not elves! They were too strong and fast to be elves.” The Assassin spoke. “They struck down almost half our brothers fighting in close. They knew where our weak spots were. I saw an Elf War Master dispatch four of our brothers himself with only his blade.”

“We must return to the ship! We must track that wounded craft. Issue the orders quickly!”

“What of the Captain?”

“Fuck that human scum. I never liked him anyway.”

Tina groaned and reached for her head, her helmet almost coming apart when she touched it. Her eyes began to focus and she saw the shattered glass of her side cockpit window where her head impacted. Her helmet had saved her life.

“Ben?” She called weakly, hearing the strain on the Raptor’s engines, and the alarms blaring all throughout the cockpit. She turned her head slowly seeing Ben’s bloody hand on the throttles. As her eyes followed his arm up they grew wider, “Ben... oh my god Ben!” Tina began fighting with her straps to unfasten herself from her seat.

“Stay there!” Ben’s voice stopped her.

His helmet was shattered, his face a mass of blood and cuts where the cockpit had imploded. His left hand was gripping the control stick tightly, the left side of his body also cut and bleeding profusely.

“Ben you’re hurt bad!” Tina barked, still trying to get her straps unfastened.

“Stay there!” Ben snapped, blood spraying from his lips. “I got her steady right now! I need a damage report Tina and fast!”

“Ben!” Endith’s voice screamed, “By the Gods no!” She sprang up from the deck, a nasty cut on the side of her head leaking blood. “It’s my fault! Ben I’m sorry!”

“It’s not your fault!” Ben spoke as firmly as he could. “Countermeasures would have been for shit! The missile was locked on us the second it cleared the launcher! Forget it! Endith... I can barely see!”

Endith looked around for a cloth or something, and finding nothing she ripped off her combat vest and body armor to tear a piece from her uniform. She leaned over in front of Ben and gasped at the sight.

Ben smiled. “It looks worse than it is.” He said. “My eyes, wipe my eyes.”

Endith did as he told her, dabbing gently around his eyes soaking up the blood from his eye lashes and eyebrows. When she pulled away the blood soaked rag, his blue eyes were almost clear. He looked at her and even through the pain he forced a grin and winked.

“See... no problem.” He told her. “Check the back.”

Endith nodded and touched his cheek gently before moving for the door into the rear of the Raptor. She stopped at the door, her eyes wide in horror. The entire rear section of the Raptor was gone, and she could see jagged edges of where the ramp and doors used to be. She could just barely make out the tops of the trees far below them. The bodies of elf and genome were scattered all over, bracing against the wind whipping through the ship. Her eyes found Tarifa near the front, her arms wrapped around the body of the Wood Elves Queen. Martin was closest to her, pulling Walter into the command seat and strapping him in. Endith turned back to the front of the cockpit.

“Ben... the... the entire back of the ship is gone.” She said in disbelief.

Ben grunted from his chair, “Figures.” He commented. “That explains the play in the pedals. There’s nothing there.”

“One engine is gone!” Tina reported. “The other is holding at sixty percent power! I got no instruments Ben! None! The entire electrical system is fried! Even the fucking compass is gone!”

“What about the radio?” Ben asked.

“It’s wasted.” Tina replied.

Tina turned as Martin scrambled into the cockpit from the rear of the Raptor. His face was cut in several places, with a deep laceration on his shoulder. He stopped when he saw the condition of the cockpit, the blood splattered over the instruments and Ben trying to keep them flying.

“Fuck!” He swore turning into the rear. “Anja get up here fast!” He screamed.

He looked at Endith, who was very pale, and squatting behind Ben, using a blood soaked cloth to keep his eyes clear.

“Ah Ben... I don’t know if you are aware... but I should probably tell you we are missing the last two feet of the ship.” Martin spoke.

Ben chuckled. “Yeah... we got a hole in us as big as my ex-wife’s ass!”

Anja scrambled in behind Martin, her arm and shoulder cut up, but not bad. She took one look at the blood and moved immediately to the space between the seats. She looked at Ben as she began pulling items from her bag. “How are you doing Ben?” She asked.

“You know me doc! Got to do everything the hard way.” Ben answered.

“Anything feel broken?” She asked.

Ben shook his head slowly. “My left shoulder hurts like a bitch, but I still got all my fingers and toes.”

Anja motioned Endith out of the way with her head and moved to the back of his chair. She reached up over the jagged edges of the side of the cockpit and looked at his blood soaked shoulder. Slowly and carefully she pulled aside the sliced flight suit and winced.

“Bad huh,” Ben asked hearing her soft intake of breath.

“It’s pretty deep. I won’t lie to you.” Anja said, “Any numbness?”

Ben shook his head. “Feels like I got a piece of metal stuck in there though. Pinching a nerve maybe.”

“I can’t see anything Ben. And if I go poking around and there is something in there, you could lose the use of your arm while we’re still in the air.” Anja told him.

“Well shit that wouldn’t be good! Pack it with bandages and we’ll go from there.” Ben spoke.

“I can stick you for the pain.” Anja said.

Ben nodded slowly, “Not too much though, just enough to take the edge off.”

Martin’s ear piece crackled on the command channel. “Raptor One! Go!”

“Skipper, you guys took a bad one there! What’s your damage?” The voice of the pilot from Raptor Three asked.

“Bad. What’s your status?”

“Minor damage to one wing, but we are losing fuel pretty quick.” The pilot replied.

Ben shook his head as he heard the pilot’s report. “Kenny, we’re crippled and flying blind!” Ben spoke now. “We got no instruments and no ass end to our ship. I’m barely keeping her up as it is. How much fuel you got?”

“Enough to stay with you for another forty minutes at this speed Ben.” The pilot replied. “I’m only leaking below three hundred knots.”

“No good Kenny. You won’t make it back unless you leave now.” Ben said.

“We can’t just leave you boss.” The pilot spoke.

“Yes you can.” Ben told him. “Once you clear our wake, contact the encampment and have another bird take off and head our way. What’s my heading?”

“You’re heading southeast boss; away from the elves’ city. On your current heading and speed you’ll cross into Nebraska in about fifteen minutes.”

“It can’t be helped.” Ben spoke. “If I try to turn her, I might lose her. I’ll keep her as straight and level as I can and I’ll try to stay above a thousand feet. They should be able to pick me up pretty easily once they are up. My radar cross section has to be as big as a jumbo fucking jet by now.” Ben said.

They heard Kenny chuckled from his cockpit. “That it is Ben. What are your casualties?”

Ben looked at Anja who shook her head. “Some cuts and scrapes... but we didn’t lose anyone thank god.” Ben spoke. “Start heading back Kenny. Once they link up with me, I’ll set down and they can pick us up immediately. I’ll see you soon.”

“Kicking it Ben,” The pilot replied. “Stay loose.”

They saw the second Raptor pull up alongside them and then speed ahead. They watched it until they could no longer see the flame from its engines as Kenny turned and headed back to Mountain City.

Anja pulled the injector from Ben’s neck. “That should dull the pain to a throb Ben.” She spoke.

“Good.” Ben said. “Tina... cut all non-essential power and route it to the engine. Use the back up generators to go through the shut down procedures.”

Tina looked at him. “Ben if I do that, we’ll go dark.”

Ben nodded. “We’re already lighting up any radar scope within six hundred miles.” He said. “If we don’t reduce our cross section... we’re going to have company real soon.” He looked out what remained of his cockpit window. “What’s our fuel?”

Tina looked at Endith. “The right gauge on the engineer’s panel Endith. What does it say?”

Endith turned and looked at the panel. Her eyes narrowed and she turned back to Tina, “Two thousand pounds.”

“Fuck!” Ben barked. “Get me a mirror or something metallic!”

Endith looked on the deck and found the shiny piece of metal that had once formed the inner shell of the cockpit. “Here.” She said.

“Endith... ease it out the side here real slow.” Ben told her, motioning with his head.

Endith eased over alongside him and did as he instructed, fighting the push of the wind. Ben squint his eyes as he tried to see the left side of his aircraft.

“Sonofabitch,” He swore. “The entire fuselage and engine housing is gone. The missile not only ripped off our engine, but it took half the wing and all the fuel in that tank.”

“What does that mean Ben?” Martin asked.

“It means Skipper that we got about another twenty minutes of flying time at the rate we’re burning fuel.” Ben answered him.

Endith looked at Martin, her eyes wide. “That will put us inside The Wastes.” She gasped.

“Ah fuck!” Martin barked. “Can this night get any better?”

“Look on the bright side Skipper!” Ben said with a laugh. “We could be back there with the uglies.”

Martin reached forward and touched Ben’s right shoulder. “Can you set us down?” He asked.

Ben nodded. “I’ll get us down in one piece Martin.” He spoke. “There won’t be much left, but I’ll get us down in one piece.”

Martin nodded. “Good enough.” He turned and headed into the back, Anja on his heels.

Endith moved between the two seats and looked at Ben, feeling responsible for his injuries and their entire predicament. Her eyes began to tear up just as Ben looked at her.

“Hey! This isn’t your fault.” Ben spoke.

“I wasn’t fast enough.” Endith spoke, her voice shaky.

Tina looked at her. “There’s no way we could have beaten that missile Endith.” She told her. “This is not your fault.”

“We’re going to need your help to land this heap.” Ben spoke smiling at her. “Besides... we’ve been in tighter spots haven’t we Tina? Remember Iraq?”

“I try not to.” Tina answered, her eyes glued to the ground below them.

Palina greeted her husband at the base of the ramp when Raptor Three landed on the platform and Kenny killed the engines. Standing with her were two dozen more Dragoons and the officer from Tareif's Division that he had promised Tarifa too. Telan stood at attention next to his wife who wore a worried expression on her face, her eyes searching for Tarifa.

"Tareif what happen? Where is Tarifa?" Palina asked.

"The Assassins had missiles." Tareif replied. "One of them struck her craft and did heavy damage. Our pilot had to return or we would have run out of fuel as well. Another craft is meeting us here and we are going back."

As if on cue, another Raptor roared out of the night sky and started its approach to another platform.

"I will come with you." Palina spoke.

Tareif looked at Telan. "You were not due here until tomorrow Senior Captain." He spoke.

"The Queen is my future mate War Master, and your daughter. It is my duty to be here." The young officer answered.

Tareif caught the look from his wife out of the corner of his eye, but said nothing. He nodded at Telan. "As soon as their craft lands have the men board Captain."

"Shall I have the half breeds arrested War Master?" Telan asked arrogantly.

Tareif looked at him, as did the five Dragoons that had exited the Raptor with their War Master. They had fought beside the half breed Genomes on the ground, shoulder to shoulder and been accepted as members of their team. The Genomes had even taken orders from Tareif himself when he had split their forces and conducted a small counterattack. "Arrested for what?" He asked.

"Chief Minister Raloo is saying the mission was a failure because the half breed Genome Hunter commanded the mission and not yourself." Telan told him.

Tareif turned as the Raptor lowered to the platform and its ramp came down. "Get the men on board Senior Captain. And you will do nothing unless I order it."

Telan nodded, "As you order War Master."

Palina waited until the young elf was out of ear shot before turning to face her husband. "You promised our daughter to that fool?" She hissed at him.

"He is a fine officer!" Tareif hissed back at her.

"He is a pompous fool Tareif! Just like his parents and his entire family!" Palina barked. "They are all pompous fools who crave nothing but power. And this is the man you wish to be your daughter's mate?"

"Palina... you must understand I did..."

"What you did was wrong husband!" Palina told him. "I thought we had decided long ago to never direct our children's fates. We agreed on that Tareif did we not? We promised each other we would not meddle in our children's lives or their decisions. Tarifa will not allow you to do this."

"She will do as I tell her." He said.

"You would force her?" Palina asked her eyes wide. "How... how could you do such a thing?"

"Palina..."

"You lied to me husband." Palina said. "You lied to me."

Tareif watched her turn away from him and she marched towards the Raptor, its engines at full power and screaming for release.

War Master Tareif of the High Elves was in for a very long night.

NEBRASKA EIGHT MILES SOUTH OF CRAWFORD

Dysea's green eyes fluttered open slowly, her vision blurry. It was bright outside, that much she could tell, and she blinked her eyes several times in an attempt to clear and focus them.

"Do not attempt to rise." The female voice spoke to her from the side. She turned her head, and saw the face of Tarifa close to her. She was a little blurry, but Dysea knew who she was. "Your injuries have been treated Dysea, but it will take a few more hours for your body to fully heal."

Dysea's eyes cleared now, and she saw Tarifa's beautiful face looking at her with those sapphire eyes. She had what appeared to be a nasty cut on her forehead, but it seemed to be slowly healing. She tried to sit up and move away from her, but a wave of pain swept through her head, and she felt Tarifa's hand touch her arm.

"You are safe Queen of the Wood Elves." Tarifa spoke softly. "I will allow no harm to come to you."

"Where... where am I?" Dysea asked softly.

Tarifa smiled somewhat awkwardly. "That is another story." She said. "I accompanied Martin and the others to rescue you and the Holy One. Your men were all killed, I'm very sorry. As we were departing the Alliance Assassins fired an anti-air missile at us and we were badly damaged. We have crashed just inside the edge of The Wastes."

"The Wastes," Dysea gasped.

"We are safe for the moment." Tarifa told her.

"The Holy One," Dysea asked.

Tarifa nodded. "He is safe as well." She motioned to the side and Dysea followed with her eyes, seeing Walter sitting and talking to two men, one a tall black man and the other the handsome man from her dreams. Her eyes grew a little wider at this, something Tarifa noticed right away. "You have seen him before haven't you?" She asked.

"In... in my dreams," Dysea answered softly her eyes returning to Tarifa, "Ever since the Holy One told me of him."

"You were investigating the attacks on your people." Tarifa said. "Tell me... what did you discover?"

Dysea looked at her suddenly wary. "Why... why should I tell you? You... you are my enemy."

"Am I?" Tarifa asked. "I too had an investigation conducted. My investigation concluded that the Wood Elves had nothing to do with the attacks on our villages. I believe it was the Alliance. I suspect you discovered the same thing, and that is why you were in our territory. The Alliance is attempting to pit us against one another Dysea, surely you can see that."

"I see that I am your prisoner." Dysea snapped, more harshly than she had intended too. She saw the look of hurt flash across Tarifa's face and then it was gone.

Tarifa shook her head. "You are not my prisoner." She said softly. "We are however in the same bad situation. We should at least attempt to work together."

"Why should I trust you?" Dysea hissed. "Why should I trust any of you? For all I know one of your flying ships could be on its way here right now, and you intend to return me to your capital to stand trial."

Tarifa nodded and got to her feet slowly. "Anja is the doctor in Martin's team. She will be over to check on you soon. I don't know how much longer we will be here. There are two teams out now scouting the area to our north and south. They should be returning shortly. There is not much water..." Tarifa set the small container thermos next to her. "Drink it sparingly. There are some rations next to you if you are hungry. I will trouble you no more."

Dysea watched her walk slowly over to where Martin and the large black man were squatting next to the Holy One. She watched as Tarifa settled between Martin's legs, his hands automatically going to her shoulders. She glanced up and saw that his eyes were gazing upon her intently, and she looked away quickly.

Walter shook his head slowly. "I don't know what I was thinking." He continued. "I should have seen what they would do right away." He looked at Martin as Tarifa settled between his legs and Martin's hands dropped to her shoulders in an almost brotherly type action. Walter shook his head slightly and continued.

"They waited until I was in my third sleep period before beginning the changes. By that time, there were already thousands of elves across the country. One of my assistants decided while I was sleeping that he would make a deal with the powers that be and he began mass producing the elves by the thousands. When I awoke again, there were millions across the planet and this Alliance government had been formed. The young assistant had an unfortunate accident a year after I woke up though, the poor fellow." That Walter had arranged for his death was obvious and something that Martin intended to question him on later. "I knew the only way I could change things was to continue in my position and attempt to effect change within the elves themselves. They did not discover what I was doing until sixteen years ago, and I have been running ever since."

They were sitting in what remained of the Raptor that Ben had landed. The landing struts had snapped when they touched down, burying the nose of the Raptor into the soft earth, but the ship was never going to fly again regardless.

“When did you discover that the moon was no longer spinning around the earth?” Martin asked.

“I discovered that quite by accident.” Walter spoke. “I was having lunch with a colleague one day, an astronomer actually, and he told me about it. When he mentioned it to me I knew then what was happening, and I began planning, after figuring out when the moon would return to its normal rotation.”

Danny shook his head. “Jeez! Just listening to this gives me a headache.” He said.

Walter chuckled and turned to look at Tarifa. “It was never my intent for any of this to happen child.”

“I know that now Holy One.” Tarifa replied softly. “I also know that if it wasn’t for you, we would all still be slaves. We would not be fighting the Alliance; we would only be slaves to them and the humans.”

“How did you make it so I would understand their language?” Martin asked him.

Walter smiled. “I encoded it into your DNA.” He answered. “I was always a very large fan of Elfin lore and history, and though I never thought it would be so important back then, I added it to your DNA strands more for fun than anything. There were many different kinds of Elves, but I used the two I knew the most about to create Tarifa and her people; The High Elves and Wood Elves.” Walter’s face became serious. “Martin my boy... I never...”

Martin held up his hand to stop Walter’s words. “I have never blamed you for how the government sought to use us Walter. I don’t think any of us do.” Martin looked at Danny who nodded in agreement. “You have and always will be who we consider to be our father.”

“And look where we are because of what I have created.” Walter said.

“This is not because of you doc.” Danny said. “What is going on is happening because of a few assholes who think they are gods.”

“I gave them the tools to think that.” Walter said.

Martin nodded. “Yes... but you did not make them choose that path.” He said. “They did that. We are not our brother’s keeper Walter.”

“Aren’t we?” Walter asked looking at him.

Martin shook his head. “No. We are not.” He said. He stood up to his full height, pulling Tarifa with him as they all got to their feet. “I have to check the status of our patrols. We can continue this discussion at another time.”

Walter watched him lean over and hug Tarifa gently before motioning to Danny with his head and they moved off to the destroyed rear of the Raptor. Walter looked at Tarifa as she watched him go and he smiled.

“I’ve never seen him display the emotions that he has in the last few hours Tarifa.” Walter said quietly. “He is changing.”

Tarifa looked at him and smiled. “He is becoming more and more expressive as well. Even in the short time we have known each other he has evolved.” She said. “I must thank you Holy One.”

“Thank me for what?”

“For Martin,” Tarifa replied turning to watch him go out into the sunlight. “I have discovered a part of myself I did not know existed thanks to him.”

Walter shook his head. “All I did was to place a small attraction there Tarifa. You told me you saw the message I left for him. Had one or the both of you decided not to explore that attraction, nothing would have ever come of it.”

Tarifa smiled turning back to him. “Perhaps you are right. I think I understand what you said to me that day Holy One. I don’t believe Martin and I are fated to be together in that way Holy One... I can sense him holding something back, and he is unwilling or unable to share it with me. I believe it is the part of him that only Dysea is to see.”

Walter looked at her. “What has happened between you and Martin was not what I intended Tarifa.” He said. “It was never my intention to have the two of you become intimate.”

Tarifa nodded. “I know that now Holy One.” She answered. “I believe it was something that both of us needed however, and I have no regrets. Our times together have allowed me to explore a very part of my soul that I had no idea was there. What I have discovered I like very much.”

“What have you discovered child?” Walter asked her keenly interested.

“I have discovered that I have denied myself too long the simple pleasures in this life.” Tarifa answered. “The touch of another person that stirs me; stimulates me in ways I have never experienced. It is something I will no longer do.”

“And Martin does this?” Walter asked.

Tarifa smiled, “Very much so.” She answered. “I also know that I am not the one meant for him. As I said... he holds something back even from me. I... I believe Dysea might be the one, as you said in your message to him. And it would explain our dreams.”

“You said something about that briefly.” He said. “What did you mean?”

“It started shortly after we became lovers.” Tarifa told him. “We began to have dreams of Dysea; the same dream for both of us. I feel a similar attraction to her not unlike Martin does. Mine is more... it is a more physical thing. I have never looked at another... another woman as I look at her. Is that something you did?”

Walter shook his head. “No Tarifa. If you feel an attraction to Dysea, it is because of your feelings, not something that I placed in you.”

“It matters not.” Tarifa said with a gentle voice of disappointment. “Dysea does not share the same feelings. She thinks of me as her enemy still, though I can see her attraction to Martin in her eyes.”

“Do not hate her Tarifa.” Walter said.

“Hate her?” Tarifa spoke quickly looking at him. “Holy One I don’t hate her, I desire her; just as completely as I desire Martin. And I can not explain that.”

Walter smiled and took her in his arms. “Then do not try. Allow what you feel to control your actions and they will be the correct ones.” He said. “Dysea has been through quite a bit the last few days. I will speak with her.”

Tarifa smiled in his embrace and nodded.

RAPTOR FOUR

The Raptor did a high slow circle over the battleground of the night before, all of its ground sensors directed at the encampment below. Tareif stood beside the genome Kenny as he used the cameras on the belly of the Raptor to try and determine if the ground below them was clear. They had started at an altitude of 40,000 feet and now circled at three.

“Kenny... I’m still not picking up any locator beacons.” The pilot’s voice spoke from the Raptor’s cockpit.

“Extend the sweep to four hundred kilometers.” Kenny ordered sitting at the ground monitoring console in the rear. “Their ship was missing its tail and limping on one engine Billy. They couldn’t have gotten that far.”

“Kenny we’re talking about Ben and Tina here. I’ve seen them keep a crippled bird in the air for five hours.” The pilot answered.

Kenny sighed heavily. “How’s your fuel?”

“We’re good for another two hours.” Billy replied.

“Ok... extend the sweep to four hundred kilometers. That puts them just over the Nebraska border.”

Tareif pointed to the chart. “This is The Wastes.” He spoke. “Communications will be impossible if they are in there. The residual radiation causes all signals to bounce randomly.”

Kenny shook his head, his radar picking up another Raptor approaching. He looked at Tareif. “The recovery bird is here sir. You still want them to land and collect the bodies?”

Tareif nodded. “They are Wood Elves ... but they fought well and deserve to be returned to their people in honor.”

Kenny nodded in approval and flipped a switch. “Raptor Seven... you are instructed to land at the encampment and recover all fallen elf bodies.”

“Copy that Four.” The voice replied.

Tareif was becoming more familiar with his ear implant and he switched channels. “Their remains are to be treated with the utmost respect soldier.” He ordered.

“You don’t have to worry about that sir.” The voice replied. “They died so that our Skipper could clear this AO. As far as we are concerned they are part of our team now.”

Tareif nodded turning to look at the pilot. "You and the others think much of your leader." He said to Kenny.

Kenny looked at him. "He's got our asses back home more times than I can count sir. He's our Skipper and our pack... and our Commander." Kenny quickly corrected what he was going to say, something that did not go unnoticed by Tareif. "You and he are a lot alike."

Tareif looked surprised at this comparison. "Alike?" He asked.

Kenny nodded. "Yes sir. You care for the men under your command as if they were your family. That's the same way the Skipper thinks."

"Kenny! I'm picking up airborne targets, two hundred miles and closing." Billy's voice spoke.

"Alliance flying craft," Tareif said. "They are slow but heavily armed."

"Billy... Ben was on a Southeast heading, and he said he had too much damage to do any turning. Drop us to the deck and head southeast until you have to bingo for fuel." Kenny spoke. "There's no way he could have set down anywhere in this area with the damage he had. They had to have made it to this Wastes area if they aren't responding to transmissions."

"Copy that." Billy said.

Kenny and Tareif felt the Raptor dip and drop for the treetops. "I'm signaling our base by your city to have another Raptor on standby to pick up where we left off." Kenny told Tareif. "We'll find them sir."

Tareif turned at the touch of his wife's hand on his arm. He turned to look at her. "We are following the heading they were on last night. We believe they may have gone down in The Wastes."

Palina's eyes widened, "The Wastes?" She gasped.

Telan stepped up to them. "We will find them Lady Palina." He spoke.

Palina looked at him with an evil glare before turning back to her husband. Tareif nodded and motioned for her to return to her seat.

Telan waited until she was out of ear shot before speaking. "You are recovering the bodies of our enemies War Master?" He asked. "May I ask why?"

"My daughter ordered that the Wood Elves with the Holy One were to be treated with respect Captain. I intend to do just that, even if they are dead." Tareif replied.

"Was that a wise decision on her part sir? It is obvious they were unable to protect the Holy One." Telan asked.

Tareif glared at the younger officer. "Do you question your Queen's orders Telan?"

"No sir. Forgive me." Telan spoke quickly.

"Please insure the Dragoons are ready to deploy at a moment's notice Captain." Tareif said before turning back to where Kenny was scanning the area below them.

"As you order War Master," Telan spoke to Tareif's back before turning and heading to where they sat in the rear of the Raptor. He kept his thoughts to himself, but knew this was something his father needed to know upon their return.

He did not hear the voice come over the radio that caused both Tareif and Kenny to look up.

"We got live ones down here!"

Radama lowered the binoculars from his eyes and nodded his head slowly. "They are Acid nomads." He spoke softly looking at Cody.

Martin had sent a genome and a Dragoon in each of the patrols. Radama and Cody seemed to mesh pretty well, and they had covered nearly five miles in this patrol alone. They had moved north while Pablo and another Dragoon had gone south.

"I make six of them." Cody said.

Radama nodded. "It is a standard patrol size for them." He said. "I would imagine they have a much larger group nearby."

Cody looked at the small map chart on his wrist. "I know our maps are not up to date, but there's suppose to be a small town just over that rise. Looks like a population of about three thousand from before the comet."

“It is possible they have taken over the town. The little we know of them indicates they are nomadic, but they do stay in one location for a time before moving on.” Radama answered.

“Is that a vehicle they have with them?” Cody asked looking through the binoculars.

Radama nodded. “It’s called a Hopper, a hover craft of sorts. The one they have is very old, but it appears it still runs.”

“How fast are they?” Cody asked.

“That model there... in its condition... I’d be surprised if it could top fifty miles per hour. The newer models within the modern cities can reach two hundred miles per hour.” Radama replied. “Many of the newer cities are designed differently than what you remember. They are much more spread out.”

“Yeah... well we don’t want to tangle with these boys anyhow.” Cody spoke. “Ben is still pretty banged up, and your two Dragoons took some hard hits when we landed. We’re down to nine effective fighters.”

Radama nodded. “I agree. We could sure use that Hopper though.”

Cody nodded, “That we could. Let’s get back and see what the Skipper says.”

The two of them inched off the rise of the hill back down below the horizon and began to run in the direction they had come. Radama however stopped and reached out to hold Cody. He looked at him.

“What’s wrong?” Cody asked.

Radama pointed to the sky in the distance. “It’s an acid storm.” He said.

“Fuck you’re kidding right! How far out?” Cody asked.

“Two... maybe three hours away.” Radama replied.

“Come on! We need to get back and get the others to those caves we saw!” Cody spoke pulling on Radama’s arm.

Radama took one last look at the incoming storm and turned to follow Cody.

Walter settled his frame on the mangled bench next to Dysea as she nibbled the bar of chocolate she had found in the ration pack. She was gazing at where Tarifa and Martin were standing just at the edge of the rear of the Raptor speaking with a High Elf Royal Guard by his dress, and one of Martin’s team.

“How do you feel child?” He asked her.

Dysea looked at him. “I’m very sore Holy One.” She answered.

Walter nodded. “I’m not surprised. Thorn beat you brutally.”

“He will not live long once I return.” Dysea snarled.

Walter smiled a tight smile. “He’s already dead.” He said.

Dysea looked at him, “Dead? How...?”

Walter motioned with his head to where Martin stood. “Martin killed him.” He said. “It was not the most pleasant thing to watch, but he will not be returning to bring anymore harm to you. They saved our lives you know.”

“I remember vaguely what happen.” Dysea said softly. “She gave me a weapon. We killed two Alliance Assassins and then Thorn hit me again.”

“You’ve been having dreams about Martin haven’t you?” Walter asked her, “About both of them.”

Dysea’s head came around quickly and she looked at him. “How... how do you know that?”

“They have been dreaming about you for almost a week now.” Walter answered. “She didn’t leave your side you know. From the moment we took off until the moment we crashed here, she held you in her arms. Once we came here she sat with you until you woke up, nearly five hours. She didn’t eat... didn’t sleep. Martin would do the same as he checked everyone. They sat with you instead of resting like the others.”

“She said that she has been investigating the attacks on High Elf villages.” Dysea said. “She told me she had discovered that the Wood Elves were not killing her people.”

“Just as you discovered that the High Elves are not killing your people.” Walter spoke. “I told her what we were doing. And what we had discovered.”

Dysea looked at him. “You told her?” She said. “Why did she question me about it then?”

“I would say perhaps because she wants you to trust her.” Walter said.

“Holy One how is it possible that I can feel what I feel for him? I have never met him, yet I am drawn to him like no other I have ever met.” She asked. “Is this... is this something that you did?”

Walter shook his head. "I only placed an attraction inside you for him Dysea, in your genetic code. As the data pad I gave you explains... nothing would come of it without you and him pursuing it. As for the dreams... no... that is not something I did."

"I see strange things Holy One." Dysea spoke softly meeting his eyes. "And always he is at the forefront. Ancient battles..." She shook her head, "Amazing things."

"Why is that wrong?" Walter asked her. "I created the elves to be open and not shy about physical relations. It has been passed down through your parents and grandparents genes to you. As with Tarifa, I believe your positions as Queen, and the continuing crisis with the Alliance has forced you to block that part of yourself. After speaking with her just now... I believe it even more."

"She is my... she is my enemy!" Dysea said.

Walter smiled at her. "If she is your enemy, why do you not sound convinced of your own words?" He said as Martin and Tarifa came back into the covered portion of the Raptor.

"We got trouble folks." Martin said.

"Shit... that's new Skipper?" Julie asked rising from her seat next to Anja.

"There is an acid storm approaching." Tarifa told them, "A very large one and it is heading directly for us."

This got everyone's attention and they all came to their feet. Danny shook his head and looked at Martin. "Skipper, do we have 'fuck with us' written somewhere on our bodies?" He asked.

Martin grinned. "We just might. Cody and Radama have found a set of caves about a half mile north of here. We need to pack everything we can haul out of here and get to those caves before that storm hits."

"How long do we have Martin?" Walter asked.

"Radama says an hour, maybe more maybe less. I'm not taking any chances so we are cutting out of here in five. Grab everything you can stagger with and meet outside." Martin answered. "Danny you get to carry Ben."

"I can fucking walk damn it!" Ben yelled from the cockpit.

"Not on my watch!" Tina's voice yelled.

"This bird is toast when we leave, so get all the weapons and ammo from the spare locker." Martin spoke. "I'm not leaving anything for anyone to scavenge. Let's do it!"

Dysea watched as Martin's team and the Dragoons sprang into action quickly and efficiently. She felt like a fifth wheel as they scampered all around her, until she turned and was looking into the very broad chest. As she lifted her eyes, she found herself gazing into the deepest dark brown eyes she had ever seen, and suddenly she wanted to immerse herself in those eyes. Dysea felt herself grow warm inside as he gazed at her. It was the first time she had seen those eyes close up, and as with Tarifa, they caught and held her attention like no man ever had.

"You feel up to carrying a small pack?" Martin asked her.

Dysea nodded quickly, "Of... of course." She stuttered out the answer, tearing her eyes from Martin's. Her lightly tanned skin showed her embarrassment as her cheeks blushed.

Either Martin didn't notice, or he chose not to embarrass her further as he set the pack down next to her feet. He held out the K12 in the thigh holster to her and she looked at him with wide eyes.

"You are arming me?" She asked in disbelief.

"It would be foolish of me not too." He replied.

Dysea took the weapon slowly. "You trust me?"

Martin stepped up very close to her and Dysea gasped, unable to back up without falling. Martin leaned over and put his face close to her neck and inhaled deeply, while Dysea stood there frozen and unable to do anything. Her wildflower scent flowed into his veins, and unlike Tarifa, Dysea's scent joined Anja's honey scent as it was burned into his brain. Martin drew back his head slowly, allowing his lips to softly caress the ridge of her elf ear. He felt her body tense and looked into her wide emerald green eyes. Dysea found herself enraptured by his eyes, and she could barely draw a breath as his animalistic gaze held her very bring.

"Trust you?" Martin spoke softly. "Why would I not trust you?"

"We... we are... we are enemies." Dysea finally managed to spit out.

Martin turned his head to the side and Dysea saw Tarifa step up next to him and gaze at her with her huge sapphire eyes. “You are many things to us Dysea of the Wood Elves.” Tarifa spoke softly. “An enemy you will never be.”

Dysea looked back to Martin who smiled at her warmly, a smile that surged through her body and caused warmth to spread in her stomach. “I guess that answers your question huh?” He said with a smile.

The moment was broken as the first clap of thunder could be heard in the distance. Martin stepped back from her then and smiled.

“Time to go folks,” He spoke.

Dysea bent over and lifted the pack, turning as she did so and catching the gaze of the human female who was staring at her. Her Persian red hair framed an angelic face, and stunning jade green eyes, and she looked at Dysea in such a way as to make her blush slightly under her tan. Then she turned as well and followed the dark skinned woman out of the crippled Raptor.

RAPTOR FOUR

“Can you get above it?” Kenny asked.

“I can try.” Billy answered. “But we’ll never be able to fly in it, and we’ll burn through our fuel three times as fast staying in the rough air.”

Kenny was looking out the cockpit window at the angry dark clouds forming ahead of them. “Damn thing moved in quick.” Kenny spoke.

Tareif nodded from behind him. “Acid storms can appear almost instantly.”

“Is there any place we can set down to wait this thing out?” Kenny asked.

Tareif shook his head. “We are out of High Elf territory. What is below us is free space. We know where the human settlements are, but nothing beyond that.”

“Shit!” Billy snapped.

“What about those Alliance ships Billy?” Kenny asked.

“They hauled ass about twenty minutes ago; as soon as this thing showed up.” Billy answered.

Tareif nodded. “Their flying craft are slow and heavily armed as I said, but they could never stay as long as we have.”

Kenny looked at Tareif. “Can your people monitor this storm from your city?” He asked.

Tareif nodded. “I will have our weather watchers inform us the moment it begins to break.” He replied. “It is safest if we return to Mountain City. We can talk with the survivors from the Wood Elf unit and find out what they were doing in our territory.”

Kenny nodded and looked at Billy. He twirled his hand in the air quickly. “Take us back Billy. Refuel and stand by.”

The pilot nodded and they felt the Raptor begin to turn.

The acid storm hit within minutes of them reaching the cave, and as they moved deeper into the main tunnel they discovered it was significantly larger than Radama and Cody had first thought. They moved down the main tunnel until they reached the first expansive area, roughly two hundred meters from the entrance, and it was here that they set up their camp. Small but powerful lights were set up in a small perimeter. The immediate area was checked and cleared, and then a two person outpost was set up a hundred meters from the entrance to provide security. There did not appear to be any other exits to the cave, and everyone began to relax after almost two full days of constant stress.

Radama stood next to Martin and the Master Chief near the entrance as they watched the rain fall.

“How long do you think this will last Radama?” Martin asked.

“It appears to be a very large one.” He answered. “I would think at least ten to twelve hours based on my experience with these storms.”

“And those Acid Nomads you and Cody saw?” The Master Chief asked.

“While they are the only ones able to move within these storms, they don’t like too.” Radama replied. “Anything living has already gone to ground, and unless they are moving their encampment, I don’t they will even come out in a storm this large.”

“So we should be pretty safe?”

Radama nodded. “I would think so.”

“Let’s keep the security post out anyway Chief, just to be safe.” Martin said. “Two hour shifts to keep everyone sharp.”

Tony nodded. “You got it Skipper.” He answered.

“This cave is considerably larger than Cody and I first thought. It might be advisable to see just how large it is.” Radama said.

Martin nodded. “Anyone who goes outside our perimeter goes in pairs. If they want to explore make sure they are armed and have fresh batteries for their lights. I don’t want any surprises.”

The Master Chief nodded and headed back for the perimeter. Radama looked at Martin for a long moment as he gazed into the storm.

“If you have something to ask Radama, just ask it.” Martin finally said to him.

“Forgive me for staring.” Radama replied looking away. “It’s just that... we... elves I mean... we do not get the type of immediate acceptance for what we are by humans as quickly as you and those who follow you have accepted us.”

Martin looked at him. “We are not entirely human Radama.” He told him.

Radama nodded slowly. “Perhaps, but it is something else as well. You and the others... you have gone through the same thing haven’t you?”

Martin nodded. “We were not accepted when we were created either. We had to fight for every piece of respect that we gained, every ounce of trust. We know what it’s like to be persecuted I suppose, but not in the way the elves have had to experience.”

Radama nodded. “No, but it is very similar.” He said. “I have been a member of the Queen’s Royal Guard since I was forty-nine Martin Hunter. I am a hundred and forty now. It has been an honor to serve Tarifa, ever since she became Queen. We all knew she was different, and she has proved it time and time again. If not for the Council of Elders, I believe things would be very different. I have... I have also never seen her as alive and in control as when she is with you.”

Martin smiled. “Well... she’s an incredible woman.” He replied. “I just don’t know if it’s due to what Walter did, or to our own feelings.”

“What I see... what all of the Royal Guard see... it may have been due to the Holy One’s actions in the beginning.” Radama told him. “Now that the two of you are working together, no... that is not something the Holy One had any part in.”

Martin looked at him and chuckled softly. “No... I suppose not.” He said. “I suppose not.”

Dysea sat alone, mindlessly chewing on the piece of ration bar. Her emerald eyes were gazing on Martin’s back as he stood talking with the High Elf Royal Guard, and she didn’t notice Tarifa standing in front of her until she cleared her throat.

Tarifa held out the small data pad in her hand. “I thought you might like to review this.” She said.

Dysea took the pad, her eyes never leaving Tarifa’s beautiful face. “What is it?” She asked.

“It is all the information we were able to gather in regards to the attacks on our villages.” Tarifa told her. “I thought you might want to compare it to whatever you discovered.”

“Thank... thank you.” Dysea told her.

Tarifa nodded with a smile, her sapphire eyes bright and alert. She began to turn and go back to where she had been sitting, and Dysea suddenly found herself not wanting her to leave.

“Wait.” Dysea spoke softly.

Tarifa turned her head and met her gaze. Dysea’s emerald green eyes held her, as only Martin’s eyes had done. Tarifa felt her heart pounding in her chest as she gazed at the stunning Queen of the Wood Elves. She noticed how her platinum blond hair was tied almost identical to hers, in a long pony tail, decorated with an elaborate silken tie. She noticed how Dysea’s hair was draped over one shoulder and curled under her neck.

Tarifa noticed the contours of her lips, and how her thin eyebrows highlighted her green eyes. She noticed the slope of her heart shaped face and how her neck curved down to her very full, firm tits that were straining against her uniform. Tarifa found herself imagining what her skin tasted like, what her lips tasted like, and what it would feel like to nestled between this beautiful woman's thighs and feast on her sweet pussy.

"Thank... thank you for saving my life." Dysea spoke.

Tarifa turned back fully to face her. "You have my sincere apologies that we could not save the lives of your Guard. I know what it is like to lose men and women that are close to you."

Dysea looked at the ground. "Leland... he was my Guards Captain." She said softly. "He was my most trusted friend and advisor, ever since I was a young child."

"Was... was he your lover?" Tarifa asked.

Dysea shook her head. "No, though there are times when I thought he wished that was also the case." She said. "I... I never felt for him that way. And I believe he was content enough just being around me."

Tarifa settled slowly to her knees in front of Dysea, watching her carefully. "Are you sure that he was dead?"

Dysea nodded. "I watched the Assassin shoot him five times." She replied. "Without medical attention immediately, there is no way he could have survived."

"You must never give up hope Dysea." Tarifa told her. "There is always a chance."

Dysea looked at her and Tarifa saw small tears forming in the corner of her eyes. "I do hope." Dysea spoke firmly. "I hope that I am able to return to my home and take vengeance on the murdering scum who did this, and the Elders who took part in it!"

Tarifa's eyes grew a little wider, "The Elders?" She spoke.

Dysea nodded, wiping away the tears from her eyes. "There is no way the Alliance could have deceived me for this long without one or more of the Elders knowing about it. I believe they have been plotting with them all along, but for what reason, I do not know."

Dysea found herself staring at Tarifa now. The sapphire eyes and the soft curve of her cheeks, the way her moist lips reflected the dim light of the lanterns. Dysea also noticed that her shimmering black hair was worn identical to hers, curling under the exact same shoulder as her own, to curl under her neck. Dysea dropped her eyes lower from her shoulders and found herself gazing longingly at Tarifa's deep cleavage, and how her ample breasts pushed against her own uniform. As she brought her eyes back up, she noticed that Tarifa was staring at her with an odd look on her face, a look that Dysea suddenly understood.

"You... you are experiencing the same thing." Dysea spoke, her words not meant as a question.

Tarifa nodded her head slowly. "My... my investigation leads me to that very same conclusion."

"The Holy One... he told me not to trust the Elders completely." Dysea spoke.

"He told me the same thing." Tarifa echoed.

Dysea turned and dug into the small pack she had brought with her from the sight of the encampment. She pulled out the small data pad and held it out to Tarifa. "Perhaps Queen of the High Elves... perhaps we have more in common than I first wanted to believe."

Tarifa took the pad from her and watched as Dysea made room for her on the ground beside her. Tarifa did not hesitate, and immediately moved next to her and they began to read the data pads they had exchanged.

EDEN

"More elves you say Admiral?" Senator Graham asked from behind the desk.

William nodded his head confidently. "Yes Senator. More." He leaned forward in the chair and fought down the bile he felt rising into his throat every time he had to sit in the same room with the man.

Richard Graham had become a very twisted man in only a few short weeks, or perhaps he had always been this twisted and had hidden it well Wallace thought to himself. In the very next room, tied face down to the large bed he had moved into the room was a browned hair female elf who was currently being raped by two of Graham's men. The young female elf would have cried out in agony from the cock being rammed into her tight ass if not for the cock that was causing her to gag and choke as it was pounded deeply into her throat.

“We can use more for labor Senator.” Wallace explained. “The majority of the Elves that Minister Deval kindly gave to us are being used as prostitutes. While I do not disagree with that in the least, the females are more often than not fucked silly, to be blunt. They have to service thirty to forty men a day, every day, which leaves them little time to accomplish any work. Not counting the two you very graciously gave to Colonel Wilson and I, there are only eighteen on EDEN. We need more.”

Richard thought about that for a moment. “Your proposal does make sense.” He said. “However I do not want to become too cozy with these Alliance idiots.”

Wallace smiled. “I was hoping you were thinking like that sir.” He said. “I’ve been reviewing the information that they provided to us, and we do have one commodity that they would very well like to have.”

“What is that?”

“The technical schematics to our Raptor’s,” Wallace answered.

Graham’s eyes narrowed slightly. “You are suggesting that we give them the blueprints to one of the things that give us the advantage? I’m surprised Admiral... as a military officer you are making suggestions that make me want to question your motives.”

“My motives are right where you have shown me they ought to be.” Wallace replied. “All I’m talking about are the bare bones blue prints Senator, none of the advanced hardware that we have added to them. Not even the avionics package. I’m talking about the blueprints to the aircraft frame and the engines. That is all.”

Graham sat forward in his chair now his interest peaked by this. “I’m beginning to see where you are going with this Admiral Wallace.”

“We have the brains Senator. All we need now is brawn. With say two or three hundred more elves, we can easily keep the men happy, and still have the brawn needed to bring our other abilities online.” Wallace spoke. “It would take time... but in six months, we could be making our own ships and more advanced weapons. As time passes, we can review other requests that they make. With Hunter and his scum gone, we will need to outfit our own army. Who is to say we can’t turn the elves he gives us into that army?”

“I do see where you are leading with this.” Graham spoke.

William nodded. “Our people can break down this drug that the Alliance uses on the elves in a few days. We can then make our own drug. The more they ask from us, the more slaves we ask for in return. And then we use our drugs and turn them into our soldiers. In a year, we could take over control of two of their main distribution points for slaves, and then we wouldn’t need the Alliance.”

“And where does that leave us?” Graham asked.

“Well sir... since I have no aspirations in the least for any type of political office; that would leave you as the new President of the Alliance, and me in charge of its military.” Wallace explained. “I do believe that is something that might be of interest to you correct?”

Graham smiled. “Indeed it is.” He said. “You could have done this on your own Admiral... why would you bring me into it?”

“I’d rather have you as an ally sir.” William replied. “It would be much easier if we worked together on this, then neither of us have to be concerned with looking over our shoulders.”

“That is very true.” Graham said. “I must admit Admiral Wallace, I am a little surprised at how easily you seem to have accepted my new position here on EDEN.”

Wallace nodded. “Having Hunter stab me in the back made me realize that perhaps everything you have been saying about them is true. And besides... my elf bitch has the tightest pussy I have ever fucked... and I’d rather fuck than die any day.”

Graham burst out laughing at that statement and nodded his head. “These elf women are perpetual virgins aren’t they? No matter how many times you bang their holes, they always manage to stay extremely tight.” Graham stood and went to the bar that he had put into the office. “I agree William. Let’s extend the hand of friendship a little more and see if we can get something out of it. Draw up the proper paperwork and I’ll sign it.”

Wallace got to his feet and nodded. “I’ll have it to you in the morning sir.”

“Excellent.” Graham watched him leave his office and turned to his most senior aide, who stepped from the adjoining room. “Do you believe him?”

The aide nodded. “If the sounds coming from his quarters every night are any indication, he is becoming more like you every day Senator.”

Graham chuckled. "It's amazing what a little pussy and power will do to a man."

"Yes sir."

"We do need more females for the whore house too. I'm becoming bored with the selection that we have." Graham spoke, untying the robe he wore and heading for the next room. "Let him know to have a much larger selection of elves chosen, preferably ones that he picks out."

The aide nodded. "Yes sir."

"Make sure I am not disturbed for at least four hours." Graham said before closing the door.

The aide nodded slowly, his stomach threatening to empty right there on the floor at what he knew would be four hours of hell for the brown haired female elf in the next room.

Wallace watched the door close to his quarters nearly six hours later and breathed a sigh of relief. He dropped the few data pads he carried onto the table and turned, looking for Anisa.

"Anisa...?" He spoke, unbuttoning his jacket and tossing it over a chair.

Wallace walked into the main living area of his quarters and froze, his hand instinctively drawing the K12 he carried in the belt holster. He took two large steps and jammed the barrel of the K12 into the forehead of Senator Graham's aide's head.

"One twitch you sick motherfucker and I'll ventilate your brain cavity where you stand!" Wallace hissed at him.

"Admiral please... wait, I...!" The young man spoke, his hands in the air, and his eyes wide in fear. "This is not what you think!"

"What is it then? Is Senator Graham checking up on me?" Wallace growled reaching forward and pulling open the young man's coat, then ripping open his shirt looking for a hidden microphone or anything that he could be using to record their conversation.

"The Senator does not know I am here." The aide spoke quickly. "I give you my word!"

"Why should I believe you?" Wallace hissed.

"He's telling the truth William." Anisa's voice spoke from the side. She moved quickly, putting herself between Wallace and the aide, one hand going to Wallace's chest, the other she placed gently on the hand holding the K12. "He has put himself in great danger by coming here William."

"He's the Senator's aide!" Wallace barked. "He's in no danger."

"He is now." Anisa told him quietly. "Look in the bedroom."

William looked at her. "What?"

"The bedroom William; look in the bedroom William and you will understand." Anisa told him.

"Anisa you can't..."

"Do you trust me William Wallace?" She asked him.

"Of course I do."

"Then for me, look in the bedroom." Anisa said.

Wallace glared at the aide and while he dropped the K12 ever so slightly, he kept it leveled on the young man's head, as he moved to the doorway of his bedroom. Wallace glanced into the bedroom to see the small form lying in his bed and curled up into a fetal position under the white sheets.

"That's... that's..." Wallace lowered the K12.

Anisa nodded. "Her name is Neara." She said.

Wallace looked at her. "She's the young woman that was in Graham's office earlier today." He spoke.

"Thomas brought her here an hour ago." Anisa spoke. "He carried her here through the vent shafts William."

Wallace turned to the young man, "The vent shafts?" He asked. "What the hell for?"

"I don't want her to go through anymore of what she went through today." The young man answered. "After... after you left, the Senator... that bastard beat her within an inch of her life as he and his cronies raped her. She begged him... she begged him to stop over and over. And he wouldn't... until she passed out."

"And why exactly would you care what happens to her? She is an elf." Wallace asked with considerable heat in his voice.

"He's in love with her William." Anisa said.

Wallace looked at her. "What?"

Anisa nodded and looked at Thomas. "He's been with her. And he's fallen in love with her. Isn't that true Thomas?"

Thomas nodded his head slowly. "I... I knew after the... after the fourth time I saw her." He answered.

"You expect me to believe that you rape her four times and suddenly you are in love with her?" Wallace almost yelled.

"I... I didn't rape her!" Thomas spoke looking at him, his eyes flaring wide. "I did not rape her! I asked her!"

Wallace chuckled out loud. "You asked her if you could rape her. Jeez that's princely of you."

"That's not the way it was!" Thomas yelled. "We... we talked most of the time! She asked me... she asked me if I wanted her and I said yes! But I told her not unless she wanted me too!"

"You expect me to believe that shit!" Wallace snapped, bringing the K12 up again and jacking back the hammer.

"It's the truth." The soft voice said.

They all turned to see the young female elf standing in the doorway holding the sheet around her battered body. There were several bruises on her face and her bottom lip was cut, but due to her elf healing powers, the wounds were fading fast.

"Neara, you need to be in bed resting." Anisa spoke.

Neara watched Wallace as she moved slowly to stand very close to Thomas, holding the sheet around her with one hand while sliding her other arm around his waist. "He... he is telling the truth Admiral Wallace." She said. "I will not allow you to take from me the only moments of peace I have had since coming to this place."

Wallace lowered the K12 quickly. "He... he raped you." William said softly.

Neara shook her head. "No. If... if anything I assaulted him."

William shook his head. "Ok... now I'm confused." He said.

Anisa took his arm. "You should not be." She said. "You are in love with me are you not?" William looked at her, his eyes wide. Anisa smiled softly. "You do not think I see the way you look at me? You think I don't sense you watching over me when I sleep William? We may be slaves William, but we have had enough experience with men to know the difference when a man... a human man... looks at you with love or with lust."

Wallace gazed at Anisa's beautiful face unable to say anything. He had fought his feelings desperately over the last few days, unwilling to say anything to her for fear she would think he was crazy. "You... you can tell that?" He asked softly.

Anisa nodded her head and stepped even closer to him. "Yes I can tell those things. Did you think I have worn practically nothing at all the last three days because it was hot in your quarters?" Anisa asked with a smile. "You are so engrossed in proving to me that you are different, that you failed to notice I figured that out the first hour after I woke."

Neara groaned and clutched her stomach, doubling over in pain. Thomas caught her quickly and lifted her into his arms, "Neara?" He exclaimed.

Anisa knew immediately what it was and she went to her. "The drug is gone from her implant and she is going into withdrawal. William... the solution you gave to me, do you have more?"

Wallace nodded. "I'll get it." He spoke heading for the kitchen.

Anisa looked at Thomas. "Take her into the bedroom Thomas. We have to purge her system of the controlling drug and she will need the heat from your body."

"What?" He said as Wallace came back into the living area.

Anisa looked at him as he handed her the small container and the injector. "Another item you don't think I remember." She said. "This solution causes the elf body temperature to drop dangerously low. You kept me warm with your own body heat the entire time didn't you?"

William nodded slowly. "Yes."

Anisa smiled. "Go Thomas. Put her in the bed, and then get undressed and under the covers with her."

Thomas looked cautiously at Wallace and saw him nod slowly. He headed for the bedroom as Anisa turned to Wallace.

“You and I have a lot to discuss William.” She said before leaning forward on her tip toes and kissing him directly on the mouth with incredible feeling.

Wallace watched her turn and follow Thomas and Neara into the bedroom.

Wallace set down the mug of coffee he had been drinking got up from the couch in the living room when Anisa came back in an hour later. She smiled at him as she walked right up to him.

“They are sleeping.” She said softly. “The boy was so filled with fear; he was running on pure adrenalin and was asleep almost before Neara.”

“Anisa... I’m sorry.” Wallace spoke.

“Sorry for what? For thinking you were protecting me?” She asked. “That is nothing to be sorry about William.”

“I didn’t... I didn’t want you to think I...”

“That you were like Senator Graham?” Anisa finished his statement. “I already knew that William.” She reached up and stroked his weathered cheek. “You are unlike any human man I have ever met.” She said softly. “When you look at me I can see the desire and the love for me in your eyes, yet there is something else. We were created to be... we were created to be the companions of humans, and to help them rise from the ashes of The Great Fire. The Holy One intended for us to be their partners, in all things and not just sexually. We ended up as the playthings of humans. I am a hundred and seventy-three years old William and you are the first man, human or otherwise, to ever look at me as an equal.”

“Anisa... you have only known me for little more than a week.” Wallace said.

“I do not know you well that is true.” She answered honestly. “But there is something about you that... it draws me to you. It stirs my blood.” She looked at him with her dark eyes. “I can not tell you that I love you William; that would be a lie. I can tell you that I wish to give you pleasure and what I feel for you makes me want to do this more than anything.”

Anisa wrapped her arms around his head and crushed her lips to his with such force Wallace lost his balance and fell back on the couch. His arms reached out for her instinctively, to protect her as they fell, and they ended up pulling her tighter against him, her firm tits pressing into his t-shirted chest. His head swam with wild and long forgotten sensations and thoughts as her hands held his face still and he pulled her closer still returning the kiss with equal passion.

Anisa groaned against his lips, and her hands dropped from his face to rip open the shirt she wore, exposing her jutting light brown tits to his hungry gaze. Wallace broke their kiss and dropped his eyes to her firm breasts, her light brown skin a sign of her Asian descent. Her dark nipples were erect and stood out proudly from her firm tits. They were easily a quarter inch long. Wallace estimated somewhere in his charged mind that she was easily a 34C in size, and they were the most delicious looking tits he had seen in his nearly fifty years. He did not need any further encouragement and he took one of her proud nipples into his warm mouth and he sucked hard.

Anisa’s head rolled back, her eyes closing in bliss as she held his head tightly to her chest. After a moment she used her elf strength to pull his head from her now salvia coated tit and she pushed him back onto the couch. Her hands dropped to his pants and frantically she worked at his belt wanting to free his cock. She needed him; needed to feel him inside her. She dropped from her position in his lap to between his legs, working his pants from his long legs. Her eyes grew a little wider as she saw his thickening cock stretch from under the boxer shorts that he wore. She lowered her face to his groin and inhaled deeply of his musky aroma, smelling his excitement as she took the waistband of his underwear in her hands and yanked them down.

Anisa gasped when his hard shaft sprang up and hit her in the lips. She heard him hiss in excitement as she took the thick cock in her small hand and let her wide eyes wander over the prize she coveted.

Anisa had been a pleasure slave for nearly fourteen months, and in that time many men had taken her against her will. Men with small cocks, men with large cocks, but never had she seen a cock so thick as William’s. The pulsing shaft in her small hand she estimated at no more than seven inches long, but the base of William’s cock had to be nearly six inches in diameter, and her fingers came nowhere near coming together as she gripped it tightly. The vein along the underside of his cock was thick, his shaft thinning to a smooth tapered head that was now red with inflamed passion. Anisa found herself licking her sensuous lips with the tip of her

tongue as she gazed at the monster in her hand. William's balls were not overly large, but they were definitely swollen with cum, and completely hairless. There was only a small patch of dark hair around the base of his cock, gray just beginning to mingle into the hair. Anisa closed her eyes in joy, extending her lips over the flared head and taking William within her warm mouth. Wallace breathed heavily through clenched teeth as Anisa's lips encased his throbbing cock within the satiny warmth of her mouth. "Ahhhhhhh... fuck!" He rasped as his hips involuntarily lifted off the couch. He heard Anisa gag quietly as his motion caused four inches of his raging cock to slide between her soft lips. He looked down between his thighs and saw her shiny black hair tossed to one side, and half of his blood engorged cock firmly seated in her beautiful mouth. Anisa looked up at him with her dark eyes, and William could have sworn they were smiling at him as Anisa pushed her face forward, taking another inch of his massive pole into her mouth. He felt the head of his cock strike the back of her throat and it was too much for him.

Anisa felt William's hands grip her head gently and pull his cock from between her lips. She looked at him as his saliva coated pole slapped against his hard abdomen.

"William... what..."

Wallace did not give her the opportunity to continue speaking and he pulled her onto his lap once more, covering her lips with his own. Anisa whimpered as his hands clutched her tight ass and he ground his huge cock against her dripping pussy. She groaned loudly as her sensitive clit was dragged over the entire length of his pulsing cock, soaking it with the juices that were pouring from her in what seemed like an endless flow. She did not resist as she felt his fingers find the edge of her soaked panties and pull them aside. This man knew what he wanted Anisa discovered quickly as she felt him rub the flared head of his cock against her dripping pussy lips, and then ease her down. Anisa's eyes opened wider as she felt the head slip inside her, followed quickly by four inches of his thoroughly slick cock. She took his head in her hands, and looked down between their bodies. Her mouth opened slightly, her eyes wide in excitement and passion as she saw the last three inches of his cock poised to enter her. She gasped as he pulled her down more, and another inch of that incredibly thick shaft entered her with little difficulty.

Anisa could not help herself impaled as she was on his cock, and she shuddered in a pleasant orgasm, her nails digging into his shoulders. Her thighs quivered in anticipation, her stomach clenching for what she knew would be a very fulfilling experience. She felt him lean forward slightly, and his hands gripped her tight ass as his mouth once more engulfed her tit. Anisa quickly gripped his head just before her world exploded. William held her ass in both his hands and pulled her down powerfully onto his pulsing cock. Anisa's eyes rolled into the back of her head and her back arched as she screamed out her pleasure, feeling her tight pussy filled with his cock.

Wallace held Anisa's hips tightly as her upper body bent back away from him, her firm tits reaching proudly into the air and her head tossing from side to side as he felt her juices soak his burning coat in a waterfall of sweet liquid. He clenched his teeth, feeling the incredible warmth and tightness of her pussy encircling his thick cock, every nerve ending on his underused pole alive in excitement. Wallace was no stranger to having women in his bed, once having boasted of having pussy in every country in the world, yet none of them had a cunt like Anisa. Her pussy was super hot, and it gripped his thick shaft tighter than anything he had ever experienced. The muscles in her pussy were milking him powerfully, and he knew he wasn't going to last long. It had been several years since he had bedded a woman, and he was going to fill Anisa's tight cunt with more cum than she had ever had before.

Wallace lowered Anisa to the floor, stretching out his body on top of hers slowly. Walter Carson had done almost too good a job in making his elves. Anisa's satiny legs curled up along side his hips and her eyes opened slowly to gaze at his face. She reached up to caress his face, his neck muscles bulging out as he tried to hold back his orgasm. He wanted Anisa to feel every ounce of pleasure he could give her. He wanted to show her that not all humans were like the animals that had raped and beaten her in the past.

Anisa smiled dreamily at him. She could feel every thick inch of his cock buried within her depths. "Do... do not hold back William Wallace!" She gasped, feeling his thick cock quiver inside her. "Fill... fill me with your cum! Fuck me!"

Her words were too much for Wallace and he withdrew his cock from her until only the head remained. Her lips curled back in a grimace of disappointment and expectation, and then they flew open wide as he

rammed his cock completely within her in one plunge. Anisa felt his burning hot balls come to rest against her tight ass cheeks as his cum rocketed up the length of his cock.

“By the Gods... Yes!!!” Anisa screamed as she felt his cum erupt from his cock into her belly. She smiled as she felt his cum blasting into her, her hands stroking his back gently as she held him in her arms. She did not love this man, but his kindness to her needed to be rewarded, and he had to know that she did care for him.

MOUNTAIN CITY

Tareif marched down the corridor high above the ground, half a dozen Dragoons and members of SEAL Team Twelve flanking him. He rounded the corner to see Ralao and four other members of the Council of Elders standing outside the infirmary doors, including Thalami.

Ralao was the first to turn his anger upon the stressed elfin War Master. “What have you done?” Ralao hissed at him.

Tareif stopped and looked at the man. “What is it that you are referring to Chief Minister?”

“At this very moment there are three members of The Wood Elves High Guard being treated by our medical staff?” Ralao barked, “Using our medical supplies! Who gave this order?”

Tareif’s eyes narrowed. “I did.” He told him. “It was my daughter’s directive.”

“What?” Ralao asked. “I want to know what is going on! Why are half the Royal Guard at full readiness and why are these flying machines of the humans coming and going at our platforms as they please? Who allowed this?”

“We received a transmission from the Holy One.” Tareif told him. “He was in the company of six Wood Elves and they were being chased by a full company of Alliance Assassins. Tarifa ordered a rescue operation be executed immediately. Commander Hunter’s flying machines were available, and he offered the use of them to Tarifa. Two of his teams and a complete squad of my Dragoons accompanied the Queen on the mission.”

“Tarifa went with you?” Thalami asked somewhat surprised, yet Tareif could detect the respect and awe in her voice as well.

“The Queen led the assault. We were able to use weapons provided to us by Martin’s Weapon Master, and we routed the Assassins.” Tareif explained. “We got them off the ground, but they had anti-air teams in the vicinity. One of these missiles struck the flying machine the Queen was on and was badly damaged. One struck our machine, and did enough damage that we had to return and replace the craft. When we returned I ordered the recovery of the remains from the battle site and we searched for the other ship.”

“The Wood Elves were in our territory?” One of the Elders asked. “What was their purpose?”

“That is most obvious!” Ralao snapped. “They were sizing up their next target.”

“Traveling with the Holy One?” Tareif spoke. “I doubt that very much.”

“What other explanation is there?” Ralao asked.

“Chief Minister I hope that you are not implying that the Holy One is somehow involved with the attacks on our border villages?” Thalami asked in a shocked voice.

“Who else could give the Wood Elves such accurate information?” Ralao responded. “What other possible explanation could there be?”

“I was going to question the commander of the Wood Elves High Guard and find out.” Tareif spoke.

Ralao nodded quickly. “We will convene the Council to discuss this. Report to us the moment you have any solid information.”

Tareif watched as Ralao led the other ministers back down the corridor the way Tareif had come. He felt Kenny step up next to him. “Begging your pardon sir but that man is lying through his teeth.”

Tareif turned and looked at the tall handsome young Genome. “He is Chief Minister of the High Elves!” Tareif spoke.

Kenny shrugged. “He could be fucking Gandhi himself sir, but he’s still lying to you.”

“How can you be so sure?”

Kenny touched his nose. “When someone lies, their adrenal gland pumps adrenalin into their system to allow them to hide the outward signs like redness in their skin and such. We can smell the additional adrenalin sir.”

Tareif looked amazed at this information, “Truly?” He asked.

Kenny nodded. “No doubt about it. It’s a little harder to detect in elves because of the differences in our systems, but the adrenalin that was dumped into his system when he was just talking to you was too strong to miss.”

“And you can detect this in everyone?” Tareif asked.

Kenny nodded again, “Pretty much.”

Tareif’s eyes became bright with an idea. “Come with me.” He spoke to Kenny.

Leland looked at the two figures next to his bed. Recognizing War Master Tareif was easy enough, as there were not many elves on the planet that did not know the formidable General of the High Elves. The second individual Leland did not know. He was taller and more muscular than Tareif and appeared human in every way, except that his aura was not the light green that other humans were to elf eyes. Leland watched as Tareif pulled up the chair next to his bed and motioned the attendant away.

“Dysea...?” Leland asked looking at him. “Where is she?”

“You are referring to the Queen of the Wood Elves I assume.” Tareif spoke.

“You know who I refer to.” Leland said defensively. “Where is she? What have you done with her?”

“Why were you and your Queen in High Elf territory Commander Leland?” Tareif asked.

“You... you know who I am?” He asked.

Tareif nodded. “You are Leland, Commander of the Wood Elves High Guard. I know quite a bit about you. You know of course who I am.”

“War Master Tareif, father to Queen Tarifa. There are few who have never heard your name.” Leland replied with respect. “You... you pulled my men and I from the encampment?”

Tareif nodded. “I ordered the remains of those killed preserved so that you may return them to their families.”

Leland nodded. “I thank you for that.” He spoke. His eyes shifted to Kenny, who stood behind Tareif and to his right. “I do not know you.”

“Lieutenant Junior Grade Kenneth Dakota.” Kenny replied, “SEAL Team Twelve, United States Navy.”

“United... United States... what is this place?” Leland asked.

Tareif looked at Kenny for a moment then back to Leland. “That is a very long story Commander, and one which we can discuss at another time. My most pressing concern now is why you and your Queen were in High Elf territory.”

Leland looked at him. “We... we were investigating the attacks on our villages by those whom we thought were the High Elves.” He answered, meeting Tareif’s eyes. “It appears that assumption was incorrect based on what we found.”

“And what did you find?” Tareif asked.

“We discovered that someone was destroying our villages and killing our people, and attempting to make it appear like the High Elves were doing it.” Leland replied.

Tareif looked from Leland to Kenny slowly, and he saw Kenny nod. He turned back to Leland. “It seems Commander that we may have much in common.”

Leland looked at him confused. “I do not understand.” He said. “You... you have been investigating the attacks as well?”

Tareif nodded. “We have been investigating attacks against our border villages that have taken the lives of nearly three thousand High Elves in the last six months. Attacks that at first glance made it appear the Wood Elves were responsible.”

Leland sat up in the bed. “Someone... someone has been playing us against one another.” He said.

Tareif nodded. “So it would appear.”

“But for what purpose?” Leland asked.

“That is an answer that I believe only my daughter and your Queen has the answer too.” Tareif replied.

“Dysea...? Where is she?”

“The flying craft we used to come to your aide were fired upon by Alliance Assassin Anti-Air teams after we managed to defeat the ground forces. Your Queen and my daughter were both on the same craft. It was heavily damaged, and our search for them has been delayed due to an Acid Storm.” Tareif spoke.

“An Acid Storm,” Leland spoke. “They are in The Wastes?”

Tareif nodded. “It appears they were unable to keep the craft in the air as long as they thought. Their speed would have put them into The Wastes’ very Western Edge. As soon as the storm passes we are returning to continue our search and we will find them.”

“The Alliance Assassins that were tracking us.” Leland spoke, almost ashamed at what he was about to reveal. “I caught a glimpse of their leader. He is... he was a Captain sent to us by the Alliance as a liaison. He was to facilitate the signing of a treaty between the Alliance and the Wood Elves.” Tareif did not react as Leland thought he would and he continued. “The Holy One told Dysea something, and it made her begin this investigation. After what we discovered at the last village, she was positive the Alliance was involved somehow.”

Tareif nodded. “It is just as Tarifa said.” He spoke. He looked at Leland. “Commander... I must apologize to you.”

Leland looked confused. “I don’t understand War Master.”

“It appears that both of our peoples have been pawns in a very devious scheme by the Alliance to wipe us out.” Tareif spoke. “And as much as it pains me to admit, it also appears that Elders on both of Councils have full knowledge of this conspiracy.”

“Dysea suspected as much.” Leland said.

“As did my daughter,” Tareif echoed.

“War Master, if... if Elders on both Councils are involved in this plot then we have been fighting all these years based on a lie.” Leland spoke incredulously.

Tareif’s face became hard with this knowledge. “Yes, so it appears.” He spoke. “And it would also mean the only ones who are aware of this plot are at this very moment trapped together in the middle of an Acid Storm, and we can not contact them.”

Kenny stepped forward now. “Is this Chief Minister an intelligent man?” He asked.

Tareif looked at him. “He would not have gained the title if he was not.” Tareif answered. His eyes went wide and he came to his feet. “And I just told him the general location of where Tarifa and the Holy One are.” He gasped, looking at Leland, “And your Queen as well.”

Kenny nodded. “There’s something else.” He said seeing them look at him. “If he is a traitor... and you would have a better feel for that than I would... we all just got very large bulls eyes painted on our backs.”

“And if he suspected that Tarifa knew of his actions he would act quickly.” Tareif spoke. Tareif’s eyes grew wider and he went to the door, yanking it open, “Telan! Contact our area scouts immediately and get a report from them.”

“War Master, may I inquire as to what for?” Telan asked.

“Just get a report!” Tareif barked, “Now!”

Kenny looked at him. “What are you thinking sir?” He asked.

“Your people,” Tareif spoke turning to look at him. “You must evacuate your entire encampment and bring them here!”

“What? Why?” Kenny asked.

Telan stepped into the room. “War Master... none of the area scouts have reported in for the last six hours.” He spoke.

Tareif looked at Kenny. “Evacuate your encampment Kenneth! Do it now!”

Kenny knew the sound of command when he heard it and he tilted his head. “Raptor Nine to base; we have a Broken Arrow! I say again that we have a Broken Arrow! Evac to my location! I say again evac to my location!”

Tareif looked at Leland. “Can you fight?” He asked.

Leland did not hesitate and tossed back the sheet and put his feet on the floor. “I am ready!” He spoke.

Tareif nodded. “Then it is time to do battle!”

CHAPTER EIGHT

ALLIANCE CAPITAL NEW RICHMOND

New Richmond was the largest and most modern city on the planet, and it was also the capital of the most powerful government anywhere in the world. Once encompassing sixty two and a half square miles, New Richmond, built upon the burnt and shattered remains of the old city, now encompassed almost twice that size at nearly one hundred and twenty square miles of territory.

Towering glass and steel skyscrapers, hundreds of stories high, dotted the horizon of the central portion of the city. As the city spread out, buildings began to grow shorter in height, until the structures far from the center of the city itself reached only one or two stories into the sky. Massive kilometers long rail trains spider webbed throughout the city extending to every portion of the city limits. All around the extreme edges of the city was a five story high concrete and steel wall. It wound its way through hills and valleys, and passed over three different rivers that made up the new limits of New Richmond. Along the outside of this monstrous wall, several hundred small villages were established and bustling with activity and all sorts of illicit action that the Alliance government allowed to take place. This illicit activity included slave trading, black marketeering in drugs and weapons, and pretty much anything that could make people money.

The tallest skyscraper in New Richmond was home to the government of the Alliance. Hundreds of offices occupied the two hundred story building, from lowly interns, to the highest government Ministers. This was the brain trust of the Alliance, where all the decisions were made on the fate of the government and its people.

It was here that Marcus came when he was not in the field. And it was here that he had been called this morning, into the office of the highest ranking military officer within the Alliance. Marcus looked across the desk at the man, his uniform modeled after the old Marine Corp uniforms, and decorated with a dozen rows of colorful ribbons. Here was where Marcus desired to sit one day, the fourth most powerful man in the Alliance, and in control of the Alliance's impressive arsenal of weapons and troops.

"Our mercenaries have begun their attack on Mountain City Marcus." The man spoke, turning to look at him.

"They will not succeed Commodore." Marcus replied confidently.

"We have trained them, supplied them. Why do you say they will fail?"

"They seek only to enrich themselves by capturing as many slaves as they can." Marcus told him. "They do not have the dedication of our most loyal troops."

The Commodore nodded. "I tend to agree, but they have numbers on their side this time."

Marcus nodded. "Perhaps Commodore, but the High Elves are not as weak as we like to believe them to be. Their Queen inspires them, and her father is a superior leader of troops. They may inflict some damage, but if our intelligence is accurate, these new forces that have allied themselves with the High Elves will prove most difficult to defeat."

"Ah yes... you speak of these Genomes that have suddenly been discovered on the moon. The base that was believed destroyed, and now we find is very much active?"

Marcus nodded. "I have read the report by Minister Deval in regards to his stay on this base. I also took it upon myself to delve into the archives to find out what I could about these Genomes."

The Commodore sat back in his chair. "What did you find?"

"My research is not yet complete Commodore, but what I was able to find is quite interesting. These Genomes were created by our friend Doctor Carson to be the ultimate soldiers of the twenty-first Century." Marcus spoke. "The program was not without its faults, and the unit led by this Commander Hunter seems to be one of only two successful units of hundreds that were made. The other was an Air Force unit that was lost after the Great Fire. In terms of skills, they are the equal to and possibly superior to even our Heavy Legions. All of them possess the ability to mutate into humanoid forms of the animal DNA that was grafted to their own. All of them were given the genes of the finest military minds of the century, and just one of them could turn the tide of a battle. Their weapons and equipment would be on a par with ours to some extent, and many of the humans

that escaped with Hunter from this base on the moon were experts in their fields. If they have allied with the High Elves, our war could become quite expensive in monetary as well as other means.”

“Your report from the field when you were chasing the Queen elf indicated that you believe they were helped by others to escape your grasp.” The Commodore spoke.

Marcus nodded. “I believe they were Commodore. The Alliance Assassins that I sent after Tarifa were slaughtered like so many hogs, and no evidence was left of who killed them. It appears she may have been the first one to stumble upon them. This also indicates they are more than capable.”

The Commodore held out the data pad. “You will find this even more interesting. Our spies within the Wood Elf capital have suggested that Dysea was becoming suspicious of our impending Alliance. She left the city seven days ago and from what they were able to determine she was investigating the attacks on her villages. Carson was with her, and orders were sent down for her termination. Captain Thorn led his Assassin unit after her, and as they were about to capture her, two of these EDEN Raptors showed up filled with these Genomes and at least one squad of High Elf Dragoons. Thorn’s unit was almost completely wiped out, and he was killed in a particularly vicious way.”

Marcus’s eyes grew a little wider. “A bladed weapon was shoved through his head? That is very interesting Commodore as it indicates rage.”

“The anti-air unit assigned to Thorn’s group was able to get off two missiles at these Raptor flying machines. They seriously damaged one and the other escaped.” The Commodore spoke. “It appears the damaged one has crashed on the very edge of The Wastes in western Nebraska.”

Marcus looked at him. “Then they will not survive long Commodore.” He said.

“That is what I first thought.” The man answered, “Until I got this report this morning. This is also the report that initiated the attack against Mountain City. Apparently, Tarifa and Dysea were on this Raptor that crashed, as well as our good friend Doctor Carson.”

Marcus’s eyes took on a predatory stare. “Has that been confirmed Commodore?”

“The Anti-Air officer was positive that the elves were on board the Raptor that crashed.” The Commodore answered. “He was not completely sure of Carson however.”

“Is this why you asked me here today Commodore?” Marcus asked.

“Our mercenary allies were instructed to attack the encampment of refugees from this EDEN base and kill as many as possible.” The Commodore explained. “They were then to attack Mountain City and inflict as much damage as possible there. This was done to keep the Genomes and the High Elves from sending any more reinforcements to search for the crashed Raptor.”

“And you wish me to begin a search for this downed craft Commodore?” Marcus asked.

“Not you personally Marcus, you are needed here. However, I do want you to assign your finest officer to this mission. He is to search for and find this crash site, and if any survived he is to track and kill them.” The Commodore ordered. “Our agents within the Wood Elf cities have already begun to spread rumors that their Queen is dead, and that the High Elves are responsible. Soon our people will make the announcement official, and the war we wanted will begin in earnest.”

“A sound plan Commodore.” Marcus spoke. “What is it you wish me to do?”

“Once you have chosen your officer and given him his orders, you are to report to the Mistresses’ home here in Richmond. She has been asking for you.” The Commodore told him.

Marcus grinned. “I look forward to that Commodore.” He said.

“As does she I assure you.” The Commodore told him. “Do you have an officer in mind?”

Marcus smiled. “Yes sir I do. I have trained him myself. He should be able to carry out your orders with little difficulty.”

“Excellent. I’ll leave you to your business Marcus. When your time with the Mistress is done, return here and we can discuss the results of the mercenary attacks.”

Marcus rose to his feet, “As you order Commodore.”

Dysea rolled over on the hard packed cave floor, holding her arms across her chest and shivering slightly. The storm continued to rage outside, and she could just make out the security team near the entrance to the cave. The dampness of the cave, especially now that it was night time outside made it very cool. As her eyes drifted over the others in the party she saw the red haired human female Anja lying with her back to the dark skinned female Tarifa had told her was named Julie. The huge black man Tarifa told her was named Daniel was lying with his face in Julie's soft hair, his long arms wrapped around both females in a sort of protective embrace. Tarifa had told her a little of the three of them, and the fact that they were lovers, though Dysea could still remember the look Anja gave her earlier in the day before they left the crippled Raptor.

The Holy One was sandwiched between the two female Dragoons accompanying them, while the others were scattered about the cave, draped either in cloaks, or in the genomes' case simply sleeping quite easily. Tarifa had told her that the body temperature of the genomes ran higher than that of elves and normal humans, allowing them to adapt quite well in chillier surroundings such as this cave.

She and Tarifa had talked for several hours, discovering much about each other that neither of them had ever known. They talked quite a bit about their different peoples, and realized that the High Elves and Wood Elves had much more in common than the Council of Elders for either group had ever let be known. Dysea had found herself allowing her eyes to wander over Tarifa in a way she had never looked at another woman as they talked, her eyes taking in the swell of Tarifa's breasts and the way her uniform pants encased her tight shapely ass. These thoughts had surprised her at first, until she realized that Tarifa was doing the exact same thing to her. Dysea felt inexplicitly drawn to her, and she could not shake the thoughts of them tangled together without clothes, pleasuring each other in ways she had never imagined. And always within those thoughts was Martin, making them both shudder while screaming out their passion. Whenever either of them looked at her, she felt herself quiver with sensations she had never felt before. Martin's eyes were especially brilliant even in the dim light of the cave, and whenever she looked at him he always seemed to be watching her, yet not once did she detect the normal look of lustfulness she received from human men. His eyes held something else when they gazed at her, and it was that look that made her shiver in unexplained desire and need.

Martin looked upon her with an enchanting stare that even Tarifa did not receive. She could see whenever he looked at Tarifa that there was caring and desire in his eyes, but it wasn't the same way he looked at her. When those dark eyes gazed upon her, she could feel them wanting her in such a way that would possess her soul. It made her body tingle whenever either of them looked at her, and it was not something she was used to, but it was something she found she enjoyed immensely.

Dysea turned her head to look at where they had settled to rest, and her eyes followed how Tarifa's lean leg was draped over his longer ones and how her arm rested on his chest. Her hair was spread out across his chest framing her beautiful face and her glowing sapphire eyes.

Dysea's eyes grew wide and her head came up slightly when she realized they were both staring at her from across the small distance, and incredibly Tarifa's eyes *were* almost glowing. As she lifted her gaze she saw that Martin's eyes were also impossibly bright in the darkness, a soft yellow glow, and his eyes were also focused on her. Even in the darkness, Dysea saw Tarifa's hand extend out to her, beckoning her to them.

Dysea made her decision without hesitation and she crawled over to them slowly, her emerald eyes locked on them. She paused when she was close enough to them to hear their breathing, not knowing what to do or what to say. Tarifa decided for her and took her hand gently.

"You don't have to be alone anymore Dysea." She said in a soft, almost musical whisper. "Let us Martin you warm."

Dysea did not hesitate then, and she moved closer to them, pressing her supple body along the length of Martin's and immediately feeling the warmth he projected. She lowered her head to his chest, her eyes never leaving Tarifa's as she brought her leg up along Martin's to rest atop Tarifa's leg. She felt Martin's arm curl around her back, pulling her even closer and his head leaned back on the small pack, his eyes closing slowly. Tarifa's fingers entwined with her own over the top of Martin's chest, their faces only centimeters apart, so close that she could smell Tarifa's peach like scent mingle with the faint scent of mint, like the early mornings in the deep forests. That scent was Martin's she knew and it filled her with a sense of peace she had not known before this very moment. Her eyes did not open as wide as she thought they would when Tarifa pressed her soft, moist lips to hers and kissed her warmly. It was a kiss not of desire or passion, but a kiss of friendship and feeling and it caused even more warmth to course through her.

The kiss ended and she watched Tarifa close her eyes, her head relaxing against Martin's chest. Dysea waited for only a moment before tightening her fingers with Tarifa's and slowly closing her own eyes sleepily, and without thought, nestled her head further into the crook of Martin's shoulder, his smell permeating her being. She did not see look of satisfaction that adorned Walter's face from where he lay.

The first part of his plan was almost complete, and the future of mankind now lay in the embrace of lovers and friends. Walter had not foreseen the attraction that Tarifa and Dysea would have for one another, and the fact that they would become lovers of each other as well as Martin did not escape him either. It was there as plain as the color of the sky. His presence gave them both peace... and he could tell from Dysea's movements that she was fighting the undeniable attraction to him, and she was losing. He had intended Martin and Dysea to be together, and for Tarifa to share in a friendship with them. That they would become lovers had not come into his calculations, but he knew in the end they would go their separate ways. Dysea was meant for him in a way... drawn to him and he to her... and there would be others Walter sensed... but Tarifa would not be one. Walter closed his eyes once more, pleased that things had worked out the way they had so far, but knowing that things rarely ever worked out the way they were intended.

There was still much to do.

Dysea's emerald eyes fluttered open at the sound of the voices, feeling the heat of the body pressed against her back. Still in a sleepy fog, she pushed back against the body relishing in the warmth. Her eyes flew open wide when she felt the hand tighten on her breast, and the slim leg pressed tighter between her thighs, coming to rest against her crotch, as she was pulled closer to the body behind her. Moving only her eyes, Dysea looked down slowly, seeing the delicate hand cupping her left breast tightly.

Tarifa's hand Dysea's mind screamed.

Dysea's first thought was to leap away from Tarifa, aghast at the position that they now rested in. She could feel Tarifa's breath on the back of her neck, and the warmth that spread throughout her every time Tarifa breathed out. It was not hard to discern that Tarifa was sleeping deeply, her chest rising and falling in even intervals, her breasts pressing into Dysea's back as she subconsciously pulled the heat from Dysea's body closer to her, thereby pulling Dysea closer. Dysea's eyes moved toward the entrance of the cave and she saw Martin squatting with a Dragoon officer and the large black man. Her eyes drifted over where the others rested and saw that all of them were still slumbering. She could no longer hear the huge claps of thunder from outside the cave and she assumed the storm was over and it was still very early in the morning. She remembered crawling over to where Martin and Tarifa laid and stretching her body out against theirs. The heat from their combined bodies had quickly chased the chill from her body and Tarifa had clutched her hand as they fell into a restful sleep.

Dysea didn't remember how they had shifted during the night, as restful as her sleep was. Now she was being held tightly by a sleeping Tarifa as she spooned her firm body against Dysea from behind. The sensations Dysea felt coursing through her were both thrilling and at the same time confusing. Tarifa's hand cupping her breast, holding Dysea close to her while her taunt thigh pressed against Dysea's crotch was generating feelings of passion from deep within Dysea's belly. Dysea's mind was racing, telling her that what she was feeling was wrong, while her body continued to respond to Tarifa's touch. Dysea bit her bottom lip as she felt her nipple harden, pressing stiffly against the fabric of her uniform and jabbing into Tarifa's palm. Her emerald eyes closed tightly as the image of the red haired female grabbing her in this way flashed across her mind, causing her to become even more excited. Dysea wanted to move her legs to stop the warmth that was rapidly spreading through her pussy as Tarifa's thigh rubbed against the bottom of her cunt. Tarifa's breath on the back of her neck was intensifying the emotions swirling within Dysea. She could feel Tarifa's own nipples become hard and even through their uniforms they stabbed into her back quite noticeably.

Dysea could only clench her teeth as the pleasurable warmth continued to sweep through her threatening to overcome her sense of reality and respond to the intense feelings she was experiencing.

"Tar... Tarifa," She finally gasped, gripping Tarifa's hand with her fingers.

This sudden action woke Tarifa quickly, and she found herself highly aroused, with her lips almost touching the back of Dysea's neck, much of her silky blond hair spilling across her face. Her own eyes grew wide as she realized she was tightly grasping Dysea's large breast and her thigh was pressed between Dysea's legs, the warmth of her aroused pussy burning into her skin.

“Dysea...!” She gasped softly, quickly removing her hand and pulling her leg back. “Oh... I... I’m so sorry. I...”

Dysea’s eyes closed slowly as she felt her arousal begin to pass, but as it passed, she felt a sense of longing fill her as well. A sense of longing that made her belly feel empty, and her heart ache. Tarifa sat up slowly, her eyes looking around quickly, her face embarrassed. She breathed a sign of relief when she realized that no one had seen their predicament and she watched as Dysea slowly sat up as well.

“Dysea... I must apologize.” She spoke quickly. “I... I was dreaming... and I did not know... I did not feel Martin leave us.”

Dysea turned her emerald eyes on Tarifa, took a deep breath and forced a small smile. “Nor did I.” She said.

“Forgive me... forgive me for being so... so inappropriate.” Tarifa said softly.

“Tarifa... were you... were you dreaming about me?” Dysea asked her eyes wide.

Martin saved Tarifa the embarrassment of having to say yes when he came into the small perimeter.

“Rise and shine folks!” He spoke in a hushed voice.

Tarifa and Dysea both looked at him oddly for his tone of voice and as the others began to rise he told them why.

“I got good news and I got bad news.” Martin said. “The good news is that the storm is over. The bad news is that we have company coming.”

This statement brought everyone fully awake, and Dysea and Tarifa forgot all about what had happen between them.

At least for the immediate future it seemed.

“I make them about two miles away and closing Skipper.” Danny spoke, lowering the binoculars.

Radama lowered the set he was using and nodded. “I concur.” He spoke.

Martin nodded and turned as Tarifa and Dysea came out of the cave with several others. He turned back to Danny, “Numbers?”

“Looks like thirty at least, maybe more.” Danny replied.

Tarifa came right up to Martin and laid her hand on his arm. “Are they Acid Nomads?” She asked.

Martin nodded. “About three dozen of them, and they are heading straight here.”

“May I?” Dysea asked holding out her hand.

Martin looked at her for a long moment, his nose twitching just a bit. Tarifa knew then that he could smell Dysea’s excitement, and she held her face emotionless as she realized she’d had the same effect on Dysea as Dysea had on her. Tarifa did not want to mention that her own panties had been soaked through when Dysea had woken her, and she knew Martin could smell her. And now he could smell Dysea as well. She watched him gaze at Dysea in a way he did not look at her, and Tarifa smiled inwardly. The last few weeks with Martin had been an experience she would not forget, or ever regret. The sex between them was amazing, but always she could feel him holding something back. Looking at him now... Tarifa knew he had opened her eyes to so much more. She did not love him, that she knew for certain, but what they had shared had brought them closer than she would have thought. As she watched him stare at Dysea she felt a sense of satisfaction that Martin and Dysea had finally come together. And after waking this morning Tarifa hoped that perhaps they would allow her to explore them both before their time together was done. Martin held out the binoculars to her.

Dysea lifted the binoculars to her eyes and scanned the two long columns of Nomads that were approaching the cave. She lowered them just as quickly and looked at Martin. “We can not stay here.” She said. “We will become trapped in the cave and they will only have to starve us out.”

Martin nodded slowly. “I know. Luckily for us however, Radama couldn’t sleep and he did a little exploring while everyone was catching some winks. He found a back way out of the cave; Jules and Anja are leading everyone there now.”

“Where does it come out?” Tarifa asked.

“It comes out about a mile further north.” Martin answered. “If we beat feet we can make it to Crawford before dark.”

“Is it wise to occupy buildings?” Dysea asked, looking at Martin.

Martin met her emerald eyes and shrugged. "It beats staying out in the open." He replied. "It also beats staying in this cave waiting for them to find us wouldn't you agree?"

Dysea nodded slowly, her eyes fixed on him. His words had not been spoken in a demeaning fashion to her. They had been a simple statement of fact. Based on what Dysea had briefly seen and what Tarifa had told her... Martin and the others with him had every right to walk around arrogant yet she detected none of that from any of them. "Yes it does." She replied meeting his gaze.

"It will also allow my people to find us more easily if we are not underground." Martin said.

"Will they be looking for us?" Dysea asked.

Martin smiled, but it was a forced smile and Dysea knew that. "Don't you worry; we'll have you back to your people in no time." Dysea lowered her eyes as he took the binoculars back from her and lifted them to his face. She glanced quickly at Tarifa, who was watching her closely. The emotions that had surged through her when she had awakened in Tarifa's grasp had been nearly overwhelming to say the least, and that they had been inspired by another female was even a greater shock. Perhaps the greatest shock of all to Dysea was that a powerful desire to bed the High Elf Queen was coursing through her. Not to mention the strange emotions that swirled through her when the red haired female gazed at her.

"Ok folks, time to beat feet. Radama, take our two Queens and follow the others. Danny and I will bring up the rear." Martin spoke finally.

Radama nodded and sat up looking at Tarifa and then Dysea. "If you'll follow me Milady? Queen Dysea?" He said.

Tarifa took Martin's hand. "You're coming?" She asked.

Martin smiled and nodded at her. "I'll be right behind you." He replied. He waited until they had started back into the cave before tapping Danny on the shoulder. "Let's boogie Dan."

Dan nodded and rolled over, moving out in front of Martin as they headed back into the cave. Martin took one final look before following Danny into the cave. He paused for a moment as his eyes adjusted and then continued deeper into the darkened cave. The lights from their perimeter had been removed and repacked into their gear and Martin did a last once over of where they had spent the night before following the echo of Dan's footsteps in front of him. As he came around the corner he saw Tarifa and Dysea standing with Radama by a small opening in the rock wall. Dan was just squeezing through as Martin came up to them.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Waiting for you!" Tarifa spoke firmly.

"They would not leave without you." Radama told him sheepishly.

"Well I'm here... so let's go." Martin told them. "Radama go ahead and..."

All of them heard the shifting of the rocks around them and froze.

"What was that?" Dysea asked her emerald eyes darting around.

"I don't think we want to know." Martin spoke. "Radama... start squeezing through the passage, we need to..."

Radama was halfway through the opening in the cave wall and he was looking at Martin speak when suddenly Martin was no longer there. His eyes grew wider as he saw Tarifa and Dysea also drop from his view as the cave floor opened up beneath them with a loud grumbling noise and the three of them disappeared.

Martin felt himself hit the cool water after what he estimated as a sixty meter fall, sliding down the hole that opened up beneath him. He had bounced off several walls enroute to his forty meter drop into the water, all this zipping through his brain as he kicked for the surface of the water.

His head broke the surface and he spit water from his mouth, just as Tarifa's soaked head broke the surface of the still water two meters away.

"Tarifa," Martin barked, kicking his legs powerfully and stroking to her side.

Tarifa dragged her soaked hair out of her face, her legs kicking furiously under the water, and she coughed and spit out water as Martin grabbed her hand. Her eyes opened wide and she saw him.

"Martin where is Dysea?" She gasped, spinning around in the water. "She fell with me."

"Shit!" Martin cursed. His eyes searched all around them, and he saw the small beach a hundred meters away. "I'll get her... go to the beach!"

“Martin!” Tarifa yelled her voice panic stricken. “Find her!”

“I will! Now swim!” Martin snapped. Martin took a deep breath and dove back under the surface. It was surprisingly light in the cavern they had dropped into, and the water was very clear. The water they had fallen into looked to be only thirty feet or so deep and he spotted Dysea quickly. She was struggling mightily, her eyes wide in fear, her cheeks bulging in her effort to keep from ingesting water and drowning. Martin kicked powerfully towards her, his SEAL training returning to the forefront. He had always been the strongest swimmer in his team, able to swim a mile underwater in only two minutes and thirty-nine seconds. He reached Dysea in twenty seconds, grabbing her around her waist. She clawed at his shoulders in desperation, her eyes nearly bugging out of her head. Her blond hair floated all around her terrified face and Martin did the only thing he could think of. He grabbed her face in his hands and sealed his lips over her mouth just as she closed her eyes and took a deep breath.

Dysea’s lungs heaved inward, her nails digging so hard into Martin’s neck that they drew blood. She expected to feel cold water fill her lungs, and her eyes flew open when instead she felt warm air fill them. She had never learned to swim, and when she hit the water it had stunned her long enough for her to sink nearly halfway to the bottom before she began to struggle back for the surface. It was to no avail, as her combat boots and uniform were heavier than she had the strength to balance, and she panicked as she continued to sink. Martin had placed his lips over hers just as she had given up, unable to hold her breath any longer. They were now on the bottom of the body of water they had fallen into, Dysea staring into his dark eyes as she inhaled.

Martin released one side of her face and wrapped his arm around her waist pulling her tightly to him as he held her head in place locked with his lips. Her eyes were still wide with fear and he needed to calm her down quickly. Martin could hold his breath for six minutes, but that was when he was calm and not sharing the air with someone else. He pressed her body close to his and felt her arms encircle his shoulders tightly. He stared into her eyes and brought his hand from the back of her head to her cheek and caressed her cheek softly, enticing her to remain calm and breathe normally. Dysea realized quickly what he was doing, and she loosened her grip on his shoulders slightly, forcing herself to still her racing fear, her face becoming more relaxed as she felt Martin nod his head ever so slightly and she willed her racing heart to slow. She felt his hands move around to take hold of her waist and he lifted his eyes upwards. Dysea nodded and Martin pushed off the bottom and they rocketed for the surface.

Tarifa knelt in the water, her sapphire eyes searching the surface of the calm underground lake. She was soaked to the bone, yet the air here was not chilly. She felt her heart racing in anguish as she waited for Martin to break the surface. She cried out in joy as Martin breached the calm surface and she saw blond hair wrapped around him. She felt nothing but relief, at the sight of both of them, even when she realized their lips were locked tightly together.

Martin held her waist tightly as he treaded water, and he took his lips from over Dysea’s mouth and she gasped and breathed deeply of the air around them. She held him tightly as she lowered her eyes back to his. “I... I can’t swim.” She said.

Martin grinned. “Yeah... I figured that out.” He replied. “Just hold on to me.” He lifted his head and saw the blinking light above them coming from the hole they had fallen through. Dysea watched as he reached into his vest and pulled out the small flashlight. He lifted it toward the blinking light and flashed off a message of his own. The light responded and then it quickly disappeared.

“Hold on.” Martin told her as he began to swim for the shore where Tarifa waited.

The Master Chief pulled himself back up the rope quickly, and climbed from the edge of the collapsed floor. He looked at Danny who was wedged into the opening in the rock wall as he held out his hand. Tony took the hand and Danny eased back through the opening. The Master Chief turned his body and followed Dan the ten meters into the next tunnel where the others waited.

“Master Chief?” Julie asked.

“They’re alive.” Tony spoke. “They dropped into some huge cavern with an underground lake and were headed for the shore.”

“Underground lake,” Anja asked the relief at his words very evident in her voice. Only Julie seemed to notice this and she smiled to herself.

“The Great Fire caused many tectonic shifts.” Radama spoke up. “We have found many of these caverns since then. All of them have had a tunnel leading back to the surface.”

“The question is where?” Danny spoke.

“Skipper said to continue with the mission.” The Master Chief told them. “He would move north and try to link up with us as soon as they could.”

Danny nodded. “Then let’s move. Those acid nomad fuckers might not be able to get across that cave in, but they might know where this tunnel exits and I don’t want to give them the opportunity to find us. Chief I want you to head back there and drop the skipper two of the survival packs from the Raptor and then you bring up the rear.”

Tony nodded and headed back through the crevice.

Martin lay on his back on the shore, breathing deeply of the fresh air as Tarifa fell to the ground next to him.

“Martin!” She gasped, taking his face in her hands.

Martin looked at her and smiled a crooked smile. “There’s nothing like a cool sixty meter plunge into an underground lake to energize the morning huh?” He said.

Tarifa’s eyes narrowed and she slugged him in the shoulder. “You jerk!” She yelled. “I thought you both had drowned!” Tarifa turned away from him to where Dysea lay on the ground next to him breathing deeply as well. “Dysea are you hurt?” She reached out and helped her to sit up as Dysea looked at her.

Dysea saw the genuine concern for her in Tarifa’s sapphire eyes, and it made her flush with warmth. She shook her head gently. “No... just scared. I... I never learned how to swim.” She explained sheepishly. “I just sank to the bottom.”

Martin sat up and took in their surroundings. The cavern they were in appeared to be easily half a mile across and a mile long. Martin could see the stalactites protruding downward from the cavern ceiling, extending as far as his eyes could view. The shoreline also extended in both directions out of the line of sight with rock formations every few hundred feet, some extending directly out into the water.

“Well this is neat.” He spoke.

Tarifa and Dysea both looked up and their eyes did as Martin’s were doing; taking in the area around them.

“High Elf researchers have discovered caverns such as this, but I have never been to one.” Tarifa spoke. “The Great Fire caused many tectonic shifts to occur, and these caverns are the result.”

“It is fresh water.” Dysea spoke now. “And the temperature is not as cold as I would have thought it would be.”

Martin nodded. “That means it’s being fed from somewhere else.” He got to his feet slowly, shaking the water out of his weapons and his small pack. “We need to move north and try to link up with the others.”

Dysea looked up at him. “That was the light we saw?” She asked him. “The one you signaled?”

Martin nodded. “They were signaling us. I told them we were alive and that we would move north to meet up with them.” He knelt next to the small packs that had dropped from the hole as he and Dysea had started to swim for shore. They had been inflated in such a way that the contents of the packs remained dry. Martin pulled his blade from his belt and punctured the air bags in both packs, deflating them. He pulled them open and began taking items from inside the packs. He transferred all the gear into one pack and hefted it to his shoulders.

“We got some dry uniforms and rations and stuff.” He spoke to Tarifa and Dysea. “We’ll move to those rocks and change, and I’ll move ahead to get our bearings.”

Tarifa and Dysea blew air into the chambers of their weapons, water spurting out of the barrels. Dysea looked at Martin. “Will these weapons fire if they have gotten wet?” She asked.

Martin grinned, “Oh yeah!” He answered. “C’mon let’s get moving.”

Dysea finished lacing up her boots and buckled the holster around her waist. There were no new undergarments, so Dysea had decided to forgo putting on the soaked white lace thong panties she always wore, as well as the lace bra. She looked at her breasts before buttoning the fatigue shirt, proud of their firmness and knowing she did not need to wear a bra. She grabbed her wet uniform and started to climb over the rocks to rejoin with Tarifa and Martin. She had only gone a few meters when her elf ears picked up their voices. She crept forward slowly, until she could look around the large rock face. Her eyes went a little wider when she did.

Tarifa and Martin were still only half clothed. Neither of them had their shirts on, and like Dysea, Tarifa had decided to not put her wet undergarments back on. At the moment she was currently sitting in Martin's lap, her firm tits crushed against his bare chest as they shared a very deep and heated kiss.

Dysea watched as Tarifa pulled his face from hers, their lips joined by a long strand of saliva for a brief moment, their faces flush and their lips moist. Dysea let her eyes wander over Martin's chest, taking in every contour of his powerfully packed muscles and abdomen. Her eyes took in the black flame tattoos that crisscrossed his chest and shoulders, as well as his back, and she heard Tarifa speak.

"That was a very brave thing you did Martin. You saved Dysea's life you know." She told him softly.

Martin smiled and nuzzled her throat, and Dysea's eyes went wide when she saw his canine teeth extend half an inch and gently nibble Tarifa's tanned satiny skin, "That little swim?" He spoke "I've jumped from higher and landed in deeper water. She would have been alright... but I think she is still recovering and everything that has happened has shocked her." He told her quietly reaching up to stroke her cheek. "You dreamed about her last night didn't you?"

Tarifa nodded with a slight smile, totally devoid of any embarrassment with the man she had shared so many pleasurable moments with in the last few weeks. "It was... it was very vivid Martin." She said softly.

Martin smiled. "No kidding. I did too... that's why I got up and left the two of you. I could smell you from the front of the cave. And I could... I could smell her as well. She smells like wildflowers when she's excited." He said almost absentmindedly, Dysea's scent coming to him now. She was only a few meters away.

"Martin I woke up with her breast in my hand and my thigh pressing against her... against her pussy." Tarifa spoke, her cheeks turning slightly red as she spoke the words. "It was glorious... though it was very embarrassing."

Martin reached up and pulled some of her hair from her face, his hands running down her shoulders and stroking her arms. "She has affected you quite a bit." He said.

Tarifa looked at him. "She has affected you even more." She said with a gentle smile. "I've seen the way you look at her."

"Tarifa I..." Martin started to speak.

Tarifa put a finger to his lips and stopped him. "What we have shared these past weeks has been wondrous Martin Hunter. I think however that both of us have known that it would not last. We... we are meant for others... you more than I, if what I feel is correct."

"What do you feel?" Martin asked her.

"There is something about you Martin." She spoke, "Something that you will not let me see. You keep it chained well... but it is meant for others. I believe Dysea is one of them."

"You are attracted to her as well, aren't you?" Martin said.

Tarifa nodded with a shy smile, "Surprisingly very much so." Tarifa answered. "I believe I feel it from her as well... but since I have never been with a woman... I don't know. Our... our relationship has opened my eyes to many things that I would not have thought of before. And for that... I will be eternally grateful to you for."

"I have felt different since returning to earth." Martin spoke. "I can't explain it... but something inside me is calling out. To what I don't know..."

"It will come to you in time." Tarifa said with a seductive grin. "I would hope that until we decide it would be best to part ways, you would still allow me the pleasure of being with you."

Martin smiled as well. "You have turned into a little vixen." He said with a soft chuckle.

Tarifa smiled and nodded before kissing his lips softly. "What you have shown me I have never experienced before, and I have discovered I like it very much." Martin looked at her oddly and she drew back just a little. "What is it Martin?"

“Your... your teeth Tarifa” Martin said his eyes a little wider. “They are...” He reached up and with his index finger he traced her now half inch long canine teeth.

Tarifa smiled brilliantly and nodded. “They are becoming like yours.” She stated proudly.

Martin looked confused. “How... how is that possible?”

“I don’t care how it’s possible, all I know is I can feel the changes inside me and I love them.” Tarifa said. “My senses are more alive, I can smell you more clearly. I feel energized Martin, like a whole new world is opening to me.”

“You... you welcome this change?” He asked surprised. This was something he had not expected and it surprised him quite a bit.

“This change makes me more like you. I feel stronger and more alive, and it is a wonderful feeling.” Tarifa told him. “Why would I not welcome it? I spoke very briefly with Anja, but I was unable to go into details. I will talk with her when we have more unexciting things to do.”

Tarifa kissed him deeply, and felt his arms encircle her, his tongue probing and finding hers and quickly defeating her in a tongue duel. Her breasts were crushed against his bare skin, her nipples erect from both the coolness of the air and her own excitement. After a long moment they parted once more, Martin nuzzling her throat and Tarifa grasping his head tightly, turning her face to the side with her eyes tightly shut.

Dysea wore a stunned look as she too saw that Tarifa’s canine teeth had indeed become longer, extending to nearly three quarters of an inch in length now. Their entire conversation had been in regards to their feelings for her, and instead of being aghast and disgusted, Dysea found herself actually enticed by the thought. She could not deny the attraction she felt for Martin, picturing him fucking her brains out made her extremely wet between her thighs, yet it was the pictures in her mind of her and Tarifa that surprised her. She found herself becoming supremely aroused by the thought of making love to Tarifa and exploring her taunt body. Dysea found herself wanting to taste her, desiring to explore every centimeter of her tanned flesh, and have Tarifa do the same to her.

Martin’s words shook away her thoughts.

“I need to scout ahead.” He told Tarifa, easily getting to his feet even with Tarifa in his lap. She uncoiled her body from around him, yet kept her arms around his shoulders as he stood to his full height and lowered her gently to the ground. “I don’t think Dysea needs to come around the corner and see us like this. Not yet.”

Tarifa nodded with a seductive smile and kissed him. “I will finish getting dressed and we will wait for you.”

Martin nodded as well and reached down to pick up his combat vest and weapons. He looked at Tarifa’s tits standing proudly in full display for him, her nipples beckoning to him and he almost lost control and took her right there. Martin smiled as he turned and headed down the shoreline.

Dysea leaned against the rocks for a long moment, calming her heart and taking deep breaths. When she had complete control of her emotions once more she made a few small noises and then stepped around the rocks. Tarifa was buckling on the combat vest, and she turned to see Dysea come from the side.

Tarifa jacked the first round into the chamber of the K12 before sliding it into the holster on her thigh. “Martin went to scout ahead. He said we should wait here for him.”

Dysea stepped up to her slowly, seeing Tarifa begin to spin her long hair in her hands to put into a pony tail. Dysea pulled her own pony tail forward and removed the lower two strands of silk that tied her hair. She held them out to Tarifa. “Take these.” She said.

Tarifa looked at her as she held out the elaborate strands of silk. “I... I have the leather.” She said.

Dysea shook her head. “These are silk. They are stronger and they will not tangle your hair when you go to remove them. They also do not suck the moisture from your hair as the leather does.”

Tarifa took the strands of silk slowly. “Thank you.” She said.

Dysea moved in front of her and sat on the small boulder. “May... I ask you something Tarifa?”

“Certainly,” Tarifa replied.

“Martin. He... he is different isn’t he?” Dysea asked her. “The Holy One told me a little of him... that he was not completely human. That is why his aura is a darker green isn’t it?”

Tarifa nodded slowly. “They were called Genomes.” She said.

“The Holy One told me that, but before he could go into more detail we were set upon by the Alliance Assassins.” Dysea explained.

“I do not know the full story...” Tarifa said. “I will tell you what I have learned from Martin and some history files that I was given.”

“Yes please.” Dysea said.

“The Holy One created them in the mid twenty-first century.” Tarifa began.

Tarifa talked for nearly thirty minutes, telling Dysea as much as she knew; which was more than most people. Throughout it all Dysea simply stared at her, watching as her lips moved, and how her breasts rose and fell evenly. Tarifa’s voice was like a soft music to Dysea’s ears and it relaxed her greatly. She absorbed all the information that Tarifa gave to her, and almost didn’t notice when Tarifa finished speaking.

“Dysea, are you alright?” Tarifa asked.

“You... you and Martin are... you are lovers?” Dysea asked the question, trying her best not to sound that interested even though she already knew the answer. She saw the look on Tarifa’s face and raised her hand. “Forgive me... I should not have asked. I apologize.”

“There is nothing to apologize for.” Tarifa told her, moving off the rock she was sitting on. “But you ask a question you already know the answer to. Why?”

Dysea looked at her as Tarifa moved closer to her. “I... I don’t know.”

Tarifa nodded. “Yes we are, though now that you have come into his life... things will change I think.”

“Me?” Dysea asked. “Why?”

Tarifa looked at Dysea, her eyes following the curve of her neck and the outline of her lips. Her eyes also took in the swell of her large breasts, and the way the fatigue pants clung to her skin. Her platinum blond hair was clean and silky, her eyes bright and alive. Tarifa made a decision then and moved closer to Dysea.

“You asked me this morning if I had been dreaming of you when I was sleeping.” Tarifa said.

Dysea was frozen in her spot on the small rock and unable to move as Tarifa moved to within inches of her face. She could see Tarifa’s wide sapphire eyes that were alive with passion and desire. Dysea knew that look well; she had seen it in the eyes of many men, yet she had never seen desire for her in another woman’s eyes. She nodded her head slowly.

“Yes... yes I did.” She replied, her chest heaving in the excitement that was welling up inside her, and the hope that Tarifa would kiss her. Dysea’s mind was racing in confusion, yet she could not push back the thoughts and the powerful desire that was building within her. She wanted Tarifa to kiss her. She wanted Tarifa to take her right here and right now, and that realization frightened her, yet it thrilled her even more.

Tarifa lowered her hand to Dysea’s leg, running her fingers up the length of Dysea’s slim and muscular thigh. Dysea flinched at the intimate touch, but she did not draw away and Tarifa looked at her, passion searing through her veins. She brought her face close to Dysea, and saw her emerald green eyes wide in surprise, but also in wonderment. Their lips were only a few millimeters apart and Tarifa extended her tongue slowly, running the tip hesitantly over Dysea’s soft moist lips.

Tarifa stared into Dysea’s eyes, searching for any sign of rejection or doubt. Her heart sang when she saw none and Tarifa knew she could no longer hold back her emotions. She wanted this woman almost as much as she desired Martin. She could not deny it any longer and she did not care where they were. She needed Dysea now.

“Yes... I was dreaming of you.” Tarifa spoke softly before covering Dysea’s full lips with her own.

Dysea could not help the whimper of delight that escaped her throat as Tarifa’s lips covered her own. Her body tensed as she felt Tarifa’s warm moist tongue gently probing, teasing and seeking entry into her mouth. Her mind burst open with stars at the new and incredible sensations that erupted within her, and when she felt Tarifa’s strong hand come up and firmly cup her large breast, Dysea surrendered to what she was feeling.

Tarifa’s eyes closed sensuously when Dysea’s soft and delicious lips parted even wider. With barely controlled glee she plunged her tongue into Dysea’s warm mouth searching for what she wanted as she gently pulled Dysea from the rock and onto the softer earth. She had laid out the liner of one of the space blankets on the ground before she began to change out of her wet clothes, and this is where she directed Dysea. Tarifa’s hands worked frantically at the buttons of Dysea’s fatigue top, and finally she got the last one unfastened and pulled it open, exposing Dysea’s firm 34C tits to her hungry eyes. Her eyes grew wide with passion as she saw

that Dysea's upper body was tattooed with a light blue ink, several light blue circles extending down between her firm tits, and what appeared to be a pendant of some kind tattooed around her belly button. Her belly button was adored with a glittering emerald piercing, and as Tarifa pulled her top from her shoulders, she saw delicate tattoos across her shoulders and circling her upper arms.

Dysea's nipples were incredibly erect, standing out proudly in excitement the likes of which Dysea had never imagined she could experience. Dysea gasped loudly when Tarifa's lips descended hungrily to her tits and took her left nipple into her warm mouth. Her hands went to Tarifa's head and her fingers entwined within her silky black hair as pleasure shot through her body like an electric current.

Tarifa suckled hard on Dysea's nipple, her own body awash with fire as her hands struggled to remove Dysea's pants. Dysea was clutching her head, her breath coming in ragged gasps at what she was experiencing. Tarifa switched to Dysea's other nipple, using her new canine teeth to nipple the erect bud, drawing yelps of pleasure from the beautiful blond woman beneath her. Tarifa dropped one hand slowly down Dysea's flat abdomen, feeling her stomach clench at the touch of an unfamiliar hand. Tarifa slowly and deftly used her fingers to unbutton Dysea's pants. Her own body was on fire, her pussy already soaking through her pants at her own excitement. She stretched her fingers out, delving further down Dysea's firm abdomen, searching for the prize she so wanted.

Dysea's hand grabbed Tarifa's wrist just before her fingers touched her dripping pussy. Tarifa's face came up from her tits, her eyes smoldering in passion, her lips moist from sucking Dysea's nipples. Tarifa blinked quickly, and questions filled her eyes as she stared at Dysea's wide emerald eyes.

"Ta... Tarifa... we..." Dysea gasped, trying to control her breathing.

"Dysea... please... I... I want you!" Tarifa pleaded with her in a husky voice. "I... I want to taste you... I want to possess you... please don't... please don't make me stop."

Hearing Tarifa's words brought down what little remained of Dysea's resistance. Dysea's eyes grew wider as she allowed the passion to sweep through her unchecked. She released Tarifa's wrist and gasped when Tarifa's fingers found the thin line of platinum blond hair above her engorged clit and gently her fingers snaked through the soft hair to find what they were seeking.

Tarifa's eyes filled with awe and a renewed passion as she found Dysea's erect clit, and discovered the surprise. Drawing a gasp from Dysea as she settled back onto the blanket, Tarifa tore at her fatigue pants. Dysea frantically lifted her hips from the blanket to allow Tarifa to strip her, and then she felt the coolness of the air around her on her bare thighs as Tarifa pulled them off her in one powerful yank. Tarifa did not pause and squirmed lower on the blanket, to settle between Dysea's thighs. Her eyes were focused on the beautifully trimmed platinum blond hair just above Dysea's throbbing clit, and the glittering diamond ring that pierced that beautiful swollen clit. Tarifa turned her head slightly, taking in the wide tattoo that decorated and circled completely Dysea's taunt thigh, and the intricate wave design that was inside the tattoo. Her lips grazed the tattoo, tasting her flesh, as her tongue traced a long path up the inside of that thigh to the outer lips of Dysea's pussy. Tarifa closed her eyes as she nestled her nose in the soft blond hair, breathing deeply of Dysea's passion. Her mind recalled Martin's words to her on how Dysea smelled like wildflowers, and Tarifa smelled them now quite powerfully, and it was Dysea's own excitement that washed away any lingering doubts about what she was about to do.

Tarifa reached up slowly with her long fingers, tracing a line along the outside of Dysea's dripping cunt, until she placed her index finger on the diamond ring that pierced Dysea's blood engorged clit. She felt Dysea's stomach clench, and her fingers entwined in her black hair. She felt Dysea pull her head towards her blond pussy and she smiled, her canine teeth now fully extended in passion. Tarifa leaned forward, took Dysea's throbbing clit within her warm lips and flicked the diamond ring gently. Dysea gasped in delight, and her thighs tightened in anticipation. Tarifa closed her lips tighter around Dysea's sweet tasting clit, her juices already splashing across her face and sliding down her throat. Tarifa grabbed her powerful ass cheeks in both hands and sucked hard on Dysea's throbbing clit, her tongue flicking madly across the diamond piercing.

Dysea's eyes flew open wide, the muscles in her neck straining as she opened her mouth and screamed in unashamed pleasure as the most powerful orgasm she had ever experienced ripped through her very being. Her legs clenched and she locked her heels behind Tarifa's shoulders, her hands gripping her lover's head tightly, as her pussy convulsed and sent rivers of her cum flooding into Tarifa's sucking mouth.

Tareif stood to one side of the platform as the last of the Raptor's settled for a landing trailing smoke as the sun began breaching the horizon. The remaining hours of the previous night had been long and very arduous. Tareif was amazed at the organization that Commander Hunter's people had, and immediately upon receiving the order from Kenneth, they began pulling up roots. The attack came from the north, as hundreds of human mercenaries hit the refugee encampment. Men, women and children were in some cases tossed into the back of Raptors and the two transports. At least five of the Raptors that had come from EDEN were destroyed by anti-air missiles as they lifted off fully loaded with civilians. Mortar rounds were dropping within the encampment perimeter, shredding flesh and smashing bone, but the genome soldiers never gave up.

Tareif had watched in stunned silence as fire balls blossomed from the area of the encampment, and Raptors began arriving to offload passengers. In displays of courage he would not soon forget, the pilots of the flying craft would take off immediately to return for more of their people or to provide close air support. Hunter had laid out a killing perimeter all around the encampment, a perimeter that included mines and booby traps. He was receiving reports from the half dozen Dragoons that had remained in the encampment and who were fighting beside the genomes, and what they were telling him was incredible... even unbelievable in some cases. These genomes were savage fighters, and even though wounded horribly, they would stagger to get the civilians to the Raptors and transports. They just never gave up, as if defeat or surrender never crossed their minds.

Ultimately it would be that dedication and sacrifice that allowed all but three hundred of the civilians they were tasked with protecting to escape. The price was terribly high though, as Tareif watched Kenneth silently counting off the number of their dead. Martin had come to the surface with fifty-three genomes in his team. As the last Raptor landed on the platform, Tareif learned that only nineteen had survived the attack, and that included the nine that were present in Kenneth's team. He also learned that if not for the actions of two of the now dead genomes, all of the elves that had been fighting with them would be dead as well. Though hideously wounded they had physically tossed the six elves into the last Raptor before it lifted off. Both of them had been shot nearly a dozen times, in places that would have dropped any normal human or elf, yet they hadn't fallen until Tareif's elves were safe.

Tareif watched as Kenneth slowly walked up to him. His face was emotionless, but Tareif could detect the anger that was boiling just beneath the surface.

"The pilot of the last Raptor reports that the mercenaries are advancing on the city. They have set up heavy mortars to the north, and it appears they are massing for a full blown ground assault." Kenneth spoke. "He estimates they will begin shelling once they have their mortars in position. Perhaps thirty minutes."

Tareif's jaw clenched tightly. "We have nothing that can reach the valley." He spoke.

"You have heavy mortars sir." Kenny spoke. "The Skipper said if we cut some tress back, they could hit the valley."

Tareif's eyes lit up. "Yes! I remember him saying that now!" Tareif turned to Telan who stood behind him. "Order all the mortar positions on the north side of the city to stand by to fire. Get as many engineers as you can gather and have them use hand lasers to cut back enough tree limbs to give the mortars a clear angle of at least eighty-six degrees!"

"Eighty-six degrees War Master?" Telan spoke. "That is almost straight up!"

"I know damn it! The heavy mortars covering the north perimeter have a range of ten miles. They can reach the valley with ease if their elevation is above seventy degrees! Now do as I order you!" Tareif snapped.

Telan nodded and turned to go just as seven genomes walked up to them carrying long black cases. Tareif looked at them oddly and turned to Kenny. "What is this?"

"Snipers sir," Kenny replied. "I was going to position them on the far north platform and have them take targets of opportunity. I also want to move three Raptors to that platform and have them use their Sabot Cannons from a stationary position, while three more orbit out of missile range. The cannons have a range of thirty kilometers sir."

"And your sniper weapons, what is their range?" Tareif asked.

"My people can hit the ass on a fly at three miles with these things." Kenny replied.

Tareif nodded. "Then I have a better position for them." He said. He pulled the map locator from his belt and activated it. A detailed map of the surrounding area came up and Tareif pointed to it. "Have one of your

Raptors drop your snipers here on top of this ridge. I will send spotters for your people. It is well concealed and the Alliance mercenaries will not know where you will be firing from.”

Kenny nodded, “Works for me.” He said.

Tareif looked at him. “Why are you helping us?” He asked. “Your encampment is destroyed; many of your people are dead. We have been at war with the Alliance for decades. This is not your fight.”

Kenny’s eyes hardened. “It’s our fight now sir. And once the Skipper gets back... I got a feeling these Alliance assholes are going to regret we ever came back to the surface.”

Tareif shuddered inwardly at the man’s words, but nodded his head. “Then we should prepare quickly.” He spoke.

THE WASTES

Dysea’s eyes were half closed in passion, her breath coming in long slow gasps, her chest rising and falling as she tried to regain control of her racing heart. She could feel Tarifa’s soft lips slowly kissing their way back up her supple body, her hands roaming gently over her still painfully erect nipples. What she had just experienced was unlike anything she had ever felt. Unlike Tarifa, Dysea had never been captured and raped by Alliance troops; she was far too skilled a warrior for that to happen. And while Tarifa had allowed more than a handful of male elves to take her to bed, Dysea had had only three lovers in her lifetime. None of the male elves who had shared her bed did so more than once, and Dysea had forgotten them within a week. She was sexually very inexperienced, and until this day had never even entertained the thought of allowing a man, let alone a woman to do what Tarifa had just done to her.

Tarifa was just as overwhelmed as her lover. She had been able to pull her own fatigues off before her own passion had soaked her pants, and now she was just as naked as Dysea was before her. She took her time trailing small kisses back up the firm stomach of the Queen of the Wood Elves, allowing her hands to roam over Dysea’s beautiful tits while she softly kissed and licked her satiny skin. She was attempting to compile her thoughts about what had just happen, and allowing her own body to cool her passions. With Martin being the lone exception, Tarifa had never willingly given pleasure orally to another person. With Martin, she had desired to suck his huge cock almost more than she could stand, and he had rewarded her with his delicious tasting cum. Dysea had produced the same effect in Tarifa, the desire to please her partner with her mouth, and Dysea had also rewarded her with her sweet tasting cum.

That she had so willingly and happily lapped away at another woman’s cunt surprised Tarifa, but she had cum as well while drinking Dysea’s delicious juices, and no one had to touch her for that to happen. Tarifa spent several moments swirling her tongue around Dysea’s hard nipples, drawing soft gasps from her. Slowly, with an almost embarrassed look on her face, she pressed her naked body against Dysea’s warm flesh and looked into her beautiful face.

“Dy... Dysea... I... I’m sorry.” Tarifa spoke unable to meet her eyes. “I... I don’t know what came over me. I’ve... I’ve never done that before.”

Dysea looked at Tarifa’s flawless face, her eyes heavy in the aftermath of her crushing orgasm. She reached up slowly and let her fingers caress Tarifa’s moist lips, noticing that her juices glistened on her lips and a small portion of her cheeks.

“You... you have never done that before?” Dysea asked more than a little shocked.

Tarifa shook her head slowly, “Never.”

“Then... then how...”

“It... it just seemed like the right thing to do.” Tarifa told her, finally looking into her beautiful eyes. Dysea’s emerald orbs were very bright and alive. “It is... it is what Martin does to me.”

Dysea’s eyes opened a little wider. “Martin... Martin pleasures you like that?” She asked astonished.

Tarifa nodded with a smile, inching her supple body further up Dysea’s lush figure until their breasts were pressed together. “He is the only one to have ever kissed me too. Well... that number now includes you. He is very good at it.” She said wistfully. “Much better than I am.”

“Better?” Dysea asked stunned. The orgasm that Tarifa had produced from her was enough to leave her seeing stars and Tarifa was now telling her Martin was better.

Tarifa's embarrassment was rapidly leaving her as she reached out and ran her finger across Dysea's soft lower lip. "Oh yes, much better. You taste wonderful by the way." She leaned over quickly and pressed her lips to Dysea's in a heated kiss, her heart singing when Dysea quickly responded with no hesitation.

Dysea returned Tarifa's kiss without pause, and she could taste herself on Tarifa's lips and tongue. It caused her body to become even more aroused, and she surrendered to the feelings that this beautiful woman was causing in her. Her arms went around Tarifa's back, pulling her closer and feeling her breasts press harder against her own. Like Tarifa, Dysea had never been kissed before, and Tarifa's kisses were igniting parts of her body and mind that Dysea had never known existed.

Tarifa pulled their lips apart almost reluctantly and stared into her lover's now fiery green eyes. "I... I have something that belongs to you." Tarifa spoke softly, smiling at her.

Dysea's eyes filled with confusion. "What... what do you mean?" She asked. Dysea stared into Tarifa's bright eyes at her words and she felt all her passions, all her desires come forth. If someone had told her a few short weeks ago that she would be lying on the ground with the glorious and naked body of the Queen of the High Elves spread across her equally nude form, Dysea would have cut their tongue out on the spot.

Dysea's eyes went wide and her head turned to see Martin's head drop to her abdomen and his tongue extended to lick her stomach and tickle the emerald navel piercing she had. His arms held his powerful upper body away from her, his lower body between her naked legs, and then she felt his massive cock drag across her diamond ringed pierced clit and Dysea's body arched off the blanket as she howled in the explosive orgasm.

Dysea's hands went to his shoulders as his lips descended to her right nipple and she screamed as every thick pulsing inch of his huge cock dragged across her engorged clit and sent massive shudders through her body as she was rocked by a stream of almost violent orgasms. The piercing of her clit had been done at her mother's suggestion to try and increase her sexual pleasure. Her mother had conducted the procedure, and even though she had taken two of her three lovers after the procedure, it had never lived up to what her mother said it could be.

That was until this very moment.

Her eyes were frozen wide open as she felt Tarifa engulf her left nipple into her warm mouth and suck hard. Dysea grabbed Martin's head in her hands as he dragged his throbbing cock back down across her clit, her juices thoroughly soaking his thick shaft and the blanket beneath her. Her head tossed back and forth, her pierced clit sending streaks of pleasure slicing through every part of her body. When she no longer felt his cock touching her spasming pussy, her eyes went to his face and saw that his fangs were fully extended and his eyes had changed to yellow orbs within a black outline. He looked down on her, his strong hands holding her hips, her chest heaving in orgasmic bliss as Tarifa continued to suckle at her breasts. She watched him lean over, Tarifa moving out of the way and he stretched his body out atop hers. He held himself above her, his face inches from her and he lowered his lips to hers and kissed her. Dysea's wide eyes closed slowly in euphoric bliss as Martin kissed her more intensely than even Tarifa had. His tongue danced with hers in a sensuous tango within their mouths, her arms wrapping around his shoulders. She felt another orgasm building within her just from his kiss and she whimpered into his mouth as it hit her, her fingers digging into his skin.

Martin kissed her deeply until the orgasm had past, and then he broke their kiss, his tongue playfully teasing her upper lip as he looked at her beautiful face. He waited for her eyes to open slowly and then he reached forward and brushed some of her platinum hair from her eyes.

"I... I will stop now!" He gasped between clenched teeth. "I will... I will stop if you are not certain Dysea."

Dysea was astonished at his words. He had just triggered two orgasms more powerful than the one Tarifa had given her, and that was simply by dragging his enormous cock across her drenched pussy and giving her a toe curling kiss. She glanced between their bodies and saw his thick cock poised at the entrance of her dripping cunt. She was more excited at this very moment than she had ever been in her life, her pussy literally drooling with her cum. She had never seen a cock that was so large and thick, and she wondered briefly if he would even be able to get it all inside her. She looked back to his face, her emerald eyes ablaze with passion and need. Tarifa had awakened within her feelings and sensations she had never thought possible, and hearing Martin tell her he would stop if she was not certain only confirmed what her heart was already telling her.

Dysea glanced at Tarifa who was stretched out alongside them, her hands lazily stroking Dysea's shoulder and arm. Her sapphire eyes were bright with desire and affection, her lips moist and pouty.

Dysea turned back to Martin and nodded her head, her hands dropping to his powerful biceps as he lifted his body off her and grasped her hips tighter. She gasped when the large head pressed against her pussy lips and her mouth opened in surprise and delight when she felt him pull her closer and sink nearly half his throbbing cock inside her and stop. Dysea's nails dug into his arms as she felt every thick pulsing vein stretch her pussy beyond anything she had ever experienced. Martin had only half his huge shaft inside her, and already it was more than any of the lovers she had taken in the past.

"By... by the gods," She gasped in between shallow breaths. "It... it is so... so big!"

Tarifa smiled and leaned close to her face, allowing her tongue to run across Dysea's cheek. "He's amazing... isn't he?" She whispered in Dysea's ear, the tip of her tongue playfully flicking at the edge of Dysea's elf ears. "And he is all yours now Dysea. Though... I do hope you will share from time to time."

Dysea's wide eyes looked at her newfound lover's beautiful face and she turned her head wanting nothing more than to share a kiss with Tarifa. Martin didn't give her the chance. Dysea's body once more arched off the blanket and she screamed in glorious rapture as Martin slid the last six inches of his huge throbbing cock into her exceptionally tight pussy and sent Dysea over the edge of the abyss when she felt his extremely hot and cum filled balls nestled against her upturned ass cheeks. When she felt Tarifa lower her head slowly and engulf her maddeningly hard nipple within the grasp of her soft warm lips, Dysea erupted in the most will crushing and indescribable orgasm of her young life.

Martin leaned forward, the muscles in his neck and shoulders straining in exertion as he held himself still completely buried within Dysea's wonderfully tight and hot pussy. Pleasure seethed through his veins on a staggering level, unlike anything he had yet experienced with the exception of once. Dysea's legs were locked around his hips, her nails drawing blood from his skin as she withered beneath him in the grips of a powerful orgasm. Martin could feel her juices exploding from her, coating his buried cock and leaking out the sides of her stuffed pussy down their lower abdomens. He lowered his head next to Tarifa's and took Dysea's other nipple within his lips and sucked hard, gently biting the nipple with his extended fangs. He felt her body shudder in another intense orgasm; her head thrust back, her eyes tightly shut and the muscles in her neck straining. It was far too much for him to endure. Her pussy clamped down on his massive cock in the same fashion that Tarifa's cunt did, milking his throbbing pole with her velvet like heat. Martin's head came up and he growled in release as his cock expanded within the grip of her clutching pussy and he erupted within her depths.

Dysea's eyes nearly exploded from her head and she screamed out her pleasure as she felt Martin's cock grow even larger within her and explode. His massive cock was reaching into her womb, further than she thought possible, and the pleasure that was ripping through her was nothing like she could have possibly imagined. When she felt the first powerful blast of his cum inside her she did the only thing she could think of and she let go, allowing the incredible and staggering sensations to envelope her completely. She cried out in surprise and joy when his arms slid under her waist, pulling her tightly against his hard body and he rolled over quickly causing her to sink even further onto his erupting cock. Her hands went to his powerful abdomen and she held on for dear life as his erupting cock unleashed even more cum into her belly. Her eyes sprang open when she heard Tarifa squeal, and she watched in passionate awe as Tarifa lowered her dripping pussy over Martin's face. In her passion clouded mind, Dysea could only gaze at the woman who had triggered this release of emotions within her. She watched as Tarifa braced herself with her hands on Martin's chest and she thrust her hips down hard on Martin's face. The blissful look on Tarifa's face told Dysea that she was cumming and cumming hard. She could see Martin's tongue lapping away at Tarifa's pussy, the thin line of black hair above her clit soaked in Martin's salvia and her own juices.

Dysea acted without thinking and reached for Tarifa, taking her head in her hands. Tarifa's eyes opened wide as Martin's finger slipped into her virgin ass once again and she could not hold back anymore. She opened her mouth to scream out her pleasure but found Dysea's warm delicious tasting tongue plunging down her throat for a soul stealing kiss. Tarifa shuddered in another explosive orgasm, her juices pouring out of her and into Martin's talented mouth. Her eyes slowly closed in blissful release as Martin's tongue once more brought her up to and over the edge. As she returned Dysea's kiss with equal passion and feeling, she smiled inwardly knowing what Dysea was about to experience.

Dysea was lost now, immersed in passion and pleasure beyond her imagination. In the back of her mind she was thinking it could not get any better than this. That was until she felt Martin's thick pulsing cock expand

within her again. He was even deeper within her now that she was on top of him, and her pussy held him in such a tight grasp that she felt his cum boil up through his entire length, the veins in his cock pressing against the walls of her cunt. She felt Tarifa break their kiss quickly and then her body lifted off Martin's face, allowing him to roll over suddenly, clutching Dysea to him possessively and as he pinned her to the soft ground under them, he slammed into her one final time.

Dysea felt Martin explode within her like a volcano, his hot cum filling her belly once more. Her hands went to her flat abdomen in stunned shock as she felt his cum warm her, and her body responded in kind. The muscles in her body strained almost painfully as her own orgasm ripped through her, stealing away her ability to even scream out her joy. She wrapped her arms around his massive shoulders, Martin's face burying into the hollow of her throat, Dysea reaching for anything to hold onto as her eyes rolled into the back of her head. Martin pulled her tighter to him, crushing her against his body and to Dysea it was the most wonderful thing he had yet done. As these thoughts flashed through her mind, the red haired human female flashed through her vision as well and then she lost her conscious self to the pleasures she was experiencing.

MOUNTAIN CITY

Tareif moved to one of the last heavy mortar positions on the north side of the city and saw his men struggling to align the mortar into its final firing position. He looked up and saw the gaping hole in the tree branches above the position and asked himself if this was really going to work. The genome Hunter had seemed so certain that it would, and as much as Tareif found himself not liking the man, he quietly prayed that his military tactics were sound.

The mortar officer looked up from his computer panel. "We are ready War Master!" He announced.

Tareif turned to the young elf behind him with the large radio on his back. There had not been time for the genomes to distribute the communications implants for his mortar crews and he was going to have to talk with them the old fashion way.

"Inform all crews I want the first barrage to contain a mixture of White Phosphorous and High Explosive!" Tareif ordered.

The young elf began speaking rapidly into the radio hand set as Tareif's ear implant cackled to life.

"War Master our snipers are getting into position." Kenneth's voice sounded.

"Tell me what they see!" Tareif barked.

"Sniper lead, switch to channel nineteen and give us a god's view," Kenneth spoke.

Tareif heard some small static and another voice joined the channel. "We're in position two point six miles east of the mercenaries. We have nice elevation and a clear field of fire. It looks like they are preparing to fire a battery of 105mm pieces of the towed type." The female voice reported. "Check that! They're firing!"

Tareif looked up at the booming sound and within seconds twelve explosions tore up the ground a hundred meters in front of the main defensive wall. Trees were blown into deadly splinters and slashed through the air, slamming into the concrete and wood wall.

"They do not have us ranged yet!" Tareif yelled, not realizing that with his lip mic he didn't need to shout. "They must have spotters! Find them!"

"Sweeping," The sniper leader spoke calmly.

"Got them," Another voice announced a moment later. "Two FOs, two clicks forward of the battery using long eyes to walk the rounds in."

"Kill them!" Tareif snapped.

"Roger! Stand by!"

The elf spotter glanced at the male genome who stared down the huge telescopic sight on top of the 20mm sniper rifle. His head was injured, dried blood staining the side of his face and neck, but it was slowly healing.

"The range is two point nine miles." He said. "Can you hit them from here?"

The genome grinned savagely. “They’re already dead.” He growled.

The elf brought the binoculars back to his eyes and focused on the two spotters that were watching the defensive wall of Mountain City from behind the thick tree. He flinched when the 20mm rifle next to him exploded once and his eyes grew wide when the spotter on the right of the tree pitched forward brutally, a fine red mist spraying all over his partner announcing his head being blown apart. There was a three second pause as the second spotter began to turn and look for an enemy. The second explosion next to him did not cause him to flinch and he saw the 20mm sniper round punch into the chest of the remaining spotter, lifting his body completely in the air and tossing him violently against the tree he was using for cover.

“Targets eliminated.” The sniper spoke calmly. He turned to look at the elf next to him and saw the male elf grinning madly.

“Perhaps you will teach me to use this weapon.” He asked.

The genome grinned as well. “It’s always nice to meet someone who appreciates an art form.” He said.

Tareif heard the sniper confirm the killing of the spotters and then the female voice came onto the channel once more.

“Sniper Lead to War Master Tareif, give me the green light sir, and I’ll start taking down targets of opportunity starting with obvious officers. We can make them regret they ever set foot in this part of the woods!”

“Permission granted!” Tareif told her with a smile on his lips.

“War Master, all mortar crews are ready to fire!” The young elf radio operator announced.

“Fire!” Tareif yelled without hesitation.

The mercenary commander stood next to his armored command vehicle listening to his artillery officer scream into his radio. He looked at his commander.

“Spotters aren’t responding!” He yelled.

The commander looked skyward when he heard at least thirty low booms. He knew that sound well and stepped away from his vehicle. “They’re firing mortars!” He yelled.

“That’s impossible!” The artillery officer spoke. “They can’t cover this part of the valley from their city!”

The first explosion proved how wrong he was. The 120mm mortar landed only ten meters from where he stood behind the first gun in his battery and his body disappeared in the blink of an eye as the High Explosive round shredded his body and everything within its fifty meter kill radius into tiny pieces, including the gun he was closest to and the entire crew.

The mercenary commander could only stand in horror as nearly all thirty mortar rounds landed with unerring accuracy and immolated his entire battery of artillery. Almost before the last explosions shredded what remained of his guns, another series of low booms filled the sky. The commander’s eyes went wide in terror as he saw his men stretched out before him, their eyes filled with uncertainty and fear as they looked at what remained of their artillery battalion. They had never been fired upon by heavy guns, and the booming explosions and screams of the dying had frozen most of them in their spots.

And that is where they died.

Tareif turned his head when he heard the loud crack from far above his head announcing that the Raptor on that corner of the high platforms had found a target for its sabot cannon and fired.

“Pour it on!” The voice of the sniper came through his ear piece. “You elf bastards are awesome with those mortars! Drop fifty and fire for effect! You’re tearing them a new asshole!”

Tareif grinned in spite of himself. He knew the derogatory term towards his mortar teams was meant as a compliment and he took it as such. He turned to his radio operator.

“Drop fifty and fire for effect!” He barked. “All crews! Alternate WP and HE rounds! Prepare the Dragoons for a counter attack! I want prisoners!”

The radio operator smiled as he lifted the hand set.

THE WASTES

Dysea finished lacing up her combat boot and sat back up slowly. She gazed at Martin squatting on the rocks twenty meters away as she and Tarifa finished dressing. He had elected to leave his fatigue top off and wear only the t-shirt and combat vest. His head was tilted at an angle as if he was trying to catch a scent. She let her eyes linger on the superbly defined muscles in his arms and shoulders, as well as the way his tattoos highlighted them. She could still hardly believe that only a short time ago, she was wrapped in those powerful arms and screaming her head off in indescribable pleasure.

Dysea smiled as she felt Tarifa come up behind her and lace her arms around her waist, placing her chin on her shoulder.

“He’s beautiful isn’t he?” Her soft voice filled her ear.

Dysea nodded her head and felt the wonderful soreness between her thighs that told her he was not only the most beautiful man she had ever seen, he had fucked her senseless with a cock bigger than any she had ever seen. She turned her head slightly and gazed into the sapphire eyes of her other lover. It had been Tarifa who had opened the door to what she was feeling now.

“I... I still can not believe we actually did what we did.” She said softly.

Tarifa’s eyes narrowed slightly. “Dysea you don’t regret it do you?” She asked softly, her voice carrying a tone of worry.

Dysea shook her head quickly turning to face her, “Oh by the gods Tarifa no!” She spoke, taking Tarifa’s hand and pulling it to her cheek. “It was the most pleasurable experience of my life, every single moment. And I want... I want it to happen again and again.”

Tarifa smiled. “Well that is music to my ears.” She saw the look on Dysea’s face and reached up to caress her cheek. “What troubles you then?” Tarifa asked.

“What... what does this mean for us; for you?” Dysea asked. “Martin... he...”

Tarifa smiled gently. “What Martin and I have shared will remain with me always.” She told her. “But you are the one he truly wants Dysea of the Wood Elves. I could see it by the way he held you so tightly and the way his body responded to yours.”

“I... I do not wish to... take him from you Tarifa.” Dysea spoke quickly.

Tarifa smiled and she kissed her softly. “You can not take from me what was never mine in the first place.” She said. “I do not understand it completely, but what Martin and I have shared was exquisite, but we both know it was not permanent. You are meant for him, and the two of you will not be alone... and I... I was meant for another.”

“But I... I want to... I want to do this again.” Dysea spoke shyly, still coming to grips with what they had shared.

Tarifa smiled. “And we will, for as long as you and Martin will have me.”

“What of... what of the Elders?” Dysea spoke. “They will... they will not approve of this thing we have discovered.”

“Why not?” Tarifa asked.

“Do you think your Council of Elders will accept it?” Dysea asked. “I know mine will not; at least not initially.”

“Dysea... like you, I want this to happen again. Being with... Martin has opened me to new things... and I have promised myself to not ignore what I desire any longer.” Tarifa spoke.

“I do as well.” Dysea told her. “We will have to break this to everyone easily. Now that I have found Martin, I will not lose him. Or the pleasure you have shown me that we can share. We must proceed carefully. You know this better than I.”

Tarifa sighed heavily and nodded. “I know. As much as it pains me to say, it will shock my parents to the core to know about what we have shared.”

Dysea looked at her shaking her head. "My... my mother will adore him." She said with a smile. "My people are not as... we are not as close minded when it comes to our sexuality." She said. "And when... when she sees Martin..."

Tarifa smiled. "I would like to be there to see that."

Dysea leaned over and kissed her tenderly. "Perhaps it will be something you *will* witness Tarifa of the High Elves, Tarifa... my friend."

"Ladies..." Martin's voice broke into their thoughts. "We need to go before our friends start to wonder what happened to us."

They both turned to see him gazing at them with his liquid dark brown eyes, though only Dysea felt the surge of love those eyes projected race through her. It was as if Martin wrapped her in some invisible blanket that overflowed with his essence and love for her, and it surrounded her with soothing warmth and comfort. They got to their feet, pulling on the small packs.

"Then let us get moving." Dysea said.

The Alliance Captain looked at the smoldering wreckage of the Raptor as several of his troops sifted through the remains, his ebony skin glistening in the sun, his burning amber eyes alert. His white hair was cut short all around, exposing the three inch long elfin ears, and the fact that he was a Drow elf. He turned as his second in command walked up. The female officer was nearly as tall as his six foot two with the same dark skin and dark amber eyes, but her long hair was flowing white in color, and braided on either side of her stunning face, only the tips and upper portion of her elfin ears sticking through the long hair.

"Nothing is salvageable sir." She spoke confidently. "What the genomes did not destroy, the acid storm that passed through here did."

The Captain nodded. "Is there any sign of bodies?"

The Lieutenant shook her head. "No sir, none that we can detect."

"Then everyone survived the crash." The Captain spoke.

"It would appear that way sir. That they were able to get this far with the damage they had speaks volumes of the skills of the pilot." The Lieutenant said.

The Captain nodded. "Indeed it does." He said. "The information the Colonel gave to us gives us a small description of the skills and abilities of these genomes. If they are even half of what the report says they are; they will make formidable opponents."

"Do you think that they... could they be..." The female started to speak.

The Captain looked at her. "We will not know that until we meet them Lynwe... you know this as well as I."

The female nodded slowly. "I know Tari... but it does not fill me with the greatest of comfort knowing we may well be seeking the very thing we should fear the most."

The man nodded. "Yes... I know what you mean."

"The cockpit took heavy damage from the missile strike sir." The Lieutenant said. "If they made it this far it stands to reason the pilot survived, but is injured."

The Captain nodded. "Even with injured members in their party these *Genomes* would still be able to move faster than you or I." He spoke. "They must have found shelter from the storm, and would have had to remain there until it was over. That gave them twelve hours minimum to rest and recover from wounds. Elves and Genomes have much faster healing abilities as you know. Have the company spread out in a five mile perimeter. Look for caves or buildings where they could have found shelter. And dispatch a patrol to Crawford to the north. They could have easily covered the distance to the ruins there since the storm."

"There is an Acid Nomad encampment four miles to our north. Their scouts have been following us for the last three hours." The Lieutenant spoke.

"Yes... I saw them some time ago. They will not attack us due to our size. Keep the men together and have each patrol equipped with a heavy machine gun. We will set up our base camp here and use this point as our pivot to conduct our search." The Captain said.

"Do you think that the Elf Queens are with this group as well?" The Lieutenant asked.

"That is what the report stated."

“What do we do if we find them Tari?”

The Captain looked at her. He reached up ran his hand through his short hair. His amber eyes scanned the desolate terrain all around them. “We will cross that bridge when we come to it.” He replied. “My hope is that they will accept us for what we are.”

“And if they do not?”

“We can not go back Lynwe.” The Captain spoke, turning to look at her. “We have struggled for too long and endured too much to go back.”

“If they do not accept us Tari, then we shall survive on our own as we have in the past.” The female elf replied.

The Captain nodded. “Order the men to discard their Alliance uniforms Lynwe. I have no desire to be set upon by either the High Elves or the Wood Elves due to our dress. Have the patrol moving to Crawford keep them on until they return, just in case there are Alliance sympathizers within the ruins of the city.”

“I will see to it.” The female replied.

CRAWFORD

Anja stepped up to where Danny stood to the side of the window frame. They had reached Crawford with little trouble, bypassing the Acid Nomad camp and moving into the ruins to occupy the four story building at the northern edge of the town. Julie was on the roof trying to establish communications with their encampment near the Elves Mountain City, the others spread out in defensive positions, but staying out of the sun and resting.

“How are you doing Danny?” Anja asked him.

Danny looked at her with his dark eyes and smiled. “I’m good.” He replied.

“Danny I’m sure Martin is fine.” Anja said reaching up and putting her hand on his chest affectionately.

Dan smiled. “I ain’t worried about the Skipper.” He told her. “This place just gives me the creeps. I hate ghost towns, they make my skin crawl.”

“I didn’t realize you were afraid of anything.” Anja said with a smile.

“Who me? Shit Red, my own shadow scares me sometimes.” Dan replied, matching her smile. “That’s why I like being in the middle of you and Jules at night. I feel safe.”

Anja chuckled and leaned up on her tip toes and kissed him softly. “We’ll protect you Danny. I promise.” She said.

“You’d better.” Dan told her, dropping his hand and squeezing her waist.

Anja moved away from him and back into the shade of the building. She made her way over to where Walter sat eating the remains of a power bar and settled to the floor next to him. “Doctor Carson, how are you holding up?” She asked.

“Quite well Commander considering my age, thank you for asking.” Walter replied. He saw her glance back to where Danny stood and then turn back to him. “Forgive me for being so forward Commander Peterson, but I’ve noticed that you seem to have a unique relationship with Daniel and Julie.”

Anja met his eyes and smiled. “It is unique.” She told him.

“You are... you are lovers aren’t you, lovers with both of them?” Walter asked.

Anja nodded her head, finding she was completely unashamed of what she felt for Julie and Danny now. Anja felt free and unrestrained for the first time in her life, and it was a very welcome feeling. “Yes we are.” She answered.

Walter smiled. “That is very interesting.” He said.

“Why is that?” Anja asked him.

“I was aware of their relationship before all this happened.” Walter said evenly. “I knew they were very fond of each other, but I did not expect them to have remained together for so long. I think perhaps you have extended that somewhat.”

Anja smiled and looked once more at Danny’s tall muscular form. She felt the small surge of pleasure course through her, though it was no where near as strong as when she first entered into the relationship with them, and that told her that while what they shared was very pleasurable, it was not what she was seeking.

“They are very special.” She said softly. “In more ways than I can begin to explain. They have opened my eyes to many things I would not have seen before; or... or things that I wasn’t willing to see.”

“You are speaking of your feelings for Martin?” Walter spoke.

Anja looked at him surprised. “Does everyone know of that?” She asked.

Walter chuckled. “Martin has very few friends Anja, as you no doubt have noticed. They are like a family... a *pack* if you will, since I understand you know what they are capable of.”

Anja nodded. “I saw it on EDEN.” She said softly. “It was surprising to say the least.” “Yes I’m sure it was.” Walter spoke.

“Doctor Carson would you tell me...” Anja began.

Walter smiled. “Please... it’s just Walter.”

“Walter it is then.” Anja said. “My specialty is genetic engineering, the same as yours.” She explained. “It was never known that Martin and Danny and the others could change like they do. Why is that?”

“It was known.” Walter told her. “There were only four people that had that information however. If that information had been common knowledge, do you think they would have allowed Marty and the others to survive?”

Anja shook her head. “No I don’t believe they would have.” She answered immediately.

Walter nodded. “You are correct.” He said. “Their ability to change did not manifest itself until they were all in their late teens. Martin discovered it first. That ability saved their lives on countless missions. With the exception of one or two changes in their appearance, all of them can control it extremely well.”

“One of those exceptions is their teeth I take it.” Anja asked.

Walter nodded. “There was nothing we could do to hide their teeth. Eventually we just said it was due in part to the animal DNA.”

Anja nodded slowly. “It... it scared the hell out of me.”

Walter nodded. “I do know the feeling.” He said. “I nearly lost control of my bladder when Martin first showed me. It’s amazing really. They have incredible strength and stamina to begin with, but when they initiate a change it increases by a factor of ten. They all seem to have the uncanny ability to control the length of their fangs, if you will, in the midst of heated engagements or moments of stress or...”

“Passion?” Anja said.

Walter looked at her and smiled slowly. “Yes.”

“And that’s why I wasn’t able to tell before I saw them change?” Anja said.

“I would hazard a guess and say they did not want to frighten you considering what you apparently share with them.” Walter said.

“Is it possible for them to... to pass on their DNA?” Anja asked almost shyly.

Walter knew immediately what she was talking about. He shook his head quickly. “I am pretty sure you mean through the exchange of bodily fluids and the answer is no. That’s not possible. We tried it in the lab hundreds of times and nothing ever came of it.” He looked at her. “Have you discovered something to the contrary?”

Anja shook her head. “No. I guess it was just a worry in the back of my mind.” She told him.

Walter smiled. “Well it’s not something you should be concerned with.” He spoke. “The Alliance on the other hand has been able to do some things that are positively horrible with my work. I have files in the Mountain City archives if you would care to review them sometime.”

Anja nodded. “Yes I would.”

Walter nodded. “Good. If you’ll excuse me Anja... the walking has tired me out more than I thought. I haven’t had this much exercise in quite some time.”

Anja smiled and watched as he settled to the floor against the pack and closed his eyes. Anja got up and went to where her pack was, settling to the floor as well. She looked around quickly before turning her head to the side. She reached up to touch her canine teeth and she concentrated as hard as she could.

Anja smiled as she felt her canine teeth slowly lengthen to almost a quarter of an inch. She felt a surge of power within her body, and for a few moments all of her senses became more alive and sensitive. She inhaled deeply during that brief moment and detected the scents of everyone within the small room. She did not yet want to reveal that she was changing, more because it frightened her than anything else. It was not what she had expected. The enhanced senses she could detect right away, but it was the surge of power and the dreams she

had that frightened her now. Her mind seemed like it had opened in a whole new way, and if she concentrated enough, she thought she could almost hear voices within her head. Whatever was happening to her... it also made her realize that no matter how much she tried to discount it, she felt her desire for Martin was growing stronger as each day went by. He was pulling her to him, and he was filling her dreams and thoughts. And with him in those dreams and thoughts was the breathtaking platinum blond female elf they had rescued.

Martin stepped out onto the sidewalk behind the black Alliance soldier and drove the blade of his knife into the back of the man's skull. His body went rigid and then immediately flopped to the ground. The sound of his weapon dropping to the concrete caused the remaining four Alliance troops in the patrol to spin around their amber eyes going wide at what they saw. There were three bodies laying half in and half out of the doorways they had passed so far, blood staining the ground. Martin's blade was coated red, his fangs fully extended and his eyes had changed to the yellow and black orbs.

The remaining four Alliance troops began to bring their weapons up in a last ditch effort to save their lives. It did them no good.

The window to their left had been shattered hundreds of years before, and that window now filled with Dysea's figure, her hands filled with her dual fighting knives. They were intricately carved blades that she had thought lost at the encampment. Martin had returned them to her before they had left the underground cavern and made their way to Crawford. As she launched herself at the two closest Alliance troops, the last soldier in the file was bringing his weapon to bear on her. He never got the chance to pull the trigger as Tarifa appeared from behind him and drove her knife into his back. He dropped his assault rifle and screamed, trying to clutch his lower back. Tarifa nimbly used his body as a pivot, her black hair whipping about as she flipped over his slumping figure and landed in front of him. His amber eyes met hers and filled with fear as he saw that her canine teeth had lengthened into nearly inch long fangs. Tarifa hit him in the chest with a straight open palm that crushed four of his ribs and drove splinters from those broken ribs into his lungs and heart. Blood splashed from between his lips as he dropped to his knees, his head falling forward to meet Tarifa's rising boot. His head snapped back viciously and Tarifa heard his neck pop like a gunshot. His body flipped completely over and he landed with a sickening thud ten meters away from her. Tarifa stood there in shock at what she had just accomplished. Elves were well known as being stronger and faster than humans, but what she had just accomplished was beyond anything she had done before.

Dysea had leaped out of the window, her blades flashing to either side of her. She felt both of them bite into flesh as she executed a perfect roll away from the two soldiers and came to her feet whirling around. One of the soldiers was holding his throat, his blood arcing into the air in powerful squirts from where her blade had sliced cleanly through his jugular vein. It took half a second for her to determine he was out of the fight and she turned her attention to the second soldier who was clutching his shoulder. He had turned further than his partner and her blade had only cut deeply into his shoulder, but it was deep enough to slice through the muscles in that arm and render it useless. He tried to grip his rifle with his free arm, his eyes wide in terror and trying to bring the weapon up. Dysea spun around, still in her crouch and drove one of her blades into his gut just as his chest exploded. Her head snapped around quickly and she saw the large black genome from Martin's group step from around the corner. She heard the soldier's body hit the ground and she turned and watched Martin throw the last member of the patrol into the unyielding concrete of the five hundred plus year old building. The soldier's head impacted the wall with enough force to crush his skull, and his body slumped to the ground, blood and brain matter staining the wall as he slid to a sitting position, his eyes frozen open in death.

"Damn Skipper!" Danny spoke as he walked up. "It took you long enough to get here!"

Martin looked at him and smiled his eyes and fangs instantly disappearing and returning to normal. "We... we got a little sidetracked." He replied.

Danny's eyes went a tiny bit wider as he detected the faint scent of both Tarifa and Dysea all over his commander and friend as he walked up to him. A huge grin split his face. "Ok... well at least the delay was important." He said. "Jules was able to string an antenna and cut through the radiation. Kenny's sending a Raptor to pick us up. The encampment was attacked Skipper, and your city Tarifa."

Martin and Tarifa both looked at him intently, "Casualties?" Martin asked.

Dan shook his head. "Kenny didn't say, but from the sound of his voice Jules doesn't think it's good."

“These are Drow!” Dysea spoke now, toeing one of the dead bodies with her boot, her voice surprised. “I thought the Drow had been wiped out.”

Tarifa nodded and knelt next to one of the bodies. “They wear the uniform of the Alliance’s elite scouts.” She spoke looking at her.

“This is important I take it?” Martin asked.

“The Alliance destroyed the Drow over a hundred years ago. Or at least we thought they did.” Dysea spoke turning to look at him.

“Well they came in from the south.” Martin spoke. “And that means they came from the direction of the crash.”

Dysea looked at him. “And that means someone told them the general area where your craft went down.”

Tarifa looked at them, her fangs now retracted. “The Alliance Assassins who fired the missiles must have tracked us.” She said.

Martin shook his head. “A general position maybe, but if they had a solid fix on us we wouldn’t be standing here talking.” He looked at Danny. “How soon before Kenny gets that Raptor here?”

“We contacted him just before these bozos showed up. He said he’d have us extracted within the hour.” Dan replied. “I got the others on the north end of the town standing by.”

Martin nodded. “Let’s get these bodies off the street and link up with the others.” He said.

Dan nodded and reached down to haul two of the bodies up and headed into the doorway closest to him. Tarifa and Dysea stepped up to Martin as he quickly searched the body next to him.

“Martin your... your friend?” Dysea asked with a small amount of embarrassment. “He could smell... he could smell Tarifa and I on you couldn’t he?”

Martin stood and looked at her. “I’d say that’s a pretty good guess.” He said smiling. He stepped up to her and leaned over to nuzzle her elf ear. He heard her sigh softly in delight, her hands going to his chest in surprise. “You do smell delightful when you are excited *Melda Min*.” (Beloved One in Elfin language)

Dysea blushed red and Tarifa took her hand with a girlish laugh. “Come with me Dysea,” She said seeing Dysea’s stunned expression at what Martin had called her. “Let us move these scum before he embarrasses you anymore.”

MOUNTAIN CITY

No one spoke as they stood on the platform high above Mountain City watching Martin walk among the bodies of the dead. They had been laid out reverently by the High Elves under orders of Tareif, each genome and human body cleaned of any blood and dirt and wrapped in silk cloth. Tony was on one knee by the body of a close friend, Julie sitting by the body of another, tears streaming down her cheeks. Danny stood behind her, his face a mask of unreadable emotion. The Dragoons who had fought beside them sternly guarded the three lifts to the platforms, allowing no one entry as the dead were mourned. There were two ranks of Dragoons standing silently behind Tareif as well, their mood somber and quiet. Tarifa was held in her mother’s arms, their eyes focused on where Martin slowly walked among the bodies.

Anja could no longer stand it seeing the dead men and women she had only just started to get to know, and with tears in her own eyes and she rushed forward to where Julie sat on the platform. As soon as Anja touched her, Julie burst into uncontrollable sobs and slipped into her arms. This in turn caused Danny to kneel behind them both and lay his head on Julie’s shoulder as the sobs could be seen wracking his body now.

“How... how did this happen?” Tarifa asked turning to her father, tears clouding her eyes.

“They had help.” Tareif replied turning to look at her. “They killed our scouts before they could report to us about the mercenary battalion that was moving through the mountains north of us. When we realized that we were about to be attacked, Kenneth issued an emergency evacuation, but the attack commenced almost immediately after he issued that order.”

“How could they have avoided our scouts and get so close to us without knowing our safe travel routes?” Tarifa asked.

“As I said daughter... they had help.” Tareif spoke.

“Find out who helped them!” Tarifa screamed startling both her mother and father. “I want to know who caused this! I want to know who among our people helped these butchers!”

Dysea turned from Tarifa’s verbal explosion, Leland holding her close. Her heart had sung with joy when she realized Leland and two others of her party had survived the attack. All that joy evaporated when they discovered what had happened. She could almost feel Martin’s pain from across the platform, and it washed over her unlike anything she had felt before. It was almost as if she could sense his emotions within her own mind, and she left Leland’s arms to go to him.

“No Dysea.” Walter’s voice stopped her. “This is something he must confront himself. He has never suffered so many losses in a single battle, and he will either conquer his demons, or he will succumb to them, but he must do this alone.”

“Holy One... he needs the support of those who...” Dysea stopped her eyes going a little wider as she realized what she was going to say.

Walter stepped up to her and smiled as he took her hands. “Yes... he will need the support of those who love and care for him.” He told her, his words carrying to all within range of his voice. What was stunning was when Tarifa stepped up next to Dysea and took her hand tightly in her own and they stood together, their bodies touching as they watched Martin.

They did not turn at the commotion by one of the lifts, nor did they notice when Ralao and Treblar burst through the mass of Dragoons with several other ministers in tow. Ralao’s face was a mask of anger and he unleashed it without regard for what was happening.

“I told you!” He exclaimed. “I warned you that this might happen!”

“Ralao now is not the time.” Treblar began to speak.

“Now is the time!” Ralao snapped. “They have brought this upon us! These half breed animals have brought this—”

Ralao’s words ended quickly when Dysea spun around in the blink of an eye and placed the barrel of the K12 directly to Ralao’s forehead.

“Another word Chief Minister and you will not take another breath!” Dysea growled.

It happened quickly and the Dragoons all around brought their weapons up and leveled them at the Queen of the Wood Elves. Tareif’s own pistol was leveled at her blond head and he snarled at her.

“Lower your weapon Wood Elf!” He growled. “You are within our lands now!”

Dysea didn’t take her eyes from Ralao’s face. “Do you think you can stop me from killing this dog before you take me down War Master Tareif?” She spoke the words firmly. “I don’t think so.”

“No Dysea” Tarifa’s soft voice filled her ears. The eyes of everyone in the area grew wide when Tarifa spoke and they watched her step in front of Dysea and reach up to touch her face gently. “Not this way Dysea. Remember what we spoke of.”

Dysea’s glaring emerald eyes went to Tarifa’s face and everyone saw the look of hostile intent immediately fade from her beautiful features. “I do this only for you Tarifa.” Dysea said softly. She reversed the K12 in an instant and Tarifa took the weapon from her hand.

Ralao immediately began again, even angrier than before. “Arrest this wench! Seize her immediately! She is the Queen of our enemy, and we allow her to defile our very city!”

Two Dragoons began to step forward but Tarifa’s voice stopped them in their tracks. “The one who lays a hand on her will be dead three seconds after.” She spoke in a menacing tone as she turned to face Ralao.

“Tarifa!” Palina gasped.

“Daughter what are you doing?” Tareif echoed his wife, his eyes wide.

“This wench and these half breed animals have brought ruin upon us!” Ralao barked out.

“They have brought hope!” Walter yelled turning to look at Ralao. “I see no ruin here! I see the bodies of those who fought to defend this city.”

“The mercenaries would not have come here if not for them!” Ralao screamed pointing at where Martin stood. “Three of our soldiers would not be dead if not for them!”

“I may be mistaken Chief Minister,” Tarifa stated. “But I see over three hundred of Martin’s dead stretched before us. Not High Elves!”

“It was only by the skill of your father that they did not attack the city itself!” Ralao barked at her. “The Alliance has never been this bold! That Wood Elf whore has led them directly to us!”

Tarifa glared at Ralao and stepped closer to him. "Call her by that name again Chief Minister and it will be I who kills you where you stand!"

Ralao's lips clamped shut in horror at her words. "You... you threaten me?" He gasped.

"It is not a threat Chief Minister." Tarifa told him. "It is a promise." She turned to look at Radama. "Radama... see to it that Dysea is provided quarters and every comfort we can provide. The same quarters will be available to Martin and the others as well."

Radama nodded his head without question. "It will be as you order my Queen." He told her. Radama bowed his head in respect to Dysea and motioned with his hand for her to precede him. Dysea smiled warmly at Tarifa before heading for the lift that would take her down.

"What are you doing?" Ralao asked as soon as the lift was descending, his eyes still wide.

"I'm acting like a Queen." Tarifa snapped back.

"You allow these animals to remain within our city? That puts us at extreme risk to further attacks!" Ralao exclaimed. "You endanger all of us!"

"So now the men and women who saved my life and the life of countless High Elves are animals?" Tarifa spoke.

"They have always been animals!" Ralao spoke. "I warned you this would happen! I told you this would happen!"

"Minister Treblar you will call a special session of the Council of Elders immediately." Tarifa ordered. "And you will remove this sniveling man from my presence before..."

"You have prisoners?" Martin's voice carried to them.

They turned and saw him standing directly behind them, his hands folded behind his back, his face a mask of calm. A mask that sent shivers down Tareif's spine.

Tareif nodded his head and motioned to the six humans who were kneeling behind the last rank of Dragoons, being guarded by four Dragoon Elves. "We questioned them." He spoke. "They know nothing and there are no officers among them."

Martin stepped around the Dragoons and they respectfully moved aside as he came up to look at the prisoners. His eyes searched the faces of the men as they stared defiantly back at him. Martin stopped in front of one of the men.

"This one is an officer." Martin spoke his eyes never leaving the man's face.

Tareif moved a little closer to him. "Impossible! We searched all of them!"

Martin reached down and touched the corners of the man's fatigue top. "If you look here you will see the holes from where he had his rank pinned on."

Some of the Dragoons murmured to each other as Tareif moved closer. "How can you be so sure?" He asked.

"I'm sure." Martin replied looking at the man. "Aren't I bub?"

"I will tell you nothing dog!" The man spat. "You are an elf lover! You are the thing we have..." The man's eyes bugged out of his head as Martin's hand closed around his throat and he lifted him from his kneeling position. The man clawed at the iron grip that was slowly squeezing the air from his lungs, his face beginning to turn blue.

"Who gave you the information you used to plan this attack?" Martin asked, pulling the man closer to him, his eyes turning to the yellow and black orbs. When the man saw this, he voided his bladder in his pants, soaking his legs as Martin's teeth extended to their full length. He shook his head madly, his fingers trying to pry Martin's grasp from his throat. "That is a shame." Martin spoke casually before turning and heaving the man's body across the platform where it disappeared over the edge. His scream echoed for several moments as he fell a over thousand feet to his death, and then there was silence.

Tareif stared at Martin wide eyed. "You said he was an officer!" Tareif barked. "Now we will learn nothing!"

"I learned a great deal." Martin spoke looking at the remaining five men. "Who would like to learn how to fly next?"

"I will not allow you to..." Tareif began but his words cut short as four of the remaining five men were all looking at the man third from the end.

Martin squatted in front of the man, his fangs giving his face an extremely frightening appearance. “That wasn’t very nice making your soldier wear your uniform to protect your sorry hide.”

“I will tell you nothing elf lover!” The man screamed. “I know who you are Martin Hunter!”

“See now that is where you are wrong.” Martin spoke calmly as he looked at the man. “You took part in an attack that killed almost three hundred innocent men, women and children; people who were under my care and protection. You took part in an attack that killed over half of my team; men and women who I consider to be my family. You will tell me absolutely everything I want to know friend, and unfortunately for you, you will not live to remember it.”

“Tarifa we must talk?” Palina spoke softly as she watched her daughter dress in her room.

“There is nothing to talk about mother.” Tarifa spoke as she pulled on the much more comfortable dress over her newly showered body.

“Tarifa this is your mother speaking to you.” Palina said. “I have never questioned what your heart has told you to do, but since you have met Martin, you are different.”

Tarifa looked at her. “Is that a bad thing mama?” She asked.

Palina stepped closer to her. “This Queen of the Wood Elves Tarifa; she is our enemy?”

“No mother.” Tarifa spoke calmly. “I have discovered many things while I have been gone. And the most important one is that Dysea is not and never has been our enemy. A point I am going to make to the Elders in a short time.”

“What is happening daughter?” Palina asked.

“We have traitors within our midst mother.” Tarifa spoke, “Traitors that have sold out our people, and Dysea’s people. They have been pitting us against each other from the start and the Alliance has been helping them.”

Palina looked at her, and knew from the expression on her daughter’s face that what she was telling her she believed deeply. Palina however could not grasp that idea, the idea that Elders on the Council would betray their people to the Alliance. She and Tarifa had never kept secrets from each other, and over the years it had made them become so much closer than just mother and daughter.

“Tarifa... you... you have proof of this?” Palina asked.

Tarifa nodded. “I do. And I will present it to the Elders. Dysea and I had a chance to talk while we were together. Our peoples have so much in common. The Wood Elves are not so unlike us mother. The Holy One knew this, which is why he guided Dysea to begin looking for answers that were not directly in front of her.”

“Tarifa I do not understand.” Palina said. “What are you trying to say?”

Tarifa met her eyes. “There is at least one Elder on our Council that is working with the Alliance, if not more than one. And the same can be said for Dysea’s Council of Elders as well.”

“This information you present is all very troubling Milady.” Treblar spoke.

Tarifa nodded as she looked at the Council seated before her. “Yes it is.” She spoke. “I was stunned to discover this is happening.”

Raloa looked up from the data pad he was reading. “This could very well be nothing more than an Alliance trick.” He stated calmly. “While I will grant you Milady that it is very provocative, no one is mentioned by name. Your investigations... which you conducted without the permission of this Council I might add... could they be tainted in any way? Perhaps the individuals you chose have themselves been tainted and have given you false information.”

Tarifa looked at him, maintaining control of her temper. Raloa was the traitor, of that she had little doubt, but she could not accuse him without proof. “That is extremely unlikely.” She replied evenly. “Yes I conducted the investigations without the Council’s permission, but then again they were concerning matters of military attacks against our people and therefore I was well within my rights to order them. The results are unequivocal in every way. No matter how it is displayed, the Wood Elves were not responsible for the attacks on our villages, and in fact Dysea has admitted her own investigations have concluded the same thing in regards

to her villages that were attacked. Someone is playing our two peoples against each other. And they have had help in doing so.”

“Do you accuse one of us of such an act?” Raloa demanded.

“I accuse no one.” She replied. “What I want is a full investigation by this Council into this matter to determine who the traitor is.”

Thimina nodded. “I agree.” She said quickly.

“We can not begin investigations without cause.” Another Elder spoke now.

“This is not cause enough?” Treblar asked stupefied. “I too agree to an investigation. I also move that we reserve judgment or action on the presence of Dysea in Mountain City until such time as we have been able to conduct this investigation.”

“Word will get out that she is among us.” Another Elder spoke.

“Very few saw her on the upper platforms.” Treblar spoke again. “We can order the Dragoons to secrecy if we have too, and she will remain in the quarters she occupies until such time we are prepared to speak with her.”

Raloa nodded quickly Tarifa saw. “I will lead the investigation.” He spoke quickly, Tarifa opening her mouth to protest when she saw Thimina nod.

“I will co-lead the investigation.” Thimina spoke. “It must be quick but thorough.”

Tarifa was satisfied with that. She trusted Thimina to be accurate and trustworthy. “I wish to thank the Elders.” She spoke.

“We should thank you.” Treblar spoke. “For if there is a traitor among us... I want a piece of their hide as well.”

Tarifa smiled and nodded her head. Perhaps things would work out in her favor after all.

ONE WEEK LATER

Tarifa stared at the sweaty bodies of her two lovers on her bed with a contented smile. The past week had flown by and it had been filled with pleasure beyond anything she had experienced up until now. Though Dysea had been confined to the upper levels of Mountain City away from the eyes of the common High Elves who lived there, she had not remained inactive. Her days were filled with helping Martin and his remaining people to set up a small encampment on top of the platforms where they had been evacuated too, and her nights were spent in rapturous bliss in the arms of Martin and Tarifa. They had spent a week exploring each other’s bodies in exacting detail. Many times Tarifa had been content to watch Martin make love to Dysea in a way that always left her gasping and crying for more. His actions were more pronounced with Dysea, more methodic and precise. He lavished her with attention, and it was she who always ended up within his embrace when it was over.

They did not leave Tarifa out of their pleasure by any means, always including her and the times when the two of them had explored her lush body with only their tongues had led to many exquisite orgasms for Tarifa. She knew however that it was Dysea who was fated to be with Martin, and she was content with the fact that they never refused her or shunned her aside. Their hours were not spent completely in bliss either, as they would talk for many hours into the night, telling Martin of things that had happened over the years to them and to their people. Dysea was eager to get back to her own people and do as Tarifa was doing and clean house among the Elders. Once she was able to do that, with Martin and the others supporting her, they would be able to forge a powerful alliance of their own and just maybe begin to turn the tide on the Alliance.

The pounding on her door interrupted Tarifa’s thoughts further and she sighed heavily at the intrusion. Martin and Dysea stirred on the bed and she watched Dysea’s platinum hair rise quickly from Martin’s chest. They had never been disturbed this early in the morning, and they looked at her with questions in their eyes.

“Stay where you are.” Tarifa said with a seductive smile. “I will tend to this and then we can say good morning in a proper fashion.” Tarifa saw Dysea’s emerald eyes light up at that since Tarifa’s definition of proper meant more pleasure for her and Martin. Almost every morning this past week Tarifa had woken them by using her lips and tongue on them in the most delightful ways.

Tarifa grabbed the light blue robe from the chair and pulled it on as she walked across the rooms of her home and went to the door, banging on the control panel and preparing to verbally lash whoever it was. Her mouth froze open, stealing her words when it slide open and revealed her father in the corridor with the tall elf officer.

“Papa?” She spoke after a moment. “What... what is going on?” Her father never came to her home this early in the morning.

Tareif stepped closer to her. “We need a moment.” He told her in a gruff voice.

Tarifa blocked his movement with her hand. “Papa why are you here this early in the morning?” Tarifa asked. “And why have you brought Telan with you?”

“Are you going to let me in?” Tareif asked.

Tarifa met her father’s eyes. “No...” She answered. “I have guests.”

“Are these guests Martin Hunter and the Wood elf Queen?” Telan asked her. His voice was neutral but carried a tone of sarcasm in it.

“Who my guests may be is none of your concern Captain.” Tarifa snapped.

“I beg to differ.” Telan spoke. “I prefer to know who my future mate is allowing into her bed.”

“Your future mate,” Tarifa laughed. “You presume much Captain.”

“Do I?” Telan spoke.

Tarifa looked at her father, her eyes wide. “Papa... what have you done?”

“You are my oldest daughter Tarifa and in accordance with the customs of our people, I am giving your hand to Captain Telan.” Tareif announced.

Tarifa’s eyes went wide at this announcement. “Papa... I do not have time for your games now.” She said moving back into the room.

“This... this is no game.” Tareif spoke following her.

Tarifa looked at him. “You are serious?” She said. “I told you we would talk about this later papa. Now is not the time.” Her eyes widened when Telan stepped into her home followed by three Dragons. “What is going on?” She demanded.

Telan motioned towards the bedroom. “They will be in there.” He spoke. “Detain them.”

Tarifa turned to her father, sapphire eyes alive in anger. “What is this meaning of this?” She demanded.

“There is nothing to talk about.” Tareif announced. “I am still the head of this family, and you will do as I say in this matter whether you are Queen or not.”

“I will do no such thing!” Tarifa exclaimed. “Remove these men from my home immediately!”

“It is already done.” Tareif told them. “The Council believes that your interaction with this Hunter person has clouded your judgment. After hearing what I heard today, I am beginning to believe they may be correct.”

Tarifa looked at him. “What are you talking about?”

“The Council of Elders met in secret last night.” Tareif spoke. “They have decided to reject the information you presented to them as their own investigations have led them to other conclusions. The main one being that you are under the false influence of this Hunter person as well as the Queen of our enemy.”

Tarifa stared at him as if he had lost his mind. “You are joking! The Council informed me of no meeting!”

“Perhaps that is because for the past week, you have spent more time sharing their bed than you have actually being Queen.” Tareif spoke his voice dull and unemotional.

They turned as first Dysea and then Martin were led from the bedroom, hastily trying to put their clothes on. Martin’s eyes burned and Tarifa could tell he was keeping his anger in check.

“Tarifa what is going on?” Dysea asked quickly.

Tareif motioned with his head. “Take them to the platforms with the rest of their kind.”

“The rest of my kind,” Martin snapped. “Would you mind telling me what is going on?”

“I will tell you nothing!” Tareif snapped. “You will return to the rest of your kind on the platforms above or I will have you arrested for treason and shot!”

Martin’s eyes went wide at this and he looked at Tarifa. The anger on her face was obvious and she gave him a quick nod. “I will discover what is happening Martin.” She spoke quickly. “Take Dysea and I will see you later.”

Martin didn't question her and took Dysea's hand in his, heading for the door followed by the three Dragoons. Tarifa looked back to her father. "My patience is gone father." Tarifa barked. "You barge into my home... drag my friends out of my home like criminals... perhaps you should explain to me what is happening quickly, or my father or not I will have you arrested and detained."

"Telan has submitted his petition to take you as his wife and I have agreed." Tareif spoke almost like a machine.

"We have spoken of this already father and I told you I will not allow you to do this. You have no right!" Tarifa shouted.

"I am your father and I have every right!" Tareif shouted back at her. "The thought of you consorting with that... that half breed human turns my stomach! And to see you and the Queen of our enemy sharing a bed in such a manner sickens me! You will take Telan as your husband, and things will become more normal around here again."

"I will do no such thing!" Tarifa snapped. "I will not allow you to barter me off as our people are bartered off!"

"You have no choice in the matter!" Tareif snapped. "It is already done and the paperwork will be consecrated within the week. Hunter is using you Tarifa! Using you to get what he wants! He cares nothing for you."

"I... I have heard some of the other genomes speaking when they think no one is around." Telan spoke now, stepping into the room. "They say that... they say that he laughs when he speaks of you. That he has had hundreds of women and you are... you are simply one of many."

"You do not know him!" Tarifa barked. "And you have no right to speak about him in such a way!"

"I know all I need to know!" Tareif snarled. "He is half animal! He has forced you to submit to him, forced you to submit to that wench of a Queen, and he is forcing you to turn away from your own people!"

"Who has told you such lies?" Tarifa snapped.

"I have eyes! I can see the lies when they are right in front of me!" Tareif growled. "You are my daughter! And you will do as your father tells you to do! You will take Telan as your husband and there will be no more discussion in regards to this!" Tareif barked.

Tarifa glared at her father with savage anger. "So now you advocate forced slavery and rape like the Alliance do you papa?" She spoke.

Tareif's eyes grew wide and he slapped Tarifa hard across her face, rocking her head back. They heard the gasp of horrific surprise and turned to see Palina rushing forward. She sprang forward, putting herself between her daughter and her husband.

"You dare you strike your own daughter Tareif!" Palina growled at him. "What has become of you? How dare you!"

"My daughter will learn her place and do as I tell her!" Tareif growled. "This discussion is over. Telan will be assigned as your new escort, and Radama will be removed from his position to attend to other duties! Once the paperwork has been consecrated we will hold the ceremony as soon as possible."

"Tareif you..." Palina began.

"That is enough of this woman!" Tareif shouted, shocking his wife of nearly two hundred years into stunned silence. "I am finished here!"

Palina watched her husband turn and leave the room, her eyes going to Telan's face. She saw the young elf smile at her and turn to follow her husband. Palina turned as the door closed and she enveloped a weeping Tarifa into her arms.

There was something terribly wrong going on, and she did not know what was happening anymore.

24 HOURS LATER

Martin walked up to War Master Tareif as he exited the lift. His eyes narrowed when he saw the half dozen Dragoons exit the other lift. Martin looked at Tareif as he stopped in front of him. His head turned when he saw Dysea move over from the tent to stand next to him. Her eyes were just as confused as Martin's and he turned back to Tareif.

“War Master Tareif.” Martin said. “Mind if I ask what is going on? I was told you wanted to see me.”

Tareif held out the data pad. “The Council has come to a decision Commander. They do not feel your presence here is a benefit to our people. They have asked that I give this to you and insure that you and your people leave our city.”

Martin looked at him taken aback. “Excuse me?”

“These are the coordinates of several locations that will sustain you and your people and allow you to survive. You must go to one of these locations and remain out of High Elf territory and business.” Tareif spoke. “Your other ships have already been informed and are standing by in the clearing to the west.”

“Where is Tarifa?” Martin asked.

“My daughter agreed with the Council of Elders in this decision.” Tareif spoke seeing Martin’s eyes go a little wider. “She is conducting her business as Queen of our people.”

“I wish to speak with her.” Dysea spoke now.

Tareif met her eyes. “What you want is of no concern to me.” He answered. “Do you honestly think she cared for either of you?” Tareif let out a small laugh. “She is Queen of the High Elves. Her only concerns are for our people. She could never actually feel anything for a half breed human and the Queen of our enemies. You were amusing toys to her nothing more.”

“We were toys?” Martin hissed taking a step toward him.

“Of course you were!” Tareif spoke, not backing down. “She will be married to an officer within my command within the week; a fine High Elf warrior that she has been betrothed too for many years now. The two of you were nothing more than items for her to use as amusement, and to learn how to become a better wife.”

“I want to speak with her.” Martin spoke quickly.

Tareif shook his head. “No. As I said she is busy, and she wants nothing more to do with either of you. You were amusing pets, but now she must return to her duties and her place.”

“We were pets?” Martin growled stepping closer to Tareif. The six Dragoons behind him lifted their weapons higher towards Martin.

Tareif smiled. “Do you think you will be able to defeat six of my Dragoons carrying weapons you supplied to us before they kill you Hunter?” Tareif spoke in a menacing tone. “I thank you for the weapons by the way. Once my armories learn how to build more of them we can supply them to all our soldiers. Tarifa thanks you as well.”

Dysea stepped closer to Martin and slid her arm around the front of his waist stopping him from moving closer to Tareif. “No *Nya Nauta Melme*.” (My bounded Love) She spoke softly to him.

“My daughter is above someone such as you Martin Hunter.” Tareif continued looking at Martin. “You are nothing more than an animal in human skin.” He looked at Dysea. “And you are no better than the whores in the Alliance brothels Queen of the Wood Elves. Leave our city while you are still able. My daughter is finished with you both! Her own words were ‘They have amused me long enough. Tell them to be gone and never speak to me again.’”

Dysea could feel Martin shaking in rage and wanting to lash out at Tareif. She glared at the War Master with hate in her own eyes.

“Where is the Holy One?” Dysea asked, keeping her anger under tight control.

“The Holy One will remain here with us. You will place his life at risk no more.” Tareif told her. “We passed on the information we have to your people as well, and it is my understanding that your Council of Elders has named a new Queen in an emergency session last night. You have been branded a traitor to your people, and if my intelligence is accurate, you will be arrested and executed on sight if you return to your territory.” He grinned when he saw her eyes widen in shock. “My suggestion is for you to remain with this animal you seem to prefer over your own kind, and be thankful I do not arrest you myself and surrender you to your people.”

“You sorry sack of fucking shit!” Martin swore at him.

Dysea gripped his arm tightly. “No Martin!” She spoke through the tears that were forming in her eyes. “We must go!” She pulled him away from Tareif, tugging him towards the Raptor. “Come! We must go quickly!”

Tareif nodded. “Go! Crawl into the hole you emerged from and never set foot in this city again!”

Tareif watched as Dysea had to nearly drag Martin to the ramp of the Raptor. Dan and the Master Chief came down to the bottom of the ramp.

“Skipper what the hell is going on?” Dan asked.

Martin looked at him. “Is everyone accounted for?” He asked his voice threatening to come apart. His stomach felt like he had just leaped from thirty thousand feet in a Hard Drop.

“We’re all onboard Skipper.” Dan replied. “Tina has the other Raptors and the transports standing by as well. They’re kicking us out aren’t they?”

Martin felt Dysea begin to shake uncontrollably in his arms and he picked her up easily and marched up the ramp.

“They’re kicking us out.” Martin spoke.

Dan looked to where Tareif stood a small smile on his face. “You shit sorry no good motherfucker.” He swore softly before moving up the ramp and hitting the controls.

Tareif stood there watching the ramp rise as the Raptor’s engines increased in power and it began to lift off the platform. Tareif felt one of his senior Dragoon officers move up next to him.

“War Master?” He spoke softly.

“What is it Cantel?”

“War Master I apologize for speaking out of turn.” The man spoke. “I had thought Commander Hunter and his people were going to be a powerful ally, and I do not understand what we have done or why.”

“I... I have secured the safety of my family Cantel.” Tareif spoke. “I have secured the safety of all our families.”

“I do not understand War Master. We have thrown away an ally that could have altered the course of our war with the Alliance.” Cantel spoke.

Tareif turned to look at the man who had fought beside him for more years than he could remember. “You do not need to understand why I have done this Cantel.” He spoke. “It has been done.”

Cantel nodded. “As you order War Master we do not question.” He replied. “You must know however, that several dozen of our people accompanied Hunter on his transports.”

“What?” Tareif asked, his eyes going a little wider. “Who has done this?”

“One of the Queen’s Senior Lieutenants, Endith I believe her name is; as well as many Dragoon warriors who fought with them when the mercenaries attacked, including Radama.” Cantel replied.

Tareif shook his head. “Then they shall be treated as outsiders from now on.” He spoke softly. “I have business to attend to now.”

Cantel watched Tareif turn and head for the lift his eyes filled with questions. He turned as another senior officer came up beside him.

“What is it Cantel?” He asked.

“How long have we fought beside War Master Tareif Roland?” Cantel asked.

“For as many years as I can remember, why?”

“When have you ever known the War Master to turn away such powerful allies? Or allow the politicians to dictate his actions?” Cantel asked.

“Never,” Roland answered.

“Ever since this Telan joined our ranks, the War Master has been different. And this last week even more so.” Cantel spoke softly. “I want you to make discrete inquires. I want all the information that you can gather on Telan and his family, their associates, their dealings, everything.”

Roland nodded. “It will be done.” He said softly.

Cantel nodded. “I want you to assign two Dragoons to the Holy One and two to the Queen herself. Our most experienced officers.”

“What will be their mission Cantel?”

“To watch Roland, and intervene if needed.”

The Dragoon officer nodded. “It will be done.”

Palina answered the insistent chime on Tarifa’s door, her face still angry at what had transpired between her husband and Tarifa the day before.

“What?” She screamed into the face of the female elf.

“Forgive... forgive me Lady Palina.” The elf spoke. “I... I just thought you should know. It’s racing through the city. The genomes... Commander Hunter?”

“What about them?” Tarifa came to the door, her eyes still red from tears and anger at what her father had done, and the betrayal of the Elders against her.

“They have left my Queen.” The elf told her. “War Master Tareif tried to get them to stay, but Commander Hunter took the Queen of the Wood Elves and left with all of his people.”

Tarifa’s eyes grew wide. “He would not leave!” She gasped. “They would not leave unless they had spoken with me first!”

“Yet he is gone.” Tareif’s voice spoke as he came from behind the female elf.

“War Master.” The elf spoke bowing her head.

“What have you done?” Tarifa snapped at him. “What did you tell him?”

“I told him nothing.” Tareif barked back at her. “I tried to tell you he was using you! He cares nothing for you! He took that Wood Elf whore and he left. If he cared for you so much why would he do this?”

Tarifa shook her head. “No!” She exclaimed confidently. “I don’t believe you! He would not leave! They would not leave without speaking with me!”

“Yet they have! He told me to tell you he enjoyed your time together, but he needed to move on.” Tareif spoke.

“No... you’re lying to me Papa!” Tarifa yelled pulling the medallion Martin had given her from under her dress. She pressed the button on the small transmitter. “Martin... Martin please... this is all a mistake and I need you to answer me! Dysea answer me!” She yelled into the transmitter as she moved to the balcony of her quarters.

Dysea watched Martin toss the medallion to the floor of the Raptor’s deck and get up from beside her and moved toward the cockpit. She reached down slowly and retrieved the medallion, feeling it vibrate softly in her hands. She turned and pulled down the set of head phones from above her and plugged the medallion into the panel. Her eyes grew wide when she heard Tarifa’s voice.

“...please answer me Martin! Damn you Martin! Why have you done this? Dysea are you there?”

Dysea reached up, her eyes hardening and she keyed the mic on the headset. “Perhaps you should explain to us why you have done this Queen of the High Elves?” She spoke. “Does it make you feel powerful to know you have tossed aside two people like trash?”

“Dysea...? Dysea... what are you talking about? Why have you left? Where is Martin?” Tarifa’s voice exclaimed.

“Why have you cast us out Tarifa?” Dysea asked her eyes narrowed in anger. “Martin is no animal... and I am no whore!”

“...I am no whore!”

Tarifa’s eyes grew wide at Dysea’s pronouncement. She was about to respond until the rough hand grabbed the transmitter from her grasp and tossed it to the floor where Tareif crushed it under his boot. Tarifa turned to her father, her eyes wide.

“What have you done?” She screamed.

“I am saving you the pain of having to hear them tell you themselves.” Tareif told her. “They care nothing for you Tarifa. You were only a tool for them. You are Queen of the High Elves, and soon you will be wed. I expect you to start acting like it.”

Tareif turned and walked back into his daughter’s quarters to see his wife glaring at him. Palina stepped up to him.

“Why have you done this Tareif?” She asked.

“I have done what needed to be done.” He answered. “I have a meeting to attend. What will you be preparing for dinner so that I can purchase some wine to go with it.”

Palina glared at her husband, and for the first time in nearly two hundred years of marriage she struck him in anger. Tareif drew back in shock at her action, his hand going to his cheek.

“I will be preparing nothing husband!” She told him, real anger in her voice. “You can eat dirt as far as I am concerned!”

“Palina... I... you do not understand what is going on.” He spoke.

“I understand that you have ripped from our daughter her dignity and choice with your actions.” Palina said. “And you did so with deceit and treachery. Martin Hunter would never have left unless you told him something that was not the truth. I will never forgive you for what you have done this day Tareif, and you may return to Pacifica alone. I will not be returning with you now or in the future.”

“Palina...”

“You have spoken enough with your actions Tareif.” She barked at him. “Leave now before I decide to seek the council of an arbitrator so that I may have our marriage ended.”

Tareif’s eyes went wide. “You will do no such thing!”

Palina stuck her finger in his face. “Do not presume to tell me what I can and can not do War Master Tareif. Your actions this day have sealed my decision. Leave now, before I request that you are removed.”

Palina whirled around and rushed to where Tarifa sat curled on the floor of her balcony, holding the pieces of the broken transmitter in her hands.

Dysea slowly hung up the headset on the hook above her when she received no response from Tarifa. She pulled her legs up to her chest, wrapping her arms around her knees and she allowed the small single tear to roll down her cheek. She felt the hand on her knee and looked up to see Martin settle to the seat next to her.

“Why has she done this *Nya Nauta Melme*?” She asked. “Why as she done this to us?”

“I don’t know.” Martin said softly.

Dysea shook her head. “Someone told her lies.” She said. “Someone has told her lies about us. That is why she is doing this.”

Martin looked at her. “Who would tell her lies about us?” He asked. “Who would she trust enough to even believe such lies after what the three of us share?”

Dysea shook her head. “I feel... I feel such so much anger at this moment.” She placed her hand over her heart. “I am no whore!”

Martin pulled Dysea into his arms tightly and her head went to his chest. “I feel it too *Melda Min*. I feel it too.”

Dysea buried her face in his chest and let the strength of his embrace flow through her as she clutched him tighter than she had ever held anything in her life.

Tareif entered the room and saw Telan stand to greet him.

“War Master.” He said smugly.

“I have done as you instructed.” Tareif spoke.

Telan nodded. “You have performed admirably War Master. My father is very pleased.”

“My sons,” Tareif spoke. “I want to see them.”

Telan held up his hand. “I understand this War Master. When the ceremony is complete and I am your daughter’s husband, I will contact my father and have him arrange a visit.”

Tareif’s eyes grew darker, “A visit?”

“Come War Master... you did not think we would actually release your sons did you?” Telan spoke. “Tarifa and you are far too popular among our people to not have some sort of insurance policy that once my family has assumed its positions of power that we will not lose them.”

“You told me my sons would go free!” Tareif snapped.

“Our plans have changed.” Telan stated firmly. “And they will stay as they are until your daughter bears me a son and seals the contract permanently. This is my father’s wish. Rest assured your sons will stay in excellent health and not be harmed anymore than they already have been.”

“I swear to you if my sons are harmed, I will keep you alive for days as I peel the skin from your flesh.” Tareif growled. “And then I will do the same to your father.”

Telan nodded. “Of course you will War Master. Now please if you will excuse me, I need to contact my father in regards to recent events.”

Tareif turned and stormed from the room, not noticing the female elf that was pressed tightly to the wall around the corner. Her eyes were wide as she had heard everything that was spoken. Her eyes darted down the corridor and then she quickly moved for the upper levels.

EDEN

Three months later

Admiral Wallace walked into the North Medical Clinic on EDEN with Senator Graham and saw several of the newly arrived elves lying on the infirmary beds. The deal with the Alliance had gone through quite easily, and now EDEN was home to almost three hundred elves. Graham had placed Wallace in charge of the indoctrination of the elves into life on EDEN. As the days passed, he was only concerned with fucking as many of the elves as he could. Graham still controlled things with an iron fist, and while Bill was slowly working his way further into Graham’s confidence, he knew they had a long way to go.

As the weeks had passed, Wallace and Thomas had been able to facilitate the deal with the Alliance for the additional elves. The transfer had gone off without a hitch, and even though the Alliance now had the blueprint plans to the Raptor Attack Ship, Wallace knew it would take them many months or even a full year to put the Raptor into full production mode, and then they would need to train new pilots. That would be worth at least another two or three good sized shipment of elves for EDEN.

Wallace also found himself falling more in love with Anisa as the days passed. He had never met a stronger or braver woman before in his life, and she showed these straits every day as she worked with him to purge selected elves of the addicting Alliance drug and bring them to their side. He didn’t know what Anisa felt for him, and at this point he didn’t care. Her presence was a soothing balm to him at the end of the day, and if she cared for him even a fraction of how he loved her, that was good enough for him.

Wallace walked up to where the young doctor stood next to Frank Wilson. “Good morning Colonel Wilson, Doctor Taggert.” Bill spoke in a professional manner. “I brought the Senator so you could show him how you have developed a new drug for us to use, and I want you to explain how it works to Senator Graham. Senator this is Doctor Paul Taggert, EDEN’s top bio-toxin scientist.”

“It is a pleasure to finally meet you Senator.” Paul Taggert spoke.

“Doctor Taggert.” Graham spoke. He glanced over to the three beds that were occupied by two female elves and one male. “May I ask why three slaves are occupying beds that are meant for humans?”

“That is my doing Senator. Doctor Taggert needed some elves to experiment on once he finished the drug.” Bill told him. “Paul, why don’t you explain it to the Senator so that he understands?”

The doctor nodded his head, “Of course Admiral.” The young man spoke with a friendly smile. He lifted the test tube of clear liquid up for Graham to see. “I call it X19. It’s based along the same lines as the Alliance’s drug, but it’s much more refined and subtle, and incredibly more powerful. The enzymes in the baseline code for the drug are...”

“Doctor Taggert, I’m quite sure the Senator is not interested in the baseline code for the drugs, only the end results.” Bill spoke.

Graham smiled and nodded his head. “Thank you Admiral and you are correct; but what I would like to know is can we use this drug to replace the Alliance’s drug? Can we market it?”

The doctor nodded. “Oh yes sir! Once we move to the production stage of this drug, we can mass produce it very quickly, and charge anything we want for it. It does not require the cumbersome injection unit on the back of the neck, and a single dose is good for an extended period of time.”

“How long is that?” Graham asked now very interested.

“It would depend on the dose of course... but several days at the very least, at the higher level.” Taggert replied. He motioned to the three elves. “The male and female elves were given the highest dose possible fifty-seven hours ago, and they are still very susceptible to my commands. Would you like me to demonstrate?”

Graham nodded. "Please do."

"The female elf's name is Leda Senator." Paul spoke. "Leda... please get out of bed and come over here next to the Senator."

The blond haired elf sat up, tossing aside the thin sheet that covered her perfect naked body. Graham licked his lips as he watched her stand on the floor and he admired her pert tits and near hairless pussy as she walked up to stand next to him. Her legs were lean and muscular, and her abdomen flat and well defined. She didn't have the largest breasts he'd seen on an elf, but they were very firm with small pink nipples.

"Say hello Leda." Paul spoke smiling.

"Good day Senator Graham, it's a pleasure to meet you." The female elf spoke, her eyes bright and clear.

Richard looked at Paul in surprise. "She does not exhibit the same mental sluggishness of the Alliance's drug."

"No sir. As I said I refined it a great deal. The elves will not have the sluggishness or clouded mind as they did under the Alliance drug." Paul explained. "They will act completely normal in every way, yet they will find it impossible to refuse any command or request from a human."

"Really?" Graham spoke not entirely convinced. "That seems rather sophisticated. Are you certain it works?"

Paul smiled. "The male and female elf you see here Senator are brother and sister. They arrived with the last shipment of slaves from earth. You can see the similar physical traits and facial features."

Graham nodded. "Yes."

"I've done some extensive research into the elves that the Alliance supplied to us. They consider it a vile sin punishable by death for any type of incest." Paul looked at the two other elves. "Colar... get up, and have your sister begin to suck your cock."

Graham watched in fascination as the male elf got to his feet and moved to the other bed. He pulled the sheet aside and helped the female elf off the bed. The female elf had long dark hair and a small patch of black hair above her small pussy. That they were related could not be denied, and Graham watched in awe as the female elf took her brother's decent sized limp cock deeply into her mouth and began to suck him off.

"I must say... that is excellent." Graham spoke in awe, his eyes becoming excited.

"Leda... it appears the Senator is becoming excited by what we are witnessing. Drop to your knees and suck him off." Paul ordered.

Graham watched with wide eyes as the blond elf immediately got down on her knees and began unbuckling his pants. Graham hissed through his teeth when he felt her warm mouth engulf almost half his seven inch cock and she began to suck hard. Her hand came up to palm his balls as she took him even deeper into her mouth. He dropped a hand to her blond locks and groaned, holding her head firmly in place while he thrust his hips forward brutally, driving his entire cock into her mouth even causing her to gag loudly as he rammed into her throat. Graham didn't see Wallace moved ever so slightly closer to Doctor Taggart and grasp the young man's arm tightly. He also didn't notice that Paul Taggart's face was frozen in place, void of any emotion, but his eyes were burning holes through Graham's chest. Graham looked to where the dark haired sister was eagerly lapping away at her brother's hard jutting cock, and Graham lost it. He rammed his cock deeply into Leda's throat and started cumming, driving his hips forward and keeping her blond head pinned to his groin as he emptied his load into her throat.

It took several moments for him to regain his composure and then Graham pulled his now limp cock from between her lips. He waited while Leda re-buckled his pants and slowly got to her feet a sweet smile on her face.

"Thank you Senator." She told him licking her lips seductively.

Graham couldn't help but smile as well, and he heard the male elf groan and turned as he unloaded into his sister's mouth.

"I must say Doctor Taggart I am very impressed, very impressed. Admiral... you are proving to be the best partner I have had in many years." Graham spoke.

"Senator... the Admiral explained to me your elaborate interests." Paul spoke, waving his hand toward the back of the lab. "I hope you don't mind that I took the liberty of finding three certain female elves that have some experience in what you prefer."

Graham watched as the two dark haired and one blond elf walked from around the corner of the divider and stopped in front of him. All of them were exceptionally attractive, and very well built. "Well what have we here?" Graham said.

"These particular elves work as sort of a team Senator. They are sisters, and have been seeing to the needs of some of the Alliance's highest officials with your tastes. They take care of each other and let's just say they enjoy small amounts of pain." Paul spoke.

"Now that is very interesting." Graham said. "I trust they have been given the drug?"

Paula nodded and held out the small black bag. "I dosed them this morning Senator, and it should be good for at least two days. This is for when you feel they are not being as compliant as you wish."

Graham grinned. "I think I may have to return to my quarters and break these young ladies in." He said. "Thank you for your explanation doctor. William... I expect you will see to the implementation of the drug with all of our slaves?"

Bill nodded. "I'll see to it myself sir." He spoke. "However I will need the names of the Sweeper Agents that have not come forward so that I can use them as conduits for the drug. They can also assist me in watching the elves more closely."

Graham nodded his head and his hand kneaded the full breast of the blond in full view of everyone. "Of course... I'll give the information to Thomas to pass on to you later today. Now if you'll excuse me I'll be in my office."

Bill forced the smile to remain on his face as Graham left the clinic pawing the firm ass of the giggling elf. Once the door slid shut behind him, Bill whirled around and looked for something to send flying across the room in rage. He saw the side door open and Anisa came out quickly, going directly to him and taking his hands. She knew how he would be after doing this, and she also knew he responded to her soothing touch.

Anisa looked at him with adoring eyes and stroked his face. Their first night together Anisa would admit was nothing more than a way for her to thank him for saving her life. She had to admit that William had fucked her far better and longer than any man before him, and he was very well endowed in the cock department. He could have chosen any of the female elves and instead had picked her. That first night was her way of rewarding him. Over the next few weeks Anisa found herself falling very much in love with this man. His actions were intelligent and extremely well thought out. He never asked her to sleep with him again after that first night, as it was not in his nature. Once he realized that Thomas was fully on their side, he took the young man under his wing and began instructing him in the arts of deception and subterfuge. And Anisa had to admit William Wallace was very good at both. She had accessed EDEN's computers under his security code and discovered quite a bit about the man she now was very much in love with. He was a former member of perhaps the finest military unit in the 21st century known as the Navy SEALs; the same type of unit that the genomes who had escaped were from. He was very highly decorated and considered a brilliant tactician. She discovered many things about the man in front of her that allowed her to feel love once more.

"Calm yourself William." She said softly, stroking his face. "This is part of your plan. You must maintain this guise for as long as necessary."

William nodded. "I know... but I hate having to order the elves to take part in such perversion." He turned as Leda went quickly to the nearest sink and forced herself to vomit by sticking her finger down her throat. He watched as Paul held the blanket around her shoulders until she had finished vomiting and then she turned to wrap herself in his arms. He looked at the male and female elf; who were now standing next to each other, pulling on their clothes.

The male elf took a step forward. "You have shown us that you and many like you on this station are not like the humans we are used too Admiral Wallace." Colar spoke. "It is for this reason that we help you. You have saved all of us from lives of slavery, and if the goal you have, the ultimate goal, our ultimate goal becomes reality, then all we have to do is worth it."

William turned as Leda looked at him, wiping her mouth after spitting out the mouthwash Paul had given her. "Admiral... you alone have returned hope to us." She spoke. She squeezed her body closer to Paul's. "You have enabled us to regain our dignity and honor, and you have helped us to find..." She looked at Paul with smiling eyes. "You have helped us to find those that mean a great deal to us. If our freedom requires that I have to suck the shriveled cock of some demented man, then I will do so. It only solidifies our plan and our goals in the end." She turned back to William as Paul pulled her closer.

“But having Leda have to perform such a vile act... having you and your wife have to do such things in front of others...” William spoke. “It twists my guts into knots knowing that this is what we have to revert too.”

Colar smiled in amusement. “Perhaps... but Teela is becoming very good at it.”

William watched the dark haired female elf slap her husband’s chest. She turned her eyes on him.

“Anisa told us what you were like on that first day William. And you have proved she was correct every day since. Elves are not as preoccupied as humans when it comes to sexual displays William. We are much more comfortable with our sexuality than humans. If we need to conduct these acts in front of others so that we can ultimately win our freedom, then I will gladly do so.”

Colar grinned, “As will I.” He said. “It has been many years since I have been able to take my wife in these ways.”

“Colar!” Teela exclaimed as his arms went around her waist and he nuzzled her neck.

The mood of anger in the room was broken, and all of them relaxed further. William shook his head with smile. “You are some of the most resilient men and women I have ever known.” He said. “And I am very glad I can call you friend.”

Anisa squeezed his hand. “And we are very glad you are what you are William. Without you, none of us would have this opportunity.”

Bill looked at Paul. “Ok... let’s have it.” He said.

“Thomas and Neara are seeing to the distribution of our “drug”.” Paul spoke. “Leda will see to the holding pens for the females who work in the brothels, and Colar and Teela will handle the worker sections. If all goes well... we can have the all the elves inoculated within four weeks. They are being selective as to who they start with, but the process is working. Colonel Wilson is using his contacts in the engineering section to monitor which elves we think will be easier to bring into the fold at first.”

Bill nodded. “I can’t stress enough how dangerous what we’re doing is. You need to be very careful about where you go and who you talk too. Martin’s last transmission stated they had been kicked out of the High Elf territory, but they had found a place to settle down into. I’m hoping we can tell him the station is once more in our control before our next communication.”

“Where did he settle down Admiral?” Frank asked.

“Somewhere in the southwest part of the country I assume, as that is where he was. He wasn’t specific and I didn’t have time to delve deeper.” Bill spoke. “Everyone keep your heads and let’s not do anything stupid.”

MOUNTAIN CITY

Tarifa glared at Telan as he lifted himself from the bed, and she pulled the sheet tighter around her naked body. Their ceremony had gone off quickly, with Tarifa going through the motions more than anything else, and Telan had taken his place as husband to the Queen, assuming the military and political duties of that position. Tarifa endured his near endless rutting, focusing her mind on Martin and Dysea, but never enough where she became lost in passion as Telan grunted and groaned while plunging his small thin cock into her. As husband to the Queen he could take her whenever he desired and she had to consent. She endured his pawing of her body with passionless serenity, and after he had gone she quickly went to take steaming showers and baths to rid herself of his stench and foulness from within her.

Telan reached over to pull his uniform shirt on, smiling at her as he did so. “I see you are responding more to my ministrations.” He gloated.

“Believe what you will.” Tarifa told him as she sat up on the bed, holding the sheet around her.

Telan looked at her as he buttoned his shirt. “You deny this?” He spoke.

Tarifa looked at him hatred in her eyes. “You may be my husband...” She snapped. “And I must submit to you whenever you wish according to our law... but do not for an instant believe that I will respond in any way to anything you do to me. Your very touch turns my stomach and makes me want to vomit.”

Telan’s eyes darkened. “You will see things my way in the end.” He growled at her. “Perhaps after you have given me a child, you will see things differently.”

“Don’t hold your breath Telan.” Tarifa spoke, rising from the bed and heading for the shower.

Tarifa stared at herself in the mirror of the bathroom after the door had closed and locked. Her face was drawn, and her usually sapphire eyes were red from countless nights of crying herself to sleep. Her days were filled with the mindless duties of the Queen, Raloa never ceasing to gloat over the Council's decision to expel Martin and the genomes. Her only peace came in the arms of her mother who had remained in Mountain City and taken a small apartment one level down from the Queen's home. This is where she spent most of her time now, remaining as far away from Telan as she could. She had seen her father several times in the past three months, but had never spoken to him, and only glared at him with anger and hatred. He was staying at the main barracks within Mountain City, and outside of official functions was almost never seen outside his office and small apartment.

Tarifa reached up and carefully removed the hidden latch from the side of the cabinet. She pulled softly and the entire cabinet came away from the wall smoothly. Inside on two shelves were a number of small bottles. Tarifa took one and quickly tapped out two pills. She swallowed them in one gulp wincing as the large pills went down her throat. She quickly followed them with a small glass of water. The pills she had gotten through one of her closest aides, and they would prevent her from conceiving a child. They were also very dangerous, as they made her violently sick for a short time and the traces of the drug could be detected by a doctor.

She looked in the mirror as she closed the cabinet and returned the latch in place. She closed her eyes and concentrated and felt her fangs extend to nearly a full inch. She took a deep breath and allowed herself to soak in the scents of everything around her. She wanted so much to contact Martin and Dysea, but Telan had such a close watch on her, she was unable to do anything to attempt to contact them. Each day that passed caused her to slip more and more into despair, and the only thing that kept her sane were these moments when she could escape into the bathroom and let go of her control and allow the changes that had come over her to come out. When she allowed her control to drop, it was almost as if she could feel Martin and Dysea wrapped around her showering her with their friendship and caring.

Tarifa sank to the floor of the bathroom and huddled in the corner, pulling her knees to her chest as the tears began to flow once more, and she felt wonderfully alive as her mind took her back to the moments when she was within their company.

“Sit down Palina.” Walter spoke gently as Palina came into his apartment.

“Thank you Holy One.” Palina spoke softly as she settled to the couch.

“What can I help you with child?” Walter asked.

“It is Tarifa Holy One.” Palina told him. “I... I fear she is slipping deeper into darkness as every day passes. She hardly eats anymore, and she has to endure that despicable Telan violating her at his whim.”

Walter sighed heavily and sat back in the chair. “This is not something I had foreseen as happening, and I believe it may be partly my fault.”

“How?” Palina asked.

“I was the one who told her to seek out Martin and Dysea.” Walter replied looking at her. “I knew that the only way to begin an effective war against the Alliance was to have the three of them together as allies.”

“You... you made her seek him out? You knowingly put her in danger?” Palina asked astonished.

Walter shook his head. “No not knowingly. I did not know what Graham would do, and I certainly had no idea what the Elders would do. I thought perhaps when they came together; they could form an alliance of sorts with each other, making all the elves stronger. Martin is so much more than what he appears to be Palina. More so than even you would understand. An alliance between him and Tarifa and Dysea would mean a shift of power against the Alliance. I did not expect that the Alliance has somehow insinuated themselves so deeply into elf society as to corrupt those that are in power.”

Palina nodded slowly. “I think I understand now Holy One. You... you gave them the means to see past what everyone else sees and look inside each other and what they could build.”

Walter smiled. “An elegant way of putting it; but essentially yes, that's what I did.” He looked at her. “Tarifa is very much like Martin Palina. They are both headstrong and willful, but they are the epitome of leaders, and that is why they became so close so quickly, aside from the obvious physical attraction.” He continued.

“Tarifa told me her relationship with Martin opened her to see many things that she would never have thought of.” Palina said.

Walter nodded. “They would have had that effect on each other yes.” He said. “They shared a physical relationship yes, but what developed more between them was a sense of common purpose and deep friendship similar to what one feels for a twin sibling. That is what I had hoped would happen.”

“And what role did Dysea play all this?” Palina asked.

Walter met her eyes. “She was the one I intended for Martin.” He replied. “The one who would...”

“Take his heart?” Palina asked.

Walter nodded. “Yes.”

“I need your help Holy One.” Palina spoke. “I do not know what Tareif told him the day they left, but it was obviously a lie to make them think Tarifa betrayed them in some manner.”

“Tarifa’s relationship with Dysea does not seem to bother you.” Walter asked with more than a little curiosity.

“Holy One... it was you who made us more accepting of our sexuality and who we were.” Palina told him. “I was shocked at first that Tarifa could have such feelings for a woman, let alone act on them. However, after I was able to think about it for a few days, I came to the conclusion that all parents do. If that is what makes my child happy, who am I to debate that? And it is not uncommon to see elves of the same gender together Holy One. Their relationships are accepted just as any other.”

“There is little I can do to help Palina. And believe me I have tried.” Walter told her. “I am being shadowed by Dragoon officers wherever I go. Any attempt by me to contact Martin or Dysea would be detected immediately by the thugs Telan has watching me.”

“Your implant does not work?” Palina asked.

Walter shook his head. “Unfortunately they are either choosing not to answer my transmissions, or they are somewhere that is beyond the implant’s range. Dysea has been declared a traitor by the Wood Elf Council of Elders, and there are orders to arrest her if she is found. Martin and Dysea would know this and would do little to let their whereabouts be known. I imagine Tarifa already knows that.”

Palina nodded. “She has tried every day, but no they do not respond to her.” Palina leaned forward in her chair. “Perhaps for that very reason, but I was thinking of something else however.”

“I will do what I can.” Walter spoke.

“You know that if she is to bear Telan a child, the union will be sealed forever.” Palina spoke. “She has been taking a foul medicine that keeps her from becoming pregnant, but her supply is almost depleted. She fears putting her aides at risk to get her more, and the medicine makes her violently sick for several hours. If she was discovered during this period it would definitely be discovered in her system, and there would be terrible consequences. Is there anything you can give to her?”

Walter shook his head slowly. “Unfortunately nothing that won’t be detected by a skilled physician.”

Palina felt tears coming into her eyes and she sat back. “Then I will lose my daughter.” She said softly. “If she does not have this medicine and she becomes pregnant, she will kill herself. I know she will.”

Walter got to his feet and moved to the small counter his mind racing. He poured Palina and himself a mug of tea and was about to add milk and sugar when his hands stopped in mid-motion, “Dysea?” He said softly.

Palina looked at his back, “Holy One?”

Walter turned to her, the tea forgotten, “Dysea.” He spoke again. “Dysea is the key. She has an intimate knowledge of thousands of herbs and roots; natural elements that would do the same thing and would be undetectable in Tarifa’s system. She would do such things for her own people who were captured or raped by Alliance troops.”

“Holy One... no one knows where they went.” Palina said. “How would I find her?”

“Cantel,” Walter spoke. “He is one of your husband’s senior Dragoons.”

Palina shook her head. “Tareif would discover what I am attempting to do.”

Walter shook his head. “I may be old and simply human Palina, but I am not without some skill. Cantel has had two Dragoons following me wherever I go, and two of them have been tailing Telan as well.” He said. “He would not do that without your husband’s knowledge unless he felt it important.”

“Holy One do you believe that members of the Council are plotting against their own people?” Palina asked.

“I think what has happened with Dysea answers that very question for you Palina. They claim she has betrayed them and come over to the High Elves. The Queen they have elected in her place is not as wise to the ways of the world, and she does not realize they are using her.” Walter replied. “Find a way to contact Cantel. If anyone knows where Martin and Dysea have gone it will be him. Do not for a minute believe the Elders do not know where they have settled.”

Palina came to her feet. “Even if I was to discover this, and I find them. Why would they help me? Whatever lies Tareif told them, they believed him enough to refuse even to have communications with Tarifa.”

“Do not believe for a moment that they have stopped caring for your daughter Palina.” Walter spoke. “That is not in Martin’s nature.”

“What are you telling me?” Palina asked.

Walter took her hands. “They might be dealing with it better for unlike Tarifa, Martin and Dysea share a bond of love we don’t understand, and they have each other. They will be no doubt trying to discover what has happened too... but something is keeping them from contacting her. Something they were told perhaps. That is what you must discover.”

Palina looked at him a new firmness in her eyes. “Thank you Holy One.” She said.

Walter smiled. “I have always loved Tarifa as my own daughter Palina. She is one of the keys to the future, and whatever I can do to try and correct my mistakes of the past I will do.”

“May the gods shine on you Holy One,” Palina spoke, a new brightness to her eyes.

Palina answered the door to her apartment and came up short when she saw the young female elf. “Yes?”

“The elf bowed her head in respect. “Forgive me Milady. My name is Alore, and I work within the Council’s halls.”

“Go on.” Palina spoke, trying to find a way to leave this child and get to Tarifa as soon as possible. She had to relay the conversation she had with the Holy One to her.

“My Lady there is something I must tell you.” The elf said. “I have carried this news within me for weeks, too afraid to come to you with it.”

“Child I do not have time for games.” Palina spoke.

“My Lady this is about War Master Tareif and what happen the day the genome soldier Commander Hunter was expelled from Mountain City.” The elf told her.

Palina looked at her, her eyes wide and her interest suddenly peaked. “Quickly child, come inside.” Palina spoke, pulling her into the apartment.

“You are certain of this Alore?” Palina asked.

“Yes Milady positive. I wasn’t more than five meters away at the time and heard the entire conversation.” Alore replied.

“And you have told no one about this?” Palina asked taking her hands.

“I was too frightened too Milady. War Master Tareif frightens me, and I do not trust Captain Telan.” Alore replied. “I live alone Milady, my family lives in Salem City. I did not know who to go to. When I realized you had taken an apartment here I knew I could come to you, but it wasn’t until now that I had the courage. I’m so sorry Milady.”

Palina smiled and squeezed her hands. “You have nothing to be sorry for Alore.” She said. “In fact, from this moment on you now hold the title of Senior Aide to me.” She smiled when Alore’s eyes nearly came out of her head. “You are braver than most Alore; don’t doubt that for a moment. I will have the paperwork and clearances drawn up immediately. Right now I need you to do something for me.”

“Anything Milady,” Alore spoke.

“There is a senior Dragoon Lieutenant. His name is Cantel. I need you to find him and inform him that I need to meet with him as soon as possible.” Palina said. “Can you do that?”

“Of course Milady, I know right where the Dragoons are billeted. I... I sometimes watch their training sessions when I am finished at the Council Hall.” She spoke, blushing as she did so.

Palina smiled. “Alore... you may have just returned something to your Queen that was taken from her against her will. Go now... and be quick. Speak to no one but Cantel.”

Alore rose to her feet and nodded, “As you order me Milady.”

Palina ushered her to the door and glanced outside before allowing her to come forward. She leaned over and kissed her head. “The Gods go with you child.” She said.

Alore smiled and hurried out onto the main walkway, quickly blending in with the hundreds of other elves. Palina stepped back into her quarters and closed the door. She went immediately to her communications console and entered in a code.

The face of the communications operator appeared on the screen. “Good day Milady. How may I assist you?”

“I wish to contact Salem City on a secure channel. Is that possible?” Palina asked.

“Of course Milady, may I ask why?”

“I’m arranging a surprise party for War Master Tareif, and I would appreciate it if you were able to not log this call.” Palina asked with her sweetest smile.

The man grinned, thinking he was making points. “What call is that Milady.” He spoke with a smile. “Channel secure... please go ahead.”

“Milady,” Cantel spoke, bowing his head.

Palina smiled and placed her hand on his arm. “Thank you for coming Cantel.” She said quietly.

“May I ask why you wanted to meet me? And why you wanted to meet here?” Cantel spoke looking at her.

They stood on the narrow unused bridge just below the main promenade. The bridge hadn’t been used in the years since the promenade above them had been built. They could still hear the music and voices above them from the hundreds of shops and dozens of homes and businesses.

“We do not have to worry about unwanted eyes and ears here.” Palina spoke.

“And why would this be an issue Milady?” Cantel asked.

“I know you have been looking into Telan and his family very discretely.” Palina spoke, seeing that his expression did not change in the least. “I want to know how that is coming.”

“I do not know what it is you mean Milady.” Cantel spoke quickly, too quickly.

Palina smiled. “The young woman I sent to summon you told me some interesting things Cantel. Items that are a great deal of interest to me if they are true, and things that would go a long way to explaining why my husband has been acting like such a bastard these last few months.”

“What exactly did she hear Milady?” Cantel asked.

Palina watched Cantel’s face carefully as she explained what Alore had told her. She was watching for the slightest sign of betrayal in his eyes; any hint that would tell her he was not working for her husband, but against him. She detected none of this as his face changed from impassive emotion to one of barely controlled anger. It took her fifteen minutes to fully explain everything and when she was done she had no doubts that Cantel would help her.

Cantel gripped the railing of the walkway when she had finished, his knuckles turning white in rage that he kept just below the surface.

“The Elders,” He hissed. “I suspected Telan was not everything he was made to appear, but the Elders?”

“Cantel... I need you to control your rage.” Palina spoke. “And I need your help.”

Cantel looked at her. “Command me.” He spoke firmly.

“Do you know where Martin and Dysea have gone? They are the key to all of this.” Palina asked.

“I...” He looked at her for a long moment.

“Cantel... I want my husband back! I want my sons back and I want my daughter back! If we don’t do something, then all we have fought for and loved these centuries will be lost forever.” Palina spoke.

“War Master Tareif gave him a pad with locations where they could go and where they could survive.” Cantel told her. “I do not know for sure their exact location, but there have been reports from several of our southwestern villages.”

“Reports... what kind of reports?” Palina asked him.

“*Falre Lome*, Phantoms of the night. The reports are of a large group of humans and elves.” Cantel replied. “They have taken over several abandoned small towns between the Tushar Mountains and the Piute Reservoir. The reports state they hear explosions and heavy equipment moving at night. They do not want to approach because whoever they are, they have established lethal minefields all around the area. Several mercenary units, slavers have been discovered destroyed in this area, hence the name *Falre Lome* that they have been given.”

Palina smiled softly. “That is where they have gone.” She spoke. “The rumors I have heard in regards to Dysea. Are they true?”

Cantel nodded. “The Wood Elves Council of Elders has named her a traitor and if caught she is to be tried for treason. Milady... if Telan’s family is holding your sons, this would explain the War Master’s actions the last few months. He has not told anyone for fear they will kill your sons.”

Palina nodded. “Yes it would.” Palina said. “You have been following Telan then?”

Cantel nodded. “He has done nothing unusual so far. He descends to the lower platforms three or four times a week to meet with a female elf who works at one of the seedier taverns, but outside of that, he has done nothing out of the ordinary.”

“His father is no fool.” Palina spoke. “Telan is a pawn in his father’s plot to gain power over our people. If Tarifa bears Telan a child, she will become expendable, and then Telan’s family will hold power.”

“They would kill the Queen?” Cantel asked stunned.

“If Tarifa gives him a child I believe they would. If she were to die in some accident after the birth of the child, Telan would hold power until their son or daughter came of age. And that would mean that Telan’s family would hold power.” Palina spoke. “They have always been power hungry, with no regard for those under them. It is why they are so powerful within the boundaries of New Spokane.”

“Milady... regardless of the power they hold, how they could have taken your sons is a mystery. They would have needed a base of power within the military and then the means to carry out such an operation.” Cantel spoke. “And where would they keep them? Your sons are well known.”

Palina nodded. “And that fact leads me to believe they have had outside help in their actions.” She said. “I have already contacted some friends I know in Salem City to do some of their own investigating.”

Cantel’s eyes grew a little wider, “The Alliance?” He gasped. “They would plot with the Alliance against their own people?”

“For men such as Telan’s father yes they would.” Palina spoke. “They would barter with the devil himself if it advanced their desire for more power and control.”

Cantel clenched his teeth. “I will enjoy killing him.” He growled.

Palina looked at him. “I know two people who will enjoy it far more Cantel.” Palina spoke. “Is it possible for you to arrange travel for me to this village in the southwest?”

Cantel nodded. “That would be no problem Milady.” He said. “The governor of this village has been petitioning the Queen to visit their village for many months. A visit by her mother would be just as formal.”

Palina nodded. “Arrange it under just that auspice.” She spoke. “How soon can you put it together?”

“War Master Tareif departs tomorrow morning for Salem City and the annual graduation of our Dragoon Elites.” Cantel told her. “I can process the paperwork and requisition the vehicles today and we can depart at mid day tomorrow, after War Master Tareif has left.”

“Telan is going with him correct?” Palina asked.

“Yes Milady. They will be gone until early next week.”

“And we can depart and return before they do?” Palina asked.

“Easily Milady, Roland has scouted the southern routes extensively. We can bypass the other villages quickly and be in southern Utah by tomorrow evening. War Master Tareif and Telan will have to use the prearranged western routes to avoid the human settlements.” Cantel replied.

“I do not want to draw attention to this trip Cantel.” She said. “I want nothing larger than what we would normally send on such a venture.”

Cantel nodded. "I will see to it Milady."

"Use your contacts within our military Cantel." Palina spoke. "Be very discrete and make no waves, but try and find out any information you can in regards to my sons' whereabouts."

Cantel nodded. "You can rest assured we will discover something Milady." He said. "What of the Queen? We can not leave her unprotected."

Palina nodded. "I will encourage her to visit her grandmother in Eastern Mountain City. She can remain there with my mother while we are away. It may provide her some comfort as well since Telan will be gone, and the Eastern Quadrant has always been a stronghold for my family."

Cantel nodded. "I will assign a Dragoon Troup to escort and remain with her while she is there, men that I trust, and that can watch Telan's enforcers as well."

Palina nodded and touched his arm. "We must proceed quickly, but we must be very careful." She said.

"It will be done Milady." He spoke.

SOUTHERN UTAH

CIRCLEVILLE

Edge of the Tushar Mountain range

There was a full moon this night, and it allowed the mercenary slavers to travel down what used to be an interstate highway. It was nothing more than a worn patch of clear land now, but it allowed the mercenary Hoppers to traverse the mountainous area with little difficulty and greater speed than normal. The moon was providing a great deal of light, which worked in their favor since half the twelve vehicles lacked any type of exterior lighting.

Three of the Hoppers were being used as transports, the backs of them holding large metal containers. Inside these three containers were almost sixty elf slaves taken during raids of surrounding elf villages. They would be transported to Cedar City Utah to be sold to the auctions there. The Cedar City Militia was the largest group of organized humans in the area, and next to the Salt Lake City Settlement, they were the largest in the state.

The driver of the lead vehicle heard the loud plopping noise come from the engine of his Hopper and he cursed when his control panel began to light up with alarms and red lights. He quickly pulled the Hopper to a halt and shut down the drive unit, while the four men that were sleeping began to wake up.

"What's wrong?" The man in the right seat asked groggily.

"The fucking cylinder drive has popped!" The driver replied. "I'm going to have to replace it!"

"Well make it quick!" The passenger spoke.

"Go back to fucking sleep!" The driver swore as he got out of the Hopper and moved around to the front of the vehicle, banging on the outer shell as he lifted the cylinder drive unit cover and pulling out his flashlight.

Martin lowered his binoculars and smiled. "Nice shooting Radama." He spoke softly into his implant.

"It is always a pleasure Commander." The voice replied in his ear piece.

Martin turned to the beautiful and bright emerald green eyes next to him on the ground. Dysea returned his gaze with a dazzling smile, her canine teeth now fully three quarters of an inch in length, and her emerald eyes outlined in black. Her platinum blond hair was even longer now, and for this operation she had stuffed it into the black balaclava that rested on top of her head. Three months had passed since they had come here, and the constant days in the sun working side by side with the man she so loved had changed her. Her body had been reforged into a deeply tanned temple of perfection, highlighting her platinum blond hair enormously. She had been in superb physical condition before, but now Dysea and all the elves that had accompanied Martin and the others had surpassed even their own expectations. All of them were now more muscular and lean, and the constant training with the remaining Genomes had honed their once deadly skills to even more lethal levels.

Dysea had now fully accepted the events that had led her to her current position. She was no longer Queen of her people, and was even wanted for treason by the Wood Elves, but those facts did nothing to dull

her intent to return one day and take vengeance on the Council of Elders and regain her rightful place. She had also fully accepted the changes that had occurred to her since Martin had come into her life and captured her heart. They made love to each other almost every night, not stopping until they were both drained and exhausted. She welcomed the changes within her own body, realizing that she was becoming more like the man she so coveted. Martin held her very soul in his palm and he worshiped her very footsteps, but they both knew that they were not complete. They still worried for Tarifa and they knew she had married, and was still active in her duties as Queen, but information was hard to come by without exposing their location to everyone that may have been looking for them.

Martin leaned over, his own eyes changing to yellow orbs outlined in black and his fangs extending to their full length of one inch. He kissed a smiling Dysea gently.

“Shall we *Melda Min*?” He spoke.

“Yes I think we shall *Nauta Melme*.” Dysea replied.

Martin turned back to the convoy of Hoppers below him in the valley. “Ok ladies and germs. Let’s get this party going!”

The driver of the damaged Hopper used his flashlight to inspect the cylinder drive of the Hopper, reaching forward with his hand. His face changed when he felt the large hole in the drive and he moved the flashlight to get a better look. His eyes grew wide when he saw the jagged edges of the hole, his eyes going up to the cover. He saw the stars through the large hole in the metal cover and his eyes flew open.

“It’s an ambush!” He screamed, whirling around and reaching for the weapon in the holster at his side.

His hand closed over the large side arm just as the black clad giant appeared in front of him. All he could see were the glowing yellow eyes of the monstrosity in front of him, and he lost control of his bladder as he saw the glint of steel in the moonlight.

“It’s time to die asshole!” The voice told him just before the eight inch blade penetrated his abdomen.

The mercenaries’ eyes bugged out of his head and he extended up on his tip toes trying to get the agonizing pain that was ripping through his guts to stop. He heard a strange, wet plopping sound and his eyes drifted downward to see his intestines spilling from inside his belly. He dropped his flashlight, reaching down to try and stuff his organs back inside his body just before there was a bright flash and his head exploded in a shower of blood and brain matter over the windshield of the Hopper.

Dysea stepped up to the side of the Hopper and stuck her silenced HK74 into the window of the vehicle, ripping out a long burst of 10mm Teflon coated rounds. She didn’t pause to watch as the three bodies in the Hopper jerked back and forth from multiple hits, their blood splashing all over the inside of the Hopper.

The mercenary driver’s scream of alarm caused many of the mercenaries to clamber out of their vehicles, many still sleepy and sluggish and they moved directly into criss-crossing fields of fire as Martin’s team of nine Genomes and eleven elves opened fire at the same time.

Martin and Dysea swept along the back side of the convoy with Radama and the Master Chief, their HK’s spitting out death to whoever attempted to exit their Hoppers. One mercenary made it half way out of his vehicle as Dysea stepped up to the front. She snapped out a front kick that slammed into the door and drove it back into the man’s legs, and he screamed in pain as one leg shattered under the enormous power of the blow. He lifted his head just as Dysea stepped up to the door.

“You fucking elf bitch!” The man screamed, struggling to bring his rifle to bear.

Dysea’s emerald eyes, now fully outlined with black stared at the man in undisguised hatred. She grabbed the door and using her elf strength, now fully enhanced with DNA from Martin’s genome cells, she rammed it forward again. The man dropped his rifle as his arm and shoulder were crushed in the door and he glanced up to see Dysea’s eyes and fangs only inches from his horrified face.

“I am no bitch!” Dysea screamed back at him before shoving the door forward with another surge of strength and hearing the mercenary’s chest splinter and shatter under the crunching metal.

Dysea turned to see Martin leap forward nearly twenty meters, his HK dropping to dangle on the quick release strap as he pulled his knife from its sheath on his thigh. His opposite hand also filled with High Elf steel, and both blades flashed in the moonlight. Martin’s jump took him directly into a group of four mercenaries, where he drove one to the ground as he landed on him with all of his two hundred and twenty plus pounds.

Dysea watched with adoring love as his jump broke the back of the mercenary, driving splinters of his shattered vertebrae into his heart and killing him instantly. Martin kicked out with his right booted foot and slammed it into the head of another mercenary, the combat toe connecting with the mercenaries' temple and instantly shattering his skull. The man's body crumpled like a noodle as Martin spun to his right, one of his knives flashing in the dim light. The razor sharp blade sliced through the third mercenaries' throat, cutting through most of the muscle on his neck, and severing his jugular vein as well as his larynx. The fourth mercenary was considerably luckier than his partners, and he was able to raise his sidearm far enough to get off three shots, two of which punched into Martin's shoulder area, causing him to stagger back slightly.

The mercenary's face flashed a grin of false victory, and he adjusted his aim to Martin's head. He felt and heard the tearing sound and looked down to see the bloody point of the knife punch through his chest. Dysea stepped up behind him, driving her other blade into his lower back with equal force. She brought her lips close to his ear and whispered into his dying brain.

"This is for every female elf you have ever taken against her will."

Dysea slashed her blades together and they tore them from his body, blood fountaining onto the ground in front of him.

Anja and Danny moved toward the last of the Hopper transports, their HKs extended in front of them. Julie had swept in from the other side with two elves and they were eliminating any mercenary targets close to the last Hopper.

As Anja passed the door to the cockpit of the Hopper a mercenary leaped from the back, his hands closing around her HK and knocking them both to the ground. Danny lifted his HK, but did not fire for fear of hitting Anja. He needn't have worried.

Anja rolled to her feet first, butt stroking the mercenary viciously as she came up several feet away from him. She let her HK drop to dangle on its strap and she looked at the man as he too got to his feet. He was larger than her by several inches and outweighed her easily by sixty a hundred pounds. His eyes were flared with anger and hate as he glared at her.

"I'm going to beat your tight ass bitch!" He screamed.

Anja jettisoned her HK with a savage smile and tossed it to where Danny was now standing by the edge of the Hopper. The firing had stopped completely as the mercenaries were being dragged from the vehicles dead by others in her team as more went to unlock the Hopper containers to free the captive elves.

Anja's green eyes changed then, narrowing into jade green orbs and black filling the white pupil area to outline the green. Her canine teeth extended as well, lengthening to half an inch much like Dysea's and she motioned the larger mercenary forward.

"Come on then big boy!" She growled at him.

The mercenary paused for a second taking in her new appearance and he answered with more bravado than he felt. "I'll show you big boy you cunt! I'm going to beat you silly and then fuck you like you ain't ever been fucked before!"

"You are so dead." Anja spat at him.

The mercenary never saw the leaping front kick that plowed into his chest and sent him flipping backwards. He landed painfully with a loud grunt, struggling to get to his feet. Anja descended upon him with no hesitation and plenty of anger. Julie stepped up next to Danny, who was watching with a grin on his face as several others of Martin's team stopped to watch as well. Anja did not relent and was pummeling the mercenary with brutal punches and kicks. All of them could hear bones breaking in the still air, and grunts of pain from him as Anja methodically proceeded to beat him to death.

No one among the elves or genomes attempted to stop her, and after a long few moments Anja finally stopped beating the mercenary on her own. The man was curled into a protective fetal position, his face a mass of blood and torn flesh. His lips were mangled, and both his eyes were swollen shut. Almost all of his ribs were shattered and he was dragging one broken leg behind him as he used his remaining strength to try and crawl away from the red headed devil standing above him.

Anja spit on his body and stood above him, before she reached down and took his blood matted hair in her fist pulling his face up off the ground. "Your shriveled little toy couldn't begin to compare to the man that rocked my world little man! And he still does... even in my dreams you pathetic excuse for a man." She snarled at him.

Julie looked at Danny oddly as she heard several of their teammates laugh. Julie knew exactly who Anja was talking about and it wasn't Danny. The last three months had been filled with plenty of work and patrols, and she had spent more time with Anja than Danny had. She never denied him her attention when the three of them were together, and she even enjoyed herself, but Julie knew her heart was no longer in the relationship they had. She sensed Anja drawing away from them, in fact she sensed they were all drawing away from each other. Anja was still madly in love with Martin, and nothing was ever going to change that. She only hoped that the Skipper found a way to get over that one hump in regards to her to see that she loved him. She had also noticed the female elf Dysea had taken a shine to Anja, always looking at her from a distance, always with those incredible emerald green eyes.

She and Danny had drawn apart as well, though much more slowly. It was more of a mutual effect as both of them were discovering new things to keep them busy, and they were also discovering new friends. Julie smiled to herself. While she was sure they would always remain steadfast and loyal friends, they were outgrowing each other and soon they would go their separate ways.

Danny shook his head and looked at Julie who smiled at him. "Remind me never to get on her bad side."

Anja shoved his head back to the ground, the force of the blow dropping him mercifully into unconsciousness. She took a deep breath and turned around to see most of the team watching her with amused expressions on their faces. She watched Danny and Julie walk up to her with several others, all of them smiling widely.

"He... he kind of pissed me off." Anja said almost embarrassed.

"No kidding?" Julie replied, stepping up to her and slipping her arm around Anja's slim waist. "Remind me to never piss you off girl."

Dysea and Martin were helping the elves from inside the container and were motioning them back where others were handing out blankets and water. Martin had seen the latter portion of her fight and his eyes now remained on Anja as the others crowded around her. For the briefest of moments he thought he saw her eyes settle on him and look at him with desire and need. He didn't see Dysea look up at him as her hands inspected his body armor. Dysea looked at Martin, their balaclavas now dangling behind their shoulders. Her platinum blond hair was easily visible in the moon light.

"*Nauta Melme*, you were shot." She spoke helping another captive elf to the ground.

Martin looked at her and then down to the wound in his shoulder. "It only grazed me. The second one was caught by my vest."

"That was foolish, leaping into a group of four mercenaries." Dysea told him. "You could have been hurt badly."

Martin assisted the last elf out of the Hopper and turned to face her fully as the newly freed elves watched them with expressions of astonishment. "You were watching my back *Melda Min*." He said.

"That does not excuse your actions." Dysea spoke.

"I was trying to impress you." Martin said.

"*Nauta Melme* you could have been hurt!"

Martin stepped closer to her. "Did it work?" He asked, drawing her into his arms.

Dysea couldn't help but smile at the expression on his face and she nodded. "Yes it did." She told him, kissing him gently.

"I wouldn't worry about the Skipper too much Dy." Danny spoke walking up behind them, Julie and Anja in tow with the others. "He's too ornery to die."

Dysea smiled at him. Many among Martin's team had taken to calling her Dy as a show of affection.

"You... you are the *Falre Lome*." The former captive male elf spoke looking at Martin and Dysea with wide eyes, "The Phantoms of the Night."

"Excuse me?" Martin asked, looking at the man.

"The Phantoms of the Night," The man repeated. "All of the villages in the area have been speaking of you in whispers. How you have rescued other elves and are building a city in the mountains." The elf spoke. "They speak of how humans and elves live side by side in harmony. And that they are led by a man who is not completely human, and always at his side is a female elf with hair the color of white gold."

Martin looked at Dysea with a smile. "That must be why you taste so good." He told her.

Dysea jabbed him in the lower back with her fingers, "Pervert." She spoke with a smile. She stepped around Martin and looked at the sixty elves that were sitting or kneeling on the ground. "You are free now." She told them. "Take what you can from these animals and go!"

"They have destroyed our villages!" A woman spoke, coming forward. "We have nothing to return too! This is all that remains from three villages of nearly seven hundred of us."

Dysea looked at Martin in the moon light and saw his nod. She turned back to the female elf. "I am sorry we could not have stopped these scum sooner. We have been tracking them for two weeks but it wasn't until this night that we were able to act."

"You... you are Dysea." The woman spoke. "You were Queen of the Wood Elves."

Dysea nodded her head slowly as murmurs swept through the crowd of elves and they all moved a little closer to see her. "That is true." She spoke. "I was betrayed by those close to me and branded a traitor. One day I will return to take back my throne, but now I am helping to build something better for all elves."

"Then the rumors are true?" The first man to speak said. "You... you are building a city here in the mountains, a city of men and elves."

"Not just men and elves." Martin spoke. "It is a city... a place for everyone who wants to live free of slavery and hatred and fear. I am not completely human, and neither are some of the others with me, but we fight for the same thing."

"What is this city called?" A voice spoke from near the back.

Martin stood there taken aback. The decision to settle and begin rebuilding had come to him almost as an afterthought. It was a natural process in his thinking, and everyone seemed to fall in with him with no questions. He thought about it for the very first time right this minute. He could recall the excitement in the voices of the men and women, as well as the elves that had accompanied them from Mountain City. It did not hit home for him as to why they were excited until this very moment. The deaths of his comrades, brothers and sisters he had fought with for years and having Tarifa torn away like she was from his grasp had clouded his mind to almost all else. It is then he realized that the men and women with him, to include the elves, they all saw something in him that inspired them to build something better than what they had seen so far.

They were rebuilding their future.

"It is called Eden!" The male voice spoke from behind Martin. He turned to see Radama step from the darkness, several elves and genomes behind him. "It is called Eden... and it will be the greatest city to ever exist one day; a city where men and elves and all who wish peace and prosperity can live and watch their children grow without fear of persecution and war." He walked up to stand next to Martin. "It is called Eden... and you will be welcomed without question if you desire these things. If you do not, then you will be left to wallow in your own misery. We will defend it with our dying breaths, and any who wish to bring us harm will be crushed under our heel. Join us! Join us and live free!"

Martin looked at Dysea as the newly freed elves began to stir among themselves. His eyes moved to where Radama stood and the former High Elf Royal Guard Commander grinned. "Tarifa once told me you were not good with words Martin Hunter." He spoke softly. "I hope you don't mind."

Martin grinned. "I would have gotten around to that part." He said sheepishly.

"Yeah... when pigs fucking fly," Tony muttered from beside Radama. That brought laughter from the genomes and elves within Martin's team.

"That could very well be the case in this day and age Master Chief." Anja spoke from where she stood between Danny and Julie. "Who knows what we will see in the future."

Tony nodded quickly, "Point taken Anja."

"We will join with you Martin Hunter." The man who had spoken first called out. "We will join with you and work beside you to see this city... this Eden become reality. All we have now are our hopes and dreams."

Dysea slipped her hand into Martin's and looked at him. "That is all any of us have right now sir." She spoke. "And that is enough for the moment."

HIGH ELF VILLAGE SALINA, UTAH

“It is a great honor that you have arrived Milady.” The governor of Salina spoke, bowing his head as Palina settled into the chair in his office.

Palina smiled and looked at the portly elf. “My daughter sends her regrets that she could not come herself, but she has pressing duties within the capital.”

“That the Queen thought to send you is proof enough that she is as wise as she is beautiful.” The governor spoke, motioning to his aide to present the crystal cups of tea. Palina accepted the tea from the aide and sipped it, allowing the liquid to warm her insides. The trip had been long, but true to his boast Roland had led them non-stop to Salina without having to detour around any human settlements.

“You have done quite well with your city governor.” Palina told the man. “I noticed though that almost half of your defensive positions are not manned. Why is that?”

“They have not been needed Milady.” He answered.

“Is that because of the *Falre Lome*?” Palina asked softly, watching the man’s eyes.

The governor looked at her surprised that she knew of the phantom soldiers that had become very real. They had been running throughout the mountains destroying mercenary units almost daily. They had even destroyed the mercenary base camp set up only a few miles from Salina, destroying the entire camp and leaving no survivors before they blended back into the night.

The governor nodded his head slowly. “Yes Milady.” He answered.

“So the rumors that are making their way back to Mountain City are true?” Palina asked him.

“They have brought slaver raids almost to a halt in the lower portion of our territory Milady.” The governor told her. “They destroyed the base camp first, wiping out every mercenary there. They left nothing but the frames of the buildings they did not destroy and an unmarked grave.”

Palina looked at Cantel who stood to her side. He nodded his head. “He is no fool Milady. It appears they are stripping everything that they might be able to use, leaving nothing to be scavenged.”

Palina turned back to the governor. “And what about these rumors of the city Governor Kadeem?”

“I have not heard those rumors Milady, but I do know that it is next to impossible to get close to what used to be know as Junction City. The closest my scouts have been able to penetrate into the territory the *Falre Lome* has claimed is ten miles from the actual city.” The governor said.

“I don’t understand.” Palina asked. “They have claimed territory?”

“There... are... warning signs posted Milady. They stretch for miles... warning all who enter into this area of a minefield and certain death.” The governor answered. “My scouts tracked a mercenary patrol that breached this warning line and watched them die after they had gone only five hundred meters.”

“And your scouts survived?” Palina asked.

“They retraced their own footsteps Milady, and went back the way they had come.” Kadeem answered. “Very quickly I might add. We have not tried to enter that area since that day.”

Palina nodded. “A wise move I suspect.”

“It is free territory Milady.” Kadeem told her. “High Elf lands end twelve miles south of Salina. There is a stretch of three miles and then the land that the *Flare Lome* has claimed begins. There were many free elf villages outside of our boundaries, some that we used to trade with. They no longer exist. Our scouts tell me the mercenaries destroyed most of them, and the others were simply abandoned.”

“And all this has happened in the last three months?” Palina asked shocked.

Kadeem nodded. “Yes Milady.”

Palina looked at Cantel once more before getting to her feet. “Governor I will need three of your scouts to take us to the border of the *Falre Lome* territory tomorrow.” She spoke.

Kadeem came to his feet. “Milady... I do not recommend that. There are still several large mercenary groups operating within this territory. While they are not large enough to present Salina any danger, they are most certainly a danger to smaller ground forces moving through the area.”

Palina nodded. “I thank you for your concern governor, but I don’t believe we will be in any danger. I would like to leave first thing in the morning if you don’t mind.”

Kadeem bowed his head, “As you wish Milady.” He spoke.

Palina nodded. "Excellent." She turned quickly and left the governor's office with Cantel on her heels. "Is this wise Milady?" He asked as they walked. "We do not even know for sure if this *Falre Lome* is part of Hunter's group."

Palina looked at him and smiled. "Martin Hunter and Dysea are this *Falre Lome*." She said.

"How can you be so sure Milady?" Cantel asked.

Palina simply smiled and continued walking. "I'm sure."

Dysea's fists curled around the blanket, tearing it from the corners of the bed in a fit of agonizing pleasure as Martin drove every thick, throbbing and delicious part of his twelve inch cock into her tight sopping cunt.

"*Lil Nauta Melme, Lil!*" She screamed out her pleasure, her fangs fully extended and her emerald eyes outlined in black. (More Bounded One, more.)

Dysea was kneeling beside their bed, her upper body on the soft sheets and blanket, while her lower body was suspended in the air impaled as she was on her beloved's will crushing cock. Dysea shuddered in another crushing climax as he bottomed out inside her blazing hot pussy, his pelvis grinding against her super sensitive pierced clit. She felt his cum filled balls nestle against her dripping pussy, his hips moving with smooth, powerful twelve inch strokes into her. Martin had been fucking her for nearly an hour now, dominating her in every way, leaving Dysea to simply scream out his name and relish in the sensations of the orgasms erupting from her on a continual basis. The orgasms never seemed to stop and one raging climax followed another, her juices pouring from her like a river, coating his pile driving manhood and both of their upper thighs.

Martin leaned over Dysea's tanned muscular back, his tongue tracing up her spine, tasting her sweaty skin and inhaling her wildflower scent. His fangs were fully extended, his eyes yellow within black. Her scent was intoxicating to him, like a drug he was addicted too. He could feel her spasming pussy clutching and milking his steel hard pole, wanting him to erupt within her and not willing to let him go until he did. He had been hammering his aching cock into this beautiful female elf for almost an hour, her wildflower scent and cries of rapture, not to mention her sizzling kisses, helping him to remain hard as a rock, even after filling her twice already with his come. Martin was still not used to the fact that this beautiful creature withering in orgasmic bliss beneath him owned a piece of his very soul. There were many beautiful elves and women within the city they were building, yet only two could hold any sway over him. He possessed one of them, as she possessed him, and his mind was always filled with the images of the tight bodied Persian haired female his body ached for just as intensely as it ached for Dysea.

This platinum haired elf was one of the strongest women he had ever met in his life. She was supremely intelligent and a superior warrior in every way, and their time together had only toned her body and made her even more lethally efficient. He never tired of her body or her scent in his head or in his bed, and they were always finding ways to touch one another in whatever way they could, simply to express their feelings for each other. What he felt for Dysea he had felt and still felt for only one other woman in his life. It was a powerful emotion, and no matter what he did, his heart ached for both of them.

Dysea was gripped in another shattering orgasm, her head on the bed, her lips parted in breathless cries of delight. Never had she imagined she could feel what she was feeling. The power of his body, the way he so dominated her with his passion and desire, yet his touch was always the gentlest she had ever felt and just the tips of his fingers could send jolts of pleasure shooting through her. And when he nuzzled her elfin ear as he so often did, and he wrapped her within that imaginary aura that so possessed her, Dysea would never; could never deny him. And that thought made her blood boil in need and desire for him. Whenever she was with him, she could feel his imaginary embrace around her, though it was definitely more pronounced and intense when he was making love to her with this much passion. At these times it was like a soothing blanket that embraced and swallowed her whole.

Martin leaned all the way forward, pressing his chest to Dysea's back and grinding his huge throbbing cock deep within her. He could feel her engorged pierced clit against his skin and he smiled as his cock grinding sent her over the edge once more. His hands dug under her sweaty body to grip her 36C tits in his hands and he pulled her up to him, causing Dysea to shriek in pleasure as she sank even further onto his massive cock. He

wrapped his arms around her tight, holding her large firm tits in his hands and placed his lips next to her gorgeous elf ear.

“*Inye melme elye Melda Min.*” He whispered into her ear before he groaned loudly and erupted inside her. (I love you Beloved One.)

Dysea’s eyes were wide in surprise and adoration, her whole body going rigid in an earth shattering orgasm as she felt Martin’s boiling hot cum explode from the head of his massive cock buried deep in her womb. She sang out her euphoric bliss and did not care who heard her, wrapped in the powerful embrace of the man who so dominated her very existence now.

They fell forward onto the bed, Martin’s cock continuing to spew his delicious load deeply into her belly. It was one of the most intense orgasms she had ever felt from her love, and it flooded her with a sense of peace and contentment.

“*Inye melme elye Nauta Melme.*” Dysea whispered just before sleep took her into its peaceful embrace.

Dysea lay sprawled against Martin’s hip and chest, her naked flesh pressed to his as her fingers gently traced the muscles and tattoos on his powerful abdomen. They had awakened with the sun pouring into the large window in their bedroom, and Martin held a steaming mug of coffee in his hand that they were sharing. Her platinum blond hair was splayed across her shoulders and down her back, the sheet covering only the firm cheeks of her muscular ass, her tanned legs uncovered and draped over Martin’s legs.

“*Inye elmenda la carita eryl Nauta Melme.*” She spoke softly, her head on his chest. (I wonder what she does now Bounded Love.)

“*Sie lye Inye Melda Min,*” Martin answered softly. (As do I Beloved One.)

“Then why do we not return and simply ask her why she did this?” Dysea asked, tilting her head up to look at his face.

Martin smiled softly. “I would like nothing better.” He replied, reaching out to stroke the silky skin of her shoulder. “Aside from the fact that it would quite possibly start a war we could not win, why does it matter now?”

“I do not believe what her father told us!” Dysea proclaimed. “I refuse to believe him. Not after what we shared. There is a part of me *Nauta Melme*... she opened a part of me I never knew existed, and I never had the chance to say thank you.”

Martin nodded. “It is the same for me.” He said softly.

“Then why do we do nothing?”

“I... I am...”

Dysea lifted herself along his body... feeling his flaccid cock between her thighs as she settled onto his lap. She ignored the shiver of pleasure it caused her and she took his face in her hands. “You are afraid.” She said softly, her face showing her surprise. “You fear... you fear you will lose me as well?”

Martin met her stunning emerald eyes with his own dark brown ones and slowly nodded his head. Dysea pulled his head to her breasts and felt his arms wrap around her almost painfully. “That is why... that is why you make love to me with such passion and intensity. You fear I will leave you as well.” She whispered. “Like Anja left you?”

Martin pulled his head back and looked at her his eyes wide. “How... how do you know about Anja?” He asked.

Dysea smiled and kissed him deeply. “It is not exactly a secret *Nauta Melme*.” She told him. “And I wanted to discover as much about the man who holds my heart so tightly that I could find. I asked.”

“Who did you ask?” Martin said quickly.

Dysea shrugged, “This person and that.” She replied.

“*Melda Min!*” He told her, his face lined with a small smile.

“Does it matter where I learned it... or does what I learned matter more?” She spoke.

“And what did you learn?” Martin asked his hands going to her hips and he leaned back slightly against the head board looking at her.

“I learned that you and Anja had a very torrid night many years ago.” Dysea spoke softly, “And that because she feared or did not understand what you were, she ended something that you did not want to end.”

Martin nodded slowly. "That's about the crux of it yes." He replied.

"She is a different person now Nauta Melme. All of you are different. Do not hold something that she regrets deeply against her." Dysea spoke.

Martin nodded. "Maybe... but that doesn't matter. She has someone... two actually, and I have you. I don't need anyone else. And how do you know she regrets what happen between us?"

"I am a woman and I have eyes." Dysea replied with that womanly "*You silly man*" look. "Even better than I did before thanks to what you have made me in to. It is my understanding that she has found her own apartment here in Eden City." Dysea spoke.

Martin nodded. "I had heard something along those lines." He said.

Dysea shook her head slowly, stroking his shoulders and back and kissing him softly and tenderly. "No *Nauta Melme*, you should never fear that I will leave you. I do not know why *Nauta Melme*, but I feel you and I are meant for one another, and not because of something that the Holy One might have done. There is something far greater at work where we are concerned *Nauta Melme*, and we will discover it together." Dysea smiled in love and fulfillment as his arms circled her waist and pulled her tightly to him. *We will all discover it together*. Dysea thought to herself as she wrapped her arms around his head, *and Anja will be with us to discover it as well*.

UTAH OUTSIDE JOSEPH OLD ROUTE 70

The three Raptors were parked in the small clearing, their ramps down and three dozen genomes, humans and elves spread about near the bottoms of the ramps calmly eating their rations and talking among themselves. Weapons were draped across laps or leaning against the Raptors where the elves and men sat. Three miles away rested the remains of a small column of slaver vehicles and twenty dead bodies which were even now being swallowed up by the creatures of the timber.

Leland sat on the edge of the Raptor's ramp calmly eating the power bar from his ration pack, his eyes touching each and every person in his team.

His team.

Five of the remaining nineteen genomes, ten male and female elves and twenty-one human men and women made up Leland's command. He had been stunned when Martin had come to him and asked him to take over his own small unit. He needed leaders who could lead, and Dysea told him he was exactly that. He had accepted immediately, and found his three dozen men and women to be the finest unit he had led in his lifetime. The elves and genomes he knew were superior warriors, but the men and women who had trained extremely hard for six weeks were shaping up to be the backbone of his unit. They trained hard everyday, pushing them beyond anything they would have thought they were capable of. And they all looked to Leland for leadership.

Martin had assigned his unit three Raptors, with a senior pilot among the group to provide the back up and experience in flight operations that Leland lacked. He had scientists and doctors within his unit that had volunteered to go through the training, and pound for pound they were just as lethal as the elves and genomes, and in realistic terms, they had more brain power than even Martin's team.

Leland loved Dysea like a sister, and over the years he had overcome the boyhood crush he had on her, but this is where he belonged. He needed to lead warriors, and Martin had given him the chance.

They were returning from a sensitive intelligence gathering mission into Wood Elf territory and had come across the mercenary column. They had made short work of the scum and then landed here to check for anything that might have been able to use. Leland had made the decision to remain here and allow everyone to eat and rest for a few hours before they made the final twenty minute flight back to Junction City, or what everyone was now calling Eden City.

He turned his head when the senior pilot Martin had assigned to him sat down beside him. Leland had never in his life felt any sort of attraction to a human female until he had met Cathy. She was a petite female, barely topping five feet tall, but as Danny had once commented to him shortly after Leland found out he was getting this team, she was built like a brick shit house. Cathy Parnelli was of Sicilian descent as Leland had

learned upon meeting her, one of the many cultures of earth from her time. She wore her dark brown hair very short, and that framed a deeply tanned heart shaped face and dark brown eyes. She bore the signs of previous battles upon her face in the form of several scars on the left side of her cheek and along her jaw. The results of a missile strike into her aircraft over the battlefields of Venezuela. However, her most prominent feature was her enormous breasts. Her flight suit did little to hide her breasts as they strained against the material, and they seemed almost too large for her diminutive frame, but when you added in her small waist and extremely well formed ass and legs, Leland saw what Danny had meant.

“So how do you think it went?” Cathy asked, taking the wrapping off the power bar before bringing it to her lips and taking a bite.

Leland tore his eyes from the way her lips moved as she chewed and he nodded. “It went better than I had hoped.” He answered. “There is much more grumbling among my people in regards to the Council’s actions in recent months.”

“Do you think they believed you that Dysea is alive and well?”

“I believe so.” He replied. “I knew many of the senior Commanders, and I believe I convinced them. I know the Commander of the Wood Elf Rangers believed me. He was a staunch supporter of Dysea and hated the Elders.”

“Well if these Rangers are half as good as you say they are; we can sure use them.” Cathy spoke.

Leland nodded in agreement. “Yes we can.” He said.

“So am I going to have to jump your bones?” Cathy asked almost casually.

Leland looked at her. “Excuse me?” he asked.

Cathy looked at him surprised. “Did you get out much working with Dysea?” She asked him in a calm voice.

“I don’t understand.” Leland said, turning to face her.

“Leland, do you find me attractive?” Cathy asked meeting his blue eyes.

“I... well... that is a strange question to ask me Cathy.” Leland stuttered out.

“You do, don’t you?” Cathy said, moving closer to him. “I’ve seen the way you look at me.”

“I... I respect your obvious skills. You are an exceptional pilot and an excellent warrior from what I have seen.” Leland replied.

“And that’s all?”

“What else is there?” He asked.

Cathy’s face changed slightly and she leaned back. “Oh.” She said softly. “I must have been wrong.” She stood up slowly and turned. “I’ll be on the observation deck when you want to head back.”

Leland watched her walk back up the ramp into the Raptor, the sway of her ass catching his eye easily, as her ass was nearly as firm and tight as any female ass he had ever seen. He felt a tug in his loins and got slowly to his feet looking around at his team. All of them were preoccupied doing other things and he tried to be as casual as possible as he walked up the ramp after her.

Cody smiled to the elf fighter he was sitting next to under the shade of the tree. “I think the boss is about to get lucky.” He said.

The elf soldier chuckled. “It took him long enough to realize that she wanted him.” He said.

“It looks like Leland is going to go where no man has gone before.” Cody said with a little smile.

“What do you mean Cody?” The elf asked.

“I can’t begin to tell you how many guys have tried to get into Cathy “Ice Queen” Parnelli’s pants in the last four years.” Cody told him.

“They have not succeeded I take it?” The elf warrior asked.

“Succeeded?” Cody laughed. “Most of them were shot down with flames coming from their asses before they even got to first base. She may be a looker, but she is by no means easy.”

Leland walked up the stairs into the observation deck and saw Cathy leaning over the plot board they had set up. He watched her for a long moment before stepping forward.

“Cathy... I...”

“Is there something wrong with me?” Cathy asked turning around slowly and looking at him.

“Wrong with you, what do you mean? No... are you injured?” Leland asked, his eyes becoming concerned.

“I don’t think I’ve ever had to work this hard to get a man Leland.” Cathy told him. “You haven’t been catching all the usual signs.”

“Usual signs? I don’t understand.” He told her.

Cathy stepped up to him. “Brushing up against you; giving you the coy looks. Do you not like women?”

“What? No!” Leland exclaimed.

“Is it the scars?” Cathy spoke, turning her head slightly to show him the three jagged scars. “A lot of men are turned off by the scars. Of course a lot of men miss the scars completely because they’re staring at my tits or my ass.” Cathy folded her arms under her breasts looking at him. “Which one is it for you?”

“Cathy... I... I did not think you would be interested in a... I didn’t think you would be interested in a male of my species.” Leland finally managed to spit out.

“Your species,” Cathy said with a small smile, moving closer to him. “You think because you are an elf and you have ears that are different that you are any less attractive to me?”

“It... it is not something elves are used to.” Leland replied honestly.

“Well for your information... I think elf ears are very sexy, and your ears in particular.” Cathy spoke.

“My ears...?” Leland asked.

Cathy stepped up to him and reached out to stroke his right ear. “Yes your ears.” She said softly.

Leland felt a hot shiver run through him and he reached up to grab her hand. “Don’t do that.” He said quickly.

“Why?”

“Elf... elf ears are very sensitive.” He said as his heart began pounding and his blood began to roar in his veins.

“Yes... I know.” Cathy said moving even closer, pressing her body against his.

Leland looked at her with wide eyes. “You... you desire me?” He asked more than a little astonished.

“Leland that is what I’ve been trying to get across to you for a couple of months now.” She told him with a gentle smile.

“Cathy... it would... it would not be...”

“I know you want me.” Cathy said. “And I know I want you. You can’t deny it Leland. Your body is giving you away. Your ears are turning red, and I can practically feel your heart pounding.”

Leland looked at her. “Who... who told you that?”

Cathy smiled. “I’ve been talking with Dysea. She told me the signs an elf exhibits when they desire someone. And she was dead on accurate. Now if you don’t bend me over this plot board and take me Leland... I’m going to pin you against the bulkhead and take you.”

Leland looked into her dark eyes and surrendered to what was washing over him. He grabbed her in his arms and kissed her hard, plunging his tongue between her lips and hearing her moan in acceptance. Cathy began pulling at his uniform as he pushed her toward the plot board, his hands tearing at her flight suit. Her body was on fire in a way she had never felt before, and she loved it. She gasped against his lips when his strong hands finally pulled her flight suit down past her shoulders and he grabbed her 38D breasts in his hands and squeezed them roughly.

Cathy’s hands were not unmoving as she frantically got his fatigue pants unfastened and yanked them down. Her eyes grew a little wider as her hands wrapped around his burning cock and she felt how hot he was. Leland grabbed her head in his hands and pulled his lips from hers, looking into her smoldering dark eyes and flushed skin. His blue eyes were clouded with passion and desire and Cathy flicked her tongue across his lips, trying to kiss him again. She could feel her pussy leaking all over, soaking right through her cotton panties. She had never been this sexually aroused before and it was driving her mad.

Leland stared at her face and did not see the scars on her cheek that marred her beauty. He did not see the bored look of the female elf girls he had bedded. He saw hot passion in her eyes, passion and desire for him.

“I am going to take you woman!” He hissed at her.

Cathy gasped when he spun her around and pawed her tits again. Her nipples were harder than she had ever seen them and she gasped when his fingers squeezed and pulled on them. She had no time to think as he pushed her forward and took her panties in one hand, yanking them from her in one pull. Leland wasted no time as the desire for this woman had taken over him. He moved her legs a little wider and took his cock in his hand. He rubbed the burning head of his shaft over her engorged pussy lips, coating the swollen head of his cock with

her juices which were pouring from her already. He eased the head of his cock forward, delving between her dripping cunt lips and took hold of her waist, burying his enflamed cock into this beautiful woman in one powerful stroke.

Cathy's eyes went wide and she cried out in pleasure gripping the edges of the plot board as Leland sank every hot delicious portion of his seven inch cock into her in a single glorious plunge. When she felt his cum filled balls slap against the backs of her tight thighs Cathy shuddered in the most powerful orgasm she had ever experienced in her twenty-seven years of life and her cum exploded from her coating Leland's cock in sweet liquid.

Feeling her cum showering his cock within the silky walls of her pussy Leland began to pound into her with powerful strokes, rocking her forward on the plot board again and again. Even the females in Dysea's Royal Court that he had bedded did not respond to him as Cathy was. She began thrusting her tight ass back at him, gripping the side of the plot board for support, her face contorted in blissful pleasure as he drove completely into her on every stroke. The only sounds on the observation deck were the slapping of his heated ball sack against her slick skin and their grunts of effort and pleasure. Leland's eyes went wide as he felt the familiar surge in his gut so soon, Cathy's pussy gripping him tighter than any elf female ever had. He could not hold back any longer, the sight of this woman beneath him responding as she was to him pushed him over the edge.

Leland slammed into her one final time driving them both against the plot board. He felt Cathy's hands reach around behind her to clutch his hips tightly as his balls swelled and his cum erupted from his cock, flooding the belly of this beautiful human woman. Her head came back and she screamed as she came with him, her belly clenching in orgasmic delight. She reached under their bodies and her fingers found his swollen, pulsing balls and she squeezed gently. Leland hissed into the back of her neck, his face buried in her dark hair and felt another surge of his cum explode from his cock even more powerful than the first one.

Cathy was delirious with pleasure as she wrapped her fingers around his hot balls and felt them preparing another explosion into her. Her eyes opened wider as a third blast of his hot cum filled her... and then a fourth... and a fifth. His eruptions into her milking pussy were causing small mini orgasms to rock her continuously. It felt like a fire hydrant going off inside her womb as his cum filled her. It was the most indescribable sensation she had ever experienced as she felt each blast of his hot cum shoot from his deeply buried cock and splash against the walls of her pussy. Cathy had a total of eleven lovers in her life, and none of them had ever come close to making her feel what she was feeling now, and without a doubt, none of them had ever filled her with so much cum at one time. His cum was going to be leaking out of her the rest of the day, and that thought caused her to smile and wiggle her tight ass back against him.

Cathy felt Leland's cock twitch inside her one last time and he slumped forward, leaning over her back, his heaving chest pressing against her skin. His face was buried in her neck and she felt his tongue extend and tickle her under her own ear.

"I... I am sorry." He gasped into her ear. "I... I did not mean for it to be so quick."

"God... Leland... it was fantastic." Cathy spoke dreamily. "Will you do that to me for the rest of my life?" Leland gently took her face in his hand and turned it so that she could see him. She smiled at him, "Hi there lover." She spoke softly, licking her lips.

Leland smiled. "As often as you like." He said kissing her nose.

The pounding on the door of the observation deck brought them both out of their post passion cuddling.

"Hey you two, if you're finished fucking each other silly we got company coming from two different directions!" Cody's voice carried to them.

Leland's eyes closed and he sighed heavily. "This is not exactly the way I would have preferred to reveal my feelings for you." He said.

Cathy smiled and clenched her pussy muscles on his softening cock. "We can work on that tonight when we get back." She said softly.

"I'd like that." Leland spoke, "Very much."

"I suppose we should go to work huh?" She asked.

"It would seem to be prudent, yes." Leland replied with a smile.

"As much as I would love to stay just like we are lover... you have to... you have to get off me, or we aren't going anywhere." Cathy told him.

Leland's eyes went a little wider. "Oh... yes I suppose that would be helpful." He said.

They shared a lover's laugh as Leland extracted himself from Cathy's supple body and they reached for their clothes.

"The drone picked them up about ten minutes ago. We got one small elf column of six Hoppers headed south, and this mercenary column headed right for them." Cody told them as he motioned to the monitors in the rear of the Raptor.

"This is the group we have been looking for." Leland spoke, his hands moving to the screen and using the keyboard to zoom the small drone's cameras closer. The drone was launched whenever they landed, with someone constantly monitoring the feed. It was a procedure that Ben had put into place to try and keep them from getting caught with their pants down. It was also used to spot any anti-aircraft batteries or missile carrying personnel. "I recognize their vehicles."

"You mean the one from Cedar City?" Cathy asked.

Leland nodded. "Yes. They have been able to avoid our patrols for several weeks now. Commander Hunter is very interested in this group."

Cody's eyes narrowed. "Hey I recognize this dude." He said, touching the other monitor. He adjusted the camera and they watched it zoom in on the face of the elf in the lead vehicle. "This is one of War Master Asshole's Dragoons."

Leland looked at him. "Are you sure?"

"I never forget a dickhead." Cody spoke. "Why would elves from Mountain City be this far south?"

"They shouldn't be." Leland spoke. "This is free territory. Zoom in on the second Hopper there." He spoke.

Cathy adjusted the camera again and they watched the screen change to the face of the woman. They heard Leland's intake of breath.

"By the gods," He gasped.

Cathy looked at him. "Leland... what is it?"

"It is the Queen's mother." He spoke softly.

"Tarifa's mom," Cody asked. "Are you sure?"

Leland nodded. "All elves know the face of the High Elf mother." He said. "Just as all elves know the face of Dysea's mother."

"We need to contact the Skipper." Cody spoke.

Leland shook his head. "He left this morning to check the status of our exploratory teams in the Gulf. He won't return until this evening."

"The mercenaries will try to capture them." Cathy spoke.

Leland nodded. "And High Elf Dragoons will not allow themselves to be taken alive, and nor I fear will the Queen's mother."

"Leland we have to help them." Cathy said. "We can't just let them be captured or killed."

"I have no intention of allowing that to happen *Nya Lisse Indil*." He said. He turned to Cody. "Load the other Raptors. We will strike the mercenary column at this crossroads, drop our ground forces and seize Tarifa's mother. I'm quite sure Dysea would like to speak with her. They are not to be harmed, non-lethal weapons only."

Cody nodded and headed out of the Raptor as Cathy stepped up to Leland. "What did you call me?" She asked.

Leland turned from the screen and looked at her dark eyes. He smiled. "It means My Sweet Lily." He said.

Cathy smiled and crossed her arms under her large breasts. "And just how do you know I taste sweet?" She asked.

Leland stepped up to her quickly, his five foot seven frame towering over her by seven inches. "If your skin is any indication it will be an adventure I will enjoy experiencing and finding out this evening." He told her in a hushed voice, bending over to nuzzle her neck.

"I'll hold you to that." She said turning to head for the cockpit.

Palina stepped up to Cantel as the other four Hoppers shut down their engines and the Dragoons piled out. They were watching the spiraling smoke as it rose into the air from the blackened wreckage of nearly twenty Hoppers. They could see the bodies of mercenary troops lying all over, some still hanging from the vehicles.

“Cantel...?” Palina spoke softly.

“It... it was a column of mercenaries and slavers.” Cantel replied.

“What could have done this?” Palina asked.

“I fear we do not want to find out.” Cantel spoke as his keen eyes swept over the scene before him. He let them drift to the treeline along what used to be an interstate highway, trying to detect any sign of activity. Cantel was one of the most experienced Dragoons in terms of having seen battle. He had fought and survived in hundreds of situations against the Alliance, yet none of them made them as uneasy as he was at this very moment. “Milady I think we should head back to Salina.” He said.

“Surely whoever did this is no friend of slavers.” Palina spoke.

Cantel nodded. “I agree with that assessment.” He told her. “But it does not mean they are friends of elves.”

“Cantel we need...”

Palina’s words were drowned out by the deafening roar of powerful engines and they all looked skyward as three of the black Raptors dropped from above and hovered only a few meters off the ground on three different sides.

Cantel and Palina watched the helmeted head of the pilot in the huge Raptor directly in front of him, and they saw the large chain cannon under the nose track on them.

“My suggestion would be to lower your weapons to the ground.” The female voice boomed from the Raptor, very clear even over the engines, obviously being amplified by a loud speaker.

The Dragoon next to Cantel moved to bring his weapon up but they all flinched when the loud crack exploded from the Raptor and a single chain gun round punched into the armored Hopper effectively blowing apart its drive core. The next three rounds impacted the dirt in front of them only a few feet away sending chunks of earth and grass into the air.

“I only give one warning.” The female voice spoke again. “You’ve just had yours. Lower your weapons or I will commence firing and I will not stop until you are all dead. And do not believe for a second I will not fire, you have fucked us over once, and that won’t happen again.”

Palina grasped Cantel’s arm. “They know who we are!” She spoke excitedly. “Do as they say Cantel, quickly.”

“We will be defenseless!” Cantel hissed.

“You already are!” The other voice shouted now from the blowing dust and dirt.

Palina and Cantel, as well as the other Dragoons looked around and saw the black clad figures move quickly from the dust, weapons raised and leveled at them. They saw the single elf walking far slower and their eyes went to him as he walked up to them.

“I know you!” Palina spoke. “You are... your name is Leland! You were Dysea’s Guards Captain!”

“And I know you High Elf Mother.” Leland spoke. “Please do as my pilot has instructed you. I would not wish to test her possessiveness of my safety.”

“You will take us as prisoners!” Cantel demanded.

Leland raised his hand. “*Nya Lisse Indil*, when I drop my hand you may commence firing.” He spoke, his voice carrying through his implant to Cathy’s helmet in the Raptor.

“Copy that!” Cathy’s voice echoed from the loudspeaker.

Palina’s eyes went wide and she turned to the Dragoons. “Drop your weapons now!” She ordered.

“Milady... we will be their prisoners!” Cantel spoke urgently to her.

Palina ignored him and turned to Leland. “Better a prisoner than dead Cantel. I wish to speak with Martin and Dysea.” She said. “I invoke a Diplomatic Truce!”

Leland watched as the Dragoons lowered their weapons to the ground and his team moved in to secure them. He stepped up to Palina. "I think you will find Elf Mother that where we tread, the laws are different. However, I'm quite sure Dysea would welcome the opportunity to speak with you."

Leland turned to his men who were securing the hands of the Dragoons. "*Lisse Indil* we are secure here! Please set down if you would and we will load the prisoners and return to Eden." He turned back to a wide eyed Palina. "Welcome to our territory Elf Mother. Welcome to Eden City."

Palina was the only one within her group that was not bound in some fashion, and she let her eyes wander over those in the Raptor with them. The men and women were a mixture of human, elf and genome, yet they interacted as if there was no difference among them in the least. The shadow passed in front of her and she looked up to see Leland standing in front of her.

"Elf Mother... perhaps you would like to see what we have built in the three months since your husband and the High Elf Council of Elders expelled us." Leland said to her, motioning with his hand to the cockpit.

Palina glanced quickly at Cantel before getting to her feet and moving for the cockpit Leland right behind her. She climbed the small staircase and moved up into the cockpit to see the backs of the pilot and co-pilot. She turned and saw the engineer sitting at her station, and her eyes went a little wide when she realized the engineer was an elf.

Palina looked out the wide windshield and could see the other two Raptors holding on either side of their craft. In the distance she saw what appeared to be buildings of some sort, but they were still very far away. She turned to Leland. "We... we aren't moving." She said.

Leland nodded. "This is the OAL... the Outer Air Limit. All of our Raptors stop at this point to confirm our identity. We have been on Eden City's radar for the last fifty miles."

"You call this place Eden City. Like the base on the moon that Martin came from. Why?" Palina asked.

"From what I understand, and we have been away for a few days, Radama came up with the name during a raid a few nights ago that rescued roughly sixty elves from slavers." Leland told her.

"Radama you say?" Palina asked stunned. "Tarifa's former Royal Captain?"

Leland nodded, "One and the same."

Palina turned back to see Cathy reach above her head to the instrument panel. "Eden OAL Control this is Raptor 49, we are holding at OAL, point two four one and we are requesting approach clearance."

"Raptor 49, please begin transmitting your identifying beacon and code word." The voice came over the intercom system.

"Roger OAL Control, transmitting now." Cathy answered.

"Identity confirmed 49, welcome back. Please state your load out."

"Control we are returning full team plus sixteen." Cathy answered. "Please inform Dysea that we have someone aboard that she will want to speak with, and have Internal Security meet us at the pad."

There was a pause on the radio. "Raptor 49, declare!"

"Raptor 49 does not declare! Repeat 49 does not declare!" Cathy spoke calmly.

"Very well 49; East pad is open for you and your flight, and welcome Home."

"Thank you OAL Control, proceeding to east pad." Cathy answered. "Raptor 49 Flight we are cleared for the east pad. Broadcast openly from here on out folks, and safe landings." Cathy eased the throttles forward and her right hand nudged the control yoke forward and they began to move.

Palina looked back to Leland. "What was that all about?" She asked.

"We've had anti-air missile batteries tracking us for about fifty miles now. The OAL is used as the point where all known craft declare themselves friendly." Leland explained.

"And if they don't?" Palina asked.

"They get shot down." Leland replied matter of factly. He pointed out the windshield. "Please just watch and see for yourself what men and elves can build if we work together and put aside century's old hatreds."

Palina turned and watched as the buildings in the distance began to get larger. The closer they got, the more items Palina was able to pick out, and the wider her eyes got.

Eden City, formerly Junction City, Utah, had become a bustling small city in just the span of three months. As they grew closer Palina could make out the newly built structures, as well as the heavy equipment

needed to build. Massive steel beams were stacked in piles thirty meters high, whole yards of wood and concrete were neatly stacked and she could see men and women loading these items into large transport Hoppers. The old highway had been cleared of all overgrowth and now Palina could see right down to the cracked and pitted pavement as it ran the length of the main city. She could also see at least two construction crews laying down new concrete and sealing as they went. The abandoned and shattered structures that had once occupied the small city were all newly rebuilt, and lawns were just starting to come back in. The airfield they were heading for was larger than anything she had ever seen, and the two massive Mark Nine transports were now nothing but skeleton hulks. That told Palina these people had no intentions of leaving this area willingly. She could see the beginnings of several multiple story steel and concrete buildings spreading away from the center of the city, as if they were expanding outward at a rapid pace.

Palina's view of Eden City was blocked as Cathy banked the Raptor toward the airfield and they dropped lower to the ground. She turned to look at Leland with an amazed expression on her face.

"You have built... you have built this in only three months?" She asked.

Leland nodded. "It helps when the man you follow has detailed maps of every old military facility within the northern hemisphere." He said. "What we didn't have readily available here, we went and got. And we still are. The first thing we did is build a factory of sorts, where we are building more of these magnificent flying machines, and hundreds upon hundreds of weapons and the ammunition to go with it. We took all the useable armaments we could find at the military bases we have visited, which is quite a bit, and returned it to working order and improved on it."

"I thought the Alliance would have scoured those bases centuries ago. Our people have." Palina said.

Leland grinned. "They did." He answered. "However, they did not have Martin Hunter to tell them where the secret bunkers of weapons were hidden; tons and tons of weapons and supplies."

"Surely the Alliance had men who knew this information." Palina said.

"I'm sure they did." Leland said. "However... the Alliance never investigated the abandoned bases west of the Great River, and almost half the bases that existed at the time of the Great Fire were west of the Great River."

Palina turned as Cathy flared the Raptor for landing, extending its landing struts and setting the bird down as gently as a feather. Her helmeted head looked out the side window for a moment and saw several Cruise Hoppers pulling up and then turned back to Leland.

"Dysea is here." She said.

Leland nodded and much to Palina's surprise he leaned over and kissed Cathy with great feeling. "I will see you tonight." He said softly.

Cathy nodded; her eyes bright. "Oh you bet you will."

Leland looked at Palina. "This way Elf Mother, Dysea is waiting."

Dysea watched Leland's team exit the rear of the Raptor while her security detachment was spread out all around her. She wore the standard black fatigues, but without the additional armor layers. Her platinum hair was tied in a pony tail, draped over her right shoulder and curled under her chin. Her emerald eyes watched the rear of the Raptor carefully, waiting for Leland to exit. When OAL Control had first notified her that Leland had brought someone she would want to speak with, almost a dozen faces had flashed through her mind.

None of them had been the women who exited the Raptor hesitantly next to Leland. Dysea felt her blood boil and her eyes narrowed as Leland led Tarifa's mother over to where she stood.

Dysea didn't even let Leland say anything before she pounced on Palina verbally. "Why have you come here?" She snarled. "Haven't you and your husband caused enough trouble in our lives to last two lifetimes?"

"They were traveling in several Hoppers headed for Eden City on the old interstate." Leland told Dysea. "The mercenary unit from Cedar City was tracking them. We hit the mercenary column and then landed and took their column."

Dysea looked at him. "We caught the other half of their force last night." She said. "Did you leave any alive?"

Leland's smile was not pleasant. "Per yours and Martin's orders none survived."

Dysea nodded. "What of your mission?"

“It was successful to a point.” Leland answered. “We should be getting a visit from General Vengal within a few days.”

“And my mother,” Dysea asked softly. “What of her?”

“She is well and sends her love. I brought some things from her for you. I almost had to physically remove her from the city, but she finally succumbed and allowed us to hide her some place safe. She is demanding to be with you Dysea. You will have to bring her here soon.” Leland told her.

Dysea nodded. “I know. Another month perhaps, when we are more firmly established and have dealt with the moron in Cedar City.”

Leland nodded. “What of the Elf Mother and the Dragoons with her?” He asked.

Dysea looked at Palina for a long moment and stepped closer to her. “Do you and your husband wish to dishonor Martin I even more than you already have Elf Mother? Tell me why I should not just execute you and give your bodies to the elements.”

“I need your help.” Palina said calmly. “The Holy One said you have knowledge that I need.”

“I have nothing that you need High Elf Mother.” Dysea spoke. “I am a traitor to my own people thanks to lies spread by you and your husband and your Council of Elders. My people now have a treaty with the Alliance, against you and the High Elves thanks to your treachery. A treaty I was not going to sign I might add. I sincerely hope Tarifa is happy with her life. Now she will need to reap the rewards of her deeds.” Dysea turned to Leland. “Give them shelter and food, every comfort we can extend to them. In the morning please take them back to Salina.” She turned back to Palina. “As you banished us Elf Mother, I tell you now, never come here again. You are not welcome here, and the only reason you are not already dead is because Martin is away and does not know you have come.” Dysea turned and began to walk away from her. “He is not as forgiving as I am.” She said over her shoulder.

“She is dying inside Dysea!” Palina called out to her, causing Dysea to stop walking. “Every day she falls deeper into despair. She has cried herself to sleep every night since you and Martin Hunter left. She will not eat; she only appears for official functions. She is dying before my eyes and I can do nothing to stop it.”

Dysea stood with her back to Palina, holding back the emotions threatening to pour out of her. “And why should this matter to me? To Martin? To us?” She said finally.

“She... she had nothing to do with what my husband did!” Palina said. “He lied to her as well as you and Martin Hunter. You and Martin were the only truly deep friends that she had. She has to endure Telan’s touch upon here every night like some sort of rutting beast. I can do nothing to help her. She has no one to turn to.”

“And this is a concern of ours why?” Dysea snapped, whirling around and marching up to her. “She said we were pets to her! There only to amuse her! When she tired of us, she cast us out! Your Elders cast us out! Your husband cast us out!”

“My... my husband lied to you Dysea, I told you this.” Palina spoke. “Cantel told me what he spoke to you and Martin on the platform that day. None of it was true! None of it! He lied to his own daughter not an hour later about what you spoke of Tarifa. He took the transmitter Martin gave her from her hands as she was talking to you and smashed it before her eyes.”

Dysea stared at Palina... trying very hard to keep her anger in check and be objective. “She was married two weeks after we were banished, yet you stand there and tell me she hates this man? Do you think me a fool?”

“She was married to a man her father promised her too, using a law our people have not used in two hundred years!” Palina exclaimed. “She despises Telan to her very core! She endures his vile touch whenever he desires, and it is killing her Dysea!” Palina let the tears come forth now and they flowed down her cheeks. “That... that is what I am trying to prevent. There is so much more to this than you could possibly believe. Please Dysea... if you care for my daughter, listen to me.”

“Care for your daughter? Tarifa had become the sister I never had!” Dysea screamed, her own tears coming now. “Martin considered your daughter his dearest friend! We... we are... she should be here with us helping us to build what we are building! That was her dream if any of you had ever stopped to ask her what she desired.”

“Then I beg you... help me.” Palina spoke. “I swear to you on Tarifa’s life... I only want her happiness. What has happened is larger than all of us. Even I don’t know the full story Dysea, but right now my only concern is to save my daughter’s life.”

“She is in danger?” Dysea asked quickly, moving back closer to Palina.

Palina nodded. “You know our laws as well as I do.” She said. “Tareif promised her hand to Telan to save our sons. He does not know of the further treachery that abounds around him. I only discovered some of it on my way here. There is a very strong power play happening within the High Elf hierarchy. I believe... I believe my husband is being controlled in some manner by enemies of our family. I have no real proof, only rumors and whispers, but I know it is killing my daughter, and ultimately it could kill my entire family. Please... I beg you to listen to me, to help me.”

Dysea met her eyes, not speaking for a long moment. In the end it was really no contest and her heart overruled everything else. And she knew Martin’s heart would have done the same. No matter what had happened, neither of them could abandon Tarifa when she needed them. She held out her hand to Palina.

“Come.” She spoke. “I will bring you to our home where we can talk.”

Palina let out the breath she had been holding and wiped the tears from her cheeks as she took Dysea’s hand.

“... you have built here is amazing.” Palina said as they walked down the street toward the large one story structure at the end. They had taken Hoppers from the airfield to within a few hundred meters of what apparently was Martin Hunter’s home with Dysea. Palina had seen children, elf children and human children, playing happily in the playground of what could only be a makeshift school.

“This is only the beginning.” Dysea spoke. “We expand every day. The medical facility is nearly complete, Anja is a task master and the main school will be finished by the end of the week.”

“How... how many live here?” Palina asked.

“There were dozens of small villages scattered throughout the area when we first arrived, human and elf, barely surviving; barely living. Martin offered them something more. All he asked was that they have an open mind. We had sixty thousand people within the first month.” Dysea said smiling at Palina’s stunned expression. “That changed quickly as those who found they could not live with elves, or vice versa were either asked to leave or forced out. As we speak... our population is roughly fifty thousand. As word spreads of what we are doing, more come. We explain to them what we are building and the laws we have. Many choose to stay... some do not.”

Palina looked at the six members of Dysea’s security detachment that flanked them as they walked. “I take it these men are to protect you?”

Dysea nodded her head. “*Nauta Melme* insists on it.” She said with a small smile. “There was an attempt on our lives in the first month... it failed... but since then he won’t allow me to go anywhere without protection.”

Palina nodded. “He knows there are many who will oppose what you and he are building here.” She said.

“Not just us Elf Mother.” Dysea said. “Every man, women and child is here because they believe we can make this work. There will be many who don’t... and many who will... but we will try and build what the Holy One first imagined when he created elves. The same thing Tarifa wishes for as well.”

“What happened to those who made the attempt on your lives?” Palina asked cautiously.

Dysea met her steady gaze. “They did not survive.” She stated matter of factly. She stopped in front of the long building they walked up to. It was very unassuming, with fresh paint and framed windows. That it was solidly made was obvious, with the same steel and concrete construction she had seen in all the other structures.

“Where are you getting the steel that I have seen?” Palina asked. “It is in all of your buildings. I saw huge rows and stacks of steel as we were landing.”

Dysea smiled. “You don’t expect me to reveal all of *Nauta Melme*’s secrets do you Elf Mother?” She said, passing her hand over a small control panel near the door. Palina watched as the door slid soundlessly open into the cool interior. “Please... it is more comfortable inside.”

Palina entered the home and was immediately astounded by how modern it was inside. The main room was sunk in several feet and you had to step down four stairs into the area that held the simple but comfortable furniture. Palina noticed that the security detachment remained outside, which told her that Dysea did not fear anything that she might try. Palina had to admit that Dysea looked very different from the last time she had seen

her. Her skin was much more tanned, almost as tanned as Tarifa's, and she looked leaner and more muscular. She watched as Dysea went into another portion of the home off the main room. It was a small kitchen she saw and Dysea took the thermos and two mugs from the counter and carried them into the main room.

"Please Elf Mother... sit down." Dysea spoke. "We have not yet finished the pumping station or water cleansing plant, so we tend to ration the water we get from the reservoir. I made this tea this morning and it is still quite hot. Would you care for some?"

Palina nodded. "Thank you. Why... why do you keep referring to me as Elf Mother?"

Dysea poured two mugs, handing one to Palina before she responded. "You are Tarifa's mother, the mother to Queen of the High Elves. My mother taught me to respect those who deserve it. What would you have me call you?"

"You respect me?" Palina asked.

"That you were brave enough to seek us out so far from the safety of High Elf territory says a great deal." Dysea spoke. "And... and to be honest... you have done nothing that warrants I treat you any other way. Forgive... forgive my outburst earlier. Seeing you brought back some very painful memories."

"Dysea... I can not begin to apologize for what was done to Martin and yourself." Palina spoke honestly. "I had thought perhaps when you were gone that Tarifa would begin to... that she would forget you both. I only watched as she slipped deeper into despair because of what Telan was forcing her to endure."

Dysea looked at her for a long moment before getting to her feet and going to a counter near the doorway. She took a datapad and walked back to her, holding it out to Palina. "This is how much we care for your daughter Elf Mother. This is the friend she has become to us."

Palina took the pad slowly and as she read, her eyes grew wider. She looked up at Dysea. "This is... this is..."

Dysea nodded. "It is a plan that *Nauta Melme* was finishing." She told her. "It is a plan to infiltrate and kidnap Tarifa from Mountain City and bring her here to be with us. He does not think I know of it. I only discovered it early this morning after he had left."

"Dysea... this... this would start a war." Palina spoke in shock.

Dysea nodded. "Yes... it probably would. Ask me... ask Martin if that matters to us?" She leaned forward on the couch. "The only reason he has not already taken her back from you is because we are now responsible for so many. I believe he thinks Tarifa would be angry with him if he risked so many just to get her back. Rest assured however... when the time came when we are strong enough to defend ourselves completely... I would have accompanied him to Mountain City and we would have confronted Tarifa. And if it was her desire to return with us, to help us continue here what she should be part of, nothing you or your husband could do would stop us from completing that mission."

Palina set the pad on the table gently. "This is not needed." She said softly. "I asked her why she despaired so when you and Martin Hunter left. She told me that the three of you were meant to build something great, and that you were closer than even brothers and sisters could be. I did not believe her at the time. I do now."

"You said she was in danger Elf Mother." Dysea spoke. "Tell me what I can do to help her."

RAPTOR ONE SOUTHERN COASTLINE OF NORTH AMERICA

The pilot of Raptor One put them into a slow bank over the beach below them. What used to be Hermosillo, Mexico was beneath them, half of the city of over half a million now underwater. The rusting and broken remains of the buildings reached into the sky as if calling for help.

"Land doesn't pick up again for three hundred and sixty miles Marty." Ben spoke from the right seat of the cockpit. "Man that must have been one whale of an earthquake. Endith... give me a ten degree turn to starboard."

"Ten degrees starboard," Endith spoke from the left seat and eased her control yoke over.

Ben watched her with a smile and glanced back to where Tina sat in the Engineer's chair. The relationship between the three of them had blossomed and grown over the last three months, and both Ben and

Tina found Endith's aptitude for flying insatiable. They had been schooling her intensely for the last two months, watching her absorb it all without blinking. Her natural elf reflexes and keen eye sight made her perfect for being a pilot, and she was rapidly proving to be the perfect student.

Endith and Ben had grown very close over that same time period, and the relationship between the three of them was unbreakable now. Endith had allowed her red hair to grow longer now, and it hung out the back of her helmet almost down to her back. They shared the same house and the same bed, and neither he nor Tina had ever realized just how intensely the three of them would fall for each other. They were almost never apart, and even though Ben had taken on more duties in training new pilots, they always found time to be together.

"Water depth is a hundred feet beginning about sixty meters from shore, and then it drops to four hundred and seventy give or take a few feet." Tina called out, looking over her instruments.

"Any of those deposits we are looking for?" Martin's voice came over the com.

Tina chuckled. "They're all over the place Marty, right where Doc Morrow said they would be." She replied. "They range in depth from eighty meters to three hundred."

"Raptor's 21 and 47 are reporting similar finds Martin." Endith spoke from her seat.

Martin sat on the lowered ramp in the rear of the Raptor, secured to the inside with a tether line. He scanned the beach below him with powerful binoculars, searching for any signs of life.

"I'm not seeing much from here. A few scattered animal signs, occasional signs of human habitation, but nothing beyond that." Martin spoke.

"I believe we may be the first to come this far south Martin." Endith explained. "The Alliance remained on the east side of the Great River for the most part. The human settlements as you know stayed close to the remains of the big cities that were destroyed. I don't recall anyone coming this far south in any great numbers."

"Well it sure looks that way from here." Martin said. "Are the other Raptor's reporting signs of life?"

"Nothing more than what we are seeing." Tina answered.

"That seals it then." Martin spoke. "Ben... contact Julie... have her get our geologists ready to move. I want a full team in here by the end of the month, with all the equipment they can stagger with."

"Roger that Martin. The end of the month is when our new transport birds will be done." Ben spoke. "It will be a good first mission for them."

"Let's drop a directional buoy here Marty." Tina chimed in. "We're five hundred meters off shore, and it will give us another launching point for reports back to Admiral Wallace."

Martin nodded and got to his feet. "I'm on it." He said going to the side of the Raptor and removing the thin cylinder from the cabinet. He fitted it into a floatation device with a small flag and activated the small beacon on top. "Endith... is there anything in the water that we should know about?"

"Like what?" She asked turning her head to look into the rear of the Raptor.

"The Alliance hasn't made like genetically engineered sea monsters right?" Martin asked with a grin.

"Ha ha very funny," Endith spoke rolling her eyes.

Martin moved to the lowered ramp and heaved the buoy out of the back of the Raptor. "Buoy away." He said.

"Marty... just got a beam transmission from Dysea. She wants you to return to Eden. She says it's important." Tina broke in.

Martin nodded and moved to the ramp controls, banging on the large button. "Roger that. We're done here anyway. Ramp coming up, let's head home."

Ben waited for the light on his console to signal the ramp was locked and secured and he turned to Endith, "All yours Endith! Let her rip!"

Endith smiled like a child let loose in a candy store. She banked the Raptor over hard and kicked the throttles to maximum power causing the Raptor to leap forward and accelerate to nearly six hundred miles per hour in four seconds.

Ben turned back to Tina. "We've created a monster." He said with a smile.

"... Telan's family controls most of Pacifica." Palina was speaking. "About two years ago they began spreading their influence to other cities. Now they are second to our family in terms of influence. Telan got his appointment to my husband's Dragoons about a year ago. It was a political appointment more than anything."

Dysea sat on the couch across from Palina, her legs folded underneath her as she listened to Palina. Her tea was long forgotten, as Palina had held her attention for nearly three hours now.

“When did you notice that his actions and behavior were changing?” Dysea asked.

“I first noticed it six months ago. He selected several officers for the Dragoons that were not from within the normal channels he chose from. I did not think anything of it at the time. There were small signs that I did not pick up and recognize until after the events with Tarifa began to occur.” Palina said.

“And you say that Tarifa is not acting like herself?” Dysea spoke.

“My daughter is strong willed Dysea... you and Martin must know that... even the death of her grandfather who she adored, did not affect her like this. Ever since she began taking those contraceptive pills it has gotten worse.” Palina spoke.

Dysea leaned forward. “She is taking contraceptives?”

Palina nodded. “She came to me three days after the marriage and asked me to help her get contraceptives. She was very adamant Dysea. She knew that if she became pregnant and gave Telan a child that the shift in power would be disastrous once that baby was born. She feared that Telan would even attempt to have her killed once the child was born, a theory that I believe he would contemplate. The contraceptives make her violently ill for several hours after taking the pills, but she is almost out of them, and she fears having her aides procure more for her.”

“The pills make her ill, in what way?” Dysea asked.

“She vomits and has terrible pains in her abdomen.” Palina said. Palina reached into the pocket of the gray jumpsuit she wore and took out the small box. She handed it to her. “I took one from her supply to bring to you, and a vial of her blood.”

Dysea took the box and opened it, taking the small black pill from the cloth. She examined it closely before looking at Palina. “This is no contraceptive I have ever seen.” She said finally, “Not a manufactured one anyway.”

Palina looked at her, eyes wide. “If it isn’t a contraceptive... then what is it?”

“I don’t know... but I will find out.” Dysea said returning the pill to its box.

“Find out what?” Martin’s voice filled the room and they both turned to see Martin walk quickly into the living area. When his eyes came to rest on Palina he froze in his tracks.

Dysea sprang quickly off the couch and moved to stand in front of him, placing her hands on his chest. “*Nauta Melme*... let me explain.”

“Why is this woman in our home *Melda Min*?” Martin snarled.

Dysea put her hand on Martin’s face, and pulled his eyes to her own. “Elf Mother came here under great duress Martin. Everything we were told was a lie *Nauta Melme*. None of it was true.”

“A lie?” Martin said softly, meeting Dysea’s eyes.

Palina got to her feet slowly. “Tarifa never ordered you sent away Martin Hunter.” She said softly. “What my husband told you was a lie. All of it was a lie

Martin glared at Palina. “Why should we believe you?” He demanded. “You have already betrayed us once. How did you find us?” Martin asked. “We did not go to one of the locations your Council gave to us.”

“Rumors are already spreading to Mountain City about what is happening here.” Palina replied.

“We knew this would take place Martin. It was only a matter of time.” Dysea spoke softly. “Please *Nauta Melme*, listen to her.”

“Who knew you were coming here?” Martin asked.

Palina shook her head, “No one except the governor of Salina.” She replied. “He has been asking for the Queen to visit his city for months. I used a trip by the Queen’s mother as an opportunity to come here.”

“Kadeem will reveal nothing.” Dysea spoke confidently looking at Palina and seeing her shocked expression.

“He knew... he knew you were here?” She gasped.

“We have been trading with him for over a month.” Dysea told her. “He was only doing what we asked him to do.”

Palina’s eyes filled with realization. “That is why only half his defensive positions were filled. You destroyed all the slavers in the area and now you are protecting his people and his city.” She said. She looked at Martin. “You do this even after what my husband and the Council of Elders did to you? Why?”

“It is the right thing to do.” Martin snapped.

Palina stepped closer to him, all fear for Martin gone from her eyes. “I swear to you Martin Hunter, on my own life, what I have told you and Dysea is no lie. Tarifa needs you both, now more than ever.”

Martin looked at Dysea, the tension bleeding from his face and he saw her nod. “Very well,” He spoke. “I will listen to what you have to say.”

Anja leaned back in her chair, away from the computer console and turned to look where Martin, Dysea and Palina stood.

“You were right Dysea.” She said, getting to her feet and meeting Dysea’s beautiful emerald green eyes. “This is not a contraceptive in any way shape or form.”

“What is it?” Dysea asked.

“Well... it’s a combination of 2C-B, Dimethoxy and Methyldam.” Anja replied. “All of which are hallucinogenic drugs.”

“Hallucinogenic?” Palina asked her eyes wide.

Anja nodded. “Combining the three makes a very powerful mind controlling drug. Where did you get this?”

“Tarifa has been taking it under the misconception it would keep her from getting pregnant.” Dysea told her.

“Keep her from getting pregnant? Who told her that?” Anja spoke.

“Someone she thought she could trust.” Palina spoke, her voice low in anger.

Anja shook her head. “This combination of mind control drugs is going to make any person very susceptible to suggestion, make them have waking visions, sleeping visions... the list is endless.”

“It makes her violently ill as well.” Palina said.

Anja nodded. “I’m not surprised.”

“Why?” Martin asked confused.

“She has you to thank for that Martin.” Anja spoke looking at him. He hadn’t been this close to her in weeks and it was making her blood race. Something that only Dysea noticed.

“Come again?” Martin said.

Anja went to the computer console again and brought up a picture on the screen. “I ran a bunch of quick tests on the blood sample that her mother gave to Dysea. Marty you already know about your ability to heal exceptionally fast.”

Martin nodded, “Yeah.”

“Well... Tarifa’s DNA has changed at the molecular level.” Anja explained to them. “Just as mine now has... just as Dysea’s now has. Apparently it is an effect of having a relationship with genomes.” Anja told him with a bright smile. “Ummm... due to the exchange of bodily fluids... all of us now have accelerated healing functions within our bodies. Not on as grand a scale as you or Danny or the others, but it’s there. The ability to regenerate quickly was one of the things that Walter gave to the elves, but what they didn’t have... that Tarifa now has... and I’m guessing Dysea and myself... is the genome ability to attack any foreign substance, any disease or poison, that is detected within their bodies and destroy it.”

“So whatever this drug is... her system is destroying it because it thinks it’s a poison and that is why she is sick after taking these pills?” Palina asked.

Anja nodded, “Essentially yes. It is also the reason this drug is not making her more susceptible to outer stimuli.” She told them. “Her body is fighting the effects of the drug and while she may be acting odder than normal... it has not completely made her lose her will.”

Palina’s face took on a harder edge. “Then whoever gave her the drugs is in league with Telan.” She said softly.

“Well they had to know what they were giving her.” Anja said. “And if she is using this, thinking it’s a contraceptive, the reason she isn’t pregnant is again because her genome cells are attacking the drug and also killing any sperm that may be present.”

Palina saw Martin flinch at that word, and in that moment she saw Telan's death in Martin's eyes. Palina knew then that Telan was going to die a horrible death for what he had done, and Palina realized she would not lose any sleep over it in the least.

"Will her cells attack a mixture of natural herbs and roots that would effectively act as a contraceptive?" Dysea asked.

Anja shook her head quickly. "No." She said. "That particular genome ability is targeted more toward foreign substances like drugs and chemicals. It should not have any effect on anything naturally taken into her body."

"So something that I make that is completely natural and undetectable with modern equipment will not be targeted?" Dysea asked, wanting to be absolutely sure.

"I'm pretty positive, but if you want to make whatever it is you mean, we can test it with your own DNA." Anja said quickly, hoping to spend more time with the seductive blond elf. "It wouldn't take more than a few minutes to run the test."

Dysea nodded. "I will have it for you in an hour." She said seeing Anja's eyes shimmer in delight.

"What about Tareif?" Martin asked.

"Well... I can't be sure without a good blood sample... but if what you have told me is accurate, those are classic signs of some type of mind control drug." Anja responded. "I've run tests on the stuff the Alliance is using on elves and it doesn't sound like that. Whatever he is effected by sounds much more subtle and powerful."

"I will get you your sample." Palina spoke. "I don't know how... but I will."

Dysea looked at Martin. "*Nauta Melme*, you have been very quiet. What do you have running through that brain of yours?"

Martin looked at her, "A whole lot of unpleasant thoughts." He said.

"Please..." Palina said. "You can do nothing to endanger Tarifa. You..." Palina stopped speaking when she realized what she was saying and she looked sheepishly at Martin and Dysea. "Forgive me that was perhaps the most ignorant statement I have made in some time."

"The Dragoons you have with you?" Martin asked. "Can you trust them?"

"Yes." Palina answered without hesitation. "If they were not loyal to my husband they would have reported me to Telan immediately after I spoke with Cantel in Mountain City."

"*Melda Min*, do you think the agents you have in the Alliance capital and the other cities would still respond to orders from you?" Martin asked.

"No... but they will respond to my mother." She answered quickly.

"There have been no attacks by the Wood Elves yet correct?" Martin asked. "Even though the treaty has been signed for two months?"

"Cantel would know better than I." Palina replied. "But there has been no talk of an attack, or even rumors for that matter."

"The treaty stated the Alliance would arm us completely before we took any action." Dysea spoke. "That is one stipulation that I insisted on, and the Council agreed with me on it. Two months would not be enough time to refit every Wood Elf soldier. We estimated at least six before this could be done completely."

Martin nodded. "That makes sense. Do you think Leland could get this information from your Ranger General when he arrives?"

"Vengal and I almost always agreed on procedure." Dysea said looking at him. "I could get this information easily."

Martin shook his head. "You won't be here." He said turning to Palina. "Can you get Dysea into Mountain City without being detected?"

Palina nodded quickly, "Easily." She replied. "No one will stop me, and I have not come under any suspicion that I am aware of."

Dysea's eyes opened wide, "*Nauta Melme* no!"

Martin took her face in his hands. "There is no time." He said. "You need to go back with Tarifa's mother and see her. The drug may have affected her enough that she simply will not believe her mother's words. This Telan does not return until next week you said?"

Palina nodded. "Correct."

“You will have at least three days with her *Melda Min*, if you leave in the morning. Stay with her, be with her, help to return her strength and mind to her. And tell her she is not alone.” Martin spoke.

Dysea placed her hands on top of his and nodded her head slowly. “You are correct.” She spoke. “I have not been away from you for more than a few hours... it will just be strange.”

Martin nodded. “I know... but when you return I promise we will spend three days in bed together and no one will interrupt us.”

“I will... I will hold you to that promise *Nauta Melme*.” Dysea spoke as she folded herself into his arms. They did not notice that Anja was watching them intently.

“It is a promise I intend to keep.” Martin said kissing her softly. “I’m going to have a talk with Cantel. You get Palina what she needs and then work out what you have to do with Anja.”

Dysea smiled and looked at Anja. “I will need only a few moments to gather the roots and herbs I need for your tests Anja.”

“I’ll be here.” Anja spoke. “And I can give Palina a very easy means to getting the blood sample she needs.”

Palina looked at her. “You can?”

Anja smiled. “Follow me.”

“He should never have been allowed entrance into the Dragoons.” Cantel spoke as he and Martin walked along the corridor.

Martin had left Palina with Dysea and went directly to where the Dragoons were being billeted. He recognized Cantel from Mountain City and he had pulled him out of the barracks building so that they could have this conversation.

“He is not a leader of men. His tactics are inferior, and he treats his troops as if they are servants.” Cantel said. “I would be inspired if I could gut him for what you tell me he has done.”

“Have no worries Cantel... for what he has done to Tarifa... his death will not be pleasant.” Martin said.

“Good.” Cantel replied. “My... my Dragoons and I Martin Hunter, we have never seen anything like what you have built here. To see elves and human children playing side by side. To see elves and humans working side by side, laughing and joking. In my two hundred and twenty years I have never seen anything like it.”

“It is not easy I can assure you.” Martin said. “It will take a very tolerant individual to live among us. With the attitude of mistrust and hatred among many humans, it will not be an easy fight.”

“And the Alliance only enforces the hatred and belief that elves are inferior and nothing more than slaves.” Cantel said shaking his head.

“Well... perhaps in the future we can change that.” Martin told him as they entered the room. “Right now... let’s worry about our current situation.”

Cantel looked up and his eyes widened. The room they had entered was unlike anything he had seen before. There were high shelves lined in perfect rows as far as the eye could see. On the shelves and along the walls in countless racks were weapons of every make and description as well as equipment he had never seen before. He watched as the tall human man walked from among the rows of shelves. His skin was deeply tanned like so many of the others, but he had a Hispanic look to him, his black hair full and almost wild looking. He looked to be in his mid fifties.

“Ah... Martino... I’ve been expecting you!” The man spoke flashing a bright smile with perfect teeth.

“Cantel... this is Juan Garcia.” Martin said. “He is... was SEAL Team Twelve’s Master Armorer.”

“What do you mean was?” Juan snapped. “I still am... only now it’s for an entire city! The ultimate dream! I get to make all the weapons and instruments of death that my twisted mind dreams up!”

Martin chuckled. “As you can see... he’s a little off.” Martin said.

“Off? I’ll have you know I am in perfect command of all my facilities!” Juan barked. “If it wasn’t for me Martino... you would have been dead a long time ago! Don’t forget that!”

“You remind me all the time Juan!” Martin said with a grin.

“As well I should! You gringos have a short memory!” Juan roared in laughter, thinking he had made a good joke.

Cantel looked at Martin oddly and then back to Garcia who had turned to the large table set up along one wall. "He is normal is he not?" Cantel whispered.

Martin grinned, "Oh yeah."

"Emyla!" Garcia yelled. "Where is my chart?"

Cantel watched the female elf come from behind another long set of racks holding the clipboard in her hand. Her dark hair was long and flowed around her face, her ears sticking out between the silky strands of her hair. Cantel watched her walk over to Garcia and hold out the clipboard.

"Don't set it down every time you stop to inspect something you old coot!" She told him.

Garcia took the clipboard. "I will have to punish you tonight Emyla." He said.

The female elf stepped closer to him and rubbed her hips against his leg. "I look forward to it Juan." She said sweetly.

"Good! Now... back to business!" Garcia spoke. "Martin requested a few items for you to return with Senior Lieutenant. And he didn't give Emyla and me a whole lot of time to get it done either!" Garcia glared at Martin. Cantel noticed the change in him right away. He no longer acted wild and absent minded and instead appeared sharp as any blade. "We have a dozen small Chameleon Transmitters, two multi-channel receivers, two portable plasma screens, and two dozen TAP cameras."

"TAP?" Cantel asked.

Juan smiled and picked up the small black case. He opened it and Cantel saw twenty four silver objects no larger than the fingernail of his pinky finger. Juan took one from the case and Cantel watched with wide eyes and the object disappeared before him. "These are state of the art in surveillance. Transparent Aluminum Photocell, or TAP for short. A camera that is completely undetectable and invisible to the naked eye. It becomes transparent when attached to any surface, and I do mean any surface. Range is two hundred meters and it delivers a picture perfect return."

Cantel took one from the box and he smiled when he watched it disappear upon contact with his skin. He could still feel it... but even his keen elf eyes could not pick it out. "This is amazing." He said.

"The Chameleon transmitters operate off the same principle, but their range is only fifty feet." Juan spoke. "Make sure wherever you place them, they are within fifty feet of where you think the conversations will take place."

Cantel looked at Martin. "You are giving me the means to place covert surveillance on Telan?" He said.

Martin nodded. "While I trust in the abilities of you and your men... these items will put you at far less risk, and could potentially lead us to the location of where Telan and his goons are holding Tareif's sons."

Cantel nodded looking back at the TAP camera. "I have many locations that I can place these that might lead us to this very information."

"Cantel that is our ultimate goal right now," Martin spoke. "You and the others who know what is going on need to maintain the same routine you have always maintained. Nothing out of the ordinary can happen! If it takes you three or four days to be in a location to place these items, wait those days. Do not rush it. Tarifa's life... and the lives of her brothers will be forfeit if anyone discovers what you are doing."

"And if we find this information out Martin Hunter?" Cantel asked. "What then?"

"Then you continue your regular routine until there is a time when you can break away and contact me." Martin answered, "If it is a day, a week or even a month, then so be it."

"What will you do with that information?" Cantel asked.

"It's better that you don't know." Martin said.

Cantel nodded. "I agree. Is it possible to get more of these items if we need them?"

Garcia nodded quickly. "We're working with Governor Kadeem on that. He has an open trade route with Mountain City that comes in once a week. We're finishing the details of how to use that, and when we do... you'll get a message."

Cantel nodded. "Excellent."

Garcia held up the small, palm sized weapon. It looked like it would fit into the hand of a child, but based on what he had seen so far, Cantel doubted it was a toy. "This is a two shot HK Hold Out Derringer." Garcia said. "It breaks open and you load from the hammer. It fires two what I call Cookie Cutter rounds, which are small quarter inch flechettes with an explosive tipped head. I'm giving you twelve of them. They are last ditch weapons, but one shot from this puppy and even an elf will go down."

“Dysea will give one of these to Tarifa. They are easily concealed in places only we can dream about.” Martin said. “But I don’t want her carrying a blade into the city. I need you to give this to Tarifa.”

Emyla held out the six inch knife secured it the sheath. Cantel took it and withdrew it from the sheath to look at the gleaming blade. “I forged it from High Elf Steel.” Emyla spoke. “And it is coated with Teflon that Juan supplied to me, making the blade unbreakable for all practical purposes. However, this blade is different. Press the small crest on the end.”

Cantel did as she told him and he watched as the inch long needle like points extended from the blade guard, “Interesting.” He said.

Emyla smiled, “Interesting and extremely lethal. Press the crest once more.” Cantel did as she told him and he watched the points of the two needle like appendages begin dripping. His eyes went wide and he looked at her. “It is Black Scorpion venom in a concentrated dose. Death will be within ten seconds. Entered directly into the blood stream it will seize all muscle function instantly to include the heart. Press the crest one more time and it will retract the additional points. No fuss no muss.”

Cantel replaced the blade into the sheath and looked at Martin. “I will see that she receives it.” He said. Martin nodded. “I have some other things to cover with you, but let’s do it over a mug of coffee.”

“I’ll have this gear packed and ready for you in the morning.” Juan spoke.

“Thank you.” Cantel said, bowing his head slightly.

MILITARY HEADQUARTERS NEW RICHMOND

Marcus walked into the central command center for all Alliance military forces across what was once the United States and parts of the planet. There were hundreds of computer stations and monitors across the massive room, men and women occupying the chairs. Marcus wore his standard field uniform, neatly pressed with only his rank showing on his collar.

He walked along the wall of the huge room until he reached the small briefing room and entered quickly.

“Ah... Colonel Marcus.” The Commodore spoke, looking up from his seat.

Marcus looked at him, taking in the three other men in the room. “Commodore, reporting as you ordered sir.”

“Please Colonel take a seat.” The Commodore spoke waving to the lone unoccupied chair. “I’m sure you already know Minister Oleg Deval and Minister Robert Wiseman and this beautiful young woman is Minister Selene Torcram of the Genetics Division.”

Marcus settled into his seat. “May I ask what this is in regards to Commodore? I was trying to triangulate the last known position of my renegade company.”

“Ah yes... you are referring to the Drow Elves that escaped your control.” Robert Wiseman spoke. “And for the last three months have been eluding your clumsy attempts to discover them.”

“Clumsy!” Marcus hissed.

“Minister... I remind you that you are in our territory now.” The Commodore spoke. “Marcus is one of my trusted and decorated officers and I will not have you insinuating anything in regards to him. Is that perfectly clear?”

“He is the only genetically enhanced officer within our military to reach such a position of rank and power!” Wiseman snapped. “And now... the very unit of Drow Elves that he trained has gone rogue and disappeared!”

“You question my loyalty!” Marcus barked coming to his feet.

“I question your...”

Wiseman’s words were cut short by the vicious backhand from the Minister sitting next to him. His head snapped back and his hands went to his suddenly bloody lips. Oleg Deval leaned forward in his chair.

“Marcus... your loyalty and dedication to the Alliance is well documented and will never be questioned.” Deval spoke. His blond hair was cut short, framing a scared face and cruel eyes. “At least not in my presence,” He looked at Wiseman, who was sitting back up in his chair. “I don’t believe I have to remind

Minister Wiseman that it was Colonel Marcus himself who discovered the Dark Elves had gone rogue. And it is he who has worked twenty hours days attempting to find them for the last three months. It is a blot on his otherwise flawless record that he works harder than anyone to remove. Isn't that right Colonel?"

"I will personally peel the flesh from the bones of the survivors when I discover them!" Marcus hissed, his face a mask of rage, and his red eyes glaring. "And I will find them."

Deval nodded. "I know you will. And that is why your integrity will not be challenged again." He looked at Wiseman, who wiped his lips with a bloody cloth and turned away. "That is not the purpose of this meeting however, so we will move on. The Commodore tells me you are overseeing the outfitting of the Wood Elves with newer weapons and armor. We would like to know how that is progressing."

"It is on schedule Minister." Marcus replied. "Once Dysea was removed and a new Queen elected that was more favorable and easier for their Council to control, the treaty was passed within weeks."

"And there is still no word of Dysea's location?" Deval asked.

Marcus shook his head slowly. "There are many rumors floating about. Some of them say she is now dead. Some of them say she escaped with Hunter. If that is indeed the case, we have been unable to find them."

"Why is that Colonel, in your opinion?" The woman Selene asked, leaning forward and putting her arms on the table as she gazed at Marcus. Her strawberry blond hair had quite a bit of red color to it, almost as if that was her natural color, and Marcus also took in the way she filled out the uniform she wore. He also noticed she did not look away while he appraised her.

"There could be any number of reasons." Marcus finally replied. "Perhaps the rumors that she is dead are true."

"Do you believe this Marcus?" Deval asked.

Marcus shook his head. "No Minister I do not. We have precious few agents working west of the Great River." He told them. "Those that we have are assigned to the large human settlements to keep us apprised of what they are doing. We have neither the trained personnel, nor the numbers of covert agents to have them combing the wilds looking for one former elf Queen and a few of these genomes, if they are even Genomes to begin with."

Minister Deval looked at him. "And why would you say that Marcus?"

The former Drow warrior looked at the man, "Because I am not a fool Minister Deval. I have gone to the same schools as our soldiers, and learned the same things they now learn. The Mistress as commented several times to me about Hunter, and the more I learn about this man, the more I believe he is who the Mistress believes him to be."

"She has also said herself that she may have been wrong initially." Deval spoke.

Marcus nodded. "Perhaps Minister... but as events go forward I believe she will gain the confirmation that she seeks. She has Colonel Moran and his Special Troops conducting many sensitive operations that hopefully will lead us to the information."

"I was under the impression his unit took some hard hits in the attack against Mountain City." Selene spoke.

The Commodore nodded. "We were able to confirm through our contacts in Mountain City that the genome force that escaped with Hunter was nearly wiped out. Only a handful actually survived." He said. "I am responsible for our forces east of the river, to include all of our cities. Colonel Moran was appointed by the Mistress to be her personal hammer so to speak. He and the others like him have been with her for centuries. I agree with Marcus that even if only a handful of them survive we should not dismiss them. We have initiated actions that will, when combined with the Wood Elf declaration of war, bring down the High Elf government in its entirety, and that is our main purpose right now."

"So you are saying Dysea is of no concern?" Deval asked.

Marcus nodded. "Wherever she is, she and Hunter are of no consequence. They lack any base of power on which to build. Dysea has been declared a traitor, and the High Elves have expelled Hunter and the others with him. There have been sparse sightings of their Raptor aircraft, but never more than three at a time. If they are not already dead... it is only a matter of time. We will begin making our own Raptors by the end of the year, and once we begin to mass produce them, no one will be able to stand with us."

"I still do not like the fact that they are out there and we know nothing." Deval spoke.

“If you prefer Minister Deval, and you authorize the funds, I will hire some of our usual contract assassins.” The Commodore said.

Deval nodded. “How much do you need?”

“An outside account with perhaps three hundred thousand credits should be more than sufficient.” The Commodore replied.

“I will make the arrangements as soon as we are done here.” Deval spoke. “I’ll route the funds from New Baltimore to the bank here.”

The Commodore nodded. “The assassins will be on their way by the end of the week Minister.” He said. “I understand you are making another trip to the base on the moon.”

Deval nodded. “It appears they have produced a drug that is actually improved over our current product. It will allow us to have more control, and actually make the elves respond better. Minister Torcrum will be accompanying me to do her own tests.”

“This Senator Graham is turning out to be more of an asset than we first thought.” The Commodore spoke.

Deval shook his head. “Graham is a fool. He thinks with his cock. No... I believe this Admiral Wallace is the man we need to befriend.”

Marcus leaned forward. “He is the genomes’ former commander Minister. Is it wise to trust him?”

Deval nodded. “I don’t trust him.” Deval spoke. “However the writing is quite clear. Graham is an arrogant slob. He thinks with only his cock. Wallace is the real power on that station. The reports I am getting is that Hunter betrayed and beat him almost to death before leaving EDEN. Wallace has sworn revenge. He is using this new drug, and very discrete methods to gain control of the elves on EDEN, and when he has enough of a power base, Graham will die.”

“We still should not trust him Minister.” Marcus spoke.

“I trust his hatred of Hunter Colonel Marcus. And the fact that he has been raping an elf slave for over three months now.” Deval spoke. “Perhaps you would like to accompany us to EDEN Colonel. Your judgment of this man would be invaluable.”

Marcus looked at his commanding officer, “Commodore?” He asked.

“It might be advantageous to all of us.” The Commodore spoke.

“And the search for the rogue company?” Marcus asked.

“I’ll put someone from my staff in charge of that temporarily. You can resume the search when you return.” The Commodore said.

Marcus nodded, “As you wish Commodore.”

Deval nodded. “Excellent. I will inform Senator Graham you will be accompanying us. The Raptor from EDEN will be arriving at the end of the week. I do suggest you finish up whatever it is you need to do in that time.”

Marcus nodded. “Of course Minister.”

UTAH EDEN CITY (FORMERLY JUNCTION CITY)

Martin held Dysea in his arms as the Raptor’s engines idled in the background. Several of the ground crew finished loading the ship as Palina and Cantel walked up to him.

“The Raptor will take you back to your vehicles.” Martin told them. “They have been repaired and under guard since we picked you up.”

Cantel nodded. “We will return to Mountain City this night.” He said. “I will attempt to send you a coded transmission in the morning.”

Martin nodded. “Remember... do nothing out of the ordinary Cantel. If we are going to pull this off... you can give no indication that you are suspicious of anything.”

Cantel nodded. “I will make sure of it *Elda Cundo*. You have my word.” He picked up the duffel bag and motioned his fellow Dragoons forward.

Palina stepped up to Martin and surprised him with a kiss on his cheek. She took his hand and pressed it to her cheek. "Thank you."

Martin nodded to her with a smile and then watched her head for the Raptor. Dysea turned in his arms until she faced him, looking up into his face. Martin looked down and stared into her emerald eyes.

"Be alert *Melda Min*." He spoke softly.

Dysea nodded. "I will *Nauta Melme*." She answered, snuggling her firm body close to his. "You were very good to me last night." She said with a knowing glint in her eyes.

Martin grinned. "What was with the..."

Dysea smiled and put a finger to his lips. "It is a surprise for Tarifa" She answered. "Nothing you should be concerned with."

"It was very cold *Melda Min*." Martin said.

"Perhaps... but did I not warm it for you?" Dysea spoke with a seductive twinkle in her eye, "Many times over. You wore me out *Nauta Melme*."

Martin smiled and pulled her tighter. "I wore you out? Seven times Dysea? Isn't that a record or something?" He said with a chuckle.

Dysea snuggled even closer to him, insuring her body melted against his. "Are you saying you are not up to the task?"

Martin pulled her tighter. "You just wait and see. You have what I gave you?" He asked.

"All of it Martin; trust in me."

"It is not you I don't trust *Melda Min*." He spoke.

"The *Quende Amille* will not betray us *Nauta Melme*. I feel this." Dysea spoke.

Martin kissed her deeply and with great passion and strength, Dysea returning the kiss with equal feeling and passion.

"Come back to me." Martin spoke.

Dysea squeezed his hands. "I will see you in five days."

Martin watched her turn and run for the Raptor. He waited until the ramp had come up before turning to look at Danny and Leland, who walked up with the Master Chief. The Raptor lifted off, turned north and accelerated quickly away.

Danny held out Martin's HK. "He called me a what?" Martin asked.

Danny pulled the twig from his mouth. "He called you a no good, elf loving, ass kissing motherfucking shit for brains." Leland and Tony smiled at Martin's expression.

"Elf loving he's got right." Martin said. "And I take great joy from kissing Dysea's ass; it's quite firm and wonderfully round."

"Spare us the details Skipper." Tony spoke with a grin.

"Hey!" Danny barked with a smile of his own. "I have no problem kissing asses that look like Julie's."

Martin glanced at Danny when he spoke as he did not mention Anja's name in that statement. "Motherfucking shit for brains?" Martin asked looking at Leland.

Leland nodded. "I believe those were his exact words too. The gentleman does not seem to possess large vocabulary skills."

Martin jacked a round into the HK with a vicious grin. "Well what do you say we go teach him some new words?"

"You mean like oh crap I'm going to die?" Danny asked.

"Something along those lines yeah." Martin spoke and started walking toward the far side of the airfield where six Raptors were standing by and loading black fatigue clad troops.

Dan looked at Leland. "It's going to be a fun five days with Dysea gone." Danny said. "How big did you say this guys' army is?"

"At last estimate... about three thousand." Leland answered.

"Master Chief... what do you think?" Danny asked as they walked.

Tony smiled. "Four hours from start to finish."

Danny smiled again. "Oh yes! It's going to be a glorious five days!"

MOUNTAIN CITY SAME NIGHT

Palina hugged her daughter tightly as the Royal Guards continued to bring the remaining crates into her quarters.

“I missed you Tarifa.” She said.

“I missed you *emme*. I was just getting ready to retire for the evening.” Tarifa said returning her mother’s embrace. She saw the stacked crates and shook her head. “Mother what have you brought with you?” (Affectionate term for Mother)

“Governor Kadeem was so pleased with my visit that he sent back a myriad of gifts for you.” Palina told her with a smile. “How is Nana?”

Tarifa gave a small smile. “You were right *emme*; it was the best thing I could have done.” She said. “She doted on me the entire time.”

“You should visit her more often.” Palina spoke removing her long jacket and draping it over the chair. “She misses you.”

“Perhaps I will.” Tarifa spoke turning away from the Royal Guards as they finished bringing in the last box and left, the door closing behind them, a single cloaked Guard remaining behind to shift the boxes around.

Palina looked at her daughter’s back as she poured a cup of tea. “You should use this time that Telan is gone to regain your focus Tarifa.” She said softly. “You have not slept well in months, and you are growing thinner.”

Tarifa turned back to her sipping the tea. “*Emme* we are not going to go over this again are we?” She asked.

Palina stepped up to her and smiled. “No.” She said. “In fact I have something special for you. I met someone on my trip that knows you.”

Tarifa looked at her. “Mother I have never been to Governor Kadeem’s city.” She said. “I do not know anyone there.”

“Yes you do.” Palina spoke. “She is a young female elf; a very intelligent and brave young woman by all accounts. She knows you quite well.”

“Is she from Mountain City perhaps?” Tarifa asked. “And she moved to Salina?”

Palina shook her head, stepping closer to her. “No. I believe you once knew her as Queen of the Wood Elves.”

Tarifa’s eyes narrowed. “That is not funny mother.” She snapped.

“It was not meant to be funny.” Palina spoke.

Tarifa’s eyes grew darker. “This is cruel mother.” She spoke turning away from her.

“I do not lie to you daughter.” Palina spoke. “They did not go to any of the locations that the Elders singled out. They went south beyond High Elf territory. They have begun to build something wonderful Tarifa.”

Tarifa turned to look at her. “You... you have seen them mother truly? This is not some cruel joke. You have seen Martin and Dysea?”

Palina nodded her head. “I would not joke with you about this Tarifa. They have started what you and Martin once talked about not so long ago. The city they are building is wondrous Tarifa. And they... they want you to come there as soon as you are able.”

Tarifa stepped closer to her, taking her hands after putting her tea on the table. Her face was brighter and more animated than Palina had seen it in months, and whatever lingering doubts she may have had were quickly washed away. “They... they are safe?”

Palina nodded with a smile. “They are safe.” She said.

“Where... where are they Emme? I have to... I have to see them! I have to know if they are safe... if they still...” Tarifa stopped talking as her nose wrinkled slightly. Her head turned and she looked at the remaining Royal Guard who now turned to face her, the cloak hiding all facial features.

“You have to know if we still consider our friend above all others Tarifa.” The Guard spoke softly.

Tarifa’s eye widened as the very familiar scent of wildflowers rushed into her nostrils. She turned to fully face the remaining Royal Guard as the hands reached up to pull back the hood that was covering the head.

“Dy... Dysea?” Tarifa choked out the words.

Dysea trembled as she reached up to pull the cloak fully off her head, letting her platinum blond hair spill out of the tie she had been using to secure it. Her emerald eyes were blurry with tears, and had been from the moment she entered the home and smelled Tarifa's peach like scent. She watched Tarifa's hands go to her mouth in stunned recognition.

"Yes Tarifa. We... we very much still consider you our greatest and most cherished friend." Dysea choked out the words. "That will never change."

"This... this is a dream!" Tarifa gasped finally. "This is a dream isn't it Dysea? You are... you are not really here. Are you?"

She stepped up to Tarifa slowly, her own tears now flowing freely, and reached out to gently touch Tarifa's face. She watched Tarifa's eyes close in disappointment, expecting this vision to vanish, but they flew open once more when she felt Dysea's hand touch her skin.

"This is no dream Tarifa" She said softly.

Tarifa promptly fainted into Dysea's arms.

Palina looked at Roland as she let the door slide closed behind her. "Roland... no one is to disturb them, and I do mean no one. If there is a problem you may contact me. I will inform the Elders that Tarifa is ill and will need a day or so to recover before she rejoins their daily sessions."

Roland nodded. "It will be done Milady." He said firmly.

Palina took one look at the door before smiling gently and heading toward the lift.

Dysea looked at Tarifa's restful face on the bed where she and her mother had placed her. She removed her cloak and draped it over the chair in the sleeping room, hearing Tarifa stir on the bed.

Tarifa sat up quickly, "Mother! My dream... it was so real!" She exclaimed, her eyes searching the room. They settled on Dysea as she sat on the edge of the bed.

"It was no dream Tarifa." She said.

Tarifa's eyes were hugely wide, as she stared at Dysea, "Dysea! You... you are here." She gasped.

Dysea nodded. "I am here Tarifa."

Tarifa burst into tears and leaned forward to embrace Dysea. The tears came for both of them as Dysea pulled her tightly into her arms, relishing in the smell of peaches and the feel of Tarifa in her arms. She stroked the silky black hair, loving the feel and texture of it.

"How is... how is this possible?" Tarifa sobbed, her face buried against Dysea's chest. "I... I thought I had lost you!"

Dysea shook her head looking at her. "You will never lose us Tarifa. You are a part of our hearts. You are like the sister we have never had."

Tarifa pulled back and looked at her. "Martin! Martin...he... he is not with you?"

Dysea shook her head slowly. "It was not safe." She answered. "There is much going on that you do not yet realize. That you don't know yet. Your mother sought us out... she told us how your father... how your father lied to us, lied to you." Dysea reached up and stroked Tarifa's tear stained cheek. "We have not gone a day without you in our thoughts Tarifa. Not a day!"

"Tarifa shook her head slowly. "I don't understand Dysea. What do you mean?"

Dysea leaned forward and kissed her moist lips softly, her eyes closing in bliss as she felt the familiar curve and texture of her lover's lips. Tarifa groaned in need and desire, folding into her arms as their kiss deepened. It had been so long since she had been kissed with any sort of emotion and for Tarifa it was wonderful. She also detected that Dysea was holding back... not giving in completely and that was odd to her. It was Dysea who broke the kiss knowing she had other duties to take care of first, mainly insuring that Tarifa was cured of the poisons violating her luscious body.

Tarifa gazed at her with hurt in her eyes. "You... you don't... you don't desire me anymore Dysea?" She asked.

Dysea shook her head while caressing her face. "Never think that Tarifa. You are beautiful and soft and you taste wonderful. You freed this part of me that looks upon you with lust and desire; that looks on..."

Tarifa smiled knowingly, some of the brightness returning to her sapphire eyes. "You desire someone else."

Dysea's emerald eyes gazed at her. "You brought Martin into my life Tarifa. You guided him to me." Dysea reached up and pushed away some of her raven hair. "The Holy One was right in a way. Coming together as we all did, it set us all free in a manner of speaking. I... I feel we will meet the one meant for you very soon. Events are moving along outside these walls, plans within plans, and you have not been yourself."

"What... what do you mean?" Tarifa asked.

"I must take care of you first." She said with a loving smile. "When I taste you, I want you to be free of all the poisons in your body."

"Poisons...?" Tarifa said.

Dysea nodded. "Telan..."

"I... I never gave myself to him Dysea! Never willingly! His touch makes me want to vomit!" Tarifa exclaimed.

"That is not something that needs to occupy your thoughts Tarifa. That is why I have come now. I am going to return to you what Telan has taken away from you." Dysea told her.

"What do you mean then?" Tarifa asked.

Dysea reached down alongside the bed and took something from the small wooden box at her feet. The clear vial had a liquid substance contained in it that was greenish in color. She held it up for Tarifa to see. "I have made this for you, as my mother taught me."

Tarifa took the vial. "What is it?"

"It is a mixture of herbs and roots." Dysea explained. "It does not have the most favorable of tastes, but it will purge the drugs from your system quickly."

"Drugs? What drugs?"

Dysea held up the bottle of pills Tarifa thought to be contraceptives. Tarifa's eyes went wide and she reached for the bottle.

"Dysea I need those! I can't... I will not betray... I will not betray all that I am by having Telan's child defile my body!" Tarifa said.

Dysea shook her head. "Whoever gave you these is in Telan's employ Tarifa! It is a combination of drugs to control your mind, not to keep you from having a child! Anja tested it thoroughly before we returned. Your mother brought us a sample. These were meant to keep you docile and receptive to his advances; to control you!"

"Dysea... he has forced himself on me nearly every night since our marriage, without these pills... I would have already become pregnant." Tarifa told her.

"No Tarifa! It is the gift that your time with *Nauta Melme* gave to you that has kept you from becoming pregnant." Dysea said.

Tarifa smiled at her, "Your Bounded love."

Dysea's smile matched Tarifa's. "He is... he is so much more than you know Tarifa. He stirs inside of me what I never thought I could know or have. And you brought us together. We would never abandon you Tarifa. We could never abandon you."

"What do you mean gift?" Tarifa asked.

Dysea concentrated slightly, and her eyes changed, black outlining the emerald, while her canine teeth extended to three quarters of an inch in length. Tarifa reached out to her face, her eyes wide. "You have... you have changed." She gasped. "Like..."

Dysea nodded. "Like you Tarifa." She said. "Concentrate."

Tarifa did as Dysea told her, and felt her teeth extend and the rush of scents fill her nostrils more clearly. She saw Dysea gazing at her lovingly and she smiled.

"This is what Martin gave to us." She said. "We have become like him in a sense. Our bodies have developed a defense against foreign drugs and diseases. That is why you are sick after you take these pills every morning. Your body is rejecting the poisons in them, killing them. And in the process of doing that, your body is purging any of Telan's sperm inside you."

Realization began to fill Tarifa's black outlined sapphire eyes and she sat up completely on the bed. "He... he has been controlling me?" She spat, her voice filled with anger.

Dysea shook her head. "Your body rejects the poisons and kills them, but enough remains to make you weaker. That is why you are sluggish and don't have an appetite to eat. As I said Tarifa, this is much larger than you realize. Telan even holds sway over your father, and that is why he forced this farce of a marriage on you."

"My father...!" Tarifa gasped.

Dysea nodded once more. "He is under the influence of a much more powerful drug." She told her. "Your mother is going to try and obtain a blood sample that I can give to Anja when I return."

"When you return?" Tarifa almost yelled. "No... you can't leave me!"

Dysea took Tarifa's trembling hands in her own and squeezed. "Tarifa... do you trust me? Do you trust Martin?"

"Of course I do!" Tarifa replied without hesitation. "Why do you ask me that?"

Dysea took the vial from her hands and held it up. "Drink this Tarifa." She said softly.

Tarifa popped the cap on the small vial and lifted it to her lips without hesitation and poured the green liquid into her mouth and swallowed. She grimaced at the slightly bitter taste as it went down, but it passed quickly and she returned her gaze to Dysea.

Dysea smiled and leaned forward to kiss her. "Good. Rest here... you will feel light headed for a few moments, but it will pass quickly. I am going to make you something to eat and then we will talk."

Tarifa took her hand. "Dysea..."

Dysea placed a finger on Tarifa's lips and shook her head. "Have no fears Tarifa. I am going to make you something to eat. We will talk... and then I intend to feast on your luscious body... I promise you that."

Tarifa relaxed seeing the promises of the pleasures she had desired for so long within Dysea's eyes.

"...has to be the Alliance!" Tarifa spoke.

Dysea nodded in agreement. "That is what your mother and Martin and I think as well." She replied.

They sat on Tarifa's large bed, sharing the extra large mug of tea. Dysea had made Tarifa eat until she was almost ready to bust, and she had to admit, she hadn't felt this refreshed in months. She had eaten two complete venison steaks with red potatoes and long stemmed vegetables. She had showered as well, now only wearing a thin cotton robe over her body.

"That is how Telan's family has gained so much power in so short a time." Tarifa spoke. "They have been getting support from the Alliance."

"We don't know why though?" Dysea said.

"Power," Tarifa spoke firmly. Her mind was clear and sharper now that the lingering effects of the drug were purged from her body, and she was rapidly regaining her keen political mind and awareness.

"They want my people to attack the High Elves?" Dysea asked, "But why? The ensuing war would kill thousands on both sides. It would leave both our peoples devastated and weak."

Tarifa nodded. "And we would be ripe for the Alliance to come in and destroy us both." She said.

"But what would Telan's family gain by that. They would be slaves as well... if they lived through the war." Dysea stated.

"They must have worked out some sort of deal with the Alliance." Tarifa spoke. "When I... when I was Marcus's prisoner, I saw several elves walking the streets of their cities freely. I could not tell what tribe they were from, but they were elves. And I also saw dark skinned elves Dysea. They were part of Marcus's command."

Dysea looked at her surprised, "Drow Elves... like those we saw in the abandoned city?"

"It had to be!" Tarifa exclaimed. "When we returned and everything happened I forgot all about them."

"But... I thought... the Holy One said they were all wiped out nearly a hundred years ago." Dysea said.

Tarifa nodded. "He told me the same thing. Their village was attacked by three divisions of Alliance troops. My father's scouts went into the village after the attack. They reported nothing but bodies and destruction."

"So they allowed some to survive in order to convert them into their ranks?" Dysea asked.

"The Holy One engineered the Drow to be similar to Martin and the genomes. One Drow warrior is an equal to ten High Elf or Wood Elf warriors." Tarifa said. "They wanted that skill to use against the other elves that broke away."

Dysea looked at her. "Tarifa... why would they target you?" she asked.

"Don't you see?" Tarifa said. "Telan's father knew that I would never willingly marry Telan. And he knew that my father would never allow such a union. He must have approached the Alliance with an offer of some type of assistance. They provided him the drugs to break my father, they kidnapped my brothers, and they got my father to invoke a law among the High Elves that has not been used in two centuries."

Dysea nodded as understanding spread across her face. "He would do this by arranging the marriage of the Queen with a prominent member of High Elf society in the hopes of a child being born."

Tarifa nodded. "If I was to bear Telan a child, then upon my death, Telan would become Steward of the High Elves until our child came of age. In essence he would be King."

"And therefore his father would rule from behind the scenes." Dysea said. "A devious plan to be sure; one that would cause the deaths of many elves, both Wood elves and High Elves, making the remaining elves look to him for leadership."

Tarifa nodded. "I have no doubts that Telan's father would find a way to get rid of me after the birth of a child." She said.

"Your mother said as much." Dysea said.

"I can not let this continue Dysea." Tarifa said.

"You have too." Dysea spoke urgently. "If Telan or his father discovers that you are no longer under their influence we will not be able to help you."

"They would not kill my brothers!" Tarifa spoke quickly. "Drugged or not... my father would never bow to them if he discovered they killed his sons."

"Tarifa... my people elected a new Queen, and she passed the bill forming a treaty with the Alliance. Even now they are arming and equipping my people. We have four months, perhaps five before the Wood Elves will begin attacking High Elf villages and cities, and a full scale war erupts." Dysea said looking at her. "We have only just begun to bring our production facilities online in Eden City. We need more time before we will be strong enough to stop a war between your people and mine."

"Dysea... I could never endure that bastard's touch on my skin again, knowing what I do now." Tarifa exclaimed. "I would be... I would be betraying all that I know... all that I am." Dysea looked at her. "Listen to me! We did not believe your father when he told us those things that day! What we shared was not something so casually tossed aside as your father and others thought. Martin had devised a plan to return here to Mountain City and take you. What we are building in Eden City... you are part of that Tarifa. Do you remember that night we lay here and spoke of it. Well we have started it in Eden. We knew that it is partly your dream as well as ours." She snapped. "When it is finished Tarifa... there will no longer be a need for our people, any elves to live separately, just as we envisioned, just as all of us envisioned."

"Why... why didn't you use this plan?" Tarifa asked.

Dysea met her gaze. "We realized that everyone who followed us and everyone that had worked beside us to build what we have, elf and human; they would have thrown it all away to follow us. We... we could not do that to them." Tears glistened in her eyes now. "You should see it Tarifa. In only three months we have brought peace to so many. Elves and humans live and work side by side. Our children go to school together. Relationships are forming, and friendships. And it continues to grow."

"I... I will not see you again once you leave Dysea!" Tarifa said. "I... I don't know if I could be that strong Dysea."

"That is not true!" Dysea replied looking at her. "Do you think we would leave you here without a way to see you? Governor Kadeem has a plan that would work. There are a few details still to work out, but you could be with us easily, and not rouse Telan's suspicions; at least not until we are ready."

"But I would still have to allow that pig to slobber all over me." Tarifa said. "The very thought of him sticking his tiny little cock in me makes my skin crawl."

Dysea looked at Tarifa with a new glint in her eye. "So he is not endowed like Martin I take it?"

Tarifa laughed. "No man is like Martin. He reaches inside me to places even I did not know I had. And his passion... it tastes so sweet." She looked at Dysea oddly. "Why do you tease me Dysea? You know this as well as I do, and you have had him all to yourself for months! I am so jealous!"

Dysea leaned forward quickly and kissed Tarifa with sultry eyes. "You will find the one meant for you Tarifa... you must believe. I have something for you." She said seductively.

Tarifa watched her get up and move to the medium sized duffel bag in the corner. She took out the black case and took a vial similar to the herb potion earlier. She came back to the bed and sat close to Tarifa. She took the cover off and looked at Tarifa. "This is for you." She said.

"What is it?" Tarifa asked taking the vial.

"It is Martin's passion. Twenty four vials all perfectly preserved; as if he was here with us." Dysea said. "When I knew I was coming here I... I wanted to have something of him to share with you. I drained him completely seven times." Dysea's eyes grew sexy as she said that. "It was very pleasurable for both of us. It will also serve to increase your resistance to the drugs. Taste it."

Tarifa lifted the vial to her lips and drank the liquid, her eyes going wide and then closing in bliss as she drank it down. She savored the flavor and texture, allowing her tongue to taste Martin's preserved cum. She opened her eyes again and saw Dysea's face and the look of desire in her eyes.

"It is delicious." She said slowly, bringing her fingers to her lips to rub it into her soft lips. "Thank you Dysea! I have so longed..."

Dysea sprang forward, sealing her lips over Tarifa's and plunging her tongue into her mouth. She pushed her back on the bed, hungrily feasting on her lips as Tarifa surrendered to her. Dysea's hands frantically pulled at Tarifa's robe, pulling it off her body, exposing her perfect breasts and suddenly very stiff nipples. Tarifa groaned as her long leg curled to press against Dysea's hip as her hands disappeared into Dysea's thick platinum blond hair. This is what Dysea wanted right now, the touch and feel of another woman against her, and until she was able to have the one she truly wanted, Tarifa would more than suffice. Dysea pulled back from their kiss leaving Tarifa gasping and reaching for her head.

"Now... Tarifa! Now I will possess you as you possessed me!" Dysea hissed before lowering her lips to Tarifa's exposed throat.

ARIZONA FOUR MILES NORTH OF FLAGSTAFF NORTH US-89

Martin lowered the cooling body of the guard softly to the ground, his black outlined yellow eyes searching the night around him. He wiped the blade of his knife on the man's shirt as he squatted next to the body, allowing his enhanced senses to reach out into the night. He turned his head slightly when he smelled the male elf come up behind him, moving like a ghost.

Martin had broken down their Special Operations forces into five teams, made up of the remaining genomes, elves and humans. He had an entire brigade of elves and humans back in Eden training every day, and it was they who were now manning the artillery pieces and rocket launcher systems set up twenty miles north of Flagstaff. It was also they who crewed the eighty M21 Scorpion tanks that were poised and ready to strike from the mountains north of Flagstaff.

The Scorpion was the United States lone heavy Main Battle Tank. It had replaced the M1A6 Abrams that had served for nearly half a century. It was a larger tank than the Abrams, at almost forty feet in length and 84 tons, yet it had kept its streamlined design and now sported a 155mm smooth bore cannon. While it was significantly smaller than the tank Martin had seen on their return to earth, for their purposes now it was well suited.

His five Special Operations teams had infiltrated Flagstaff within an hour of full dark. All of his teams had operational objectives, and their priority was to get as many of the elf slaves and innocent humans out of Flagstaff within raising a warning. Flagstaff was ruled by a cruel mercenary warlord, and with the exception of Cedar City it was the largest settlement of humans south of Eden. The five teams had been training together since Martin had broken them down. Danny commanded one team, Leland, Radama, and Tony commanded the other three, and Martin had put together the team he now led. He looked at the lean blond haired elf as he settled onto the ground next to Martin. He glanced at the body of the dead guard, and then looked at Martin.

"He was the last one Commander." The elf spoke. "We have a clear path to the outskirts where the Hoppers are hidden. Daniel and the other teams have reported in already. They have evacuated their targets and are moving back into assault positions."

Martin nodded as he replaced his knife in the sheath. “Have the extraction team move them out Ealin, as quietly as possible. They are to stop for nothing. Two Raptors will be covering them from ten thousand feet as they head to the rendezvous.”

The elf nodded and moved soundlessly to the door a few feet away. He looked inside the darkened building and saw the other members of their team guarding close to four hundred men, women and children, human and elves alike. He motioned with his hand, directing the two closest members of the team to start them moving, and then went back to squat next to Martin.

Their intelligence teams had entered the city several weeks prior to this night, covertly targeting and finding those that were sympathetic to their cause. Leaders were approached and plans were made, and on this night, they had evacuated almost two thousand people that had chosen to accompany them. There were many that they did not approach because of their positions and the crimes they had committed against elves and against humans. The leader of this mercenary group was extremely cruel in his treatment of slaves and prisoners, and no one that was within his inner circle would be given the opportunity to surrender.

Ealin looked at Martin in the darkness, seeing that his eyes had returned to normal. He could tell by the way Martin was frozen in place, his head canted slightly skyward that he was trying to pick up any scents that could be construed as a danger to them. Ealin remained silent, simply content to watch the man he and many other elves now called *Lyca Ohtar* in a term of reverence. (Lycan Warrior)

“We have been lucky this night Ealin.” Martin spoke, his voice almost a whisper as he turned and looked at him.

Ealin nodded. “Perhaps... but luck has eluded us for many years. Maybe now it is time for us to have some.”

Martin nodded. “We will make our own luck Ealin. Contact the battery commanders and inform them to commence firing at the prearranged time. We’ll move back into our assault position as soon as all the civilians are clear.”

Ealin nodded with a smile.

FLAGSTAFF

The human mercenary commander stepped from the building that acted as his command post holding the large mug of coffee in his hand. He was a large man, easily over six foot and two hundred pounds, and was known for his brutal tactics when dealing with slaves or elves. He had no qualms about enslaving humans when they did not conform to his order of things, and his face showed the scars of many years of warfare. He and his mercenaries had moved in and taken over the remains of Flagstaff, returning some semblance of normal life to those that followed him. He was not known for being patient or understanding, and if someone did not conform to his way of doing things they were very quickly strung up and hung, or shot dead in the street.

The mercenary stopped on the porch of the building he called home. The sun was just breaking the horizon, but he noticed that none of the slaves were in the streets conducting their usual clean up chores. Bottles of alcohol and trash filled the streets from the previous night of partying by his men, and as he looked up and down the street he saw nothing except blowing trash. He turned and went back to the door, shoving it open.

“Neely get out here now you fuck!” He screamed.

Moments later the second man joined him on the porch still trying to pull his pants up around his waist. The skinny man looked at him.

“What’s wrong boss?” he gasped.

“Do you see anything wrong here?” The commander yelled. “Where are the fucking slaves? Why aren’t they doing their fucking job?”

“I don’t know boss!”

The larger man reached out and slapped the skinny man in the head viciously. “Well find out you dumb bastard!”

He watched as the skinny man dashed from the porch heading for a building across the street. “Give me more coffee!” He roared.

He held out the mug as the small blond elf came scurrying out of the house to pour from the large thermos in her small hands. She cowered before him, pouring the coffee and then backing up to stand to the side.

Her head came up and looked north when the deep echo of booms filled the morning air. The commander's gopher stopped in the middle of the street at the sounds, dismissed them and finished running up to his commander who was staring north.

"The... slaves... they're..." He gasped.

The commander looked at him. "Spit it out you idiot!"

"They're gone. All of them! The boys guarding them are... they're dead! Someone cut their throats!"

The mercenary commander's eyes opened wide and he turned back to the north.

Martin had salvaged thirty-eight of the advanced Multiple Launched Rocket System mobile launchers from an abandoned air force base in Nevada. The vehicles had been stored in near perfect condition in a hidden underground weapons depot that had been vacuum sealed. They had been state of the art weapons in the 21st century, the latest model being the advanced MLRS 300II and with very minor modifications made by Martin's team of engineers, all thirty-eight of these platforms were now fully operational.

As if on cue, the twelve MLRS 300II that had accompanied Martin's team and were set up forty-six miles north of Flagstaff, let fly with a full twelve rocket barrage per vehicle. When they had discovered the 300IIs, they had also discovered thousands of rockets ranging from anti-personnel to anti-armor, and now 144 rockets sped towards Flagstaff. Six of the rockets were impact fused 500 pound warheads, guided by advanced Doppler radar and targeting sensors. The other six rockets were anti-personnel rockets with 700 M87 shaped charges per rocket. The mercenary commander did not see the launch tubes swivel back into position to receive the reloads.

The mercenary commander watched with fascination and horror as four of the 500 pound warhead rockets landed directly on top of the large hotel that housed his men four blocks down the street. He did not see the rockets hit the building, but he saw the immense explosion that announced the deaths of almost three thousand murdering slavers and scum. The five story hotel erupted in a fountain of rock, concrete and steel, the concussion from the blast shattering what little remained of windows in the area. The next two 500 pound warhead rockets landed squarely in the motor pool where all of his vehicles were stored. He could only watch in awe as his Hoppers and wheeled vehicles began exploding, lifting into the morning sky streaks of flames towering into the once quiet morning air. As others began to pile onto the porch they could only watch as the six anti-personnel rockets opened above a designated portion of Flagstaff and spilled out their 700 sub munitions each. Four thousand two hundred two pound shaped charges scattered as they fell, and soon the popping sounds of them going off could be heard all around them. The thunder filled the air for a full minute as each shaped charge went off as it landed, destroying anything within the ten meter radius of its blast. Huge chunks were blown from buildings all around them, glass and concrete filling the sky as deadly missiles. The mercenary commander could only stand and watch as the bomblets devastated the building that housed his now empty slave pens, as well as the auction center, and the close to two hundred men that were responsible for running his auction center.

There were now twenty remaining mercenaries standing in and around the porch, as well as several hundred humans that were piling out of their homes, all of them gawking at the amount of destruction that had occurred in little more than a minute.

Heads turned as another roar followed and nine of the Scorpion tanks came barreling through the buildings on the end of the street, causing people to run for cover as the massive machines of death cut loose with their main cannons, sending nine high explosive rounds punching into neighboring buildings, blowing out machine gun turrets and the three anti-air missile crews that had stationed themselves on the roofs of adjoining buildings. As the nine Scorpions moved off the center of the road, their main guns coming to rest on the gathered civilians, six armored Hoppers pulled onto the street and made their way slowly up to the building of the mercenary commander. None of those on the porch made a move for their weapons inside as two of the Scorpions had their main guns trained directly at them. All eyes watched the Hoppers come to a halt and a fleet of foot humans and elves in body armor and carrying weapons piled out.

All eyes went to the tall young man who walked casually toward the mercenary commander. He stopped only a few feet away from the man standing on his porch and looked at him with a smile.

“Top of the morning to you dick head,” Martin barked with a grin.

A mercenary with more guts than brains screamed and rushed at Martin, his face a mask of rage and hatred. He made it ten steps from the porch before an arm came from the side and slammed into his chest, breaking several ribs and lifting him into the air to deposit him unceremoniously on his back with a grunt of pain.

“Bad idea asshole,” Ealin growled at him, shoving the barrel of his HK into the man’s chest and ripping out a three round burst. The mercenary’s body jumped twice before becoming still as the rounds shredded his heart and lungs.

“Gee... is that how you greet visitors to your quaint little town here.” Martin asked.

“You... you’re that elf loving motherfucker from up north!” The mercenary commander screamed.

Martin smiled. “Martin Hunter is the name. And believe me when I tell you it is not a pleasure to meet you.” He moved closer to the porch. “Your slaves have been liberated and are now being treated and moved back to safety.”

“Who the fuck do you think you are...?” The mercenary screamed. “You can’t just come in here and do this!”

“Oh but I have!” Martin spoke. “Slavery is against the law sport.”

“There ain’t no law out here asshole! I’m the law! What I say goes!”

Martin shook his head. “Not anymore. You are officially out of business. And very soon you’ll be dead.” Martin looked around at the smoking rubble his MLRS Launchers had caused. “Did you like my show? I love the smell of barbecued asshole in the morning. And my intelligence tells me we caught pretty much all of your little shit heads sleeping in the hotel, too bad for them.”

“I got friends! They’ll hear about this! Your ass will be dead in a week!”

Martin chuckled. “If you are referring to your buddy in Cedar City... don’t you worry... he’ll be following you very soon.” He said. “You have caused the deaths of far too many elves and good decent people, and that stops today.”

“Who’s going to stop me asshole? You?”

“I already have, in case you are too fucking stupid to see what is going on around you!” Martin spoke. “There will be no more slavery in the area we now control. No more slavery, no more auctions and no more oppression.”

“What area? What are you talking about?” The mercenary asked.

Martin smiled. “As of zero six hundred this morning, we have laid claim to southern Utah, all of Arizona, and all Nevada.”

“We?”

Martin smiled. “Yes... the men, women and elves of Eden.”

The mercenary commander reared back his head and roared with laughter. “You have got to be joking! Elves were made to serve humans! That is what they were designed for Elf lover! To be our fuck toys and beasts of burden! Where have you been living... the moon?”

The commander couldn’t understand the laughter that filtered through the ranks of Martin’s soldiers. His face grew redder as his embarrassment grew. He stepped off the porch, “C’mon tough boy! Just you and me! I’ll fuck your ass up so bad it’ll be funny. When I win, you leave your tinker toys and go crawl back into the hole you came out of! I get all your slaves and all your equipment!”

“Eden does not have slaves.” Martin said, causing many heads among the human citizens of Flagstaff to turn and look at each other.

“What’s wrong tough guy! Afraid you can’t beat me in a stand up fight?”

Martin looked at the man with a smile, “Not at all.” He said. His right hand whipped forward faster than normal human eyes could follow. The gleaming blade of the knife slammed into the chest of the mercenary commander with a wet thud, and the man staggered back, his eyes wide. He looked down and saw the handle of the knife protruding from his chest, blood leaking out around the blade. His mind didn’t comprehend what it was and he reached up to grab the handle.

When his hand closed around the handle, his eyes shot wide as even that small movement caused the razor like blade inside his chest cavity to finish severing his heart. He dropped to his knees, blood now pouring from his mouth and looked at Martin who walked up to him.

Martin smiled as he grabbed the blade and yanked it out of the man's chest. "I don't fight fair dick face."

The mercenary commander pitched forward into the dirt, his blood rapidly pooling around his cooling body. Martin leaned over and wiped the blade on the man's shirt before returning it to its place on his thigh.

"Ealin... round up the rest of these mercenary scum and lock them down!" Martin ordered, his eyes coming up to face the several hundred men and women standing in the street.

Their eyes followed the dozen elves and humans as they sprang into action, forcing the mercenaries to their knees at gunpoint and beginning to secure them with flexi-cuffs. Their eyes went back to Martin as he climbed on top of the rusted hulk of the truck.

"I will say this once and only once!" Martin barked to the gathered men and women. "Now is the chance for you to decide. Join us and what we are building, have what you didn't have with this idiot! Prosperity! You will work side by side with elves and men in building a future your children will be safe in! A future you can have a hand in building."

"Elves were made to serve us!" A male voice yelled from the crowd.

"Elves were made to be an ally of man!" Martin snapped. "They were made for the purpose of helping mankind pull itself from the ashes of the Great Fire and move into the future! They were not made to be slaves and beasts of burden! What have you accomplished until this day? You still live in squalor and fear every day. Living under men such as this piece of shit is not freedom! It's not peace. You live in prisons of your own making. Now is the chance for you to break those chains and make something better. We have made that place... not three hundred miles from here. We have running water, power, and food for all. We have schools, medical clinics, stores and thousands who have already seen what they can build. They work day after day side by side with elves to make it better. You can be part of that. Or you can remain as you are and die. We will not tolerate slavery in any way, and we will fight for every part of our freedom. Join us and you can be free as well. Fight us..." Martin took a deep breath. "Fight us and we will crush you under our boot. The choice is yours. I give you one hour to decide, starting now."

Martin jumped down off the truck and turned to Ealin. "Search the remains! Any mercenary or slaver left alive is to be executed. Contact the engineers and have them move to our location. I want this city, or what remains of it stripped bare. Take everything we could possibly use, no matter what it is."

Ealin nodded with a smile. "Three states *Lyca Other*?" He asked.

Martin shrugged. "We were going to do it anyway." He replied. "We may as well get started and let the word spread."

"And the fool in Cedar City?" Ealin asked.

"He'll be dead before the end of the week." Martin answered. "I'm going to contact our teams, come and get me if there are any problems."

Ealin nodded with a smile and watched Martin walk toward one of the Scorpions to use its long range radio unit.

MOUNTAIN CITY

Tarifa's head rocked back and forth on the soft sheets, her raven colored hair spilling across the pillows. Her hands gripped her firm breasts tightly, pinching her own nipples. Her face and upper body were covered in a fine sheen of sweat, her breath coming in deep gasps as pleasure like she hadn't experienced in months surged through her body. Tarifa couldn't remember how many orgasms Dysea had given her in the last two hours, so awash with sexual energy and pleasure as she was. Dysea's delicate touches and caresses had driven her almost wild with passion, and when her lover's soft warm lips finally found their way to her dripping pussy, it was as if time had stood still.

Dysea had never entertained the thought of being with another woman until Tarifa had taken her that day in the cave and shown her what it could be like. The week they had spent in each other's arms was something she would not soon forget, but even now, feasting as she was on Tarifa's lush body, images of Anja flashed back and forth in her mind.

She had taken her time at first, exploring the supple skin and lush curves, tasting Tarifa's flesh with soft kisses and gentle licks. When she found herself between Tarifa's satiny thighs staring at her glistening pussy,

everything fell into place for Dysea. She had traced the outline of Tarifa's dripping pussy with her tongue, eliciting gasps of delight. She had used her fingers to softly part the folds of her cunt, and marvel at the heat and scent that poured from her. Her head was filled with the sweet peach scent that wafted from Tarifa's core, and it took her only seconds to pull her own clothes from her before Dysea felt her own juices pouring out of her extremely excited pussy. Tarifa's fingers had entwined in her long hair, urging her to lover to lap away at her pussy, but Dysea resisted, wanting Tarifa's pleasure to last as long as possible. She had used long tender licks along the outsides of Tarifa's engorged pussy lips, tracing the contours and marveling at the texture and sweetness. She also marveled at how Martin could cram his huge cock into such a small and beautiful pussy, much as she marveled how he did the same to her. It did not take her long to be overcome by the scent and begging of Tarifa before she fastened her soft lips over Tarifa's throbbing clit and sucked hard, just as Tarifa had done to her that first time. She smiled in victory as Tarifa's body had arched off the bed and she had cried out, clutching Dysea's head tightly to her spasming pussy while Dysea drank down her juices.

That had been two hours ago, and now Dysea was still happily lapping away at her lover's still sweet tasting pussy for all she was worth. Dysea's face was covered in Tarifa's cum, and she had no idea how much of her lover's passion she had drank down, and she didn't really care as she wanted more. Her own pussy was drenched, just the task of eating Tarifa's pussy had caused her to have three of her own powerful orgasms, and once more she squirmed her crotch against the soft sheets in her own rapidly building orgasm.

Dysea's tongue was rapidly whipping Tarifa's sensitive clit into frenzy, her lips locked around the extremely hard and erect bud. She reached up with one hand and squeezed Tarifa's right tit, rolling the hard nipple between her thumb and forefinger causing Tarifa to grip the sheets tightly, her eyes shut. Dysea was like a child with a new toy as she experimented with her lover, sending her long fingers deeply into Tarifa's tight cunt, causing her hips to convulse in delicious pleasure. She found that sucking hard on Tarifa's clit while driving three fingers into her sopping pussy had caused Tarifa to scream in unadulterated orgasm, nearly throwing them off the bed.

Now Dysea used her index finger to probe Tarifa's most intimate place. Her anus was slick with pussy juice from her multitude of orgasms, and it was easy for Dysea to tickle her pink opening with little friction. She glanced up Tarifa's clenching abdomen when she felt her lover sit up quickly on her elbows, her eyes wide.

"Dysea... what are you... it has been so long since..." Tarifa gasped.

Tarifa's eyes nearly bugged out of her head and she fell back on the bed when Dysea bit down gently on her engorged clit and simultaneously plunged her index finger into Tarifa's clutching asshole.

Tarifa's back arched off the bed, and she screamed.

Oh did she scream as the most powerful orgasm that she had experienced since Martin had taken her that first night ripped through her being. Her quivering thighs clamped tightly on Dysea's head, her hands ripping the sheets from the bed, the muscles in her neck and throat standing out in exertion as she felt her belly catch fire and her cum rocketed out of her pussy in powerful waves.

Dysea kept her finger buried deeply in Tarifa's ass as she clamped her mouth over Tarifa's spasming pussy. Her eyes opened wide and then closed dreamily as Tarifa's cum erupted into her mouth with a force she had not yet experienced or was prepared for. Feeling Tarifa's juices shooting into her mouth with such delicious force caused Dysea to experience her own shattering climax, and she ground her pussy into the bed as her juices flowed from her. She wanted to scream out her pleasure, but instead kept her lips glued tightly to Tarifa's pussy drinking down the peach tasting cum her lover was giving her.

After nearly a full minute of muscle stretching orgasm, her back arched off the bed, Tarifa collapsed back onto the sheets, unable to catch her breath, and completely drained of energy. She groaned as she felt Dysea's lips leave her still clenching pussy and begin a journey of soft kisses and licks up her body. Dysea paused to tease Tarifa's nipples with her tongue before licking the sweat from between her firm 34C breasts. She trailed her tongue up the hollow of Tarifa's throat, stretching her naked body out atop her lover, making sure that their pussies came to rest against one another. She lifted her head and looked into the wide sapphire eyes of her lover and smiled contently.

Tarifa dreamily pulled Dysea's lips to hers once more and they shared a deep kiss filled with nothing but love and desire. When they parted Tarifa had tears in her eyes. Dysea reached up and gently wiped the tears away.

"What is it Tarifa?" She asked. "Tell me."

“I’m... I’m just very happy right now.” Tarifa sobbed out the words.

Dysea smiled and nuzzled Tarifa’s throat. “Things will begin to get better Tarifa. You must have faith my dear friend. You must have faith.”

“I’m... I’m so tired Dysea.” Tarifa spoke happily.

Dysea laid her head on Tarifa’s breasts and felt her arms encircle her. “We still have two days together Tarifa.” She said. “We can sleep and then pick up where we have left off. I still have another surprise for you.”

Dysea pulled the younger woman’s body tighter as she felt Tarifa’s arms tighten around her. Tarifa was still recovering from the drugs in her system and she fell quickly asleep, her head against Dysea’s breasts. It took another long moment for Dysea, and when she fell asleep, the image that flashed across her mind was that of Anja and Martin and her locked in a similar embrace. And then Dysea allowed sleep to take her into its peaceful state.

CHAPTER TEN

EASTERN ARIZONA

SOUTHERN EDGE OF OLD NAVAJO INDIAN RESERVATION

Tari, the Drow Elf commander, moved easily through the pitch black forest where he and his Company of Drow troops were camped. They had established this position two weeks ago and were doing their best to remain hidden and out of sight. His scouts had come to him a short time ago to inform him of the devastating attack on the mercenary scum in Flagstaff just yesterday by Martin Hunter and those under his command. According to his scouts, Flagstaff was now nothing but a ghost town. Anything that could be used had been stripped in only twenty four hours, and now all that remained were the shells of the city buildings and not much else.

Tari could not help but be impressed by how efficient Martin Hunter was. The man was an utterly ruthless enemy, showing no mercy or quarter, yet he was also by all reports from his scouts extremely compassionate towards the infirmed and the very young and very old. He would wipe you from existence if he detected any threat from you towards anyone under his command or towards his new city, and this above all else is what drove Tari to believe this was the man he had learned of in the schools he had been sent to. The rumors of Eden were spreading like wildfire among the mountains and plains, and he and Lynwe could sometimes hear their own troops talking quietly about seeing this city where men, Elves and whoever desired to be free lived together.

Tari had commanded these two hundred Drow warriors since their inception. They were all products of genetic experiments by the Alliance on captured Drow warriors from long ago and the children they had been forced to bear. When their species had been wiped out nearly a hundred years ago, the Alliance had kept several dozen prisoners to conduct experiments on, forcing many of them to breed. They wanted to develop a different breed of elf that would be a superior warrior, but many of the experiments ended up being sexually deviant in nature. Many of the experiments had been cruel and inhuman, physically changing many of his warriors in different ways over the years. All of his warriors however had one distinct connection and common thread among them. All of them despised the Alliance to their very cores and had been working towards a singular goal very discretely. When word had come down the chain of command that they would be the lead unit on the search for the two Queens of the largest elf factions, Tari had decided it was time for them to take all the Alliance had taught them and desert to Martin Hunter’s command, betraying the ones who thought they were the Masters. All of them had sworn they would never be taken prisoner by the Alliance again.

They had been tracking Martin Hunter’s actions since they had been expelled from High Elf territory. Tari had not felt comfortable just yet in approaching Hunter and his group. The survival of his unit and their continued existence was all that mattered to him anymore. He had nothing left to work for except to see that his men and women finally found their freedom and could live free of persecution from the Alliance. He knew Martin Hunter was the man who could see this dream come true, but the inbred fear he had of who this man might be held him back.

Tari's keen ears picked up the whimpering noises from the large tent he was heading for, and he slowed his gait. Lynwe was his second in command and had been since the inception of his unit. She was an exceptional Drow warrior, specializing in unarmed combat and stealth. She was very powerfully built and possessed unmatched speed and strength that equaled her unparalleled beauty. Her muscular body was almost equal in height to his six foot one frame and rippled with exceptionally defined muscles. Her shimmering white hair hung down to nearly the top of her tight powerful ass cheeks outlining a flawless face with soft full lips and bright amber eyes. She was extremely intelligent and kept a very tight reign on her emotions, never allowing what she felt to show through except in her actions. Tari sighed heavily as he slowed and watched what was happening in the tent before him, surprisingly feeling sorrow at the sight before him.

The opening flap on the tent was folded back, the soft lantern providing enough light for his keen eyes to recognize where the whimpering noises were coming from. They were emanating from the second female Drow officer in the tent with Lynwe. She was also quite naked and at the moment was face down in the pile of blankets beneath her, as her fists clutched at the deer skin coverings, her lips pulled back in almost a snarl like expression, a second blanket clutched tightly in her teeth. Tari recognized the second Drow officer as Anari, his senior medical officer, and another incredible specimen of female beauty and power. Tari knew that Lynwe and Anari were lovers and had been for several years now. Lynwe was obviously the more dominant of the two females, as was customary in any Drow relationship. The female Drow was always the one in charge of a relationship; even those with a male Drow she deemed fit enough to be her mate. It was the Alliance's genetic experiments on his troops that brought about the relationship before his eyes.

Tari shook his head slowly with sadness in his eyes as he watched why Lynwe and Anari would never be able to have a relationship outside of each other. Lynwe's muscular ass flexed in the dim light of the lantern, her back and shoulders slick with sweat as she drove her hips forward with dominating powerful strokes. The thirteen inch steel hard ebony cock between her legs was driving deeply into Anari's willing and extremely beautiful and tight ass. Lynwe's head tossed back, lost as she was in the pleasure of the moment. Anari had an incredible ass, so very tight and warm and perfectly shaped, and Lynwe relished the moments when she could plunge her male cock into that ass. Her hands gripped Anari's hips as she sped up her plunges into her ass, Lynwe's large come filled balls slapping loudly against the backs of Anari's thighs. Lynwe clenched her teeth and groaned loudly as she finally erupted into the bowels of her submissive lover, grinding her huge ebony pole down fully anchored in Anari's tight ass. As Lynwe groaned in release he heard Anari moan loudly as well, her small hand stroking the thick ten inch cock that jutted from between her thighs. He watched as Anari stroked her male organ with near blinding speed until she too exploded and her thick cum drenched the blanket beneath them.

This was what the sexually deviant Alliance experiments had done to Lynwe and Anari. Two stunningly beautiful women and they had cocks that were larger than most males. Tari had not been able to escape the experiments himself, and he had never attempted to have a relationship with a female due to what was done to him, and had given up ever trying. Lynwe and Anari, as well as many others of his unit still hoped to pursue what they could and had not given up. Tari looked up into Lynwe's face and saw her eyes focused on him while she emptied her cum into Anari's tight ass.

"Ah... kiss me Lynwe!" Anari gasped, turning her equally beautiful face back towards her Drow lover, the blanket falling from between her teeth. "I beg you!"

Lynwe turned back to Anari and drove her thick cock forward again eliciting a groan of delight from Anari beneath her as the last of her cum spilled into Anari's bowels. She reached forward and grasped Anari's silky white hair in her hand. Though it was much shorter she was able to grab enough of her hair to pull her head up almost painfully. "Kissing is for those in love!" Lynwe growled.

Lynwe proceeded to pull her softening cock from Anari's ass, her cum spilling from the stretched opening as Anari slumped completely onto the blankets. This was the way of their relationship. Anari knew Lynwe cared for her in her own bizarre way, but she had never once showed her any affection, and while she would never admit it to anyone for fear of appearing weak, it was beginning to take its toll on her emotionally.

Lynwe reached for her clothes and dressed quickly as Tari approached slowly from the darkness. She turned to him as she fastened the last snap of her top, encasing her large firm breasts within the uniform. She stepped out to meet her commanding officer several paces from the tent, possessively blocking Tari's view of Anari's naked form within their tent, and not even realizing it. Tari made note of this but said nothing.

“You don’t come to my tent at this hour unless something has happened Captain.” Lynwe spoke softly.

Tari looked at her as she straightened her uniform. He made no attempt to look behind her into the tent. “We are no longer members of the Alliance Lynwe.” He spoke softly. “And while we may be Drow, we do not have to adhere to ancient laws and tradition.”

Lynwe looked at him, her bright amber eyes understanding what he was saying. “It is very hard Tari.” She replied in almost a whisper. “I... I have so much hate within me.”

Tari nodded slowly. “Of that I have little doubt.” He answered. “Just know that she cares deeply for you, and she does not deserve the hate.”

“She is free to find a lover of her own.” Lynwe spoke almost defensively. “I have made that clear to her.”

Tari nodded. “Have you thought perhaps that she may not want too?” He said.

That statement caused Lynwe to pause and she glanced back into the tent quickly, watching as Anari was pulling her top on over her delicious looking breasts with hard jutting nipples, and her firm rippled abdomen. She felt a rush of sexual desire course through her at the sight, but she fought it down quickly. She turned back to Tari. “I... I will reflect on what you are saying my friend.”

Tari smiled. “I have come to advise you we will be departing tomorrow morning for Cedar City. Our scouts have reported that Hunter is going to move against the slaver there within the next three days.”

“Are they sure? It is so soon after his taking Flagstaff?” Lynwe asked.

Tari nodded. “It appears so. They have detected the remainder of his tank forces leaving Eden and heading southwest. With them were at least two additional battalions of heavy artillery and rocket launchers, as well as another two battalions of troops.”

“He has left Eden unprotected?” Lynwe asked in surprise.

Tari shook his head and smiled. “Hunter has done well in hiding the size of his forces. Our scouts were nearly captured when they got too close to Eden’s southern border. They estimate he has at least two Battalions still guarding the city, and you can be assured they have artillery and air support.”

“He’s moving to eliminate the last large contingent of slavers and mercenaries here in the south.” Lynwe spoke intelligently, her mind racing. “Once he destroys that idiot in Cedar City, he will effectively control all of Arizona, Nevada and most of southern Utah.”

Tari nodded. “And if he is stripping cities as he did Flagstaff it is for only one reason.” He told her.

Lynwe’s eyes went a little wider. “He’s going to establish his own territory!” She exclaimed.

“And Eden will be the center.” Tari spoke. “He is wasting no time either. None of the human and elf villages within the territory have refused his aide and have openly joined his movement. His ranks are swelling with men and women, as well as elves. The remaining Indians here on the reservation have been discussing joining him as well.”

“The High Elves are not going to be happy with him establishing his own territory on their southern border.” Lynwe spoke.

“There are rumors that many of the High Elf villages along that border are already actively working with him in regards to trade and mutual defense treaties.” Tari explained. “We know already that the governor of Salina has done this.”

“And you think others will follow his example?” Lynwe asked.

Tari nodded. “I believe they will. Already those he and Dysea have drawn to Eden are experiencing the benefits of their society. They no longer want for the small things. Medical attention, schools for their young children, a society free of prejudice and hate and persecution.”

Lynwe’s eyes narrowed. “How is that possible Tari?”

Tari shrugged his shoulders. “I have no idea... but however he has done it, it appears to be working.”

“Do... do you think he will allow us to join him?” Lynwe asked. “Our history with the High Elves and Wood Elves is not pleasant. Our Drow history is wrought with conquering and killing High Elf and Wood Elf villages and towns. That does not even include the history we have now, thanks to the Alliance bastards. And as you know, they have long memories.”

“Perhaps.” Tari answered. “Our scouts detected Dysea leaving with the High Elf Queen Mother only two days ago. We assume they departed to return to Mountain City. That suggests that the rumors they are

lovers is at least possible, at the very least they are friends enough to not abandon Tarifa to the whim of the Alliance. That Dysea herself went gives even more credence to this notion.”

“The... the two Queens are friends... if not more.” Lynwe asked in obvious surprise. “That is why she would return to Mountain City even after they expelled them and effectively ended her reign as Queen of the Wood Elves. They must have been monitoring everything going on within Mountain City, and now that her mother has come to Eden City, they have decided it is time to act.”

Tari nodded. “That could very well be the case. There is so much information we do not yet have access too.” Tari told her. “Hunter is quite good at keeping secrets, and we have known for some time that Dysea has a security detachment after the assassination attempt. They did not accompany Dysea when she left with the High Elf Queen Mother, so we have to assume that everything is not as it is made to seem.”

“I am tired of running.” Lynwe spoke finally. “Our safest proposition is to join Hunter. We can not keep running from Alliance forces while protecting those we have sworn to protect.”

Tari nodded. “I agree. That is why we will depart tomorrow morning to join him at Cedar City. With luck he will welcome us.”

“And if he doesn’t?” Lynwe asked.

Tari met her eyes. “We have no place else to go.” Tari said. “He has too.”

MARE ORIENTALE BASIN WESTERN FRINGE OF THE LIGHT SIDE ON THE MOON MOON BASE EDEN

Anisa whimpered in passionate delight, her face buried into the soft pillows on the bed, her back arched upwards as she felt William stroke his incredibly thick cock into her from behind with power and confidence. Anisa had grown to crave the sensations his hugely thick cock gave her whenever he made love to her, and this time was no different as she met his powerful plunges into her dripping pussy with hard thrusts backwards. She groaned every time his burning hot balls slapped against the back of her thighs and sent tiny ripples of pleasure racing through her. Her pussy was soaked with her cum as he had already given her two very powerful orgasms, yet somehow he had held back his own orgasm and continued to fuck her with the same intensity.

Anisa had not intended to fall in love with this man, yet as she looked back on their last few months together she realized it was inevitable. He was the most compassionate man, human or elf, that she had ever met, yet he had a dark side to him that she had seen come out only twice before. Both times in was in response to something that Senator Graham had done, and she feared for whoever was on the receiving end of that anger. William however had never shown anything but love and warmth to her and those he deemed his friends and allies. Anisa had to practically force him to take her after that first time because he did not want her to feel servicing him sexually was necessary. Anisa didn’t tell him that his cock pounding into her made her feel things she had never felt before, and she now craved their moments alone together. Anisa quickly found that she loved being dominated by him in their bed as he drove her to new heights of pleasure each and every time they were together. It turned her on so much because she knew that outside of their bed he was the perfect gentlemen, and treated her as an equal in everything. It was not something she was accustomed too, but she was rapidly learning to accept it and take it for how it was meant as a sign of love.

Anisa could also sense there was something beneath the façade that William projected; something sinister and wild, always waiting to come out. She had seen glimpses of it in his eyes before he brought his emotions back under control. Yet whenever he was with her, she felt like a blanket of soothing warmth was draped around her body and she never questioned him about it.

Anisa felt William’s hands tighten on her slim hips and she knew he was close to filling her with his cum. She turned her head to the side and reached back to grip his pile driving hips, digging her nails into his skin as she knew he liked.

“*Sardar* William!” She cried, “*Sardar!*” (Harder!)

Bill Wallace clenched his teeth and did as his lover asked. He had been fucking this beautiful elf for nearly an hour now, and he was about to erupt inside her incredibly tight and spasming pussy. He slammed his hips forward with more force, driving his rock hard cock into Anisa with incredible strength, and when he

bottomed out inside her velvety warm he felt her powerful pussy muscles clamp down on his raging cock and her lost it.

“Ah fuck!” Bill yelled as his cum exploded deeply into Anisa’s belly, filling her. He felt her own sweet juices splashing wetly across his spewing cock as her body went rigid in her own orgasm and she screamed out her joy.

Bill collapsed forward onto her back, pushing them both down onto the bed as his cock continued to erupt inside her, and his arms went under her body to cup her firm breasts and he pulled her to him. Her small frame fit snugly into his embrace, her supple ass pressed against his groin. As his cock began to soften within her depths, Anisa made no move to extract herself from his powerful embrace. She released his hips and wrapped her arms over his hands as they clutched her breasts. He shifted slightly, coming to rest beside her in the bed, heedless of the wetness her previous orgasms had caused on the sheets. Anisa could only smile in contentment as his buried his face in the hair at the back of her neck, her raven colored mane wild and unchecked. Though he was growing soft, he still was firmly buried inside her, and this is what Anisa relished so much. William never was in a rush to leave her in bed as if she was some passing whore. He held her tightly after all of their encounters, his cock still within her much of the time and stroked her soft skin until both of them were breathing regularly again.

This time was no different, and Anisa spooned back against him as his lips caressed the back of her elfin ear, sending shivers of delight through her. He leaned forward against her face.

“You are incredible.” He spoke softly.

Anisa smiled. “And you are my *Cundu*.” She answered. (Prince.)

Bill pulled her tighter and sighed against her ear. “The representatives from the Alliance will be arriving in a few hours.” He said.

Anisa nodded. “We will be ready.” She told him. “Do you think our plan will work?”

“The only one I see as a question mark is this Colonel Marcus fellow.” William said. “I understand he is part elf and part genetically enhanced soldier.”

“He is what we call a Drow elf and he is a monster.” Anisa said quickly. “He is responsible for the deaths of many elves and humans. He is totally heartless, and a savage brute. I have seen the aftermath of his twisted nature on a young female elf. She barely survived and her mind broke at the things he did to her. She was in the hospital for nearly two months recovering from the physical wounds alone. Her mind never recovered.”

Bill nuzzled her neck. “I intent to make sure that will not happen here Anisa. I promise you.”

“Be careful in your dealings with him William.” She spoke, turning her head slightly towards him. “He is an evil man.”

“I’ve dealt with evil men before.” William told her confidently.

Anisa turned slowly, groaning as his still large cock slipped from the warmth of her soaked pussy. She turned in his arms and reached up to take his face in her hands. “You are no match for him physically William. Promise me you will not endanger yourself. I... I could not bear to lose you now. You have... you have become my *tyar*... my reason for going on.”

Wallace reached up and stroked her soft cheek with his weathered hand. “Do you trust me?” He asked.

Anisa nodded. “Without question William, you know this.”

“Then no matter what you see... or what you hear... know that I do...” Wallace looked into her dark eyes and surrendered to what he was feeling. “Know that I do love you Anisa.”

Anisa felt the tears trickle from her questioning eyes at his words but she kissed him deeply. “No one has ever told me that William.” She said.

“Just don’t forget it.” He said.

“You are unlike any man I have ever known William.” She said. “Were there many of you in the time you came from?”

Bill chuckled at the question and shook his head, “No, most of us came from one city, and we didn’t venture outside our city very often.” He told her.

“You are going to put the seed of doubt into the Minister’s heads about Graham aren’t you?” She said.

“I intend to let them know who actually runs this station.” William told her, “In a discrete way of course.”

“It is a dangerous game we play William Wallace.” Anisa told him.

Wallace nodded. “Yes it is. But in order for our ultimate plan to succeed, we have to play it.”

“I have heard rumors among the new elves that have come to Eden.” Anisa said.

Wallace looked at her, “Rumors?”

Anisa nodded. “They are rumors of a city in the southern mountains where men and elves live and work together in harmony. They are destroying slavers and mercenaries alike and building great things. This is... this is your Martin Hunter isn't it?”

Wallace smiled and nodded. “If I had to guess I would say yes. Marty said he had settled in the southwest near Utah and Arizona. We communicate several times a month, short untraceable links.”

“They are building what the Holy One first envisioned for men and elves.” Anisa spoke with barely concealed excitement. “I would like to see this city one day if it is true.”

William nodded. “So would I.” He replied. “So would I.”

Anisa snuggled even closer and rubbed her moist pussy against William's soft cock. She looked at him with a seductive twinkle in her eyes. “Do we have time?” She asked.

Wallace grinned like a child in a candy shop. He rolled over on top of her sliding between her silky thighs easily. “We can make time.” He told her before covering her lips with his own.

MOUNTAIN CITY

“This is what Martin has taught me Tarifa.” Dysea spoke softly. “And it is what I will now teach you. It will give us an advantage in battle that you and I have never had. He wanted me to show you in case you felt it was needed for yourself to make a quick and silent exit.”

Tarifa and Dysea were sitting on the roof of Tarifa's home, the thick blanket spread out on the metal surface, the moon light bright and allowing them to see easily. They were both naked; their bodies nearly mirror images of perfection in the muscular curves and lean limbs. Tarifa was almost fully recovered from the months of malnourishment and addiction to the drug she thought was a contraceptive, and she had regained her lush muscular form quickly with Dysea feeding her almost endlessly for the last two days. Her natural elfin metabolism, enhanced even further by Martin's DNA, allowed her to recover much more quickly. They had shared many hours of pleasure together, endlessly exploring each others curves and most private places, until they were exploding in passion. They had grown much closer these last two days, physically and emotionally, and among the things they discovered was an almost sister like bond that had developed between them. Dysea had told her of everything that had occurred while building Eden City, holding nothing back, including her growing desire for the woman who had hurt Martin so much in the past. Tarifa had looked at her intently, listening and then telling her with great feeling to allow things to grow and work themselves out.

They sat facing each other now, Tarifa's long legs draped across Dysea's. Their breasts were pressed together, their nipples hard in the cool night air, but both of them were suppressing the feelings of passion they felt. Their eyes had changed, the black outlining the sapphire and emerald colors, their fangs extended to their full length of nearly three quarters of an inch.

“I can fight Dysea.” Tarifa spoke with a small smile. “I thought you brought me up here to have your way with me under the eyes of the moon and stars.”

Dysea's emerald eyes glittered in the moonlight and she smiled, leaning forward to kiss Tarifa softly. “That thought did cross my mind.” She said softly with a smile. “But I must show this to you before I leave tomorrow evening.”

“Show me what Dysea?”

Dysea leaned back from her and took a deep breath. “Watch Tarifa, this is another gift that Menya Melda has given to us. You must picture it in your mind first, and then allow it to come over you.”

“Picture what?” Tarifa asked.

Dysea took a deep breath and closed her eyes, “The Ahya.” (Change.) She said softly. “Feel it around you. Allow it to pass through you, embrace you.”

Tarifa closed her eyes and relaxed, taking deep breaths as the wind blew across the top of her home slightly. Her elfin ears twitched when she picked up the noise and she listened harder, trying to make out the

myriad of sounds. Her nostrils flared as a kaleidoscope of smells swept over her. Dysea's wildflower scent was most prominent due to her proximity, but Tarifa could detect dozens of other scents, ranging from food to flowers and plants and even people.

"Dysea I..."

"Shhh... embrace it Tarifa..." Dysea's soft musical voice spoke. "Separate the smells, catalog them in your mind. Memorize them. Feel the breeze on our skin, how it touches us, caresses our flesh. It can tell us so much. Direction, distance... even what it is. Hear the sounds, the voices, the footsteps, allow it to embrace you and teach you."

Tarifa did as Dysea instructed her, allowing it all to surround her and fill her. It was incredible and almost more than she thought she could bear, but she felt Dysea's hands take hers and she relaxed even more, and began to file what she could hear and smell away just as Dysea had told her. She had never opened herself fully to the changes her relationship and love of Martin had brought about in her until now. She had not known the extent to which it had affected her, and now with Dysea's help she was learning.

"Once we allow the *Ahya* to come over us completely, all of our senses and physical attributes increase nearly ten fold Tarifa." Dysea's voice spoke softly. "We... we are no longer just elves... we are something more. In time you will be able to file away a new smell or taste into your mind without thinking, and you will never forget it."

Dysea opened her eyes and looked at the beautiful face of her lover. Tarifa opened her eyes as well, and she saw the look of wonderment in them. Dysea smiled. "You see."

"It's amazing Dysea!" Tarifa spoke looking at her with wide sapphire eyes. "What else has he shown you Dysea? Tell me."

Dysea smiled. "There is so much about Nauta Melme that he holds back, even from me." She spoke. "There is something... just beneath the surface. I can almost feel it when he makes love to me. It wants to come out, take me, possess me, but he holds it in so tightly. There... there are times when I watch him Tarifa, staring at the moon or the sky, and it's almost as if he is talking with someone else. I can hear voices... faint echoes within my mind. It is very intoxicating at times... yet it is also frightening. It is almost as if he is holding more inside him than he allows others to see, even me."

"Do you believe he... he means to hurt you in any way?" Tarifa asked.

Dysea shook her head quickly. "No... it is never that. I have known nothing but love and warmth in his embrace. Never have I seen him angry with me, though I have tested the limits of his patience at times." She answered with a small smile. "I believe it is because he *wants* to show me more... *tell* me more... but something inside him stops him."

Tarifa took her hands and squeezed them tightly. "We have known each other for so short a period of time, but I am closer to you than to my own sisters Dysea. Even without the physical pleasure we have given each other, I feel a special bond with you."

Dysea nodded with a smile, "And I with you Tarifa. I have never had the pleasure of siblings, my father died before my mother could bear him more children and she never took another husband. You fill that part of me that a sister would, and I will always cherish that."

"Dysea, should we tell the Holy One what we have discovered?" Tarifa asked, her hand absently reaching up to stroke Dysea's face.

Dysea shook her head again. "Your mother and my mother are the only ones who truly know what has been happening. We should keep it that way for now, at least until we have devised a plan to free your father and brothers. I know Nauta Melme has already begun working on one in his head, in between getting into trouble no doubt while I am away." Dysea spoke with a grin.

"The two of you were truly meant for one another Dysea... and it makes me happy to see you with him." Tarifa spoke.

Dysea reached up to stroke her cheek. "You will find the one for you Tarifa, do not fear that. If anything, my love and my time with Nauta Melme have shown me that these things most often blindsides you from the least expected area, such as my growing feelings for Anja."

Tarifa chuckled. "Well she is delightfully wonderful to look at." Tarifa spoke. "Something I would not have noticed six months ago."

Dysea chuckled, "Nor I."

Tarifa met her eyes. “We have a night and day remaining before you have to depart. What do we do?”

“Nauta Melme asked me to discover as much about this messenger who pass on the pills to you as I could.” She spoke. “This person may lead us to whoever is actually supplying the pills. I believe it may be time for you to run out of your medication and inquire that you need more urgently.”

Tarifa saw the look in Dysea’s eyes and her jaw line hardened. “Yes I think that would be an excellent idea.”

The tavern was in the lowest portion of Mountain City, and it was also considered the most dangerous, as it was where most of the petty criminals resided. It was also home to many of the seedier establishments that operated brothels out of their buildings. No matter what the elves tried, they found they could not rid themselves of these parts of their cities, and many of the elves considered these portions of their cities to be unconscious leftovers from their years as slaves. The position on the ground level and proximity to the several entrances nearby gave the criminal element easy access in and out of Mountain City. This was where many of the citizens of Mountain City dare not venture. It was an extremely rough and dangerous part of the city, and for the most part it was left without security forces patrolling it unless something major occurred. Tarifa had tried to expunge this part of Mountain City from their lives, but no matter what she did, it never seemed to die.

Dysea and Tarifa now sat in the rear of the tavern, the small table providing them with an excellent view of the entrance into the establishment. Both of them wore thick capes with the cowls and hoods drawn over their heads, effectively hiding their identities from the dozens of dubious looking individuals within the tavern. Most of the tavern was occupied by elves, but there were the few humans that were brave enough to enter. This was initially a surprise to Tarifa, who had never ventured this deep into the bowels of her own city, but she quickly understood it for what it was. None of the humans were slavers, as that would not be tolerated by even those elves prone to criminal activities, so that made many of them traders of black market goods who were looking to spend an evening with some of the more loose female elves in the cities. It was smoky inside, with the sounds of voices and music filling the air. They were watching the entrance to the tavern, as they had been for the last hour, carefully watching those who entered but remaining very subtle about it.

“Do you believe they will come?” Dysea asked in barely a whisper, almost no sound coming from her lips, almost as if she was mouthing the words. Dysea knew that Tarifa’s keen ears would detect her words now that she had opened herself fully to the *Ahya*. Their cowls hid the fact that their eyes were no longer normal, outlined in black as they were.

“There is no reason for suspicion.” Tarifa answered in the same manner, no sound coming from her moving lips. “I followed the procedure exactly.”

Their heads turned casually as the door to the tavern slid open and the figure of medium height stepped into the darkened room. The figure wore a long cloak and cowl as well, hiding their features from view. They watched as the head swept the room, finally coming to rest on where they sat. They gazed at the figure as it made its way towards them, moving among the mass of bodies with grace and obvious skill. That the figure was female was obvious as even the long cloak conformed to the full figure and breasts that pushed against the cloak. Tarifa sensed Dysea stiffen next to her, but resisted the urge to turn to look at her.

“Dysea... what is wrong?”

“It... it is a Drow!” Dysea answered in the same silent words.

“A Drow, here; that... that isn’t possible!” Tarifa replied, watching as the figure grew closer. “I... I thought they were nearly extinct.”

“You said yourself you saw dark skinned elves moving freely in the Alliance city where they held you prisoner.” Dysea spoke.

“I did yes, but that they could be Drow never entered my mind.” Tarifa said. “Nor the fact they could be in my city.”

“Perhaps Tarifa, but whoever this is, it is a Drow elf.” Dysea answered. “No one moves like a Drow Elf. And this person is moving like a Drow.”

“Do we change the plan?”

“No. I will just up the dosage somewhat.” Dysea spoke, her hands deftly bringing the small tranquilizer gun from under her cloak. It was something that Martin had given her to keep from having to kill anyone if she needed to make a fast exit from Mountain City.

They watched the figure settle into the third chair at their table but make no move to draw back the cowl. Now that Tarifa had Dysea’s warning, her changed eyes could just barely detect the fringes of silky white hair under the cowl.

“Tell your Queen she takes a great risk coming here for this medicine.” The female voice spoke softly.

“She is almost out of what was given to her earlier. She needed more.” Tarifa replied calmly.

“Who is your companion?”

“A friend and protector,” Tarifa answered leaning forward. “Do you have what I need?”

The female Drow Elf took a small container from under her cloak and set it on the table. Her hand betrayed what she was, confirming Dysea’s suspicions. Her skin was the color of dark caramel, though barely discernable in the dim light of the tavern. “I was able to obtain double the requested dosage so that you do not have to take such risks coming down here. It is not safe for you to walk these paths.”

“You worry for the Queen’s safety?” Tarifa asked slightly surprised.

“The High Elf Queen is not my enemy.” The female spoke. “And I have no desire to make one of her. The rumors that spread in these streets say she is in danger, and I do not wish to have her come down here and risk herself while in my presence.”

“That is very interesting reasoning for a Drow.” Tarifa spoke. “I understand the Queen is responsible for the deaths of many of your people. Why would you help her?”

“You are... you are different.” She spoke. “Not like the normal hand maidens that come into these parts.”

“Should I take that as a compliment?” Tarifa asked.

The head of the Drow female turned ever so slightly to look at Tarifa’s hidden face. “The High Elf Queen has killed many of my people yes, but it is she who also urged the end of the war between our two peoples.” The Drow answered. “And this action saved many more lives. Do you have my payment?”

Tarifa took her hand from under her cloak and reached out with the small brown bag of credits and placed them in the outstretched hand of the Drow Elf. “I thank you.” She spoke, covering the exchange discretely with her other hand, casually taking the Drow’s hand between her own as if meaning to shake the hand. Tarifa’s hands clamped down on the Drow’s hand with a vise like grip and the Drow’s head came up quickly, exposing those near glowing amber eyes for Tarifa to see. The strength of the grip on her hand should not be coming from an elf.

“What are you doing?” She hissed.

“Getting some answers!” Tarifa hissed back.

Dysea extended the tranquilizer gun under the table and fired two quick shots. The soft sound was lost in the background noise of the tavern, as was the grunt of surprise and pain as the darts slammed into the Drow’s exposed side. The tranquilizer acted instantly, and the Drow’s now exposed amber eyes rolled into the back of her head and she collapsed forward onto the table.

Tarifa acted just as quickly, scooping the Drow female into her arms, absently admiring the firmness of her body. Dysea quickly joined her on the opposite side of the unconscious Drow, as they situated the Drow warrior between their bodies.

“I know a place.” Tarifa said quickly. “We can take her there.”

“Quickly,” Dysea said. “Before we draw more attention to us than we desire.”

They needn’t have worried, as it was apparent that many of the taverns’ visitors passed out from too much wine and ale, and the few heads that had turned in their direction went back to what they were doing and dismissed the drunken elf and the comrades that assisted him in leaving the tavern.

MOON BASE EDEN

“I present Colonel Marcus of The Alliance Military Eastern Command Headquarters.” Minister Oleg Deval spoke, motioning to the tall dark skinned elf with cruel amber eyes.

William had turned out in his finest dress uniform, with all his decorations, to greet the arriving Alliance Ministers with Senator Graham. He had met Deval before, but the new Ministers he had not. There was older man by the name of Robert Wiseman and the head of the Alliance Genetics Division Selene Torcrum. Wiseman had the same hard look as Deval and Bill immediately dismissed him as another crony. Minister Torcrum however was different. She was relatively young for such a position of power, her strawberry blond hair long and pulled into a tight pony tail away from her face. The plain gray outfit she wore did not hide the long legs and ample chest she sported, and William briefly wondered how she had advanced so high up in an obviously male dominated form of government.

William now stood eye ball to eye ball with the man that many of the elves called The Alliance Butcher. Marcus was equal in height to Wallace's six foot one, and very well muscled. He had a dark cruel look in those amber eyes, and it was setting off alarm bells in William's head from the start.

"An honor to meet you Colonel," William spoke calmly.

Marcus eyes this human in front of him, taking note of his excellent physical condition, and the intelligent look of his eyes. "You may not think so after our visit here Admiral." He spoke.

"Is that so?" William said confidently. "And why is that?"

"It is my job to make certain that Alliance interests are being looked after." Marcus spoke. "I intend to do just that."

"I have no doubts you will find everything in good order." William spoke.

The politicians in the room simply stood there and let the two military men stare at each other from six inches apart for another few seconds before Graham smiled.

"We are very pleased you have come." He spoke. "I have arranged very comfortable quarters for you during your stay. All of you will have two slaves at your call for whatever you may need at all times. Please..." Graham motioned for the door. "I'd like to give you a short tour and then I have an exquisite dinner laid out for you."

Deval seemed pleased at this. "I take it you are happy with the last shipment of slaves then." He asked.

"Oh yes, very happy." Graham answered.

"Perhaps then we can begin discussions on the advanced avionics packages for the Raptors that you have so graciously given us the plans too. And I'm sure Minister Torcrum would like to inspect your facilities and see your baseline code for the new drug."

Graham nodded, "Of course. We'll pass the lab area on the way to more comfortable surroundings and I can have Doctor Taggart give Minister Torcrum the complete design and specs."

Deval turned to Marcus. "I trust Admiral Wallace will be able to give you a separate tour of the facility Colonel."

William smiled. "I'd be honored too." William replied. "We can start with the Raptor production facilities here on Eden."

Marcus nodded. "That is sufficient to start." He spoke and heading towards the opposite door that William's hand extended in the direction of.

William looked at Deval. "We'll meet you for lunch Minister. Enjoy the tour."

William turned and followed Marcus out of the receiving center and into the heart of Eden Base.

MOUNTAIN CITY DRAGOON SAFE HOUSE

"And you are sure no one knows of this place?" Tarifa asked Cantel as he lowered the two heavy bags to the floor.

"This is one of the oldest safe houses that we have My Queen. Only the most senior commanders know of its existence." Cantel replied. "And they are all loyal to you without question."

Tarifa nodded. "Inform my mother of our location so that she does not worry." Tarifa told him. "We will return sometime before mid day so that Dysea can leave with the Trade Caravan."

"My Queen... she is a Drow!" Cantel spoke. "They were thought to be extinct! How is it that she is alive and operating within Mountain City?"

“I don’t know, but we will find out Cantel.” Tarifa replied.

“You should allow me to at least leave a senior Dragoon with you. If she is schooled as a Drow Assassin, she will be lethally trained and extremely dangerous.”

Tarifa touched his arm. “We will be fine Cantel. Make sure my mother knows our location and insure all arrangements for Dysea’s return are perfect.”

Cantel nodded quickly and bowed his head, “As you order my Queen.”

Tarifa watched as the door slid closed behind him and she secured the lock. She tossed back her cloak and draped it over the chair as she headed for the bedroom where Dysea had taken the Drow.

Dysea was securing the Drow’s feet to the floor anchors with clasps and iron bracelets that were connected to the floor at the foot of the bed. The safe house was able to accommodate prisoners and had been used to interrogate individuals in the past. Dysea had removed the Drow’s cloak and cowl and she stepped back just as the Drow was beginning to regain consciousness. The woman’s silky white hair was cut short all around her head except for in the front where it was considerably longer on either side of her face. Her dark obsidian skin was flawless in its features, her lips appearing soft and colored with dark red gloss. The outfit she wore was a very revealing skin tight white dress that barely came down over her firm, muscular dark thighs. It was cut in a deep V shape, revealing her muscular abdomen and the line of cleavage from her medium sized but exceptionally firm breasts, and was held together with laces. Around her neck she wore a glittering gold medallion that Dysea quickly reached down and removed as she stirred. The effects of the tranquilizer were instantaneous in their results, but Martin had told her it would give the person a splitting head ache when they woke.

Dysea heard the Drow moan as she moved her head and she turned to look at Tarifa as she came up next to her. “She’s already coming around?” Tarifa asked surprised.

Dysea nodded. “Her metabolism is regenerative it seems, much like ours is. It appears she is much more resilient to poisons than most elves.” She answered, also surprised at this realization. “Another ten minutes and she would have woken up while we were carrying her here. She has no weapons, but she was wearing this.”

Dysea held out the medallion to Tarifa who took it in her hands gently.

“An heirloom perhaps,” Tarifa spoke turning it over in her hands admiring the intricate workmanship it would have required to make. The medallion was split down the center, as if it had been cut with a laser.

“Whatever it is, it was all she had on her in possessions.” Dysea said. “Why would a Drow Assassin be in Mountain City without weapons?”

Tarifa looked at the Drow on the floor at the foot of the bed, her sapphire eyes wandering over her body in a different fashion that Dysea’s had. Tarifa took in the lush figure and silky satin like skin, as well as the curves of her hips and the fullness of her breasts. She had touched the Drow’s skin in the tavern, and it had sent ripples through her even as she had Dysea had supported her as they left the tavern. “Her heart rate has increased. She’s fully awake now.” She said.

Dysea smiled. “You can open your eyes Assassin.” She snapped. “We know you are conscious now.”

The Drow’s eyelids opened to reveal her gleaming amber colored eyes and the anger and hatred was very obvious within those amber gems. “I will kill you both and strip the skin from your bodies!” She hissed vehemently.

Tarifa and Dysea smiled. “Just how do you plan to do that?” Dysea asked. “You are securely shackled. And you will not break those bonds.”

“No bonds can hold a Drow Assassin!” She spat.

“You think highly of your skills.” Tarifa spoke now. “Yet you allowed the two of us to take you with considerable ease. Why is that?”

“You... you deceived me!”

“Of course we deceived you!” Tarifa replied. “Did you think we would tell you who we were and expect you to meet with us! How is it that a Drow Assassin survived the Alliance purge of your people? How long have you been in my city?”

“Your city,” The Drow spoke sarcastically. “You think much of yourself if you...” Her words stopped and her eyes took in Tarifa as if seeing her for the first time, “You... you are the High Elf Queen?” Her eyes went to Dysea and recognition blossomed on her face once more. “You are the... you are the Wood Elf Queen?”

“Former Queen.” Dysea corrected her. “You have much to answer for. Paramount among them is the attempt to kill Tarifa.”

“I did no such thing!” The Drow spat defiantly.

Dysea held up the container of false contraceptives. “Then explain this?” She tossed the container on the floor at the Drow’s feet.

“I will tell you nothing former Queen! I am a Drow Assassin! I am superior to you in every way!” The Drow hissed her eyes angry.

Dysea was upon her in a blink, moving far faster than the Drow assassin could follow. She gasped when Dysea’s hand closed around her throat and squeezed. She leaned back but was stopped by the foot of the bed and her eyes sprang open as Dysea’s face, her emerald eyes now outlined in black appeared in front of her eyes.

“You will tell us what we want to know Drow Assassin!” Dysea snarled. “If you do not, I promise you more pain than you could possibly imagine.”

The Drow glared right back at Dysea, the defiance never leaving her eyes. “You... you know nothing of pain!” She stammered. “You... you have never been tortured by the Alliance Pain Masters!”

Tarifa stepped forward and placed her hand on Dysea’s shoulder, “Dysea.” She said softly, causing Dysea to meet her eyes. Dysea released her grip on the Drow’s throat and got back to her feet as Tarifa knelt in front of the Drow Assassin. “Dysea may not have experienced the Alliance Pain Masters... but I have.” Tarifa said softly.

“You lie!”

Tarifa reached up and pulled the loose fitting shirt from her right shoulder. The Drow’s eyes went to the three inch long jagged scar that paralleled her shoulder blade. She knew immediately what it was. “The Pain Master inserted his electrodes through here.” Tarifa said, touching the scar. “I was his prisoner for four days before Marcus made me his plaything.” Tarifa’s hand snapped out with lightning speed and she hit the Drow across the face with a stinging pop that rocked her head back and split her bottom lip slightly. “Never accuse me of not knowing pain! And do not doubt the pain Dysea will inflict upon you will be far greater than anything the Pain Master may have put you through. She has a particular distrust of Drow. Now, I have been used by far too many people for far too long and I want answers. You will answer our questions with no more games or spouting your Drow superiority to us. Either of us could take you as if you were a child if we so choose. Do we understand each other now?”

The Drow’s amber eyes softened slightly and she reached up to wipe away the blood trickling from her split lip. These were not ordinary female elves she was dealing with, their speed and strength far greater than anything she had ever encountered. She needed to know more before she could form a plan to escape and she nodded her head slowly.

Tarifa nodded. “Good.” She said. She got up and moved across the room, pulling the chair from under the desk. She brought it back to the end of the bed and sat in it facing the Drow assassin. “*Har Undu*, on the bed. You do not need to stay on the floor.” (Sit Down)

The Drow got to her feet slowly and pulled herself into a sitting position on the end of the bed, the iron shackles clanking on the floor as she settled.

“Let’s begin with your name.” Tarifa said.

“Aihola,” The Drow answered immediately, “Aihola of the Family Anatyla.”

“Who do you work for?” Dysea asked.

“I work for myself!” Aihola replied. “I am alone.”

“Then who gave you the drugs to give to me?” Tarifa asked.

Aihola’s eyes narrowed. “I do not deal with drugs! Of any kind! They are evil!”

Dysea bent down and retrieved the container from the floor and held them up in front of her face. “These are drugs Drow whore!” She snapped.

“They are pills to keep from becoming pregnant!” Aihola snapped right back. “I do not transport drugs! And I am no whore Wood Elf bitch!”

Tarifa took the container from Dysea’s hand. “These pills are not a contraceptive Aihola.” She said calmly. “They are a combination of three mind controlling drugs given to you to give to me so that someone else could control my mind.”

“You expect me to believe that?” Aihola popped, looking at her. “There is nothing wrong with you.”

“How did you get into Mountain City without being detected?” Tarifa asked.

“I was given travel papers and credits.” Aihola replied.

“By whom?” Dysea spoke.

“I don’t know. They were left for me in a delivery box in New Baltimore! Five months ago!” Aihola replied.

“So you are a member of the Alliance Military?” Dysea prodded.

“I was until a year ago.” Aihola replied honestly. Something told her that these two Elf Queens would know if she was lying, and the sapphire eyes of the raven haired Queen were boring into her in a way no gaze ever had. “I was expelled for... I was expelled and ordered executed for not butchering an innocent human family that had done nothing wrong!”

“And they just let you leave?” Tarifa asked with some doubt.

Aihola shook her. “I escaped the day before my execution.” She answered.

Dysea pulled the second chair over next to Tarifa and settled into it. “Are we to believe you escaped from a maximum security military prison the day before you were to be executed by yourself?”

“My unit commander and others assisted me.” Aihola answered. “A little more than three months ago they vanished while on a mission. All of them are Drow... and all have been servants of the Alliance. They tortured us... conducted vile experiments on us! We had decided nearly a year ago to desert at the first opportunity, and apparently that opportunity came.”

“Yet you remained in New Baltimore undetected?” Tarifa said. “Why?”

“I took on a new identity and had plastic surgery to change my appearance.” Aihola said. “There is an extensive underground network in New Baltimore.”

“There is an underground network?” Dysea asked surprised.

“There are many who do not agree with the Alliance policies.” Aihola spoke. “They have formed an underground cell where an elf or someone wanted by the government can go to for help. New Baltimore is very large, as most of the Alliance cities are. It is a small affair to remain hidden and undetected if you know what you are doing. There is a sizable mercenary network that uses New Baltimore as its base.”

“So you were recruited to come to Mountain City to poison me?” Tarifa asked.

“I was recruited to come here and await orders!” Aihola snapped. “When I arrived I was given a place to remain hidden and told I would be contacted. Just over three months ago I was. I was instructed to deliver a package to a female elf within the Royal compound. I did so and was paid quite well. I had no idea what the package contained and I didn’t ask.”

“You asked this time.” Tarifa said. “You must have or else you would not be under the impression you were carrying contraceptives for the Queen.”

“When I was contacted they offered double what I was paid the last time to deliver the pills to you this evening. I inquired as to why the figure had doubled for a similar job. She told me.” Aihola answered.

“She told you?”

“My contact was a female.” Aihola told her. “By the sounds of her voice and breathing, I estimate she was nearing a hundred years of age. She had a trace of Western City accent in her tone.”

“She told you they were contraceptives for me?” Tarifa asked.

Aihola nodded. “There are rumors circulating here in the lower levels of your city that you do not wish to bear that *saura ner* Telan a *haryon*. The voice told me the rumors were true.” (Putrid Man) (Heir)

Tarifa looked at Dysea. “I know who it is.” She spoke confidently. “She is an aide to my mother, though how she has access to such drugs is a mystery. My handmaiden must have contacted her, and she made the call to Aihola here.”

“The new aide to your mother the one that goes by Alore,” Dysea asked.

Tarifa shook her head. “You have not seen her yet. But you will.” Tarifa turned back to Aihola. “How did she contact you?”

“I have an untraceable communicator.” Aihola answered.

“Where is this communicator?”

“It... it is hidden.” Aihola told them.

Tarifa glanced at Dysea and nodded slowly. “Remove your clothes.” Tarifa spoke matter of factly turning back to Aihola.

“I will do no such thing!” Aihola spat.

“You will if you wish to live.” Dysea demanded.

“Then you will have to kill me!” Aihola barked.

Dysea moved much faster than Aihola was prepared for and in the blink of an eye she was behind her, wrenching her head back further on the bed by her hair. Dysea’s eyes changed quickly and when Aihola reached back to strike at her she grabbed one of her wrists and pinned it above her head. Tarifa was in front of her then, pulling her other arm back and pinning it behind her as well. They both noticed that this Drow female had a great deal more strength than a normal elf, forcing them to apply more pressure.

“No!” Aihola screamed, struggling in the iron like grip of Dysea and Tarifa. Her amber eyes were wide at the strength of the two Queens, “*Ni indome cera hon!*” (I will carve out your hearts.)

Tarifa settled onto Aihola’s lap, effectively pinning her legs down and brought up the razor sharp blade. “Do not move!” She spoke firmly.

Aihola looked at her as she lowered the knife to the laces holding her dress closed around her. “No! *Le bertho na apa... ahhhhhhh!*” (You dare to touch.)

Tarifa sliced open the laces holding her garment together and watched as her full and very firm obsidian colored breasts were fully exposed to her eyes. Aihola’s nipples were jutting out nearly half an inch in length, fully erect and they looked to be painfully hard. This caused Tarifa’s eyes to go a little wider, and her heart to flutter but she kept to her task.

“*Le racco* whores!” Aihola screamed. (You cursed.) Her head was flailing side to side as Tarifa’s hand snaked lower along her flat firm abdomen. “No! *Inye nosta le! Lau!*” (I beg you. No)

Tarifa’s fingers slipped inside Aihola’s thin white panties and she felt the soft white hair above the opening of her pussy. Her eyes grew even wider when Aihola’s taunt body tensed noticeably, her back arching slightly. There was only one place she could have hidden a communicator and not have Dysea find it. Tarifa’s finger slipped through the soft hair and found Aihola’s soaked pussy lips. She felt her extremely erect clit prodding the skin of her hand and Aihola’s eyes nearly rolled into the back of her head when Tarifa’s hand brushed against her engorged clit. As gently as she could, Tarifa slipped her fingers past Aihola’s drenched pussy lips and found the thin object taped inside her thigh.

“*Lau...lau! Inye... inye nira buio le...Ahhhhhhh... lau!*” (No...no! I will serve you!)

Tarifa was taken aback as Aihola’s body went completely rigid and her cum flooded out of her spasming pussy. The veins along the side of her neck bulged out, and her coal black skin suddenly blossomed with sweat. The strong scent of Cherry Blossoms filled the room as Tarifa lifted the communicator in her cum covered fingers, her eyes on Aihola’s withering body as she was gripped in a powerful orgasm.

Dysea looked at her amazed, her own senses overwhelmed by the scent of Aihola’s cum, which still was erupting from her cunt, soaking the panties and the bed she was sitting in. Aihola was completely out of it, her body having betrayed her as she surrendered to the sensations ripping through her. Her mind was flashing with bright lights and she silently cursed the Alliance scientists who did this to her. The slightest sensation of pleasure on her breasts or pussy caused her to become highly aroused and unable to stop the pleasure from gripping her and sending her over the edge. She had tried to control it, but Tarifa’s hand had been too soft and too skilled, and her engorged clit was fully erect by the time her hand had deftly slipped into her lace panties. Aihola lost all sense of reality as soon as her hand had grazed her clit and sent her over the edge.

Dysea no longer needed to restrained Aihola as she was gripping the sides of the bed in an explosive orgasm and she released her grip on her arms, watching as Aihola brought her hands down to her obsidian breasts and began to fondle them roughly, pinching her own nipples trying to draw out her pleasure.

“What did you do to her Tarifa?” Dysea asked in shock.

Tarifa looked just as surprised and held up the communicator. “I... I don’t know. This is what I wanted.”

Dysea took the communicator and took the wrapping off of it carefully as Tarifa turned to look at Aihola’s glistening body on the bed. She brought her fingers up to her face and inhaled the Cherry Blossom scent deeply, feeling a wave of sexual heat surge through her. Almost without thinking Tarifa slipped her fingers into her mouth and tasted Aihola’s juices. Her taste buds came alive and exploded in delight at the taste.

“I have the last communication code.” Dysea said.

“*Inye Racco le ui*,” Aihola spat viciously as she began to regain her composure, her chest heaving in exertion. (I curse you both!) “You had no right!” Her delicious looking breasts were shiny in the dim light, covered in a fine sheen of sweat, and Aihola tried to pull her sliced garments together to hide her nakedness.

Dysea turned to look at Tarifa and saw her chest rising and falling quickly. Her face was flush and her eyes had changed again, “Tarifa?” She asked softly.

Tarifa turned to look at her and Dysea then detected the now familiar smell of her lover’s excitement. “Dysea... I... I feel so warm.” She said in a voice that was almost pleading in tone. Dysea felt a wave of sexual warmth rush through her just as quickly as she smelled Tarifa’s excitement, “What is happening Dysea?”

“It’s... it’s the Drow!” Dysea answered hesitantly, feeling her own excitement rising quickly. “She... her juices... it is affecting us somehow.” She said stepping closer to her. “I... I have seen this before Tarifa. We should leave now... before...”

Dysea’s words were silenced as Tarifa’s soft luscious lips covered her own and Tarifa’s tongue plunged into her mouth. Dysea’s control surrendered to Tarifa’s need and her arms pulled her closer, frantically pulling at Tarifa’s clothes. Tarifa nearly ripped Dysea’s top from her, exposing her large tanned breasts and aroused nipples. Dysea gasped loudly as Tarifa lowered her head and engulfed her right nipple within her warm mouth. Even in the midst of her increasing sexual excitement, Dysea continued to pull Tarifa’s own clothes from her, finally freeing her firm breasts and eraser hard nipples. She pinched Tarifa’s nipples firmly hearing her groan in desire. Whatever had affected them was firmly in control and Aihola could only watch in stunned shock as the two Queens groped and licked each other all over. It was a new sight for Aihola, having never experienced pleasure with a woman, and even though a small part of her found it disgusting, it was having its own affect on her. She could not tear her gaze from the firm and lush bodies of the two Queens as they pulled the remainder of each other’s clothes off, exposing themselves to her gaze completely.

Aihola’s amber eyes were wide in growing excitement, and she felt the warmth returning between her quivering thighs. She watched as the two young Queens fell to the bed next to her and quickly reversed their positions. She got a full view of Dysea lowering her dripping platinum haired pussy onto Tarifa’s extended tongue, and she watched as Dysea’s blond mane lowered out of sight into Tarifa’s dark haired pussy. She was frozen in place watching Tarifa’s tongue plunge furiously in and out of Dysea’s pussy, alternating between long licks up the blood engorged lips as they opened like a flower and flicking across the clearly pierced and very erect clit. Tarifa’s hands never stopped moving, stroking her lovers’ body all over. Aihola could only stare at them and the gods help her, she wanted the High Elf Queen to do the same to her.

It was Dysea though who won the battle as Aihola saw Tarifa push her head back, her face and lips covered in Dysea’s juices and scream. Dysea’s dancing tongue and skilled fingers caused her to shudder in orgasm as her cum exploded out of her, emptying into Dysea’s willing mouth. Aihola saw Tarifa’s eyes fix on her as her neck strained in orgasm and it was then that she saw the extended fangs protruding from Tarifa’s open mouth. She also saw that the white’s of her eyes had disappeared and her sapphire colored eyes were now outline din black.

“I want... I want to taste her!” Tarifa gasped and Aihola’s eyes grew even wider.

Aihola watched as Dysea’s body turned on top of her lover and she discovered that Dysea’s emerald eyes had changed as well, and she saw the extended fangs as Dysea lovingly trailed her tongue up between Tarifa’s jutting breasts.

They were both far too gone to care and Dysea smiled as she licked her lips next to Tarifa’s beautiful face.

Aihola saw the look of desire in both their eyes and she tried to get up quickly from the bed. “I... I am a Drow warrior!” She stated quickly as both Tarifa and Dysea came across the large bed towards her. “I... I will not allow this!”

Tarifa moved like a blur of light and grabbed the chain that connected to Aihola’s ankle shackles. She yanked hard and watched as Aihola couldn’t hold her balance and fell with a gasp back onto the bed. She moved again grabbing Aihola’s silky hair in her fist. Aihola’s wide eyes saw that her lips and face were moist with Dysea’s juices.

“You will... you will not take me like this! I am a Drow warrior! I will not submit to this! I... I do not bed women!” Aihola nearly shouted, but her voice was faltering, as Tarifa’s soft hand trailed up her muscular abdomen.

“I... I have heard Drow woman like it rough.” Tarifa spoke in a husky voice, staring into Aihola’s amber eyes.

“NO! Do not... I don’t want this!” Aihola pleaded.

“Your body says otherwise Aihola.” Dysea’s voice was soft as her face appeared next to Aihola’s.

“I... I don’t...” Aihola began.

“We are going to take you now!” Dysea spoke, filling her hand with Aihola’s lustrous white hair.

“No! I... you...” Aihola’s couldn’t complete her sentence as Dysea’s lips covered her mouth and gripped her head tightly by her hair. At the touch of Dysea’s tongue within her mouth Aihola groaned against the invading appendage as it met and began a duel with her own tongue. Aihola had never been kissed before, and it sent electric shocks shooting through her unlike anything ever had. She could taste Tarifa’s cum on Dysea’s tongue and it tasted distinctly like peaches and despite the fact that it was a woman’s tongue within her mouth, Aihola found it very much to her liking and her resistance to the kiss subsided just a little.

Dysea felt this and deepened her kiss, using her free hand to reach for Tarifa’s head which was currently snuggled next to Aihola’s large breasts, her tongue dancing across the firm black skin and mercilessly teasing the monstrously erect and hard nipple. Dysea pushed Tarifa’s head lower, and needing no further encouragement in her current state of arousal Tarifa complied.

Tarifa shifted her body lowered and settled between Aihola’s quivering black thighs. She admired the lean muscles as they clenched and drew tight, and she caressed the slick black skin, the contrast of her skin against Aihola’s heightening her desire even more. Her eyes found the prize she was searching for and they grew wide as Aihola’s nearly half inch long dark pink clit was engorged and completely unhooded once more as if begging to be feasted on. The dark pink lips of Aihola’s pussy were open like a butterfly just spreading its wings and Tarifa brushed her nose against the sensitive lips inhaling deeply, burning her scent into her brain. She felt Aihola’s legs tense and her tight black ass clenched as she tried to draw away. Tarifa didn’t allow that and took those beautifully shaped black cheeks in her hands. Her ass was easily the equal, if not more beautiful than Dysea’s firm and wonderfully shaped ass and she held the tight ass cheeks firmly as she drew herself closer to that soaked and dripping pussy. She pursed her lips and blew softly on Aihola’s fully exposed clit, feeling proud as one of Aihola’s powerful hands dropped to her shoulder and squeezed tightly, trying to push her away.

Dysea knew from the way Aihola reacted that Tarifa was about to take her and she pulled away from the toe curling kiss she was giving to the Drow Assassin. She smiled when Aihola instinctively flicked out with her tongue trying to continue the kiss. She stared into Aihola’s amber eyes as she lifted herself up and rotated her body around.

“No!” Aihola protested, turning her head to the side even as her eyes stared at Dysea’s dripping pussy lower over her face. “I am Drow! I don’t... I don’t do this! I don’t bed with other women! No!”

Dysea looked down as she knelt above Aihola’s face and saw Tarifa’s sapphire eyes looking up at her positioned as she was in front of the Drow’s sopping pussy. She felt a rush of further sexual excitement and reached out to lower her hands onto Aihola’s large breasts.

“I... I would believe you... Drow assassin... if your body was not betraying you.” Dysea groaned as she pinched Aihola’s huge nipples. “Ta... taste me Aihola!” Dysea gasped. “Taste me and you will experience the second most wonderful thing in this harsh world. Taste me you Drow bitch!” Dysea lowered her drenched pussy entirely onto Aihola’s face.

Aihola was almost beyond the point of caring, as Tarifa’s continued blowing of cool air across her huge clit was driving her mad with desire. She had watched the platinum blond pussy lower over her face dripping its wild flower tasting juices onto her cheeks and lips. She tried to keep her head turned to the side, the last of her willpower telling her that it was beneath her to submit to such base pleasures, especially with another woman and a non-Drow woman at that. Her body and heart answered for her mind as she felt Tarifa’s soft warm lips encircle her almost painfully erect clit and suck hard. Aihola turned her head in order to scream out her pleasure but instead found the wonderfully beautiful blond pussy of Dysea lowering to her soft black lips and pink tongue. Without thinking Aihola stabbed out with her tongue and it plowed into Dysea’s pierced clit, causing Dysea to scream out her own pleasure as her powerful thighs clenched Aihola’s head tightly between them and flooded her mouth with cum.

Aihola's strong hand grabbed the back of Tarifa's head, wrapping her fingers in the raven black mane of the High Elf Queen and held her head in place as her cum erupted into Tarifa's sucking mouth. Tarifa drank down Aihola's juices with relish, squeezing her thighs together as she came in a powerful orgasm of her own. Aihola's free hand reached up to grab Dysea's right upper thigh and pull her down even harder onto her cum covered face as she alternated between screaming out her own pleasure and drinking down Dysea's sweet cum as if it was her last meal on this planet.

Only one thing was going through the minds of all three of them at that moment and that was to see how many times they could make each other cum.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EDEN MOON BASE

"It is very impressive." Marcus spoke as his amber eyes took in the control room where the production of the Raptors was taking place. He could see that the center stretched as far back as even his keen eyes could detect, and there were control rooms like the one he now stood in spaced every few hundred meters. At the various stations on the floor below he could see dozens of elves working with various humans standing at different points within the massive room. Much of the production was automated, and the elves were used for the extreme manual labor of hoisting large metal components from one conveyor to another. "I noticed you do not have any security on the production floor itself. Why?"

"It's not needed." William told him. "Our drug allows the elves the most freedom of movement on the station, and we do not have to monitor every elf's progress. The way it was explained to me by my people, the drug works at almost the sub conscious level. When they are given a task, no matter what it is, the elves feel an overpowering urge to complete that task, regardless of whether they want to or not."

Marcus looked at him. "There are always exceptions to the rules." He spoke evenly.

William nodded. "Yes there are. That is why each elf is equipped with a micro receiver when they arrive on Eden. That receiver is linked to a tiny explosive charge implanted into their necks right next to the two main carotid and jugular veins. A small radio burst and that charge explodes. End of problem."

Marcus nodded in approval. "Efficient." He spoke turning to face William. "I understand you were Hunter's Commanding officer for some time."

William nodded slowly and Marcus detected the slight twitch in his jaw line at the mention of Hunter's name. "Ten years total, off and on."

"And yet he betrayed you at the end."

"He damn near beat me to death." William told him. "Then he sabotaged my station, took thousands of metric tons of supplies and almost my entire fleet of Raptors. You're damn right he betrayed me, and if I ever come across him again, I'll string him up by his guts and watch him die."

The door to the control room opened and the armed man in fatigues walked in. Marcus watched as he went directly to Wallace.

"Admiral... we have a situation in D corridor, section twenty-two." The man spoke.

"What is it?"

"An elf at the end of his dosage period is refusing to take commands. He killed a guard and took his weapon and is now holding four hostages."

"How did the guard allow him to get his weapon?" William snapped his face angry now Marcus saw.

"He violated protocols Admiral." The guard spoke carefully. It was obvious to Marcus that the soldier feared his commanding officer.

"You're damn right he did! Fuck!" William swore. He looked at Marcus. "I have to apologize for this Colonel Marcus; I gave additional instructions to be extra alert during your stay here. This should not be happening."

"Did I understand you said he was at the end of his dosage period?" Marcus spoke. "What exactly does that mean?"

“Each dose of X19 last for 72 hours. In the last two hours of that period the elves can become hard to handle if they haven’t gotten another dose. X19 is very addictive; it’s how it was designed. If they don’t get the next dose they can lose control.” William explained. “That corridor is nearby, would you care to observe?”

Marcus couldn’t hide his surprise at being invited to see this. It was an obvious failure in security and a flaw in the drug, but Wallace was not hiding it. “I’m surprised you would allow that.” He said finally.

“Why not?” William spoke. “It’s a flaw. I’m not going to try and hide a flaw in something just to look good. This drug works and works well... but it does have its flaws. This just happens to be one of them.”

“What will you do with the elf?” Marcus asked as William motioned towards the door.

“He’s killed a guard.” William replied. “There’s only one punishment on this station.”

It took them only a matter of minutes to move down several corridors and make three turns and then they arrived at the location. Marcus could hear shouting and he saw four armed soldiers with their weapons leveled at a large male elf that now held a bloody assault rifle to the head of an older human male kneeling in front of him. The body of a soldier was on the gray floor, a large pool of blood spreading outward from his prone form.

The obvious officer came up to Wallace as he approached. “He’s lost it Admiral! He’s not responding to any commands now. He keeps demanding that we bring him more X19, but he won’t let the others go until we do.”

Marcus watched as William’s jaw twitched again in obvious anger. “Why haven’t you activated the charge?” He demanded.

“We’re afraid the explosive charge will cause his finger to pull the trigger and kill the hostage.” The officer replied. “And none of my detachment wants to risk a head shot.”

William sighed heavily. “Colonel I must apologize for this situation. It’s embarrassing.”

“Unexpected events can not be planned for.” Marcus spoke. “That you have not tried to hide this from me says quite a bit.”

William looked at him. “Yeah well... that doesn’t help me now.” He said. He looked at the officer. “Give me your sidearm.”

The officer didn’t hesitate and handed over the K12 automatic. William took two steps and brought the K12 up in one smooth motion. He fired two shots from the automatic and the results were quite effective. The first round from the K12 hit the hostage in the leg and caused the man to slump forward screaming in pain. The elf lost his grip on the man’s collar as he fell forward and it exposed him for all to see. The second round from the K12 punched squarely into the elf’s chest, blowing him backwards, blood erupting from his chest in fountains. William turned to the officer. “Activate the charge now!” He ordered.

The captain didn’t hesitate and his thumb plunged down on the small button of the box he held in his hand. Marcus heard two small pops and watched as the neck of the elf burst apart ghastly, blood showering the walls at an explosive rate. The male elf had not fallen down from the bullet to the chest, and his hands dropped the rifle they had been holding when his neck exploded in two different directions and his blood began to fountain from the two massive holes. It took only seconds for him to drop to the floor clearly dead, his blood still leaking onto the steel gray metal beneath him.

William handed the K12 back to the officer. “Get this mess cleaned up!” He spoke. “And make sure the elves are up to date on their doses!”

“Yes sir!”

William turned and moved a short distance away to speak with another officer that had arrived and Marcus stepped up to the first one. “May I?” He asked motioning to the K12 William had fired.

“Yes sir!” The officer spoke handing over the weapon.

Marcus made a show of inspecting the weapon and admiring it. He ejected the magazine and looked at the steel jacketed rounds carefully before reinserting it and holding it out to the officer. “Thank you.” He said, before moving over to where Wallace was.

“...make sure you check the dosage records for all the elves. I don’t care if it takes all night.” William was speaking to the second officer.

“Yes sir.”

William turned to Marcus. “Again I must apologize for this incident Colonel.”

“You handled it well.” Marcus spoke honestly.

“It shouldn’t have happened at all. I’m going to have to devise tighter control methods to monitor the dosage records of the elves.” He said.

“I have some suggestions if you would be willing to hear them.” Marcus spoke.

“I certainly would. We are supposed to meet Senator Graham and your Ministers for lunch. We can talk as we head for the restaurant.” William spoke.

SOUTHERN UTAH TEN MILES SOUTH OF CEDAR CITY

Martin held the steaming hot mug of coffee in his hand as he stood at the front of the armored Hopper. A large and detailed map of Cedar City was spread out on the hood, and Danny, the Master Chief, Radama, Anja and Julie and two other elf officers were gathered around the hood. All of them were drinking coffee or water and munching on ration bars.

“What’s the word from the scouts?” Martin asked.

Ealin leaned forward and stabbed his finger on the map. As the executive officer for Martin’s team he had appointed himself as Martin’s administrative assistant as well. He gathered all the intelligence reports and other information that came in and went over it before it found its way to Martin. It was something he found he had a talent for, and even though Martin had told him it wasn’t necessary; Ealin had continued to conduct the duties regardless.

“They have penetrated within half a mile of the city.” Ealin spoke. “They report that there is no outward appearance that he knows we are coming.”

Martin looked at him. “You’re kidding right?”

Ealin shook his head. “All six teams of scouts report the same thing.” He spoke. “They can see mortar and artillery positions inside the wall from their locations, but none of the positions are actually manned. The two teams we have inside the city confirm this as well.”

“What about the heavy machine gun positions along the top of this wall?” Danny asked, tracing the map.

“They are occupied, but it appears the mercenaries are not at an increased level of readiness.” Ealin replied. “Scouts report they can see the sentries smoking and joking as the Master Chief puts it.”

“He doesn’t believe we’ll attack him.” Martin said to no one in particular.

The others looked at him. “Skipper that’s crazy; we’ve been going at this idiot for almost three months with raids and surgical strikes.” Danny spoke. “He has to know we would come for his ass sooner or later.”

“He thinks he has too many men for us to handle.” Tony spoke now. “That and he thinks that wall of his will protect his lard butt.”

Martin grinned. “Good... let him think that he is nice and cozy. When we bring it down on his ass he’ll change his tune.” He said looking at Ealin. “What’s the word from our people inside?”

Julie extended the small data pad over the hood of the Hopper to him. “They’ve formed into five separate cells.” She told him, glancing at Ealin and seeing him nod. “These transmissions just came in this morning. When we begin our attack, they are going to move as many elves and innocents as they can to these five locations.”

Martin leaned over the map and marked their locations on the laminated map of Cedar City. “Ealin... make sure our battery commanders have these coordinates. I don’t want stray shells landing and killing the people we are supposed to be saving. Advise them I’ll have the ass of whoever misfires and drops artillery into these locations.”

Ealin nodded with a grin. “I’ll let them know.”

Radama turned his head as his communications implant sounded in his ear. He listened for a few seconds and then looked at Martin. “Martin... Leland is coming in with someone he says you should meet.”

Martin nodded. “I wondered when they would make themselves known.” He said. “Tell him to bring them in.”

“What’s up Skipper?” Danny asked.

“It is Dysea’s former Ranger General Vengal.” Martin replied. “He and a sizeable force of his Wood Rangers have been trailing us for twelve hour now. I told Leland to go out and meet him and bring him in.” Martin sipped the coffee and made a face like he had just tasted shit. “Man... who made this coffee!”

Anja looked at him across the hood. “If one more person tells me my coffee tastes like shit I’m going to get angry!” She retorted.

Martin looked across the hood at Anja and smiled at her. Her honey scent filled his nostrils and surprisingly he could not detect either Danny or Julie’s scent on her. That surprised him somewhat and he saw Anja’s jade green eyes smile back at him in a very alluring way. This caused his heart to skip a beat and the memories of her succulent flesh and tight body from that night so long ago screamed at him.

Martin looked away quickly as Leland broke from the treeline with two of his team and two tall elves. They Wood Elf Rangers were very capable looking and very well armed. Martin turned and watched as they came up to the small command group and stopped.

“Martin may I present General Vengal of the Wood Elf Rangers.” Leland spoke.

Martin held out his hand without question. “It’s a pleasure to meet you General. You could have saved yourself a chilly twelve hours and come in last night.”

The dark haired elf hesitated, uncertainty in his eyes before he took the offered hand. “You... you knew we were following you?” He asked.

“You and your troops are top notch General. It was totally by accident that they were detected.” Martin said quickly, sensing it wouldn’t be a good thing to say that compared to his scouts, the elves were toy soldiers.

“You and your forces tread very close to Cedar City Martin Hunter.” Vengal spoke. “When I agreed to meet with you and told Leland this, I was under the impression I would be meeting you and Dysea in your new city.”

Martin looked at the elf general, taking in his height and well muscled form, as well as they lines of experienced that etched across his face. This man had seen much combat and looked to be extremely capable. “*Melda Min* is currently in Mountain City on personal business for the two of us. That was the plan originally, but events change as you well know.”

“You refer to my Queen as your Beloved One Martin Hunter.” Vengal said. “Am I to understand you are claiming you and she are now *Nute Ve Min*?” (Bonded as One.)

Martin looked at Leland quickly and then back to Vengal. “Yes, I suppose you could say that? Does that pose a problem General?”

Vengal looked at Martin with a slightly surprised expression. “Then the rumors we have heard are true?” He said.

Martin nodded. “Yes they are true.” He answered, looking somewhat embarrassed. “May I ask where you heard these rumors?”

Vengal couldn’t hide the grin that crossed his face, “From Dysea’s own mother.” He answered. “I visited her before we left. She... she is much more open minded in her views than most elves of her years and wisdom. I believe her first comment was “with *Lyca Ohtar* as their father and my daughter as their mother I will have powerful *Indyo*.”

Martin looked surprised and embarrassed at the same time. “She said that?” He asked.

Vengal nodded. “She did indeed Martin Hunter, right before she demanded I bring her with us.”

Martin looked stunned. “Wait a minute... she came with you?” He asked.

Vengal nodded. “Without even meeting her, you have gained a very powerful spiritual leader among the Wood Elves. She understands, as many of us do, if you have taken the heart of our Queen, then you are powerful indeed. I had no choice but to bring her. I left her with six of my finest Rangers at the edge of your perimeter.”

Martin turned to Ealin. “Ealin... take a detachment and escort her and the General’s men inside the perimeter. Make sure she has whatever she needs.”

Ealin nodded quickly. “I will see to it *Lyca Ohtar*.” He said and moved off quickly.

“You still refer to Dysea as Queen?” Radama asked softly.

Vengal met Radama’s eyes. “Dysea will always be Queen in my eyes and the eyes of many, regardless of what that fool Council of Elders say. The child they have put in her place is so easily controlled and manipulated it boils my blood just thinking about it. She is an innocent in all that is happening, and when the

time comes she should be spared. That is why we are here. And I see we have come at just the right time. You are no doubt preparing a battle plan to kill the fool in Cedar City?"

Martin nodded with a grin. "That we are." He said.

Vengal nodded. "Good. I have brought a hundred of my Wood Rangers with me, and we are eager to spill the blood of those who prey on my kind and others."

Martin stepped to the side a little and motioned to the map on the hood of the Hopper. "Then let's not waste anymore time." He said.

MOUNTAIN CITY

Tarifa stood beside Dysea and her mother in the small cargo bay watching as the Dragoons loaded the Hopper for trip back to Salina. The security was heavy, but Cantel had stationed them in a way as to not draw unwanted attention. Palina stood a short distance from them talking in whispers with Cantel, while Tarifa and Dysea said their goodbyes.

"I don't want you to go Dysea." Tarifa spoke softly, slipping her hand into Dysea's.

Dysea looked at her and smiled warmly. "I don't wish to go either, but your father and Telan will return tomorrow and it would be far too dangerous for me to stay. You know that Tarifa."

Tarifa nodded her head in understanding, but her eyes held sadness in them. "When will you or Martin be able to return?"

"If all goes well with the return to Salina then we can establish a permanent trading route. As Queen you can come and go as you please, and now that you are free of the drugs and your mind is clear, I have no doubt you will find ways to come see us, as long as you don't endanger yourself." Dysea told her. "I will return as often as I am able Tarifa, you know that. We will never abandon you."

Tarifa caressed her cheek as they looked at one another and she smiled brightly. "Dysea... what happen with Aihola... it..."

Dysea shook her head quickly. "The Alliance experiments on her cause even the most casual touch to ignite passions within her. She secretes a pheromone when this happens, and it was this pheromone that affected us, at least initially." She finished the sentence with a sly smile.

Tarifa returned the smile. "Then it was pleasant for you as well?"

Dysea nodded, and even under her tan she turned a small shade of red. "Even after our systems purged the pheromone she secretes when excited and made us immune to it you mean?" She spoke shyly. "Yes... it was extremely pleasant for me."

Tarifa couldn't help but blush as well squeezing Dysea's hand. "What do we do?"

"I have seen this before, though not on as large a scale as with Aihola." Dysea spoke. "I sincerely doubt she even knows she secretes the pheromone. It is a typical Alliance method to be used as a means of control. You noticed the small scars on the inside of her thighs?"

Tarifa nodded. "Yes."

"That is where the electrodes were placed. Close to her center of pleasure." Dysea said. "She must have cut them out when she escaped, and now actual contact is needed to set her off." Dysea took the small data pad from her pack and typed on it for a moment. "These are ingredients for a potion to counteract her extreme sensitivity. Give it to her. I don't believe she is a threat to you, and she could make a valuable friend. I will see if Anja can produce something that will be more permanent for her when I return."

"I... she..." Tarifa started to speak.

Dysea looked at her with her emerald eyes. "She stirs your blood, doesn't she Tarifa?"

Tarifa nodded slowly meeting her eyes. "I... I don't know what it is about her." She spoke softly so that only Dysea could hear her, "Her scent drives me mad with desire and to me she tastes wonderful."

Dysea smiled and leaned close to Tarifa. "Then do not be afraid to explore this Tarifa." She said softly. "For you don't know what it could bring."

Tarifa took the pad and tucked it under her cloak with a smile. "You will do what I asked when you see Martin?"

Dysea nodded with a smile. "I will try Tarifa. I don't think I will be as proficient as you however. *Nauta Melme* is quite large."

Tarifa grinned and stepped forward to nuzzle Dysea's throat. "All it takes is practice Dysea, and patience." She said softly. "And think of the pleasure you will get in return."

Dysea chuckled softly. "Yes... there is that to consider." She said. She reached up and stroked Tarifa's lips. "Be strong Tarifa? Don't let that *sara quelet ner* extinguish the light inside you." (bitter corpse of a man)

Tarifa smiled brightly. "That will not be a problem Dysea." She said. "Not anymore. You have given me back my mind and my body."

Dysea kissed her softly. "I will try to contact you weekly."

"I will miss you Dysea." Tarifa said.

They pressed their foreheads together as Cantel stepped up to them with Palina. "The caravan is ready to depart." He said, not wanting to intrude on their goodbye. "We should leave soon."

Dysea nodded. She pulled Tarifa into a strong embrace and squeezed her tightly. "I'm ready." She said softly.

Palina stepped up next to her daughter as Dysea and Cantel moved to the Hopper and took her arm. "Do not fear Tarifa. Now that you are yourself again, their friendship will mean so much more."

Tarifa nodded with a smile. "I know." She looked at her mother. "We have much to do mother." She said. "We should sit down with the Holy One and begin to make our plans."

Palina nodded. "I told him we would be over to see him after we saw Dysea off. He's... he was very happy that the two of you were able to reunite."

"*Amille*... please do not be angry with me." Tarifa said. (Mother)

Palina looked at her. "Angry? *Selye* (Daughter) I am not angry with you. Confused perhaps... but never angry. I do not pretend to understand the relationship you have with Dysea. You share each other's flesh yet you are like sisters."

"It is very different I know." Tarifa said. "But Dysea's heart belongs to Martin, and his to her. And they have yet to discover the others that will share their lives I think. My... the person I am meant for will..." Tarifa's mind flashed to the Drow Aihola. "That person will come soon I think."

Palina looked at her. "Your father... when we free him of those *naraca* (Vile) drugs, I believe your father just may surprise you in who he truly is daughter. He is far more accepting than you have seen."

Tarifa looked genuinely surprised by this statement and her face showed it, "*Atya?* (Daddy) Mother you jest with me?"

Palina smiled. "No Tarifa. There is much that you do not know about your father. There are many sides of him you have not seen because of your duties as Queen and you living here in Mountain City. Perhaps we can change all that now."

Tarifa smiled. "I believe I would like that." She said just as Cantel came back up to them.

He bowed his head slightly. "Roland will contact me as soon as they are moving freely south to Salina My Queen."

Tarifa nodded. "Thank you Cantel. I want a two man detachment of Dragoons assigned to Aihola immediately. They are to treat her with every respect."

"Tarifa the Drow... this Aihola," Palina gasped. "They... they have always been our most hated enemy."

"Aihola is not our enemy." Tarifa told her. "She escaped from New Baltimore on the day of her execution for not killing a family. She was tortured and experimented on by the Alliance butchers, and I for one do not intend to reinforce to her that we are enemies, for we are not."

"My... my Queen..." Cantel looked at her, his face a mask of horror.

Tarifa looked at him. "Cantel... what is it?"

"I... I did not... I did not think my Queen. One of the men I left to guard the Drow..." Cantel looked at her.

"Yes! What?" Tarifa said.

"It is Norebon." Cantel told her seeing her eyes widen.

"Norebon," Tarifa gasped. "His grandparents were slaughtered by the Drow in one of the last raids against the High Elves! Cantel... how could you?"

“My Queen... please you must believe me. I did not think!”

Tarifa ignored him and broke into a sprint out of the cargo bay, heading for the location of the safe house.

MOON BASE EDEN

The Alliance Ministers sat in the small living room of the quarters they had been assigned and waited for Marcus to finish sweeping the room. He held the small device with a blinking green light on it, and he swept it over the last portion of the room he had yet to check. He turned back to Deval.

“The room is clear.” He said. “We may speak freely.”

Deval nodded and settled onto the plush couch. “Excellent.” He said. “We can finally relax. I’ve been bored with Graham since the third hour in his company. The man is an idiot with no sense of reality.”

Marcus stood to one side of the couch, his arms folded across his chest as the Ministers all sat down with drinks in their hands.

Selene settled on the chair by herself while Wiseman sat across from Deval. “I’m still running initial tests, and I have not broken down the components, but at first glance this X19 drug seems to be everything they have said it was.” She spoke after sipping her drink. “It is incredibly powerful... it’s amazing that this young fool Taggart was even able to recognize it.”

“You don’t think he is capable?” Deval asked.

Selene shook her head. “Oh he’s capable... he’s just plain ditzzy. He continually goes off on irrelevant tangents, and can not keep his focus.”

“So it’s possible to reproduce this drug then?” Wiseman asked.

Selene nodded. “Oh yes... and quite easily.” She replied. “The profit we could make off this drug is infinite. It’s highly addictive... and very powerful as I said. Once injected with it... regardless of what you may feel is right or wrong... you will do what you are told to do.”

“The only obstacle I see then is getting a sample off this station.” Wiseman spoke now.

“I would not recommend that.” Marcus spoke up now.

“Come now...” Wiseman said. “Surely Colonel Marcus, you do not believe these fools on this base could stop us.”

“Not only would they stop us... we would very likely end up very dead.” Marcus spoke matter of factly.

“Preposterous!” Wiseman snapped. “Is that your professional opinion Colonel?”

“Robert that is quite enough.” Deval spoke. He looked at Marcus. “What makes you say that Marcus?” He asked.

“Graham does not run this station.” Marcus said. “Admiral Wallace does.”

Wiseman couldn’t contain his laughter and got to his feet. “You must be joking! Graham has an iron grip of things here. The fool has shown us his personal control room, not to mention the files on dozens of infiltrators he has among the elves and crew of this base. He could not be anymore in control.”

Marcus simply stared at Wiseman with a look of utter contempt on his face, his amber eyes glittering. “Are you as big a fool as you act Minister Wiseman?” He spoke finally.

That remark caused Selene to chuckle and Wiseman’s face to turn red with anger and embarrassment. “You overstep your bounds Colonel!” Wiseman snapped.

“And you overlook yours you fool!” Marcus popped.

Deval had a small smirk on his face as he leaned forward on the couch. “What have you seen that tells you otherwise Marcus?” He asked.

“Admiral Wallace, whether by design or by accident, allowed me to see that it is he who controls this station and not that fool Senator Graham, no matter what he thinks.” Marcus spoke. “Whatever measures Graham used to assume control of the station have since been eliminated. Wallace controls the security, and the elves. Those with any kind of authority report to him, and not to Graham.”

“So you don’t think these Sweeper agents as he calls them are active anymore?” Deval asked.

Marcus shook his head. “Most likely they are all dead. I watched Wallace eliminate a rogue elf today. He shot the elf in the chest, and then ordered the control measures they have in place activated. The elf’s neck

blew apart as we watched. I checked the weapon he fired, to reassure myself that we were not being duped. It was loaded with live ammunition. Admiral Wallace is much more than we were led to believe.”

“Why leave Graham in charge?” Selene asked. “Why not kill him?”

Marcus smiled. “It’s simple really. He’s using him as cover. He supplies him with all the elves the man has a desire for. Those elves undoubtedly report directly back to Wallace.”

“So he’s working with the elves?” Deval asked.

Marcus shook his head. “He’s working for himself. Under his cool exterior, he is a twisted and cruel man. He has no regard for the elves here. They are only a means to an end for him.”

“Then the Mistress was correct?” Deval spoke.

Marcus nodded. “I believe she was, yes. They have provided us with elves for our pleasure while we are here, but we are not in New Richmond anymore. The elves are under his control and will report to him anything that we do. I suggest we refrain from our usual activities and do nothing to cause Wallace unrest.”

“Such as what Colonel,” Wiseman asked sarcastically.

Marcus looked at him. “Such as your appetite for using sharp instruments on elves while you fuck them Minister.” He snarled.

Wiseman came to his feet. “Why you...”

Deval looked at Wiseman. “Think about what you are about to do Robert.” He said calmly. “You would not take three steps with hostile intent towards Marcus before he killed you where you stood. Now sit your ass down!”

Wiseman glared at Marcus and looked at Deval before settling back into the chair with a huff. “I do not discount myself from my own warning Minister.” Marcus spoke. “We need to refrain from our normal routines while we are here. We need to learn as much as we can while here, and then we need to come up with a proposition that Wallace and Graham can not refuse.”

“What do you suggest Colonel?” Deval asked.

“As Minister Torcrum has stated, this drug is beyond anything we have the ability to produce.” Marcus answered. “Our scientists could reproduce it easily, but first we must obtain a sample of it. That will not be as easy as asking for it. Wallace will demand quite a bit for that information. And he will convince Graham to ask for it somehow. I believe we should beat them to the punch.”

Deval sat back in his chair the gears in his mind turning. “That is very interesting Marcus.” He said. “You must have some idea in your head. Tell us what you are thinking.”

MOUNTAIN CITY

“No! Please! Ahhhhhhh,” Aihola’s voice carried to Tarifa’s keen ears as she entered the safe house.

“How does it feel Drow bitch?” The male elf mounted behind Aihola growled into her ear. “How does my cock feel up your ass?”

“Stop! Please...Ahhhhhhh!” Aihola screamed. “It... it hurts!”

The male Dragoon laughed next to her ear. “If it hurts so much... why are you cumming all over the bed bitch?” He drove his hips downwards again, sinking his entire cock deeply into Aihola’s bowels once more as she howled in pain and unwanted pleasure.

The Dragoons had set upon her the moment they entered the safe house. As physically spent as she was after her tryst with the two elf Queens, Aihola had been sluggish and her movements predictable. They had surprised her as she was thinking about how the two Queens had driven her mad with desire and passion, the Alliance experiments only heightening her intense pleasure to levels she hadn’t reached before. They had obviously had been with women before, as they had known exactly what to do to set her off. And Aihola was contemplating her own feelings on what had happen as well. The two Queens had forcibly introduced her to a new form of pleasure that she had never once considered, and she had taken to it like a fish to water, relishing in their screams of pleasure as her tongue worked on them. It shamed her that she found the experience so utterly wonderful.

The raven haired High Elf Queen had stirred Aihola in a way she had never felt before. The Queen had feasted on her pussy for hours, even letting Aihola dominant her by holding her face to her spasming pussy and

grinding her dripping sex against her face in lust. It had also been a few hours of discovery for her as well. She and Tarifa had rolled together on the bed well after the Wood Elf Queen had fallen asleep, and for the first time in her young life Aihola had actually eaten the pussy of another female. And what frightened her most was that she loved every minute of lapping at Tarifa's delicious cunt.

These were the thoughts going through her head when theDragoons surprised her. In her weakened state it was easy for them to pounce upon her and render her helpless. The blood trickling down the side of her face attested to the violence of the attack. The larger of the twoDragoons had struck her with his weapon knocking her back onto the bed. The second Dragoon had grabbed her arms and pinned her face down on the bed, ripping the sheets from her naked form. The larger Dragoon wasted no time in pinning her legs to the bed with his knees while he unbuckled his pants. He fingered her sore pussy roughly, quite unlike Tarifa and Dysea who had stroked her pussy with hands like flower petals, causing her to scream out in pleasure. This Dragoon cared not for her pleasure, and pawed her pussy and ass cheeks as if she was a slab of meat. Regardless of his intent, Aihola cursed the Alliance again; as their experiments caused her body to react and it was shortly after that her pussy became a sopping mess.

Aihola had screamed and tried to fight, but the Dragoon holding her down had the proper leverage to keep her from twisting away, and soon she felt the larger elf's thick cock slap against her coal colored ass cheeks.

"Scream all you want Drow whore!" The Dragoon had snarled in her ear. "The room is soundproof! This is for my grandparents!" He barked before driving his thick cock brutally into her virgin ass with one savage plunge.

And howl Aihola did, in a mixture of agony and pleasure from the violent intrusion. He grunted and slobbered all over her back and shoulders as he fucked her ass with brutal strokes, while she whimpered and came all over the bed beneath him.

That all changed in three blinks of an eye.

Tarifa stepped into the room where she and Dysea had left Aihola sleeping on the bed and came up short. It took only a matter of those three blinks for her eyes and nose to detect what was happening here, and she felt her anger rapidly reach a boiling point and spill over at the sight before her.

Palina had not witnessed the physical changes that had manifested themselves within her daughter because of her relationship with Martin Hunter. She had not seen Tarifa in her altered state, at least not until this very moment.

Palina could only gawk in stunned silence as Tarifa's eyes changed quickly to black around sapphire, and her fangs extended to their full length in an instant. The Dragoon holding Aihola's arms saw her first, his eyes going wide in fear. He immediately released his grip on Aihola's hands and lashed out with a savage punch to the side of her head, causing her to see stars. While Tarifa couldn't stop the blow to Aihola's head, the Dragoon was hardly fast enough to stop his impending doom. Aihola's dazed eyes caught a glimpse of Tarifa stepping forward, her face twisted in a savage snarl, and grasp the Dragoon by his head. Aihola heard the sickening crunch of his neck snapping like dry timber as Tarifa grabbed his head and nearly tore it from his shoulders, and then the sound of his body hitting the floor. Aihola felt the larger Dragoon withdraw his cock from her ass before blackness finally washed over her and she passed out.

Tarifa barely paused after killing the first Dragoon, and was stepping over Aihola's inert form to reach the backpedaling Dragoon.

"My... my Queen," Norebon gasped as he stepped back against the wall with no where to go.

Tarifa lashed out with her hand, her face now a darkened mask of anger and hate. The stinging blow carried enough power to snap the Dragoon's head violently to the side as she stepped up to him. Tarifa was easily six inches shorter than the Dragoon, yet her hand closed around his throat and lifted his near two hundred pounds with little effort, pinning his half naked body to the wall. He gasped for air, clawing at her hand around his throat.

"You scum!" Tarifa snarled. "You defile the uniform you wear with your perverted actions!"

"My... my Queen," Norebon stammered barely able to talk. "She... she is a Drow whore! They... they killed my... my family!"

Tarifa squeezed her hand around his throat. "She is no whore!" She screamed. "And she did not kill your grandparents!"

Cantel knelt next to the bed, his hand gently pushing Aihola's hair from the side of her face to inspect her head wound. He had been a Dragoon all of his life, and he had never personally witnessed something like this before. He had taken hundreds of lives, elf and human alike, as well as countless Drow, yet this perversion was beyond anything he had seen. He glanced up at where Tarifa had Norebon pinned against the wall and was slowly choking the air from his lungs.

"War Master Tareif would gut you where you stand for your actions this day!" Cantel spat at his fellow Dragoon. He got to his feet and came to stand next to Tarifa, Norebon's eyes wide in fear as the air was rapidly leaving his lungs and his face was turning blue. "I will act in his stead!"

Cantel withdrew the wicked looking blade and without further thought drove it into the side of Norebon's abdomen. Norebon's eyes nearly exploded out of his skull as Cantel plunged the blade in as deeply as he could and ripped it sideways. Tarifa released him and stepped back quickly as his blood and intestines spilled from the now gaping wound in his belly. Norebon slumped to the floor, his hands attempting to hold his organs inside his body. Blood spilled from between his lips as he turned his face up to Cantel and Tarifa.

"Your name will be stricken from the rolls of the Dragoons, and your family will now bear your dishonor!" Cantel spat at him. "And now you will die like the animal you have acted as this day."

Tarifa snapped out with another blow, this one a short but exceptionally powerful punch to Norebon's jaw. The blow rocked his head back, and all in the room heard his neck pop like a gunshot within the confines of the room. Norebon sank to the floor, dead before his body stopped moving.

Cantel stood there in shock... his eyes showing his shame. "My Queen... Tarifa... I have no... I have no excuse for what has happen here." He said softly. "I will... I will present my dishonor to a Dragoon Council when your father returns."

Tarifa looked at him. "You will do no such thing!" Tarifa snapped, her eyes slowly returning to normal. "You have acted as a Dragoon Commander this day. This dog did not deserve to wear the uniform. My father would have done the same. And he can not learn of this."

"Tarifa... he must..." Cantel started.

"He can not!" Palina spoke from behind them. She was next to Aihola on the bed, pulling the sheet back over her naked form, and gently stroking her head. "If what happen here is revealed it will alter our plans and expose us all. No Cantel, you have acted honorably, and now you must dispose of these idiots."

Cantel's face showed his realization at their words and he nodded. "I will see to it." He spoke quickly. "Their remains will never be found."

"What of the Drow Tarifa?" Palina asked.

Tarifa stepped over to the bed and sat next to Aihola's unconscious figure. She reached out and caressed her bare shoulder and back gently, almost lovingly. "Take her to my home." She said finally.

"Tarifa you can't!" Palina spoke quickly. "It will raise suspicion! Telan will question all that you do!"

Tarifa looked at Cantel. "We have always thought the Drow destroyed Cantel, but they were also mercenaries before the Alliance wiped them out, were they not?"

Cantel nodded. "Many became Assassins and body guards after our war with them destroyed their power base."

Tarifa nodded thinking quickly. "Start passing the word among the Dragoons that an attempt was made on my life while I was shopping with my mother in the Merchant Quarter. Report that we were saved by Aihola, who was injured in defending me. I brought her back to my home to recuperate as thanks."

Cantel's eyes grew bright. "Saving your life would immediately grant her a pardon for all past crimes."

Tarifa nodded. "Yes. Then I can select her as a personal Attendant. That will cover any questions that might come about as to her staying with me."

"What of Telan?" Palina asked. "Surely he will know who she is and what she was brought here for. How will you explain it to him and keep him from becoming suspicious?"

Tarifa looked at her mother with a smile. "He is a man is he not *Amille*?" She asked with a small smile. "And Telan always thinks with his cock first."

Palina looked at her daughter carefully, while Cantel turned away embarrassed to hear his Queen speak in such a manner. "Tarifa... we can find another way."

Tarifa shook her head. "This is the only way *Amille*. The only way that would be plausible."

"Telan will gloat and expect you to share his bed whenever he pleases if you do this." Palina spoke.

Tarifa nodded. "Yes... and he will believe he is finally gaining my favor. And in that way he will be easily controlled." She spoke. She took Palina's hand. "I no longer fear what I must do *Amille*. Now that I know what Martin and Dysea and you have revealed to me, I will do what is necessary to save my father and brothers. If that means I have to allow Telan to think he is all I ever desired in a man than so be it."

"You are sure?" Palina asked.

Tarifa nodded. "It is the only way."

"You should let me string him up by his innards for what he will force upon you my Queen." Cantel hissed turning back to her.

Tarifa shook her head and reached out to gently touch his arm. "If I allowed you to do such a thing Cantel, then my brothers would die, and we will fail to discover just how deeply Telan and his family are embedded with the Alliance scum."

Cantel nodded slowly. "I understand my Queen; it does not mean I have to like it." He spoke. "What of the Drow my Queen?" Cantel asked. "What of this Aihola? Will she go along with your plan?"

Tarifa looked at him. "I will convince her."

"And if you can't?" Palina asked.

"Then I will kill her." Tarifa answered flatly.

SOUTHERN UTAH CEDAR CITY

The staccato sounds of gunfire could be heard across the landscape of Cedar City. The sounds of explosions in the distance and the brilliant blasts of flame and smoke into the sky would announce the precision accuracy of the MLRS rockets landing among the buildings and streets of this once popular mountain city.

The forces of Eden had begun their attack with complete and utter surprise. Two battalions of humans and elves launched a ground assault from the southwest corner of the city under Danny's command, while Martin brought another battalion in from the east. Four battalions of humans and elves were pushing slowly south from the northern tip of the city and from the airport. The MLRS batteries and three other batteries of the devastating 200mm Self Propelled Advanced Paladin artillery were methodically pounding different sections of the city, dropping hundreds of rounds of high explosive shells into the city proper. The force of nearly twenty thousand mercenaries and assorted scum had been taken completely by surprise, their leader saying that Martin did not have the manpower to take their city from them.

Almost ten thousand of the human mercenary force was killed in the first three hours of the operation, caught in their barracks by heavy artillery and repeated rocket attacks from the nine orbiting Raptors.

Leland led the small team of humans and elves through the half destroyed buildings that were once five stories tall. The manufacturing center of Cedar City was now a wasteland from little use and the enemy of time. The concentrated artillery barrage in this area had left little standing that was over three stories tall. The night was their friend, and Martin was using every minute of darkness they had to sweep as far into the city as they could. The keen eyes of the genomes and the elves gave them the ability to strike in near pitch black, and it was that advantage that had allowed them to press as far into the city as they had. All of them were covered in dirt and soot from the burning wood and steel that they had just come through. Leland brought them to a halt along the side of what was once a grocery store, the front of the building now nothing but a gaping hole from 200mm high explosive artillery shells.

Vengal quickly moved up beside where Leland crouched, his elfin eyes wide and excited. "Your new leader does not believe in sitting in the rear I see Leland!" He spoke with a grin. "We are further forward than our other units in this area."

Leland nodded in response. "I have learned much about him in only four months General." He replied. "Foremost among what I have learned is he does not like to be left out of the action."

Vengal sipped water from his canteen. "I have to say I am very impressed with the battle plan he put together. He has taken down a city of almost twenty thousand enemies in only a few hours."

Leland nodded. "We aren't out of the action yet General."

“No we are not, but I’ve had more fun this night than in the last hundred years.” Vengal answered with a toothy grin.

They turned as the diminutive human female squatted down next to them. She had a radio handset jammed into her helmet over her ear, and sweat poured down her blackened face.

“Ealin says we can come up from the backside along this street. It will lead us directly into their rear perimeter, four hundred meters from here.”

“Thank you Diane. Pass the word if you would.” Leland replied.

Vengal watched the young female nod and her hand went to the handset as she moved a short distance away, her eyes meeting Vengal’s gaze squarely and without any hesitation. “Tell me Leland…” Vengal spoke softly turning to look at his former executive officer. “How is it that this Martin Hunter has been able to bring together so many, humans and elves, and forge them into a workable society in so short a time? It is something the Holy One attempted and failed at for so many years.”

Leland looked at his friend. “I will tell you what I think General.” He said.

“Yes.”

“I believe that Martin seizes on the one thing that no matter how bad it gets, all of us still have within us.” Leland told him.

“What is that?”

Leland hefted his assault rifle. “Hope.” He answered quickly.

“Hope?” Vengal asked.

Leland nodded. “Do you not hope for a place where you can raise your children and not worry for their safety? Do you not hope for a place where we are seen as equals and not slaves? Do you not hope for a place where we can grow old and die not from war or disease, but from old age?”

“Hope is a relative term my friend.” Vengal said.

Leland shook his head. “No. It is a poignant term that can move many to greatness.” He replied. “And it is something that Martin Hunter, Dysea, Tarifa and many others have returned to all of us. And this time we will fight for that.” Leland got to his feet. “Let’s move!” He hissed.

Martin’s command group had occupied the small warehouse office space quickly and turned it into a working CP. Security was heavy along the edges of the half destroyed building, machine gun emplacements set up on all four corners of the building, and four teams of snipers on what remained of the roof. Inside the office, Ealin had set up a small table and had spread out two maps of Cedar City on the table, and this is where Leland and Vengal found Martin as they came into the CP.

Vengal simply watched him for a moment, taking in the dirty uniform, and the blood stained pants. His weapon dangled from quick release straps, and he had a small bandage on the side of his face. Vengal and Leland both looked at Ealin as he came up. His uniform was not in much better condition, and as they looked around the small room they saw the others of the Command Group also looked as if they had been involved in a large attack.

Ealin saw the questions in their eyes and he smiled. “We came across a company sized group of mercenaries holding this building. It took us an hour, but we secured it. *Lyca Ohtar* became rather upset when they refused our surrender terms and called all of us elf loving motherfuckers.”

“You have outdistanced your support Ealin.” Leland spoke. “The tank and mortar elements are scrambling to keep up with you.”

“I saw an opportunity and we took it.” Martin spoke from the table turning to greet them. “Now we have a staging area to push through to our northern battalions.”

Leland took the offered hand as he and Vengal stepped up to the table and shook it firmly. “I understand that.” Leland said. “However… Julie and the Rear Guard Detachment Commander were screaming their heads off about how reckless you are.” Leland pointed to Martin’s face. “It seems they may have been accurate.”

Martin chuckled, “This scratch?” He spoke. “Jeez! I’ve cut myself worse when I was shaving. It’s Julie’s job to scream at me, she’s been doing it for years, and don’t let Juan fool you. He would have done exactly the same thing.” Martin pointed to the map. “How is your deployment?”

Leland looked at the map. "We have secured the southeastern half of the city. I have my people establishing bunkered positions as we speak all along Route 15 all the way to the old interstate."

Martin nodded. "Danny has pushed in north all the way up to route 200 and as far east as the old coliseum. Radama has secured the airport and Colonel Fowas has relocated his artillery batteries there."

Vengal looked at Martin. "Colonel Fowas? He is the Commander of the High Elf Dragoon Ninth Infantry?" He asked.

Martin nodded. "Yes he was. He left Mountain City three weeks after we were expelled. He joined us a week later with nearly all of his command."

Vengal chuckled. "That must have set off War Master Tareif." He said. "I understand Fowas was one of his most loyal officers."

Martin grinned. "I don't suppose it gave him warm and fuzzy feelings for me, no." He answered. "Fowas told me that Tareif was acting strangely and had been for months. It apparently stems from Telan somehow. When Tareif ordered Fowas to stand down his unit and removed him from Security of Mountain City, Fowas decided it was time to leave."

"How many other High Elf units have deserted to you Martin Hunter?" Vengal asked.

Martin met Vengal's eyes with an even stare. "You'll forgive me if I don't answer that General."

Vengal nodded. "I take no offence." He replied. "In your position I would act the same."

"Leland what are your casualties?" Martin asked.

"They are surprisingly light." Leland answered. "Nine dead and thirty-three wounded."

Martin nodded turning back to the map. "We've been lucky." He said. "They didn't expect us to hit them from three sides, and they damn sure didn't expect heavy artillery. We have the advantage for another four hours, and then things will get nasty."

"Nasty? Why do you say that?" Vengal asked.

"We have the advantage now because of our sight." Martin spoke. "The genomes and elves have superior night vision. We can move more quickly and direct actions more efficiently at night. Once the sun comes up they'll be able to see us and we'll start taking more casualties."

"What do you suggest?" Leland asked.

"We've secured all the refugee sites that were pinpointed before the attack." Martin said, touching five different points on the map. "We got these assholes surrendering all over the city, and we're running out of people to watch them. Intelligence taken from them indicates that the leader of this group and roughly a hundred of his closest people have bunkered in here... at the old Southern Utah University. The only problem is they have about four hundred civilians as human and elf shields. Whoever this leader is, he figured out we aren't going to attack places where innocents are holed up and he gathered as many as he could while moving here."

"So artillery is out of the question?" Leland spoke.

"I had Ealin dig up what he could from the old City Hall as far as blueprints on the University." Martin said, spreading out some blueprints on the table over the map. "The place is built like a fortress with high stone walls all around the campus and a large sewer and tunnel system under it. I had a Raptor do a low altitude recon pass over it and it looks like they have everyone here in this building. It used to be a sports arena, so it can hold large numbers of people. The rest of them are in what used to be the Student Center. It's filled with meeting rooms and such and has open fields of fire all around it."

Leland looked at him. "Bring it down." He said softly. "A hundred men could hold these two facilities for days Martin. Open fields of fire and the time to lay traps, our people would be cut down before even getting to within sight of the building."

Martin nodded. "I know... but I'm not going to sacrifice four hundred men, women and children to this fucker." He growled.

"You are thinking a covert operation?" Vengal said.

Martin looked at him. "Yes, with half your Wood Elf Rangers and thirty of Leland's team." He spoke. He motioned to the blueprints. "This tunnel comes up directly under the arena. It has to be the drainage for the locker room or something. I don't imagine they are well armed, as the scum we captured and interrogated said they were scrambling really fast to get out of the area."

“Even lightly armed as they probably are, many civilians could die in the assault.” Vengal spoke. “The moment they knew we were attacking they would start killing these people.”

“Not if you broke in and became hostages yourselves.” Martin said, seeing the confusion on Leland’s face, but the recognition on Vengal’s face. “Get your men inside, and get them close to the bad guys. No coms will be used, just clicks on the implants when everyone is in position.”

Vengal nodded. “When we are all in position, we hit them at the same time.”

Martin nodded. “It’s very risky, but...”

“It keeps us from having the blood of four hundred innocents on our hands in our quest to do good. And if it works... the word will pass that we risked all to save them and not sacrifice them. That knowledge alone will draw thousands to our cause.” Vengal finished.

“Our cause?” Martin asked.

Vengal met his eyes and nodded. “Yes Martin Hunter, our cause. My Queen is here... and after what I have seen this night... the future of my people is here. I would be honored if you allowed me to lead this mission.”

Martin gazed at him for a long moment, detecting no signs of false bravado or deception from him. He nodded. “I’ll contact Julie and get your men set up with some implants.” He said.

Leland looked at Vengal with a smile and much respect. He turned to Martin. “What will you be doing *Lyca Ohtar*? Surely you will not sit this one out?”

Martin grinned. “Me? I’m going to take Ealin and my team, and we’re going to go watch a football game.”

Leland and Vengal both looked at him as if he had gone totally mad.

SALINA, UTAH

Dysea stood to the side of the small airfield, her thoughts miles away as she watched without interest as the Dragoons and the team from Eden loaded the Raptor with the last of their supplies and equipment. They had arrived in Salina without any issues, making excellent time. During the trip Dysea had time to contemplate everything that had happened in her life in the last few months.

She was no longer Queen of the Wood Elves, and she found herself honestly relieved at that knowledge. It was not something she had thought she would ever say. The realization that she was no longer Queen also made her come to realize that she no longer needed to ‘be’ Queen like in her actions. She had found something that she had long ago given up hope of ever finding, and that was her intense love for Martin. What she and Martin had begun to build, and what Tarifa would help them to build when she rejoined them, that was who she was now. She wanted a life without fear and persecution; a life full of laughing and healthy children; Martin’s children. She wanted a life of having Martin’s body wrapped around hers, and perhaps sharing that life with the red haired human who so filled her thoughts now.

Her love of Martin Hunter had also changed her physically in a way she had never expected. Though she could not alter her physical appearance to the extent that her *Nauta Melme* was able to, her eyes and teeth still became something other than normal. Her senses were extremely more attuned to her surroundings, and she had learned quickly from Martin how to distinguish between the different scents, and also how to use her sense of smell as a weapon. Her physical strength had also increased nearly three fold, and she was now more physically fit and her stamina and reflexes were far beyond any elf that she knew with the exception of Tarifa. And while she had questioned her mother’s attempt to increase her sexual pleasure with the piercing of her womanhood, Dysea could not deny the delicious sensations of pleasure that ripped through her when her *Nauta Melme* was driving his beautiful cock into her. She now understood why her mother had told her to have it done, and it was the reason that she had performed the same operation on Tarifa. Tarifa now sported a glimmering sapphire piercing of her clit, and the memories of tickling that ring while feasting on Tarifa’s luscious pussy sent warm feelings coursing through her, and quickly Anja replaced the images of Tarifa in her mind, and Dysea could not shake the images of being wrapped in an intimate embrace with the red haired human female. Dysea smiled to herself, knowing that she would need Martin to fuck her silly once she returned if she continued to think these thoughts.

As she contemplated all these things, Dysea knew as Wood Elf Queen she could never have achieved them. Yet as she was now, just Dysea, that dream was well within her grasp. They would have to fight for every inch of ground they gained, and there would be setbacks, she was intelligent enough to know that, but she was also intelligent enough to know that as long as she had Martin that dream could come true. There was an aura about Nauta Melme, a will and drive that she had never experienced in any man before. She knew there was far more to the man she loved than he was willing to let her see right now, but she knew his love for her was complete and total, and the time would come when he would share all his secrets with her.

It was this realization that came to her as they returned to Salina. This was the realization that caused her to walk to the nearest stylist of hair and make the changes she had. Her long platinum blond hair was no longer simply straight as it was now cut in such a way as to frame her face in angular waves and edges. Now her face was framed by the gentle angular style in such a way that it highlighted the emerald color of her eyes and made them stand out more. She had kept her hair long, reaching almost to the small of her back because Martin liked to fill his hands with it, but it was a new version of Dysea, a new hair style to go with the new person she would now be.

She smelled Governor Kadeem moving up behind her long before he came into view and she turned to face him as he got within sight of her. His eyes registered surprise at her new look, but her smile as he stopped in front of her.

“Your beauty challenges that of Tarifa Queen Dysea.” Kadeem spoke.

“Governor, I am no longer Queen. I am simply Dysea. Please... we are equals you and I.” She told him.

Kadeem looked at her. “But you are the... you are... you are *Nauta Min...* of *Lyca Ohtar*.” He said. (Bounded One) “It is written.”

Dysea looked at him oddly. “Written?” She asked. “What do you mean?”

“It is written in The *Yara Parma*, The Ancient Books.” Kadeem answered.

The Ancient Books of the Drow,” Dysea asked surprised. “It is written in there? I thought the Alliance destroyed all the history the Drow had in their main library when they purged their race?”

Kadeem shook his head. “Some of it managed to survive. I was able to obtain a copy of the Ancient Books from a human. They did not know what they had, though the books cost me quite a bit.”

“That is very interesting Governor.” Dysea said. “Would you allow me to read them?”

“Of course my lady... I will have them sent to you in the next shipment to Eden.” He answered.

Dysea nodded. “I appreciate that Governor, but regardless of what is written, that does not make me someone special.” She said.

Kadeem shook his head. “With respect... it makes you very special.” He told her. “You and *Lyca Ohtar* have given all of us hope.”

“We could very well fail Kadeem.” Dysea said.

Kadeem nodded. “Perhaps; but is not the attempt worth it?” He answered. “And it is this that gives us hope. Regardless of whether you succeed or not, hope has been returned to us all.”

Dysea nodded slowly. “You are correct; the attempt is indeed worth it.” She replied. “I thank you for your words Governor.”

Kadeem smiled. “I came to inform you before you left that The High Elf Council has approved the trade route to Salina My Lady.” He told her. “I received word only moments ago. They believe it is Salina that is providing them with their ripe fruit and vegetables.”

Dysea smiled. “Then let us let them continue to think that.” She said. “The trade route has been securely worked out?”

Kadeem nodded. “It has, twice a week My Lady.” He answered. “A changed letter or number will indicate that Queen Tarifa will be coming with the convoy. I will then notify you in Eden.”

“Excellent. When I return to Eden I will insure that you are delivered the fresh fruits and vegetables three times a week so that you do not miss a shipment and draw suspicion.” Dysea answered.

“There was also word from Mountain City of an attack on the Queen.” Kadeem spoke. “The reports say she was rescued by a female Drow warrior. A Drow! Everyone thought they were extinct. The Queen has announced this Drow will become her personal Attendant. Can you believe it? Is this true?”

Dysea nodded. "There are quite a few Drow that survived the Alliance purge from what I understand. She is a part of no clan or family and I met her before I left Tarifa. She will make a fine Attendant to Tarifa. You have your instructions on what to do if any dispatches come through."

Kadeem nodded. "Yes My Lady." He answered. "The communications hub you have left here will come in quite handy. It is well hidden and well guarded, have no fear."

Dysea nodded. "Until we are ready to fully announce we exist, we must maintain certain levels of secrecy Kadeem. It is not because we do not trust you; it is because we do not trust those in the larger elf cities."

"Yes I know. And I will insure we do our part as well." Kadeem told her. "Your... your hair looks very... you look very stunning My Lady. More so than any time I have seen you before."

Dysea smiled and blushed slightly. "Thank you Governor."

They turned as the Crew Chief for the Raptor walked up slowly. "We're all set to depart Dysea." The male elf spoke. "Cathy is warming the engines up and we can lift off in three minutes."

Dysea nodded and gave Kadeem a short embrace which surprised him slightly. She smiled at him. "I will see you again soon." She spoke before turning and following the crew chief towards the Raptor. The whine of the engines spooling up prevented any conversation until she was inside, and she moved directly to the cockpit.

Cathy turned her helmeted head and her eyes grew a little wider. "Wow!" She spoke. "I like the new hair cut, very sexy."

Dysea smiled and settled into the engineer's chair. "I rather like it myself." Dysea said. "I hope Martin does too."

"Dysea... you could be bald and he wouldn't care." Cathy said. "I've known the Skipper a long time, almost as long as Ben and Tina. You're in his blood girl, never forget that. You'll see."

Dysea smiled at her words, unsure what the last part of her statement meant. "He is in mine as well." She said finally. "How are things going with Leland?" She asked knowingly.

Cathy couldn't help the wide smile on her face. "I can honestly say I have never worshiped a man before." She spoke. "But Leland... well he just makes me tingle all over inside."

"He's a good man." Dysea said.

"Yes he is. I just bet he's elbow deep in trouble right now though." Cathy said.

"What do you mean?" Dysea asked.

"We've been busy while you were gone." Cathy told her with a knowing smile. "We wiped out the mercenaries in Flagstaff, and Martin and Leland are leading the assault against Cedar City."

"We went after Cedar City?" Dysea spoke a worried expression on her face.

"It's going well Dysea, relax. We've cleaned out most of the city rather quickly. They didn't think we would attack, and when we did, we hit them from three different directions. They ran like little kids."

"What are... what are our casualties?" Dysea asked.

"Thirty-seven dead and three hundred nineteen wounded." Cathy answered somberly.

"We... we predicted almost a thousand dead if we attacked before winter." Dysea spoke in surprise.

Cathy nodded. "I know... we began hitting them last night and caught them with their pants down. Martin and Leland have been pressing the attack ever since. Last time I spoke with him they were about to head deeper into the urban portion to link up with Martin and his command. Marty got a little ahead of his support elements."

"Martin is there?" Dysea asked.

Cathy nodded. "That's where we're heading. We have a load of supplies for them."

"He didn't tell me he was going to attack Cedar City." Dysea spoke.

"He probably didn't want you to worry Dysea, and besides, he knew you had another mission. Sit down sister, because there's more. Your mother showed up with a bunch of your Wood Elf Rangers too." Cathy spoke. "Last I heard they were kicking ass and taking names."

"My mother is at Cedar City?" Dysea asked aghast.

"Don't worry, she's holding down the fort at the airfield." Cathy spoke. "We've moved our command section there. When we lifted off, she was directing the arrival of wounded and the extraction of the civilians we have rescued."

"Let us go quickly Cathy. I haven't seen my mother in months." Dysea said.

Cathy grinned. "That's what I like to hear!" She turned and her hands flew over her flight controls. "Let's turn and burn."

CEDAR CITY

Martin winced as the rounds struck the side of the building above his head and showered him with broken bits of concrete and brick. He pulled his head back quickly and looked at Ealin and the other members of his personal team that lined the outer wall of the old college football stadium.

"I think they are waiting for us?" Martin spoke with a smile.

"What makes you say that?" Ealin asked sarcastically as he rolled his eyes.

"Are the other teams in place?" He asked.

The female elf with the small radio attached to her shoulder and headset stuck in her ear nodded her head quickly. "Danny split his group into two teams. They are standing by at the northern entrances. They were undetected as they moved into position."

Martin nodded. "I saw a football game here once." Martin spoke to no one in particular as he hefted his HK74 assault rifle. "The visiting team won."

"I take it we are the visiting team?" Ealin asked.

Martin grinned. "I don't know, but we are going to win I can tell you that." Martin looked at his watch and took a deep breath. "Execute!" He barked.

The twenty-two mercenaries from Cedar City had holed up in the front office of the stadium, unable to get all the way to the University grounds with their comrades. It had been a horrific twelve hours for them. None of them had ever come under heavy artillery fire before, and when the rockets and artillery rounds began landing all around them and destroying all that they took for granted, they quickly panicked. Many of them bore minor wounds from flying shrapnel and gunshots. They had been completely unprepared for the ferocity of the attack by the elves and the men and women under Martin's command. Many had seen dozens of their mercenary comrades attempt to surrender only to be brutally shot in place as the humans and elves swept throughout the city, slowly taking control of what they once had.

It mattered not where they turned, for if the area was not being hammered with artillery, it was infested with humans and elves that were heavily armed and out looking for blood. Their slaves and many of the civilians of Cedar City had disappeared in the first ten minutes of the attack, and they didn't know that most of them had been ushered to safe zones within the city limits and were under heavy guard, though they were receiving medical treatment and hot food and drink.

The mercenaries had never experienced the savage violence that was being visited upon them before. They were so used to being the ones exacting the violence on others, as soon as it was turned against them by someone stronger, they ran like the cowards they all were.

They managed to make their way here to the stadium before being cut off by artillery fire and unable to link up with their commander at the University. All of them knew they were surrounded, but they mistakenly thought they were in a good position to hold and protect them from further attacks. The guards that were posted had taken potshots at a few fleeting glimpses of armed people in and around the front office block, but they were completely unaware of how close to death they truly were. No one heard Martin's shouted command to execute, and the first any of them knew they were about to die is when the four flash bang grenades came flying through the smashed out office windows and went off in their midst. Many of them mercenaries were unprepared for the grenades' detonation, and screams erupted as ear drums were ruptured and blackness with white stars filled their eyes. Almost all of them dropped their weapons to clutch at their heads in agony, and none of them saw or heard the three teams of elves and humans burst into the room.

Nine HK74's spit out death and devastation, the Teflon coated ammunition punching through bodies with no resistance at all. The screams of the dying were quickly silenced by single shots or three round bursts through open mouths or into foreheads and chests.

Martin squeezed the trigger of his HK one last time, sending a three round burst through the left eye of a mercenary who had been unable to even get off the floor. His hands had been clutched over his bleeding ears, his mouth open in silent agony of which Martin quickly freed him of. His head blew open like an over ripe melon, splashing the wall and the floor with blood and brain matter.

“Clear!” Martin barked out, holding his position. Ealin and his radio operator were on either flank of him, holding their positions.

“Clear!” Danny’s voice sounded in the smoke filled room.

“Clear!” Radama’s voice followed. “I have the leader of this group!”

Martin got to his feet slowly as the smoke from the grenades began to filter out of the room and he saw Radama shove the human man forward to sprawl in front of Martin. His ears were bleeding, and Martin knew his ear drums were ruptured. He also bore two bullet wounds in his upper shoulder and arm, his ragged uniform soaked in blood.

“Hi there,” Martin spoke looking down at the man.

Martin saw Danny come up through the dissipating smoke, his HK in his hands. “The rest are deader than shit.” He reported. “This one zagged when he should have zigged. Radama was aiming at his empty melon head.”

Martin grinned. “Secure the building, and let Leland know that no reinforcements will be coming from the stadium.” He spoke turning to his female radio operator. “He can conduct his attack as soon as he and General Vengal are in position.”

“Danny please let Juan know that we can use the stadium here to set a triage center before moving anyone to the airfield.” Martin spoke. “Process them here and then send them forward. I don’t want to risk anything at the airfield.”

Danny nodded and turned to his own radio operator who waved indicating he understood. “I’ll get some additional security in here to lock down the place.” He spoke.

Martin nodded and looked at the mercenary. He reached out and slapped the man viciously, getting his attention. “Is there a reason why I should keep you alive?” Martin asked, raising his voice so that the man could hear him even with his damaged ears.

“Fuck you elf lover!” The man spat.

Martin chuckled. “You aren’t my type sport.” He answered. “Take this fucker and string him up outside.” Martin spoke looking at Radama. “Do it in a way so that they can see his carcass at the University.”

Radama smiled savagely and grabbed the man by his long greasy hair, “With pleasure.” He spat.

Leland lifted his finger to his lips in the universal sign for silence as the young human boy saw him lift himself from the sewer in the floor of the large bathroom.

“Where you at runt,” The mean voice echoed in the room. Leland scrambled quickly to the side of the door.

The boy turned to see the large mercenary burst through the door of the bathroom, and his eyes filled with fear. “No... please... not again!” He gasped.

The mercenary grinned widely, revealing broken teeth and a foul smelling mouth. “You liked it last night boy.”

“You will hurt this child no more scum.” Leland growled.

The mercenary’s eyes went wide and he started to whirl around, only to have Leland bury the large blade into his chest that much more quickly. Leland clamped his free hand over the mercenary’s foul smelling mouth and wrenched the blade up. The man lifted himself up on his tip toes to escape the savage pain tearing through his chest and belly, but it was of no use. His blood splashed wetly on the tile floor around him, and his eyes quickly rolled into the back of his head as Leland sliced open his heart.

Leland easily grabbed the body before it fell, catching the weapon and lowering them both quietly to the floor. He looked at the human boy.

“I mean you no harm little one.” Leland spoke gently. “And this man will no longer hurt you.”

“Are... are you an elf?” The boy asked quietly.

Leland smiled. "Yes I am little one. I have come with my friends to save you." He motioned to the hole in the floor and the boy followed his hand to see more elves and humans quickly climbing out of the sewer drain. "Are your parents outside?" Leland asked, coming up next to the boy.

The blond haired boy, no more than eight years old, shook his head. "They are dead mister." He spoke.

"Are you by yourself?" Leland asked. The boy nodded slowly, his hands clutched together as he bit his lower lip. "What is your name?"

"Johnny."

Leland smiled and held out his hand, "Johnny can you tell me how many men like him are out there?"

"Billy was really mad this morning! A bunch of his friends left last night!" The little boy answered. "They didn't think anyone saw them, but I watched as they ran off down the street."

Leland looked at Vengal as he settled next to him. He turned back to the boy. "Can you tell me how many are left Johnny?"

"Not many." He replied. "Billy was so mad he killed two of his own men to scare the others. There is only like twelve of them left. No one else knows."

Leland smiled and took the boy's small hand in his. "They won't hurt you any longer little one." He said softly.

"Are you... are you going to kill Billy?" Johnny asked.

"I am certainly going to try." Leland spoke.

"He's hurt me a lot." Johnny spoke lowering his head in shame.

Leland felt his heart go out to the human child and he brushed the blond locks from his eyes. "You have no need to fear any loner Johnny. I will protect you."

"You... you promise?"

Leland nodded without thought. "I promise you. Right now I need you to stay hidden in here until I come back for you. I'm going to go take care of Billy and his men ok?"

Johnny nodded. "Ok."

"Go hide in one of those small stalls until I come back for you. And don't move no matter what you hear. Do you understand?"

Johnny nodded and Leland and Vengal watched him scamper quickly into one of the abandoned toilet stalls. Vengal glanced at Leland a look of disgust on his face.

"They use children?" He asked in outrage.

"Scum like the ones we are about to kill have no morals General." Leland replied wiping the blade of his knife on the dead mercenary's shirt. "I will enjoy killing this scum Billy."

Vengal nodded. "Indeed. We should stick to the original plan in case the child has missed any that might be hidden."

Leland nodded. "If the child is any indication, we must move quickly. The civilians may be in greater danger if this Billy person thinks he is threatened."

Vengal smiled savagely. "Give me six minutes to move into position and then we can attack."

Leland nodded. "Six minutes General."

CEDAR CITY AIRFIELD

Dysea embraced her mother at the foot of the rear ramp of the Raptor as Cathy shut down the engines and systems from the cockpit. That they were related was easy enough to tell as her mother had the same platinum blond hair and the same slim yet luscious figure, but she looked much older.

Dysea smiled as her mother held her tightly, inhaling her mother's scent and finding joy and peace in the smell. She had not seen her in almost a year, and to finally be able to embrace her tightly like this was just the medicine she needed.

Dysea's mother finally pushed her away and held her at arm's length and looked at her, eyes moist with happy tears.

"You... you should not have come." Dysea told her, but not really meaning her words.

Normya could only grin as she looked at her only child. "Acid storms could not have kept me away child." She said. "It has been too long since I have seen you."

"I have missed you *Amille*." Dysea spoke softly smiling at her mother.

"Imagine my surprise when I discovered that Vengal was coming to meet with you and this Martin Hunter." Normya spoke. "I was incensed when the Council declared you a traitor to your own people. They provided no proof except some silly information they made up. Things have been very bad Dysea. There is much talk among the people that you were betrayed Dysea. This new Queen the Council has appointed bends like a reed in the wind to the Council's will."

"It doesn't matter anymore *Amille*. I will deal with the Council of Elders when the time is right. I am here now, and we are building something far greater." Dysea spoke.

"So I see. I have been among these people for only a few short hours and in that time I have seen something I never imagined I would, humans and elves working together." Normya told her as they began to walk away from the rear of the Raptor. "Elves treated equally... and in positions of authority over humans. And the humans accept this as if it is common place." Normya shook her head. "When I arrived here at this airfield, a human man came up to me and asked if I would take control of directing the refugees to buildings and tents they had set up. He did not blink that I was an elf."

Dysea held her arm as they walked and she smiled. "It is part of what we are building here *Amille*." She said. "They care not if we are human or elf, only that our ultimate goal is achieved. And that is freedom and prosperity for all of us."

"The man who has claimed you for his own, this... this Martin Hunter?" Normya spoke. "What is he like? When I asked to see him I was told he was leading an attack on the old University here personally. He commands such a following... such courage and devotion."

Dysea nodded. "Yes he does." She said. "And I think he is more frightened of you than you are of him."

Normya looked at her daughter aghast. "You jest!" She spat.

Dysea smiled, "Not at all." She told her mother.

"You have returned from Mountain City." Normya asked. "How is... how is the High Elf Queen?"

Dysea looked at her mother, trying to see any signs of disapproval and rejection but all she saw was a mother's love. "She is herself again." Dysea answered. "*Amille*... I..."

Normya put a finger to her daughter's lips and shook her head. "You need explain nothing to me Dysea. I have thought of what you have done many times myself, but I never had the opportunity to experience it. You have said she is like the sister you never had?"

Dysea nodded with a gentle smile. "We have become very close, yes *Amille*." She answered quickly.

Normya nodded. "Then who am I to say anything?" She replied. "Is this Martin Hunter up to the chore of pleasing my daughter as she desires?"

"Mother!" Dysea exclaimed, her face taking on a slight shade of red even under her tan.

"It is a fair question!" Normya spoke.

Dysea couldn't help but shake her head. "He is more than up to the task mother." She finally said. "Come... we'll secure a Hopper and go to the university and you can meet him." She looked up and waved at the heavily armed soldiers that had become her shadow as soon as she exited the Raptor. Normya took notice of this quickly and watched as one of them broke from his position and ran up to her briskly.

"Yes ma'am?" He asked.

"I want to go to the University Richard." She spoke.

The young human man nodded his head. "The General just reported in that Leland and General Vengal have taken down the last mercenary position at the University. The captives there are being moved to the coliseum."

"How many did they save?" Dysea asked.

"All of them ma'am, Leland and that Wood Elf Ranger did some serious ass kicking. They even captured the leader of the scum. The General is with him now."

"Good... secure a Hopper and let's get moving." Dysea spoke. "My mother will be accompanying us."

The young man nodded and turned to another in Dysea's security detachment and began shouting orders. Normya squeezed her hand. "You have a security detail?" She asked.

Dysea nodded. "*Nauta Melme* insists on it." She replied to the same question Tarifa's mother had asked. "There was an assassination attempt when we first started building Eden. Since that time he has insured I was never alone when I was not with him."

Normya nodded in understanding. "What you have built will no doubt threaten many. He did the right thing in protecting you."

They turned as the armored Hopper pulled up next to them. Dysea took her hand. "Come mother... it is time you met *Nauta Melme*."

MOUNTAIN CITY

Aihola stretched luxuriantly on the silk sheets of the bed she lay in. Her eyes fluttered open, a look of contentment on her face at feeling the soft sheets against her skin. As the memories of the last few hours came rushing back, her eyes sprang open quickly and she sat up in the bed with a start. She inhaled sharply when she saw Tarifa sitting on the large bed lotus style, her eyes nearly aglow in the dim light of the coming morning.

"Good morning." Tarifa spoke softly. Aihola looked around quickly, her Drow warrior instincts lighting off and Tarifa took notice of this. "You are safe Aihola. You are in my home."

Aihola turned back to her. "Safe!" She hissed. "Your Dragoons raped and beat me! I will never be safe among your kind!"

"The Dragoons who assaulted you are dead!" Tarifa stated flatly. "They were scum of the vilest sort. I had you brought to my home, and here you will be safe."

"Your home," Aihola asked her eyes going slightly wide when she heard Tarifa tell her the men who had raped her were dead. "So now I am your prisoner as well?"

"You are no prisoner Aihola." Tarifa spoke softly. "But it is safer that you stay here with me than any other place in Mountain City."

"Why should I trust you?" Aihola hissed. "You... you and your blond Queen raped me as well! You are no different than..."

Tarifa sighed heavily. "We... we did not intend for that to happen Aihola." She spoke softly. "The Alliance experiments on you... when you become excited you secrete a pheromone that anyone around you will find irresistible. It overcame us and caused us to react the way we did. I sincerely apologize for that."

Tarifa got up from the bed and Aihola noticed for the first time that all she wore were undergarments that fit her lush body like a glove and highlighted every delicious curve. The same curves Aihola had taken great pleasure in exploring intimately only a few hours ago. Her coal colored skin hid the deep blush she felt as these thoughts raced through her head. She watched as Tarifa went to the small table and she couldn't help but admire the long satiny legs and firm ass cheeks, nor could she discount that Tarifa's large breasts were straining magnificently against the light blue bra she wore. She noticed for the first time that Tarifa was perhaps two or three inches taller than her. She watched as Tarifa picked up the vial of dark liquid and returned to stand next to the side of the bed and hold it out to her.

"Dysea is quite knowledgeable of Alliance poisons and such." Tarifa explained. "I don't know how... but she is. She left this for you. It is made from herbs and roots and will effectively counteract what the Alliance experiments did to you. It will not cure you completely, but it will make it so you are not as... sensitive to unwanted manipulation. At least until such time as we can find a more permanent solution. She has returned to Eden and taken a blood sample of you back with her. If anyone can discover a cure for you, Anja can."

"How do I know this is not just some other means for you to control me?" Aihola retorted.

"I have no desire to control you Aihola." Tarifa spoke. "You are an unwitting pawn in a power play among the High Elves. Telan has been using you, as he does everyone else."

"So you say." Aihola spoke, realizing for the first time that she was very naked under the satin sheets. She gripped them quickly and wrapped them around her slim chocolate body.

Tarifa nodded. "Yes... so I say." She spoke pulling the chair closer to the side of the bed. "You have a choice to make Aihola."

Aihola watched as Tarifa settled into the chair and looked at her. Her actions thus far had not been in any way controlling. Aihola's keen senses could not detect anyone else inside the room with them, or inside the

house for that matter. Tarifa was extremely comfortable and her heart beat evenly. Tarifa smiled as she saw Aihola reaching out with her acute Drow senses.

“We are alone Aihola.” She spoke. “There is no one else here with us.”

“Why have you brought me here?” Aihola finally asked.

“I need your help.” Tarifa answered honestly.

“My help? You are the Queen of the High Elves... what would you need my help for? I am a Drow warrior, an assassin, a mercenary. I am as much hated by your people as I am the humans and other elves.”

“I don’t hate you.” Tarifa spoke softly.

Aihola laughed softly. “You are Queen... you hate me more than anyone.”

“If that was the case, and I did hate you, than why are you here now? Why did I react in the manner I did when I saw those men raping you?” Tarifa asked.

Aihola was silent as she gazed at Tarifa’s face. The almost blue black hair framing her sapphire eyes, the full lips and delicate skin. Aihola remembered how those lips tasted of peach, how her skin flushed as she reached the pinnacle of pleasure at Aihola’s own urging. And she remembered the intense pleasure those lips had bestowed upon her as they drove her to heights of passion she had not known existed.

“And if I say no?” She questioned.

“Then I will kill you.” Tarifa stated flatly, “Without hesitation.”

“You think much of your skill Queen of the High Elves.” Aihola spoke. “I am a Drow warrior... I could...” Aihola’s eyes bugged out of her head as she found she could no longer breathe. Her hands went to her throat and she felt the iron grip of Tarifa’s hand on the slim neck. She glanced frantically at Tarifa’s face and saw it was only inches from her own. Her eyes had changed to sapphire orbs surrounded by blackness, and her fangs had extended to their full length. Aihola restrained herself from exerting her own strength, not wanting to reveal what she was.

“Do not for an instant believe I could not kill you Aihola.” Tarifa spoke. “I am considerably more than just an elf now, and it would not please me to have to show it to you.” Tarifa moved her face closer, her hand still clutching Aihola’s throat, but not squeezing any tighter than she already was. Aihola’s hand rested atop hers. “I have no desire to kill you Aihola. I would very much like you to listen to me and help me of your own accord.” Tarifa’s soft lips were only millimeters from Aihola’s own soft pink lips as she spoke. “You... you know too much already and I...” Tarifa sat back slowly, releasing Aihola and bringing her hands together as she returned to the chair. “I would prefer to have you as a friend.”

Aihola rubbed her neck where Tarifa’s hand had just been. “And if I do not help you, that is when you will kill me?” She spoke her eyes wide in a mixture of anger and something else she did not understand. “I have no family! No clan! My brother and those under his command have vanished and they are probably dead at the hands of the Alliance! What could you possibly give to me that would make me want to go on?”

“Hope.” Tarifa answered without hesitation. “Hope for a future where things are different. I have been among the Alliance torture chambers Aihola, just as you have been. Marcus himself tortured and raped me for nearly six weeks before giving me to his men. Nine of my father’s Dragoons died rescuing me. I have sworn never to have that monster take me alive again. I too thought all hope was lost... that things could never change, until I met someone who changed my mind and returned that hope to me.”

“The one you speak of... he is the one who changed you and the Wood Elf Queen?” Aihola asked softly.

Tarifa nodded. “He has changed us in more than just physical terms.” She replied. “My... my relationship with them is difficult to explain, but it has opened my eyes to hope for a better future. And he has already started building that future with Dysea, and they wait for me to join them, for we began this quest together. And I will join them and help them as we build a future at the earliest possible moment. You can be a part of that future with us.”

“You mean as the sex toy of you and your Wood Elf lover; as the plaything of the man who changed you and her into something other than elves?” Aihola snapped viciously. “I think not! I have no desire to become like you and she!”

Tarifa looked at her, her eyes returning to normal and her fangs retracting. “Was making love to me... to us that terrible Aihola?” She asked gently. “I did not think so, and I can tell you neither did Dysea. Part of the gift that Martin gave to us was an ability to heal and purge foreign diseases and viruses from our bodies. The

pheromone your body secretes when you are gripped in passion no longer affected us after the first hour Aihola; at least it did not me. I was acting quite of my own free will.”

Aihola looked at her surprised. “You... what... you were willingly doing such things to me?” She gasped.

“While we could not resist initially, once our bodies were purged of the pheromone you secrete, we were acting quite willingly I assure you. I... I enjoy it very much Aihola, perhaps much more than Dysea. You... you could not help yourself, we understood this... but you tasted so good and sweet and...” Tarifa looked at Aihola, her cheeks turning a slight crimson. “It was wrong and I apologize to you for that. That however is not the reason behind what I propose to you. Who you share a bed with is entirely up to you, and you would be helping me by acting as my Royal Attendant.”

“Do you think me a fool? I would be your Attendant?” Aihola gasped.

Tarifa nodded. “My bodyguard if you prefer that term, yes.” She replied. “I can think of no one who would fit that role better. You are a Drow warrior, and that by itself strikes fear into others.”

“Your... your husband knows me.” Aihola spoke softly, her mind racing now at what Tarifa was offering to her. “How would you explain this to him?”

“He is *NOT* my husband!” Tarifa growled viciously, startling Aihola. “And he is no different than most men, and fortunately for me he thinks with his cock most of the time. I can deal with Telan.”

“You... you are married to him.” Aihola spoke not understanding. “He... he is your husband.”

“I would never willingly marry that pig!” Tarifa spoke, the heat in her voice very evident. “Telan and his family are part of the problem. Before Dysea came to Mountain City they were giving me drugs in an attempt to control my mind and my actions. You were supplying those drugs without realizing what they were intended for. Unfortunately for Telan, because of the changes in my body because of my relationship with Martin, the drugs did not work as well as they had hoped. Once my mother told Dysea of what was happening, she came here in order to help me. I am once more the person I was before all of this began.”

“Then why do you need me?” Aihola asked, now very riveted by the story Tarifa was telling her.

“There are others associated with Telan that do not think with the wrong head.” Tarifa told her. “As long as they perceive that I am doing what they want and am still under their control, and even becoming more compliant, they are not to be feared. You would be there for those that fall outside that category.” Tarifa looked at her, softness in her eyes that Aihola had not yet seen. “And... I would... I would very much like to have a friend.”

“What... what is it you want of me Queen of the High Elves?” She finally asked her voice soft and almost a whisper as she lowered her head.

“The first thing...” Tarifa spoke reaching out and grasping her jaw and gently lifting her face to meet hers. “My name is Tarifa and I want you to use it. You are not a slave Aihola, not any longer. And... and if you truly wish to leave... then I will allow you to leave if you give me your word you will never speak of what we have discussed this day.”

Aihola looked at her quickly. “You would allow me to leave? Even with what I know and what you just told me?”

Tarifa nodded slowly. “If that is what you truly wished, after what we shared... I could not bring myself to kill you.” She got to her feet and looked down at Aihola. “There are clothes for you in the truck against the wall. I am relatively sure they will fit you quite nicely. I’m going to take a bath. If you are still here when I come out then I will have your answer. If you are not here, then I will fabricate a cover story to make your exit from Mountain City easier. The choice is yours. I... I would like very much for you to stay. The vial contains enough liquid dosage for a least a month. If you leave you will need to seek out Dysea in Eden so that they can give you a more permanent solution or your symptoms will return. Now you must decide.”

Aihola watched Tarifa turn and exit the room leaving her to admire the sway of Tarifa’s ass as she walked, and to decide the future of the rest of her life.

Dysea's security detachment maintained an extremely tight circle around her and her mother as they made their way into the interior of the old football stadium. Once word had been received that Leland and General Vengal had succeeded in taking down the last holdout of mercenaries within the city, medical teams had descended upon the stadium in droves. They could see hundreds of men, women and children, humans and elves alike, being attended to by dozens of field medics, while a trauma center had been set up in one of the larger offices, Anja directing her medics and treating everyone.

Normya clung to her daughter's hand as they approached the office area of the old stadium. She was unsure of how Dysea knew where to go exactly, not realizing that Dysea was tracking Martin by his scent. To Dysea's enhanced sense of smell, Martin's unique mint scent was almost overpowering to her and she followed it easily enough. They came to a long corridor and had traveled half way down the narrow hall until Dysea pulled up short. Normya looked at her daughter.

"What is it?" She asked.

Dysea smiled. "Let's wait here for a moment." She spoke calmly. "*Nauta Melme* will join us momentarily."

"What... what do you mean? How do you know that?" Normya asked.

Dysea started to answer but the large crashing sound stopped her words. They both turned as the entire wall in front of them came crashing outward from the force of the large body that came through it. Plaster and old wiring was ripped from the wall as the bloody body of the mercenary leader impacted the far wall of the corridor and slumped to the floor. His hands were bound in front of him with Teflon plastic cuffs, his face bloody from a smashed mouth and a nasty cut above his eye. His nose was equally twisted and bloody, the cartilage obviously broken, and the upper portion of his nose angled sharply outward.

Normya watched as the towering male human smashed through the shattered wall right after the body of the mercenary. She took in the tall incredibly muscular body, the dark hair and the wild looking yellow eyes encased in coal black outline, and quickly realized that this man was not completely human. Her eyes grew wide when she saw that the incisor teeth of the man were abnormally long, nearing an inch in length, giving him an extremely terrifying appearance. She watched as he bent over and hauled the mercenary up by his throat with only one hand and slammed him none to kindly into the opposite wall with as much effort as lifting a twig from the ground.

"I know how many innocent lives you have taken!" Martin growled. "Human and elf alike; and for no other reason than they failed to please you in some way. You are nothing more than a disease and you have the audacity to ask me, to beg me for mercy?"

Normya was unable to hear what the mercenary leader was able to mumble, his blood stained lips hardly moving. His eyes were clearly bulging out of his head as the air circulating in his neck was slowly being extinguished by the huge man's fist. Normya couldn't help herself and found herself smiling. "Oh I like this man." She whispered to Dysea. "Tell me he is a friend of your *Nauta Melme* my daughter."

Dysea grinned at her mother before looking back to where Martin had the mercenary pinned against the wall. She felt her heart jump when Martin's head turned as he detected her scent, and his eyes grew wide and immediately changed back to the pools of dark brown she so adored. Martin dropped the mercenary's body unceremoniously, and stepped back from him.

"Danny?" He spoke to someone behind him. Normya's eyes grew wider still when she saw the even larger black man exit through the large hole in the wall. "String this shit sorry fuck from the tallest tree you can find before I lose my temper and begin to cut off his limbs."

Danny smiled and reached down to grab the mercenary leader by his greasy dirty blond hair. "I think I can arrange that Skipper! And I got just the tree in mind." He spoke.

Martin turned to look at Dysea as Danny hauled the groaning mercenary leader of Cedar City to his doom. "*Melda Min*." Martin spoke taking a step towards her.

Normya's eyes widened when she heard what Martin called her and she turned to look at her daughter, but Dysea was already launching herself into Martin's powerful arms. Normya turned back and saw her daughter within the embrace of this powerfully built man, a man who was not completely human Normya could tell from the color of his aura. She watched as their lips came together and her daughter shared an exceptionally passionate kiss with him, heedless of the others that were watching.

Martin's arms crushed Dysea to him as her long legs drew up along his sides and her arms encircled his head tightly. Dysea plunged her tongue into Martin's mouth, dancing it across his teeth and artfully playing tag with his own tongue. She quickly lost the battle and groaned as Martin pulled her tighter and deepened his kiss, pinning her warm tongue with his own and teasing the tip of his tongue across the bottom of her trapped tongue, causing tiny ripples to course through her.

They slowly and quite unwillingly drew apart, a small strand of saliva connecting their lips, and Dysea traced her fingers over his face and eyes. "I have missed you *Nauta Melme*." She spoke softly. "I have missed you so very much."

Martin nuzzled the hollow of her throat, his lips grazing her satiny skin. "No more than I have missed you *Melda Min*." He told her softly.

Dysea took his face in her hands and kissed him once more, staring into his dark eyes with adoration and love. "Tarifa sends you her undying thanks Martin." Dysea spoke, caressing his cheeks. "She so wanted to be with us here. To help us to continue what we started."

Martin set Dysea down on the floor. "You reek of her." He spoke with a grin. "And..." He sniffed Dysea's hair, "Someone else as well."

Dysea smiled and squeezed his hands. "I couldn't pull myself away from her." She told him shyly, pressing her head against his chest and wrapping her arms around his waist. "We missed having you with us my love."

Martin held her tightly, his eyes closed as he relished in the feel of her in his arms. "Then she understands of our plan?"

Dysea nodded. "She does not like it, but she knows what she must do. Governor Kadeem and I should be able to arrange visits by her that will not arouse suspicion. Now that she knows we still consider her a dearest friend, I have no doubt she will try and make as many trips to see us as she is able and not put herself in jeopardy."

Martin nodded and caressed Dysea's hair. "And who is this other female elf I smell on you *Melda Min*?" He asked.

"A Drow warrior we ran across." Dysea answered. "I will explain all that later when I have you alone." She told him, a lustful glint in her eyes as she gazed at him.

Martin smiled. "I look forward to that."

Dysea drew away from him partly and turned to hold out her hand to her mother. "*Nauta Melme*... may I present my mother Normya."

Martin looked at Normya and bowed his head slightly to her in respect. "It is an honor to finally meet you Queen Mother." He spoke.

Normya looked at him surprised. "My daughter is no longer Queen Martin Hunter... therefore I no longer hold that title."

Martin looked at her. "Your daughter will always be Queen... and you will always hold that title in my eyes." He replied, taking her hand and bringing it to his lips to kiss the back of her knuckles.

Normya couldn't help but smile broadly. "Oh I like him daughter." She said with chuckle. "I like him very much."

Martin laughed with them. "Please... we have set up a small command post of sorts nearby where we can relax and talk more."

Normya allowed Martin to take her arm, and noticed that he still held Dysea's hand tightly, as he led them down the corridor. She smiled to herself... knowing that her daughter had chosen extremely well.

MOON BASE EDEN

Taggart looked at Anisa as she sat on the edge of the medical bed. "How long has this been happening?" He asked.

Anisa met his eyes. "I would say roughly six weeks now." She answered.

"And what exactly do you feel?" Paul asked.

“There are moments when I can hear others talking when they aren’t even close to me. I smell things I shouldn’t be able to.” Anisa answered. “I... I’m stronger... my reflexes twice what they should be.”

Paul finished drawing the blood from her arm and placed the small cotton ball over where we had withdrawn the needle. He looked at Anisa carefully. “Go on.” He said.

Anisa shrugged. “It’s very scary Paul.” She spoke. “I’m changing and I don’t know why.”

Paul placed the vial of blood on the table and then turned back to look at her, leaning against the adjoining bed. “I do.” He told her softly.

Anisa looked at him surprised. “What do you mean you know? I have just come to you, and you have not even conducted an examination.”

“I don’t need to conduct an examination.” Paul answered.

“I don’t think I understand.” Anisa said. “How is it possible that you know what is happening to me without a full medical examination?”

Paul went to one of the medical tables and retrieved a data pad from it. He walked back to her as he punched in a security code and then held it out to her. “Read this.” He said.

Anisa took the pad and after a moment of looking at him, she began to read the pad. The more she read, the more her eyes grew larger. She looked up at him. “How... how did you get this?” She asked. Paul turned away and began to fiddle with the instruments on the small table next to the bed. Anisa reached out and took his arm, turning him back around. “I asked you a question Paul. How did you find this out?”

Paul met her eyes and exhaled heavily. “You must not reveal you know anything.” He said. “The Admiral would kill me if he found out.”

“Found out what Paul?” Anisa asked.

“We have a secure communications line open with Martin and the others on Earth.” The voice spoke from the doorway, startling them both and causing them to whirl around. Admiral Wallace strode into the room casually dressed in civilian clothes and looking like he had just woke up. “We have sent reports back and forth since he established Eden City in Utah.”

Anisa looked at the man she had come to love fiercely. “I don’t follow William.” She spoke. “Why... why keep that a secret from me?”

“If you did not know... and you were captured... you could not tell them anything.” William answered. “I’m... I’m sorry Anisa.”

“I don’t care about that!” She snapped. “I understand that! Why would you keep what this Anja Peterson reported from me?”

“That’s a bit more complicated.” William answered her.

“Admiral... I’m sorry... she...” Paul began.

Wallace waved his hand cutting off his apology and shook his head. “It’s not your fault Paul. It’s something I should have been more open about from the very beginning.” William looked at Anisa, “Especially with you Anisa.”

“William... why... I don’t understand.” Anisa spoke stepping closer to him, and reaching out to stroke his weathered cheek.

“I... I have always tried to keep it from others. I doubt even Marty knows.” William spoke. “All throughout my entire career I have had to hide it and turn away from it. I never wanted to, but it was something I needed to do. It was part of my mission to help in protecting him.”

“Protect who William...?” Anisa asked.

“Martin.” Wallace answered, “To protect Martin. He doesn’t know who and what he is yet. He will discover it soon enough... but right now he believes he is still a Genome.”

Anisa stepped off the table and moved to him. “William... what are you talking about? Who is Martin? What do you mean?”

Wallace shook his head and put a finger to her lips. “You have a right to know. I have never felt for a woman what I feel for you.”

“William I am an elf!” Anisa snapped.

Wallace chuckled. “Do you think that matters to me considering what I am? I saw the report that... Dym... Doctor Carson left for Marty in the computer at Eden Ground Command. How he altered certain

elves to make them more attractive to *genomes*, and vice versa. Have you never asked why you suddenly found me so attractive Anisa?"

"Why would this matter?" Anisa asked.

"Walter Carson was brilliant." Wallace spoke. "One of the smartest men I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. And I hope to see him someday soon so thank I can thank him."

"Thank him?" Anisa asked.

William nodded. "Thank him for you." He replied.

"William... my *Cundu*... I don't..."

William smiled at her. "Everyone seems to think that Marty is the very first genome Walter ever created. That is not completely accurate." He looked at Anisa. "You see... Martin and those with him... they aren't really genomes at all."

Anisa's eyes went wide at this and they all heard the small yelp of surprise and the glass vial hitting the floor behind them. They turned and saw Alliance Minister Torcrum standing in the small office listening.

She had just heard everything William had told them.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CEDAR CITY

"...decided that the time was right to come to Cedar City and knock off this scum bag before he was able to consolidate his base more so than he already had." Martin was explaining to Dysea and Normya as they sat in the small office he had taken over as his temporary Command Post. He leaned against the small desk in the room, the mug of coffee in his hand. Dysea and Normya could see the members of Martin's command staff moving about checking maps and continuing to get reports from the field.

"You didn't tell me you were going to attack Cedar City *Nauta Melme*." Dysea scolded him moving up close to him, pressing her body against his and snuggling her face into his neck.

Martin nodded slowly and meeting her emerald green eyes. His arm snaked around her small waist and pulled her closer to him. "I know *Melda Min*, but I didn't make the final decision until the attack on Flagstaff went so well. Everyone was pumped up and confident, and the plan we developed last month worked to perfection."

Normya looked surprised. "And you were able to mobilize your forces and attack in less than three days?" She asked the look of shock very evident on her face.

Martin nodded. "Most of them were ready to deploy anyways in case the operation in Flagstaff bogged down. Once we swept through Flagstaff so quickly, we were on a roll and I had them move to Cedar City."

"The fall of Cedar City will not go unnoticed Martin Hunter." Normya spoke wisely. "The other strongholds of mercenary and trader scum will be ready for you now. And word will go out among the human cities as well. You and my daughter have brought humans and elves together for the first time in our history, and once word of your victories reaches elf ears, hundreds if not thousands will flock to you. And more still will want to destroy what you have built. Are you prepared for that?"

Martin looked at Normya, his arm still holding Dysea close to him, her hand resting on his chest as she looked at her mother. "We are ready now." He answered. "Eden is nearly complete, and our security measures to protect the city are impregnable. As we grow in size we will expand the security boundaries. The schools are opening within the week; our medical facility is the finest outside of Alliance controlled territory; and for the first time in four hundred years elves can become what they were intended to be, the partners and friends of humans."

"And what of those that do not want this?" Normya asked.

Martin's dark eyes changed to steely orbs. "I don't particularly care what they want or don't want." He told her. "I'm only concerned with Eden. Those that want to live free will join us, those that don't can go right straight to hell."

"And if they attempt to destroy what you have built so far?"

The look in Martin's dark eyes caused Normya to shudder as a cold shiver ran down her spine. "Then it will take them three very long and painful days to die." Martin answered coldly.

Normya couldn't help the smile that creased her face and she burst out laughing. "Oh my daughter, don't let this one get away. I might steal him myself if you do."

Dysea laughed with her mother and wrapped her arms around Martin's waist. "I have no intention of letting him get away." She spoke.

Normya got to her feet. "I look forward to talking with you more Martin Hunter. However, one of your promising young officers asked that I coordinate the transfer of wounded back to Eden, and after so long of not doing anything; I believe I will enjoy this task. I..."

Normya's words stopped when the hulking figure of Danny came into the room, Vengal and Radama with him. They walked right up to where Martin was.

"My Queen," Vengal spoke seeing Dysea for the first time and he quickly went to one knee in front of Dysea. "You don't know how it makes my heart sing to see you well."

Dysea smiled and took Vengal by the shoulders, urging him to stand up. "It is very good to see you as well General." Dysea spoke. "But I am no longer Queen, and you need not bow to me."

Vengal looked at her. "You will always be Queen to me My Lady, and to thousands of Wood Elves who recognize what is happening among our people. Never doubt that."

Dysea's face took on a tint of embarrassment and she nodded. "Thank you General." She spoke. "Martin tells me that you took part in the attack here on Cedar City?"

Vengal nodded with a smile. "We did My Lady, and I can proudly say I have not had this much fun in nearly a hundred years."

Dysea laughed and squeezed his hands as he stood back up. "Yes... *Nauta Melme* appears to get into some sort trouble on a regular basis." Dysea glanced at Martin with a lusty twinkle in her eye before looking back to Vengal. "How many travel with you my friend?"

"A hundred of my Rangers accompanied me My Lady." Vengal replied. "*Nauro Ohtar* has used us well here in Cedar City." **(Wolf Warrior)**

Dysea looked at him puzzled. "*Nauro Ohtar*? Why do you call him that?"

Vengal glanced at Martin quickly and then back to Dysea. "He has the senses of a wolf My Lady, he hunts at night, and he is unforgiving of his prey."

Dysea smiled. "Yes he is." She said turning to look at Martin oddly as if something suddenly became clear to her. "Yes he is."

"Skipper," Danny spoke now. "Some of the other elves we freed have told us about a convoy of Hoppers that left here two days ago. Apparently it was full of elves that were being taken to Las Vegas to be sold as slaves; roughly three hundred of them."

Vengal looked at Dysea, his eyes showing a spark Dysea had not seen in them in some time. "My Queen, Anuk was among them."

Dysea's eyes went wider, "Anuk? Are you sure Vengal? The reports we received told us she had been killed."

"I questioned the woman myself." Vengal told her. "She described Anuk in detail. It has to be her."

Martin pushed off from the desk he was leaning on. "Who is this Anuk?"

Dysea looked at Martin. "She is Vengal's youngest and only surviving daughter." She answered. "She was on a routine patrol eleven months ago and was attacked by slavers. The initial reports we received told us she and her Ranger unit were wiped out."

Martin perked up at this news. "General, are you sure she was speaking of your daughter?" He asked.

"I am positive *Narmo Ohtar*." He replied. "She described my daughter right down to the tattoos I gave to her at her coming of age ceremony. It could be no one else. I ask that you allow me to pursue this convoy to Las Vegas and retrieve her."

Martin turned to look at the map on the desk. "Two days ago would have given them quite a head start." He said. "By the time you got moving they will have reached Vegas already. How big an operation is in Vegas?"

"It is a human settlement, easily three times as large as Cedar City." Dysea answered, moving to stand next to him by the table. She adjusted the controls on the map chart and brought up a close up image of Las

Vegas, Nevada taken from a Raptor in a high altitude pass over the southwest. “A slaver hub if you will. It is controlled by humans, but it is not considered a mercenary outpost. Everyone is free to come and go as they please and there are literally thousands that come to Vegas to buy and sell their slaves.”

“Elves you mean?” Martin said.

Dysea nodded. “They sell elves and humans *Nauta Melme*; humans who are not capable of defending themselves.”

“You must allow me to retrieve her *Narmo Ohtar*.” Vengal spoke, his voice excited now. “She is the only daughter I have left.”

Martin shook his head. “I’m sorry General, but I can’t send you into a settlement of humans that large. You would be captured along with her. And you now know far too much and have become far too valuable to me to risk you on such an operation.”

“She is my daughter!” Vengal snapped. “I... I can not simply let her slip through my grasp! I believed her to be dead! It nearly killed my wife when she found out Anuk had been lost! My other two daughters were killed by Alliance troops, and if there is even the slightest chance that Anuk still lives I will go after her.”

“I can’t allow that.” Martin spoke looking at him.

“You do not command me!” Vengal snapped.

“You are too emotional General.” Martin spoke remaining calm, “Too attached. You would be captured within hours of entering this city.”

“I do not care! I...”

“I do care!” Martin barked loudly, causing Dysea, Normya and Vengal to jump at the tone of his voice.

“*Nauta Melme*... we have to do something.” Dysea spoke softly turning to face him. “This... this could be a child of ours one day. We...”

Martin held up his hand stopping her words. “I didn’t say we would do nothing *Melda Min*.” He spoke taking a deep breath. “Danny... how soon can you put together a G-Team? Get in... snatch her and get out.”

“Shit Skipper I can do that in my sleep.” Danny replied. “Give me an hour.”

“Make it a four person team Dan; you, the Master Chief, Radama and one other elf.” Martin said.

“I will accompany them!” Vengal spoke quickly.

Martin shook his head. “No.”

“I must! If she is under the control of the Alliance mind drugs, only I will be able to convince her that what is happening is real. You must allow me to go with the team. I...”

Martin stepped up to Vengal and looked at him squarely in the eye. Vengal met his gaze without backing down, standing up to his full height of five foot ten and still shorter than Martin’s six foot two. “Listen to yourself General Vengal.” Martin spoke softly. “The desperation in your voice is such that you would attempt anything to get your daughter back, and that includes being captured yourself.”

“Would you not do the same thing?” Vengal asked.

Martin nodded. “Perhaps I would... but I would also listen to those who cautioned against such a move. I will allow you to travel with the insertion team Vengal, but you have to give me your word that you will return with the Raptor. Would you take the chance of making your wife a widow?”

Vengal’s eyes softened just a little bit and his shoulders slumped. “You are correct.” He said softly. “I would... I would do anything.”

Martin put his hand on Vengal’s shoulder. “I would as well... and not going is why you and I are the leaders we are. We know our limits and what we can and can’t do. Do you have someone among your Rangers who knows Anuk well enough to recognize her?”

Vengal nodded quickly. “Her cousin Leena is among the hundred I have brought with me.” He replied. “She is the finest hand to hand fighter I have, and she is also very beautiful. She and Anuk were very close.”

“A combination that is no doubt quite deadly.” Martin said with a smile. “Radio for her to get to the airfield, and I’ll get some more maps so that we can put together a plan.”

Vengal nodded and moved out of the room quickly. Martin turned to Danny. “No heroics Dan. Get in, get her out and return.”

“Me be a hero Skipper?” Dan spoke with mock surprise. “The thought never crossed my mind.”

“I’m sending Julie and Anja back to Eden with the Third Battalion and all but one of our artillery batteries to reestablish and expand the defensive zone around Eden.” Martin spoke.

Danny nodded. "Good move Skipper."

Martin stepped up to him slowly; looking at the man he considered a friend and brother. Dysea watched them carefully, no words passing between them, but once more they appeared to be speaking with one another, and the gentle echo in her mind returned once more.

Danny nodded and headed out of the office with Radama. Dysea stepped up to him and took his hand looking at him curiously. "You handled that very well *Nauta Melme*." She said softly.

"Let's just hope it's not a wild goose chase." Martin said turning to her.

Normya saw the way they looked at each other and she stepped closer. "I am going back to the airfield and leave the two of you alone for a few moments until Vengal returns." She spoke.

"Thank you *Amille*." Dysea said with a smile.

Martin watched as she left the office and turned back to Dysea, and found her in his arms and her delicious lips covering his. His arms went around her waist and he lifted her into the air as they shared the deep passionate kiss. Dysea's legs curled up alongside his hips and she could feel him thickening between her thighs. She took his face in her hands and pulled away reluctantly, looking into his eyes and seeing the adoration and love in them for her, as well as the burning need.

"We... we don't have the time *Nauta Melme*." She spoke in a soft voice, sending her tongue across his lips quickly.

Martin lowered his face and nuzzled the hollow of her throat, Dysea gasping in delight when she felt his tongue flick out and he traced the sensitive part of her neck just under her ear with the moist tip. "Tell me *Melda Min*. Why is it that I smell Tarifa all over you, and it is mixed with another scent? A scent like..." Martin tilted his head slightly.

"Scents like Cherry Blossoms perhaps?" Dysea asked her eyes bright.

Martin met her eyes. "Yes." He answered.

"Do we have a few minutes before General Vengal returns so that I can tell you of Tarifa and what transpired?" Dysea asked.

Martin smiled. "I'll make a few minutes." He told her.

"You must keep control of yourself *Nauta Melme*. I can't have you taking me here on top of this desk. It would not be acceptable," Dysea said, caressing his face. "No matter how pleasurable that prospect sounds."

Martin smiled and kissed her softly. "I will keep control of myself. At least until I get you back to our home." He said. "Then I intend to ravage you for two full days."

Dysea squirmed in his arms, grinding her hips against his and pressing her firm breasts tighter against his hard chest. "I look forward to that." She said with a seductive smile.

"So tell me... how is Tarifa?" Martin asked. "And who is this delightful new elf I smell all over you?"

MOUNTAIN CITY

Telan glared at Aihola as she stood in the living room of Tarifa's home. He and Tareif had returned only a few short hours ago to discover that there had been an attempt on Tarifa's life while she was shopping in the market district with her mother, and this Drow assassin had rescued her. The same Drow assassin that had been hired by his father to deliver the mind control drugs to Tarifa's aides. It was the talk of the city now, and Tarifa's actions after the attack, naming the Drow as her Attendant and personal Guard were justified and entirely within her realm as Queen, and there was nothing he could do about it.

He tossed the duffel he was carrying to the floor and stepped up the Drow quickly, his face a mask of anger. "Explain yourself quickly Drow whore!" Telan hissed at her, moving menacingly close to Aihola. "This was not part of the plan!"

Telan's eyes grew wide when he felt the pinprick under his chin and he froze. Aihola smiled at him, but her amber eyes told the true story, glaring at him with undisguised hatred. "Take care Telan." Aihola spoke in a low voice, her hand nudging the blade of the wicked looking knife just a tad higher. "I am not one of your whores. Take a step back before you lose your ability to speak."

Telan lost much of his bluster and did as Aihola instructed him, his face still frozen with anger. He looked at the Drow, now dressed in a form fitting black jumpsuit and a long cape with a cowl that was resting

along her shoulders. Her shimmering white hair was draped seductively over her left shoulder to curl around her firm breasts. Her soft pink lips were moist and Telan felt the surge in his groin as he looked at her. He had to admit she was a beautiful creature, even for a Drow.

“What happen?” He asked in a much more civil tone, finally turning away from her.

“Your wench of a Queen came to pick up the drugs herself in a fit. I followed procedure and brought them too her” Aihola spoke as she casually dropped the blade of the knife back under her cape. “There were several slobbering fools who followed her not knowing who she was and thinking she was an easy target. There was a female with them, with platinum colored hair. I stopped them from raping and killing your whore, and they instead raped and beat me. The Queen ran them off with her mother and brought me here to attend to my wounds. How was I supposed to know she would make me her personal Attendant?”

“Platinum hair you say?” Telan asked. “Did you get a look at her face?”

Aihola shook her head. “She kept her face hidden, and while her men raped my ass she forced me to eat her disgusting cunt. I did not sign on to this to become a whore for you or your father! You will speak with this wench and get her to release me!”

Telan looked at her. “Does she suspect that what you gave her is not what she thinks it is?”

“Do you mean does she know the drugs are not a contraceptive as she stupidly thinks?” Aihola asked with a grin. “She still believes they are keeping her from becoming pregnant, though I don’t believe that will matter much longer.”

“What do you mean?”

“She spent time with her grandmother while you were gone.” Aihola said. “Her mother was visiting friends in Salina. Her grandmother convinced her to accept her position. And she did something to increase her desire for you, though I can’t think of anything that would do that.” She finished the comment with a smile.

“What do you mean did something?” Telan asked.

“I have no idea, nor do I care!” Aihola snapped. “All I know is she returned from her grandmother with a renewed sense of making your farce of a marriage work. Personally I think her grandmother brainwashed her. Anyone who would bed you willingly would have to be insane.”

Telan took a step toward Aihola and he saw the blade extend from under the cape once more stopping him. “You try my patience Drow.”

“I don’t particularly care Telan.” Aihola spoke. “I could kill you before you took two steps and be well within my rights as the Queen’s new Attendant. I could say you attempted to assault her yourself, who do you think she would believe? She is a fool, and thanks to your drugs, easily manipulated.”

“She does not know your true purpose?” Telan asked again.

“Would I be standing here if she did you fool!” Aihola snapped. “I did not agree to this arrangement and you will tell her to release me from this duty!”

Telan shook his head. “I must talk to my father first.” He spoke.

“I want double the money!” Aihola demanded. “All of it in advance, or I will tell her everything!”

Telan’s eyes flew open. “You think to blackmail me! To blackmail my father! You presume much!” He almost screamed.

“You have no choice!” Aihola barked. “This is not what we agreed upon, and if I have to remain as her babysitter, I want more money!”

Telan glared at Aihola with hate in his eyes but said nothing. He took a deep breath to calm his nerves and turned to look out the open window. “She suspects nothing?” He asked again.

“As I said, she is a fool in a woman’s body. My suggestion would be to have her produce you a son as your heir and then get rid of her.” Aihola spoke. “And enjoy her disgusting body while you have the opportunity, she is so dimwitted she would not know a real man if one bit her.”

Telan turned his head and glared at Aihola. “I know your weakness Drow!” He growled. “Do not force me to use it as I did before.”

Aihola’s face softened just a bit. “Double my price and no less!” She snapped.

“Where is Tarifa?” Telan asked. “I must talk with my father before I see her.”

“She is with her mother at her residence. She asked me to remain here until she returned.” Aihola answered.

Telan picked up the duffel and moved for the door. "I will inform you of what my father says Drow witch. Until that time you will act as Tarifa as requested of you. Is that clear?"

Aihola smiled, "Until the money stops." She spoke.

Telan whirled and stormed from the home and out the front door. As it slid shut behind him, Aihola let out a long breath. She turned as Tarifa came from the bedroom to stand next to her.

"You play a dangerous game Tarifa." Aihola spoke softly.

Tarifa looked at her oddly. "You were very convincing Aihola." She said, "Almost too convincing."

Aihola smiled at her, her own five foot six inch height forcing her to gaze up into Tarifa's sapphire eyes. "Perhaps... but I will need to be if we are to pull this off."

"We? I was under the impression you did not believe anything I told you, and you only remained because you lack anywhere else to go." Tarifa said to her. Aihola did not detect any sort of hostility or dishonesty in Tarifa's voice and did not take offense at her words.

"The potion you gave me." Aihola spoke turning her amber eyes on Tarifa. "It did what you said it would."

Tarifa smiled. "I'm glad." She replied.

"I must ask this." Aihola said the memories of the events with Tarifa and Dysea still very fresh in her mind. They were confusing thoughts to be sure. She was a Drow warrior, an assassin with unmatched skills, yet her tryst with the two elf Queens had made her shudder in pleasure she had never known. She had willingly, eagerly pleased them, savoring the taste of Tarifa's sweet juices even more and then wanting more. She found herself yearning, desiring more of what she had experienced with Tarifa, and only with Tarifa, yet the thought of breaking that taboo of her people willingly made her question everything she knew. Tarifa... the High Elf Queen affected her in a way she had never experienced with a man, and certainly never with a female. "I need to know if..."

Tarifa reached up and gently put her finger to Aihola's lips. "Anja will discover a permanent cure for you Aihola. I gave you my word. I will not hold you to anything, nor will I force you to do what you do not wish to do. This has only just begun and you may still back out if you wish. I can simply tell everyone I released you from your obligation."

Aihola stared at Tarifa for a long moment, taking in the curve of her lips and the bright beauty of her eyes. Aihola had to admit, the High Elf Queen was stunningly beautiful, and unlike what she had told Telan, she knew Tarifa was extremely intelligent. No one before Tarifa had ever treated her as an equal, and while her mind screamed for her to escape this place before it changed her, her heart was telling her to remain. Aihola shook her head slowly.

"I am involved now." She finally spoke. "It will only raise more questions if I simply fade away."

Tarifa smiled and leaned forward to softly kiss her on her pink lips. Aihola was surprised to find she did not draw away from the kiss, but actually found she was relishing the taste of Tarifa's lips on her own. Tarifa squeezed her hand and drew back. Tarifa had to admit to herself that this Drow warrior excited her more than Martin and Dysea ever had. She and Dysea had enjoyed their time with Aihola, but while it was only a passing interest for Dysea, Tarifa found herself desiring this Drow warrior more and more each day. She found herself caring for Aihola in a way not familiar to her. She wanted to have this Drow dominant her, take her however she wanted, but she could also sense the conflict within Aihola, and knew to push her into something she was not completely comfortable with was unwise. She decided at that moment to simply enjoy Aihola's company and friendship for as long as it lasted.

"Thank you Aihola." She said softly. "I... I believe I will need a friend through all of this, and I can think of no one that will fit that better than you at the moment."

Aihola smiled in a way that made her usually stern face soften. "I will need some more clothes and other items since I will be remaining with you Tarifa."

Tarifa nodded. "Purchase what you need and place them on my account." She answered. "I need to prepare for when Telan returns. He will undoubtedly want to bed me and it is not something I look forward too."

"Your commitment and desire to this ideal you say the Wood Elf Queen and this Martin Hunter are building is unlike anything I have ever seen." Aihola said quietly. "To expose yourself to such dangers and abuses simply to one day go to this city they are building is not something I'm sure I could tolerate."

Tarifa smiled as her thoughts turned to Martin and Dysea. "It is hard to explain and I would imagine even harder understanding. Perhaps one day, you would allow me to show you."

Aihola met her eyes. "Perhaps one day." She said softly. "Perhaps one day."

MOON BASE EDEN

"Yes! Yes! Fuck me! Fuck me harder! I'm cumming! I'm cumming!" Alliance Minister Selene Torcrum screamed out her pleasure as the elf under her buried his rock hard eight inch cock deeply into her sopping pussy once more. His hands were holding her tight ass cheeks and slamming her down on his cock with great force. Selene's strawberry blond hair whipped from side to side as her body went rigid and she came all over the elf's pile driving cock.

"You want more?" The elf grunted beneath her.

"More! Give me more you wonderful man!" Selene screamed out as she ground her spasming pussy down on the thick cock buried inside her. "More!"

The second male elf stepped up behind her, his hands taking her silky hair in his fists as he yanked her gasping head back. He licked the side of her face like a dog, leaving a trail of saliva on her cheek. "I have more for you human bitch!" He snapped. "Spread her!"

The elf below her gripped her tight ass cheeks and pulled them far apart, exposing Selene's tight pink anus to his partner behind him. Selene knew what was about to happen, and her eyes went wide as she felt the head of the elf's hard cock press against her most private opening.

"No not there please! I've never had... Ahhhhhhh!" Selene collapsed onto the elf beneath her as the second elf drove his stiff cock deeply into her ass.

He clenched his teeth as he watched his cock slid all the way into her tight ass until his balls came to rest against her dripping pussy. His hands dropped to her hips and he held her tightly as he pulled his cock back out slowly watching her sphincter dilate to allow him easy passage.

"Fuck! Your ass is tighter than anything I have ever had bitch!" The elf gasped, pulling her up against his chest and reaching around to paw her large firm tits. Her pink nipples were painfully hard and he took them between his fingers pinching them as he drove his cock back into Selene's ass.

Selene's eyes were shut tightly as pleasure unlike anything she had ever imagined ripped through her body. Her mouth was open as she gasped in delight, feeling the elf pull out of her ass slowly and then drive back in. Her entire body was alive in agonizing pleasure that she could not control.

"You want more Minister Torcrum?" The elf snarled into her ear as he pulled her hair hard, her neck muscles straining as he licked her face again. "You want more elf cock?"

"Yes... yes! Give me more you wonderful men! Oh god, fuck me harder! Make me cum!" Selene screamed.

"Give her something to shut her up!" The elf beneath her body barked.

The elf fucking Selene's ass with deep powerful strokes yanked her head to the side and Selene's eyes found the third elf cock only inches from her face. This elf was darker than the other two, his skin a deep bronze color, and his cock was larger still at nearly nine inches long and deliciously thick. Her eyes were wide as she reached up to grip the thick pulsing cock of the elf. "Suck him you Alliance whore! Suck his elf cock!"

Selene's mind told her it was the wrong thing to do, but she couldn't deny the desire that was pulsing through her body as the two elves sandwiched her between their powerful bodies and fucked both her openings. She was in almost a daze as she watched the third elf step closer and he gripped her strawberry blond hair in his rough hand.

"Suck it you Alliance bitch! Suck my elf cock!" He growled the words at her.

Selene did as he told her and lowered her head to engulf the large head between her red lips. Her eyes went wider still as he forced her head lower, driving his cock deeper into her mouth. She gagged noisily and tears came to her eyes as his thick cock rammed deeper into her virgin throat. She had never sucked a man off before, considering herself above such an act, yet now as this long thick dark colored elf cock pushed deeper into her throat she came like she had never cum before. She tried to scream out her pleasure around the thick cock invading her throat, but it came out only as more gagging sounds, the elf grabbing both sides of her head

and burying his cock completely in her warm clenching throat. He threw his head back, and grunted loudly as her delicate nose pressed against his hard abdomen.

“Suck me! Yes! I’m going to cum bitch!” The elf yelled. “We’re going to fill you with our elf cum! Yeah!”

Selene’s body was on automatic now as she drove her ass back against the thick cocks invading her pussy and asshole. She could feel her elves nearing their release as they had all stopped talking now and their breathing quickened.

“Tell... tell us how much you love our cocks,” The elf beneath her yelled.

Selene pulled her mouth from the thick cock in her throat, her hand immediately reaching up to continue stroking the huge elf cock. “Yes! Yes! I love your cocks! Fuck me! Fill me with your cum!” She screamed.

“You’ll do anything for us won’t you?”

“God yes anything! Fuck me! Fuck my pussy and ass! Fuck me please!”

“You’ll help us escape won’t you bitch, to get off this station!” The elf fucking her ass drove his cock into her deeply with that question, causing Selene’s eyes to roll back in her head as another orgasm erupted from her.

“Yes! Yes! Anything! More! Give me more!” She screamed. Selene replaced her pumping hand with her mouth once more and without a second thought plunged her lips down around the elf cock until they anchored at the base of the pulsing monster.

“Yeah! I’m cumming Alliance whore! Drink it all down, every fucking drop!” The elf yelled gripping her head even tighter as his neck muscles stretched with the strain of holding back the intense orgasm her warm throat and lips were about to give him. Selene reached up to grip his cum filled balls and she groaned loudly as she felt his cum rise through the hard shaft and he erupted deep in her throat, and set fire to her belly as she swallowed it down.

Selene’s pussy and ass clamped down on the cocks inside her as she yanked her mouth from the exploding cock and squealed like a stuck pig as she felt both the elves fucking her ram into her deeply one last time and explode within her body. The spasming cock in her hand was blasting the thick cum all over her face, some of it shooting into her open mouth and her sexually charged mind found herself relishing the taste as she drank it down eagerly, while more of his cum splattered on her face and dripped down to her large tits.

The two elves fucking her were rigid now, their muscular bodies pressed tightly against her own as they filled her with their hot cum. It was unlike anything she had ever experienced, as a supremely warm sensation spread through her as their boiling hot cum blasted inside her like two uncontrollable hoses reaching places she never knew existed. And like the whore they called her, she lapped away at the erupting cock in her hand as it sent stream after stream of the delicious tasting cum into her mouth and all over her beautiful face.

It took nearly a minute before their cocks were drained, and Selene felt bloated from their thick juices filling her every female hole, yet she was wonderfully satisfied as never before. Her body felt hot and her nipples were harder than she had ever remembered them being. Her mind kept telling her what she was doing was wrong somehow, yet another part was telling her to beg for more. She turned her now cum drenched face to watch as the elf behind her withdrew his softening cock from her stretched asshole, leaving her feeling empty. She held tightly to the largest of the elves, turning back to bath the wonderful cock in her face with her tongue. The elf beneath her lifted her and withdrew his cock from her pussy, the copious amount of his juices pouring out of her mixed with her own sweet liquids. She was unaware of him extracting himself from her body as she devoted all her attention on the large cock in front of her, unwilling to release it from her grasp. She looked up into the elf’s face, seeing his handsome features for the first time.

“I want... I want more.” She gasped. “I’ll do... I’ll do anything you ask. Just give me more of this.” She said hefting the now hardening cock in her hand.

The elf standing in front of her while she lapped away at his cock smiled. “Anything you want Minister.” He said.

William shut off the monitor and turned to where Minister’s Deval and Wiseman and Colonel Marcus sat in the chairs across from his desk, half a dozen weapons trained on them from every angle in his office. He

turned in the chair and looked at the men. Senator Graham sat on the couch along the side of the room, his face dark in anger.

“Is this the way the Alliance rewards our friendship Minister Deval?” Wallace asked him, “You reward us by Minister Torcrum consorting like a common whore and offering to help our slaves escape this station while they are gang banging her pretty ass?”

“Where is Selene?” Deval demanded.

“I have her in the brig!” Wallace answered. “And the elves that took part in this little tryst were executed an hour ago!”

“I demand to speak with her!” Deval spoke.

“We undertook this relationship with the Alliance under the pretense of friendship!” Graham spoke now getting to his feet. “This is how you repay our friendship, by conspiring to help our slaves escape?”

“I assure you Senator Graham I had no knowledge of this prior to this meeting.” Deval defended himself.

“One of your Ministers is caught sneaking into the slave quarters for a little four way fun with elves and you don’t know about it?” William spoke. “Why do I find that hard to believe?”

Marcus looked around the office slowly, his mind calculating options and ways to get out of this.

“Senator I had no idea that Selene... that Selene was sympathetic to elves! I assure you this is as new to me as it is to you.” Deval said. “She... she does not represent the Alliance stance on our relationship with EDEN.”

William looked at Marcus from behind his desk. “Go ahead Colonel.” He spoke, his words filled with a cold finality to them. “One twitch from you and my men will fill you with so many holes; you’ll look like a piece of old Swiss cheese. So many holes in fact, it will be far more than your genetically enhanced elf healing system will be able to handle.”

Marcus glared at William from his chair. “This is not something we were aware of!” He growled. “How can you hold us accountable?”

“So you are saying that you knew nothing of Minister Torcrum’s obvious carnal tendencies towards elves?” William spoke.

Deval nodded. “That is what we are telling you Admiral.” He echoed Marcus. “She... she has succeeded in fooling us all it appears.” His voice was laced with anger. He looked at Graham. “Richard... I assure you this incident is not... this is not something... do with her as you wish... but I urge you not to take this as a sign of how we view EDEN and our mutual arrangements.”

“We will put her on trial.” Graham spoke.

Deval nodded. “Do whatever you feel is necessary, but please do not let this come between us. I implore you.”

Graham looked at him for a long moment. “Perhaps we should discuss this somewhere more comfortable.” He said.

“I wish to see Selene.” Marcus growled.

“I’m afraid that is out of the question.” Graham spoke.

William got to his feet. “I think in the spirit of our mutual arrangements we can allow that Senator.” He said. “You can view her through a partition, but I don’t think allowing you access to her cell is wise.”

“Why is that?” Marcus asked as he stood.

William’s smile was cruel. “It’s simple really, because I want to kill her myself. I abhor traitors.” He told them. “And I would prefer you did not take that pleasure from me.”

“What makes you think that is my intent?” Marcus spoke.

“Colonel Marcus, you are just like me. You’ve been betrayed before and you have an intense hatred for people who fuck you over.” Wallace answered. “I’ll send you a video copy of her execution as soon as she is convicted and sentenced.”

Dan, Radama, the Master Chief and the very attractive dark haired elf were clustered around the plot table with Leland and Vengal. The four of them wore black high pressure suits under their desert fatigues, their faces blacked out with paint. All of them wore HK74's that dangled from quick release straps and an assortment of side arms and other nasty killing tools. There were roughly nine others in the back of the Raptor, all of them relaxing comfortably and several even sleeping.

Dan pointed to the map of the old Nellis Air Force Base northeast of Las Vegas. "This is our impact point." Dan spoke. "This is the easternmost point of the old base and infra reds show it to be abandoned. From here we'll move west until we reach the edge of the city."

Leland leaned forward. "You should enter here at the northern gate. There is much more foot traffic and security is not as heavy."

"How do we find Anuk once we are within the city?" Leena asked. "There are at least twenty slave centers within the city proper. We don't know which one she was taken too."

"The elves we talked too said one of the Hoppers they used had a bad motivator." Radama answered. "We used a recon Raptor to do a passive sonic frequency scan on the three roads they would have used. We isolated the signal and tracked the Hopper to this facility." He touched the map and the aerial view of the city came up and the large building turned red in the lower corner."

"That's the old Palazzo Casino Dan." The Master Chief spoke up.

Danny nodded. "Yeah... and from what the scans could tell us, it's loaded with people."

"The Palazzo Center Casino is operated by one of the largest gangs in Las Vegas." Leland spoke. "They call themselves The Skulls. They are exceptionally bright and skilled with their security measures."

"They aren't too good at giving themselves a name." Dan said with a smile. "That's got to be one of the dumbest gang names I've ever heard."

"Do not be fooled by their name Daniel." Leland spoke. "We have an extensive file on their operation and all their main members. They can be exceptionally brutal when they need to be. Slaves have known to disappear for hours and if they return they are never the same."

"I haven't met a security system yet that I couldn't breach." Tony told them. "That won't be a problem."

Leland held out the documents to them. "These papers identify you as Slave buyers from New Miami. All of them are quite accurate."

Dan looked at the papers. "What happened to the real owners?" He asked.

Leland's smile was not pretty. "They made the mistake of stumbling across one of our supply routes and thought they would take the entire convoy captive." He explained. "Dysea took great offense at this."

Dan chuckled. "Yeah I just bet she did."

"We've had two members of a human group sympathetic to us posing as them for several years now. They have been assisting us in running a very lucrative black market trading center, and in the process they are able to help an average of fifty to sixty slaves escape to freedom each year." Leland spoke. "I was able to contact them and they have agreed to remain out of site for a few days while we conduct this mission."

"This will get us into the slave center?" Dan asked.

Leland nodded, "With no questions."

"Ok... that covers me and Tony here, but what about our partners?" Dan asked. "I don't envy leaving Radama and Leena here sitting out in the open with no cover and no support."

"They will remain in the room that is reserved in your assumed names at the Palazzo Hotel." Vengal told them. "We have many contacts within the bowels of the operations portion of the hotel, and it was a simple matter to crack into their system and reserve you two very elegant suites."

Dan's dark eyes smiled in the dim light of the Raptor. "I've never stayed in a suite before." He said.

Vengal removed something from his jacket and held it out to Dan. "Martin requested that I give you these." He said holding out the picture and small piece of cloth. They belonged to Anuk, and I have carried them since she was lost."

Dan took the picture and the scarf. He brought the scarf to his face and inhaled deeply of the silk fabric. Dan felt himself become lightheaded for a moment and stars sprang into his eyes as he smelled the scarf. He pulled it away slowly and stared at the soft red fabric for a long moment.

"Daniel you seem distracted, are you ok?" Radama asked.

Dan shook his head quickly and nodded. "I'm fine." He spoke quickly. "It must be the altitude." He brought up the photo of Vengal's daughter and gazed at it for a long moment. He took in the long rust colored shade of red hair, and the Cerulean blue eyes and Dan felt his heart begin to beat much faster. He looked at Vengal. "This is your daughter?" He asked finally.

Vengal nodded. "Anuk is my youngest yes. She would have celebrated her one hundred and twenty-first year only last month."

"Man... I'm glad she didn't turn out looking like you." Dan said.

This brought a smile to Vengal's face and the others chuckled. "She does take after her mother." Vengal finally spoke behind his smile.

Dan tucked the picture and scarf into his fatigue top and turned back to the map. "Ok... we get in, find her, snatch her and make our way to Nellis for extraction. Leland... you and the General will be waiting for us here."

Leland nodded. "Martin asked that we use the time to do a thorough scouting of Nellis." He said. "Cathy will be monitoring the radio at all times should you need to extract quickly."

"That works for me." Dan said. "Leena... since you've never done a hard drop before, you'll be riding down with the Master Chief here. Hope you don't mind cramped quarters for a short time?"

Leena shook her head looking at Tony. "I will endure." She answered.

"If he gets fresh... you have my permission to kick him square in the gonads when we land. Not before though, or you might crash." Dan said with a smile.

Leena looked at Tony with her dark eyes and smiled. "I don't believe there will be any problems." She said.

"Not from me!" Tony spoke. "I like my balls just as they are."

"Yeah," Dan said, "Perpetually empty and underused."

"Hey that's not fair!" The Master Chief exclaimed.

Vengal listened to the laughter in the Raptor and once more he could only be amazed at the camaraderie that Martin Hunter had instilled in those who chose to follow him.

Martin waited until the last of the armored Hoppers and Scorpion tanks had pulled out with Anja in command. Julie had departed two hours earlier with all but one of the MLRS 300II mobile launcher batteries and the nine Scorpion tanks that would travel with Anja's group. A single battery of 300IIs remained with Martin's command, as well as twelve of the Scorpion tanks and a full battalion of ground troops that would ride the armored Hoppers that remained on the airfield with him. He walked the perimeter of the airfield, now considerably less busy with the evacuation of the rescued humans and elves. All of them had been transported back to Eden and would be held in a secure facility with every comfort provided to them until such time as it was determined they were not in fact spies of the Alliance. Martin's Intelligence Division used very elaborate and very accurate lie detector tests on everyone coming to Eden. Some criminals had attempted to enter Eden with new identities in order to set up an organized crime ring. They were discovered within hours and never heard from again.

Martin moved finally moved to the terminal where most of his battalion was settled in. He walked among them as they sat in small groups talking and joking while sharing coffee and rations. He moved to the office his command team had procured for him and stepped through the door, closing it behind him. He dropped his combat vest and weapon onto the chair and turned to go into the larger room of the office, only to have Dysea appear before him as quiet as a ghost. Martin noticed immediately that all she wore was the fatigue top, and she was naked underneath it. He inhaled deeply and could smell her excitement in the enclosed space of the small room.

"I have waited long enough *Nauta Melme*." She spoke in a husky voice stepping close to him and pressing her body against his, all the while never breaking eye contact with him. "I need you now!"

Dysea gasped as his arms engulfed her and lifted her into the air while his lips came down over hers hungrily. Dysea's eyes changed almost immediately, her fangs extending to their full length as Martin pinned her against the nearest wall and plunged his tongue between her lips in a toe curling kiss that caused her body to ignite. She could feel his fangs lengthen within their kiss, their tongues dancing to a seductive tune only they

could hear. She felt Martin lift her naked legs along his hips, and broke their kiss as he began to strip out of his fatigues, holding her against the wall with only his powerful legs. Dysea helped him, tearing at the thin t-shirt he wore, ripping it down the front with a powerful yank exposing his broad beautiful chest to her hungry eyes.

Dysea placed her hands flat against his skin, caressing the wonderfully sculpted muscles of his chest and abdomen and causing Martin to stop moving as he was content to watch her explore. She was still somewhat in awe of Martin's size. His six foot two frame towered over her own five foot seven inch body, easily outweighing her by over a hundred pounds. She traced the numerous scars on his chest and rippled abdomen with her fingers, smiling as his stomach clenched at her soft touch. Dysea had always been strong willed and independent, and even as a child growing up she had pushed her parents to their limits of tolerance. When she became Queen she had never contemplated having a man in her life, yet now as her hands caressed Martin's skin, she could not imagine life without him. He could crush her easily; all of her deadly skills would be useless against him, no matter what she tried, and it amazed her at how gentle and soft his hands were when caressing her skin or holding her in his arms. As small as her frame was, she fit into his arms like the fingers of a glove, and she relished the feeling of his powerful arms wrapped around her. When she lay in his arms, fear and doubt became something she was unfamiliar with.

The first time Martin had taken her in that cave with Tarifa, she had been filled with fear at his enormous size. She had never seen such a specimen of manhood such as Martin had. He had been so gentle and loving, and she remember how she had quickly grown accustom to his size due to the quantity of her own passion that he caused to escape her pussy. His delicious cock had given her experiences unlike any she had ever imagined, filling her to the point where she thought she would split apart, and causing immense orgasms to pulsate through her body, shaking her to her very core. Dysea knew she could not love another man as she loved *Nauta Melme*. They were joined in a way she doubted the Holy One had foreseen, by not only physical love, but also by a deep abiding sense of passion and want of each other. She had seen and experienced his compassion for others, his desire to help and make things better for all. She had also witnessed just how brutal and savage he could be if he considered you his enemy.

Dysea looked up into his face and saw his yellow black eyes gazing back at her, eyes that looked upon her with undisguised love. Dysea lowered her head to his chest, her lips wrapping around his nipple as she felt him begin yanking at his pants once more. His hand took a fistful of her soft platinum hair and he pulled her head up gently so that he could see her beautiful emerald and black orbs.

"I like what you have done with your hair *Melda Min*." He told her with a smile as his tongue danced across her lips.

Dysea whimpered as he teased her, trying to catch his tongue between her lips. She felt his other hand tear open the fatigue top she wore and toss it to the ground, freeing her large firm breasts to his gaze. Martin looked at her large breasts with lust and hunger, the tattoos adorning her body only serving to increase her beauty in his eyes and increase his excitement further. Dysea grasped his face tightly and pulled his lips close to her, staring into his now yellow and black eyes.

"Do not tease me *Nauta Melme*, I beg you." She hissed at him. "I have hungered to feel you inside me for days."

"Tarifa did not sate your appetite." Martin asked with a small smile as he drew his tongue along her neck and tickled the bottom of her elfin ear.

"She sated my appetite for her yes!" Dysea exclaimed her fingers digging into his broad shoulders as his tongue danced across the most sensitive spot on her elfin ears. "But she could not help my appetite for this!"

Martin's eyes shut tightly as Dysea's hands dropped between their bodies and wrapped around his savagely hard twelve inch cock.

"Take me *Nauta Melme*!" Dysea gasped into his ear while guiding the head of his huge pole to her opening. Dysea was already so excited, her juices were pouring from her and it was a small matter to line up the head of his cock with her soft pussy lips. "Take me now!"

Dysea's eyes opened wide as she positioned the head just inside her tight opening and she felt Martin thrust. A noiseless scream escaped her lips as her head flew back, banging against the wall as her beloved sank every delicious inch of his impossibly thick manhood into her in one powerful stroke. Dysea came immediately, and she came hard, her body going rigid in his arms as her sugary fluids splashed wetly from her spasming pussy coating her beloved's massive cock. Her arms went quickly around his powerful shoulders as he buried

his face in the crook of her shoulder and neck, his lips fastening onto her skin and he began to make love to her with deep and magnificently powerful twelve inch strokes. His hands filled with her flawlessly formed ass cheeks and he used her firm body to assist him in possessing her very soul. Dysea covered the side of his face and his neck with soft kisses of love and delight, her body quaking with wondrous waves of bliss on every plunge he made into her depths. She gasped words of love into his ear each time he sank home, bottoming out inside her completely and causing her to have mini orgasms on every breath stealing plunge. He was making love to her like a man possessed, his arms crushing her to him, his fangs nibbling on her neck and shoulder almost to the point of pain.

Dysea couldn't contain herself anymore, and took his head in her hands, pulling his face from her neck. She gasped each time he stroked into her, and she looked deeply into his yellow black eyes, seeing all she had ever dreamed she would see in a man's eyes as he possessed her very soul; adoration, love, passion and an overwhelming sense of need.

"By... by the gods... *Nauta Melme*... kiss me please!" She screamed now, not caring if anyone heard her.

Martin did just that, covering her soft lips with his own and plunging his tongue down her throat. Dysea's eyes flew open when she felt his thick shaft expand even further inside her, stretching the walls of her exceptionally tight pussy more so than she could remember. Even locked in the kiss with Martin as she was, she knew what this meant. She felt Martin's hard muscular body stiffen, and his huge manhood grew impossibly larger inside her as his boiling hot cum raced up the length of his manhood and erupted deep into her womb with a force that sent her over the edge herself. Dysea screamed even louder if that was possible as she felt her beloved's essence filling her. Her sweet juices poured from her, soaking his erupting cock deep within her and splashing wetly upon their thighs as it leaked out around his firmly seated cock.

It was at least a minute before Martin slumped against her, pinning them both against the wall, the last remnants of his essence spilling into her. His lips descended to her rock hard nipples and he lovingly traced the nipples with his talented tongue, drawing small circles around them, keeping them as hard as rocks. Dysea pulled his face up to hers and looked at him with black around emerald eyes, eyes full of her adoration and love for him.

"You... you truly... truly missed me *Nauta Melme*." She gasped as her chest heaved, pressing her large breasts against the burning skin of his chest.

Martin leaned forward, kissing her lips softly. "You have no idea *Melda Min*." He said in a half whisper.

"I too missed you *Nauta Melme*." She said softly. "It seems I can not be long from your arms before the desire for you almost exceeds my control. Are you finished ravaging me, or do I have more to look forward too?" She asked, her eyes promising endless pleasures.

Martin brought his lips to within centimeters of hers. "Oh there is much more, *Melda Min*, much more." He said before covering her lips with his own and pulling her away from the wall. Dysea gasped against his lips as she sank even deeper onto his still hard manhood and he held her there in delightful agony before turning and heading for the small couch in the office.

MOUNTAIN CITY

"Do we know who conducted the attack?" Telan's father asked from the vid phone screen.

Telan shook his head. "No. The Drow assassin spoke of a female leader however, with platinum hair."

The older version of Telan leaned forward in the chair he sat in from the elf city of Pacifica. "Platinum hair you say?" He spoke. "You suspect the Wood Elf Queen?"

Telan shrugged. "It's possible father." He replied. "Perhaps she returned for revenge, or perhaps it was just a coincidence. The Drow whore wants double her original price to buy her silence. I told her I needed to speak with you."

Anlain thought quickly, options going through his keen mind. "Pay her what she wants." He said finally. "I would rather have her keeping an eye on the High Elf wench, and then we can watch both of them. I will have some people look into this female the Drow spoke of. There has been no accurate information on where

the Wood Elf whore disappeared too. Only that she went with the genome Hunter. What else did the Drow wench say?"

"She spoke of Tarifa visiting her grandmother and something about how her grandmother performed a procedure of some sort to increase her desire for me." Telan spoke.

"What procedure?" Anlain asked.

Telan shook his head. "I have not seen Tarifa since returning, so I don't know. I was going to see her after speaking with you."

"Palina's mother is an old fashioned elf." Anlain spoke thoughtfully. "We may have an unwitting ally on our side. If she convinced Tarifa to be more receptive to your advances... that will only work in our favor. She is still taking the drugs?"

Telan nodded. "The Drow was positive about that. And she still believes them to be a contraceptive."

"We'll have to adjust that if her grandmother has convinced her to accept you." Anlain spoke.

"Whatever her grandmother has done I want to know about it. What about Tareif?"

"He has returned to his home. Palina greeted him when he arrived, apparently to reconcile their differences." Telan said. "I found this odd father, considering what happened between them."

Anlain nodded, "As do I." He said. "Keep a close watch on her. I am not as concerned about Palina as her influence has dwindled to practically nothing since your mother has started visiting the different elf cities and taken part in official functions. She may however, still have enough pull to cause delays in our timetable."

"I'll assign two of our finest agents to watch her." Telan spoke.

"Impregnate Tarifa quickly Telan." Anlain said. "Bed her as often as your duties allow, but you must not keep her from acting as Queen. The drugs will allow us to control her to a degree, but her actions must appear normal."

"I understand father." Telan said. "And I will enjoy fucking her every opportunity I get."

Anlain smiled. "That's my boy. Contact me if the need arises."

That conversation had taken place three hours ago, and now Telan was emptying his sperm into Tarifa for the second time in less than an hour. He had discovered the procedure her grandmother had performed in the shape of the glittering sapphire piercing of her clit. Tarifa had seemed more docile and receptive towards him, but not fully convinced. However, once he began to pound his cock into her, she became putty in his hands due to her grandmother's gift. The piercing must have made her extra sensitive, and Tarifa had clutched at his shoulders and whispered urgings to him as he had fucked her. Unlike the other times he had taken her, she had become very wet and allowed easy penetration into her center. The warmth and tightness of her pussy had driven him crazy and his only thoughts were of relieving himself in her, giving no thought to Tarifa's pleasure, and not even noticing that her eyes were tightly shut as he grunted into her.

Tarifa's eyes were tightly shut only because she was imagining it was Martin taking her and not Telan. It took only a few thoughts of what she had shared with Martin before he left, and the size of his manhood and what it made her feel and her pussy was soaked. It allowed Telan to thrust easily into her, grunting and slobbering the whole time, while Tarifa imagined it was Martin. This is why she clutched at Telan's shoulders after she was wet enough and whispered into his ear in supposed passion. His touch made her want to vomit, and his ridiculous cock was not even half of what Martin gave to her. **(Heart)** She played the game well, urging him on, clenching her tight pussy around his small tool. He could not even get a decent motion going as he kept slipping out of her. Tarifa would quickly grab his small manhood and angle him back into her opening, all the while still pretending he was actually pleasing her.

Tarifa finally threw her head back in a mock orgasm as Telan emptied himself into her for the second time. He lifted himself with his arms and watched her face contort in a supremely well orchestrated fake orgasm. He collapsed onto her, his male pride at finally getting Tarifa to respond to him already taking over.

"I... I told you it would become better." He gasped.

Tarifa opened her eyes and gazed at him with a staged look of satisfied pleasure and ambiguity.

"Telan... I... I..."

Telan rolled off her naked body and slipped his hand down her smooth abdomen, roughly pawing her pussy and touching the sapphire piercing. "This was your grandmother's idea huh?" He asked.

Tarifa nodded shyly. "She thought... she thought it would help." She answered.

Telan looked at her. "I am not a bad man Tarifa." He said. "If you will allow me to show you, I can provide you all that you will ever need."

"I... I do not wish to be enemies." Tarifa spoke softly.

"Then you will try?" Telan asked her.

"I can promise nothing Telan... only that my heart is no longer held by another. I will need time... and I will need you to treat me as a wife... not a trophy." Tarifa said.

Telan looked into her eyes, attempting to see some deception, but he saw nothing but honesty. He nodded slowly. "I... I will do my best." He answered.

Tarifa reached up and stroked his cheek. "That is all I can ask." She said. "And I will do the same. Perhaps in time something true will come of this relationship."

"Do you wish me to leave?" He asked.

Tarifa nodded. "This is your home as well, and your bed. We will need to learn to share it as we share our lives."

Telan nodded and rested his head on the pillow as he lay next to her. Tarifa waited until he was asleep before climbing from the bed and moving quickly into the bathroom. She had prepared a tub of boiling hot water before he had arrived and because of the time that had passed, it was perfect now. She lowered her body into the steaming water, and with almost frantic motions began to wash away Telan's disgusting residue from her body, inside and out.

"I admire your strength." Aihola's voice caused her to stop and turn in the water and she watched Aihola appear from the shadow in the corner of the large room.

Tarifa ran the large sponge down her arm slowly this time and shook her head. "What the females in the lower city see in him I do not know." She snapped. "The man drools like a hog, and his cock would not please even the most inexperienced of them."

"Mind your words Tarifa." Aihola warned stepping closer. "You might wake him."

Tarifa looked up at her and noticed now that she wore a simple white dress that hugged her luscious body, dipping low between her high breasts and revealing her deep dark cleavage. Her nipples protruded against the thin fabric, and Tarifa inhaled catching the faint scent of Cherry Blossoms in the air. She smiled seductively at her. "I slipped him a sleeping agent when I first allowed him to kiss me. He will not wake until the morning, and he will be full of himself when he does. Two can play the game he has begun." She moved over to the side of the large hot tub and looked up at Aihola. "Do you always wear such attire to spy on me Aihola?"

"The... night is warm." Aihola responded too slowly as she gazed at Tarifa's naked body in the water. "I was coming here to use the tub when you came in."

Tarifa smiled and motioned for her to come into the water. "It is just right, and there is more than enough room." She said.

"You told me..." Aihola started.

"Do not worry Aihola." Tarifa spoke to her with a warm smile. "As much as I would like to taste you once more after seeing you dressed like that, you have nothing to fear. Unlike Telan, I do have a great deal of self control, and I told you I would do nothing to make you feel uncomfortable." Tarifa motioned again to the hot tub. "Join me please. We only need talk."

Aihola looked at her. "Talk of what?"

"You can tell me of your life before we met." Tarifa offered. "Or we can speak of the boring intricacies of politics."

Aihola gazed at Tarifa for a long moment before making the decision that would forever change her life. She reached up and untied the dress, allowing it to fall around her ankles, exposing her body for Tarifa to gaze at. Tarifa smiled and moved to the other side of the hot tub out of respect for her and simply watched as she lowered her glorious ebony body into the water. Aihola's body was much more muscular than her own, or even Dysea's lean frame. Her abdomen was wash board flat and very well defined, the muscles rippling under the smooth skin and glistening now with water as the soft triangle of white hair above her sweet pussy disappeared under the surface. Tarifa watched as she settled onto the bench in the tub, the level of the water just barely covering her full firm breasts. Tarifa's gaze settled on Aihola's amber eyes and she turned to pour two glasses of wine from the tray next to the tub. She held one out for Aihola, who took it with a nod of thanks.

“So... tell me,” Tarifa said. “Tell me of your life before you came here Aihola of the Drow Family Anatyla. In the passion of the moment with Dysea and I a few days ago, you called out the name Tari.” Tarifa smiled at Aihola’s embarrassed glance at the water. “Tell me about him, is he someone you care for?” Aihola met her eyes again. “He was my Commander... and my brother.”

MOON BASE EDEN

Anisa approached William from behind as he gazed out the large window in his quarters, his hands clasped behind his back. She hesitated behind him, unsure if she should disturb him. He had been standing there for almost an hour simply staring out in to the stars. Anisa turned to go into the small kitchen and his words stopped her.

“Don’t leave.” He spoke softly.

Anisa stopped and turned back around. “I didn’t... I didn’t want to disturb you *Nya Cundu*.”

William turned to look at her. “That is not something you could ever do Anisa.” He said with a warm sincere smile.

“Minister Deval and the others have departed.” Anisa told him, moving closer to him now.

William nodded. “Yes I watched their Raptor depart. They made the deal we wanted.” He said. “And I believe they will keep up their end of the bargain.”

“They fear you William.” Anisa said softly, “Marcus especially. It was in his eyes.”

“I hope that fear buys us the time we need.” He replied.

“You... you don’t like the way we handled Minister Torcrum?” Anisa asked.

“I will do what is necessary to protect you and the others on this station, but no... I don’t like meddling with people’s minds or controlling their actions. I should have known Graham would have people inside. Having her raped was not part of our plan.” He answered.

“It was the only way William, and it was not something we planned no, but it worked in our favor regardless.” Anisa said moving up to him and taking his hands in hers. “If we had not done what we did, she would have eventually told them everything she heard.”

“I know.” He said. “That doesn’t mean I have to like it.”

Anisa nodded, “If it is any consolation, one of the men who... one of the men who took her have volunteered to watch over and care for her. The effects of the drug will wear off in a few days, and she will discover what happened.”

“And then she will become an enemy prisoner.” William said, “A prisoner inside our base that will try everything within her power to either escape or get word back to her superiors.”

“They will not believe her.” Anisa said. “Not after viewing what they did.”

“You’re probably right, but now all we have to do is convince her that we did her a favor, and we weren’t the ones who had her raped.” William spoke, not believing for a moment that they would be able to accomplish that.

“Why does this bother you so William?” She asked him.

“I don’t like manipulating people for evil purposes.” He answered. “I know why we did what we did, but it was still manipulation on a grand scale. We used her rape as a controlling means. And it is something I swore I would never take part in because... because it was done to me and Martin and all the others on an even grander scale.” He looked at her beautiful face and met her dark eyes. “I should not have gotten involved with you in such a personal way. Now I have made you into something that you don’t understand.”

“Then make me understand William.” Anisa told him, her voice carrying a tinge of anger in it. “Explain it to me. I do not regret one moment of our relationship! Not one! Do you now mean to say that you do?”

William looked at her wide eyed. “What? No Anisa... that isn’t what I meant!”

“Then tell me! Share with me what is happening inside me!” Anisa told him forcefully. “I will not run away from you William, no matter what you think you are.”

“It’s not what I think I am Anisa... it’s what I know I am.” He exclaimed.

“What are you?”

“I’m something very different Anisa.” William said. “And that is only the half of it.”

Anisa stepped right up to him now and took his hands in hers. “Tell me William.” She spoke softly, looking into his weathered face. He was not handsome in such a way to turn heads, his was a rugged handsomeness that you only discovered after you witnessed what was inside his heart.

William looked at her for a long moment before taking a deep breath. “Do you know what a werewolf is?”

Anisa’s hand went to her chest, “*Nauro?*” She said in disbelief. **(Werewolf)** “Yes... yes I know what they are? They are the stories parents tell their children when they are small.”

Wallace nodded. “That they are.” He spoke. “And they are also very true.”

Anisa laughed at him. “William you jest with me.” She said her face becoming serious as he stared at her with his eyes. “Don’t you?”

LAS VEGAS

Danny stood on the balcony of the forty-second floor of the Palazzo Hotel and looked out over the skyline of Las Vegas. He could see the Venetian Hotel nearby as well as at least a half dozen other hotels up and down what was once Las Vegas strip. Much of the area around the assorted hotels was occupied by shanty towns of home made shacks and even some tents. There were hundreds of Hoppers moving up and down the large strip, and even more in the few parking garages he saw.

The drop had gone off without a hitch, as well as their entrance into the city. The guards at the checkpoint did not question Radama and Leena with them, obviously assuming they were slaves of one sort or another. They also did not question the large crate that was in the back of their commandeered Hopper, which carried an assortment of weapons and other nasty surprises. They had checked into the Palazzo Hotel with little trouble and been escorted to their rooms.

Dan turned as Tony, Leena and Radama joined him on the balcony. “Why weren’t the buildings here destroyed by the Great Fire?”

“Many of them were.” Leena replied as she came to the railing. “From what I understand the Great Fire affected many of the cities differently. The buildings here were built to last and sustain damage from earthquakes and the fires that could possibly happen as a result. For reasons that no one has been able to answer, the fires in the sky did not burn as hot in this part of the land. The result was that the buildings remained standing while the people died.”

Dan looked at Tony. “Kind of killed it as a resort town huh?” He said with a grin.

“It seems to be bouncing back well enough Dan.” Tony said.

Dan’s eyes narrowed. “Yeah well I ain’t much for slave trading. We’ll have to put this place near the top of our list of slum holes to come clean out.”

“There is much Alliance influence here.” Leena spoke. “They invest heavily in the slave auctions held here. Every major auction has at least one or two Alliance officials in attendance.”

“That’s good information.” Dan said.

“The auction begins in six hours.” Leena spoke. “We should rest and prepare.”

Dan nodded, “That we should.”

They returned to the interior of the suite, and while not as lavish as hotel suites that Dan had seen in the past, the suite was definitely more lavish than anything he had seen up until this point since they had returned to earth.

Leena went to the small table between the couches and picked up some data discs. “A table has been reserved for you near the front of the room and close to the auction center. You’re sure Anuk is here?”

Dan nodded. “I smelled her when we came into the lobby.” He answered. “By my estimates she was within five hundred meters.”

Leena nodded. “That fits, the slave holding cells are on basement sublevel three.” She spoke.

“So how does this work?” Dan asked.

“They will show the slaves today only.” Leena answered. “They will parade them around the center, allowing everyone to get a good look. Once that is done, they will allow a select few buyers purchase the slaves for the evening to try them out.”

“Try them out?” Tony barked. “Jesus this place makes me angrier and angrier.”

“Only the most beautiful of the female elves will be sold for the night, and only to a buyer that shows quite an interest in them. The Skulls will be watching everything, so when you see her as they walk them around the room, make a show of inspecting her thoroughly. Once the walk through is complete, they will take bids for the elf’s services for the night.” Leena told them. “The account we have access too has twenty-two thousand Alliance credits in it, and that should be ample for our purposes.”

Dan shook his head. “I’ll use the account we have set up.” He told her.

Leena looked at him, her eyes narrowing. “This account is quite sufficient.” She said.

“I’m not saying it isn’t, but the identities of the two guys we are impersonating says they are players right?” Dan said.

“I don’t understand. What do you mean players?”

“They run a major black market network right?” Dan asked.

Leena nodded. “Yes.” She answered. “They funnel the credits back through channels and it ends up in an account that is used by my people.”

“And you sent our information ahead so they know we’re coming?” Dan said.

“Of course we did!” Leena replied testily.

“What would look more suspicious to you Leena?” Dan asked, “Given our position and seeing an account with twenty-two thousand credits in it, or an account with four million credits in it.”

Leena looked at Radama. “We don’t have access to those kinds of funds Daniel.” She spoke.

Dan nodded. “But we do.” Dan said holding up the credit chip. “Like you... we’ve also set up a network that brings in illicit funds. We call it a black bag fund, just for operations like this.”

“How were you able to set this up?” Leena asked. “It took us eight months to channel this many credits into this account.”

Dan smiled. “Let’s just say we have a rich uncle.” He spoke.

“A rich uncle,” Leena spoke. “I don’t understand.”

“It’s a figure of speech Leena.” Tony explained to her. “We have access to larger amounts of Alliance credits, and it’s safer for your network if we use that.”

“How were you able to obtain them?” Leena asked.

“It’s better if you don’t know.” Dan said moving to the large crate they had brought with them. “Let’s see what toys we can bring to the party.”

SOUTHEAST OF CEDAR CITY UTAH DIXIE NATIONAL FOREST OLD ROUTE 143

Tari and Lynwe rested on the thickly forested ridge overlooking the lone road twisting through the Dixie National Forest. Old Route 143 was the only road that was still passable in the mountains, and it gave a direct connection to Old Interstate 89 which would lead those they were watching directly back home. They counted dozens of armored Hoppers, a kind they had never seen before, as well as the 300II and the Scorpion Battle Tanks as the miles long convoy snaked through the mountains.

Tari lowered the powerful binoculars he was looking through and looked at Lynwe. “This Martin Hunter is an exceptional tactician.” He said to no one in particular. “Notice how the Hoppers are spaced among the tanks and missile launchers? No two vehicles will be destroyed in any one attack, and the correlation of forces dictates that any part of the convoy will be able to bring maximum firepower to bear on any ambush attempt.”

Lynwe lowered her identical binoculars and nodded. “There is a gunner in every Hopper, and all of them are alert, sweeping their sectors as they move. There are portable anti-personal missile launcher crews on the exterior of every tank and probably in some of the Hoppers.”

Tari nodded. “That does not include the three flying machines we have seen make occasional appearances over the convoy since they left Cedar City.”

“Our scouts reported that Cedar City was destroyed.” Lynwe spoke looking at him as she smiled. “They saw the body of the mercenary leader hanging from a very tall tree near the old university.”

Tari matched Lynwe's smile. "I believe I could grow to like this Martin Hunter quite a bit." He said. "The man does not believe in pulling any punches."

"You know... that's really good to hear." The voice spoke from behind them.

Tari and Lynwe reacted instantly, rolling away from each other, gathering their weapons as they did. Tari rolled to his knees, his rifle coming up just as he felt the cold metal of the gun muzzle placed to his left temple.

"I wouldn't." The voice spoke again. "I haven't had my breakfast this morning, and brains aren't exactly a favorite of mine."

Tari glanced out of the corner of his eye and saw Lynwe in an almost identical position, the long platinum blond hair of the Wood Elf very visible as she held the strange looking automatic to Lynwe's right temple from slightly behind Lynwe's shoulder. He shifted his gaze upward and found himself looking into the face of Martin Hunter, his hand unmoving as it held the K12 pistol against his head. Tari looked around and saw at least a dozen elves rise from the tall grass or appear from behind trees, his own security force disarmed and being prodded forward.

"We are not... we are not your enemy Martin Hunter." Tari said as calmly as he could. In all his years as a soldier, no one had ever been able to sneak up on him or Lynwe without being detected. Not only had Martin Hunter found him and Lynwe, his entire security detachment had been discovered and disarmed. Tari looked into Martin's face, which was neither hostile nor friendly, but completely void of emotion. "We have been escorting a group of humans and elves that we have picked up enroute here from Nebraska. They wanted to join you, as do we."

Martin nodded and squatted down in front of him slowly, the K12 never wavering. "Yes I know. My people have been watching you for two days now." Martin spoke. "You weren't trying to hide very well."

"We did not wish to hide." Tari said. "As I said, we have come to join you. The innocents we picked up during our quest to reach you. We could not leave them to their fates."

"*Nauta Melme* they carry Alliance weapons." Dysea spoke, her eyes never leaving Lynwe's face.

Tari nodded. "And our uniforms are hidden away in one of our vehicles." He said quickly.

Martin nodded. "Yes I know. We took down your group an hour ago. We found the uniforms."

Tari looked at him astonished. "You captured my entire command? How is that possible, we had no warning?"

Martin nodded. "You'd be surprised how possible some things are."

"You admit you are Alliance soldiers then?" Dysea asked out loud.

Tari gazed at her for a long moment. There was something about this Wood Elf that seemed familiar, and it took only a moment for his keen mind to recall what that was. "I admit we were once Alliance soldiers Queen of the Wood Elves." He answered calmly, and totally at peace with the decision they had made so long ago. "We no longer serve them. All of us have chosen to... change the direction of our lives and we deserted from Alliance service. We despise the Alliance and everything it stands for! We are the last of my people and I would not see them destroyed at the whim of Alliance butchers!"

"This must be the rogue elf company we have been intercepting transmissions about these last months *Nauro Ohtar*." Ealin spoke from behind Martin. "Marcus himself has been leading the search for them."

"They call... they call you Wolf Warrior?" Tari asked Martin.

Martin lowered his K12 and looked at Tari, "Yeah. Kind of catchy don't you think?"

Tari saw Dysea lower her weapon from Lynwe's head and watched as she stepped away from her until she was next to Martin, but her eyes never left Lynwe, and the K12 remained in her hand. He looked back to Martin. "You believe me?" He asked.

"Let's just say that so far your story checks out." Martin told him. "The civilians that are traveling with your group appear to be in excellent health, and they trust the soldiers you left at your camp. We questioned some briefly, and they said you had been protecting them for over a month as you moved west."

Tari nodded. "We traveled only at night like the slavers do. If we were detected by the Alliance recon drones we would look like a slaver column and they would ignore us."

"How do we know they won't just shoot us Tari?" Lynwe snapped. Dysea's head turned quickly from looking at Lynwe to where Tari stood.

"If I had wanted you dead... you would be dead." Martin spoke. "Don't doubt that for a second."

“Tari?” Dysea asked, looking at him. “Your name is Tari?”

Tari met her eyes. “That is correct.” He replied. “You speak my name as if you have heard it before.”

“Do you know a Drow assassin by the name of Aihola?” Dysea asked.

Tari’s amber colored eyes lit up, “Aihola! You know Aihola? Where is she? Tell me!”

Dysea became hesitant at his excitement and she paused before replying. “How do you know her?”

Dysea asked, almost possessively.

“How do I know her? Aihola is my sister Queen of the Wood Elves. I helped her to escape New Baltimore almost a year ago, and I have not heard from her since.” Tari answered. “You have seen her? Spoken with her?”

Dysea nodded slowly. “Three days ago, in Mountain City.”

“She is alive?” Tari asked.

Dysea nodded, “Very much so.”

Lynwe stepped closer to Tari, her own face somewhat brighter. “Tell us how she is?” Lynwe spoke. “We have not spoken with her in so long.”

Dysea glanced at Martin and she saw him nod his head slowly. Tari and Lynwe both saw this. “What is it?” Tari asked.

Dysea looked at him. “Aihola is in excellent health.” Dysea said. “She is in Mountain City acting as Personal Attendant to the High Elf Queen Tarifa.”

Martin could see the looks of relief on both their faces even though their expressions hardly changed. He could smell the relief that coursed through them at this news, and that was the biggest indicator that perhaps these Drow were not enemies after all.

Perhaps they would be potential allies in the war Martin knew was coming.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

LAS VEGAS

Dan and Tony sat at the small table only four meters from where the large stage was set up. The inside of the auction center was alive with music and filled with hundreds of men and women. The majority of them were humans, the rest the elf employees of the center itself. The female elves were scantily clad in almost transparent dresses, revealing their attributes for all to see as they carried trays of drinks and food to the hundreds of tables in the center. Smoking was obviously allowed and Danny saw dozens of men with thick cigars, and some even holding pipes. All of the slaves working the floor had the standard Alliance drug dispenser attached to the back of their necks. It was really no larger than some of the cell phones that Danny had seen in the 21st century. It was anchored into their skin and the small tube that pumped the drug into their systems was hidden from plain view.

Dan and Tony both swept their eyes across the massive room slowly, taking in all they could see. They each had a small TAP camera attached to their foreheads just above their eyebrows, and the feed from these cameras was going directly back to their suite where Leena was monitoring it with a sophisticated laptop computer set up.

“Leena are you getting this?” Dan asked softly, the noise of the auction center covering his words completely.

“It’s coming in quite clear.” Leena’s voice echoed in his implant. She sounded excited and out of breath.

“What’s wrong?” Dan asked.

“We’ve... we’ve never been able to get pictures like these from inside an auction center Daniel.” Leena replied. “Not with this clarity.”

“We’re going to do slow sweeps of the room. If you see anyone of dubious fame make sure you mark their location and feed us some Intel if you are able.” Dan spoke.

“I’m doing that now.” Leena replied.

“Where’s Radama?”

“He is coordinating with those we have working in the hotel’s operations area.” Leena told him. “He will insure our escape is completely vetted. He is quite thorough... for a High Elf.”

Dan and Tony looked at each other and smiled at the tone of arrogance in her voice. “Do I detect a slight air of superiority in your voice there Leena?” Dan asked.

“Not at all,” Leena answered. “I’m merely stating a fact.”

The music became louder and they saw a man jump up onto the stage. He looked to be in his forties, muscular with just a slight bulge at his waistline. “Welcome! Welcome!” He spoke loudly, his voice carrying through the center.

“Here we go.” Dan spoke.

“That is Ambrose.” Leena’s voice sounded in their ears. “He is the leader of the Skulls, and perhaps the cruelest of them all.”

“He doesn’t look like much.” Tony spoke as he sipped his drink.

“We have confirmed he is responsible for the deaths of at least three hundred and twelve elves and humans.” Leena replied. “The last person to cheat him was flayed alive and then tossed into a pit with two very hungry Grizz beasts.”

“Nice guy.” Tony commented.

“Nice is not a word I would use to describe him Anthony.” Leena spoke, her voice dripping with arrogance once more. “You would do well to listen to me and stick with our mission.”

Dan and Tony looked at one another over the table, Tony making a show of pompous superiority with his face. Dan chuckled as they turned back to listen to the man on the stage.

“We have a new day for you folks!” Ambrose shouted dramatically, “A new day and some outstanding new slaves for your viewing pleasure! My men will be circulating, so if you see anything that perks your interest... or your sex drive... let them know! And here they are!”

The side door to the stage slid open and Dan and Tony watched as three rows of slaves were led out in single file. There looked to be about sixty of them, male and female, the females wearing only a transparent wrap, and the males wore what amounted to a loin cloth. All of them had the drug dispenser attached to the backs of their neck and appeared docile. Danny detected her scent almost immediately in the rush of air the doors provided as they opened. His keen eyes quickly found her in the last row and his eyes grew a little wider. The picture Vengal had given him did not do his daughter justice in the least.

Anuk stood at least five foot eight, her rust colored red hair flowing elegantly over her shoulders to the top of her incredibly firm ass. The wrap did nothing to hide the flat muscular abdomen, or her incredibly firm breasts. Her stiff nipples poked at the transparent wrap, causing Danny to feel a tug in his groin. He admired her long tanned and muscular legs and the perfect “V” they formed at the junction of her crotch, not to mention she had the most incredible ass of any woman he had ever see, muscular and firm and very prominent. Anuk had no hair between her thighs, her womanhood exposed for all to see. She walked with the other slaves as if this was the most normal thing in the world, allowing hundreds of others to gawk at her near naked body, and then Danny noticed her eyes. They were cerulean blue in color, just like the picture Vengal had given him, but they were blank eyes now, no emotion in them whatsoever. Dan knew this was due to the drug, and he felt his anger spike at what had been done to this beautiful young elf.

“I have her.” Dan finally spoke, “Last row, sixth from the end.”

There was a pause and they heard Leena gasp in their ears. “Yes! It’s her... by the gods it’s her! Oh Anuk.”

Danny and Tony both could hear the anguish in Leena’s voice. “Leena...” Tony spoke now. “Stay with us Leena. We need you to pull this off.”

There was a long pause and they looked at each other. “Thank... thank you Anthony.” Her voice came back on the COM. It was stronger now, and more in control. “Thank you for reminding me of our purpose. It... it’s been so long since I have seen her.”

“I know the feeling Leena.” Tony answered. “Just hang with us and we’ll get this done.”

“Ok...” Dan spoke. “I’m going to do my thing. Leena... monitor what I say and guide me if I need it.”

“I’ll be ready.” Leena spoke. “Anthony... can you move to the slave entrance and pass your camera into the rooms beyond? Pictures of the interior of the slave pens could come in useful in the future.”

Tony got as they got to their feet. “I’m on it.”

“Only the wealthiest will be allowed to approach the slaves while they are on show.” Leena told them. “Of which the two of you are as far as the Skulls are concerned. You need to act like it. Be arrogant... be powerful. Daniel... show interest in the others as you make your way to Anuk, do not focus entirely on her until you reach her. Touch the others, inspect them.”

“Touch them?” Dan asked surprised as he moved closer.

“Daniel it is a slave auction. We are considered property.” Leena spoke calmly. “Would you purchase something without first inspecting it? I was under the impression you were an experienced operator.”

“Leena...” Dan started to say.

“As distasteful as it is to you Daniel, you are a man. When was the last time you got to fondle a female without worrying about the consequences? You must do it or we will not succeed.” Leena’s voice echoed in his ear.

“Shit!” Dan swore as he approached the line of slaves with roughly a dozen other men and women.

Danny was aware of the half dozen very serious looking Skulls gang members that surrounded the stage. All of them very heavily armed and watching the men and women who had approached intently. He stepped up to the first female elf, a dark haired beauty and let his eyes linger on her for a moment. Dan was asked to act before in the course of his countless missions with Martin before they had come here, and he drew on that acting now. He detached himself as he reached up and squeezed the elf’s arm and then her thigh. He turned her around, seemingly inspecting her firm breasts, his hands lifting them and measuring them. He tried to move slowly, watching as some of the others also inspected the elves, some even reaching between the elves’ thighs and fondling their most private areas.

Dan skipped over the next two blond elves, making his face show displeasure at them and moved to the next dark haired female elf. He did the same as before, but this time he fondled the female elf as the others had before nodding his head to himself and moving on. It took him six agonizing minutes to move down the line until he came to Anuk. He paused and looked at her from the floor for a long moment, his heart racing as he gazed at her, but keeping his face emotionless and empty. He stepped up to her and turned her around to face him. Her head immediately lowered and she looked at the floor.

“She will not meet your eyes Daniel.” Leena’s voice spoke in his implant. “The drug conditions them to be subservient in every way.”

Dan reached out and ran his hand over Anuk’s leg, squeezing her thigh and feeling the power in them. He had seen others step up onto the stage and he did as well now, towering over her five foot eight height easily. He walked around her twice, squeezing her shoulders and roughly pawing at her breasts. Anuk’s cinnamon scent was filling his head in a rush, causing every nerve ending in his body to ignite. Dan had never felt this way before, not even in the most passionate moments with Julie or Anja. It was like his entire body was alive and on fire. Dan finally lowered his hand to her thighs and as gently as he could he ran his finger along her pussy lips. Dan saw her flinch slightly and wetness coated his finger unexpectedly. He brought his hand away slowly, not wanting to draw attention to himself and nodded his head in approval as he stepped off the stage.

“Motion one of the guards over now.” Leena’s voice told him. “Ask him about her. Do not move directly into asking about money, he will become suspicious. Tell him you find her interesting. Let him lead you into talk of cost.”

Dan found the nearest guard and motioned him over. The man looked at a data pad that he carried and then walked over to the hulking black man.

“What can I do for you Mister Williams?” The man asked respectfully.

“This wench here,” Dan spoke motioning to Anuk. “I find her interesting.” He used the key word that Leena had told him to use and watched as the guard nodded.

“Of course sir,” The man spoke. He looked at his data pad once more. “She is a rare find if I do say so myself sir. I was one of the lucky ones allowed to break her in when she arrived. You will have to use lubrication however, as it appears she does not respond well enough to stimuli even with the implant. Will that be an issue sir?”

Dan shook his head slowly, holding his hands behind his back, “Not at all. I rather like them tight.” He spoke.

The guard chuckled. “She is that sir.” He answered.

“Is there anything I should know about her?” Dan asked casually.

The guard looked around quickly as if he was making sure no one was listening to him. “She does not appear to care for men of your skin color sir. She has been uncooperative at times to the few dark skinned men of my guard unit. Perhaps you would care for another elf instead?”

Dan turned to look back to Anuk. He let his eyes linger on her for a long moment, her eyes staring at the floor. Dan shook his head slowly. “No... I don’t believe that will be a problem at all.” He spoke slowly.

The guard smiled. “I see you don’t mind the uncooperative ones sir.”

Dan looked at the guard, trying to keep from ripping the man’s throat out, “Not at all.” He answered. “They scream louder.”

“Daniel... now is appropriate to ask about price.” Leena spoke in his ear.

“And what would her price for the evening be?” Dan asked the guard.

“Her services for the evening will set you back four hundred thousand credits.” The Guard said. “That does include one of our top suites and unlimited food and beverage however.”

Dan heard Leena gasp in his ear, “Four hundred thousand!” Her voice said in disbelief. “That’s outrageous!”

“If I may inquire as to why such a high price is being asked?” Dan spoke smoothly.

“We were able to discover that her father is a very high ranking figure among the Wood Elves sir.” The Guard answered. “Ambrose is expecting a senior Alliance member to arrive in two days to take her back with him. He figured we could make some extra money for those two days.”

Leena again let out with a sharp intake of breath. “They know that General Vengal is her father.” She said.

Dan smiled. “Is that so?” He said, “An excellent plan by Mister Ambrose, an excellent plan indeed.”

“He thought so sir.” The guard spoke. “Will you be interested Mister Williams?”

Danny nodded as he handed over his credit disc, “Most assuredly.” He replied. “If the Alliance is interested in her, then she must be very special. In fact... I will extend my stay here and take her for the two days.”

The guard looked at him wide eyed as he took the disc and slid it into the slot on his pad, his eyes widening a little when he saw the amount of credits the disc held. He looked quickly to Dan. “You are sure that is what you would like to do sir?”

Dan nodded. “I believe I might enjoy breaking this young elf in.” He spoke.

“Would there be anything else I might be able to help you with sir?” He asked hopefully.

Dan turned as Tony came up to them. “This is my partner Mister Collins.”

The guard nodded at Tony, “A pleasure sir. Have you made a selection as well?” He asked, looking at the second extremely tall and bald black man.

Tony looked at Dan. “Did you get the red haired wench?”

Dan smiled. “Yes indeed. She might be worth the credits I have paid for her.”

Tony looked at the guard. “Add the blond on the end. She appears willing enough to sate my appetite for tonight. Perhaps I will get another for tomorrow or keep her. I’ll see how she holds up first.”

“What are you doing?” Leena asked in their implants. “That is not necessary!”

The guard smiled even wider and added the cost to the disc. “Do you have your own suites here in the hotel sirs, or can I offer you two of our own.”

“We are staying next door at the Palazzo.” Dan replied. “I have a fondness for that hotel that dates back a couple of years. Will that be an issue?”

The Guard shook his head. “Not at all sir, Mister Ambrose owns the Palazzo as well.”

“Excellent.” Dan said. “What is your fee?”

“Those of us who work this part of the operation get one percent of your cost sir. It’s very lucrative for us. That’s why we are the best.” The guard answered proudly. “We are allowed to accept gratuity from the customers if they see fit.”

Dan forced a smile. “I believe it fits then. We’ve come a long way and if this elf turns out to be as exciting as you say, you’ll have made an otherwise boring business trip eventful.”

“Business sir?” The guard asked. “Would I be overstepping my bounds if I asked what business you are in?”

“Tell him it is none of his business!” Leena spoke.

“Not at all,” Dan answered. “Joseph and I deal in rare minerals. Diamonds mostly, but we dabble in other things as well. Our main customers are on the eastern seaboard, but we’ve drawn interest from some buyers out here.”

“A profitable business I see.” The guard spoke.

“Yes it is.” Dan replied. “Add another ten thousand for yourself and bring us two bottles of your best wine when you deliver the elves to our suites.” Dan spoke holding out the second disc. “I am in suite 4291, and my partner Mister Collins is in suite 4293 next door.”

The guard’s eyes lit up at this and he bobbed his head happily. “I will see to it sir.”

“How long do we have before you deliver them?” Tony asked.

“I can have them to your suite within the hour sir.” The guard spoke.

Dan smiled. “Excellent. It will give us time to gamble in your fine casino before we indulge ourselves.”

The guard nodded and handed back the disc after removing his ten thousand credit tip. “I’ll begin processing the transfer right now sir.”

Dan nodded. “We’ll stop off for a few games of Blackjack, and then return to our suites.”

“We’ll say one hour.”

The guard nodded and turned to move away. Dan looked at Tony as they too headed out of the auction center.

“That was very foolish Daniel. You did not do as I instructed.” Leena’s voice spoke in their ears.

“However a ten thousand credit tip will entice him to be very receptive towards whatever you ask. Especially if he can get more credits from you.”

“That was the idea.” Dan spoke softly, becoming perturbed with Leena’s attitude. “We have enough juice for both of them right?”

“We have three doses.” Leena answered. “That is more than enough.”

“Is Radama back?”

“I’m making my way back now Daniel.” Radama’s voice cut into their conversation.

“How’s our exit look Ray?” Tony asked. Many of the Genomes and humans and even some of the elves had taken to calling Radama “Ray” for short. At first he was angered at this until Dysea had explained it was a means of affection and respect being showed to him by those who used it.

“I have tapped into their cameras and looped the feed for this floor.” Radama replied. “When we are ready I can switch the live feed to the looped one and we will have six minutes to make our way from our rooms to the sub levels of the hotel. Once there we can make our way through the underground rail system that used to be here. We have three Hoppers waiting at our designation point.”

Dan nodded as they walked into the casino portion of the center. “We’ll hit a hand or two of Blackjack and then move back to your location.” He spoke. “Be ready to move.” Tony did not notice how Dan brought the finger he had used to rub Anuk to his nose and inhale deeply, nor did he see him slide the finger into his mouth. The cinnamon scent and flavor caused Dan’s heart to race as they walked into the casino. There was something very different about this elf, something very different indeed.

TWENTY MILES SOUTH OF EDEN (FORMERLY JUNCTION CITY UTAH)

“...Not a lot of notice Admiral,” Martin spoke from inside the armored Hopper that had been transformed into a communications platform. He sat in the high backed chair, Dysea standing behind him.

“I know Marty, but after talking with Paul and Anisa it’s something I feel we need to do.” Admiral Wallace spoke.

Martin looked at Dysea briefly before turning back to the small monitor. “Meaning no disrespect sir, you’re asking me to possibly endanger everything we have built here over one woman’s family. A woman I might add, that until a few hours ago was working with the scum we are fighting.”

“Martin we convinced Deval of her treachery before he left. In doing so, he gave us access to everything she had been working on the last ten years.” Wallace spoke. “Paul has been through many of the experiments, and none of them were conducted on elves. The majority of her work was done in agriculture, news ways to produce crops and genetically engineered plants and such.”

“Then how is it she reached so high a place within their government Admiral?” Dysea asked from next to Martin.

Wallace sat back in the chair he occupied. “She was Deval’s main squeeze.” Wallace answered. “Believe me he was none to happy about it either. Marty... getting her to work with us would be a very large coup. Her knowledge on the internal workings of the Alliance government could be invaluable.”

“She could also bring all of you down.” Martin said.

Wallace nodded. “I’m aware of that, but we’re within a few weeks of taking back complete control of the station. Once we do that... we’ll be in a far better position to dictate what is happening.”

“How many total Admiral?” Martin asked.

“Five.” Wallace replied. “I can’t order you to do this Marty. You’ve done amazing things down there, and I won’t ask you to put what you have in jeopardy.”

“How do we know her family will even agree to this?” Martin asked.

“After listening to Deval, I believe the only thing keeping them alive was the influence their daughter exerted within the government.” Wallace answered. “Selene was not well liked among the other ministers, and we may have stumbled upon a gold mine without even realizing it.”

“The Admiral has a point *Nauta Melme*.” Dysea spoke softly, Martin turning to look at her. “Alliance politics are not what you are used too. There is always a struggle within their own ranks to acquire more power. And if it comes at the cost of another, they do not care.”

“There are two locations Marty, two clicks apart. Her parents are at one, and then a younger brother with a wife and child.” Wallace spoke. “They are located in New Memphis; both locations are near the river. I’m sending you the exact data now. Deval’s Raptor won’t land for another seven hours.”

“How do we know he hasn’t already contacted his government and told them to act?” Martin asked.

“We haven’t picked up any long range communications from his Raptor to earth.” Wallace replied. “I’m guessing he wants to deal with this personally.”

Martin nodded slowly, “Alright Admiral.” He said. “I’ll put something together and try to get it done sir. Will you question how I do it?”

“Have I ever done that Marty?” Wallace asked.

Martin looked at the screen. “No sir you haven’t”

“And I’m not going to start now.” Wallace told him. “If you are able, inform me when you and if you are successful. It will be another leverage point we can use to get Selene to work with us willingly.”

Martin nodded. “Yes sir.”

“Thank you Martin. Good luck my boy.”

The image faded and Martin turned in his seat to Dysea. “What do you think *Melda Min*?”

“Your Admiral seems like a wise man my love.” She replied. “Has he ever misled you in the past?”

Martin shook his head, “Never.” He answered instantly.

“Can we do such a thing in so short a time?” She asked.

Martin nodded, “Easily. We’ve conducted missions before on very short notice. The question is who goes with us?”

“The Drow *Nauta Melme*,” Dysea answered. “I believe them Martin. To travel for so long and protect those innocents as they did.” Dysea shook her head. “They could have easily abandoned them to their fates and they would have found us much sooner if their intent was anything but honorable. And there is something different about them as well. Something changed.”

“I thought you didn’t like the Drow?” Martin asked.

“It is true that our histories have never been friendly.” Dysea answered. “My... my experiences with Aihola, as short as they were, have changed my view of them. You saw how they reacted when I told them she was alive and safe, the concern on their faces. That is not something one usually sees in a Drow warrior.”

“I did notice that.” He said. “And I agree; I get a good feeling from them. And I’d know if they were lying anyway. I’ll brief Julie, I’ll lead a team and she’ll take one as well. Kenny will be our flight, and he can bring Julie and Anja when he comes to pick us up. We’ll take this Tari and his second officer Lynwe. The rest will return to Eden with you.”

“You... you don’t wish me to come.” Dysea asked.

Martin shook his head. “No for several reasons. As close to Wood Elf territory as New Memphis is, you could very well be recognized. We are the ones everyone seems to look to for leadership, though I’m quite sure they look at you for more than that,” He told her wagging his eyebrows. Dysea leaned over and punched his arm. “If anything happens, I will need to be focused and not gawking at your luscious body.”

Dysea smiled and moved closer to him, settling herself into his lap. “I will hold you to your promise *Nauta Melme*.” She said running her tongue along his jaw line.

“I intend to keep that promise *Melda Min*.” Martin spoke, kissing ever softly.

Dysea nodded. “I will contact Julie and have her meet you here while you gather your teams.” She said.

Martin squeezed her firm body in his arms one last time before getting to his feet and heading out of the refitted Hopper.

LAS VEGAS

Danny answered the chime on the suite door and after making sure that Radama and Leena were safely in the other room, he went to the door. As it slid aside he saw the guard from the auction center standing in the hallway, Anuk standing slightly behind him to his right. He saw the other two Skulls as well, their weapons in view but nit directed at him in any way.

“Ah... you have arrived, excellent.” Dan spoke. “I’ve been looking forward to this.”

“Here she is Mister Williams.” The guard spoke. “I had her cleaned up and changed into a suitable outfit, not that she’ll remain in it for very long I would imagine.”

Danny chuckled. “Indeed.” He spoke. He stepped aside. “Please bring her in.”

The man grabbed Anuk’s arm and started forward, but she did not move. “I will not... I will not let that Negro touch me. They... they are vile and disgusting.” Her voice came out softly but with some firmness to it.

The guard’s eyes went wide at her words and he squeezed her arm tightly, causing Anuk to wince in pain and nearly double over. “You will do as you are told elf bitch!” He snarled. “He has bought your services for the night, and I for one hopes he uses you in every orifice that you have!” The guard looked at Dan, who quickly hid the flash of anger on his face. “My apologies sir, I...”

Anuk let out a small scream and leaped at Dan, raking her fingernails down his face and leaving three gashes, blood instantly blossoming out. The guard reacted quickly; horror in his eyes and clubbed her on the back of the head with his weapon, dropping her to the floor. He turned to face Dan, who had a murderous look on his face as he glared at Anuk on the floor.

“Mister Williams... I... I can not apologize enough sir!” The man stammered. He looked at Anuk and kicked her viciously in the side. “I will see to it she is severely punished for this!”

“No!” Dan growled. “I would like that pleasure.”

“Sir... please allow me to return your credits to you and allow you to choose another of our females at half cost to you.” He spoke turning to glare at Anuk. “Her actions... her actions will cause me great harm.”

“No.” Dan spoke again. “This will go no further.” Dan bent down and took Anuk’s hair in his hand, wrenching her head back. She gasped in pain and tried to reach for his hands, her eyes focusing on his face. “She is not drugged?” He asked.

“She is strong willed sir, and sometimes she is able to overcome the effect of the drug.” The guard answered. “I apologize to you sir; it is not something we were told to reveal.”

Dan smiled cruelly. “I will punish her for her actions trust me.” He spoke. “Bring her into my suite.”

The guard bent over and grabbed Anuk’s arm, yanking her to her feet none to gently, her red hair flailing all over. “I hope he fucks you in the ass elf bitch, and makes you bleed.”

The guard shoved Anuk through the door, his two men following him past Danny. They entered the suite fully, the guard practically dragging Anuk into the center of the room. He turned and his eyes went wide when he saw the silenced K12 come up in Dan’s hand, and the head of one of his men disappeared in a fine mist of blood and brain matter. He saw Tony step from the adjoining door, also holding a silenced K12 and the head of his second man also blew apart like an overripe melon, showering both him and Anuk with blood and bits of bone. His eyes settled on Dan as he brought his K12 level with his head.

“I will give you exactly three seconds to release her.” Dan spoke, his voice cold and unyielding.

“I’ll... I will kill her!” He yelled, scrambling to get his own weapon to come up, and leveling it at Anuk’s head. “Don’t move! If you shoot me I will kill her!”

“No... I don’t think so. I’m going to put a slug through your medulla oblongata that will sever your spinal cord. Your brain won’t know you are dead, therefore you won’t be able to do shit.” Dan spoke and his finger caressed the trigger. The 40mm Teflon coated bullet punched through the guard’s face half way up his nose. The slug tore out the back of his neck, leaving him still standing there staring at Danny. It took several seconds for his body to finally get the message and he dropped like a limp noodle to the floor.

Anuk’s cerulean eyes focused on Danny and with another howl she lunged at him. This time however Danny was ready and he backhanded her with little effort, sending her flying across the room just as the bedroom door of the suite opened and Leena and Radama rushed out.

“Anuk!” Leena cried, going immediately to her cousin. She rushed to her side as she curled into a fetal position on the floor, glaring at Danny with anger in her eyes. “What have you done?” She screamed.

Dan was next to her in the blink of an eye. “I don’t know what her problem is, but you’d better get her under control quickly!”

Leena saw the three nasty cuts on his face and her eyes showed confusion. “What... what happened to your face?”

“She happened!” Dan growled. He got back to his feet and turned as Tony slid the door to the suite shut. “Radama... help Leena treat them.” Danny spoke. “We need to purge the drug quickly and then get out of here before someone comes looking for these three idiots.”

Tony needed no direction and was grabbing the body of one of the dead guards and dragging it into the adjoining suite. Dan reached up to his face and ran his fingers along the two gashes Anuk had given him, wincing as his hand came away with blood.

“Fuck!” Dan growled before bending down and grabbing the body of another guard and following Tony.

RAPTOR 46

83,000 FEET ORBITING NEW MEMPHIS

“...Two locations that we’ll hit.” Martin was speaking to them as they crowded around the plot table on the observation deck of the Raptor. Kenny had picked them up quickly and they had immediately climbed to this altitude and engaged the stealth mode on the Raptor. He now held them in a slow orbit of the city of New Memphis far below them.

“Both targets are within half a click of the river.” Martin spoke, his finger sliding down the map chart. “Tari... you’ve been to New Memphis?”

The Drow commander nodded and leaned over the table. “Lynwe and I took our advanced training in a school located in the northern section of the city. It is not far from where your targets are situated. The wall around New Memphis is heavily guarded due to its proximity to this edge of The Wastes. All of the Alliance cities are much more spread out than you are used too. There are many encampments all around the exterior of the wall. Men and women use their closeness to the wall as a means of defense.”

“What about security inside?” Martin asked.

“Again you will be surprised.” Tari answered. “For the most part the only individuals that will be out on the streets at this hour are criminals. The Alliance security forces do not normally patrol the streets in any kind of numbers.”

“Why is that?” Julie asked from her spot next to Martin, her eyes on Tari. She had allowed her hair to grow much longer the last few months, almost as long as Anja’s, and even though it was now wrapped tightly in a pony tail, it was shiny and draped over her shoulder.

Tari had noticed her the first moment he had boarded the strange flying craft. She had been standing near the ramp, and even in her fatigues and combat vest, her smell had elicited sensations within him that he had not felt in many years. His senses were more acute than most elves due to his Drow blood, and increased even more by the Alliance experiments on him and his people. He could detect Julie’s scent easily, and it was this scent that was causing the reactions in him.

“It is a way for the Alliance to maintain control in their cities in part.” Tari replied, meeting her eyes. “If they do not press the criminal elements that prowl the streets at night, they are better able to control the civilian population. If they do not come out at night in great numbers, the Alliance does not need to patrol the streets.”

“What if the gangs get out of control?” Julie asked.

“As distasteful as it undoubtedly is, unless the gangs do something quite violent, the Alliance does nothing.” Tari answered. “As I said... it is a control measure of sorts.”

“No civilians on the streets at night, the less they have to patrol and the fewer resources they have to provide.” Martin spoke with a nod.

Tari nodded, “Exactly.”

Julie looked across the plot board at him. She had felt this Drow elf’s eyes on her off and on for most of the trip, and surprisingly it did not bother her in the least. He was tall for an elf, right around six feet, and he had the complete opposite physical dimensions of Danny. While Danny was heavily muscled, Tari was lean and athletically built. His pure white hair was shoulder length and framed a strong jaw and thin lips. His amber eyes were what caused shivers to pulse down Julie’s spine, and she found they were not shivers of fear. His scent was pungent in the confined area of the observation deck, a powerful musky scent that reminded her of the deep timber in the early morning hours.

“That seems rather callous.” Julie commented to Tari.

“Yes it is.” Tari answered nodding his head. “However no one has ever accused the Alliance of being compassionate in any way.”

Lynwe leaned forward now across the plot board, detecting Tari’s interest in Julie and it made Lynwe think of her lover then, and turned to look at her as she sat in one of the chairs along the wall quietly. She and Anari had come together almost by accident. No one knew what experiments had been performed on the individual Drow warriors, and only through time and friendships had almost all of them been discovered by those within their unit. She and Anari had discovered each other early on during their training. They had been using the barrack showers late in the evening when no one else was awake to hide the results of the experiments on them. Each of them had thought they were alone and quite unknowingly had stumbled across one another while they were both soaking wet and completely nude. It was taboo for the Drow to have relationships with members of the same sex, a law that had been started centuries before by a long dead Drow Matron. When Lynwe and Anari realized they had been afflicted with the same curse, it was almost natural that they form a bond; a bond which grew over time until they had become lovers. Anari willingly assumed the role of submissive female to Lynwe, craving the attention Lynwe would give to her. She would wantonly suck Lynwe’s enormous cock or allow Lynwe to fuck her beautifully tight ass whenever Lynwe demanded it, and she was content to simply stroke her own organ to release. The last few months however, Anari had been increasingly asking for Lynwe to show her more affection, to kiss her and stroke her skin.

Lynwe had no doubts that she cared for Anari, but the taboo of their people and her own inability to put into words what she was feeling had always held her back.

“Lynwe?” Tari’s voice broke into her train of thought.

She looked at him, her mind returning to the present as she shook away the thoughts of what she knew could never be. “My apologies, my thoughts were elsewhere for a moment.” She said quickly. She pointed to one of the spots on the map. “This target location is closer to the Alliance school than the other.” She spoke. “There is a relatively wide field only five hundred meters from this house. It is used as a parade field of sorts, but there is nothing else in the area. It would be ideal for a landing zone if you intend a parachute drop.”

Martin nodded slowly. “That’s where the team I’ll lead will go in.” He spoke looking at the map. “Julie... you’ll land here at this point and move to the secondary target.”

Julie nodded. “No problem Skipper.” She said.

Martin nodded and looked at Tari. “You’ll go with Julie’s team Tari. Lynwe will accompany my team. Anja will be support for both since we aren’t that far away from each other. I understand you have a medical officer with you?”

Tari nodded and motioned for Anari to come forward. “This is Anari,” He spoke as she came to stand next to Lynwe. “She is a skilled surgeon and expert of all types of wounds.”

Martin nodded. “Anja... make sure she’s got everything she needs will you?”

Anja nodded from next to Julie. “Will do,” She spoke, letting her eyes go to where Anari stood. “If you’ll come with me, I’ll get you a medical bag.”

Tari looked surprised. “We will go with you?” He asked.

Martin nodded. “I don’t see why not, your knowledge of the area could prove to be invaluable.”

Tari looked at Lynwe briefly before turning back to Martin. “You will arm us then? I do not envy going into this area of the city with no weapons.”

Martin nodded. “I would be foolish not to.”

“You trust us?” Lynwe asked even more surprised.

Martin looked at her now. “Is there a reason why I shouldn’t?” He asked. “You’ve been very forthcoming up until now, and I don’t see anything that would indicate to me you are being deceptive.” Martin smiled. “Besides... Julie is your team leader on this OP, and if you do something you aren’t suppose to... she’ll put a bullet between your eyes and not even blink.”

Tari looked at Julie across the plot board. She met his eyes and smiled. Tari returned her smile. “Yes... I believe she would.” He said. “You will have no worries Martin Hunter, Lynwe and I and those under our command have come too far to turn back now. Our future rests with you and Eden City.”

“I’m glad to hear that.” Martin spoke. “Lynwe you’ll be with my team. Ealin is my second in command and I want you to stick next to him the whole time.”

Lynwe nodded, “As you wish.” She replied.

“Kenny is going to drop to 37,000 feet and we’ll jump from that height.” Martin spoke. “Once we have the packages, each team will move to this abandoned dock area here where he’ll pick us up. It should be very simple... get in, grab them and get out.”

“Martin Hunter... we... we are not qualified to jump from this height.” Tari spoke, his voice wavering just a little bit.

“That’s no problem.” Martin said. “Julie’s tandem qualified, and you can jump with her. Lynwe can go in with Anja.”

Tari glanced at Lynwe, who had a smile on her face at this news. He shook his head slowly, knowing she was the much more adventurous one of their unit, and a leap from this height had always been something she had talked of doing.

“Is that going to be a problem Tari?” Martin asked.

Tari looked at him and shook his head again. “No.” He answered. “I... I will endure.”

Martin nodded. “Ok... let’s get ready folks... I want to be home in less than six hours.”

LAS VEGAS

“Cousin?” Leena spoke softly as she stroked Anuk’s face gently. They were in the bedroom of the suite, Radama helping her carry Anuk into the room and laying her in the bed. Leena had wasted no time and injected Anuk with the anti-dote to the mind control drug. That Anuk had been able to fight the drug as much as she had spoke incredibly of her powerful will and mind. Leena knew it to be that she was the daughter of General Vengal. He was forceful and driving and he drove his troops hard, yet he also considered each of them a member of his family and did not needlessly throw their lives away.

Anuk’s cerulean colored eyes opened slowly, blinking rapidly to adjust to the light in the room and to focus more quickly. “Leen... Leena?” She spoke softly, her lips dry and cracked.

“I am here cousin.” Leena told her, gripping her hands and moving so that Anuk could see her.

“Leena!” Anuk said more forcibly, rising up on the bed. “It... it is you!”

Leena smiled and nodded her head. “It is me Anuk.” She spoke. “Go slow cousin, the antidote for the drug is still working within your system. It will take several hours to purge it from you completely, but your elfin abilities will begin to reassert themselves.”

Anuk gripped her cousin’s hands, her eyes darting around the room. “Where are we?” She asked quickly.

“We are in Las Vegas Anuk.” Leena explained. “We thought you were dead cousin. We searched for weeks, but found nothing. It was only a few days ago that we learned that you had left Cedar City and been transported here. Your father obtained permission to come get you, and here we are.”

Anuk’s eyes flooded with tears and she buried her face in her cousin’s shoulder. “Oh Leena it was horrible!” She cried. “They... they raped me over and over! Dark skinned humans! They beat me endlessly. I did not think I would survive.”

Leena took her hands. “You did survive cousin!” She spoke. “You survived and you are here now among friends. We are waiting for nightfall so that we can depart the city. Your father waits at the old air base northeast of the city.”

“My father?” Anuk said. “He is close by?”

Leena nodded, “Just outside the city, waiting for us to return.”

“Us?” Anuk said, her mind still a jumble of thoughts. She remembered the guards bringing her here, the dark skinned human and his companion, the high elf soldier. Her eyes grew wild and she gripped Leena’s hands. “I saw them Leena. Dark skinned ones. Negroes! I saw them here. They are the ones who thought to buy me and rape me further!”

Leena shook her head. “No Anuk! They are friends. They risked much to come here and get you out. And they... they are not completely human.”

“I saw them!” Anuk nearly shouted.

Leena nodded. “Much has happened since you have been gone cousin. Do you trust me Anuk?”

Anuk looked at her. “You are my blood, Leena. Why do you ask me that?”

“Then trust me now.” Leena spoke. “The one you injured, Daniel is his name. He and his partner Anthony are different, very different. They are not fully human. Radama is a former High Elf Royal Guard. Your father waits with Leland outside the city.”

Anuk looked at her oddly. “Leland? The Queen’s Guardsmen Captain?”

“Yes that Leland. But as I said much has happened since you were taken from us. You must believe me Anuk; we came to get you out cousin. Daniel and Anthony are not our enemies.” Leena explained to her. “They... they have risked their lives to come save you at your father’s behest. They...”

The door slid open and their heads turned to see Daniel step into the room fully dressed in his standard fatigues and combat vest. His K12 was now in its holster and his HK74 dangled from the quick release straps. Anuk’s eyes narrowed into slits and she launched herself at him screaming in rage even as Leena yelled for her to stop. She got within three feet of Dan before his hand closed around her throat much faster than anything she had ever seen, and suddenly she was dangling from his grip easily eight inches off the floor. She grasped at his hand around her throat, trying to claw free of the iron grasp. He was easily six feet four inches tall Anuk’s mind registered, and his muscles bulged from his body in inhumanly sculpted definition, unlike the fat slobbering slavers who had captured and raped her. He brought her within inches of his face and she watched in horror as his eyes changed to yellow orbs encased in pitch black, the whites of his eyes disappearing completely. She watched as fangs sprang from his mouth lengthening to nearly an inch, giving him an imposing and utterly fearsome visage. Anuk also saw the three deep scratches on his cheek where her nails had raked across his skin.

“I am becoming extremely upset that you insist on attacking me whenever you see me!” Danny growled. “I am trying to save your elf ass, and if you don’t learn to control yourself a little better sweetheart, I’m going to toss you out of this forty-second balcony and watch as you go splat on the pavement below. Am I getting through that thick head you seem to have.”

Leena stepped up to him. “Release her, this instant! The men who captured her; they were black skinned like you. They were negroes. They treated her very badly, beating and raping her countless times. She is only reacting to that.”

Dan’s gaze did not leave Anuk’s wide cerulean colored eyes. Her hands had stopped trying to pull his grasp from her throat because he was not squeezing her neck. “You have my sincere apologies for whatever happened to you. If I could find the men who did this to you I would, and then I would string them up by their balls myself. However I did not do this to you! I came here freely to help get you out of the hell you have been living. Do not make me begin to regret that decision Anuk, because don’t doubt for a second that I will leave your pretty ass here if you hit me again. Am I making myself clear enough for you?”

Anuk glared at him with anger in her eyes, anger that was slowly subsiding. She nodded her head slowly. Danny slowly lowered her so that her feet could touch the floor, but he did not let go of her neck.

“The sun is going down so we are leaving. Get her dressed into something better suited for moving fast.” Dan spoke, releasing Anuk and looking at Leena. “Radama is helping Judziea and we’ll be able to move in twenty.”

“Judziea?” Leena asked, “You speak of the other female elf you brought?”

Danny nodded. “Radama’s got her almost ready to go.”

“We can not bring her!” Leena spoke. “Our mission was to come for and return with Anuk only. I told you that you should not have bought her as well. She will only slow us down.”

Dan met her eyes. “It would have looked odd if we only bought Anuk. She’s part of this now, and she goes with us.”

“You can not! Anuk is the priority!” Leena snapped.

Dan’s eyes flared. “What is it with you Wood Elves?” He snapped right back at her. “Where does this “me” shit keep coming from? Judziea helped us to get your bitch of a cousin here, she goes with us. I will not leave her behind to be tortured and raped because of us. And I am getting extremely fed up with your pompous, arrogant attitude.”

“That is not the mission Commander!” Leena spoke, ignoring his words.

“I’m changing the fucking mission!” Dan yelled losing his temper now. “This is my Op, and if you have a problem with it, you are more than welcome to find your own way back you arrogant bitch! And make sure you take the Queen Bitch with you!” Dan said motioning to Anuk.

Anuk drew back her hand to hit him and stopped in mid motion as Dan’s face was suddenly inches from hers, only this time he had allowed the change to come over him, and dark brown hair erupted from his exposed skin, his face contorting into something from one of Anuk’s nightmares as a child as his features lengthened into a short snout and his vicious looking fangs grew even longer, a smaller twin set of fangs bursting from his gums directly next to the nearly inch and a half long main fangs.

“Go ahead!” Dan growled, his anger seething inside him as it hadn’t in quite a long time. “Hit me!” Anuk took a step back as did Leena, looks of horror on their faces. “What is it going to be Leena?” He asked after a long moment, turning to look at her, his yellow orbs blazing. “My way, or the two of you learn to fly on your own.”

Leena stepped in front of her cousin protectively. “We will do as you ask.” She said.

Dan’s features immediately changed back to normal, though due to his anger, his fangs remained quite visible. “We leave in twenty.” He said simply. “Be in the main room or we leave without you. Period.”

Dan turned and left the bedroom without a glance back.

“Where is Rickart?” Ambrose yelled out the door to his office at one of the men in the corridor of the back room of his casino.

“He took that new red haired elf and some other bitch to a couple of big black dudes who bought them for the night boss.” The man answered.

Ambrose’s face knotted up. “She wasn’t supposed to be put on the auction block!” He snapped. “I had a special customer for her tight ass!”

“It... it wasn’t logged on her tag boss!”

“Shit! Call him and tell him to bring her back here now!” Ambrose snapped, watching the guard lift the small radio he carried. He walked back into his office and returned to his chair. Just as he lifted the glass of ale up to take a drink the guard from the hallway came in.

“Boss I can’t raise him on the radio.” The man said. “They were only going to the Palazzo, so he’s within range easy. And the two men that went with him aren’t answering either.”

Ambrose came to his feet. “Fuck! Get half a dozen men fast and meet me in the lobby of the Palazzo. Something isn’t right here.”

Dan opened the door of his suite and carefully looked down both sides of the corridor. He ducked his head back in and looked at the others.

“Time to move,” He said. “Tony you got the rear, I’ll take the lead.”

They stepped into the hall and started down the corridor towards the elevator, moving briskly but not running so as to not draw attention from the other rooms on the floor. All of them froze at the sound of the bell chiming on the elevator as it reached their floor. The doors slid open to reveal Ambrose and three men that stepped out of the elevator. Their eyes widened when they saw Dan in the center of the hall, his HK coming up in the blink of an eye.

“Gun!” Dan screamed, dropping to one knee and cutting loose a well aimed three round burst from the HK, the Teflon coated rounds punching into the chest of the man to Ambrose’s right and lifting him off his feet.

Tony had smashed in the door of the room he was next to before Dan’s warning had finished leaving his lips. His large shoulder splintered the thick wood, and his hand dragged Judziea into the room as Radama pulled Leena and then Anuk into the room. Dan backed up, dropping into a crouch by the door, laying down accurate bursts from his HK, pinning Ambrose and his two men near the elevator.

Tony moved through the room, ignoring the older couple that was in the bed and staring at him in fear. He smashed the balcony window and stepped out, looking down to the balcony below. “Here.” He called, pulling Judziea to him and lifting her up quickly. She screamed as he swung her out over the edge of the balcony, dangling her forty-two floors above the parking lot before the momentum carried her onto the balcony below. “Ray.” Tony yelled, turning back to Radama.

Radama had Leena’s arm and pulled her back to the balcony. He didn’t question what Tony had done and began to climb over the edge.

“Are you crazy?” Leena screamed.

Radama ignored her, dropping to dangle off the balcony and swinging his body to the landing below. Leena looked at Tony. “Is there no other way?” She asked.

“You could go out into the hall and see if you could shoot your way to the elevators.” Tony answered as arrogantly as he could. “Move your ass!”

“Leena hurry,” Anuk climbed over the railing and did the same thing as Radama, swinging her body over just enough to land on the balcony below. Radama steadied her, and then pushed her into the room where Judziea huddled next to the door. Leena followed quickly, and then Tony. Dan pulled a smoke frag/smoke grenade from his vest and lobbed it down the hallway after a three count. The grenade blew, spraying razor sharp fragments at the exposed lower body of one of Ambrose’s guards. As the man howled in agony the smoke began to fill the hallway making it impossible to see.

“C’mon!” Ambrose screamed at the remaining man with him. “Go!” He lifted the radio he carried. “They’re moving to the floor below us! Get to forty-one! There’s a big black motherfucker leading them!”

Dan walked past the others as he dropped effortlessly to the balcony below and moved to the hotel room door. He opened it quickly and again looked both ways before throwing open the door and leading them out into the hallway for the elevator. As Dan approached the elevator, the door opened revealing the startled faces of three more of Ambrose’s guards. Dan didn’t hesitate and lifted the HK; spraying the inside of the elevator with 10mm Teflon coated jacketed hollowpoints. The tips of the hollowpoints were filled with a small liquid explosive that blew gaping chunks out of their bodies as the bullets flung them about unnaturally.

They ignored the bodies as they piled into the elevator and Dan punched the button for the sub level. “How’s everyone holding up?” Dan asked as he ejected the half full magazine and replaced it with a full one, “That good huh?” He spoke when no one answered.

“I’ll be better when we are clear of these shitheads.” Tony spoke.

“C’mon Master Chief, where is your spirit of adventure?” Dan asked with a grin.

**NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE
9 MILES NORTHEAST OF LAS VEGAS
RAPTOR 41**

Cathy Parnelli sat in the cockpit of her Raptor, her brown eyes scanning her instruments for the hundredth time in the last hour. They had landed at the old Nellis Air Force Base after dropping Dan and his team off at altitude. The base had seen better days, no doubt about that. Many of the buildings and old hangers had been destroyed or deteriorated to the point where they were falling apart. Cathy had landed behind one of these hangers with barely any effort, and had been monitoring the Raptor's ground sensors in split shifts with her co-pilot over the last twelve hours.

Cathy, with nothing else to do since Leland was investigating the immediate area with General Vengal and her crew chief, had let her mind wander over the events of the past weeks. Mainly her thoughts came back to Leland and what they now shared. In her position within the Raptor unit and others, she had always been a topic of discussion she knew. Her goods looks was the first thing anyone noticed, mainly the size of her tits. Men had made no bones about wanting to take her to bed, and over her life she had allowed eleven to do just that. She had never had to work so hard to get a man as she had worked to get Leland. Her two hour long talk with Dysea had explained many things to her, and it had left her wanting to get even closer to the blond haired, blue eyed former Guardsmen Captain. When she had first approached him just before Tarifa's mother had arrived, and he had seemingly rejected her advances Cathy had then felt something she had never felt before. Usually men fell all over themselves to get her into bed, but Leland had been different, and she had been very hurt. That all changed when they had met in the observation deck upstairs.

The quick yet passionate coupling they had shared spread across the plot board had been nothing compared to what he had done to her that night when they returned to Eden City. Cathy had never been with a man who had paid so much attention to her. Leland had explored seemingly every square inch of her firm body with his lips and that fantastic tongue of his. He had kept her on the edge of blissful orgasm for over an hour, devouring her body in ways that boggled her imagination. He was not the largest man she had ever taken inside her, but that flyboy from Edwards Air Force Base may have had a big cock, but he was a child compared to Leland. While not long at only seven and a half inches, Leland was incredibly thick, and he knew how to use it. Cathy was like putty in his hands as he fucked her silly for half the night, the number of times she had cum lost to her after the first dozen. The amount of cum he emptied into her whenever he came, which was quite frequently, was unlike anything she had ever experienced, and his cum was extremely hot and delightfully tasty. She had almost choked on what he had unloaded into her willing mouth during their time, but seeing his lean muscular body stretched on the bed before her, the veins in his neck standing out and his muscles practically ripping through his skin as she drove him to heights of pleasure he had never experienced before, caused her to have her own orgasm when he finally gripped her dark hair in his fingers and let go.

Leland had fucked her in more positions than she thought possible, his hands never stopping as they roamed her firm body, eliciting gasps of extreme delight from her, while only serving to urge him for more.

What had solidified her love, and she had surprised herself at the use of that word in her mind, was when they had collapsed in the end, both of them utterly exhausted and unable to move. Leland did not attempt to extract himself from her body. He had wrapped his arms around her, his softening cock still buried within her depths, and heedless of the copious amounts of their combined juices covering her bed, they had fallen into a content filled sleep.

The small beeping on her console jarred her from her thoughts and brought her attention back to her instruments. Her eyes went to the ground sensor panel. "Tommy get up here now!" He ordered her co-pilot.

Cathy turned in her chair to where her female elf engineer sat. "Denara did you see it?"

The dark haired female elf nodded as her hands flew over the controls quickly. "I saw it Cathy." She replied. "I'm increasing the power to our sensor array."

"Only by ten percent," Cathy warned. "If someone is out there I don't want to give away our exact location."

Cathy looked at her co-pilot move quickly into his seat, still rubbing sleep from his eyes. "What's up?"

"The ground sensors got a hit." Cathy told him. "We're trying to pin point it, but spool up engine power just in case. And bring the weapons online."

"We've done that the last three times Cathy." The co-pilot spoke. "You really want to do it again?"

Cathy glared at him, her dark eyes decidedly evil. "I don't care if we've done it the last hundred fucking times Lieutenant. While I'm in command of this bird we do as I say! Is that clear?"

"I'm on it." Tommy spoke properly chastised.

Leland sat on an equipment crate outside the Raptor, General Vengal and the crew chief with him near the end of the ramp. They had done a little bit of scouting, but did not want to wander too far from the protective armor of the Raptor. Vengal looked at Leland as he downed a gulp of water.

"I've noticed something different about you Leland." Vengal spoke munching on the protein bar.

Leland looked at him. "What is that General?"

"You seem calmer, less excitable. If I remember correctly, as the Queen's Captain you were less inclined to relax and breathe easy." Vengal spoke.

Leland nodded. "Many things have changed in these last months General." He spoke. "I have seen things I never in my lifetime felt I would see. And I have... I have found something I thought I would be denied."

Vengal looked into the hold of the Raptor towards the cockpit, "The human pilot?" He asked.

Leland nodded with a smile. "Yes."

"She is human my friend." Vengal spoke.

Leland nodded again. "Yes she is." He said. "And one day I intend to make her my wife."

Vengal looked at him. "You believe that strongly in what Martin Hunter is doing?"

Leland met his eyes. "You have not yet seen Eden City General." He spoke. "Once you do, you will know why we all feel as we do. And it is not just Martin Hunter who we believe in. True he is the driving force behind our unity right now. His leadership and skills have gotten us this far, but with every day we grow stronger and better, and that is due to everyone being able to realize their potential. Did you know that the Queen spends three days a week in one school or the other when we are in Eden teaching the children? Not just the elf children, but all the children."

"What does she teach them?" Vengal asked.

"She teaches them the arts, accurate history, what the elves were supposed to be when the Holy One created us." Leland spoke. "She does not demean human history; it is not one side or the other. She teaches both sides equally and allows the children to formulate their own opinions."

"And she shares Hunter's bed." Vengal spoke.

"You sound like you don't approve General." Leland spoke.

"I am old and set in my ways Leland." Vengal spoke honestly. "He still looks very human."

Leland nodded. "And that is where the similarity ends General. You saw his actions for yourself in Cedar City." Leland told him. "He cares not whether we are elf or human. He treats everyone equally. You are either his enemy, or you are his friend. There is no in between with Martin Hunter. If you are his friend, no matter elf or human, he will stand by you to the death. If you are his enemy, no matter elf or human, he will kill you just as easily." Leland smiled. "He did not have to allow this mission to take place to rescue Anuk."

Vengal looked at him. "I would have gone regardless of what he said!" Vengal snapped. "He does not control my actions."

Leland shook his head. "No that is true, but do not doubt for a second that he would have taken you and every Wood Elf Ranger into custody and locked you up if he thought your actions would have put Eden City at risk."

"He would have died." Vengal boasted.

Leland shook his head. "No General. He would have succeeded." Leland spoke softly. "Because every elf that has served with him would have done exactly what he ordered us. If he ordered you locked up that is exactly what would have happened General. Don't doubt that."

Vengal looked at him. "You would have gone against your own people?" He asked.

Leland shook his head. "Eden City is where my loyalty lays now General Vengal, and yes if you had threatened the security of Eden City in any way I would not have hesitated in my actions. Wait until you see Eden Vengal. You may very well change what you believe as well."

"And you would be content... happy with this human female?" Vengal asked, "Enough to make her your mate? She knows what that means I hope."

"I will explain it to her when the time is right. And yes... I would be very happy." Leland answered.

"Her lifespan is less than half of yours Leland." Vengal spoke softly.

Leland nodded and got to his feet. He did not see Cathy walk slowly down the ramp, her eyes wide as she listened to him. “Yes it is.” He spoke. “And for that half of my life I will be the happiest elf on the planet. And when she precedes me into *Menel Cemenye*, I will raise our children with the memory of her face on my shoulder and I will never take another wife, so that I can join her one day and we can be together forever.”

(Heaven and Earth)

The crew chief chose that time to look up and he saw Cathy. “Is there something wrong ma’am?” He asked getting to his feet.

Leland turned slowly to see her standing there, her dark eyes directly on him as Vengal got to his feet. “*Nya Lisse Indil?*” He asked her.

Cathy regained control of her racing mind and shook her head. “We... we’re picking up contacts on the ground sensors.” She spoke.

Leland looked at the crew chief. “Load the last of the equipment.” He spoke. “General if you’ll take the communications station as we discussed.” He motioned Vengal inside and waited for him to pass before walking up the ramp and stopping to look at Cathy. Her eyes were still wide as she gazed up at him. He smiled. “You are catching insects *Nya Lisse Indil.*” He said with a smile reaching up to close her mouth.

“Leland... what you said.” Cathy stammered. “You... did you mean that?”

Leland took her heart shaped face into his hands and leaned over to kiss her soft lips tenderly. “It is not exactly the time or the place to discuss this, but yes... I meant what I said.”

“Leland... we...”

“Captain!” Tommy’s voice echoed back to them. “You’d better get up here!”

The tone of his voice shook Cathy from her daze and she twisted her head to the cockpit. She turned back to Leland. “We aren’t finished with this talk.” She spoke.

Leland smiled. “No we are not.”

Cathy moved for the cockpit and bounded up the stairs, moving to her seat. She settles into her pilot’s seat. “Give it to me.” She spoke as Leland and Vengal came in behind her.

“We have nine contacts!” Denara spoke from the engineering station. “I make them as Alliance troop carriers! They are moving right for us!”

“Shit! How did they find us?” Cathy snapped, pulling her straps on over her shoulders, “Give me full power Tommy!”

“Spooling power to full! Ten seconds!” The co-pilot replied.

“They’ll be on us in two minutes!” Denara spoke.

Cathy pulled her helmet on and secured her chin strap. “We won’t be here in two minutes!” She said.

Sparks danced across the nose of the Raptor, causing them to flinch as the sound of bullets slamming into the Raptor’s armor echoed around them.

“Fuck!” Cathy Parnelli swore, “Sabot!”

“Alliance squad directly to our front!” Denara barked. “They must have used the hills as cover to avoid our sensors!”

“Try to avoid this!” Cathy growled taking her flight stick, the HUD in her helmet tracking on the six figures she saw directly to her front about three hundred meters away. “Tommy I have targets!”

“Let her rip!” His voice sounded.

“Eat shit!” Cathy barked as she mashed her finger down on the firing button for the sabot cannon and watched as a hundred rounds burst from the chain cannon under the nose of her ship and ripped into the clustered group of Alliance soldiers, even from this distance, their blood and body parts exploding clearly into the dimming sky, “Power!”

“We have full power!” Tommy called.

Cathy yanked back on her control stick without a moment’s hesitation and Raptor 41 leaped into the sky, its powerful engines burning the ground under them as she climbed straight up.

“Go dark!” Cathy ordered quickly as she brought the Raptor through six hundred feet. “Engage the stealth shield!”

“Going dark,” Denara said, her hands flying over the controls in front of her.

“Engaging stealth shield,” Tommy called out. “How the fuck did they find us?”

Leland looked at Vengal. “Who knew we would be here?” He asked.

“You suspect Leena?” Vengal asked insulted.

Leland shook his head, “The support staff at the hotel. Who knew we would be here waiting for them?”

Vengal’s eyes went wide as the realization of what Leland was saying hit him. “We... we have been infiltrated.” He gasped.

“Fuck!” Leland swore aloud, causing everyone to look at him. Leland never swore, “Contact Daniel on the emergency channel!” He ordered. “Tell him we have been compromised and are moving to the alternate site. Inform him that more than likely his primary evac plan is compromised as well. He needs to make his way to the secondary site.”

“We’re forty-two minutes from the secondary site.” Cathy spoke, looking at her chart.

Leland gripped her shoulder gently, causing her to turn and look into his blue eyes. “Keep us hidden.” He said softly.

Cathy nodded. “Don’t worry.”

Leland looked at Vengal. “Come General, we must devise another route for Daniel to take.”

LAS VEGAS

They were halted in the sewers of the hotel, the smell of human feces and urine nearly overpowering, especially to Dan and Tony. The cold water was rancid and no one wanted to shine their lights onto the surface to see what they were wading through. Dan had called a halt when he heard Leland break in over his implant. Radama helped Judziea to the side and let her lean against him, while Tony moved fifty meters further ahead, his shadow just barely visible in the near pitch black tunnels.

“Fuck me!” They heard Danny exclaim in the silence.

“What is it?” Leena asked. She supported Anuk with half her body, while the other half leaned against the damp and undoubtedly disgusting concrete wall of the near five hundred year old sewer.

“Ray!” Dan called, moving closer to where they all were. “Find us another way out of here.”

Radama didn’t hesitate and propped Judziea against the cool wall while he pulled out his map chart.

Leena looked at Dan. “What is going on?” She demanded.

“We’ve been blown!” Dan stated simply. “We need to go to the alternate site.”

“What do you mean blown?” Leena spat. “That’s... that’s not possible.”

“It’s not only possible, it’s already done.” Dan said. “An Alliance column popped out of no where and almost tagged the Raptor and crew. Cathy got them off the ground in time and they are moving for the secondary pick up site.”

“Secondary site? I was not aware of this.” Leena said. “Where is this secondary site?”

“Boulder City Municipal Airport,” Dan answered.

Leena’s eyes flew open, “Boulder City?” She gasped. “You can’t be serious!”

“I’m very serious.” Dan spoke.

“Anuk will never make it that far. Boulder City is at least ten kilometers from here.” Leena protested, her voice becoming whiny and winded. “She is too weak.”

“She’s got enough energy to attack me... tell her to use that energy to keep moving.” Dan stated matter of factly.

“Leave the other elf and we take turns carrying Anuk.” Leena spat. “She is the priority on this mission. The other one is only slowing us down. We could have already made it to the first extraction if not for her.”

Dan took a deep breath to control his building anger and he cast his dark eyes directly on Anuk. She was watching him with those cerulean orbs, a myriad of emotions pulsing through them, including hate and anger. Dan could smell the hate for him wafting from her pores even over the vile stench of the sewer and he shook his head.

“Would you mind telling me why it is so fucking important that we get her back to her father?” Dan asked. “Why is that Leena?”

“I... I am following my orders Commander, unlike you.” Leena replied.

“Your orders were to get Anuk here and disregard anything else?” Dan asked. “Even the lives of people who assisted you?”

“Judziea did not assist us!” Leena snapped. “She is a High Elf whore! Without the dose we gave her to counteract the drug, Anuk would be fine and we would have been out of this retched city by now.”

“I am... I am no whore.” Judziea spoke from where she leaned against Radama. “Why don’t you tell them the real reason? I have had to listen to it for months now! Tell them!”

Dan looked at Leena. “Well?”

“I have no idea what she is talking about,” Leena spoke not meeting Dan’s gaze.

Judziea snickered from her spot. “She knows.” She said softly. “Anuk was to be wed to the son of the most powerful family within Wood Elf hierarchy, second only in influence to Dysea’s family. It is all she could talk about after she was captured. How he had courted her and showered her with gifts. How she should not have been on the mission she was captured on. She was made for finer things, above the life of a common soldier. Her father falsified all her training documents to make it appear she was trained as she was. She is no more than a spoiled brat. It made me sick. Now that Dysea has been renounced as Queen, her union with this pompous noble born would mean even more.”

Dan settled his eyes upon Leena. “Is this true?” He asked.

“She does not know what...” Leena stopped as the barrel of Dan’s silenced K12 pressed against her forehead.

“I asked a question, and for once I would like a straight answer without the arrogant attitude.” Dan spoke softly. “If I don’t get that answer, I will put a bullet in your two faced brain, then I will shoot Queen Bitch here and I’ll leave you both in this sewer to rot. How does that grab you?” Leena glared at Dan, her lips tightly shut and her eyes filled with hate and rage.

Dan jacked back the hammer on the K12. “I’m waiting.”

“It’s... it’s true.” Leena hissed. “Are you happy now?”

“So all of this was just a set up then?” Dan asked her, “Your unit coming to Cedar City? Helping us take out that ass wipe gang leader and slaver? That was all just a cover up to get us to help you get her out of Las Vegas?”

“We have known her location for a month.” Leena told him. “Once we discovered she was still alive we began to put a plan together to get her out. Leland’s visit to see Anuk’s father altered our plans somewhat. We came to Cedar City to get Anuk, and found you were already assaulting the city. Once we discovered that Anuk had been taken, the General formed another plan to have you help us retrieve her.”

“He did all this just so his daughter could marry some sleaze ball noble born dickhead?” Dan asked incredulously.

“Matarn is... he is a fine man.” Anuk spoke now. “He is... he is handsome... and strong.”

Dan nodded. “I don’t suppose this Matarn asshole came with you huh?”

Leena shook her head slowly, causing Anuk to look at her. “Matarn... Matarn did not come with you?” She asked.

“It was too risky.” Leena replied to her.

Dan chuckled. “Yeah... more like he didn’t want to take the chance of getting his ass shot off rescuing the woman he is suppose to be marrying. Real nice fellow.”

“He is noble born!” Anuk popped. “Not... not some negro barbarian like you.”

Dan’s eyes narrowed and he was about to say something when Radama hissed loudly. “I have another route Daniel! But we have a problem.”

“Of course we have a problem!” Dan spoke moving over next to him. “When don’t we ever have a problem?”

“This sewer takes us all the way to Southeastern Avenue. From there we cut east to Boulder Highway and then south directly down to Boulder City.” Radama spoke, his fingering moving along the map chart.

“So what’s the problem?” Daniel asked.

“It appears they have found our entrance into the sewers.” Radama spoke. “The camera I left there just sent me a signal. There are at least twenty armed members of this Skulls gang entering the sewer now. I’m marking their heat signatures a click behind us.”

“Fuck!” Dan snapped. He turned back to Leena. “Your people blew us in, and when I find them, I’m going to take great pleasure in ventilating their brain cavities. Tony... move us out!” Dan looked back at Leena. “You’d better keep up, or you and your cousin here will be all by your lonesome.”

Dan waited until they had started moving before switching his COM implant to a separate and secure encrypted channel and then he began speaking.

NEW MEMPHIS

The jump had gone off without a hitch, and the six members of Martin's team had landed within ten meters of each other. They quickly discarded their chutes and O2 bottles in a dumpster behind one of the buildings. No one would find the gear for days, if at all due to the amount of garbage that was stuffed into the dumpster. They moved like ghosts across the streets, the only light being cast from the main portions of the city far in the distance. Martin reached the edge of the building first and turned to watch the others as they moved up. He was impressed with the Drow as they moved stealthily and without effort. Lynwe was directly behind him, with Anja between her and Anari. Ealin brought up the rear of their column, the lone human being the heavy weapons operator Eric. He was a burly man in his late twenties with almost an Irish accent, and he hauled the medium sized M280 5.78mm machine gun around like it was a toy. The drum beneath the receiver held three hundred rounds, and he had two more drums draped over his combat vest like poncho via from old earth history. All of them were black faced, and their balaclavas were pulled down over their heads.

Martin checked his map chart and saw that their target building was only eighty meters away. He was looking at the chart when he smelled fear and anxiety. As he looked up, the gang members dropped from above his team in silence. It was the stupidest move they could have made. Martin simply stood up and shoved the barrel of his silenced HK into the chest of the gang member in front of him and let loose a three round burst. There was no sound except the almost silent racking of the bolt on the HK. The bullets lifted the gang member into the air and dropped him to the cold pavement dead before his brain was able to catch up with his body.

Lynwe dispatched the man in front of her with her HK as well, electing for a head shot and bring up the weapon with viper like reflexes. The single round punched through his forehead and blew out the back of his head. She turned to see Anja move, letting her HK drop and dangle on the quick release snaps, as her hand filled with black coated High Elf fighting knife. Lynwe would know the craftsmanship of a High Elf blade anywhere, and she was very impressed as she watched Anja move with speed a normal human did not have as she stepped behind the man in front of her and flashed out with her blade. There was a soft gurgling sound as he dropped his club and reached for his throat which was now open to the air and spurting blood in high arcs. Anja spun swiftly her other hand also filling with High Elf steel and the gang member's head lolled to the side as she nearly took his head off with the next slice.

She needn't have worried for her lover, for while Anari was submissive in their bed, she was anything but submissive in her duties. Anari simply stepped up to the gang member in front of her and snatched his jaw and the back of his head, twisting violently with her elf strength. The gang member's head snapped like dry twigs and he went immediately limp. The heavy weapons soldier and simply used the butt of his machine gun as a battering ram and slammed it into the skull of the gang member nearest him, crushing the punk's head with one blow. Ealin she watched lower the gang member to the pavement quietly as his hand returned the blade to its spot on his leg. Lynwe's eyes remained on Anja as she moved back against the wall and she was able to catch Anari's eyes also admiring Anja's skill. Anari felt Lynwe's eyes boring into her and she tilted her head slightly to look at her lover. Lynwe flashed a brilliant smile at her in the darkness, and Anari felt a rush of sexual desire course through her when she saw the desire in Lynwe's eyes for her... and... and for the not quite human woman in front of her.

Anari let her eyes wander to Anja and she gazed at her more intently, her amber eyes able to see her quite easily even in the darkness.

Lynwe turned back when she felt Martin's hand touch her arm. He motioned Ealin forward next to them.

"Ealin take Eric and Anari and cover the south side. Lynwe and Anja and I will go in the front door. Two clicks when you are in position. Go!"

Ealin wasted no time and motioned to Eric and Anari. They broke from the cover of the wall and followed him in his elf quick movement across the front of the building.

Lynwe looked at Anja as she moved up next to her and Martin. She detected Martin Hunter's eyes on the red haired female and she looked at him as he gazed at Anja. The red haired female met his dark eyes with

her jade green eyes and Lynwe could detect the sparks flying between them. Having this woman in her bed quickly fell to the wayside as she realized Anja Peterson had eyes only for Martin Hunter.

Selene Torcrum's sixty-eight year old father sat at the kitchen table with his wife of over forty years reading the book and sipping from the mug of coffee. It was an illegal book, a novel by T.S. Elliott from hundreds of years before. The binding was worn and the pages frayed, Selene had taken great care in preserving it and sending it to him, knowing of his love of reading.

Weston Torcrum let his thoughts wander for a moment to his daughter. The younger of his two children, he had known from when she was a small child that she was going to be incredibly intelligent. Her degrees in Genetics and Advanced Biology quickly earned her acclaim and the eye of the government. Weston hated the Alliance and all they stood for. As far as he was concerned they were violent butchers and cared only for keeping their grasp on power, and they used the slavery of elves to do that. Weston had an abiding hatred for the Alliance, perhaps due to the fact that his wife was an elf, and ever since they had been married she has had to hide her elf heritage by virtue of regular medical cosmetic treatments to hide her ears and make it appear she was aging like a human. Talia Torcrum loved her husband without question and knew what it would entail to remain with him, and she did it without question.

Weston had been surprised and a little angry when Selene told them she was going to work for the Alliance, but after a three hour long discussion with his daughter, he finally understood what she was trying to do. She was going to play a role, all the while attempting to change things from within the belly of the beast. It was not something he or Talia liked, but her position allowed her to take care of her family more than others, and that in turn allowed them to continue aiding the black market organization that helped elves escape the cities and return to their people.

Weston looked up and saw his wife staring over his shoulder with wide eyes, her hands frozen in the motion of the clothes she was sewing. "Talia what is it? What's wrong dear?"

Weston felt the cold hand of fear grip his stomach when his wife did not answer. He froze when he felt the cold steel press up against the back of his head near his ear, and he closed his eyes to whisper a last goodbye to those he loved.

"T.S. Elliott." The male voice spoke from behind him, "Murder in the Cathedral; that was one of his best works if I do say so myself."

Weston opened his eyes and slowly turned his head towards the sound of the voice. His eyes came to rest on the black painted face of the very tall and imposing man dressed in black and holding the exceptionally scary looking weapon on his head. Weston Torcrum took a deep breath resigning himself to his death. They had gone too long without being discovered, and he had known for some time that it was only a matter of time before they were caught.

"Is there anyone else here?" Martin asked.

"There is just my... my wife and I." Weston spoke evenly.

"Ealin and Eric conduct a sweep of the rest of the apartment." Martin spoke. "Anja and Anari cover the back door."

Weston watched with wide eyes as he saw the two men move past the young man into the interior of his home. The two women he saw turn and head for the back door of their apartment. "I assure you young man, we are quite alone." Weston said, his voice wavering in tone for only a fraction of a second as another female from the looks of the way she filled out her uniform moved up behind his wife.

Martin reached up and pushed back his balaclava, exposing his face. "You'll forgive me if I check for myself sir. I've found people who are cozy with the Alliance aren't the most truthful."

"We do not help the Alliance! You will find nothing!" Talia Torcrum hissed.

Weston held up his hand to his wife. "Let them do what they must Talia." He spoke. "We can no longer hide ourselves."

Martin saw her eyes dart to one side of the room quickly and she sprang out of her chair with speed far greater than any human. Martin had already deducted she was an elf by her scent, and he simply jammed the barrel of his HK into Weston's chest as the older man began to rise.

"I wouldn't." Martin said.

Lynwe caught Talia before she got halfway across the room, using her height and Drow strength to pin the woman's arms down and hold her tightly against her own body. She leaned over close to her ear. "You will not break my grip she elf." Lynwe spoke. "And we are not here to hurt you."

Martin looked at Anja as she came into the room. "Check the cabinet she was making for." He said.

Anja allowed her HK to drop on her straps and she went to the large ceiling length cabinet that held dishes and assorted glasses. Her relationship with Danny and Julie had given her much keener senses due to their DNA bonding with hers, and now she used that much more acute vision to detect the faint line in the wall behind the cabinet, and the faded signs of use. She pulled the cabinet aside just as Ealin and Eric came down from the second floor.

"It's clear Martin." Ealin spoke, seeing Anja by the cabinet. He saw Martin motion with his head towards Anja, and he pulled back his balaclava and moved over next to her. His elf eyes detected the indentations of the hidden door easily and he looked at Anja and nodded.

Anja planted her palm against the wall panel and shoved. The entire section of wall moved inwards and then slid aside to reveal a short staircase leading down into a well lit room that had nearly a dozen elves staring back up the stairs at them.

Anja turned back to Martin. "You'd better check this out." She said.

Eric came over next to Weston as Martin moved to the newly opened hidden door and looked down into the stairwell. He saw four adult elves and eight children who appeared in their early teens. Martin turned back to where Weston was standing, seeing that his wife was near tears as Lynwe's arms still held her tightly.

"I'm guessing they aren't exactly Alliance issue are they?" Martin spoke turning back to Weston.

Weston's eyes went to where Ealin stood, seeing his elf ears. He turned to see Lynwe release his wife who turned to also watch her as she drew back the balaclava, revealing her Drow features and allowing her shimmering white hair to fall.

"Drow!" His wife gasped, stepping away from her quickly.

Weston turned again to see Anja and Eric pull their hoods off, before his eyes went to back to Martin. "You are not... you are not Alliance Secret Police?" He finally was able to stammer.

"Lucky for you no," Martin replied, "Anari?" He called.

Weston saw the female step from the kitchen area, her balaclava also pulled down to reveal her white hair and Drow features.

"The streets are silent." Anari replied quickly.

"Who... who are you?" Weston asked as Talia came up to him. He pulled her into his arms protectively, "Slavers!"

"I am no slaver!" Anari hissed stepping forward towards him.

Anja stepped between her and Weston just as Lynwe got there as well. "He is frightened Anari." Anja spoke in a soft voice.

Anari and Lynwe both looked at Anja with their amber eyes, surprised at the soothing tone of her voice and the almost musical elegance of her tone.

Martin turned slightly to his left. "Raptor One to Raptor Three, give me a status."

Julie's reply was immediate and he heard her within his implant. "We have secured the packages One. However, we have a situation."

"Explain."

"Nine additional situations to be exact," Julie's voice said.

"Stand by Three." Martin turned to look at Weston. "You're running an underground network to get elves out of the city aren't you?"

Weston met Martin's eyes. "I'm sorry but I will reveal nothing to you until I know who you are. You are obviously not with the Alliance, not if you are working with elves. Who are you?"

Lynwe looked at Martin. "They are common Martin Hunter." She spoke, "Humans who are sympathetic to our plight. His woman is an elf after all."

Martin nodded. "Yeah I figured that out in one sniff." He answered.

Anja stepped up to him now. "Marty this is a problem. Kenny's Raptor is not configured for twenty-two additional paxs."

Martin met her green eyes. "Yeah, that is a problem isn't it."

“*Falre Lome*.” The voice said causing everyone to turn and look at the male elf that had moved up to the top of the stairs. “You... you are the *Falre Lome* aren’t you?”

Weston and Talia both focused their eyes on Martin now. The rumors of the *Falre Lome* had been circulating throughout the city for weeks. The Phantom soldiers as they were called were said to have begun building a city deep in the mountains of the west, a city of men and elves.

“That is nothing more than a rumor Rumala.” Weston spoke, looking at him. “There is no truth to it. The Alliance would never allow a place like that to exist.”

“No Weston.” The elf spoke coming fully out of the hidden room now. “It is real.” He looked at Martin. “Isn’t it? It is said that the leader of the *Falre Lome* moves like a ghost, that he has eyes that can look through you into your soul. That he has the eyes of a *Lyca Ohtar*. They say he travels and fights with elves who are his friends and brothers. And they say he shares the bed of the Queen of the Wood Elves. It is you, you are the one.”

Martin looked at him. “They say all that?” He asked quite surprised by this information.

Weston’s eyes grew wider and he looked at Martin. “You... you are saying it’s true?” He gasped.

Martin turned to look at him and nodded. “Most of it yes.” He replied with a smile, “Though the part about seeing through your soul is a little off; flattering... but not really true.”

“How... how did you find us?” Weston asked.

“Your daughter,” Martin told him.

EDEN MOON BASE

William looked through the window of the cell door at Selene Torcrum very confused. He turned to the elf that stood outside the door.

“What’s this?” He asked.

The elf, his bronze colored face badly bruised, looked through the one way glass. “Apparently that is her natural color Admiral. When... when I cleaned her in the shower, the false coloring she was using came out.”

Bill looked at the elf. “I’m sorry Aenin. I didn’t expect Graham to move so quickly after I told him we had her.”

“It is not your fault Admiral.” The elf replied. “We thought that we had found all of his Sweeper men. No one imagined he would use elves to replace those he lost.”

“I’m sorry for what happen to you and what you were forced to do.” Bill said.

“I am recovering Admiral.” Aenin spoke with a small smile. “We elves are very resilient.”

“Yes... just how resilient I learn every day.” Bill replied.

“Have we discovered how they were able to obtain the drug?” Aenin asked.

“One of the elves that Paul treated after the conduit accident was actually working for Graham. He was able to lift a vial out of the infirmary. Paul has put everything under lock and key now.” Bill answered.

“Admiral... I... I am not proud of what happen.” Aenin spoke.

“It is not your fault Aenin.” Wallace told him again. “Graham’s men were able to stick you and her before you realized it and tried to intervene. You were not in control of your actions.”

“I should have been able to fight it more.” Aenin said.

Bill shook his head. “If there is blame to accept it is mine.” He said softly. “I should have been more careful speaking where I was. And then I allowed Graham to use the tape he made to blackmail the Alliance.”

Aenin looked at him. “You are upset about that?” He asked surprised.

“Not about the Alliance, just about the tactics we resorted to using to obtain what we wanted.” Bill answered.

“That was not your order Admiral.” Aenin told him. “You bear no blame for that. And given our circumstances, I would have used the tape in the same manner.”

Bill looked through the glass again. “How is she doing?”

“She has not eaten in almost two days.” Aenin spoke. “She is angry and worried for her family. Admiral... you know of course that she is part elf?”

Bill nodded. “I just discovered that. How can you tell?”

Aenin looked through the glass. “She has had cosmetic surgery done on her ears to hide their natural size and shape. It is very painful the first few hours after being done, and it must be repeated every few years. Due to our natural regenerative abilities, the shape of our ears will always grow back.”

“You have to admire her for that.” Bill spoke. “Apparently her family has been running and underground network for many years, helping elves to escape New Memphis and other cities.”

“Why would she work with the Alliance then?” Aenin asked.

“That’s what I’m going to find out.” Bill spoke holding up the data pad. “Stay by the door if you will.” Aenin nodded, “Of course Admiral.”

Wallace entered the code on the door and stepped into the room. It was not a large room, a standard ten by ten room with bunk and toilet and sink.

Selene Torcrum screamed when she saw him walk through the door and she lunged at him with hatred in her eyes. Her strawberry blond hair was gone, replaced by the deep burgundy red that was her natural color. No longer tied up in the bun she wore when she had come to Eden her hair tumbled past her shoulders in waves. The plain white jumpsuit she wore did nothing to hide her very shapely figure, and her eyes were steel blue in color and filled with a murderous intent. All of it directed at him.

Bill caught her throat in the grip of one hand, his eyes changing to yellow orbs outlined in black and he brought her frightened face within inches of his own.

“Doctor Torcrum, do not make me regret my decision to keep you alive.” Bill growled at her, his fangs clearly evident and protruding from his lips. “Please control your urges to rip my face off until you have heard me out.”

Selene glared at his changed face. “Or what... you’ll arrange to have me raped again you sonofabitch!”

“That was not my doing!” Bill spoke.

“You expect me to believe that! You even brought one of those fuckers in this room with you!” Selene spat. “Why should I even talk to you?” Selene slumped in the grip of his hand around her throat now, and her eyes instantly filled with tears. “Everything that meant anything to me is gone now. Thanks to you!” She hissed, the fire in her eyes returning. “I swear... I swear to you... if I ever get the chance I’ll kill you.”

Bill smiled as he let go of her neck and watched her step back. He willed his features to return to normal and looked at her. “You can join the ever growing list of people who want to kill me, but for now let’s talk about your family.”

Selene backed away from him, her arms wrapping around her upper body as if she was cold. “My... my family is dead.” She stated softly.

Aenin saw that she was shivering and removed his fatigue top. He stepped up to her and held it out for her to take. Selene glared at him, noticing for the first time the large bruises on his neck and arms. “Regardless of what you may think of me Selene Torcrum, you are cold and it is just a piece of clothing.” He spoke.

“Go to hell!” She barked at him.

“You might want to be a little nicer to the man who saved your life.” Bill spoke.

“Do you consider rape saving someone’s life now Admiral?” Selene spoke. “You and the Alliance will get along very well then.”

Wallace exhaled deeply, maintaining control of his emotions. “I had no desire to go over this, but before I slap you silly due to your attitude I’ll explain it to you.”

“Oh please... I look forward to hearing how you planned my rape and killed my family.” Selene spoke.

“You were placed in this cell after you overheard my confession to Anisa.” Wallace told her. “I advised the Senator of my actions and made up an excuse that you were trying to steal the secrets to our drug.”

Selene looked at him. “Your drug? Your drug doesn’t even work!” She barked. “It’s a fabrication!”

Wallace smiled. “Yes I know.” He told her, causing her head to come up and her eyes to focus on him. “Graham took it upon himself to act without my knowledge once he learned I had locked you up. He had previously recruited four elves to his cause, promising them power and control. One of these elves managed to steal a sample of the Alliance drug from our labs. A drug you helped to improve over the last few years I might add.” He spoke causing Selene to lower her gaze. “Anyway... the four elves came to your cell and injected you with your own drug, thus making you very compliant to whatever suggestions that Graham wanted you to show. Aenin here tried to stop them, and he was able to kill one before they also injected him with the drug.” Selene let her steel blue eyes go to where the elf stood. He was the one she could remember the most. He had the deep

bronze skin and the incredibly handsome face. "Once they injected Aenin they forced him to conduct himself in a manner which he had no control of. Your drug is very effective Selene." Bill continued, her eyes coming back to him. "When they had finished what Graham wanted them too, they very nearly killed Aenin before two of my security team were able to stop them."

"I... I am supposed to believe this?" Selene asked, though her tone was much more subdued.

Bill looked at Aenin. "Show her." He said.

"Admiral it is not necessary." Aenin spoke softly. "It is a shame I must bear."

"I told you it was not your fault Aenin. Now show her!" Bill snapped.

Aenin sighed heavily and reached down to pull off the t-shirt he was wearing exposing his upper body. Selene winced at what she saw crisscrossing his chest. Aenin's hairless yet well developed chest was criss crossed with jagged looking cuts that were still healing. Selene was half elf and therefore knew that if the cuts were still healing, they must have been very deep. His sides and abdomen were adorned with large purple welts and some of his skin was still red.

"They broke six of his ribs, snapped his collarbone and stabbed him four times, on top of what you can see." Bill spoke. "He spent nine hours in the infirmary, and you want to know the first thing he told Anisa when she went to see him, he told her he would still watch over you."

Selene dropped her gaze from Aenin, unable to meet his eyes.

Bill looked at Aenin motioning for him to put his shirt back on. "I can be a brutal motherfucker when I want to be Selene. Some have even called me heartless." He told her. "However, I have absolutely no use for rape or those who commit rape. What happened to you was not my intent, and the only thing I can do is offer my sincere apologies. The two assholes that lived are in the brig as we speak. I'm going to squeeze every ounce of information out of them that I can, and then I'm going to vent their carcasses into space. When I'm finished with that, I'm going to take care of Graham as well."

Selene shook her head slowly. "It... it doesn't matter anymore." She said softly. "Deval will have my family executed the moment he gets back. Everything... everything I have worked for all these years... it's all gone now."

Bill lifted the data pad and touched the small control panel. The woman's voice burst from the pad.

"Selene! Are you there dear?" Selene's head snapped up at the voice and she nearly jumped from the bed she had sat on, snatching the data pad out of Bill's hand. The small monitor was active and full of a picture of her mother's face.

"Momma?" Selene whispered softly.

"Martin... he told me I could send you a message dear. I had no idea you were involved with these *Falre Lome* people Selene. They came here tonight. They said you had gotten into some trouble and that we were no longer safe. They are taking us to their city in the mountains, all of us. I... I never thought I would see it in my lifetime Selene, men and elves working together. They follow this young man without question Selene. He didn't bat an eye when he saw the refugees. He said his Admiral would give you this message and that as soon as we were safe we would contact you. Your father is with him now plotting a route out of the city. He sends his love Selene. Be safe child. I don't want to lose my daughter when the thing we have desired for so long is within our grasp. I love you daughter."

"*Amille*," Selene whispered reaching up to touch the screen. She slowly looked up to where Bill stood his arms crossed over his chest, "How?"

"I didn't expect Deval's reaction Selene." Bill spoke. "I assumed he would be upset, but he was incensed. Why is that? Did he know you were half elf maybe?"

Selene clutched the data pad to her chest. "No... if he had known that I would have been executed." She shook her head. "I... I have been sleeping with him for over a year." She replied, moving back to the bunk and sitting down. "I've allowed him to use me however his twisted mind wished in the hopes I could gain information that would save the lives of my family and other elves. I have shamed myself with my actions. He is a twisted evil man, and Marcus is no better. Worse even in terms of brutality. Deval believed... Deval believed I was beginning to fall in love with him." She looked at him. "You ordered... you ordered this Martin person to get my parents? Why?"

"I asked him." Bill spoke. "He has built something down there with the others. They look to him for leadership now. I no longer consider him a subordinate. I asked for his assistance in this matter, and ultimately

he decided he would help. He'll get your family out of the city; I have no doubts of that. As to the why, well it stands to reason that I got you into this, and I should at least attempt to make things right."

"What... what do you want of me?" Selene asked, firmness returning to her voice.

"Every bit of information you can give me on the Alliance and the inner workings of the government. People involved; places they meet; times; everything you can think of."

"The Alliance is massive Admiral Wallace. There is no way you can bring them down." Selene spoke. "Many have tried in the past four hundred years."

Bill grinned. "Have you ever heard the story of David and Goliath?" He asked.

Vengal watched as Cathy lowered the Raptor to the ground as gently as a feather, the remains of the Boulder City Municipal Airport spread out all around them.

"Cut engines!" Cathy ordered. "But leave the turbines at seventy percent charge in case we have to blow our way out of here."

"Cutting engines," Tommy reported. "I'll take the first watch with the sabot cannon Cathy. I don't envy getting caught with our pants down again."

Cathy smiled as she unbuckled her straps. "Thanks Tommy." She spoke as she began to climb out of her seat.

"Your flying skills amaze me." Vengal spoke, looking at her. "These... flying ships... Raptors you call them Do you have many of them?"

Cathy was about to reply when she saw Leland come up behind Vengal, his fist clenched around the K12. Her face twisted into confusion. "Leland... what's wrong?" She asked.

Vengal turned as well, only to have Leland press the barrel of the K12 to a spot between his eyes. Vengal's eyes burst open in surprise and he froze. "Leland... what is... what are you doing?" He gasped.

"Take his weapons *Nya Lisse Indil*." Leland spoke coldly.

Cathy reached down and removed Vengal's side arm and his fighting knife without hesitation. "Leland... what's going on?" She asked.

"I'm going to ask the General right now." Leland replied. "And he is going to tell me everything I want to know isn't that right General?"

"Leland you will stand down this minute!" Vengal ordered. "That is a direct order!"

Leland jacked back the hammer of the K12. "As I have already explained General, my loyalty is now to Martin Hunter and Eden City. Perhaps you can explain to me why my friends are now in a great deal of danger attempting to rescue your daughter so that she can become the wife of the new Queen's brother. Perhaps you can explain to me why our primary extraction location was compromised, and why my friends now have to move even further to get out of harms way." Leland leaned closer. "And perhaps you can explain to me why I should not just pull this trigger now and allow your brains to decorate the console behind you for betraying our trust in you."

"Leland... you don't understand!" Vengal spoke quickly.

"Then I suggest General you make me understand, and do so quickly." Leland told him.

MOUNTAIN CITY

"I propose a gradual increase in tax revenue from the coastal cities during the fishing season to absorb the difference until the next growing season." Raloa spoke to the members of the full Council of Elders.

"Only if we do it over the next four years," Tarifa countered. "It will give time for the citizens of the coastal cities to become accustom to it and adjust accordingly." She spoke, looking over the documents in front of her.

Raloa looked at her. "The increase in revenue will help the farmers now my Queen." He said.

Tarifa nodded. "At the expense of the fishing villages, yes I know. We must learn to balance Minister Raloo. I will veto anything under four years, and I know you don't have the support to pass a referendum." She looked across the table at him with her sapphire eyes sparkling in delight.

Raloo nodded his head. "Very well, four years." He spoke.

"Excellent." Tarifa said, looking around the room. "What else?"

"I have a request here from Governor Kadeem of Salina Majesty." Treblar spoke lifting the formal looking document. "He thanks you for the visit of your mother to his humble city and formally asks that you accept an invitation to honor Founding Day in Salina."

"Salina?" Tarifa spoke. "That is the city that we have recently established a new trade route with isn't it?"

"Yes Majesty. Due to a new process designed by Governor Kadeem's City Scientists, they have been able to nearly triple their output of fruits and vegetables. All the fresh produce we have received in the last week has come from them. It is quite good actually. I had some grapes that came in this morning." Treblar spoke with a smile.

Tarifa looked at Raloo. "Minister Raloo this Governor Kadeem is in your district is he not?"

Raloo nodded. "A fairly large city Majesty and Kadeem is a competent leader. Their location provides them adequate security and for reasons we aren't aware of, the slavers and mercenaries are no longer venturing into the mountain areas in the region."

"Why is that?" Tarifa asked.

"There are rumors Majesty, nothing more." Raloo spoke.

"Such as?" Tarifa asked.

"Phantom soldiers Majesty." Raloo said.

Tarifa laughed. "Phantom soldiers... oh my." She feigned fear and the Ministers at the table chuckled.

"Forgive me for asking my Queen but you appear considerably more relaxed since your rather horrible experiences some months ago." Raloo asked her suspiciously.

Tarifa nodded. "Let's just say I am attempting to put those times behind me. My visit with my grandmother brought everything into perspective for me. My husband... my husband and I are growing closer and things are returning to normal."

Tarifa saw the nods of agreement from around the table and she turned to Treblar. "When does this Governor Kadeem expect an answer Minister Treblar?" She asked.

"He asked that you allow him two days to prepare if you will be attending." Treblar replied. "He will of course need to clear things with Cantel in regards to security arrangements."

Tarifa's brow furrowed. "Yes. I also would like to ask Telan about it as well. Perhaps he will accompany me. I believe the Holy One has voiced a request to get out of the city as well."

Raloo's eyes narrowed. "Is that wise my Queen?"

"I told him I would consider it, Minister Raloo." Tarifa answered. "You said yourself Salina is relatively secured. If Telan and my father believe it to be safe then I will bring it to this Council. We can not keep him confined to Mountain City, regardless of what we may think of his security. He has never been confined, and I for one do not wish to be the first Queen to basically have the Holy One under house arrest. Do you wish to be the First Chief Minister to allow this?"

Raloo met her eyes. Tarifa was right of course, as there were already rumors floating through the bowels of Mountain City that he was the one demanding that the Holy One stay within his quarters. He nodded slowly. "I do see your point." He spoke finally.

"I have no desire to lose him either Chief Minister, but we can't keep him locked within the walls of Mountain City forever." Tarifa spoke. "Perhaps you would like to attend Founding Day as well. Salina is in your district."

Raloo's eyes showed genuine surprise and he smiled. "I have not been away from Mountain City for some time." He said looking at her.

"Perhaps you should consider it then. I for one am extremely tired of having to argue with you about every bill I present. Perhaps we could use it as an opportunity to learn about each other more." Tarifa spoke.

"I will consider this." Raloo spoke seeing Tarifa nod.

"I believe that is all the business we have today Majesty." Treblar spoke.

“Excellent.” Tarifa spoke coming to her feet. “Tomorrow we will need to discuss the appropriations bill for the Mineral Resource Center.” Tarifa smiled at the groans from the gathered men and women. “I don’t look forward to it either, but we must pass something. I’m going to enjoy a quiet dinner with my mother and the Holy One and prepare. I will see you all tomorrow.”

They stood and bowed their heads as Tarifa made her way out of the chamber. As she exited the door, Aihola fell in beside her. She had taken to wearing form fitting dark gray jumpsuits with a long cape and hood. They were common among the citizens of mountain city; though very few of those wearing the same clothes were quite as deadly as the Drow. Tarifa had spent three hours the night before brushing out her long lustrous white hair, and it was now wrapped in silken ties that Dysea had given to her before she had left.

“Are you seriously going to ask Telan for permission to go Tarifa?” Aihola asked in a voice just above a whisper, knowing that Tarifa alone could hear her. “And you invited that dog Raloo. He despises you, it emanates from his pores like oil.”

“It will appear even less suspicious if I can say Telan approves of the visit. He is a senior military commander, and even as Queen it would be proper to ask him his opinion.” Tarifa replied as she smiled and nodded to several Ministerial aides. “As for Raloo... if he does bring his fat carcass, then I will have plans for him.”

“What if they decide to come with us?” Aihola asked. “You would have no time to... no time to meet with Dysea and your Martin Hunter.”

Tarifa kept the smile on her face. “There is a Dragoon training exercised scheduled for that same time. It would be wholly inappropriate for him to excuse himself for what is essentially a vacation. As for the Minister, I can divert his attention if needed.”

Aihola found herself smiling. She had discovered much about Tarifa, the High Elf Queen, in their last few nights together relaxing in the soothing waters of the tub and speaking of different things. She was exceptionally intelligent and had a keen mind. She was quick witted and not afraid to voice her opinions and even though she was holding up well, having to submit to Telan and make it seem like it was pleasurable was taking its toll on her.

Aihola also learned that she longed for Tarifa’s touch on her body. She wanted to taste Tarifa’s flesh over and over. She wanted to dominate her and make her beg for release. And she wanted to wrap herself in Tarifa’s arms and allow sleep to take them. And most of all she wanted Tarifa to feel the same thing.

“We are going to your mother’s residence then?” Aihola asked.

Tarifa nodded as they rounded the corner of the building into a relatively unoccupied hallway. “We need to discuss some things with the Holy One.” She replied.

“We?” Aihola asked.

Tarifa slowed to a stop and looked at her. “I told you I would include you in everything Aihola. I meant that. You have as much right to know what I am doing as everyone else. Perhaps more so due to...”

“Due to what,” Aihola asked.

Tarifa looked at her evenly with her sapphire eyes, “Due to how I feel about you, and the fact that those feelings grow stronger with each passing day.”

Aihola’s blush wasn’t seen due to the color of her skin, but she did blush and she felt a warm sensation spread across her skin. “It is... I have never...”

Tarifa looked at her. “What?”

“I’ve never met the Holy One Tarifa.” Aihola spoke softly.

Tarifa smiled. “He is not some magical wizard Aihola. And we will need his guidance.” She said looking at her closely and seeing the confusion on her face. “What is it *Nya Istel*? What troubles you?” (My Light) Tarifa had taken to calling her that in private when they were alone, and though Aihola never acknowledged it, those words and the way she spoke them caused warm and desire to surge through her.

Aihola looked at her only inches away, the curve of her lips and cheeks, the dazzling color of her eyes. She saw Tarifa look around carefully and then she leaned over to press her lips to hers. Aihola’s heart sang as she realized what Tarifa was going to do, but then Tarifa stopped. She reached up with her hand, their lips so close and placed two fingers on Aihola’s lips.

“I’m sorry.” Tarifa said softly. “I... I forgot myself for a moment. I promised I would not do anything to put pressure on you.” She stepped back and took a deep breath before looking into Aihola’s amber eyes with a smile. “Perhaps I have something else that will bring a little more joy into your life.”

“What... what do you mean?” Aihola said.

Tarifa held up the two data pads, her eyes brightening. “These came this morning with the convoy from Salina.” She replied. “I believe they are for you.”

“Me?” Aihola questioned.

Tarifa nodded. “It seems you are not as alone as you first thought *Nya Istel*.” She spoke. “One is from Dysea, and the other I believe is from someone you know quite well. His name is Tari.”

Aihola’s amber eyes exploded open. “Tari! He is alive? How... I mean where... he...”

Tarifa smiled and took her hand squeezing it. “Be calm *Nya Istel*, you can read them when we reach my mother’s home and you can have privacy. Just know that he is with Martin and he is safe.”

Aihola took a deep breath calming her excitement at this news, knowing they both still had roles to play. She nodded to Tarifa. “*Avatyare nin.*” **(Forgive me)**

Tarifa released her hand reluctantly. “There is nothing to forgive. Come... my mother is expecting us.”

LAS VEGAS

FIVE MILES FROM BOULDER CITY AIRPORT

They were resting in the broken down building just on the edge of Las Vegas. The lights of the city could be seen easily now in the darkness. Leena held Anuk close to her body as Anuk was shivering in the cool night air partly from the symptoms of drug withdrawal and partly from the night air.

“We have another six miles to go.” Dan spoke softly. “We’re on the surface now so we can move quicker. Radama you have anything on the motion sensors?”

Radama shook his head. “Nearest contact I have is three and a half miles north of us. They seem to be concentrating the search in the sewers still.”

Dan nodded. “They’re as stupid as they look. Ok... we can make it in under an hour if we hump it. Let’s get moving.”

Leena looked at him. “Anuk is getting worse.” She said. “Her body temperature is dropping dangerously low.”

Dan looked at Judziea and saw she was huddled close to Tony, but did not appear to be suffering from the chills. “It’s a symptom of the antidote.” Dan said. “Anja said it makes elf body temperatures drop quite a bit.”

“She will go into shock if we can’t warm her up!” Leena spoke quickly. “My body alone does not provide enough heat for her.”

“Get her up and moving. Activity will generate body heat.” Dan said.

Leena glared at him. “She is exhausted! She can hardly stand!”

“Would you rather stay here?” Dan asked.

“I... I will be alright.” Anuk’s voice said as she struggled to her feet.

“Anuk you...” Leena protested.

“He... he is right.” Anuk spoke. “I need to keep moving.”

Leena slipped her arm under her cousin. “Are you sure Anuk?”

“I do not wish to be captured by those animals again.” Anuk spoke as they began moving, “Never again.”

Dan turned to check their rear and heard the loud crashing noise. His head snapped back around to see the floor of the building open up and swallow Leena and Anuk completely. He dropped his HK to let it dangle and dove for the opening in the floor. He slid to a stop on the edge and his eyes widened as he realized he was looking into an empty black maw. A black maw he could not see the bottom too. Leena was holding onto a dried out piece of timber with one hand, Anuk dangling from her other hand. Her face was a mask of pain.

“Help... help us!” She grimaced as the words left her mouth. “I... I can’t... I can’t hold her!”

“No Leena!” Anuk screamed her eyes now very wide and filled with undisguised fear. “Don’t drop... don’t drop me!”

“Hold on!” Dan yelled shoving his HK from under his gut, his eyes frantically looking for something to use to support himself. He could hear the floor of the building creaking under his two hundred and sixty pounds of muscle.

“Daniel!” Radama’s voice cried out as he, Tony and Judziea started back towards them.

“No!” Dan screamed at them. “The floor will give out completely!”

“I’ll find a board!” Tony yelled, his eyes searching the immediate area.

“Fuck me!” Dan grunted. “This shit only ever happens to me and the skipper!” Dan leaned over as far as he dared and clamped his hand onto Leena’s arm. “I have you!” He yelled to her. “Pull her up! Have her grab my other hand!”

“She’s too weak!” Leena screamed.

“Fuck woman, don’t argue with me!” Dan yelled.

Dan watched as Leena grimaced in effort, pulling Anuk up as far as she could, almost level with her shoulders. “Take his hand!” Leena snapped.

Anuk grabbed Dan’s hand, using the last of her strength to reach up and clamp onto his forearm with both hands. Dan began to swing Leena back and forth and looked over to Tony. “Sling shot!” He yelled and saw Tony nod.

“Wait! What are you doing?” Leena screamed. Dan swung Leena one more time and then heaved with all of his strength. Leena screamed in pain as her shoulder was immediately dislocated the moment Dan yanked her up. She flew wildly through the air, easily twenty meters until she slammed into Tony’s unyielding body with a loud grunt of pain.

Dan reached down without pause and grabbed Anuk with his free hand and now had both hands on her arms. “Hold on!” He yelled. “I’ll get you up.” Dan heard the floor creak below him and he looked down slowly.

“Pull me up!” Anuk screamed. “Pull me up!”

Dan ignored her and tried to focus his eyes on the beams beneath him. The darkness made it hard to see but Dan found what he was looking for and his eyes grew even wider. The support beams for the floor he laid on were thick old timber, and all of them had been eaten away by time and what appeared to be termites. He could also see the foundation walls on the side beginning to push inward and sand began to slide through cracks already in the concrete walls. He had maybe seconds before the additional weight on his body made the old timbers snap off and he would plunge into the darkness below. “Oh shit!” He muttered. He snapped his head up and looked at Tony. “Get to the evac point now!”

Tony looked at him confused. “I got a board!” He yelled.

“Master Chief I’m giving you a direct order!” Dan screamed. “This building is sitting on a sink hole and that fucker is about to open! Evac now! God damn it evac now!”

Tony’s eyes were wide as he pulled the struggling Leena away from the building. “No!” Leena screamed. “We can’t leave her! No!”

The screeching sound grew louder now and Tony watched as the edges of the building began to bow inward. “Radama run!” He yelled. “Run!”

Dan waited until he saw his teammates turn and sprint for safety and then he looked at Anuk. Her cerulean eyes were filled with tears, her body wracked with sobs. “Oh man, this is going to hurt!” Dan said to himself as he gazed into the darkness beyond Anuk’s dangling body.

Dan closed his eyes and willed the change upon him. Anuk could only watch in horror as the human hands that had been holding her suddenly transformed into tough leathery skin and sprouted thick dark hair. The fingers lengthened and grew savage looking claws almost two inches long. She looked up and watched as his face grew into the shortened snout, and square like nose with wide nostrils. Coarse like dark hair blossomed over his face and neck, the muscles under his skin rippling and pulsing in inhuman exertion. His gleaming white fangs burst forth from his gums and Anuk saw her death. And then his eyes opened and staring at her were the most beautiful yellow black orbs Anuk had ever seen. She saw his face clench and then Dan pushed off from the floor, pulling Anuk up towards him with inhuman strength and crushing her to his body protectively as their bodies began to fall back into the huge hole beneath them.

There was a brief second when Anuk was inches from his animal like features, and she looked into his yellow black eyes, and Anuk saw fear.

“Hold on!” Dan told her.

And then they fell.

NEW MEMPHIS

Martin’s yellow black eyes were currently scanning the quiet empty dock area along the Mississippi River. He could see the hulk of the former Hernando Desoto Bridge in the southern distance against the backdrop of night sky. There were almost no clouds, and the moon and stars were in full force, bathing the urban area in a supernatural like light. Martin knew that the other side of the bridge no longer existed, the concrete and steel pilings having been eroded away by the countless years of the huge river flowing by. Martin turned his superbly keen eyes back northward, searching for anything that could be construed as being out of the ordinary.

They had left Weston Torcrum’s home on the lower end of Mud Island and moved north. They had linked up with Julie and Tari, three more adult elves and six children among their team. Martin and his eleven member unit were now responsible for the lives of nine adult elves and thirteen elf children. The lateness of the hour bode well for them and they were able to move to their current location unimpeded. Martin could see the massive wall surrounding New Memphis now. Its thirty meter high concrete and steel construction was an imposing sight. The wall stopped at the river’s edge, to be replaced by what was easily an impassable layer of number three ten strand razor wire. It was stretched tight across the water, at surface level, and the narrow pedestrian bridge overlooked this man made barrier. Martin’s eyes could detect at least six guards on a roving patrol walking from either end of the bridge.

Martin turned slightly as Julie eased to the ground next to him. “It’s nice and quiet Skipper.” She spoke softly.

Martin nodded. “It won’t stay that way.” He answered.

“Where did we find two PAVE LOW III helicopters Skipper?” Julie asked. “I thought they had all been retired when the Raptors came into full production.”

Martin smiled. “The better question is where did we find anyone old enough that remembers how to fly them?” He spoke.

“Don’t let Ben hear you say that Skipper.” Julie spoke. There was a long pause as they squatted there in the cool night breeze listening to the sounds of the river and then Julie turned her yellow black eyes on Martin. “Can I ask you something Skipper?”

Martin detected the shift in the tone of her voice and he looked at her. “Shoot.”

“You ever wonder when the fighting will stop.” Julie asked him. “You, me, Danny, the others, we’ve been fighting on and off since we were sixteen.” She continued. “We landed the EDEN mission and we all thought we’d be home free. No more wars, no more fighting and dying. Less than a year into that gig and look where we are?”

Martin nodded. “Back where we started.” He replied softly.

“Do you ever think about just saying fuck it and disappearing?” Julie asked him. “Find an out of the way place and just living life?”

Martin nodded, “Every day.” He answered honestly, “Especially now that I have Dysea.”

“Have you finally figured out how to love Marty?” Julie asked him.

Martin smiled and looked at her. “It’s never a dull day that’s for sure.” He replied. “I find myself wanting to just take her and find an island somewhere in the Pacific where we can run around naked and not have a care in the world. She has made me see there is more to life than fighting.”

“I think Danny and I have run our course Skipper.” Julie said softly, looking at the man she had called brother as long as she could remember. “We’ve talked about it and we think it would be best for both of us.”

“What about Anja?” Martin asked more quickly than he had intended.

Julie grinned. “Anja... well that’s another story. We both care for her deeply, but... well I think it was just an infatuation. Something that was new to all of us and very enjoyable.”

“Does she know?”

“I think she senses it. She’s a lot smarter than she lets on, and to be honest I think she feels the same way. She’s been very distant of late.” Julie answered quietly. “This world we’ve introduced her too, becoming like us in a way. She’s still walking through it like a wide eyed teenager. I don’t think it has hit her just yet what she is capable of. She’s still operating on her training wheels so to speak.” Julie looked at him. “And she is so in love with you she can’t see straight Marty.”

Martin looked at her his eyes wide. “What?”

Julie nodded. “Why do you think we’ve drawn apart from each other?” Julie said. “Anja still loves you... and while we may have had a really good time together, the longer she is around you, the more she realizes she still loves you, and the more she makes Danny and I realize that it’s time to move on.”

“Jules...”

Julie shook her head. “Don’t you dare apologize for something that is not your fault Skipper, don’t even think about it. Danny and I have known we weren’t meant to be together. Anja coming into our lives just hastened that break, and made it a lot easier.” Julie said. “She loves you boss... you can smell it all over her. My advice would be to not let her slip away.”

“Jules... I have Dysea now.” Martin said.

Julie laughed. “Man... you are as dense as Danny sometimes Skipper. Dysea and Anja have the hots for each other too. Haven’t you noticed the shy looks and longing stares between them?”

Martin shook his head slowly. “No.”

Julie laughed softly again. “It’s there Skipper.” She said. “Man... what’s it feel like to have two hot women want you so bad they walk around with their panties wet all the time?”

“Julie... that...”

“Have you ever thought about changing Dysea boss?” Julie asked suddenly.

Martin nodded. “Yes I have.” He told her. “Like you... I think it will be too much. We struggled with it in the beginning remember. Then there are times when I say why not. Dysea knows I can change to a degree, but she is also not stupid. She senses there is something more.”

Julie nodded. “Anja does too Skipper.”

“Julie... you know I will never be angry with you or Danny. We... the three of us... we’ve been together since the beginning.” Martin spoke.

Julie nodded. “I know. I just wanted you to hear it from me.” Julie said. “Danny is too much of a coward to tell you.” She finished with a smile of affection.

Martin looked at her. “Jules... you and Dan are like brother and sister to me. You’re the only family I have. The only family I’ve ever had. What happened... the comet... it changed us all, but it would never stop me from telling you guys to go with what your heart tells you? In the end, that is what matters.”

“Dysea has changed you boss.” Julie told him with a smile.

“Jeez! Don’t tell her that, I’ll lose my advantage.” Martin said. He turned soundlessly. “Head back to your team. We have five hours to kill before Ben gets here with the PAVE LOW III. That puts us an hour before daybreak. I want everyone to be ready to roll.”

Julie nodded. “We’ll be ready.”

MOUNTAIN CITY

“...hope you don’t think ill of me Aihola.” Dysea’s image was on the data pad in Aihola’s hand as she stood on the patio balcony of Palina’s home. “I have spoken with Anja, and she is confident she can produce a more permanent solution to your situation. I have sent up another mixture of the serum in the supply run with this data pad. Anja is currently on a mission with Martin, but she will return soon. I hope to see you soon Aihola. I must go now... until next time Aihola.”

Aihola smiled as Dysea’s picture faded and her fingers drew away from touching her image on the pad. She felt her skin flush at the memories of the Wood Elf Queen and her delicious pussy. Aihola set that pad aside and picked up the second pad Tarifa had given her. She took a deep breath, closing her eyes as she activated it.

“Hello sister.” Tari’s voice caused tears to come to Aihola’s face and she opened her amber eyes to look on Tari’s face for the first time in over a year.

“Tari,” She gasped, touching the screen.

“I must make this brief sister, for Martin Hunter has requested we join him on a mission. The Wood Elf Queen assured me this would reach you. I did not believe her when she told me you were alive my sister, and it made my heart sing to the heavens. I have missed you Aihola, and I look forward to the day I can hold you again. Much has changed since we last spoke Aihola. I have broken our unit, our family from the Alliance as you no doubt already know. We have spent the last months shadowing this Martin Hunter while he rampaged through the mountains and built something unlike anything we have seen. As we traveled we picked up humans and elves alike that suddenly looked to us for protection. They looked at us not with fear sister, but with acceptance. I must tell you Aihola, it was inspiring. I have never felt welcome anywhere, but after only a few hours among Martin’s group, I feel welcome.” Aihola watched as he looked away for a moment and nodded. He turned back to face her on the screen. “I must go sister, but before I do, I wish to tell you what else I discovered while traveling the wastes and living a new life. We are Drow Aihola, meant by the Holy One to be dominant in all which we are. I have learned much sister; I have learned that the old ways are no more. The ways of our parents died with them. We need no longer cling to centuries old traditions and rules. This is a new age, and a new era. It will bring war and death this I know, but we are now free to follow our calling no matter where it lies. You were always the more emotional Aihola, mother said this many times.

“You are Drow Aihola of the Family Anatyla. Do not be afraid to take what you want my sister, and no longer should you be afraid to express who you are inside.” Aihola watched her brother wave his hand and make the strange faces he always made when he was at a loss for words, and she chuckled at his antics. “Bah... listen to me; I have become a philosopher in my old age. I must go, but we will see each other soon Aihola. Until then... be who you are, not as you think you should be.”

Aihola touched the small screen just before his image faded and she wiped the tears from her eyes. She looked up at the sky above her and felt a great weight lifting from her shoulders and she smiled.

“Take what I want.” She said softly and nodded her head. “This... this I will do my brother.”

Aihola tucked the data pads into her small hip pouch and walked back into Palina’s home.

“I have obtained the blood sample Anja needs from your father to determine what controls him.” Palina spoke as Aihola came back into the room and moved to the chair across from where Tarifa sat on the couch.

“We can take it to her when we go to Salina for Founding Day.” Tarifa replied to this confidently.

“You don’t seem concerned that they might try to keep you from going.” Palina asked her daughter.

Tarifa shook her head. “They will know that they can’t keep me locked down here in Mountain City indefinitely.” She spoke. “Telan is becoming more comfortable and he is reporting this, as well as my actions.”

“I have almost all the cameras that Martin Hunter gave us deployed in locations around the Council Chambers and promenade.” Cantel spoke from behind them. “I will be able to place the remaining ones in two days when we gather for the training meeting. To approach the administrative offices before hand would look suspicious on my part. I have stated many times I hate going there, and to suddenly appear would lead to questions.”

Tarifa nodded. “Holy One I’ve requested you accompany us as well.” She spoke looking at him. “Some of the Ministers looked skeptical, Raloo more so, but after I invited him as well and told them we can’t keep you locked in Mountain City forever they appeared to acquiesce.”

Palina looked at her daughter wide eyed. “You invited Raloo Tarifa?” She exclaimed. “Why would you do such a thing?”

Walter chuckled as he sipped his tea. “Keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer.” He spoke. “It is an old adage, but one that Tarifa is wisely staying true too.”

“By inviting the man who has betrayed us,” Palina gasped. “How is this going to make our tasks easier?”

“It would illicit trust, at least temporarily.” Tarifa replied. “And it will allow me to keep an eye on him.”

“But if he accompanies us, you will not be able to meet with Dysea, or Martin. I thought that was part of the reason for this trip.” Palina said.

Tarifa chuckled softly. "You don't know Martin very well mother." She replied. "I will be able to spend considerable time with Martin and Dysea both. And I'll be able to see Eden for the first time. And Aihola needs to see her brother."

"Putting your safety at risk because Aihola wants to see her brother is not wise daughter." Palina spoke.

Tarifa's eyes narrowed. "Aihola has... she has been there for me every night after Telan has had his way with me. I can not rush out to come here mother. Aihola has soothed me and we have talked of many things. She has been my friend, and she deserves your respect mother!"

Tarifa got to her feet and angrily stormed out of the room to the balcony area of her mother's home. Palina started to rise, but Walter got to his feet first. "These are trying times Palina." He spoke, his voice soothing. "You must trust in your daughter's wisdom. There is something bothering her, and she has always talked to me. I will speak with her."

Palina opened her mouth to speak but stopped herself and Walter headed onto the balcony following Tarifa. Palina took a deep breath and nodded her head slowly. "She is right." She spoke softly, turning her eyes to where Aihola sat. "Please forgive me Aihola, my concern for my daughter caused me to forget what you have endured yourself. Tarifa has never had those she called friends. Her position and the status of our family have prevented that. I thank you for the friendship you have given her."

Aihola leaned forward in the chair. "Queen Mother... I am Drow. I understand our two peoples have never been friends. Drow do not make friends, yet my time with Tarifa, as short as it has been, has shown me many things that I would not have seen before. She is your daughter yes, but she has become my... she has become my friend." The words were foreign to Aihola, but they came from within her as easily as the morning breeze, and it only served to confirm what she already knew. "I will die before I allow harm to come to her Queen Mother. I give you my word as a Drow Warrior."

Palina looked into Aihola's amber colored eyes and she saw truth and devotion in them. She smiled slowly and came to her feet holding out her hand. "Come Aihola... let you and I check on the progress of our dinner. I'm beginning to get hungry."

Aihola looked at Palina in surprise, and in an act that unlocked that final door into her new world, Aihola took Palina's hand as she got to her feet. "I would like that Queen Mother." She spoke softly.

Walter came up behind Tarifa slowly. She was leaning against the railing, her face upturned into the night.

"Tarifa?" He spoke quietly.

Tarifa turned quickly and folded herself into Walter's arms. Surprised, he allowed his arms to encircle her as she placed her head to his chest.

"I am so confused Holy One." She spoke softly.

Walter tightened his grip on her. "I have no doubt of that Tarifa." He told her. "Are you concerned that you can not go through with what you have in mind?"

Tarifa drew back her head slightly. "No." She answered. "I can do that."

"Then what troubles you child?"

"Holy One is it wrong for me to... to have feelings for someone?" Tarifa asked.

Walter shook his head quickly. "I think you know it's not Tarifa." He said. "Martin is..."

Tarifa shook her head. "No Holy One... it is not Martin."

Walter looked at her. "I don't understand... I thought you and Martin were... I thought you were lovers."

Tarifa nodded. "We were." She spoke. "And for the time we had together it was glorious. We... we needed each other at that time."

"Not anymore though?" Walter asked.

"Your own words to me and to Martin Holy One," She said. "We would help each other to see different things, to see in a whole new perspective. You were right. Martin and I will always be like brother and sister, as close as two siblings can be, but Dysea owns his heart... as does Anja. There is much more to Martin than he shares Holy One. Perhaps much more than you even know."

Walter smiled at her. "You might be surprised at what I know about Martin." He said. "I did not realize that Anja still held sway over him though?"

Tarifa nodded. "Holy One I think I may be in love." Tarifa said.

“There is nothing wrong with that Tarifa. Love is a natural way of things.”

“Even if that love is for another woman,” Tarifa asked, seeing Walter’s eyes go slightly wider.

“You speak of... you speak of Aihola?” He asked.

Tarifa nodded slowly. “Holy One... she stirs me like no other I have ever met, male or female.”

“Then why do you ask me if it is wrong Tarifa?” Walter asked her taking her face in her hands. “You above all the elves I have created and those that were born after like you; you deserve happiness more than all of them, because you have endured more than most. If Aihola stirs these feelings in you Tarifa... do not dismiss them or deny them. Explore them.”

“You will not... you will not think less of me?” Tarifa asked.

Walter pulled her close for a strong embrace and smiled. “Think less of you? Why would I think less of you child, when you do the one thing that still many cling to as wrong? No Tarifa... I will think more of you. Not less.”

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

NEW MEMPHIS

Anja Peterson had changed in the last five months.

She had come to EDEN with an attitude of arrogance and distrust, having been working the last three years directly for Senator Graham, a man whom she despised. She had allowed Graham’s son Kevin and even Graham himself to take her to bed and slobber and grunt all over her, in the hopes of furthering her career. She was out only for herself at that time in her life, not caring what she had to do, or who she had to sleep with to get where she wanted. Anja was smart, beautiful, and an extremely skilled genetics expert, yet she considered people below her education level to be beneath her and undeserving of her attention. She could have used her brains to obtain what she wanted, and instead chose to use her looks.

All that had changed when she met Daniel Simpson and Julie Collins, two of the Genomes she had been sent to EDEN to have declared not fit for duty and removed from the active Navy roles. And in an ironic and amazing twist of fate, Anja had become the very willing and quite submissive lover to both of them, and her world had suddenly become so much larger and clearer.

Anja did not think of herself as a bad person, nor did she start out acting as a pompous bitch. She was extremely intelligent, tops in her class at the Naval Academy, one of the first women to complete the Navy’s SEAL training with honors, and she had two advanced degrees in Genetic Engineering and Bio-Research. The people she had chosen, or more importantly her father had chosen for her to associate with had changed her. Yet her relationship with Danny and Jules had opened so many doors that Anja had never known existed. She no longer looked at Genomes as beneath her, primarily because she had become part Genome herself thanks to Danny and Julie and their torrid relationship. During her time in school Anja had always preferred to look at things objectively, yet her duty posting with Graham and his son had dampened that trait in her. When she had joined EDEN’s crew and been reunited with Martin Hunter and the other genomes, that objectivity made a smashing come back. She witnessed utter self sacrifice during the emergency on EDEN after the comet had passed them by when the unknown Raptor had crashed into the base. Martin and Danny wouldn’t leave several human engineers to die in the vacuum of space and so they worked as a team and repaired the damage and kept themselves alive.

When Anja had first met Martin Hunter she was stuck by his carefree, almost reckless path in life, and somewhat angered at his lack of emotion towards her. Anja knew she was beautiful, and not just beautiful, but downright head turning, eye stopping gorgeous. Though only five foot three, she had always kept her body in superb shape. She was proud of her large, firm 34C breasts and her naturally stiff nipples. Her tits were usually the first thing that men noticed about her and then she knew she had them. She had long legs for her height, and she kept them in lithe, muscular shape by her hand to hand regime and riding a bike as much as she could. Her ass was perhaps her finest asset, extremely firm and perfectly round muscular ass cheeks allowed her to fill out any pair of pants she wore with considerable ease. Anja had soft jade green eyes and full red lips that, Julie had commented on not so long ago, were wonderful to kiss and feel moving across her body. She had always used

her beauty to her advantage, but that night with Martin Hunter had changed all that. He looked through her arrogance and defenses and her pompous attitude and dove right for her soul. He had fucked her into senselessness that night, igniting within her a need and passion she never knew she could feel. It was a need and passion she did not rediscover until she had returned to EDEN.

She had fought her feelings about going to EDEN and seeing Martin again, and when she acted like a bitch to him, he had responded in kind. Her brief but intense relationship with Danny and Julie had granted her almost immediate acceptance by the Genomes that remained. Her actions over the next few days cemented that trust even more. She did not have to think what her decision would be when it was discovered Graham was making a play for control of EDEN when they returned from earth with Tarifa. It was actually the easiest decision she had ever made.

Anja had left with Martin and the other Genomes and returned to earth to carve out their own life. Meeting the elves and eventually having to leave their capital city and build their own city had drawn her even further in. Her true self had blossomed and grown by leaps and bounds aided by her new Genome cells and skills. Anja had finally become what she was meant to be, a compassionate but capable warrior of unparalleled skill, with a firm devotion to what was right and just; a pattern of action and concern that mirrored Martin Hunter, the one man she was madly in love with.

Anja had also discovered her true sexuality while sharing a bed with both Danny and Julie. She no longer repressed her feelings and reveled in sensations that were new and wonderful. That she was without any question bi-sexual did not cause her to blink in surprise at all now. Julie's lush body had ignited a different type of passion within Anja, with its suppleness and sensuous curves and Anja loved them both. They had awakened a new person in her, and at first she thought it was love she felt for them both, yet as time passed she realized it was nothing more than a close knit friendship. They held a place in her heart and always would, yet over the last few weeks she had wanted to expand and explore because she was still looking for something. She was still missing a core piece of her being; a sense of actually belonging to someone. It was a feeling she had not felt since that night with Martin. She sensed it in them as well, a calling of sorts. Returning to earth had changed all three of them. She figured their time remaining together was short, and while that saddened her to a degree, she knew it was for the best. All of them were growing and their paths were taking different roads, and to try and remain together would only hurt them in the end.

Anja had a new sexual appetite, and she knew what she wanted. She wanted to be dominated; she wanted to be taken over and over again. Anja discovered she was totally submissive in bed, and she wanted someone to take her, dominate her, and command her but also someone who would respect her in and out of their bed. Anja had noticed many attractive elves and humans over the past weeks, even fantasizing quite a few times of having Dysea and Martin dominate her and make her do what they demanded. Thinking of Dysea caused Anja to shudder in delight. She desired the Wood Elf Queen, more than she had ever desired Julie. The elf Queen's body was even more enticing than Julie's and she longed to see Dysea naked and wrap herself around that lush body. The platinum blond hair and the lithe figure of the former Wood Elf Queen always got Anja hot, and she already knew how impressive Martin's assets were, and she couldn't help but notice the almost constant smile Dysea walked around with. It had surprised her at first that she would apprise women as she did men, but that shock had long since passed and it came quite naturally to her.

It did not surprise her however when she came to the realization that she was deeply in love with Martin. He had stolen her soul that single night so long ago, and no matter what she did, she couldn't purge him from her thoughts. He was who she was meant for, of that she had no doubts. Seeing him all the time now made it worse, and knowing that he was sleeping with Dysea even more so, because she wanted both of them so bad it was almost painful.

Anja turned when she felt the hand of the dark haired female elf Talia touch her arm. She looked at the woman and smiled warmly. "Yes ma'am."

Talia Torcrum looked at the young human female. "Your... your aura is not completely human young lady. Nor is it like that one... your commander..."

"Martin?" Anja asked.

Talia nodded. "Yes. His aura is a much darker color than yours. Like a deep forest in the west. A normal human aura is lighter in color... similar to the color of the skins of pears. Yours is different somehow."

Anja nodded. "I'm not completely human any longer." She replied with a smile. "My DNA has been altered somewhat because of a relationship I was having." Anja surprised herself when she used the past tense to refer to her trio with Danny and Julie.

"And you knew this?" Talia asked.

Anja shook her head, "Not at the time no. We only discovered it was happening later, but it was a willing change. It was not something forced on me."

"The Alliance conducts horrible experiments." Talia said softly. "Genetic experiments on elves and even humans that do not agree with their rules." She looked shyly at where Anari sat alone, her back against the wall of the building they were in. Lynwe had moved up to where Martin, Julie and Tari were squatting in a small group. "I understand that these very Drow elves with you were subjected to terrible experiments."

Anja looked at her. "How do you know?"

"The unit they belonged to came here for schooling or training or something like that many years ago." Talia explained. "I recognize the leader and his female second in command. She is very imposing." Anja's eyes moved to where Lynwe squatted. "There were rumors floating around the city all during the time they were here about how the Alliance had conducted terrible experiments on them." Talia saw the questions in Anja's eyes and continued. "Many years ago, a little over a century I think, the Drow were very nearly destroyed by the High Elves in the last battle of a war they had been fighting for decades. At the end of this battle there were only five or six thousand Drow elves left. Many of them became mercenaries and slavers. Apparently their fortitude impressed the Alliance scientists and their last village was attacked. The Alliance slaughtered them like hogs; the only ones to survive were taken prisoner by the Alliance to be used for experiments. The Drow you see here are offspring of those captured, and it was they who paid the price in the end."

"What was done to them?" Anja asked tearing her eyes from Anari just as she turned her head, feeling eyes on her and turning to see who it was.

Talia shrugged. "It is said that many of the experiments were sexual in nature, and that many of the Drow even went so far as to commit suicide when it was discovered what was done to them. Those that travel with you and any who live elsewhere must have been the strongest of mind and body."

"They seem very capable." Anja stated.

Talia nodded. "They are." She answered. "Many of them were trained by Marcus himself."

"Marcus?" Anja asked.

"He is a Drow as well, but he is different. He willingly underwent the Alliance genetic experiments. He wanted them, and they turned him into a vicious cruel monster that would butcher his own parents if he needed too. He has no heart, no soul." Talia spoke as if the mere mention of his name would bring him down on top of them. "Trust me you do not want to fall into his hands."

Anja smiled and took her hand. "We only have a few more hours and then all of you will be safe." She said.

Talia met her eyes. "We will be safe yes." She spoke softly. "What about those we leave behind?"

"We're working on that." Anja told her.

MOUNTAIN CITY

Aihola looked up from where she lay on her bed listening to the message from Tari again when she heard the door to her small quarters open and close. Her fingers closed around the handle of the R4 Razor Hybrid Knife. The doubled bladed weapon was one of a dozen that had been secreted into Mountain City and picked up by Cantel earlier in the morning. The R4 was a new designed knife, forged from High Elf Steel but finished with a matte black coating of Teflon, making it virtually indestructible. She had taken to the weapon immediately, quickly realizing the one Cantel had given her was perfectly weighted and balanced for her own hand. Cantel had told her that it was Dysea who had given specifications that were ideally suited for Aihola. She had smiled at the time thinking she would have to thank the Wood Elf Queen in a similar way.

Aihola moved nimbly from her bed, the thin white robe tied around her curves loosely. She had been passing time until her nightly rendezvous with Tarifa in the large hot tub, and no one besides Tarifa had access to her private quarters. She pressed her back against the corner of the wall that led into the small main area of

her quarters, and lifted the R4 closely in her hand, intending to strike for the vital neck area of whoever came around the corner.

“*Nya Istel?*” Tarifa’s soft voice called out.

Aihola leaned around the corner and saw her, “Tarifa!” She exclaimed softly. “What are you doing here?” Aihola moved up next to her, amber eyes scanning the area behind Tarifa. “It is three hours before we meet, you must go! If Telan finds you here he will discover all is not as he thinks!”

Tarifa shook her head. “I slipped a pill into his drink at dinner. He will not wake until tomorrow morning the pig.” She spoke looking at the R4 Hybrid in her hand. “Were you expecting someone?” She asked with a smile.

Aihola saw where she was looking and shook her head. “I did not know it was you.” She said. “And it is no secret that Telan does not appreciate my company.”

Tarifa nodded. “That is true.” She said as she looked around the small apartment. Aihola had decorated it sparingly, Cantel bringing over some items she had requested from the small apartment she had been staying at before. “So this is where you come when you aren’t by my side?”

Aihola looked at Tarifa and for the first time saw what she was wearing. Tarifa’s robe was thin like hers, but a light blue in color, and Aihola could see her erect nipples straining against the thin fabric. She felt her face flush and warmth rushed to between her taut thighs. While her visit was a surprise, Aihola had already planned to do what her brother had said and take what she wanted. At this moment, Aihola wanted Tarifa more than anything else in her life. She had not been able to stop thinking about her time with the two Queens and what they had made her feel and do, and those memories came rushing back to her now, sending great waves of desire through her. And that desire was solely focused on Tarifa and had been for some time.

“What is it you want Tarifa?” Aihola asked confidently. She was determined to be the Mistress here, no matter Tarifa’s position as Queen.

Tarifa looked at her, detecting the slight change in her tone of voice. It was almost a tone of annoyance, yet held something else as well. “I’m sorry... I didn’t mean to disturb you.” Tarifa spoke. She started to move around her to leave, but Aihola planted her hand against the wall, blocking her path with her arm. Tarifa looked at her again and now she saw Aihola’s amber eyes staring right into her soul.

“You came here for a reason.” Aihola spoke moving closer. “What would that reason be?”

“It’s... it’s nothing really.” Tarifa spoke turning so her back was against the wall. She was confused by Aihola’s suddenly dominate nature, and while it caused a tingling sensation within her belly, Tarifa was still unsure of how Aihola would react.

“If it was nothing why did you come here dressed so?” Aihola asked, her next step putting her only inches from Tarifa’s glowing sapphire eyes. “Was it your intent to come here and try to seduce me with your charms?”

Tarifa laughed off that truth and shook her head. “No... I... I was only going to see if you would like to...”

Aihola smiled as her desire for this female continued to grow by leaps and bounds. “I think that was your intent.” Aihola spoke reaching out to stroke Tarifa’s neck with her nails. She watched with a gleam in her eyes as she allowed her fingers to move lower, stroking the hollow of Tarifa’s throat and dipping closer to the valley between her breasts.

Tarifa was frozen as Aihola’s fingers caused electric tingles to course through her body. “Ai... Aihola... what... what are you doing?” She was finally able to say.

Aihola moved her lips closer to Tarifa’s until they were almost touching. “I believe you came here with a purpose Queen of the High Elves.” She spoke softly, her hand dipping even lower. She turned her hand over and brushed the back of her knuckles across Tarifa’s left breast, eliciting a small gasp when her knuckles grazed over Tarifa’s nipple. Aihola smiled when she felt the bud harden and become even stiffer. “What is that purpose?”

Tarifa had very nearly lost it already. Her skin was on fire, her nipples protruding proudly from her thin robe. She felt the change come upon her, and the world became so much more vibrant and real. Her sapphire eyes, now outlined in black looked to the ceiling as her hands came up to grip Aihola’s strong shoulders. “Aihola... you can’t... I... I am Queen... I...”

Aihola no longer feared Tarifa when she changed, and she smiled when she saw Tarifa's teeth lengthen into half inch long fangs and her eyes change into the sapphire black orbs. Aihola brought her lips closer to Tarifa's neck, lightly grazing her skin as her hand moved lower, sliding down Tarifa's firm abdomen and making its way between the folds of her robe to touch her warm naked skin. She felt Tarifa's muscles clench and her fingers tighten on her shoulders as Aihola ripped away the robe with one hand while her other dipped lower between Tarifa's thighs. Aihola's eyes grew slightly wider when her fingers grazed the area where she knew there should be soft dark hair and she found nothing but smooth soft flesh. This only served to incite her even more and she pressed her body tighter against Tarifa's, her nipples pressing against Tarifa's own breasts, while flicking out her warm pink tongue to caress the tip of Tarifa's ear eliciting a gasp of delight.

"You have removed your hair Tarifa?" Aihola spoke softly into her ear. "What exactly am I suppose to deduce from this? I can smell your excitement Queen of the High Elves, and..." Aihola slid her fingers down even lower, curving them around slowly until they reached Tarifa's pussy. "And you are already dripping."

Tarifa shook her head slowly. "Please... I don't... I don't want to..."

"I think you do slave!" Aihola spoke more confidently. "You have not cum in so long! And you must endure that disgusting beast slobbering all over you." She whispered into Tarifa's ear. "He can not touch you in the places I can. He can not do to you what my tongue can do." As she was speaking to her, Aihola was sliding her fingers back and forth lightly over Tarifa's fully aroused and spread labia, being careful to rub her pierced clit every time she brought her fingers forward. Her pussy lips were engorged with passion, Tarifa's clit standing erect and burning with desire. The sapphire piercing was causing the pleasure to slowly build in her belly, and there was nothing she could do to avoid it now. "And Telan most assuredly can not do this to you." Aihola spoke softly, bringing her face around to stare at Tarifa. Her eyes were heavy with passion, her mouth slightly open and her breath coming in soft gasps. "Can he Tarifa?"

Tarifa shook her head quickly back and forth. "No! Gods... no!"

Aihola reached out with her tongue, running it along Tarifa's upper lip slowly and ever so sensuously, pulling back quickly when Tarifa tried to kiss her. Tarifa's eyes were wide, and she bit her bottom lip as Aihola's fingers worked her into a sexual frenzy. Her pussy was sopping wet now, her legs weak and Aihola was having little trouble. She was also becoming very aroused herself, feeling the warmth spread through her own belly and into her loins. She pressed herself closer to Tarifa, pushing one of her legs between Tarifa's thighs as she tore open the robe further, pulling it almost completely from her body and suckled on Tarifa's silky neck. Tarifa gasped loudly when she felt Aihola's lips on her skin, her body on fire. In the haze of pleasure she thought she felt two sharp points graze her skin. She felt Aihola's knee press against the back of her own hand manipulating Tarifa's soaked pussy, allowing her to apply more pressure; pressure that was soon going to force Tarifa into a blissful orgasm.

"You... you came here... you came here to seduce me didn't you?" Aihola spoke softly, her own arousal very nearly out of control. "You wanted me to taste you! To suck your sweet pussy, didn't you High Elf Queen. Answer me!"

"Yes!" Tarifa cried. "Yes! By the gods yes... that is what I wanted!"

Aihola smiled and drove three fingers deeply into Tarifa's pussy. Tarifa stood up on her tip toes gripping Aihola's shoulders for support as her orgasm shattered her resistance, and her sweet cum poured all over Aihola's fingers and hand. Her head tilted back and she looked at the ceiling and the metal striping of the window above them. She saw the look on her own face and she saw Aihola smiling, pleased with her self that she was making Tarifa come. She also saw the tips of what looked like two very sharp fangs extend from Aihola's lips and then her head came crashing forward. She clutched at the Drow warrior, burying her face between Aihola's firm breasts, as she rode out the first orgasm she had experienced since Dysea left, humping the three fingers Aihola had stuffed up her pussy, wanting it to last as long as possible.

After a long moment of Tarifa clenching her powerful pussy muscles down on her fingers, Aihola slowly pulled them out, hearing her moan in reluctance. Aihola brought them to her mouth, slowly putting one finger then the others seductively between her lips and drawing Tarifa's juices from them, savoring the taste and feeling her own desire nearly triple in intensity. She released Tarifa after ensuring she assisted her in slumping to the floor gently so that she wouldn't fall and stepped back.

"Perhaps I will do these things." Aihola spoke as she started towards her bed.

Tarifa watched her walk, still in the afterglow of the small but powerful orgasm given to her by Aihola's distinctly experienced fingers. Her eyes were clouded over in obvious lust, wanting more, needing more. Tarifa watched as Aihola turned to face her and sat down on the edge of her bed. She pulled aside her white robe to reveal her taut body in all its glorious beauty. Her ebony skin glistened with a fine sheen of sweat; her breasts though considerably smaller than Tarifa's own were conical and firm and looked oh so tasty, the dark nipples jutting proudly and begging to be suckled. Her legs were long and slender for her height, packed with muscle yet still looking feminine. And then Tarifa's eyes found her center and she whimpered in desire. Aihola's pussy was breathtaking; the thin line of pure white hair above the pink half inch long clit, now standing out proudly and obviously waiting to be fed upon. Her pussy lips were a deep red and opened like a butterfly spreading its wings. It was so different than Dysea's pussy, Aihola's clit much larger and not pierced, and Dysea's blond platinum line of hair above her opening. Dysea's tattoos only added to her beauty, but Aihola's skin was so dark and inviting, it had its very own addicting nature, and this is what Tarifa wanted. Tarifa looked up into Aihola's amber eyes and then watched as Aihola dropped one of her hands to her glistening pussy and ran her fingers invitingly over her own pussy lips slowly.

"Come Tarifa, Queen of the High Elves." Aihola spoke confidently, her lust making her confident. "This is what you want. It's written all over your face."

Tarifa didn't dare attempt to stand up, so she discarded what remained of her torn robe and began to make her way over to Aihola on her hands and knees, her hybrid eyes focused on that beautiful pussy. With graceful and feline like seductive movements she made her way to the edge of the bed on her hands and knees. Aihola reached out with her hand as Tarifa finally settled between her thighs, her eyes never leaving Aihola's now very excited pussy, her lips only centimeters from her engorged clit. Aihola caressed Tarifa's face before she wrapped a large portion of Tarifa's raven black hair in her fist and looked at her with unabashed lust in her amber eyes.

"I am your mistress now Queen of the High Elves. You will do as I demand when you share my bed. And I intend to see you share my bed quite often." Aihola spoke softly but very firmly and confidently. "If you please me, perhaps I will return the pleasure to you." Aihola was not kidding herself and she knew it; she would be the dominate Drow mistress to Tarifa, but she would never deny her anything. "Now to get your reward slave... you must eat my pussy and make me scream!" Aihola spoke, pulling Tarifa's head closer to her dripping pussy. "Eat my pussy well and I will reward you slave!"

Whatever doubts Tarifa may have had when she came into Aihola's room vanished when Aihola spoke those words. She felt the pressure Aihola exerted on the back of her head, pulling her closer to that dripping cunt in front of her face. Tarifa knew Aihola was right, she would do anything for her; she would allow Aihola to dominate her, as long as Tarifa got to dine on her wonderful pussy. The act of being submissive to Aihola in this way was driving Tarifa mad with lust and she inhaled deeply, the scent of cherry blossoms filling her nostrils, as the tip of her nose was nestled in the soft white hair just above that jutting clit.

"Eat my pussy now slave!" Aihola spoke more forcefully now, and she pulled Tarifa's head into her pussy with more strength than she intended, pushing her hips towards Tarifa's face in desperation and want. She thought for an instant that perhaps she had overstepped her bounds with her actions, but her eyes flew open and she screamed, her head falling back as Tarifa's wonderfully soft lips encased her painfully erect clit and she bit down ever so gently.

Tarifa's hands moved up to Aihola's breasts and began to pull and pinch her stiff nipples as her body fell back on the bed. Aihola still clung to her head, holding her face against her pussy. She needn't have bothered, Tarifa had no intention of leaving the position she was in until her Aihola had cum harder than she ever had before. That was her duty now as slave to her Drow Mistress.

Tarifa sucked hard once more on Aihola's clit before extending her tongue out as far as she could and trailing the tip of her tongue from the bottom of Aihola's delicious pussy back up to her clit with agonizing slowness. Aihola's body strained against her orgasm the entire time, her hands pulling Tarifa's head closer as she ground her pussy against Tarifa's lips, using all of her will power not to explode right there. She draped her long legs over Tarifa's shoulders, pulling her closer and holding her firmly in position.

"Yes... yes my slave!" Aihola gasped her amber eyes wide, her entire body shaking in pre-orgasm shudders. "You... you eat me so good! You're going to make me cum!"

Tarifa felt wetness between her own thighs as she feasted on Aihola's sweet pussy. She kept her left hand firmly fixed on Aihola's left breast, manipulating and pinching her nipple almost to the point of pain. Tarifa sensed that Aihola would enjoy that more than most and she was not disappointed as it drew moans of pleasure from her Mistress. Tarifa dropped her right hand down to scap her nails down the backside of Aihola's taut thigh. She traced Aihola's firm supple ass with her hand, squeezing that mound of delicious ebony flesh tightly, marveling in the firmness and texture. A part of Tarifa's mind told her she would have to explore every nook and crevice of that gorgeous ass at another time. Tarifa brought her fingers up the inside of her thigh to Aihola's soaked entrance and slowly pressed a long slim finger deeply into her dripping pussy, feeling Aihola's pussy muscles clamp down tightly on the invading appendage. She heard Aihola groan softly as she added another finger slowly, pushing her fingers in deep. Aihola's pussy was exceptionally tight, and she could feel the powerful walls of her tunnel clamping down on her fingers, as well as the incredible heat. Tarifa was beyond caring at this point, totally intent on making Aihola cum as hard as she could. Another finger followed the two already buried in her pussy and Aihola's body tensed as Tarifa shoved them in as deeply as she could.

"That's it, cum for me... cum for me Mistress!" She gasped, removing her lips from that hard clit, willingly accepting her role as slave to her Drow Mistress, plunging her fingers faster and deeper. She lapped away at Aihola's defenseless half inch grape sized clit with her tongue now, flicking it hard on every plunge of her fingers into her pussy.

It had also been far too long for Aihola, and her orgasm began in her belly, spreading outward and down to her spasming pussy. Aihola's body went rigid, her mouth opening wide and her amber eyes staring at the heavens as her orgasm exploded out of her. Tarifa's eyes also flew open, yet it was for a different reason. Aihola's cum erupted from around the fingers Tarifa had buried in her pussy, her sweet liquid splashing wetly on Tarifa's jaw and neck. Aihola's body arched off the bed, and Tarifa quickly pulled her fingers from her clenching pussy and opened her mouth wide, locking her lips around Aihola's entire spasming pussy, her own eyes closing in bliss as she drank down Aihola's cum.

"Ahhhhhhh... Yes my... yes my slave!" Aihola screamed her neck muscles straining to the point where veins were protruding from her skin, as her body shuddered violently in the midst of the most intense orgasm she had ever experienced. "Drink my juices slave... drink it all!"

Tarifa did just that, swallowing Aihola's cum as it squirted into her mouth with such force it set Tarifa off as well. She didn't remember Aihola cumming this hard before, her juices squirting out of her into Tarifa's waiting mouth, but she relished it none the less. Tarifa ground her tight ass cheeks down onto her heels as her pussy jumped and spasmed and her cum flooded out of her, splashing wetly down her thighs. Aihola came for nearly thirty full seconds, and Tarifa did not remove her lips from their pussy lock until she had consumed every delicious drop. Tarifa then spent the next minute lovingly licking Aihola's still swollen labia, lapping up every minute amount of cum that was left, cleaning her beautiful pussy with her tongue as she felt Aihola's body settle back onto the bed and she lovingly licked the puffy outer lips of her cunt. She began to lick and softly kiss her way up Aihola's still heaving belly, stopping to allow her tongue to explore the sweet tasting dark flesh before her. The contrast in their skin color was driving her into a passionate frenzy, and even though she had just cum for the second time, Tarifa felt another orgasm begin to burn slowly within her belly. She climbed onto the bed slowly, as her tongue trailed up Aihola's lithe body, teasing her still painfully hard nipples and rolling the stiff buds in her fingers while her tongue traced the edges of the sweat soaked dark globes.

Tarifa gasped when Aihola grabbed her and rolled them over, pinning her body to the soft bed. She took hold of Tarifa's face tightly, while looking down at her and skillfully using her own tongue to clean off her cum from Tarifa's chin and cheeks.

"Was... was that pleasing Mistress?" Tarifa finally asked in a soft submissive voice after Aihola had tongued her face clean.

"It... it was pleasant enough slave." Aihola answered firmly, though Tarifa could detect the passion that was still there.

"I will do better next time Mistress." Tarifa spoke, her hands absently caressing Aihola's waist and back.

Aihola smiled. "Oh I know you will my dear. You will have much time to practice. You will serve under me whenever we are together. If you please me then perhaps I will do the same for you."

Tarifa smiled brilliantly. "Oh yes! Please Mistress... I need... I need your attentions!"

Aihola smiled, still getting her breathing under control. "So... you want your reward do you slave?"

"Oh yes Mistress! Please... please don't tease me." Tarifa pleaded, fully getting into her role as submissive. She knew full well that it was not all an act. It may have been the fact that Aihola was a Drow elf, but being near her this way, submissively in her arms, their naked flesh touching, all Tarifa wanted to do was please her in every way she could. Aihola would never refuse her and never hurt her, Tarifa knew that and she actually found it most pleasing to be dominated in this way, especially by a Drow.

Aihola smiled warmly, her amber eyes gazing upon Tarifa with love and desire, as she realized just what she felt for this High Elf Queen. She leaned over and kissed her deeply, plunging her tongue into Tarifa's mouth and hearing her whimper in delight as she returned the kiss with equal lust and passion. Aihola held her face while she explored Tarifa's mouth with her tongue, dancing it across her teeth and the insides of her cheeks, exploring everything she could, engaging in a duel of tongues that Tarifa naturally lost. Aihola pulled back after a long moment, Tarifa's tongue dancing across her lips as she did, trying to reclaim her soft lips.

"Now you will know your position, Queen of the High Elves." Aihola spoke softly. "Under me, pleasing me and now you will continue your duties while I feast on your delicious flesh." Aihola shifted on the bed quickly before Tarifa had time to speak, turning opposite of her and seductively lifting one of her legs to the opposite side of Tarifa's head and she positioned her still dripping and passion bloated pussy over Tarifa's face. Aihola looked down at her prize, her fingers lightly running across Tarifa's hairless already soaked labia and seeing her fully aroused and unhooded clit. Aihola smiled; as this was the prize she so coveted. The round sapphire piercing glittered in the light, and Aihola could see how it actually pierced the hood of her clit, and caused the sapphire ring to brush against her sensitive bud when she was aroused, stimulating her even more. Aihola inhaled deeply of Tarifa's aroma and smiled.

"Prepare yourself slave... and you may scream if you wish." She spoke.

The moment Aihola's strong tongue flicked out and slammed into Tarifa's pierced clit, she did just that, screaming out her pleasure as a hammer like orgasm struck her instantly. Her screams of rapture were drowned out quickly as Aihola plunged her pussy down onto Tarifa's face and Aihola began to feed.

LAS VEGAS BOULDER MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

"Do you believe him?" Cathy asked Leland.

Leland met her dark eyes. "I want to." He answered softly. They sat in the cockpit of the Raptor as night rapidly fell all around them. "You must understand *Nya Lisse Indil*, elf families of influence and power will do anything to keep what they have, and gather more power and influence. It is the same with the High Elves I have no doubt. Vengal promised his daughter Anuk to the son of this family."

"She didn't have any say in it?" Cathy asked.

Leland shook his head. "I doubt it. It is more than likely that she was raised from a child with the intent she would eventually become wife to this man. When Vengal made this arrangement, Dysea was still Queen. Vengal's family was very powerful themselves, but a marriage between the two families would have given them even greater influence and ties to Dysea." Leland turned back into the Raptor's crew compartment to Vengal sitting on the bench near the ramp. "He was not aware of the Alliance betrayal of Dysea, and I do not believe he knew the daughter of this family would be chosen Queen. At least I do not believe he knew of this. Vengal may be many things, but a traitor to Dysea he is not."

"You're sure about that?" Cathy asked.

Leland nodded. "Yes."

"What did Dysea say when you talked to her?" Cathy asked him.

"She said to return to Eden once the mission was completed and she would confront Vengal." Leland answered. "You have not seen Dysea when she is angry. It is a sight to behold."

Cathy grinned. "I have no doubt about that." She answered. Cathy looked at his handsome weathered face, his blue eyes bright and intelligent. "Leland... about what you said earlier." She spoke softly.

Leland looked at her with a smile and reached up to touch her cheek. He caressed the scars on her otherwise flawless face. "It is what I want." He spoke. "I would hope it is what you want as well."

“Leland... I’m... Vengal is right. I’m completely human. I... I won’t live anywhere near as long as you will. It would not be fair to you.” Cathy told him.

Leland smiled. “Half a lifetime with you *Nya Lisse Indil* is enough for me.” He replied. “Besides... technically you are already almost four hundred years old. Much older than me, and I have always wanted to enjoy the charms of an older woman.”

Cathy couldn’t help but chuckle and she moved closer to him kissing him softly. “You are a very unique man Leland.”

“I like to think so.” He answered. “You do not have to give me an answer now Cathy. When you are ready... though I think I know what your answer will be.”

“Oh do you?” Cathy spoke with a smile.

Leland nodded. “You make these delightful little noises when you are in my arms, and you have whispered many professions in my ear during...”

Cathy put her fingers to his lips. “I get the point.” She spoke with a smile. “And you are right. I would be very happy to...”

Tommy turned from his co-pilot’s seat and looked back at them. “Boss... we got company.” He spoke.

Cathy and Leland both go to their feet and moved the few meters to the pilot’s seat which Cathy quickly settled into, “Where?”

“Four contacts moving from the north.” Tommy spoke.

Cathy looked at Leland. “That’s the direction they would come from.” She said. “But there should be six of them.”

“How far out are they?” Leland asked.

“Nine hundred meters,” Tommy answered.

Leland nodded. “I will go out and meet them.” He said heading for the rear of the Raptor. He watched Vengal get to his feet when he saw them coming. “General we have four contacts moving quickly towards our location.”

“Four?” Vengal spoke confused. “But there were six of them.”

Leland nodded. “Yes I know. We do not have communication with them because they are maintaining radio silence until they have us in sight. I’m going out to meet them.”

“I will accompany you.” Vengal said.

“I don’t think that is wise.” Leland told him.

“We are in the middle of enemy territory Leland.” Vengal spoke quickly. “I may be many things, but I am not a fool.”

Leland thought about it for only a second before nodding, “Very well.”

Tony skidded to a halt next to the ramshackle building that used to be a hanger. Leena half hung to his shoulder, her arm useless and her feet almost dragging. The tears in her eyes had long since dried up at having to leave her cousin to her death, the pain and the fact that she did not want to die pushing the grief away.

Tony turned as Radama and Judziea stopped next to him. “We’re almost there.” Tony hissed quietly. He looked at Leena in his arm. “Are you going to make it?”

Leena met his eyes and nodded with a grimace. “I have suffered worse injuries.” She spoke through clenched teeth. “You did not have to break my ribs when you caught me though.”

Tony grinned. “Hey... that wasn’t on purpose.” He replied. “You landed awkward is all. Besides... it could have been your head.”

Leena met his eyes. “You... you do not seem to be upset that we lost your friend.” She spoke.

Tony looked at her. “Danny? Danny ain’t dead.”

“How do you know this? We don’t know how deep the sinkhole was.” Leena said. “It could have been miles deep.”

“It wasn’t.” Tony answered, his hybrid eyes searching the darkness.

“How do you know?”

Tony looked at her answering quickly, almost too quickly. “The minute I saw them begin to fall I switched my internal implant to Danny’s command channel. He called off distances as they fell. The last

transmission that came through said they'd fallen a hundred and thirty meters. He must have struck something, because his COM blinked out after that."

"A hundred and thirty meters," Leena asked aghast. "Anuk... Anuk would not survive a fall of that distance. She..."

"Company!" Tony snapped, pulling Leena down as he saw the two shadowy figures rise up only thirty meters away.

"Raptor! Raptor! Raptor!" Leland's voice called out in a loud whisper carrying to them in the still night.

"Here!" Tony barked, smelling Leland and the Elf General. He watched as the two figures sprinted to where they were and took shape. "It's good to see you Leland."

Leland's eyes swept their small group quickly. "Where is Daniel?"

Vengal also chimed in. "Anuk! Where is Anuk?"

"We took shelter in an old building after getting out of the sewers." Tony replied. "As we were moving out the floor gave way and a sink hole opened up. Our additional weight must have triggered the sink hole. Dan saved Leena here, but he and Anuk..."

"He and Anuk what?" Vengal snapped.

"They fell." Tony told him.

Vengal's eyes went wide. "They fell! And you did not think to go back to see if they had survived?"

Tony ignored Vengal and continued talking to Leland. "Danny told us to haul ass. It was a four story building and it all got taken down on top of them. He was speaking to me for a few seconds, and then his transmission got cut. There was nothing we could do."

"You should have gone back!" Vengal almost screamed. "We... we came all this way! We had her in our grasp, and you let her die!" He stepped closer to Tony.

"Fuck you General Elf!" Tony spat. "I've served with Danny a lot longer than you. We've survived this long because we follow orders! If he hadn't told us to beat feet we'd all be at the bottom of that sink hole with him! Now step off or I'll chop you to fucking little chunks." Tony had moved Leena away from him against the wall of the battered hanger as he prepared to draw down on the elf.

Leland stepped between them. "We do not have time for this." He spoke. "We..."

"Leland! That armored column has found us!" Cathy's voice came over his implant. "We need to leave and now! They're three minutes away!"

Leland looked at them. "We need to go! The unit that we ran from earlier today has discovered us again! We need to leave!"

"I will not leave my daughter!" Vengal snapped.

Leland looked at him. "General we do not know if they are alive!" He said. "We need to leave now. We have this position and we can return when there are not enemy forces in the area!"

"I will not leave her!" Vengal almost screamed. "She could still be alive! We need to find her! We must go back! We have to..."

Leena took a step forward and swung her hand viciously. The butt of the handgun slammed into the side of Vengal's head, dropping him to the ground like a sack of shit. Everyone looked at her. "He has lost all reason because she is his daughter! I am not stupid. We can not stay here any longer to search for them, no matter how much I want to." She said. "We need to go now!"

Leland wasted no time and gathered Vengal into a fireman's carry, "This way!" He said and headed off into the night.

Ninety seconds later, Tony was staring out the ramp of the Raptor as they lifted off into the air. He was looking back at the city of Las Vegas, and he was making a silent vow to himself and to a lost friend.

"We'll be back to get you Danny. Hang tough my brother. Hang tough."

She was called Anuk, daughter of Vengal.

She was one hundred and twenty-one years old, the youngest daughter to the senior Wood Elf Ranger Commander. She was born into a powerful and influential elf family, never wanting for anything. She had the best schooling, the best clothes, the best foods and lived in luxury as far as the elves considered the definition of that term. She was courted by only the most handsome and influential elves, but her hand had already been

promised in marriage to the son of another powerful and influential family. Matarn was extremely handsome, and well established within the Wood Elf Ranger command structure. He had risen to his position by virtue of his family and their standing, not by any of his own deeds. He had been involved in only limited combat against the Alliance and in small raids against the High Elves, his family not willing to risk his life in the mundane duties of a soldier.

Anuk had gone through the standard Wool Elf Ranger training and completed it with barely passing marks and a little nudge from her father. Anuk had never wanted to be a soldier, feeling herself above such things due to her family's influence and closeness to the Queen. She had gone through the training to please her father, and enhance her standing among her people, as well as attempt to impress Matarn. Anuk knew she was beautiful, and she made no bones about that. Her five foot eight height came from her father, her long rust colored red hair and cerulean blue eyes she inherited from her mother. She weighed a hundred and twenty pounds, most of it muscle, but still with some baby fat spread out in places that she worked hard to control and get rid of. She was still considered a child by elfin respects, and this bothered her to some degree. She had long tapered legs, satiny skin and a tight, head turning ass that she worked hard at keeping that way. Her 34B breasts were firm and conical, topped with small eraser hard pink nipples. Her cheekbones were high in a regal fashion, her light red lips soft and full. She had allowed Matarn to paw her body at times since she was to be his wife anyway, yet his groping was usually roughly done with no sense of what he was doing. Anuk had never been with a man, ensuring Matarn would have that honor.

Her capture had changed all that.

The mercenaries that had captured or killed her small Elf Ranger unit were vile and disgusting men. And they were exceedingly brutal. Nearly all of them were of the dark skinned variety of humans, African Americans the history books had called them. Most of them were the most disgusting human men she had ever seen, and their appearance did nothing to quell Anuk's dislike for humans to begin with. She had been captured pitifully easily, one of the mercenary slavers hitting her on the back of her head during the battle. She had awakened to find herself in a large cage like cell, her head throbbing in pain. She felt the Alliance drug dispenser on the back of her neck immediately, and gasped as her fingers inspected it. She could almost feel the drug working its way through her system. Anuk had looked up when the cell door opened and the enormous black man had come in. She had flung herself at him in rage, intending to shred his face with her nails, but he simply backhanded her inexperienced and still woozy body across the cell and then pounced on her back as she tried to recover. He had shredded what remained of her uniform until she was completely naked and feeling exposed and helpless.

Then with the Alliance drug doing half his work for him in making her more docile he then proceeded to rape her savagely for several hours, taking her virtue with grunting animal like noises while tears had streamed down her face. He had even gone so far as to cum all over her naked body before he left her to wallow in sorrow. That had begun the cycle she had been living for the last nine months. She had lost count of the men who had raped her, sometimes two or three at once, and with the Alliance drug keeping her from resisting for the most part, she endured acts so vile she did not even want to remember them. The drug and the fervent hope that her father would come for her with Matarn and rescue her was the only thing that kept her from taking her own life.

Anuk opened her cerulean eyes slowly, that effort itself causing her to groan in pain. She didn't move the rest of her body as her eyes slowly came into focus. Her whole body ached liked it never had before, every muscle and bone screaming in protest. Her eyes came into focus slowly and she saw the pieces of concrete and wood next to where she laid. The memory of what had happened in the last few hours came rushing back to her. The auction where she had been bought by a giant of a black man, her cousin Leena, the withdrawal effects of the Alliance drug making her cold and stripping her of her strength. The escape through the rancid sewers of Las Vegas and finally the floor opening beneath her and her plummet into the darkness of the abyss in the arms of a beast.

Anuk's eyes grew a little wider when she realized she was no longer cold and shivering. The dangerous drop in her body temperature from the anti-dote to the Alliance drug was gone and she felt incredibly warm and strangely soothed. She slowly lifted just her head, wincing as her neck and shoulder muscles yammered at her in protest to the movement. Anuk realized she was lying on top of another body. A body that was pulsing with

heat and incredibly hard and firm. She turned her head slowly and her eyes settled on the face of the man who had saved her life.

Anuk remembered now what had taken place in those last few seconds.

She was dangling above the blackness after the floor had caved in and nearly swallowed them. She and Leena were holding to this man's hands for dear life, screaming for him to pull them up. In an incredible display of strength, he had heaved Leena clear out of the hole and out of sight, both of his hands then taking hold of Anuk. His face appeared confused and when he looked at something under where he lay, Anuk had followed his gaze and felt her heart sink. The main support beams were splintering under his additional weight, and sand and dirt was pouring through a foundation that was cracked and broken from centuries of deterioration. Anuk had looked back up quickly to see him changing as he had done before, changing into a fearsome looking hybrid of man and animal. He pushed off the floor powerfully pulling Anuk up into his arms like she was a child just as the floor gave way. She looked into his yellow black eyes for a split second, before they began to plunge into the darkness.

Anuk had felt him wrap those long powerful arms around her, one clawed hand pulling her head into his chest protectively. Her face was pressed so tightly to his chest she could smell his musky animal like aroma. She heard him counting off numbers in the beginning of their fall, amazingly twisting his body while they fell so that he took the brunt of impacts against the side of the tunnel they were falling into. She could hear him grunt in pain on each impact, and all she could do was try to huddle closer into his arms and say silent prayers to her gods. The final impact before she blacked out caused her to cry out as her head slammed upwards into his jaw. Anuk had felt a flash of intense pain and then blacked out.

He looked dead, Anuk thought to herself. He was unmoving, several gashes marring his dark skin, blood still oozing from the jagged cuts but surprisingly they seemed to be healing in front of her very eyes. He had protected her during the fall, using his own body as a shield to keep her from harm, and judging by their position now, he had twisted his body at the end to cushion her landing.

Anuk grit her teeth as she tried to move her legs, nearly crying out at the pain that shot through her.

"Don't move!" Dan's voice spoke.

Anuk turned her head as quickly as she dared and looked at him as his dark eyes opened slowly and he looked at her. She watched in awe as his face broke into a smile.

"Wow... I must be dead." Dan spoke softly looking at her. "I didn't think angels were real."

Anuk looked at him confused. "Angels?" She asked. "I don't understand, what is an angel?"

Dan shook his head as he started to move his arms slowly, "Never mind." He replied. "Oh man... did you get the name of the pilot driving the Raptor that hit us?" Dan's entire body ached horribly. He'd been conducting combat operations since the age of seventeen, and until this day, had never known that so much of his body could hurt at one time. He lifted his arms to make sure that they worked, and moved his eyes to Anuk once more. "Can you move?"

"It... it is very painful." She replied in a soft voice.

Dan nodded. "I do know that."

"How... how far did we fall?" Anuk asked.

"I lost count at a hundred and thirty meters... but we hit shortly within a few seconds after that." Dan answered. "I'm guessing maybe two hundred meters."

Anuk looked at him wide eyed. "We... we fell two hundred meters?"

"Well... we were making like a pin ball in a machine as we fell." He said with a forced grin. "We didn't exactly drop straight down."

"You... you protected... you protected me." Anuk spoke softly, her mind just coming to realize that to its fullest extent. Had she fallen alone, regardless of whether she bounced back and forth, the fall most certainly would have left her broken and bleeding, and above all else, very dead.

Dan groaned as he moved his legs and shoulders. "Yeah... and I'm going to pay for it later I can tell." He spoke through clenched teeth. He looked at her. "As much as I enjoy having you plastered across my chest and all, we do need to get up and try to get back to the surface."

Anuk's eyes flared at his words and she pushed herself up off his chest regardless of the pain it caused. "You pig!" She snarled.

Dan watched her roll off him to the side, her face grimacing in pain and he sat up as gingerly as he could, his entire body screaming out in agony at this action. His ability to heal was rapidly asserting itself, but even he hadn't taken this much damage to his physical body in a long time. He knew it would be a few minutes before he could move about with no pain.

"Glad to see you haven't lost your cheery disposition." Danny spoke as his eyes took in their surroundings.

It was surprisingly well lit where they were, and Dan looked up to see crisscrossing beams of wood and pieces of concrete above them. They were effectively buried alive. As he turned his head he could see what looked to be a larger tunnel roughly a hundred meters from where they were and small fingers of light coming from above. He looked around his body and found the barrel of his HK sticking out from under some rubble. He reached out and pulled on the cool metal, only to have it come free from under the wood and concrete with no stock and no receiver. Dan shook his head and tossed the useless hunk of metal to the ground. He did a quick inventory, feeling his K12 still strapped to his thigh, and his combat vest still loaded with his usual assortment of goodies.

"What... what is that smell?" Anuk asked as she painfully pulled herself into a seated position.

Dan sniffed the air and looked at her with a smile. "That my dear is you and I." He spoke. "I've always wanted to take a walk through waist deep shit. I guess I never counted on smelling it once it dried though."

"What... what are you?" Anuk asked looking at him now.

Danny grinned, "Lieutenant Commander Daniel Simpson Ma'am. United States Navy SEALs."

"SEALs?" Anuk asked. "Like the... like the animal?"

Dan's grin faded. "You're making a joke right?" He asked looking at her sternly. Her facial expression told him she had no idea what SEAL stood for. "Let's forget that part ok." He spoke.

"You... you should not have been able to survive such a fall." Anuk said.

Dan nodded. "Yeah... I've heard that before too."

"How... how is it possible?" Anuk asked. "Are you... are you a Drow? There are rumors that the Alliance kept Drow warriors as prisoners and conducted terrible experiments on them."

Dan shook his head. "No... I'm not a Drow... and before you ask, no I'm not part of the Alliance."

"Then what are you?" Anuk asked.

"I am what was commonly referred to in my time as a Genome." Dan replied, pulling his K12 from its holster to ascertain if it was still serviceable.

"Genome... what is this Genome?" Anuk asked.

Dan looked at her. "It stands for Genetically Engineered Nomenclature for Operations and Military Expenditure." He answered, "Genome."

Anuk's cerulean eyes saw that the injuries on his face were almost gone. She pointed to them, "Your... your face. The cuts are almost healed."

Dan nodded. "One of the few things they did right when it came to making us." He answered. "All of us have a regenerative system that works about a hundred times faster than normal."

"There... there are more of you?" Anuk asked surprised.

"There are other Genomes yes, but me personally, I'm one in a million." He spoke with a grin. Dan noticed that his words didn't get the response he was hoping to elicit. "Did you get out much when you were back at your home?" He finally asked.

"What do you mean get out?" Anuk questioned him.

"You know... go to parties." Dan said. "Go out on dates. Go dancing."

Anuk looked at him like he was from another planet. "I am the daughter of General Vengal. I am above such things. And I am the betrothed of Matarn, son of Fal'duil."

"Oh right..." Dan spoke to her as he rolled his eyes, "The noble born putz who didn't want to come get you himself." He spoke. "Nice guy by the way."

"Matarn is a fine man!" Anuk snapped, her temper flaring. "He is educated and proper! He is not a dark skinned beast like you! He is not a negr..." Anuk stopped herself and saw Dan looking at her intently.

"A Negro like me," Dan finished her sentence for her.

“Men who look like you took my dignity! They took my virtue!” Anuk screamed at him, tears bursting from her eyes now. “They raped me! Over and over! And they laughed while they raped me! I was pure before they took me! Now... now I am tainted by those beasts!”

Dan looked at her as she lowered her face into her hands, her body softly shaking with the force of the tears. “Anuk... I am truly sorry for what happened to you.” He spoke gently. “I don’t pretend to understand what you must feel or are going through, but if we are going to survive this and get out of here you have to realize something,” He waited for Anuk to raise her face from her hands and look at him through tear stained eyes. “I am not those men.”

Anuk snorted in disgust. “Yes you are!” She spoke softly. “All of you are alike.”

Dan shook his head and realized there would be no arguing with her on that point right now. It was too soon after her captivity and rescue and the ordeal she had suffered through. He did make a mental note to himself to try and find the men who had captured her and make sure they felt every inch of his blade as he gutted them. Dan’s eyes widened just a little as he realized that he wanted to find the men who did this to Anuk and make them pay in a very painful manner. He’d never felt this type of anger surge through him, and he was uncertain what it meant.

Dan rose to his knees, his eyes inspecting Anuk as he did. There was no doubt about it; she was without a doubt the most gorgeous creature he had ever laid eyes on, and that included Julie and Anja. Her rust colored red hair was matted with dirt and sweat from the sewer and the fall, and dust from the falling concrete and wood. The clothes that Leena had brought for her were not practical and most of them had been shredded by the drop into the darkness. Her firm breasts were almost completely exposed for his eyes and anyone else who cared to look. He groaned as he removed his combat vest and set it aside, before unbuttoning his fatigue top. He pulled it off and held it out to her.

“Take this.” Dan told her.

“I am fine.” Anuk replied testily.

“You’re an elf, and you are beginning to shiver again. I’m guessing the effects of the anti-dote have not completely worn off yet.” He told her. “You need it more than I do.”

“I would be fine if you had not given the medicine to the High Elf whore as Leena said.”

Dan looked at her. “She helped us to get out of Las Vegas. It wouldn’t hurt to be a little more understanding.”

“She was a High Elf whore!” Anuk spewed. “She enjoyed what those beasts did to her every night! I did not!”

Dan stared at her for a long moment, getting lost in her fiery eyes. He shook his head and held out the top again. “Do you want this, or would you rather freeze?”

Anuk looked at him before slowly reaching out and taking the fatigue top from his hands. When she reached up to grab it, her face twisted into a painful grimace and she cried out softly. Dan’s eyes went wide and he moved closer to her.

“You’re hurt!”

Anuk drew back from him quickly. “I... I am not!” She replied pain in her voice very obvious to Dan, as well as the adrenalin that had just got dumped into her system.

Dan didn’t let her tone deter him and he moved even closer. “Keep your tongue in your mouth and let me look at your side.” He demanded.

“I will be fine!” Anuk spoke.

“Christ woman, you are dense!” Dan spoke, moving forward and pushing Anuk to her back before she could react.

“No!” She screamed, rearing back her hand to strike him, “Ahhhhhhh!”

Dan ignored her cry of pain and pulled aside what little remained of the top she wore. He winced inwardly when he saw the wound. There was a nasty five inch long gash along her rib cage just below her breasts and it was very deep. The slice looked clean, and he assumed it was from some protruding piece of metal she had scraped as they fell. His fingers gingerly touched the wound, and Anuk’s body went rigid as she grabbed his arm and squeezed with every ounce of her natural elf strength.

“I can see the bone of your ribs.” Dan commented, causing Anuk to turn her head and look at him, all the fury gone from her eyes now. She was exposed for his eyes to see, her breasts very nearly touching his face,

yet his eyes remained focused on her wound as his fingers gently moved along the edges making certain there were no leftover pieces stuck in the cut itself. He didn't even glance at her breasts by accident, intent as he was on the tear in her flesh.

Anuk watched Dan lean back and pull his vest to him, delving into one of the larger pockets. He pulled out a small plastic container and cracked the seal on it. He shook the small bottle vigorously and then used his thumb to pop the cap off. Anuk saw the spray top and looked at him.

"What is that?" She asked.

"It's a disinfectant." Dan replied and he leaned over again to spray the cut. "This is going to sting some, but hopefully it will kill whatever may have got in there after our little sewer bath."

Anuk winced slightly as he sprayed the liquid over the entire cut, gritting her teeth to hold back the scream she wanted to let out. Instead she dug her nails into his arm again, his face impassive as he worked even though she would have drawn blood if not for his t-shirt. Dan finished spraying the wound and reached for the other part of the kit. He tore open the sterile packaging, his eyes never leaving her wound, and again this did not go completely unnoticed by Anuk and it surprised her to say the least.

Dan looked at her and held up the small white cloth that looked like a bandage. "This is what we call a MEDCOM patch. It is something that the docs where I come from thought up and put together. It's not something I think the Alliance would readily distribute. It's a self adhering bandage. Once I put it on, it will anchor itself with tiny microscopic filaments. Once it's anchored, it will help pull the edges of your wound together and pump a steady stream of anti-infection drugs into your system. There is one side effect though."

"What?" Anuk asked.

"It will hurt like a mother for about twenty seconds while the filaments anchor into your skin, and I have to hold it onto your wound so it seats properly." Dan answered. "If I use it, hopefully it will kill any bacteria that may have got into your wound and stop infection."

"Why are you telling me that?" Anuk asked.

"I'm telling you because I don't want you decking me, or trying to rip my face off when my hand touches you." Dan replied.

"What if you don't use it?" Anuk asked.

"After walking through a sewer that smelled that bad... do you really want to take that chance?" Dan asked. He shrugged. "If I don't use it, then there is a good chance that your wound will get infected and it will only get worse." He answered. "Trust me... I have no desire to put my hands on you. Personally I think you're an arrogant and spoiled little bitch and I wouldn't waste two seconds trying to get into your shorts. You ain't worth the effort."

Anuk's eyes flared wide in anger and she opened her mouth to come back at him with a tirade of vile and derogatory insults but her eyes widened when Dan slapped the MEDCOM patch on her side. Anuk's eyes flew open even wider and this time her nails did break the skin on Dan's arm, her head dropping back against the ground as the MEDCOM patch began to work.

Dan held the patch to Anuk's side as she took very long and deep breaths, trying to calm her nerves as the pain slowly dwindled until it was gone. She looked up at Dan slowly, her cerulean eyes burning in anger.

"You... you said that on purpose." She spat at him, "To make me... to make me angry."

Dan nodded as he sat back. "It got your adrenalin pumping and that makes the medicine in the MEDCOM work faster." He answered.

Anuk bit off a reply and closed her mouth as she watched Dan sit back across from her and pull the K12 out. She watched him break down the strange looking sidearm in less than twenty seconds and inspect the pieces carefully as she slowly pulled the fatigue top on over herself trying to block out the pain of moving. It was three times too big so she rolled up the sleeves and used a torn piece of the shirt she was wearing as a belt of sorts, tying it around her waist and pulling the fatigue top tighter.

"What... what are we going to do?" Anuk asked finally. "They will return for us won't they?"

Dan slapped the magazine back into the K12 and worked the slide chambering a round before he looked at her. "It looked like that entire building came down on top of us, and I doubt they'll try and get a work crew digging at the site so close to Las Vegas." He answered. "We're going to have to find our own way to the surface and then contact them to come and pick us up."

"How will we find a way to the surface?" Anuk asked. "We are buried alive here."

Dan shook his head. "There is a slight breeze coming in from that way," He told her, pointing deeper into the tunnel they apparently had fallen into. "Fresh air means a way to the surface. We just follow the fresh air."

"How do you know this?" Anuk asked.

Dan looked at her. "Man you are just full of questions aren't you?" He spoke. "Part of my genetic DNA is made up from an animal back in our time called a Timberwolf. My sense of smell, sight, hearing and taste is a hundred times more sensitive than a normal human."

"You said that before... your time. What do you mean?" Anuk asked her natural curiosity getting the better of her.

Dan met her eyes. "You got about ten years for me to try and explain it to you?" He asked with a smile. "Ok... listen, I'm from a base on the moon called EDEN. We..."

EAGLE FLIGHT ENROUTE TO NEW MEMPHIS

Ben's fingers caressed the control stick of the MH-53EJ PAVE LOW IV adjusting their course by one degree. Ben was in his glory, as the PAVE LOW IV was the aircraft he had started his career in the Air Force flying. At the time, it was the most highly advanced flying craft of any country in the world, rivaling even the space shuttle. It was the only rotary winged aircraft in the world that had an auto-pilot, terrain following and terrain avoidance radars, inertia navigation system, GPS Doppler computer system, and integrated avionics. The cockpit of the MH-53 was almost as sophisticated as that of the Raptor, and indeed, many of the systems on the Raptor were first used on the MH-53EJ. When they had discovered the vacuum sealed underground hanger at Luke AFB outside of Phoenix Ben had been thrown back dozens of years as they discovered twelve MH-53EJ's and all the equipment needed to maintain them for the next fifty years.

Ben's helmeted head maintained its position on the landscape in front of them as they flew only a hundred feet above the trees. The visor of the helmet was down, casting a eerie greenish glow on the land below him, but giving him a perfect view of the surrounding terrain. He didn't need to adjust the controls in any major way as the terrain following radar was slaved to the main computer and doing the work for him.

They had received the call from Martin three hours before, and because of their location and the number of additional passengers, Martin did not want to risk exposing a Raptor to Alliance troops. He wanted to make it appear as if elves and humans conducted this operation. Ben immediately had thought of the Pave Low IVs and decided he would fly the mission himself. There were only three other pilots qualified to fly the Pave Lows, and none of them had even half as many hours in one as he did. His helmeted head turned to his left and he saw the second and third Pave Lows maintaining a rigid formation not far off his wing and he smiled to himself at the skill they were displaying. He had trained his pilots well in the Raptors, and that was being seen in their ability to adapt to the Pave Low.

Ben turned his head the other way and saw Tina in the co-pilot's seat, her helmeted head keeping a close watch on her instruments.

"How is everyone doing?" Ben asked cheerfully.

Tina turned her head to look at him. "You actually learned how to fly in one of these things?" She asked him.

Ben chuckled. "These babies were state of the art until the Raptor came out." Ben answered. "You're just spoiled."

"They are very loud." Endith's voice came from behind them at the engineer's console.

Ben nodded. "Inside here they are, but the bad guys won't know we're coming until we set down on their asses, not unless they are very attentive." He replied.

"It's like flying a museum." Tina commented from her seat putting the rib to Ben.

He looked at her. "Hey... I take offense at that remark."

Tina chuckled from her seat. "I know." She spoke.

"Do not worry Ben." Endith's voice cooed in his helmet. "You were no museum last night or this morning."

Ben felt his chest swell at the memories of Endith's cries of passionate orgasm and the way she clutched at his shoulders as they had sex a few hours earlier. "Well thank you Endith." Ben spoke looking at Tina. "Maybe I'll be extra special tonight."

"That's just because she gets you so hot." Tina spoke playfully.

"Hey..." Ben replied. "Whatever works right?"

"Perhaps we'll see if he can handle both of us tonight Endith." Tina spoke turning back to the diminutive female elf that now shared their bed and their lives.

"I would like that very much." Endith replied with a twinkle in her eyes just as her console began to beep. Her helmeted head turned, "Contact! I'm picking up Martin's beacon." She exclaimed, "Ten miles."

Ben nodded and they became all business again. "Ok folks time to put our work hats on! Spin up those mini guns back there," Ben spoke into his mic to the three elf gunners that rode in the spacious rear of the Pave Low. "Kenny... Paula... give me a thousand meters of separation on either side. We'll be doing the pick up; you guys just make sure no one bites me in my ass."

"Copy Eagle Lead," Kenny's voice answered.

"A thousand meters it is boss," The female voice answered.

"Ok... I'm taking it down to twenty-five feet off the river." Ben spoke. "Eagles Two and Three maintain a hundred feet and look for targets. Mini guns are free."

NEW MEMPHIS

Deval gripped the table and flung it across the room of Weston Torcrum's now abandoned living room while Marcus studied the hidden room from the top of the stairs.

"That fucking half elf whore!" He screamed.

Marcus turned as the senior Alliance sergeant walked up to him silently, avoiding Deval at all cost. "What have you discovered?" Marcus asked.

"They were here until very recently Colonel." The man replied. "I estimate no more than eight hours ago. The chamber below appears large enough for at least two dozen elves, and there are bedrolls and uneaten rations as well."

Marcus nodded. "Her family has been running an underground network for slaves it seems." He spoke absently. He looked at the sergeant. "Contact the garrison commander and make sure that there have been no attempts to breach the wall. And then spread out the search of the area to include all the way to the river. They must be attempting to leave from somewhere nearby."

"Do you think they are still in the area Colonel?" The man asked.

"There has been no attempt to leave the city as of yet." Marcus spoke. "The security checkpoints at the gates report no sign of Torcrum or any who have been trying to leave. That tells me they are still within the city and waiting for the right moment to leave."

The sergeant nodded and moved to quickly exit the room. Marcus turned to look at Deval as he glared at a photo of Selene and her family.

"I want them found." Deval growled. "I want to listen to Weston Torcrum scream as I castrate him in front of his wife and son. And when he is almost near death I will rape his elf wife in her ass in front of his broken eyes before I gut him."

"I have issued orders to the garrison here to begin a wide search." Marcus spoke. "We do not know how deeply this underground network goes. Perhaps we should begin interrogating slaves."

Deval slammed the photo against the far wall and watched as it shattered into hundreds of pieces. He turned to Marcus and shook his head. "No." He replied. "If we begin to randomly arrest and detain slaves and interrogate them to the point where they are no longer useful to their owners we will lose what little support we have among the local city governors."

"I do not understand why we allow the governors to have as much power as they do." Marcus asked. "It is symbolic only."

Deval nodded. "Perhaps... but sometimes a symbolic show of support goes much further than an iron grip squeezing the life from a victim."

Marcus shrugged his shoulders. "It is a waste of time if you ask me." He spoke. "It appears they had several adults and at least a dozen small children with them when they departed." He reported. "They will not be able to move well enough to avoid detection for very long with a group such as that."

"Find them Marcus." Deval hissed. "Find them and bring Torcrum to me. I wish to inflict upon him the shame his daughter has brought upon me."

"What about Minister Wiseman?" Marcus asked. "He too knows of Selene's betrayal."

Deval looked at him, his eyes cruel and utterly ruthless. "I have already given orders that will silence Minister Wiseman, permanently."

Marcus nodded. "A wise move Minister, a very wise move."

Martin moved up next to Anja and Ealin on the second floor of the dock warehouse where they sat in front of the half smashed out window.

"What's up?" He asked.

Anja looked at him and held out the small binoculars. "Take a look." She spoke.

Martin brought the binos up to his eyes and trained them on where she motioned. The sun was less than an hour from coming up, dawn breaking over the horizon, and it was easy enough to see the Alliance troops off loading from several trucks in the small clearing four blocks away.

"Oh boy," Martin spoke.

"They started arriving a few minutes ago." Anja spoke, her eyes going back to the window as Martin watched the troops through the binos. "They're just milling around right now, but I'm betting they are fixing to start searching this area very soon."

Martin nodded and lowered the small binos. "I never bet with a beautiful woman." He spoke meeting her jade green eyes. "Ben is seven minutes out... coming in from the north. Ealin keep an eye on them and report their movements. Anja get the others ready to move."

Anja nodded... keeping her face impassive. Martin's words had struck a cord within her, and she didn't know what to make of them as she watched him blend back into the shadows. She turned slowly to Ealin who was watching her intently. "What?" She asked.

"I did not know that you and Lyca Ohtar knew each other in... in such a way." Ealin spoke innocently.

Anja nodded her head slowly. "It was a long time ago." She answered, "In another time and another world."

"It appears to be not as long as you might think." Ealin said.

Anja shook her head to clear her thoughts. Martin's eyes had done to her just now what they had done to her all those years ago before he had taken her to bed and fucked her into a multi-orgasmic state of pure bliss. "He has Dysea now." Anja said, fighting the warmth that was spreading through her at the memories of that night.

"Are you so sure?" Ealin asked softly before bringing the binos back up to his eyes and turning to look out the window. "Perhaps *they* want you as well."

Anja didn't respond to him as she gathered up her silenced HK and headed for the stairs.

The Alliance guards walking the pedestrian bridge over the river were bored. They hated this duty, and the eight hour period they had to sit in the guard houses on either side or walk the half mile back and forth across the top of the raging river forty feet below them. They had not received the heightened security alert and were totally unaware of renegade slaves and humans in their location. The pedestrian bridge had been built to keep gangs and mutant creatures from infiltrating into New Memphis via the river as they had done when the city was first beginning. The concertina wire beneath the bridge was deployed in long strands and done by boat. There was no way an animal or human could pick their way through the ten strand wire without raising some alarm. On either side of the river the concertina wire was anchored into concrete pillars nearly two feet thick.

The two guards were in the center of the bridge when they stopped to light cigarettes and chat. They were young, new recruits into the Alliance army, and this was their first night on actual duty.

It would be their last.

“What’s that?” One of the men asked, lowering his smoke to gaze out over the river.

“What’s what?”

“Don’t you hear it?”

“I don’t hear anything but the river.” The second man proclaimed as he took a long pull from the smoke.

“It sounds like... it sounds like a turbine.” The first guard told him.

“A turbine,” His companion spoke. “Freddie you’re getting senile on me. There is nothing out here but you, me and the river. Just like always. The drill sergeant said this would be the most boring duty of all.”

“I’m telling you I heard it!” The guard called Freddie spoke moving from the center of the twenty foot wide bridge to the side that faced north. “And it’s getting louder.”

His partner listened harder and then he too could hear the whine of what sounded like a powerful turbine. “What the hell is that?” He asked as he made his way to where his partner stood near the edge of the bridge.

“I don’t know. I’ve never heard anything like that before.” Freddie replied. “It sounds almost like an aircraft engine or something.”

“Aircraft engine, out here?” His partner asked. “There’s nothing out here but us.”

“I’m just telling you what it sounds like.” Freddie snapped. “Maybe you better call it in.”

“Call it in? Are you crazy? They’ll think we are both nuts and put us on shit duty for a month.” His eyes went wide as Freddie turned to look at him.

The guard called Freddie saw the look in his partner’s eyes and then looked down to see him urinate in his fatigue pants gripped in fear. He turned back around slowly and could hear quite clearly the whine of the powerful turbines now, and the sudden mass of air pushing down at him. His eyes grew wide when he saw the cockpit of the enormous, matte black helicopter looking directly at him from only fifty feet away. He could clearly see the pilot and co-pilot’s helmeted heads in the greenish lit cockpit.

And he could clearly see the barrel of the mini gun swing toward him in the eerie glow, and the helmeted head of the person operating that gun as they hung out the side.

Then Freddie and his fellow Alliance soldier died as a thirty round burst from the 20mm mini-gun chopped their bodies into bloody mush.

Ben jerked the nose of his Pave Low up ten more meters and sent them hurtling down the river towards the infra red beacon he saw in his helmet.

“Give me my diversion!” He barked over his radio.

“On it Eagle One,” Kenny answered. “Stand by for the fireworks.”

“Three is moving to cover position.” Paula’s voice spoke.

“One minute out!” Tina barked. “Stand by Marty... here we come!”

Martin squatted next to Anja just outside the old dock warehouse. Julie was on his opposite side, Tari close to her, and Lynwe just to Anja’s right. The elves and the rest of their two teams were lined up just inside the warehouse for the moment that Ben set down. They would run in a single file to the rear of the MH-53EJ and up the ramp.

“One minute!” Martin spoke. “We need to make this orderly as possible folks. Space out between the elves, the Pave Low is loud when she’s on the tarmac, and I don’t want anyone wandering out of the file and getting chopped in half by the blades.”

Their heads all turned as a massive explosion to the northeast lit up the early morning sky. Kenny’s Pave Low was sweeping back and forth over the large vehicle depot and the three mini guns on his craft were tearing up the trucks and Hoppers with ease.

“Kenny is having fun.” Julie commented with a grin.

Ealin’s voice in their implants made them all tense. “Martin... Alliance troops are moving towards the depot!” His voice sounded excited. “But there is a small detachment that is sweeping towards your position from the south! They are in two Hoppers, roughly nine men.”

“Fuck!” Martin swore.

“I’m on it Skipper.” Julie spoke quickly beginning to move.

“Jules... don't be late.” Martin spoke.

Julie grinned again, “Me late? When have you ever known me to miss a flight home?” She turned to Tari and looked into his amber eyes. “You interested in a little payback?”

Tari's smile would have chilled a cobra to its core. “By all means,” He spoke.

Julie nodded and they headed around the edge of the building.

“What is going on?” Marcus screamed from next to the armored Hopper that was parked on old Auction Avenue.

The sergeant turned from the radio. “Someone is attacking the vehicle depot Colonel!” The man yelled. “A strange aircraft is firing down into the depot and destroying the vehicles!”

Marcus looked toward the rising black smoke and flames. “Deploy the entire garrison immediately!” He barked out the orders.

“They are already enroute Colonel!” The sergeant answered.

Marcus's keen eyes picked up something else as he looked toward the river. He glanced inside the Hopper and snatched up the binoculars. He brought them to his eyes and trained them on the area he had been watching. He watched as the whirling blades of an ancient helicopter dropped from site as it settled to the ground on the other side of some warehouses.

“There!” He screamed. “The attack on the depot is a diversion! Torcrum and the others are escaping from the riverbank! Divert the garrison there!”

Julie and Tari waited on either corner of the small alley road that led directly to the waterfront. They could see as Ben settled the big MH-53EJ to the ground gently several hundred meters away, as well as the civilians begin to run towards it. Julie peered around the corner quickly once more, spying the two Hoppers as they moved down the road. The shadows that she and Tari occupied were rapidly fading away as the sun rose and they needed to act quickly. She looked across the alley at Tari, seeing his amber eyes settle on her. She flashed two fingers and hefted her HK as further sign of what she wanted to do. Tari nodded and flipped his HK to full automatic. Julie held up three fingers and counted down. When she lowered the last finger both she and Tari stepped from around the corner and opened up.

The HK was designed as an all-purpose assault rifle with the properties of a sub machine gun and an assault rifle combined; the 10mm Teflon coated armor piercing rounds gave the HK74 the punch it needed while its basic design allowed for silenced operation and lightweight use. The caseless ammo allowed for high magazine content, and no worries of hot brass hitting the floor or ground and spooking the enemy in an urban environment.

That did not matter now however as both Julie and Tari each burned an entire magazine into the two Hoppers and those inside them. The 200 10mm rounds punched through the light armor and windshields of the Hoppers, tearing into engine drives and body parts, shredding flesh and splashing blood wetly over the interior of the two vehicles. The driver of the first Hopper caught two rounds directly through his chest, blowing his heart out the back of his seat and sending the Hopper careening into the nearby wall effectively blocking the street. The second Hopper fared a little better, but only because only three of the four occupants died. The man furthest away in the passenger seat had the presence of mind to duck down to try and protect himself and was hit by only one bullet which passed through the meat of his side. The other occupants of his Hopper were instantly chopped to bloody chunks, the second vehicle slamming into the first, the engine beginning to spark and smoke.

Tari was in the process of changing magazines when Julie sprinted over to him. “Let's go!” She yelled.

Tari ignored her and lifted the HK to pump another sustained burst into the two Hoppers. Julie grabbed his arm and pulled him hard towards her and he whirled to face her, eyes ablaze in hate and rage. It caused Julie to step back quickly. Tari saw the look of horror on her face and immediately the killing rage that had come over him passed. He shook his head. “Forgive me.” He spoke quickly. “I... I have much hatred for the Alliance.”

Julie stepped closer to him, her hand squeezing his thick forearm. "I understand Tari." She spoke softly. "I do. But now we need to get out of here."

Tari nodded. "You are right." He replied.

"They have everyone almost loaded. By the time we get back we..." Julie's words didn't come out as her head canted slightly and she turned her head.

"What is it?" Tari asked, knowing the hearing and senses of the Genomes were far superior to his own elf senses.

"Vehicles," Julie answered. "A lot of them, and they're getting closer. C'mon!" Julie grabbed his arm and they sprinted to the closest building on the waterfront, bounding up several flights of stairs. They found their way into a room facing the street and Julie went to the window. She didn't need the binoculars to see the dozen heavily armored Hoppers moving slowly down the main street toward them. "Shit! We got loads of company!"

Tari lifted the binos he carried and scanned the column of armored Hoppers, "T14 Hoppers." He reported. "They are heavily armored and each is capable of carrying a dozen troops. It is unlikely our weapons will do much against their armor."

"Ours might not, but our guardians will." Julie told him. "Eagle One from Raptor Three we need heavenly support, armored column moving towards your location. Respond."

"Raptor three standby; support is inbound your location, twenty seconds." Tina's voice replied immediately.

"Three this is one," Martin's voice filled her implant. "When air support arrives you carry your ass back here, and you can take that as a direct order."

"Understood Skipper," Julie answered. He turned to look at Tari. "Watch this."

It took only fifteen seconds for Paula's MH-53EJ to appear over the road from behind the column at a hundred feet off the ground. The attack was a complete surprise and completely devastating. The 20mm mini guns on both sides of the MH-53 spit death at the rate of 6000 rounds a minute, the tongue of flame from both guns nearly three feet long. Paula swept over the top of the column moving slow; her elf gunners dead on accurate in their concentration of fire. They knew the weak points of the T14 Hoppers, and this knowledge paid off as the armoring piercing rounds punched through the heavy armor of the Hoppers, shredding flesh and metal.

Julie looked at Tari in the rising sun of the morning as the explosions shook the ground around them, "Time to go handsome." She spoke with a smile and touching his arm.

Tari met her bright dark eyes, surprise written on his own face. No one had ever called him handsome before, and it left him quite speechless. He nodded finally and turned back to take one last look at the carnage being wrought further down the block. He lifted the binoculars once more and swept them over the column again, his blood going cold and his breath stopping as he saw the flash of white hair.

"Marcus!" Tari hissed.

Julie's face narrowed and she moved up next to him. "Are you sure?" She asked.

Tari nodded. "I know him intimately Julie." Tari spoke, his voice bordering on the edge of losing control. "I owe him much pain."

"Tari we need to go!" Julie spoke.

"We can not simply let him go." Tari snapped. "He has killed and maimed hundreds of my people."

Tari gripped his arm again. "This is not our mission Tari." She told him. "We need to exfil now!"

Tari looked at her. "You don't know what this man has done to my people, to me! He deserves to die horribly!"

"That may be true... but if you go off half cocked now; you'll compromise the mission and get yourself killed!" Julie snapped.

"I don't care!" Tari snapped back at her.

"But I do!" Julie barked. She wasn't sure what made her say that, but it came as naturally to her as breathing.

Tari met her eyes for a long moment, seeing something in them that he had not seen in the eyes of a woman before. He nodded. "We will go!" He said quietly.

Julie led them down the stairs at a dead run, bursting into the street from the side of the building. They didn't break stride as they headed for the Ben's MH-53EJ. They could see the last of the civilians boarding the craft as they sprinted for the helicopter. Paula still circled above the armored column like a predatory bird, her elf gunners cutting loose with burst after burst of concentrated fire. Many of the Alliance troops had never come under any sort of sustained fire, and after seeing almost all of their armor shredded by the high velocity armor piercing rounds, and many of their fellow troops chopped into bloody bits, none of them had any desire to stick their heads out from the holes they had found.

At the moment Marcus was being held down and covered with the bodies of two senior human sergeants who were attempting to protect him at all costs. As Marcus himself had never been under any sort of air attack before, he remained where he was, not wishing to move and expose himself to unnecessary risk.

Another Alliance soldier skidded to a stop next to Marcus. "Colonel they've destroyed all the armor!" He yelled above the whine of turbine engines and mini gun bursts. "Half our force is dead, many are wounded! What do we do?"

"We do nothing!" Marcus yelled back. "Do you have a death wish? This was not some operation that was thrown together! This was carefully planned and executed. The humans and half elves have grown smarter! Did you bring anti-air missiles?"

"We are not allowed to store them at the garrison headquarters Colonel." One of the sergeants replied as he pushed himself off Marcus and to one knee.

"Whose fool order was that?" Marcus spat as he sat up.

"The Garrison Commander Major Vallow sir," The man answered.

Marcus got to his feet slowly and turned to look down the street through the smoke and haze and flames. He watched with his keen elf eyes as two figures boarded the ramp, one a tall human male, the other a shorter female with red hair. The male turned to look in his direction as the ramp closed slowly while the big helicopter began to climb into the air. Marcus could have sworn that the figure was smiling at him.

"I want to know how they got into the city." Marcus spoke turning to look at the two sergeants who had protected him. "You two just became my personal aides. Question who you must, search what you will... but find me answers!"

The two men nodded quickly, "Restrictions Colonel?" The older of the two asked.

Marcus looked at them, his amber eyes burning in hate, "None at all."

Anja looked at Martin as Ben lifted the MH-53EJ into the sky slowly and began to accelerate smoothly. "What did you see?" She asked softly.

Martin looked at her. "What do you mean?"

Anja smiled. "Don't try it Martin Hunter. I know you well enough to know that you saw something, or someone that held your attention. I would say it was either a bad guy, or a very attractive woman."

Martin grinned. "Anja... you wound me." He spoke as his eyes went to the ramp now as it locked into place. The large ramp of the MH-53EJ locked halfway up, the scene below in the streets of the city still very visible. Martin's eyes caught the bright flash from a nearby rooftop and the grin on his face disappeared. "Ben evade now!" He screamed as he stepped in front of Anja without hesitation.

Anja heard the alarm in his voice and her combat senses lit off as well as he stepped in front of her. She was close enough to Martin to hear the wet thud and see his body go rigid and teeter towards her. "Marty!" She screamed.

"Sni... Sniper," Martin gasped as his eyes flared and he fell forward into her arms just as his three word command to Ben registered and the MH-53EJ slew violently to the right.

The combination of the helicopter's quick movement and Martin stumbling into her arms caused Anja to lose her balance and fall backwards, Martin in her grasp. He twisted his body enough, wrapping his arms around her as they fell and he took the impact on his right side.

"You've been keeping an eye on me Anja." Martin spoke the words softly as he looked up at her.

Anja looked flustered. "I... I have not!" She hissed at him in a slightly defensive whisper, meeting his dark eyes with her jade green orbs and seeing the pain in his eyes and the fact that he was fading fast.

Martin smiled again and leaned close to her ear. "That's too bad." He said softly again. "You know, you're still just as delicious looking as when we first met. And now that you're part like... like me... you smell even sweeter." Martin's arms went limp and his eyes closed.

Anja stood there in stunned silence as a warm feeling rushed through her at his words and she caught his head before it impacted the steel floor of the helicopter. "Martin!" Anja screamed at him. She moved her body off his and pushed him over onto his side. She saw the blood on the floor of the helicopter and the large caliber entry wound just under his shoulder blade. "Fuck! She swore looking up and seeing Talia Torcrum gazing at her wide eyed. "My bag," Anja yelled pointing to the medical knapsack. "Give me my bag!"

Anja's voice spurred Talia into action and she moved quickly to get the bag just as Julie and Tari came towards them from the cockpit. Julie's face filled with worry at seeing her Skipper on the ground and Anja covered in his blood.

"Anja!" Julie snapped skidding to a halt next to her.

Anja was tearing open her bag with one hand while holding Martin on his side. "A sniper," Anja spoke, "On one of the roofs! Martin... he got in front of me Julie! He took the bullet for me! Hold him up... I need to treat him. The bullet is still inside him!"

Julie's hands grabbed Martin's unconscious form and held him on his side as Anja dug in her bag. "Tari... help me!"

Tari settled onto the deck next to her and grabbed Martin's side as Julie held his head off the deck. Anari scrambled over next to Anja and began to rip open the back of Martin's vest and fatigue top.

The sniper brought the rifle down from his shoulder, his steel gray eyes emotionless and unblinking. "Slayer One from Slayer three, negative hit. I say again negative hit."

"What is your status?" The voice spoke from within his implant.

"Raptor One must have caught a flash from my scope. He stepped in front of target just as I fired." The sniper answered.

"You hit Raptor One?" The voice asked incredulous.

"Affirmative," The sniper answered. "Target is still alive."

"Fuck!" The voice echoed, "Damage to Raptor One?"

"He would have caught the round high in the shoulder." The sniper answered the simple question dispassionately. "It shouldn't be fatal with his healing system."

"Damn! He can still create havoc wherever he goes." The voice answered.

"Colonel if I may ask sir, why are we going after him and his team?" The sniper spoke as he began to break down his rifle. "Commander Peterson is one of us now Colonel, at least partially. You've seen the reports."

"We don't question orders Sergeant." The voice answered.

"Roger sir." The sniper replied, "Orders Colonel? Do we assist Colonel Marcus?"

"Fuck that half breed elf!" The reply was quick. "Let him clean up his own mess. Move to the exfiltration point. We need to report to the President."

"Roger that, moving now," The sniper answered.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

MOUNTAIN CITY

Tarifa sat on the edge of Aihola's bed, her eyes gazing on her new Drow lover and Mistress as the sun began to creep up in the horizon and cast light into the small window. Aihola's face was quite peaceful as she slept, her soft pink lips open slightly as she breathed. Tarifa remembered vividly the taste and texture of those wonderful lips as they had kissed her passionately and explored her body. Tarifa shifted her eyes and watched the rise and fall of her chest, Aihola's somewhat smaller but still very firm breasts hidden by the thin sheet, her

dark nipples pressing against the fabric. Her shimmering white hair was splayed across the pillow, soft and shiny in the early morning light. The sheet covered her lithe ebony body only partially, and Tarifa allowed her eyes to wander hungrily over the taut dark flesh of her muscular thigh and calf. Gazing on Aihola like this sent a shiver of pleasure through Tarifa as she remembered the events of the previous night. The pleasures she had shared with Aihola were unlike anything she had ever experienced. Even her times with Dysea had not compared to the sheer will breaking orgasms that Aihola had produced from her, or the enormous pleasure she had experienced simply by having her face snuggled between Aihola's delicious thighs. Aihola had dominated her completely, instructing her how to please her, demanding her to do things that gave them both untold pleasures. Tarifa had experienced orgasms more powerful than anything, just by simply having Aihola firmly in control of her every move. Yet unlike a typical Drow relationship, which Tarifa knew full well was usually very one sided for the dominant Drow, Aihola had returned every sliver of pleasure back upon her with undisguised passion, desire and glee.

Tarifa stared at Aihola's peaceful face, her thoughts rushing through her mind with clarity she had never known. Tarifa had been raised to hate the Drow, she had even killed many of them in the latter years of the war they had fought, yet lying before her now was not a hated enemy. On the bed before her was a woman Tarifa had come to desire almost painfully. Tarifa knew that a small part of it was the taboo of the Drow that Aihola was breaking by sleeping with her, a small part of it was the fact that the contrast in the color of their skin drove her mad with desire, but most of all Tarifa knew it was because of the woman Aihola was. Tarifa had learned much about Aihola in their time together, relaxing in the hot tub simply talking of different things, and she had caught a glimpse of the woman Aihola truly was. On the bed in front of her was not a hated Drow enemy, but a complex and intelligent woman who had quite unexpectedly wormed her way into Tarifa's very soul. Aihola was a skilled and deadly warrior without question, but there was a side to her that Tarifa had only glimpsed at until last night. Aihola was Drow yes, and it was in her genes to dominate and be superior, but she had not hesitated in giving pleasure to Tarifa every which way she could the previous evening. She had even gone so far as to do things to her that Tarifa had never considered. Looking at her, Tarifa felt no more questions in her. This woman had wormed her way into her heart as surely as the sun came up every morning. And Tarifa relished that feeling more than anything in her life right now.

Tarifa reached out and softly ran her fingers along Aihola's shoulder and upper arm, causing her to stir and her amber eyes to slowly open. Aihola turned her head and saw Tarifa, and a small smile creased her soft pink lips. She gazed at her with a longing that made Tarifa want to lose herself within the pleasures of those lips once more. Aihola's amber eyes saw the sun coming up through the window, and she came instantly awake, her eyes ever alert as she bolted upright in the bed, holding the sheet over her breasts.

"It... it is morning!" She gasped. "Tarifa you must..."

Tarifa smiled and took her hand quickly. "Fear not *Nya Istel*." She spoke softly. "Telan is already gone. I woke him earlier and sent him off with a smile on his putrid face, and none the wiser."

Aihola looked at her, her eyes taking on a shamed expression. "Forgive me Tarifa... I have been remiss in my duties. I should not have allowed myself to act in such a way last night. It has... it has put you in danger."

"Why in the name of the gods would I be angry over something that I found so overwhelmingly wonderful Aihola?" Tarifa asked her. "And it did nothing to put me in danger, so put that thought from your mind."

"I allowed... I allowed my personal feelings to override caution Tarifa." Aihola told her, gathering the sheet around her body and preparing to get out of the bed. "I took what I wanted and my actions put you at risk. That was not what I had intended to..."

Tarifa silenced her words by covering her soft lips with her own and kissing her deeply. Aihola's instinctive reaction was to grasp Tarifa's head with a moan of desire and kiss her back harder, thrusting her tongue between Tarifa's lips with determination and domination. Tarifa groaned in delight, sinking into Aihola's arms, surrendering to her Mistress as Aihola returned her kiss and she gave herself to the sensations coursing through her. It felt so gloriously right and wonderful to surrender to her like this.

Aihola quickly brought her raging passions under control and pulled back from their kiss with barely concealed reluctance. "Tarifa..." She gasped softly. "Someone might come in." Aihola stared into Tarifa's sapphire eyes as they opened slowly with a dreamy expression on them, and Aihola had to fight down the urge

to take her right there. Seeing her face and lips so close, Aihola realized she had some very un-Drow like feelings rippling through her, and they were feelings she now welcomed with open arms.

Tarifa nodded slowly, a look of disappointment on her face that did not go unnoticed by Aihola. "You... you are correct." She spoke as she leaned back on the bed. She closed her beautiful eyes briefly as if composing herself and then opened them again to look at her with an expression that caused Aihola's heart to leap. "I brought us breakfast." She spoke motioning to the small table where the hot tea and small breakfast biscuits rested.

Aihola looked at the table and noticed the smell and shape of the biscuits for the first time. They were an ancient Drow recipe that she hadn't had in years and her eyes grew bright, "Lunta biscuits!" She exclaimed, holding the sheet around her as she reached for the sweet breakfast biscuit.

"I hope you don't mind." Tarifa said as she began to pour two mugs of tea. "I inquired of the Holy One a few days ago in regards to foods that the Drow considered delicacies. He told me that these biscuits were among your people's greatest invention."

Aihola chose one of the biscuits and took a bite out of it, her eyes closing in bliss as the warm biscuit practically melted in her mouth. Aihola opened her eyes as she chewed and looked at Tarifa. "Tarifa... these are... they are delicious." She said.

Tarifa beamed with pride and set the tea down in front of her. "I'm glad."

Aihola plucked at a piece of the biscuit on the edge of her lips and looked at Tarifa closely. "Do you not have to appear before the Council soon?" She asked.

Tarifa shook her head. "I postponed the meeting until tomorrow before we leave for Salina. I wanted..." Tarifa looked at her shyly. "I wanted to spend as much time as I could with you."

Aihola suddenly looked very embarrassed. "Tarifa... I... I apologize again for my actions last night." She spoke softly. "I should not have... I should not have treated you in such a way."

"Why?" Tarifa asked her. "I did not exactly protest in any way." Tarifa smiled and her eyes turned seductive as she remembered their actions, "Quite the opposite in fact if my memory serves me correctly."

"You... you are Queen of the High Elves Tarifa." Aihola replied slowly, her own emotions raging within her now. "I am..."

Aihola looked at her, and knew without question at that very moment that she had fallen in love with Tarifa. A taboo that was so anchored in their Drow culture, two females being lovers and Aihola found that she was surrendering to it with no qualms. Tarifa had found her way into her heart and soul as easily as any blade could have. The Queen of the High Elves had a body that caused her own pussy to pulse with excitement, a body that Aihola could explore every night for the rest of her life and never tire of. Yet Tarifa was also the Queen of the High Elves, and any relationship that Aihola desired could never...

"Don't do that." Tarifa's words interrupted her thoughts and she looked at Tarifa who was gazing at her intently.

"Don't do what?" Aihola asked.

"Don't you dare question the feelings that your heart tells you are right." Tarifa told her. "And don't question whether our relationship will continue or is right? That is what you are thinking isn't it?"

"Tarifa you are the Queen of the High Elves." Aihola spoke calmly. "I am a Drow Assassin. There could never..."

Tarifa moved much faster than Aihola could track her with her eyes thanks to her newly enhanced genome DNA, and suddenly her face was within inches of her own, her sapphire eyes having changed to the sapphire orbs outlined in black. Aihola also saw the tips of her fangs extending past her soft lips. It no longer frightened her when Tarifa changed, and she stared into those sapphire orbs with desire and love.

"I know some of the taboos of your people Aihola." Tarifa spoke softly. "I am not a fool in regards to your culture *Nya Istel*. I have spent several nights deep in conversations with the Holy One, learning about the Drow and your history. He gave me many books and data pads to study. I know that you have broken one of the strongest taboos of your people already by taking me into your bed. That by itself speaks volumes of the person you have become. Before last night you were hesitant with me, knowing that I desired you so, and you did nothing. What happened to change that?"

Aihola found she could not tear her eyes from Tarifa's bright beautiful face. Tarifa called her *Nya Istel*, "My Light" in the elfin language, and those words caused Aihola's heart to pulse in joy, "My... my brother

Tari.” She answered softly. “In his message to me he told me that many of the cultures and traditions of our people had died with them. He said we no longer needed to adhere to customs and rules hundreds of years old. That we were free to take what we wanted, and that we would build the Drow again in a different image, a better image.”

“And I was what you wanted?” Tarifa asked shyly.

Aihola nodded slowly, “Since that very first night.” She replied honestly. “I... I have never felt for anyone what I feel for you. No woman and certainly no man. No one has elicited the emotions within me that you have stirred. It confused and frightened me until I saw the message from Tari. His words made it all so clear to me.”

“So... so what we shared last night you do not regret?” Tarifa asked softly, her voice holding hope and promise.

Aihola shook her head slowly with a smile. “No Tarifa, I do not regret it.” She moved closer to her, reaching out to caress her cheek. “Do you regret it *Tarinya Enda*?” **(Queen of my Heart)**

Tarifa welcomed Aihola’s touch and she smiled dreamily, “Never.” She replied softly. She reached up and took Aihola’s hand in hers. “And I hope it happens again and again, for as long as I have years on this earth.”

“What... what of your role as Queen? What of...” Aihola looked at Tarifa, her amber eyes searching Tarifa’s face. “It would never be accepted Tarifa.” Aihola asked.

“I will not lie to you Aihola.” Tarifa spoke honestly as well. “It would not be easy. I have... I have always searched for love. I... I believe I have finally found it with you. I do not care what you are... I only care what I feel when I am with you.” Tarifa got up and moved to the small window looking out over the top of Mountain City.

“But... Tarifa, I am Drow?” Aihola asked getting to her feet as well and moving up behind her slowly, her heart hammering in her chest as she waited to hear what Tarifa would say to that. Aihola was prepared for the worst though she hoped for something more.

Tarifa turned and looked at her. “I do not care *Nya Istel*.” She spoke. “I have fallen in love with you. I don’t please you enough... is that it? I’m not submissive enough? Tell me *Nya Istel*; tell me Mistress, I do not want to lose you.”

Aihola’s amber eyes did nothing to hide the feelings that ripped through her at Tarifa’s words. It was more than she had expected or hoped for, and it made her soul sing with new found joy. She looked up into the eyes of her taller lover. “Ta... Tarifa,” She started to say.

Tarifa stepped closer to her, pressing her body to Aihola’s and taking her hands in her own. “I have fallen very much in love with you Aihola of the Family Anatyla. It has happened very quickly I know, but I know what my heart is telling me and... and I truly hope I am not making a fool of myself and you feel the same in return.”

Aihola stared at her for a long moment, the silence in the room so complete she thought for sure she could hear the pounding of both their hearts in the still morning air. She stared into Tarifa’s eyes, memorizing every contour of her beautiful face and let the words come. “You are not making a fool of yourself Tarifa, and I do feel the very same thing. More powerful than anything I have ever felt for anyone.” She answered with a loving smile.

Tarifa stepped closer to her now and kissed her softly. It was a kiss of two people very much in love. There was no dominance by either of them, only a deep kiss that drew them together even more. “You do not know how that makes my heart sing.” Tarifa spoke softly after they had reluctantly parted.

“What of your mother and everyone else? What will they say?” Aihola finally asked her, her hand coming up to caress Tarifa’s cheek and jaw line.

Tarifa smiled dreamily once more. “I care not what they will say.” She said firmly. “I had something torn from me once before because I listened to others. I almost lost the one man and woman who are like the dearest brother and sister I have ever had. We are rocks for each other, and while we may have shared something long ago, it has blossomed and grown into what it is now, a deep abiding friendship that nothing could ever come between. I will never allow that to happen again, concerning anything, least of all my feelings for you.”

“Tarifa I...” Aihola began.

“I will be your willing slave in all things private to us *Nya Istel*.” Tarifa spoke softly with a knowing and delightful smile, pressing her body against Aihola’s harder, “Most especially in our bed. I enjoyed my role immensely, and I will do whatever you ask of me my Mistress.”

Aihola smiled seductively, “As did I... my slave.” She answered squeezing Tarifa’s hands and leaning over to nuzzle her cheek with her lips. “But never in public Tarifa. I honor and love you too much, and you are still Queen. I want us to be equals in everything we do Tarifa. Is that even possible?”

Tarifa traced a finger over her cheek, relishing in the warmth and radiance of Aihola’s amber colored eyes. “It will be soon *Nya Istel*.” She spoke softly in response. “We have much to accomplish in the months ahead, and you must meet Martin as well as the others. I will not hide from them what we share, and he would be angry with me if I tried. The time we spent together opened our eyes to many new things, and we have so much to do. Once all of us have broken from such old traditions and customs we can be together as we want to be Aihola. Until that day, we must be patient and enjoy what little privacy we will have here to the fullest. Can you do that?”

Aihola nodded confidently. “I have waited over a hundred years to feel what I feel for you Tarifa, Queen of the High Elves. Another few months being cautious of our love will not be so long to wait, and then I intend to announce it to the world.”

Tarifa smiled. “You will have to beat me to that.”

Aihola smiled and leaned forward to kiss her gently. “By the gods you are delicious my love.” She spoke huskily. “How did... how did Dysea let you get away?”

Tarifa smiled at her words and drew Aihola back towards the bed. “I believe that Dysea’s true heart lies with Martin and perhaps someone she has yet to discover. She did not say as much when she was here, but I could feel her soul longing to return to Martin, and longing for the touch of someone else. It was radiating from her strongly.”

“He is the core isn’t it?” Aihola asked as they settled onto the edge of the bed.

Tarifa nodded slowly. “The moment he returned to our planet, events were set in motion that will forever change the face of everything we know. I think you will be impressed. Aside from his obvious physical attractions and he has quite a few of them,” She spoke with a knowing smile. “He is perhaps the most compassionate man I have ever known. Yet that compassion is laced with steel. If you are his friend he will do anything within his power for you, but if you are his enemy... well let’s just say I have seen the side of him that no one wants to see. It is not a pretty sight when he becomes angry, and part of me believes that there is much he does not let anyone see. Not even Dysea.”

“You are looking forward to seeing him aren’t you?” Aihola asked with absolutely no malice or jealousy in her voice at all.

Tarifa nodded slowly with a smile. “I have missed him a great deal. He... he is like a brother to me now... a brother and dearest friend. You know what it feels like to feel as if you are alone? When someone you are close to... someone who shares your values and ideals and you are close too, you know what it feels like when you are apart from them. That is what it feels like to have not seen him in so long. I thought perhaps I had lost him and Dysea... their friendship and caring... but her visit here made me see that it has perhaps made the bond between us stronger. A bond that now includes you.” She looked at Aihola and slipped her arms around her waist pulling her ebony body tightly against hers. “Enough talk of that, I am with you now my Mistress. How... how may I please you?” She said.

Aihola smiled as passion again swept through her and she allowed it to consume her. She pushed Tarifa back onto the bed her amber eyes filled with desire and hunger as she spread her body out on top of Tarifa. “Yes... yes you are... my slave, and I’m sure I will come up with something over the next few hours.” She spoke before lowering her lips to Tarifa’s and pulling her body to hers.

EDEN (FORMERLY JUNCTION CITY UTAH)

Dysea stood on the tarmac of the airport her blood boiling in anger and her heart aching with worry as she paced in front of Vengal. She wore the standard dark gray fatigues she had adopted after coming to Eden. They were practical and comfortable yet did nothing to hide her figure in any way. Her long platinum hair

cascaded past her shoulders, framing her face and falling to nearly the top of her tight ass. Buckled around her waist was a utility belt that held a holster for her K-12 automatic on her left hip, and the long bladed Wood Elf fighting knife was strapped to her right thigh. She had spent the last twenty minutes communicating directly with Anja after they both tore new assholes into the communications officer in the tower. Dysea had come immediately to the airport when Leland had contacted her that they were inbound and what had happened on their mission. It was here that she discovered that Martin's team was also inbound from their mission, but that Martin had been wounded. It took another thirty minutes of screaming and yelling before she had spoken directly with Anja.

Dysea had lit into Vengal the moment he had come down the ramp her face a mask of rage. Leland stood at the top of the ramp, Cathy next to him as they watched. They saw roughly a dozen and a half of Vengal's Wood Elf Rangers approach, led by the man Leland recognized as Matarn. Tony and Radama stood to one side of the lowered ramp, Dysea's five person security detachment spread out in a loose circle around her, Vengal and the others.

"...realize what you have done?" Dysea ranted, only inches from Vengal's face. "Do you have any idea what your actions will do?"

"I was only attempting to rescue my daughter!" Vengal protested.

"You have used us!" Dysea screamed. "You used us to accomplish something you could not do yourself! You knew this!"

"She is my daughter Dysea!" Vengal spoke softly. "The only daughter I have left."

"You should have been forthright the moment you arrived in our presence!" Dysea screamed. "I would have done everything in my power to give you the help you needed. Everything! Instead you betrayed my trust and what's worse you betrayed Martin's trust!"

The young elf who had arrived after Vengal and the others departed stepped forward now. Matarn came from a very influential Wood Elf family and thought very highly of himself. He was very handsome with fair skin and long blond hair. His blue eyes were bright and clear, but they also held a small amount of malice in them. It was also obvious to even the casual observer that he did not care for anyone or anything that was not elfin in nature.

"He is no elf!" Matarn snapped. "Why should we care in the least if what we told him was the truth? We should not trust these human hybrids!"

"Matarn keep your silence!" Vengal hissed at him viciously.

"I will not!" Matarn barked again. "Anuk is sworn to me! She will be my wife! She belongs to me! She has been a slave and defiled by those like these men and women for too long and in what should have been a simple operation she should be back here with us and not trapped with some black skinned barbarian who is neither human nor elf!"

"These men and women are not like the others!" Vengal snapped.

"They are all the same!" Matarn answered. "We are superior to them in every way. All of them are barbarians as far as I am concerned!"

Dysea turned her head slowly to look at Matarn, seeing the look of astonishment on Vengal's face at Matarn's words. "Does this arrogant young fool speak for you now Vengal?" Dysea asked her eyes boring into Matarn.

"No my Queen, he does not." Vengal answered softly.

"She is no longer Queen!" Matarn almost shouted. "My sister is Queen now! And it was she who sanctioned this operation! An operation we should have never revealed to these people! Their incompetence has most likely cost me my most treasured property!"

Vengal's dark eyes glared at Matarn, "Property? My daughter is no one's property!" He growled. "You would do well to remember that!"

"You promised your daughter's hand to me!" Matarn spoke.

"That is true... but she is still an individual!" Vengal replied. "You speak of her as some sort of possession."

"We will not have this discussion here." Matarn growled. "And it matters not now. Because of these fools and their incompetence, she is lost to us. I am quite sure that this black skinned barbarian is having his way with her even as we speak. We..."

Matarn's eyes grew wide when he felt the prick of the razor sharp blade press against the soft flesh under his jaw. Dysea was directly in front of him now, her emerald eyes outlined in black and her lips curled back over her fangs. Her arm was extended, holding the Wood Elf Shakur ritual fighting knife in its position. The blade had moved from the sheath on her thigh to its present position in less than a single blink of an eye. The men with Matarn had not seen anyone ever move so quickly, not even an elf and they were slow in reacting, their weapons coming up almost in slow motion. They were also far too slow and froze in mid motion when they heard the snicker of bolts slamming home driving live rounds into rifle chambers, and the barrels of a dozen HK-74 rifles jamming into their bodies in various locations. Their eyes also heard the mechanical sound of the retractable turret in the side of the Raptor behind Dysea extending and locking into place, a female elf behind the controls of the 30mm chain cannon.

Dysea glared at Matarn as a predator would look upon its prey. Her extremely cold and emotionless emerald green orbs outlined in black gazed at him with the finality of death's touch.

"You stand closer to death's door than at any other time in your pathetic life." Dysea's words were measured and filled with an icy calm that sent a shiver down Matarn's spine unlike anything he had ever felt. "You speak of a man who has more honor within him than you have common sense. The only reasons... and I do mean the only reasons... that you still stand there now and are not on the ground attempting to hold your innards inside your body, are due to General Vengal and the relationship we have shared in the past, and the fact that Anuk is betrothed to you." Dysea stepped closer to Matarn, keeping the blade pressed tightly to his throat, a thin trickle of blood beginning to slide down his neck, staining the blade. Dysea's black outlined emerald eyes stared at Matarn intently. "If *Nauta Melme* were here you would already be dead Matarn, don't doubt that for a single moment." The sounds of the PAVE LOW III approaching caused Dysea to turn her head and look to the sky for a moment. She glanced at Leland who stood on the end of the ramp his HK-74 leveled at two of Vengal's Wood Rangers, "Leland... place Matarn and the others under house arrest. General Vengal will be kept separate from them. Insure they want for nothing, but they are not to be allowed free access to anyplace in Eden City, or any type of communication equipment. Make sure you search them thoroughly and take anything that might be used as a weapon."

Leland nodded, "As you order Dysea." He spoke.

"You have no right to do this!" Matarn gasped, even with the blade against his skin.

Dysea turned back to him. "I have every right to do this. You have used us once, and I will not allow you to do so again. Daniel Simpson is like a beloved brother to Martin Hunter young Matarn. They have fought and survived in places you and I could not possibly imagine, they have seen things that we could never hope to understand. I dare say if anything has happened to Daniel due to your deception, you will not have long left in this world." Dysea took her blade away. "Take them."

"Dysea..." Vengal began to speak but Dysea shook her head quickly.

"We will speak later." She spoke, her words carrying firmness in them that Vengal did not question.

Vengal bowed his head slightly as Leland stepped up to him, "Until later." He said.

Dysea had already dismissed him as she turned to watch Ben bring the PAVE LOW III in for a landing. She could see the medical Hopper racing across the tarmac toward them to transport Martin to the clinic. Dysea's heart was caught in her throat at the moment as she contemplated just how important Martin was to her.

The past few months spent at his side and in his bed had confirmed for her that no man would ever have her heart as he did. That first time within the cave had been a moment of passion and lust that Dysea had been denying for too long. Tarifa had triggered something within her that she had kept buried deep and Martin had been the one to release it. She had allowed him to enter her soul, and he had allowed her to see into his, bringing them closer together than she ever thought possible for two people to be. The first few weeks after being exiled from Mountain City they had made love to each other because it gave them peace. As the weeks passed by however their loving making became more intense, more spontaneous and considerably more passionate, and they would pleasure each other for hours on end. Dysea didn't believe that Tarifa loved her and Martin anymore than they loved Tarifa, but they would always share a friendship forged in the most trying of times and one that they could always turn to in times of need or council.

Dysea's love for Martin however was something else entirely. It consumed her being in a way she could not put into words. There were times when they were in bed where she would simply allow her eyes to wander over every contour of his body and face, marveling that such a specimen of a man belonged to her. And Martin

made no bones that he did indeed belong to Dysea. There were times lying within his embrace when she could also feel Martin's eyes on her doing the same thing, and she felt washed with warmth and love. Her feelings for Martin however consumed her very soul in the embrace of love.

Dysea had also recognized that a new part of her had awakened, and she no longer shied away from appraising other females. There were many beautiful women within Eden, human and elf alike, but for some reason she could not explain, her thoughts always returned to one and she found herself comparing whoever she was looking at to that woman.

Anja.

Perhaps it was because she knew of the relationship that Anja and Martin had shared however briefly so many years ago. Perhaps it was due to Anja's exotic Persian red hair and the smooth contours of her face and skin. Martin had told her everything about that night and what had transpired afterwards. Dysea could also detect the tone in his voice when he spoke about Anja. His words and tone softened, as they often did when he spoke to her. Dysea could tell that Anja still held a part of his heart that he kept locked away from even her.

Dysea had spent considerable time with Anja Peterson when she wasn't working beside Martin. The human/genome hybrid woman and she shared much more in common than she had first realized. At first Dysea had kept her distance because of the relationship she knew Anja was involved in. When she first began to change because of her love for Martin, Dysea began to hone her body in a way that she hadn't before, always waking early to go to the makeshift gym the genomes had established in a nearby school. She always saw Anja doing the same thing, but with Julie and Daniel at first, and then only Julie, and finally over these last few weeks she was alone. Dysea had found herself gazing at the definition of Anja's toned body. Anja's breasts were larger than her own, and while she was easily six inches shorter than Dysea, she had long legs for her height. Legs that ended in the most incredibly perfect ass Dysea had ever witnessed on a woman. Anja's abdomen rippled with muscles, lean and deeply tanned. Her legs were also muscular, yet they remained distinctly feminine. Her dark Persian red hair shimmered in the morning sunlight, and Dysea had found herself wondering on many occasions if this was her natural hair color.

As Dysea stood waiting as the large rotors on the flying machine slowed she silently gave thanks that it was Anja caring for Martin. Anja had contacted her immediately after getting his condition stable, and they both had resorted to cursing and screaming at befuddled and very frightened communications technicians until they could talk to one another clearly.

Dysea walked with the medics and her security detachment as the ramp on the PAVE LOW came down slowly and she felt a small smile crease her face when she heard the bellowing voice from within the strange flying machine Ben had been so ecstatic about discovering.

"I can damn well walk!" Martin's voice bellowed.

"If you try I'll knock you out and sedate you myself!" Anja's equally loud and firm voice replied as Dysea walked up in front of the now apprehensive elf medics from Anja's clinic.

Dysea stopped when she saw Anja standing over a sitting Martin, her hands on her hips and not budging a muscle. The front of her uniform was saturated in what Dysea assumed was Martin's blood, and her keen eyes detected the civilian elves and humans that Martin and his team had rescued from New Memphis. Martin was shirtless, with a large bandage over his shoulder and back that was stained with blood as well.

Dysea watched Martin get to his feet slowly and with a grimace of pain and he towered over Anja by nearly a foot. He glared down into her face, his eyes changing to yellow/gold within black orbs and his fangs extending to nearly a full inch.

"I am entirely capable of walking out of here on my own!" Martin growled at Anja.

Dysea could not help but be impressed by Anja. She knew her *Nauta Melme* was an extremely intimidating physical presence all by himself, but when he allowed his eyes and fangs to alter, he appeared like some fearsome visage from an adult's nightmare. Anja looked up into Martin's face and Dysea watched as her jade green eyes changed and shrank in size, becoming outlined in black as well, and her canine teeth extended to nearly half an inch. Dysea almost forgot that Anja's relationship with Daniel Simpson and Julie had changed her as her own relationship with Martin had done to her. Anja remained in front of Martin, no back down in her whatsoever, and met Martin's eyes.

"You so much as take a step off this aircraft and I will stick you with enough sedative that you will drop like a limp noodle in the wind." Anja growled back at him.

Dysea watched Julie move from the direction of the cockpit, the Drow warrior Tari right behind her. The civilians were watching this confrontation intently; unable to move for fear of igniting something they had no control over.

“Better listen to her Skipper.” Julie spoke with a grin. “She can be very tenacious. And I know from experience you won’t win.”

Anja smiled sweetly at Martin as he continued to glare at her. “What’s it going to be Marty?” She asked.

“You wouldn’t dare.” Martin spoke.

“Do you really want to test me?” Anja asked calmly.

Dysea could not help but smirk at the stunned expressions on the faces of the elves of Martin’s team and the civilians. They had never heard anyone challenge *Nauro Ohtar* in such a way. Dysea chose that time to step forward so that everyone could see her. She heard the soft gasps from some of the civilians as they recognized her immediately.

“She is correct *Nauta Melme*.” Dysea spoke softly.

“I will not have my troops see me carted off this aircraft on a stretcher *Melda Min*.” Martin replied, his eyes never leaving Anja’s. “My healing system is…”

“Your healing system is not infallible Martin.” Anja spoke softly now. “The bullet was coated with some kind of poison.” She told him, seeing his face wrinkle just a tiny bit in confusion at this information. Anja reached up and touched his cheek, the warmth of his skin sending electric shocks through her fingers. “It is just a precaution until I get you back to the clinic and insure that your healing factor is indeed destroying the poison. Trust me on this please.”

Dysea stepped up next to Anja. “I agree *Nauta Melme*.” She said softly. “Please listen to *Melyanna*.”

(Dear One)

Martin glanced from Dysea to Anja and back before his eyes returned to their normal dark brown and he acquiesced, lowering his frame back onto the bench in silence as Anja ushered the two sturdy male elves forward with the stretcher.

“Take him directly to the exam room and begin routine prep.” Anja ordered. “I want all of these civilians brought there as well to undergo complete physicals. Make sure they have ample food and plenty of liquid to drink, some of them looked malnourished.”

The other medics nodded and began to usher the civilians off the helicopter as Anja looked at Dysea. “Thank you.” She said softly.

“You appeared to have it completely under control.” Dysea said. “I simply echoed what you were telling him. What happened out there Anja?”

Anja didn’t hesitate and took her hand. Dysea felt a warmth course through her as Anja led her from the PAVE LOW III. “I’ll tell you everything as we head to the clinic.” Anja spoke as they headed for one of the extra Hoppers that had arrived minutes before.

NEVADA SIX MILES OUTSIDE LAS VEGAS 187 METERS UNDERGROUND

Anuk’s eyes popped open with a start at the loud snapping noise nearby. Her cerulean blue eyes darted back and forth as she remained perfectly still, bringing her senses back from her fitful sleep. The flickering light from the small fire several meters in front of her cast ghostly shadows across the small tunnel they were in. She felt the thick wool like blanket draped over her and her eyes grew a little larger as the blanket came into focus. It wasn’t a dirty ragged piece of cloth as she expected, but it looked almost brand new with a slight musky odor. She let her eyes wander over where she was once more. They had traveled for several hours, until he had chosen this small tunnel to stop and rest. It was situated above the main tunnel and was only about twenty meters deep. The interior walls were smooth and unbroken, though a cave in had collapsed the roof of the tunnel preventing them from going any further into it. He had told her to rest, and she had sat down almost immediately and fallen into an exhaustive sleep.

Anuk's dreams were dotted with memories of her months as a prisoner and slave, the uncountable rapes and beatings at the hands of her captors, the wild breakout of the hotel only a short while ago, his fearsome face inches from her, and then their drop into the unknown. Her body was incredibly sore, most especially the deep cut along her rib cage. She winced slightly as she stretched out her legs and leaned forward just a little. Her eyes settled on him as he squatted by the small fire adding wood to it as he broke the thick boards in his hands. He was the man who had rescued her, and the man who had saved her life twice in less than six hours.

Daniel Simpson he had said his name was.

Anuk had never seen a man such as him. The slavers that had captured her and killed the rest of her Ranger patrol were also black skinned men, but many of them were fat and foul smelling as if they hadn't bathe in weeks. They were ill tempered and disgusting humans, yet most of them were exceptionally large and brutal in their dealings with slaves.

Daniel was different.

He was easily as tall as many of the slavers, but his body looked as if it had been sculpted from a marble statue. She watched as the muscles in his arms and shoulders worked under his skin as he snapped boards that no elf would have been able to break even with their enhanced strength. His head was completely bald, the firelight gleaming off the crown of his skull. His skin was not as dark as the slavers, more like a deep caramel color. He squatted with ease, the dusty fatigue pants covering long muscular legs. His combat boots were black and she saw the hilt of a small knife secured on his left boot ankle. He wore only a tank top t-shirt, his utility belt around his waist, the matte black automatic in the holster, as well as the Wood Elf Shakur fighting knife. Anuk's eyes grew a little wider when she saw the knife. She hadn't noticed it before, and now she wondered just how he had the knife in his possession.

Anuk stared at his back remembering what he had turned into right in front of her. She would never have believed it had she not witnessed it herself. The change that came over him was terribly frightening. Anuk had thought for an instant her was going to rip her apart when he first changed. The short dark brown hair that had erupted from his pores and covered his exposed skin, as well as the long and vicious fangs that curled from his mouth. He had changed into something then, a version of a wolf he had explained to her. The story he had told her was almost impossible to believe, yet for some uncanny reason she believed him, but she felt there was more he wanted to tell her and didn't. When she had fallen asleep hours before there was no blanket over her, and now the wool blanket surrounded her and she smelled...

"Food!" Anuk gasped, scrambling from where she sat heedless of the pain that lanced through her side.

Danny turned as she came off the ground and moved toward the small fire. He smiled when she knelt next to him and looked at the metal pot he had sitting in the center of the fire, her nose flaring at the smell.

"What... where did you find food?" Anuk asked reaching forward to stick her finger into the brown substance in the pot.

Dan motioned to the main tunnel. "I noticed something odd about these tunnels when we got out here into the main shaft." He explained pointing out into the main tunnel below them. "I remembered that in my time the city of Las Vegas had begun construction on an underground rail system between here and Phoenix. They got it working from Vegas to Prescott Arizona before they ran out of money. It was actually really cool. The rail system had stops along the entire route, and at each stop was a small shopping mall. There's one about two miles down. I was able to rummage around the stores until I found some food with a shelf life of forever. Mainly old military rations from the sporting goods store. That blanket was the only one that was sealed in a vacuum wrap and serviceable. I was able to scrounge together different clothes for you that will at least allow you to be less exposed." Dan spoke as he handed over the small bundle. "They should fit you well enough."

Anuk stared at him with the bundle in her arms. "You did all this while I slept?" She asked incredulous.

Dan nodded with a grin. "I'm quick on my feet." He answered.

"What... what is that?" Anuk asked licking her fingers.

"That my beautiful companion is what the military called field rations in the time we came from." Dan spoke moving to adjust the small pot and stir the concoction around more with the metal spoon. "If eaten alone they were the most retched things known to man, but we learned a few tricks to make them actually pretty good."

Anuk stared at Daniel as he stirred the pot. He had called her *beautiful* in such a way that Anuk felt warmth flush across her skin. It was not spoken with a sarcastic tone in his voice, and Anuk could not detect

any other motive from his words. She looked at the bundle of clothes and saw that he had brought her a sturdy pair of dark work pants, and a button down shirt that would cover her entirely. There was also a pair of boots that looked as if they would fit her.

Dan glanced at her. "Go ahead and change while I serve out this wonderful slop for us to eat. I will keep my back to you, don't worry."

Anuk didn't take her eyes from him as she moved further back into the tunnel to change. She wished that she could bathe to remove the grim and dirt from her body and attempt to wash away the filth of what she had endured these last months, but the clothes would at least return some of her dignity to her until she could cleanse herself in a pool of steaming hot water. She dressed as quickly as she could, heedless of the fact she had no undergarments to put on. She pulled on the pants which slid over her legs and hips smoothly, amazingly fitting her almost perfectly. She pulled on the dark green socks and then the black boots before standing and beginning to unbutton the oversized fatigue shirt. As she stretched awkwardly to remove the top she let out a small gasp of pain, her eyes closing tightly as it felt like a thousand needles were stabbing into her side.

"What's wrong?" Dan's voice spoke almost instantly.

Anuk's eyes opened quickly to see him towering over her, his dark eyes bright in the dim light of the tunnel. Anuk attempted to cover her half exposed breasts and shied away from him. "I... I am fine." She managed to gasp.

"Oh really," Dan spoke. "I can smell your pain and how your adrenalin just spiked sky high." He said stepping closer to her and reaching for the fatigue top.

Anuk prepared to hit him as hard as she could to keep him from taking her. Her fingers balled into a fist as his hands touched her and gripped the shirt. As her arm tensed to throw the crippling punch into his neck she felt him lift the fatigue top from the bottom, being very careful not to expose her breasts, and look at her wound.

"The MEDCOM patch is gone!" Dan exclaimed. "Why didn't you tell me?"

Anuk watched him move quickly back to where his vest was and grab the small medical kit. "It... it came off as... as we were walking here." Anuk spoke softly as he returned with another bandage in his hand.

"Damn!" Dan grunted as his fingers once more probed the wound tenderly. "It's infected now! Fuck!"

Anuk watched him tear open the remaining bandage and hold it out over her side. He looked up at her. "Ready?"

Anuk nodded and grit her teeth as he placed the bandage over the long slice in her skin. His hand slid around to the small of her back to give him leverage as he held the bandage to her skin, and his fingers sent electric jolts through her skin at the contact, and it was not from pain. Anuk hissed in pain then, her hand going to his shoulder and squeezing with her elf strength, as the micro filaments of the bandage bore into her skin to anchor the healing patch in place. It passed within seconds and she relaxed her hand, but did not take it from his shoulder. She watched him as he secured the bandage even further with white tape from the kit, gingerly applying two strips across the middle of the bandage. Satisfied with his work he slowly began to get to his feet and Anuk allowed her hand to drop away.

"We need to find someplace where you can take a bath and wash this crude off yourself." Dan spoke softly. "I have one more patch, but it's already infected and unless we can clean it up, it's only going to get worse." He held out his hand and Anuk saw the two small pills in his large palm. "These will take the edge off and make the pain a dull throb."

Anuk looked at the pills in his hand and then to his face. "I..."

"Anuk... if my intentions were anything other than honorable do you think I would be doing this?" Danny asked her in a voice that was calm and sincere.

"I... I would fight you!" Anuk spoke.

Dan nodded slowly. "Yes you would. And if that was my intent you would lose." He told her plainly. "My brothers and sisters and I were not raised to act in such a manner. Marty... the oldest among us... I watched him beat a man to near death for attempting to take something that was not his right to have. Take them... and then finish dressing and come eat. You will need your strength to fight the infection, and I would prefer you return to your father in good health. He does not strike me as the type of man you want pissed off at you."

Anuk's eyes softened slightly. "You... you have seen my father?" She asked.

Dan nodded. "He was waiting for us at the pick up sight." He answered.

“Why did he not come for me?” Anuk asked.

Dan chuckled. “He wanted too.” He replied. “He was ready to invade Las Vegas to get you back once he discovered you were still alive. Marty convinced him a small operation was better and since your father is apparently well known among elves, he would not give us away.”

Dan took her hand in his and Anuk felt shivers shoot through her as he dropped the small pills into her palm. “These will be good for twelve hours, and when that patch comes off tell me so we can put the last one on.” He curled her fingers around the pills and stepped back from her. “Now finish dressing and come eat some of the slop I have prepared. It’s my own recipe.”

Anuk watched him turn and move back to the fire. She looked at the small pills in her hand contemplating what she should do. He was right she concluded. If he had wanted to take her against her will he could have done so already many times over. And Anuk was no fool, after seeing what he could transform himself into, she held no doubts she would never be able to fight him off. She popped the pills into her mouth quickly and bent to retrieve the shirt he had brought her.

“This is delicious!” Anuk exclaimed as she shoveled another spoonful of the mixture into her mouth.

Dan chuckled to himself as he chewed and shook his head. “I’ve heard it referred to as many things, but never delicious.” He replied as he too shoveled another spoonful into his mouth.

“What... what it is?” She asked finally.

“They’re called Meals Ready to Eat.” Dan replied with a large grin. “It was the standard military ration in my time. The most disgusting thing army scientists ever devised. Many of us thought they were developed as a slow way to kill us, but they are packed with nutrients and calories, and if you learned how to mix and match them and add additional seasonings, you can at least make them tolerable.”

“Where did you get seasonings?” She asked looking at him.

“Apparently the owner of the sporting goods store was ex-military.” Dan replied. “He had everything that we used to spice them up.”

“Were you able to find a way back to the surface?”

Dan shook his head. “I found two of the exit tunnels, but both of them were buried. Looks like a large cave in sealed them shut.”

“But you said you could smell fresh air.” She told him.

Dan nodded. “I think it’s coming from vents in the ceiling.” He answered. “When they built this tunnel they installed ventilation shafts every few hundred meters. I’m guessing the air is coming in through the ones that were covered or destroyed. We’ll just have to keep moving southeast until we find a place where we can get out, or someplace where the rock above us isn’t so thick that it blocks my implant.”

“What is this implant?”

Dan tapped his jaw line. “We have microscopic implants under our skin that act as radios.” He answered. “We’re too deep for a signal to penetrate the ground above us, but we might possibly come to a point that is higher up and a signal can penetrate the rock.”

“How is it that you know so much about this tunnel?” Anuk asked warily.

“When we were children our training was very thorough.” He explained. “Since we were genetically created... they were able to make us have photographic memories and be able to use thirty-three percent more of our brain capacity. Pretty much anything that I read I remember.”

“How many of you are there?” Anuk asked. She saw a look of pain flash across his dark face before he set his bowl on the ground.

“There were sixty-two of us when we came back to earth four months ago.” Dan answered. “An attack against our base camp near Mountain City killed all but nineteen of us. We did manage to save many of those who came with us, but not all of them.”

“I don’t understand, what do you mean those who came with you?” Anuk asked him.

Dan nodded. “I told you about EDEN. Well we left there in quite a hurry when one of the political assholes we had in our time decided he was going to take control of the station and work with this Alliance. He didn’t like genomes to begin with, and we knew that once he got control, not only would he enslave any elf he found, he would have us all killed. We left EDEN with almost two thousand men, women and children who felt

as we did. After the attack in Mountain City the High Elves kicked us out and we moved to Junction City Utah. We renamed it Eden City and that's where we began rebuilding."

"Rebuilding?" Anuk said. "What are you rebuilding?"

Dan smiled. "Eden is a city where everyone is free and does not have to live in fear. Elf, man, whoever wants to live free. That's what Eden is."

"But the Alliance would never allow a city such as you describe to thrive." Anuk spoke.

Dan chuckled. "You don't know Martin Hunter." He answered. "Marty is genetically descended from Kings." He told her, seeing Anuk's cerulean eyes grow a little wider. "When they made us, they combined DNA from many sources, some of the greatest military minds in history up until that point. Martin's DNA is made up of the ancestors of the Spartan King Leonidas. If you were to trace back his bloodline, it would lead directly to him."

Anuk had set her bowl down now, enthralled with this information. "Your... your leader is descended from Kings?" She asked.

Dan nodded. "Don't tell him I told you that." He said with a smile. "He hates it when we tease him about that."

"Who was... who was this Spartan King you speak of?" Anuk asked.

"He lived in 480 BC." Dan answered. "You know what..."

"I am not a fool Daniel Simpson." Anuk told him with a genuine smile. "We have kept the same format of telling the years since the Great Fire."

"Sorry." Dan said sheepishly. "Anyway... King Leonidas was a Spartan. They were the premier military state of that time period. King Leonidas was a military genius, and the Spartans up until that time had never lost a battle. A Persian army invaded Greece in 480 BC and Leonidas led 300 of his Spartan soldiers along with several hundred allies into battle against nearly a million Persians. It is called the Battle of Thermopylae. They were guarding a small mountain pass and for three days they held that pass killing almost twenty-five thousand Persians. It's possible they could have held for even longer but they were betrayed in the end and the Persians were able to get behind them and attack from both sides. Leonidas and his Spartans fought until the last man, but they eventually were all killed. That action spurred the entire city state of Sparta to war, as well as all of Greece at the time and a year later they routed the Persians. Leonidas had a son, and it was that bloodline that was passed down through the centuries until it reached an Army General in our time. This General was considered the most brilliant tactician and skilled warrior since the days of George S. Patton. It was his DNA that was the template for Martin." Dan smiled. "There is a poem Martin taught us all as children, and we recited it before every mission we went on."

"What poem?" Anuk asked very curious. "Tell me this poem."

Dan took a deep breath.

*"Where is the honor of yesteryear, Of Thermopylae, and the Spartan's lack of fear?
Where is the ambition to give one's life, in the fight for Freedom, Truth, and Right?
Is to be honorable such a sin that it brings scorn from friend and kin?
O God, to be a Man is such a struggle that I wonder the meaning of this life of trouble.
Yet, from the back regions of my mind I hear a lonely echo rise,
An echo that pierces my very soul And helps me remember my goal:
"WE DIE PROUD.....WE DIE PROUD!"*

Dan looked at her. "Marty likes that poem." He said. "It was written by an army officer over a hundred years before we were created."

Anuk stared at this giant of a man with ebony skin. When he had spoken the poem, she could almost feel the passion he put into the words, and how his dark eyes grew brighter in the fire light.

Dan shook his head. "Well... eat up." He spoke reaching for the pack he had returned with. "We'll need to start walking out of here." Anuk watched him as he reached into the pack and drew out the holstered weapon. He set it on the ground next to her feet. "I assume you can use that." He spoke. "I cleaned it and it should work fine. I loaded four extra magazines for you." He added as he placed those on top of the holster.

Anuk stared at the pistol for a long moment before lifting her eyes back to him as he rummaged in the pack. “You... you are giving me a weapon?” She asked.

Dan looked at her. “Why wouldn’t I?” He asked.

“I... I don’t...” Anuk stammered, trying to find words to answer his question.

Dan set the pack aside and met her cerulean blue eyes. “Anuk... I understand... I understand what you have gone through these last months. I can’t begin to imagine what happened to you... or what was done to you. The only thing I can say is I am not one of those pigs... and my friends are not like them. If I had the chance I would hunt down every one of them and make them pay in blood for what they did to you. Right now I just want to get you back to your father. You will have to trust me.”

Anuk stared at him as his words sank in. They were spoken with as much sincerity and warmth as she had heard from anyone in her life, and she found herself looking at Daniel in a new light. Slowly she bent down and picked up the automatic at her feet. She returned her eyes to him and nodded slowly. “I... I will try to trust you Daniel.” She spoke haltingly. “I hope you will understand that after what has happened I will not give my trust lightly.”

Dan nodded. “That’s good enough.” He told her. “Now finish eating and let’s get our asses moving. I like caves and all... but I surely don’t want to spend anymore time down here than we need too. I have to work on my tan you know.”

Anuk couldn’t help but chuckle at his words and she began to finish the bowl of heated MRE in her hands. Dan turned away to busy himself with something else, and he did not see her eyes return to stare at him intently. And it was not a look of hatred that filled Anuk’s eyes now. It was a look of intense curiosity and interest.

“I’m fine *Melda Min* really.” Martin spoke to Dysea. He sat shirtless on the medical table in the clinic, the bandages gone from his wound and any sign that he had been shot only hours before erased.

Dysea stood next to him, holding his hand tightly. “Trouble seems to go out of its way to find you *Nauta Melme*.” She said with a small smile.

Martin leaned over and kissed her deeply. He withdrew after a moment and smiled. “Most would say it is the other way around.” He told her.

Dysea placed her hand on his bare chest, feeling the warmth from his skin spread across her palm and throughout her entire hand. “There are times when you do test the limits of my patience with you my love.” She said with a smile, her emerald eyes glimmering with love. “It appears you have the uncanny ability to get into trouble wherever you go.”

“Why doesn’t that surprise me?” Anja’s voice carried to them as she entered the room. She had changed into a new set of fatigues, but now wore a white lab coat over them. She walked up to them, her eyes never leaving Martin.

Martin detected something different about her and he slowly slid off the bed to his feet. “What?” He asked.

Anja held out the small datapad for him. “It was *Batrachotoxin*.” She spoke.

Martin took the pad from her. “Are you sure?”

“I did the test three times.” Anja replied. “There’s no mistaking it.”

Dysea looked at her. “What is this *Batrachotoxin*?” She asked.

Anja looked at her. “It’s a neurotoxin.” Anja told her. “Perhaps one of the most lethal ever known to man, if not the most lethal. The bullet was coated in it. If it had hit me, even with my new genome genes, I would have been dead in minutes. I narrowed it down to *Phyllobates terribilis*, or the Poison Dart Frog.”

Dysea looked at her. “Wait... I know of them.” She said. “They are indigenous to the lower continent. The central continent is no more. How did they find their way here?”

“The better question is who would know how to use the toxin that secretes from their skin.” Anja said. “It’s not exactly the most well known information about Dart Frogs. Most people just looked and saw that they were very colorful and pretty.”

Martin was silent for a long moment before looking up at Anja. “Well obviously someone within the Alliance knows about their other uses.” He said, “Perhaps this Marcus fellow?” He asked looking at Dysea.

Dysea shrugged. "It's possible. He is a Drow, and it is well known they dabbled in the use of poisons and ancient magic."

"Magic?" Martin asked looking at her with a smile.

"Do not mock me *Nauta Melme*." She scolded him, but did so with a smile. "I am only telling you what I have heard."

"Do you think this Tari or anyone with him might know?" Anja asked.

"It's possible." Dysea answered. "I will approach him about it. I doubt they would answer questions from someone who is not an elf just yet. The Drow were very protective of their secrets, and we need to earn their trust just as they do ours."

Martin nodded. "I agree. Can you talk to him?"

Dysea nodded and stretched up to kiss him softly. "I will go see him right now."

"I will see you for dinner then." Martin spoke.

Dysea squeezed his hand with a smile and headed out of the clinic. Martin's eyes followed her until she was out the door, then he looked back to Anja.

"Why didn't you tell her Marty?" Anja asked him.

"Tell her what?" Martin asked.

Anja smiled. "Don't try and fool me Martin Hunter." She said. "Only one military unit in the entire world was known to coat their bullets with Batrachotoxin. They were the Genome sniper teams."

"Anja... the only genomes left are the ones under my command." Martin said. "Do you think one of them secretly infiltrated New Memphis and then tried to kill you?"

"No." Anja answered.

"Then someone within the Alliance obviously has the same knowledge we did." Martin said. "Let's not add problems where there are none. Now tell me about Danny. Dysea will fill me in with more detail, but what do we know?"

"Cathy did a high altitude flyover before returning to Eden due to fuel restraints. She was using seismic and infra red sensors." Anja replied as she pulled the chair up next to the bed when Martin sat back down on the edge. "They are alive, that much she was positive about. They apparently fell into what use to be the old Vegas Interstate Tunnel."

"The underground train tunnel between Vegas and Phoenix?" Martin asked.

Anja nodded. "I traveled on it once from Flagstaff to Vegas. It was actually quite nice." She answered. "Anyway... they are too deep underground to get a signal to his implant, but she said there were a lot of infra red signatures in those tunnels."

"Humans?" Martin asked.

Anja shrugged. "There's no way to tell." She replied. She looked at Martin's face and it appeared as if he was deep in thought. His eyes changed then and he looked at her.

"Danny is fine." He spoke.

"Marty... we don't know that." Anja said.

"I do. Don't worry. Dan's hard to kill." Martin told her.

Anja looked at him oddly before nodding her head. "Dysea put Vengal and the others under house arrest. That Matarn asshole is a real jerk and I get the sense there is more to him than he wants everyone to believe."

"How are you doing Anja?" Martin asked softly.

Anja looked at him. "I'm fine why?"

"You seem different." Martin said. "I know that things with Julie and Danny did not work out as you had hoped."

"And how would you know what I hoped?" Anja asked somewhat defensively.

"I'm sorry... I thought..."

"I care for them as friends." Anja said quickly, regretting her defensive response. "And I believe they care for me the same way. We needed to go our own ways and discover ourselves. I don't hold any ill will toward them. We are still very close; we just don't share a bed anymore. With everything that has happened in the last few months, I think it has opened all three of us to new things and we all want to expand and stretch our wings."

“No hard feelings?” Martin asked.

Anja smiled, “Never.” She said softly. “I’m fine Martin really.”

“Ok... I just wanted to make sure.” Martin said.

Anja got up from her chair. “Thank you for what you did Martin. You saved my life you know.” She said.

“Bah! You’re stronger than you think.” Martin said as he turned to pull on his blood stained uniform shirt.

Anja eyed him strangely as he buttoned the shirt. “Why the sudden concern about me Martin?” She asked softly. “You never cared about me before. Not after what I did to you.”

Martin turned to look at her, slinging his combat vest and utility belt over his shoulder. “Did you ever stop to think Anja; that perhaps that is what you chose to see?” He told her. Martin stepped up to her and leaned over to kiss her cheek gently. While he did, he inhaled deeply of her honey scent. “Thank you.” He whispered before turning and heading out of the clinic.

Anja stood there frozen in her spot. Her new found genome senses were alive with his mint like scent and she felt a massive rush of warmth and sexual desire course through her unlike anything she had felt since... since that night so long ago. His words echoed in her ears and she turned to look at the door he exited out of. Her eyes went wider and she turned to look at her desk and the vid/conference screen. Anja moved to her desk quickly.

MOON BASE EDEN

Anisa lay on the bed, her breathing coming in deep gasps. Her light brown skin was slick with a fine sheen of sweat, drops of sweat pooling between her full breasts. Her dark nipples were standing almost painfully erect in her excitement. Her eyes were wide in wonderment, her long black hair splayed across the pillows wildly. Never in her life had she met a man who could pleasure her for so long without rest. William never seemed to tire of her firm body, and their love making sessions went on for what seemed like hours. Nothing had prepared her for his endurance, and no man before him had ever pleased her in the ways he now did.

Wallace’s face was situated between Anisa’s olive complexion thighs, his tongue twirling madly around the outer edges of her engorged labia. Her pussy was spread open like a butterfly spreading its wings and he was feasting like a man who hadn’t eaten in days. His tongue swept slowly up one side of her dark lipped pussy and then just as slowly down the other side. He was deliberately avoiding her eraser hard clit, wanting to prolong her pleasure as long as he could. The small bud was fully unhooded now, demanding attention in her excitement, and her pussy was continuously leaking her sweet cherry smelling juices. William’s face was covered in her juices and it did not deter him in the least. Her legs were thrown over his shoulders, her ankles locked together behind his shoulders. Her taut thighs quivered in anticipation of her impending orgasm, telling him she was teetering on the edge. He glanced up from between her luscious thighs and saw her face twisted in pleasure. She was gripping her own breasts, squeezing her nipples tightly; her lips parted slightly signaling her impending orgasm. He had seen it enough times to know she was right on the brink.

William decided it was time to send her over. He brought his tongue to the entrance of her pussy, pushing it in half an inch and began to drag it up towards her erect clit. His fingers danced along her firm ass cheeks, probing around her most private of openings. He positioned the tip of his index finger against her puckered anus and heard her gasp. Her eyes flew open and she struggled to lift her head from the bed.

“Will... William... what are you...”

William fastened his lips over her proud clit and bit down gently as he plunged his index finger into her tight ass.

“Ahhhhhhh... William...” Anisa’s eyes flew open wider than ever before, her hands grabbing his head almost painfully as her body arched off the bed. She howled out her pleasure as her cum exploded from her into his waiting mouth. The pleasure came in huge waves, rocking her very world, and shattering whatever bonds she may have still had in place. This was unlike anything he had given her so far and her body was screaming out its joy.

Wallace reached up with his free hand and grabbed one of her breasts, squeezing it within his strong hand as her back arched off the bed. Anisa's hands flew to his and she gripped his large hand tightly as her entire body shuddered almost violently in the mind shattering orgasm. He had moved his mouth slightly lower, fastening his lips over her entire pussy, the tip of his nose still rubbing her engorged clit as her sweet cum filled his mouth. Wallace drank it down with relish, savoring the taste and smell of her essence.

To Anisa it seemed as if her orgasm had lasted for hours. When she finally collapsed back onto the bed, she saw only stars and was unable to catch her breath. Her chest heaved with exertion, her black hair matted with sweat. She felt William planting soft lingering kisses all over her pussy and on the insides of her still twitching thighs. She felt him shift on the bed and begin to move back up, his warm tongue leaving a trail of soft kisses and nibbles up her firm abdomen and between her breasts as he lapped up the sweat from her skin. Anisa whimpered in delight when his face appeared in front of her and he covered her moist lips with his own, and he kissed her hungrily. Her arms flew around his shoulders and she kissed him back just as hungrily, even nipping at his lips in an attempt to dissuade his tongue from stealing her breath away. It didn't work, as she knew and hoped it wouldn't, and his arms slid under her head and he pulled her tighter to him as his body settled on top of hers.

Tears formed in her eyes as her lithe figure melted against his, and he rolled over slowly, pulling her on top of him so as not to crush her with his weight. Anisa felt his cock between her thighs as her still dripping pussy coated his shaft. Her breasts were flattened against his hard chest, and slowly she pulled away from their kiss. She tossed her head to the side, throwing her billowing hair over one shoulder and stared into his blue eyes which brimmed with love and desire for her.

"You... you are incredible." She whispered, still attempting to catch her breath.

Wallace smiled and reached up to caress her neck and shoulder. "Does that mean I can taste you whenever I wish?"

Anisa looked at him with brilliant brown eyes. She had resisted his attempts to pleasure her like this, feeling that it was her duty to give him pleasure first and foremost. She had allowed him to have his way this night and now she did not know if she could live without it. "Oh... oh yes." She gasped with a smile, "Most assuredly whenever you wish."

Wallace grinned. "I told you so." He said as his arms wrapped around her waist and pulled her even tighter. "And you do taste so good."

Anisa opened her mouth to reply when the communicator on the small table next to the bed chimed. She chuckled and rested her forehead on his chest. "Answer it my William. I need time to regain my senses anyway."

William reached over and punched the panel. "What is it?" He growled.

"Admiral it's Leda." The female voice spoke from the com panel.

William and Anisa both perked up at this. It was not one of Graham's stooges calling him for something ridiculous, but one of their cohorts in the small resistance they had formed. "Go ahead Leda." William spoke.

"Paul asked that I contact you immediately. We are receiving a communication from Eden on earth." She explained. "It's Anja Peterson on a highly encrypted channel."

"Is it an emergency?" William asked.

"No not at all." Leda answered. "She's discussing some things with Paul right now, but she requested to speak with you. Paul did not want to transfer the connection for security purposes."

"The mission for Selena's family was a success I take it?" William asked as Anisa slid off his chest and he lifted himself on his elbows.

"Yes. They had a spot of trouble at the end, but everyone returned quite safe." Leda replied.

"Very well... inform her I will be there in fifteen minutes." William spoke.

"Yes sir."

William looked at Anisa with regret on his face. "I'm..."

Anisa put a finger to his lips. "Do not say you are sorry." She spoke. "We both know you have to take the transmission."

"You stay right here and we will continue this when I return." Wallace told her.

"I have not the strength to go anywhere." Anisa spoke curling up on the bed.

William grinned and kissed her softly. "Good."

“...a search of the archives and find out for me if any other Genome units survived the purge.” Anja was telling Paul. “And keep this between us ok.”

“What’s going on Anja?” Paul asked.

“It’s nothing really. I just want some background information. That’s all.” Anja replied.

Paul turned as the door to the clinic slid open and Admiral Wallace came in. “The Admiral is here Anja. I’ll get to work on what you asked for.”

“Thank you Paul.” Anja replied as Wallace nodded to Paul and took the chair he vacated for him.

William waited until Paul had left the small room before looking at the screen. “I understand the mission was successful Commander.” Wallace said.

“Yes sir. We retrieved Minister Torcrum’s family as well as two dozen others. I’m sure Martin will be contacting you with a full report soon.” Anja answered.

“So why are you communicating now on a different channel than normal?” Wallace asked.

“Admiral... I have some things that I want to ask you, and I want the truth sir.” Anja spoke keeping her voice calm and neutral.

Wallace nodded without hesitation. “The truth I’ll give you, if I have the answers.” He told her.

“Admiral... I want to know who really requested that I be assigned to EDEN.” Anja asked. “And don’t bullshit me sir, I’m part Genome now as I’m sure you are already aware and I’ll know if you are lying to me.”

“Commander... if you are asking me that question then I would say you already know the answer.”

Wallace replied to her. After a long moment he added. “What’s going on down there Anja?”

“...last scans put their position here.” Julie told Martin as they leaned over the plot board. “It looks like they survived the fall and were able to move roughly eight hundred meters from where they dropped.”

They were in the Command Center for all of Eden City’s defenses. Many of the technicians and engineers that had accompanied them down from the moon had set to work on building this center immediately after arriving in the former Junction City and it was decided here was where they were going to stay. The center was built in a large circular pattern, with large monitors and screens covering one half of a U shaped perimeter. Men and women occupied a dozen different consoles that were used to monitor the hundreds of sensors that had been installed in the dense mountains surrounding Eden. These sensors were able to pick up movement and heat signatures for hundreds of miles. No one would be able to sneak up on them without the defenses of Eden City knowing about it. Several of the other stations monitored all communications that they were able to intercept, most of it Alliance communications, with some elf transmissions and weak broadcasts from across the planet.

The technicians had duplicated EDEN’s HIS, or Holographic Imaging System, and tied that system into the sensors around the perimeter. They could also download scans from any Raptor and transfer the information to the HIS.

“So they aren’t injured?” Martin spoke.

Julie nodded, her face showing the signs of relief. “Unless Danny is carrying this female elf, it looks that way.”

“They haven’t moved far enough away from Las Vegas to suit me.” Martin spoke. “Get another Raptor up for more scans.”

“This Ambrose character has an extensive array of anti-air missiles Skipper.” Julie told him. “We’ll have to drop to two thousand feet to get detailed seismic scans of the area. Any higher, and we won’t be able to pin point their location because of the thickness of the earth.”

“Fuck!” Martin swore his eyes never leaving the plot board. He reached out and stabbed the easternmost portion of the tunnel. “We don’t know what these are?”

Julie shook her head. “Some of them are human sized, some are not.” She replied. “The signal could also be distorted somewhat. All we know is that he was headed in this direction.”

“And he doesn’t know what’s in front of him.” Martin said. “More than likely he is following the smell of fresh air coming from the ventilation shafts in the ceiling. Some of them are two hundred meters deep, and

were designed to circulate air in case of a fire or accident. Most of them are placed in the main shaft,” Martin leaned over and pointed at the darker spots on the board. “He probably thinks it will lead them to an entrance.”

“Fresh air coming in from these vents is bad. It would also serve to block the scents of anything in front of them.” Julie commented. “The only one of us with a better nose than Danny is you Skipper, but if there is a breeze coming down these shafts, he won’t be able to smell anything in front of them.”

“Do we still have engineers in Flagstaff?” He asked.

Ealin chose that time to walk up to the board from one of the other consoles. “We have a company of them just outside of Flagstaff.” He replied, catching Martin’s question. “They were just finishing up striping the city.”

“What’s their security?” Julie asked.

“They have a platoon with them.” Ealin replied.

Julie looked at Martin. “You want to have them enter from the Flagstaff end Skipper?”

Martin nodded. “They’ll need to unbury it. When we shelled the city, the terminal would have collapsed over the entrance. Get them working on opening the entrance again. Find out what they need and get it to them. Have the platoon with them set up a heavy defensive wall once the entrance is clear. Reinforce them with light mortars and send four chain gun turret emplacements.” Martin leaned over the plot board. “Julie I want you to get teams to these ventilation shaft locations. If they are clear have emergency packs lowered and secured. Danny will know to look for them.”

“Why can’t we just pull them up through these main ventilation shafts Skipper?” Julie asked.

“The ceilings are too high Jules.” Anja’s voice spoke now. They turned as she walked up, moving to stand next to Julie. “The main shaft where the trains ran was at least two hundred meters high, I remember that much from my ride on them. And that doesn’t include the depth of the earth above the tunnel at any given location.”

“Anja’s right.” Martin said after a long moment of eyeing Anja. “Even if we got lucky and a train was stopped under one of the shafts, there’s no way they could climb up to the shaft itself. And Danny’s fat ass is too big to squeeze through one of those shafts anyway.”

The others in the room smiled and relaxed a little more. Julie nodded as she looked at the board. “I’ll put the packs together myself.” She said. “Standard emergency packs with a few surprises.”

Anja’s eyes didn’t leave Martin’s face. “I’ll put some medical supplies together for each pack.” She spoke. “They could be injured, and they might come in handy.”

Martin nodded as he turned back to the board as well. “I want a four ship detachment airborne within six hours. Get Ben in on this. Two will ride shotgun and take out any anti-air emplacements that this ass hole Ambrose might have. One will drop the teams to lower the packs, and one will come back with a complete seismic sensor sweep. Ealin... get four people, elves or genomes to drop the packs. This area is still unknown to us and I want them to move fast when they are on the ground.”

Ealin nodded. “It will be dark by then *Lyca Ohtar*.” He spoke. “May I suggest a team of six to provide security as well?”

Martin nodded slowly. “The fastest scouts we have.” He said. “I don’t want them on the ground for a long period. Not in an area we haven’t explored yet.”

“I will see to it.” Ealin spoke.

Julie shifted her HK over her back and looked at him. “I’ll have the packs ready in an hour.” She said turning to Anja. “I’ll meet you at the clinic.”

Anja nodded. “I’ll be right behind you.” Julie nodded and headed out of the Command Center. Anja turned back to look at Martin and she moved slowly to stand in front of him. “The... the Admiral is waiting for a status report from you.” She said.

Martin nodded. “Getting my people back is more important right now.” He replied. “I’m sure you told him the most pertinent facts though.”

“I needed to speak with Paul,” Anja replied evenly at his unspoken question as to why she contacted EDEN on her own. “That is why I contacted EDEN on my own. The Admiral just happened to walk in.”

“What did you need to speak with Paul about?” Martin asked, leaning up against the plot board. “You are a far more skilled and knowledgeable geneticist than he is.”

“Perhaps in some things,” Anja answered with a small smile. “I would prefer not to say anything about it at this time.”

Martin nodded, “Fair enough.”

“I hope this doesn’t hurt the trust we have built over the last few months.” Anja spoke.

Martin looked at her oddly. “Why would it do that?” He asked her. “Technically speaking as far as rank goes, you are third in command behind Danny and me. You don’t need my permission to conduct yourself Anja. Not if you deem it to be important in some way. This... what we are building here is not the prevue of just me. It’s an effort by all of us.”

Anja could not force out what she truly wanted to say and she finally looked down at the floor. “I’ll go put those medical packs together.”

“I need to contact the Admiral and then speak with General Vengal.” Martin said. “Let me know when everything is ready to go.”

Anja nodded and turned quickly to leave the Center. She was very confused and did not want to make a fool of herself by saying something she would regret. She took a deep breath as she left the center and got her emotions under control. Saving Danny was the priority now. She would have to deal with her feelings for Martin and Dysea at another time.

MOON BASE EDEN

Selene Torcrum looked up from the data pad she had been reading while she sat on the bed in the brig and saw Wallace enter the cell. She set aside the pad and got quickly to her feet. She had been afforded every comfort she asked for up until now, yet she had to remain in confinement in case Graham made another attempt on her.

Wallace looked at her, the expectation on her face and the worry. He held up his hand before she could ask him the question she wanted the answer to. “Before you hit me with a barrage of questions, your family is safe.” He told her. “They were extracted to Eden along with nearly two dozen elves that they were attempting to smuggle out of New Memphis.” Wallace looked at her. “I have to hand it to them; that is very brave of them, running an underground network for slaves.”

Selene met his eyes. “They have been running an underground network out of New Memphis for over a decade. I have attempted to help when I was able.”

Wallace nodded. “Sit down Selene.” He spoke, motioning her to the bed.

Selene did as he told her and settled onto the edge of the bed as he pulled the chair over. “What is going on Admiral?”

“I just got done with a three hour communication with Martin Hunter.” Wallace spoke. “He’s the man who leads the free elves and slaves on earth. Does the Alliance, to your knowledge, use Batrachotoxin in any way, shape or form?”

“Batrachotoxin? You mean the poison that a Dart Frog secretes from its skin?” Selene questioned.

Wallace nodded, “That Batrachotoxin yes.”

“I didn’t work in the Bio-Weapons Division Admiral, you know that.” Selene replied. “But no... I’ve never heard of them using such a weapon.”

“You’re sure?”

Selene nodded. “I sat in on almost every Council meeting Admiral.” Selene replied. “Nothing like that ever came up. If it is a project that they are pursuing then the entire Alliance Council is in the dark. Batrachotoxin is lethal and extremely hazardous to handle even with the proper precautions.”

William nodded. “Yes it is.” He spoke. He held out the data pad to her. “You will find a message from your parents on that pad. I have one more question for you, before I leave you alone.”

“Yes?”

“I’m going to give you a choice Selene.” Wallace spoke. “You can remain here on this base, and once I remove Graham from power you will be quite safe from Alliance fingers. Martin is sending one of his Raptors here to the moon to bring back some equipment and other items. You can return with that Raptor to Eden to be with your family.”

Selene looked at him. “What is the catch?” She asked.

Wallace shook his head. “There really is no catch. I just want you to understand that if you return to earth, while you will be quite safe in the city Marty has been building, the word will eventually get out that you are still alive. Marty can protect you, but only to an extent. You will not be as safe down there as you would be up here.”

“I... I would be able to be with my family?” Selene asked.

“Of course,” Wallace told her. “It is not a confinement in any sense of the word. Martin wanted me to make it clear to you that you would be free to come and go as you please anywhere on earth. But outside the confines of Eden City down there I doubt you would last long.”

It was not really a hard decision and after only a few seconds Selene nodded her head. “I wish to be with my family.”

Wallace nodded. “I’ll let Marty know.” He said getting to his feet. “The Raptor will be here in 36 hours. They are taking a very out of the way route so as not to be picked up by any ground or air based radar the Alliance has.” William moved to the door before stopping and turning around to look at her once more, “Selene... a word of advice. If all of this is just a big game you are playing, I should tell you that I’m a Prince compared to Martin Hunter. If you double cross him... there won’t be anywhere safe enough or far enough away where he won’t find you. And when he does find you, regardless of the fact you are a woman... it will take you a long and painful time to die.”

Selene just stared at Wallace as he spoke and then watched him turn and exit the cell.

EDEN CITY (FORMERLY JUNCTION CITY)

Martin was not thinking of Selene Torcrum at the moment. He was flat on his back on the sheets of his bed, his fingers entwined in the long platinum blond tresses belonging to Dysea. He was naked, his tanned skin soaked in sweat, the muscles in his abdomen and thighs straining against the exquisite pleasure that Dysea was currently bestowing upon him.

Dysea was kneeling on the bed equally naked and soaked with sweat. Her soft hands were stroking the hard muscles of Martin’s thighs, the entirety of his thick, twelve inch cock buried in her throat. Dysea ground her tight ass down on the heels of her feet, the insides of her thighs slick with the juices that seemed to be continually pouring from her pussy. The room smelled of sex, as they had been making love for the last three hours.

Tears streaked the corner of Dysea’s eyes, her nose buried against Martin’s washboard hard abdomen, her lips stretched around the massively thick base of his cock. It had taken her over twenty minutes to finally reach this position, her beloved’s entire manhood anchored snugly within her velvety throat. Tarifa had told her of the pleasure she could get from this act, and Dysea had not believed her until this very moment. She had only sucked Martin’s cock occasionally, preferring to have it pounding into her tight pussy, but as she had tossed her head from side to side and shoved forward finally engulfing his entire cock within her mouth, Dysea had exploded all over the sheets beneath her in an incredibly powerful orgasm. Her lips were stretched almost obscenely around the base of his cock, as she moved her tongue as much as she could in the limited space within her lips. She could feel the thick pulsing vein that adorned the underside of Martin’s cock against her tongue and she attempted to whip the tip of her tongue back and forth over this vein.

Dysea dropped one delicate hand to where Martin’s huge cum filled balls were swollen and ready to explode. She hefted them in the palm of her hand, hearing the hiss escape his throat as she squeezed gently. Her other hand reached up to explore his rock hard abdomen and chest, and her thumb and forefinger found one of his nipples and she pinched his nipple between her fingers.

That was all that was needed and Dysea gagged loudly as Martin’s hips came off the bed. Dysea felt his thick twelve inch cock swell even larger within the confines of her warm tight throat and then the rocketing flow of boiling hot cum as it raced up the length of his manhood. Dysea whimpered in carnal delight as she felt his large cockhead flare deep in her throat and the first jet like blast of his cum erupted into her belly. Dysea released his heavy balls and both her hands clutched at his chest, her nails digging into his skin as blast after blast of his delicious tasting cum poured into her belly. Martin’s hands held the back of her head tightly to his

groin, the muscles in his legs rigid and stretched; it seemed, to the point of snapping. His face was contorted into a grimace of pain and pleasure, his teeth clenched and his eyes tightly shut. He needn't have bothered to hold Dysea's head, for she had no intention of releasing his pulsating and gushing cock from the prison of her throat until she had drained him of every drop of his cum. His eruption had set her off yet again, and her pussy was spasming in the throes of her own orgasm.

Dysea pulled her head back slowly wanting to taste him even further, and she dragged her lips and the edge of her teeth along his still exploding cock, causing Martin to whimper in pleasure. She wrapped her small hands around the four inches of his saliva coated cock she had released from the grip of her throat and greedily continued to drink his cum, relishing in the mint flavor. His explosions within her mouth were lessening in force, but still she sucked as hard as she dared, wanting to taste every drop as it warmed her belly. She squeezed her thighs together, trying to prolong her own orgasm as Martin's hands fell away from her head to grip the side of the bed. His knuckles turned white and he thrust his hips upward several times as the last of his cum spurted into her willing mouth.

Dysea opened her tear stained eyes and watched him drop heavily back to the bed, but she didn't release his softening cock from within the grip of her soft lips. She took a deep breath and plunge back down on his thick pole, milking him for everything he had to offer her. Slowly she began to draw her lips back along the entire twelve inch length. Several agonizing moments later, just the tortured head of his huge cock rested in her mouth and Dysea lavished it with attention, using her tongue to twirl around the crown and trace the ridge. She allowed his cock to slip from between her lips and it slapped wetly against his abdomen, fully half of its size from a moment ago. Dysea extended her tongue and licked the entire length of his softening shaft, and then proceeded up to his powerful abdomen, tracing the ridges and contours of his rippled stomach muscles with her talented tongue. When she was reasonably sure she could move without fear of collapsing from her own breathtaking orgasm, she began the delightful trek up his hard abdomen and broad chest, nibbling and kissing his skin the entire way.

Dysea slowly and deliberately plastered her body on top of his as she brought her face even with Martin's and found his incredible dark eyes staring at her. Her eyes flew open in joyful surprise when he pulled her face down to his and drove his warm tongue between her lips, kissing her with passion and love, heedless of the drops of his cum that still clung to her lips. Dysea returned his kiss with equal hunger, her small hands holding his face as his fingers grasped her tight ass and ground her still dripping pussy hard against his soft but still incredibly large cock.

It was a long soul stealing kiss and when their lips finally pried away from each other both of them were out of breath again. Dysea flicked her warm tongue out as their lips drew apart; caressing his moist upper lip and then his strong chin as a cat would lap up a bowl of warm milk.

"That was... that was unbelievable *Melda Min*." He whispered to her, his lips moving to caress the soft silky skin of her throat.

Dysea's eyes closed dreamily and she smiled as he nibbled on her skin. "I... I did not realize how... how delicious you taste *Nauta Melme*." She replied in a whisper as well. "I will... I will have to devour you more often."

Martin smiled and rolled over quickly pulling her with him until he was above her. Dysea smiled as the weight of his body pressed against her and made her feel safe and wanted. She looked at his face as his eyes took in her beauty. The shape of her lips, the contour of her cheekbones, and the sexy ridges of her pointed elf ears, "*Tye harya nya fea mi immo mannars Melda Min*." He whispered to her. **(You possess my soul in your hands Beloved One.)**

Dysea couldn't help the choked up sound that came from her throat at his words, or the tears that sprang to her eyes. She took his weathered face in her hands and used her thumbs to trace his cheeks, "*Ar tye luhta farme inye harya mi immo ranco nya Nauta Melme*." **(And you enchant all that I possess when I am within your embrace my Bounded Love.)**

"*Inye vamme lelya immo uvane*," He continued, reaching up to caress her cheek. **(I could not go on without your beauty.)**

"You will always have me my love." Dysea spoke softly.

Martin smiled at her. "And you will always have me."

“What you feel for me my love?” Dysea asked, running her finger across his lips. “Is it the same as what you feel for Anja?”

“Anja?” He asked surprised.

Dysea smiled. “Do you think I don’t see the way you look at her? It is the same passion I see in your eyes for me just before you bed me. She shares your heart with me Martin, I can see this.”

“*Melda Min*... I...”

“Do not mistake my words for anger or jealousy my love.” Dysea spoke quickly. “It can not be anger when she stirs my blood just as she stirs yours.”

Martin looked at her. “You...”

Dysea smiled brilliantly. “My relationship with you has opened my eyes to many things I would never have known or experienced before. When I look at her I desire her, and it stirs my blood more than even Tarifa can. Will you tell me I am wrong?”

Martin shook his head. “I will never lie to you *Melda Min*, about anything. I love you too much to dishonor you in such a way.”

“Then tell me why she stirs your blood so, for when I see you look at her, I see the same intense passion in your eyes that is there when you possess me.” Dysea said.

Martin looked at her. “She is like you *Melda Min*. So intelligent and strong willed. So willing to put others needs before your own. She wasn’t always like that, she lost her way for a time, but it is coming back to her. When I see her now... it is like it was before.”

“And it troubles you that you can feel this for both of us?” Dysea said.

Martin nodded. “It is not easy to explain how I can love you and love Anja just as completely. I have trouble understanding it myself. Tarifa... she allowed that part of me to be released... and I can only hope that I was as helpful for her. We will always care for one another, but she does not hold my attentions as you and Anja do. No.”

“It is no different for me *Nauta Melme*.” Dysea said softly.

“I thought...”

Dysea smiled. “We will never deny the other our council; we have grown too close for that. She holds a place within me that I did not know I have... it is like a love for a dear sister but her true heart does not reside with me and we will never share a bed again.”

“Then you have sensed it as well?” Martin asked.

Dysea nodded, “Since my time with her in Mountain City. When we discovered Aihola, it was as if something inside her was reborn. While we may be in her heart, I believe Aihola holds her soul.”

“I suspected as much.” Martin said. “Her messages after you departed began to become less frequent, as if something else was holding her attention.”

Dysea nodded. “She has discovered who she really is, just as I have. We will be able to speak with her soon enough. She should be arriving in Salina tomorrow evening.” Dysea traced Martin’s eyelids gently. “I see the intense interest in Anja’s eyes when she looks at me, and it is in me as well. I see the love in her eyes when she gazes at you. I wish... I wish to pursue her *Nauta Melme*.”

“Do not do this because you think it is what I desire *Melda Min*.” Martin said stroking her cheek. “Whatever my feelings for Anja may be, I love you with every fiber of what I am.”

“I would never have reason to question that *Nauta Melme*. You show me your soul every time you leave me breathless in your embrace and then hold me in your arms as sleep takes us. What if... but what if Anja is what I desire as well?” Dysea asked him.

“I would never deny you anything *Melda Min*, you know that.” Martin said.

“If... if something happens between us, can... can you put aside the pain she caused you so long ago and allow your true feelings for her to guide you?” Dysea asked.

“I have moved beyond that Dysea.” Martin said, “As with you, I love her too much to allow the mistakes of our past to dictate our future.”

Dysea wrapped her arms around his shoulders and stared into his gorgeous dark brown eyes. “Then make me yours completely *Nauta Melme*.” She whispered.

“You are already belong to me completely Dysea,” He told her with a smile. “You...”

Dysea shook her head. “No Martin, make me like you.” She said. “I know it is possible for you to do this. There is something you hold back from me *Nauta Melme*. Something that only Daniel and Julie and the others you came with share. I see it *Nauta Melme*, I can feel it in you. And I wish it more than anything.”

Martin stared into her emerald green eyes for a long moment. He shook his head slowly. “*Melda Min*... if I did that, there is a lot you don’t know Dysea. It is not what you think it is.”

Dysea took his face in her hands. “It is part of you *Nauta Melme*. Part of who you are. You have made me... you have made me like you only partially *Nauta Melme*. I wish you to make me like you completely.”

“*Melda Min*... there are times when even I don’t know what I truly am.” Martin spoke softly. “I have tried to figure it out my entire life... and I still don’t have the answers.”

“You... you and the others are not these Genomes that you wish everyone to believe are you?” Dysea spoke. “You are something different, something much more.”

Martin stared at Dysea, her emerald orbs gazing at him with complete and unabashed love. “There would be no going back *Melda Min*. It can not be undone. The initial change is extremely... it will take some time to come to grips with what you can do. What you have seen is only part of it Dysea. And it would... it would link us forever.”

“I do not find the prospect of being bound to you for the rest of eternity in the least bit daunting *Nauta Melme*.” Dysea told him with a smile. “It is what I desire. And I have you to hold me and give me strength through the pain.”

“You... you are sure about this?” Martin asked.

“I have never been surer of anything.” Dysea answered.

Martin ran his fingers over her cheeks and lips once more, staring into her eyes. Dysea thought for a moment he would refuse her, and she opened her mouth to speak. “Close your eyes *Melda Min*.” He said softly.

Dysea shook her head, “No my love. I do not fear the beast inside you. It is part of you, and it is part of the reason why you make love to me with such passion and power. I will not...”

His lips descending upon hers stopped her words as he kissed her hard, plunging his warm tongue between her lips and stealing her breath away. Dysea moaned against his lips and her arms tightened around his shoulders. She whimpered when she felt the huge head of his thick cock, now fully engorged in passion once more, press against her pussy lips demanding entrance into her warmth. Martin pulled back from their kiss leaving her breathless and trying to pull his lips back down to hers. She gasped as the head of his cock pushed into her warm tunnel, his teeth clenched. He hissed in pleasure as her snug warmth encased his glands and he stopped with just the huge head inside her.

Dysea’s eyes went wide as the change came over him in front of her. Short black hair sprouted from his skin, and she felt his muscles thicken and grow more powerful, like bands of steel stretching across his back and shoulders. The hair was soft and it rubbed against her delicate skin setting fire to her body. His face began to alter as well, his lips curling back as vicious looking flesh shredding fangs lengthened into view. She saw for the first time that there was a smaller set of fangs next to his larger canine teeth. The hair erupted from his face, his features transforming into a short snout, his eyes changing into the beautiful yellow black orbs she so adored. Dysea had never seen him in his fully changed form, and her hands trembled as she clutched at his powerful shoulders. This was not it though... he was still holding back.

“Everything my love please?” Dysea gasped. “Hold nothing back from me I beg you!”

His entire body had become thicker and more muscular and... Dysea gasped loudly as she felt his cock swell inside her. Her emerald green eyes flew open wide at this revelation. She dropped one hand between their bodies and suddenly realized that his cock had grown in proportion to the rest of his body. She looked into his yellow black orbs when her hand found his cock and she saw him smile. She could not wrap her fingers around his cock before the change due to its thickness, and now it seemed as if it had doubled in size.

“*Nauta... Nauta Melme...*” Dysea gasped, suddenly unsure of what she had asked from him, “Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!”

Dysea’s head flew back and she screamed in a mixture of intense pain and exquisite pleasure as Martin hunched forward and drove the entire fifteen inch length of his burning hot cock into her belly. Sweat immediately blossomed all over Dysea’s skin, and it felt as if she was on fire from within. Her legs were spread out and she brought them up to curl around his lower back, locking her ankles together. His lava like balls, now the size of large oranges, slammed against her tight ass cheeks as the head of his cock penetrated very nearly to

her womb. The emerald piercing on the hood of her steel hard clit caused waves of a volcano like orgasm to envelope her. Her body arched off the bed and she screamed in unimaginable pain and bliss.

Martin's looked down on her, passion, desire, lust and unadulterated love pouring from his yellow black eyes. He saw her neck muscles straining against her sweat slick skin, her hands gripping and tearing the sheets from their bed. Her neck and throat looked so inviting, and the incredible heat and tightness of her spasming pussy would cause him to lose control very quickly. He leaned forward, placing his fanged face next to her elf ear as she shuddered in out of control orgasms.

"All that I am *Melda Min*." He whispered and lowered his head to her neck.

Dysea felt his fangs pierce the skin of her neck and sink deeply into her flesh. Her arms flew around his massive shoulders as a burning sensation ripped through her. She screamed again, louder this time as another orgasm even stronger than the first followed almost immediately and the pain increased. The burning sensation raced through her shoulders and down her arms. Dysea felt his now incredibly massive cock swell within her pussy and when the first eruption of his searing cum blasted into her womb Dysea's eyes rolled into the back of her skull and she howled longer and louder than ever before as the incredible pain and wondrous pleasure mingled together and became one.

Tarifa's eyes sprang open at that moment as if some unknown force had prodded her awake. The moon was casting an eerie glow through the window of Aihola's room, the shards of white light bathing them in a soft light. Tarifa was snuggled within Aihola's embrace, her muscular body spooning her from behind. Her face was buried in Tarifa's hair at the back of her neck and she could feel her warm breath on her skin. Her left hand was snaked around her waist and cupped her full breast possessively even in her sleep. Aihola's taut thigh was pressed between Tarifa's own legs, and Tarifa could just detect the faint smell of their lovemaking saturating the sheets and the air in the small room. They had spent the better part of the day entwined within each other's embrace, pleasuring each other in ways that only they could. They had stopped only when Telan had returned, and it had taken Tarifa only a few short hours to make Telan dinner and have him grunting over her until he was spent. The drug she had put in his wine knocked him out almost immediately and Tarifa had left his vile clutches.

Aihola had spent the next hour washing her body in such a way that Tarifa felt cleansed of Telan's retched touch for the first time in months. After that they had spent hours pleasuring each other once more before drifting off to a content filled sleep.

Tarifa snuggled back against her Drow lover's form, coveting the warmth of her skin and the grip of Aihola's hands on her body. She felt something within herself, as if something wonderful had just occurred somewhere and it filled Tarifa with peace and a soothing calm. She smiled dreamily and closed her eyes, falling back into a deep sleep within Aihola's embrace.

NEW MIAMI

The woman stood on the balcony of the home overlooking the crashing Atlantic Ocean. The moon caused the water to appear silver as it crashed onto the beach, foaming until it was soaked up by the sand. The beach was deserted for miles in either direction, the far off lights of New Miami giving the sky behind the large beach front home an ivory glow. The woman wore only a long cape and hood, the cape hanging open revealing her naked tanned flesh. She had long legs with muscular calves that extended up to her lean olive colored thighs. There was a single strip of black hair extending above her pussy. Her abdomen was flat and rippled with muscles, her breasts large and firm. Her black hair billowed around her shoulders, the moonlight giving her hair an almost unnatural glow. She held the single mug within her hands as her black eyes gazed across the surface of the water.

The woman did not move a muscle as the tall man approached her from behind. He was no threat to her as she had detected his presence long before he had come to this point. If he had been a threat, he would have been killed the moment he had set foot on the property of her home.

“The mission failed.” She spoke, not wording her statement as a question.

The Colonel nodded his head. “Hunter stepped in front of the target just as Slayer Three took his shot.” He told her.

The woman turned, her face hid by the shadows cast from the walls. “You hit Hunter?” She asked.

“His healing system would have protected him Madam President.” The Colonel answered.

“You had better hope so Colonel, for your sake.” The woman replied.

“Ma’am, if I may why is the target Commander Peterson? If all the reports are accurate she is half... she is like him now.” The Colonel asked. “Shouldn’t we be going after the elf Queens?”

“The elf Queens are irrelevant right now.” The woman answered. “We are about to initiate a war between the Wood Elves and the High Elves that will most certainly tear them apart. With our support the Wood Elves should have no trouble eliminating most of the High Elf Ruling family, as well as most of their best troops. Once that is accomplished we can move in and clean up the remainder of both groups. We will have thousands more slaves, and our control over North America will be complete.”

“You don’t believe Hunter will act for one side or the other?” The Colonel asked.

“Perhaps... but his support will be miniscule. He has no power base, no army. What could he possibly do?”

“So you don’t believe the rumors about this *Falre Lome* and the hidden city within the mountains?”

“Ah yes, the Phantom Soldiers?” The woman laughed. “And the mythical city of elves and men that is so prevalent within their cultures. Yes... Walter did much to enhance their legends to give them hope. It is almost as bad as the actual legends and lore he used to tell me about when he was engineering the elves. It is a false hope, one that does not exist. I have a new mission for you Colonel.”

“Yes ma’am.”

“Doctor Carson is the center of their religion.” The woman spoke. “Find him. Kill him. Once you do that, we will have won half the battle and not even lifted a finger.”

The Colonel nodded, “As you order Madam President.” He answered.

“Excellent. How many men accompanied you here tonight?” She asked, stepping closer to him.

“Myself and three others Madam President,” He answered as her hand came to rest on his broad chest.

“Why don’t you insure the compound is locked down and you and your men come upstairs? I have need of your services, and I grow tired of these paltry human men. They have neither the size nor the stamina to please me.” The woman said. “Their diets produce cum that tastes bitter and sour. I need the sweet taste of your cum Colonel, as much as you and your men can supply. Are you up to the challenge?”

The Colonel looked at her with hunger in his eyes. The woman before him was President of the Alliance, but she was also a woman, and his eyes grew hungry as he remembered the times in her bed before. “I believe we can arrange something ma’am.” He finally spoke.

The woman smiled under the hood. “Excellent.” She stated. “And tell them not to hold back this time Colonel, for I will not. My body is theirs to use as they will, including my ass.”

The Colonel watched as she turned away from him, dragging her hand across his chest and moving for the stairs that would take her up to the bedroom. He smiled a sadistic smile and headed to get his men.

The woman stopped on the stairs as she watched the Colonel move quickly, a small smile on her face.

“Soon my love Martin; soon you will be dead, before you even know who you really are. And then I will rule this planet as we were meant to before your father got in the way.” The woman reached up and drew back the hood revealing her distinctly Asian features. “Soon...”

Yuri Tanaka smiled as she continued up the stairs to prepare for the gang bang she would be experiencing in only a short while.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

MOUNTAIN CITY

Tarifa looked at Minister Raloa as she walked up to the large heavily armored Hopper he stood next too. She wore a full length ivory white dress that flowed outward at the bottom and brushed against the soft soled

shoes she wore. The dress was trimmed in gold lace and sparkled in the early morning sunlight. The design and cut of the dress caused it to hug her lush figure like a glove, accenting every curve and contour. There was a choker for a collar and the dress split open as it plunged down between her firm breasts, fully exposing her ample cleavage and tanned skin. Aihola had spent two hours of the early morning braiding part of her hair into four separate rows on either side of her face. These braids she then wrapped tightly around Tarifa's head like a natural crown, accenting them with recently picked white lilies. It was a custom of the Drow for such a hair style, as it signified the possession of one Drow for the other in the Mistress/Slave relationship. Since Aihola had decided to forgo most of her people's ancient rituals, she decided this would be how she would show her possession and love of Tarifa. Tarifa and Aihola agreed that no one outside of the Holy One would know what the braids really meant, and Aihola then instructed Tarifa as she did the same to her hair, further cementing their relationship for all time. It was a way for them to publicly showcase what they felt for each other, without publicly revealing their relationship completely. The remainder of Tarifa's billowing black hair cascaded down her shoulders framing her flawless face and stunning sapphire eyes, falling to the middle of her back.

"Minister Ralao you have decided to accompany us?" Tarifa exclaimed as they approached the Hopper. Aihola walked slightly behind and to Tarifa's left. She wore a simple dark gray jumpsuit and utility belt, a long cape and cowl draped over her shoulders. The hood was down; her shimmering silver/white hair braided and pulled into a tight pony tail.

Ralao met her words with a small forced smile and nod of his head. "It has been many moons since I have left Mountain City. I decided it would be a pleasant trip."

Tarifa gave him a brilliant smile and slid her hand into the crook of his arm. "Then I insist you travel with me in my Hopper. We may be able to use the time to allow each other to see different perspectives on an assortment of issues."

Ralao seemed taken aback at this and he shook his head quickly. "I would not dare to presume I could change your mind on anything my Queen." He stammered. "I will ride with Ministers Thalami and Treblar if that pleases you."

Tarifa bowed her head to him in return, "Of course." She spoke evenly. "I hope you will see fit to spend time with me while we are in Salina. There is much we could work out if we sat down together."

Ralao nodded his head, "At your call my Queen."

Tarifa watched him move back to the third Hopper in the line of seven. She glanced at Aihola who stood just to her right, "What a pompous wind bag. He is coming to watch me, so that the powers controlling my father and Telan can keep an eye on me." She muttered. "They must consider me to be a brainless idiot."

Aihola smiled ever so slightly. "You do play the part so well *Ussta ssinssrigg*." Aihola spoke softly so that only Tarifa could hear her. **(My Love in the Drow language)**

Tarifa's eyes gleamed in adoration when she heard Aihola call her that. It had surprised Aihola that Tarifa, as a High Elf Queen had an excellent working knowledge of the ancient Drow language. The Drow language was different in many ways from the normal elf words, and there were very few non-Drow who could speak it. That Tarifa was one of them had only made their relationship all the more pre-ordained as far as Aihola was concerned. They could talk almost completely in private even in front of others, and no one would know what they were saying.

Tarifa turned back to watch as Ralao got into the Hopper further down the convoy.

"*Usstan orn l'amith popping ukt sokoya lotha tresk'ri vel'drav l' draeval chu*." Tarifa replied softly. **(I will enjoy popping his pretty little world when the time comes.)**

The corners of Aihola's lips curled slightly in a smile. "That would be very fun to watch *Tarinya Enda*." She spoke softly, switching back to the common elf language. **(Queen of my heart)**

Tarifa turned as her mother walked up to the Hopper, Walter Carson beside her. Two Dragoons that she did not recognize walked behind them. Tarifa bowed her head to Walter. "Holy One, it warms my heart to see you accompany us."

"I have you to thank child." Walter replied, "You and your mother." His face did not change expression, but Tarifa clearly saw that he recognized the braids in her hair, and those in Aihola's shimmering white tresses. "I see that time has been good to you child." He spoke, leaning over to kiss her forehead as he had done since she was a baby.

Tarifa smiled and squeezed his hands as the Dragoon in Cantel's command stepped from around the back and opened the armored door to the interior. "We are ready to depart my Queen." He spoke.

Tarifa nodded and turned to enter the Hopper. Aihola waited for Palina and Walter to enter the Hopper before she moved to get in. She blocked the Dragoons from entering the Hopper and jerked her thumb back to the Hopper behind them. "You can ride back there." She ordered.

"We were told to stay with the Holy One always Drow witch." The Dragoon snapped, looking at Aihola with undisguised hatred.

Aihola smiled at him sweetly, not intimidated by him in the least. "Unless you plan on riding on top, you just got bumped to the next Hopper." She told him evenly. "Maybe next time, but I doubt it."

Aihola got in and pulled the armored door shut even as the Dragoon officer began to protest. She secured the hatch and took a seat next to Tarifa on one of the interior benches. The MV9 Hopper was very spacious inside, providing every comfort with plush couches and a small bar. It was armored even more than the normal MV9 due to the fact that it was the Queen's transport. When Aihola had settled next to her on the soft seat Tarifa rapped on the armored glass that separated their compartment from the cockpit of the Hopper. Palina and Walter watched as the hatch slid aside to reveal Cantel's weathered features.

"We can depart whenever you wish my Queen. I swept the vehicle myself and you may speak freely for the duration of the trip."

"Thank you Cantel. You may proceed." Tarifa replied.

Palina waited until the divider closed before speaking. "It... it may not be very wise to antagonize the Dragoons assigned to the Holy One Aihola." Palina spoke, looking at her with an expression of surprise. "We had to pull many strings to get the Council to allow the Holy One to accompany us."

Aihola met her gaze evenly. "Would you have preferred I invited the Dragoons in and we rode the entire way to Salina in silence *Quende Amille*?" She asked calmly.

"I only meant..." Palina started, surprised by the respectful tone of voice Aihola used with her.

"I know full well what you meant *Quende Amille*." Aihola said respectfully. "You do not trust me, or what you think my motives may be. Rest assured that your worries are unfounded. My only concern on this trip is Tarifa's safety." Aihola glanced at Walter. "Forgive me Holy One."

Walter grinned, "For what?" He asked as the Hopper lurched forward and they began to move. "You will do what you must Aihola. I expect no less from you."

Aihola looked at Tarifa, "*Dosst ilhar kyonen naut whol uns'aa ussta ssinssrigg.*" (**Your mother cares not for me my love.**)

Palina noticed for the first time the identical braids in Tarifa's and Aihola's hair. She watched as Tarifa took one of Aihola's hands within both of hers and pulled her back into the seat. She looked at her daughter, her eyes slightly wide as Tarifa spoke to Aihola in a language she didn't understand.

"*Ussta ilhar 'udtila naut share ussta orlingg xor ussta xukuth wun selg'tarnen concerning dos,*" Tarifa told Aihola, her sapphire eyes bright. (**My mother does not share my bed or my heart in matters concerning you.**)

Aihola smiled and Palina saw her relax. Tarifa squeezed her hand within hers and then she turned and met her mother's eyes. "We are all on the same side." She spoke calmly. "I will not have us bickering amongst ourselves. Mother... Aihola has my fullest trust and confidence, as well... as well as my love." She saw her mother's eyes go even wider. "We have much to cover before we get to Salina, and I would like to arrive rested. As Martin is fond of saying; 'Can we dispense with the political bullshit and get to it?'"

Walter burst out in a hearty laugh unlike anything he had shared in many months. "Ah Tarifa... your time with Martin has certainly expanded your sense of humor."

Tarifa smiled at Walter's words. She glanced coyly at Aihola, and they shared a knowing smile between them. "My time with Martin has expanded many things for me Holy One." She said. She took a deep breath and her face became serious once more. "For now we must speak of how to avert this coming war that the Alliance is urging the Wood Elves to partake in, against us."

"We do not have the numbers to combat the Wood Elves daughter." Palina spoke dismissing for the moment the fact that her daughter was showing affection for a Drow assassin. "Not with the support they are receiving from the Alliance in material."

"That is why we must devise a way to make the Wood Elves see what is happening." Tarifa said.

“How do we do that *Tarinya Enda*?” Aihola asked openly, ignoring the surprised look from Palina.

Tarifa looked at her. “I do not know *Nya Istel*.” She answered sitting back in the comfortable seat. “The odds do not seem to be in our favor. That is why I hope Martin can help us in some way.”

“This would never have come about four centuries ago.” Palina spoke softly. “The High King always kept the peace between the elf peoples. When the Alliance murdered him in his sleep darkness descended upon us all.”

Tarifa looked at her mother oddly, “High King?” She asked. “I don’t know what you mean mother. What High King?”

Palina looked at Walter and he leaned forward. “This is not common knowledge Tarifa, and it should not be bandied about. When I first created the different elf species, I took from elfin lore not only their cultures, but also the fact that there was always a High King to be the mediator between the different cultures. When I created the elves, I also created a High King to lead them all. Each elf species would have their ruling family, a King or Queen, or both. But the High King was the final say in all matters. The first High King lived only ten years after he was conceived, but long enough to have a son. That son was recognized as High King and he served in that capacity for the next thirty years when he came of age. I used the genetic make up and DNA from a royal bloodline that I had preserved from the 21st century when I originally created their gene code.”

“Are you saying somewhere out there is an elf descended from this royal line?” Tarifa asked, stunned at this news.

Walter shook his head slowly. “To the best of my knowledge the Alliance murdered him in his sleep before he and his wife were able to conceive a child.” Tarifa saw his eyes go a little wider for a moment and then they returned to normal.

“Holy One is everything alright?” She asked.

Walter looked at her. “Yes. Yes of course... I was just remembering something. It is of no importance.”

“Each culture was given a sample of his DNA so there would be no disputes and no trying to bring false imposters into the picture.” Palina continued now. “We have it stored in our archives, as I’m sure the Wood Elves do, as well as every elf clan left on the planet.”

“I would very much like to hear about this at a later time, but that does us no good now.” Tarifa exclaimed. “Martin and Eden City are the best hope we have for avoiding this war. And they are who we must petition for help.” She spoke as she sat back. Tarifa did not see the look Walter gave her as she settled back into the seat a look of frustration on her face.

Aihola looked at Walter with great interest now. She had seen the look pass across his face as Tarifa did, yet she thought she saw something else. She had always been a student of history, often times defying her Alliance Masters and studying history scrolls that were not allowed to the Drow in their captivity. “Holy One... if I may ask the question; this royal bloodline... the... the DNA,” Aihola clearly did not grasp the concept of genetics, and she struggled with the technical terms. “You say this High King was created from the bloodline of a King in the 21st century?”

Walter shook his head. “The descendants of this King yes. There was a General officer within the American military that was a blood descendant of the King. The actual King himself lived in 480 BC.”

Aihola’s eyes grew a little wider, “A warrior King?” She spoke somewhat in awe, knowing the age the Holy One spoke of as a time of great men and many battles.

Walter smiled genuinely. “I see you disobeyed the Alliance in regards to your education Aihola. I’m very happy about that.”

“Ancient history was a subject I enjoyed greatly Holy One. And all of the Drow studied extensively the warriors that came before us in centuries past. I just took it one step further and managed to acquire history scrolls they did not allow us to have.” Aihola replied appearing more excited than any other time that Tarifa had seen her, discounting the moments when her lips were fastened on Aihola’s sweet pussy. She smiled as her love questioned the Holy One. She learned something new about Aihola every day it seemed. “Was it Alexander The Great, Holy One or King Edward; King Henry perhaps?”

Walter smiled at her enthusiasm. “They came after the King we used as the template, though all were great men.” He answered.

“Then who Holy One,” Aihola asked with anticipation.

“We used the bloodline of Leonidas as the template.” Walter finally answered her.

Aihola's eyes went wide in undisguised awe, "The Spartan King?"

**EDEN CITY
FORMERLY JUNCTION CITY UTAH**

Welcome to the club.

Hello Dysea.

Good morning.

It's about time.

Is she awake yet?

Don't make fun of her Kenny.

It didn't take me this long to wake up!

That's because you aren't as intelligent as she is.

Enough!

Martin's deep sounding word ended the voices.

There were flashes of desert sands. Explosions that sent billowing black smoke into the blue sky, strange places that she had never seen. Oceans the color of green silk, flashes of Anja's face contorted in pleasure, Tarifa's beautiful eyes and the face of a strange Asian woman. There were bare white corridors, the billions upon billions of stars and the stunning picture of the blue green planet.

Dysea's emerald eyes sprang open and she bolted upright in their bed, the sheet dropping away to reveal her glorious nakedness. A multitude of strange sounds and smells assailed her senses and she gripped her head as it throbbed almost painfully.

"Melda Min?" Martin's voice carried to her.

Dysea looked up as Martin came into the room wearing no clothes. He carried a tray with him which he quickly set on the table next to the bed. He took Dysea's hands in his and pulled her into his embrace as he knelt next to the bed.

"Breathe deeply Melda Min," He spoke softly. *"As I taught you before, slowly catalog everything and file it away. You will remember it later. Bring your mind back to peace. You can do it."*

"Nauta Melme... it hurts!" She gasped. *"I can... I can hear things! The smells... it is too much!"*

Martin took her face in his hands. *"Look at me Melda Min. Concentrate, just as I taught you before. You will need to apply yourself more this time until you become accustom to the changes. It is no different. One scent or sound at a time, just as before. You can do it. We will help you."*

"I don't... I don't understand!" She grimaced, her hands coming to her head. *"There is only... there is only you!"*

"No Melda Min." Martin said. *"Do you trust me?"*

Dysea looked at him with pain filled eyes, tears beginning to form. *"You... you know I do Nauta Melme."* She spoke through clenched teeth.

"Trust me now my love." Martin said. *"Do as I taught you before. We will help you Melda Min. We will help you."*

Dysea gripped Martin's thick arms; her forehead pressed against his chest as she listened to the sound of his soothing voice and did as he instructed her. As he had taught her before, with painstaking detail she memorized every smell, every sound and filed it away within her head. She pictured her brain as a massive library, the shelves filled with the information she put there. It was too much though, there were so many sounds and smells and images that she did not understand. Her hands squeezed his arms tighter as she fought with all her strength to keep from going mad. She was about to scream out in hopelessness when in her mind she saw the soft green light appear before her.

We will help you Melda Min. The soothing voice told her.

This was Martin's voice.

Martin?

Don't fight it Dysea. The female voice she recognized as Julie's spoke now. *Allow it to envelope you. Embrace it.*

Julie? What...

You will get the answers to your questions Dysea. This was Danny's voice she had no doubt of that, but he was hundreds of miles away, how was that possible. *For now you must be at peace.*

Let us help you. The voice of Martin's Master Chief who she knew as Tony, *Don't fight it.*

You hold my heart in your hands Melda Min. Martin's voice filled her again, so soothing and warm.

Dysea loosened her grip on Martin's arms but did not release them. She forced her body to relax in his strong embrace and she felt the pain slowly drifting away from her temples. The lances of pure white hot pain began to dull and withdraw. The sounds and smells began to become distant and bearable, and as she relaxed further and embraced the green light within her mind, they completely disappeared. Dysea opened her eyes now, a look of wonderment filling her face as she saw things within her mind that she could never have imagined. She felt a complete and utter acceptance embrace her, surrounding her and making her feel protected and wanted.

Dysea looked up slowly until she was gazing into Martin's beautiful dark eyes. He smiled at her.

Hello Melda Min. His words filled her mind, but his lips did not move. *Welcome to our world.*

"*Nauta Melme...* I hear... your words... but... your lips are not moving." Dysea gasped.

Martin nodded. *I know; it's pretty neat huh? Try it.*

I do not know how. Dysea said with her mind, even as her eyes grew wider at the revelation she had just done it.

Martin smiled and moved further onto the bed, pulling Dysea into his lap as he settled. The sheet fell further away from her naked form, but neither of them moved to pull it back up. Martin pulled her close to him, her full breasts pressing against his chest and she slid her arms around his shoulders. "It is quite amazing isn't it?" He asked her, speaking normally.

"*Nauta Melme* how..." Dysea's face was bright and animated as if she had just discovered a pot of gold under the rainbow.

Martin put a finger to her lips and shook his head. "I will answer your questions *Melda Min.*" He spoke softly. "But first you must promise me something."

Dysea looked at him, "Anything my love." She told him.

"What I am going to tell you must never be spoken of openly with anyone." Martin told her, his face very serious, "Never without permission from all of us. Some of what I will share with you not even Admiral Wallace or Walter have knowledge of."

"All of us?" Dysea asked confused. "But there is only you and I here."

"The world you have now entered is far more than just you and I *Melda Min.*" Martin told her. "Promise me."

"*Nauta Melme*, the Holy One is father to..."

Martin shook his head. "You must promise me *Melda Min!*" He spoke almost urgently. "You will understand soon my love, I give you my word. It is the only reason we have survived for as long as we have."

Dysea met his eyes and nodded slowly touching his face. "On my eternal love for you *Nauta Melme*, I swear to you." She said.

Martin nodded and took a deep breath. "When Walter first created us... only four of us could change our physical forms, The Admiral, me, Danny and Julie. It was a decision that Walter made and he never revealed to anyone the reason for it. We never asked. He created the Admiral four years before the three of us or so he told us, encoding into his DNA the ability to age normally until age fifty. That is why he appears older than us. He will age now as we will, living for several hundred years at least." Martin smiled to himself. "Walter was... is a genius Dysea. He can manipulate genes and DNA like a god. However he did not expect the Genomes he created to develop the flaw that became our downfall. No one knows what triggered it, but the Genomes began to go insane. They would snap mentally and go off on killing rampages. Hundreds were massacred before the government decided to exterminate us." Martin took a deep breath. "It was affecting all Genomes, all but the four of us. Even some on our own team were showing signs of breaking. The Admiral had an idea that because of our animal DNA, whatever was causing the others to lose their minds was not happening to us.

“We developed a plan then, Danny and Julie and I. Even the Admiral did not know of it. We decided to save our brothers and sisters if we could. We knew our saliva was infectious, filled with whatever genes that were keeping us safe from the disease. We... we began changing the members of our team in secret. No one knew but the three of us and those we were changing. We endured the hundreds of tests that the government saw fit to give us to insure we would not snap. It worked Dysea. Whatever was in our blood, in our genes, it saved those we had come to regard as brothers and sisters.”

“No... no one ever knew?” Dysea asked awestruck at this news.

Martin shook his head. “I believe Walter may have suspected, but he did not mention it to anyone, least of all those who wanted to exterminate us.” He looked at her. “We did not want to die.” He said with a wry grin.

“So... so all of you that remain can change?” Dysea asked.

Martin nodded slowly. “Once they allowed us to return to duty we made sure that no one would change their appearance unless it was a matter of life or death. There were a few that knew about the four of us, but not the others. And we never gave them reason to suspect otherwise.” Martin smiled. “Anyway... we didn’t know of the biggest side effect of doing what we did.”

“What do you mean side effect?” Dysea asked.

Martin met her emerald eyes. “Changing everyone had the effect of allowing us to speak with our thoughts. We don’t know how this ability came to be; only that it did. Julie believes it is because we all now share common memories and thoughts. What Danny has experienced, I can see within my mind if I try hard enough. The same holds true for all of us... and now it holds true for you as well.”

Dysea’s eyes grew a little larger. “You mean... my thoughts... what I think... these things are no longer my own?”

Martin shook his head. “No... I will teach you how to guard your mind and shield your thoughts *Melda Min*, and all of us have sworn never to invade the mind of a comrade without good cause. Your private thoughts will be just that. Private to you and only those you choose to share them with.”

Dysea brought her hands up to his face, “And your thoughts *Nauta Melme*?” She asked softly. “Do you guard them as well?”

“My thoughts are yours to experience and share whenever you wish *Melda Min*. From you I will hold nothing back, I will keep no secrets.” Martin told her.

Dysea felt the tears form in her eyes at his words. “You would... you would do that for me?”

Martin smiled. “You have seen the part of me that no one else has Dysea. The part I wish to share with only one other. And then I will be complete.”

Dysea smiled as the tears rolled down her cheeks, “Anja?”

Martin nodded. “She is as much a part of me as you are now. When... when the time is right... and if it is what she wants... then I hope she will choose to join us.”

“I could...” Dysea began.

Martin shook his head. “I know what you are going to say *Melda Min*, but no. As you asked me... Anja much ask as well. We force the change on no one, not since the Purge. As time passes and we take wives or husbands, and it is what they wish, then they can join us, but never by force. The only exception we have agreed to make is if the individual is in danger of dying. And that is the only exception. We make no others. I know she stirs you... as she stirs me... and I want her just as badly as you do... but if you pursue her, you can’t change her unless it is something she asks for.”

“I have... I have this ability now?” Dysea asked stunned.

Martin nodded. “Yes... and it will grow stronger as you come to realize what you are able to do. You were right *Melda Min*... there is much about me that I have not told you. I will share it with you now over the next few days.”

“And what of Tarifa *Nauta Melme*, you... she has changed as well, in part because of you.” Dysea asked.

“You must guard yourself even from her my love.” Martin said, reaching up to stroke her cheek. “She is special to us both, but I believe her path leads down a different road as you yourself have said. If she... if she asks... perhaps... but she must choose that path... and I am not entirely sure I wish to change her as I have changed you, as I wish to change Anja. I do not feel for her what I feel for you and Anja.”

“Why do you not speak with your minds all the time?” Dysea asked him, wanting to leave the subject of Tarifa behind for the moment.

“As you probably can tell, it gives us a great advantage over those around us.” Martin answered with a smile. “But it *is* physically draining, especially over great distances.”

Sudden recognition showed in Dysea’s eyes. “That... that is why you have not launched a full blown search for Daniel. I... I heard his voice in my mind. You speak with him... even now.”

Martin nodded. “We use short code words that we have developed over the years. The communications are brief, but yes. There is much I need to teach you.” He told her. “Your physical abilities, as you will no doubt discover over time, have increased by ten fold, even over what you already were capable of as an elf. You will need to guard against showing your true abilities very often. They are somewhat more extensive than what you have seen so far.”

“My appearance... I can... will I change?” She asked softly, “As you did last night.”

“Did... did I frighten you *Melda Min*?” Martin asked, suddenly very concerned.

Dysea kissed him quickly, seeing the look of concern flash in his eyes. “I was never frightened my love. The beast within you still has your mind and your heart. I knew I was in no danger.”

Martin nuzzled her neck with a smile before looking at her again. “I will teach you all that you need to know as time passes *Melda Min*. Yes... you will be able to change... even more than you know.” He replied. “First however, you need to eat and drink. You will find that your appetite has increased as well as your abilities.” He told her with a smile. “And then you must depart for Salina. Tarifa and the others will be arriving early this evening, and you will need to coordinate with them how best to get them away from her guards so that she can see Eden City.”

“Me?”

Martin nodded. “There is no one else I trust more other than Anja, and she will be going with you. Tarifa, this Aihola, Cantel and two others will be coming with her to Eden.”

“I will be recognized if I am seen my love.” She spoke.

Martin smiled and leaned forward to kiss her softly. He lowered his head and nuzzled the silky skin between her full breasts once more. “Then don’t be seen.” He told her.

“What... what will you be doing *Nauta Melme*?” Dysea asked.

“General Vengal and I are going for a little trip.” Martin told her. “I have no intention of harming him *Melda Min*,” He said seeing the look of concern flash across her face now. “By the time you return to Eden City with Tarifa we will have already come back.”

“What do you intend to do Martin?” She asked.

“I will tell you when you return.” He said. “Not before.”

“Martin you...”

Trust in me Melda Min. His voice spoke within her mind.

Dysea allowed her fingers to caress his face for a long moment as she stared into his dark eyes. She smiled finally and looked at the tray of food he had brought in.

What did you bring me for breakfast? I am starving. She asked him within their thoughts. When Martin didn’t move or attempt to release her she turned her head back to look at him. What she saw in his eyes and on his face made her breath catch in her throat, and a wave of desire swept through her unlike anything she had ever experienced before.

“There... there is something else you should know right away.” Martin’s voice was soft and husky yet she could detect the barely controlled passion in his tone and she felt her skin prickle with warmth. Dysea also felt his cock beginning to thicken between her thighs, pressing against the soft platinum hair of her pussy. The heat from his growing manhood was setting her loins ablaze, and a searing need was rapidly engulfing her belly.

Dysea closed her eyes as the pounding desire began to spread through her body and her heart began to quicken. She looked back to his face and saw that his eyes had changed, and his fangs were fully extended now, and in his eyes she saw the most animalistic and natural of desires. “*Nauta... Melme...*” She gasped, barely able to contain the passion that was seething through her. A passion and want she had never experienced before.

“We... we are very possessive of our mates *Melda Min*.” He spoke to her in a soft rumbling voice. “We can... we can control our sexual auras, filling the air around us with our pheromones. It will affect anyone... but to the one you have chosen... as your mate, it is...”

Dysea gasped loudly, her hands going to his head as his lips descended to her breast. Her nipples were harder than she had ever known them to be, almost painfully hard and when his lips engulfed her left nipple she hissed in agonizing pleasure. A burning heat had spread throughout her entire body, a heat that caused her skin to smolder with passion and need. She looked down at his face as his lips pulled away from her nipple, leaving it wet with saliva. His eyes met hers again.

“To the one you have chosen as your mate... it is irresistible!” He growled.

Dysea screamed, her nails digging into his shoulders as in one deft movement, Martin had lifted her hips and impaled her completely upon his will breaking cock. Her lips parted slightly and she whimpered loudly in delight as she felt every thick wonderful inch of his enormous cock fill her in one magnificent plunge. Her entire body was on fire, burning with fervor and lust and want. And somehow instinctively she knew that only Martin could fulfill that craving. She brought her head back up, her platinum mane flying around her face and shoulders, her emerald eyes now changed as well. Her fangs, larger than before the change, extended now in her own passion and she locked her fingers behind his neck. His large hands gripped her firm, gymnast shaped ass in a commanding embrace. She felt potent and reborn, and she stared at him with scorching emerald/black orbs that mirrored his desire for her. Dysea ground her tight pussy down upon his hips, feeling his magma hot balls press against her asscheeks, swollen with the liquid she so madly sought. She could feel every pulse of his throbbing twelve inch cock filling her to the point where she thought she would split in half. Her sweet juices flowed freely from her clenching pussy, unlike any other time before this moment.

Dysea seized his face in her delicate hands tightly and her emerald/black orbs bore into his yellow/black ones. She could see the fire for her in his eyes; she could feel the heat in his blood racing through his veins under his skin; and she could most definitely feel the mad hunger for her pulsating in his cock. An almost savage smile split her striking lips as she gazed into his eyes. She was having the same effect on him that he was having on her, his chest heaving in passion, his muscles corded and straining like flexible bands of steel, as if he was waiting for permission.

“Take me!” She gasped. “Take me *Nauta Melme!* Take me now!”

He reacted almost before the words had left her lips, twisting her around until she was beneath him, and then Dysea’s world dissolved into a myriad of white stars and bright lights as he withdrew his entire cock from her dripping pussy and plunged back inside her tight warmth. His first twelve inch stroke into her depths caused her to gasp at the power he commanded, and she knew then she never wanted it to end. When he struck home, his swollen balls slapping against her upturned asscheeks, Dysea felt the pleasure devastate her and she howled. She wrapped her silky-smooth thighs around his battering hips, her ankles pressing against the backs of his muscular legs and her hands gripped his tight powerful ass as he withdrew and once more rammed into her completely. Dysea howled again as another orgasm rocked her, her pussy convulsing around the dominating cock within her velvety depths. The emerald piercing of her flared clit only enhanced this agonizing pleasure to a height she had not yet experienced and her juices were pouring from around his battering ram of a cock. She felt him withdraw once more and on his return plunge Dysea clenched her teeth, her mind now focused on only one thing.

It was focused on the sinful pleasure that was ripping through her very soul, and overriding everything else.

When Martin’s bloated balls pounded into her again, she clenched her powerful pussy muscles and heard him cry out next to her ear as she milked him. Dysea released his pounding ass and wrapped her arms around his broad back for better leverage. She needed him to fill her with his searing cum; nothing else mattered at this moment. She wanted to feel his life giving seed erupt within her and finally claim what was truly his. She began to meet his powerful thrusts into her, driving her hips up to meet him as hard as she was able. It was almost too much for her, as her clit piercing was crushed against him with every dominant stroke, sending electric like shocks of pure bliss spiking through her. In her pleasure clouded mind Dysea did the only thing she could think of. As he drove into her once more Dysea reached as far down as she could, past his straining ass and clutched his throbbing balls.

Martin’s head came up from beside her neck, his lips leaving the spot on her neck that they had been sucking on and he too howled. Dysea’s eyes went wide as she felt his burning cum race up the length of the huge cock buried in her depths. His entire shaft swelled in size and power and her body arched off the body to crush against his chest as the first eruption of his cum within her sent her completely over the edge. Her voice

joined his in a symphony of passion, mingling as one their physical bodies as well as their voices as they exploded together.

It took nearly a minute before Martin's rigid body finished emptying into her and he lowered his head to her chest completely spent. During that time Dysea had ridden wave after wave of pleasure as each blast of his cum inside her had initiated another orgasm. As he lowered his head to her sweaty chest, she wrapped her arms even tighter around his back, not wanting him to escape from within her grasp. She hummed in delight when his arms slid under her and pulled her even closer, making it almost impossible to tell their bodies apart. Neither of them cared in the least that the sheets were soaked with sweat and their mingled juices.

Martin kissed her breasts lightly, his lips soft and warm as they moved up her neck to her throat and finally they claimed her lips as well. The kiss was deep and filled with a passion neither of them had known, and the only reason they finally parted was so they could both breathe.

Dysea reached up with her hands, her arms weak, and placed them on his face.

"I... I am no longer hungry my love." She managed to speak the words with a small smile.

Martin grinned and nuzzled her throat, "Neither am I." He spoke to her softly, "Neither am I." Dysea's body responded immediately to the hungry look in his eyes, and she felt her belly clench in anticipation once more as she smiled at him, "At least not for food."

LAS VEGAS/PHOENIX INTERSTATE TRAIN TUNNEL THIRTEEN MILES EAST OF LAS VEGAS

Anuk woke quickly, sitting up as her cerulean blue eyes searched for Danny almost without thinking. She saw him squatting by the embers of the smoldering fire, his head canted upwards at the ceiling as if he was talking with the gods. Posing as he was, Anuk could almost see the animal side of him showing through, waiting to pounce on an unsuspecting enemy. As she sat up completely, tossing the blanket aside Anuk realized something for the first time. Never in her life had she felt so safe and protected. His very presence instilled a feeling of calm in her, and somehow she knew that he would never allow any harm to come to her person if it was within his power to stop. This feeling caused a different wave of emotions to course through her, and they were emotions she was not familiar with. The thought that he would protect her from any harm filled her with a strange sense of warmth and... desire. She stared at his powerful back, shocked that she could feel desire for a man who so resembled the butchers who had raped and brutalized her.

Anuk shook her head slowly. No... he was not like those animals. Even when her breasts were fully exposed for his eyes to see, he did not even blink as he worked on her wound. He could have taken her at anytime since they came together and Anuk knew she could never fight him, yet he had been the complete opposite. He was almost shy when treating her wound, as if touching her skin would validate everything he thought she felt towards him. There was something very different about this man, something so different that it intrigued her like no other. Anuk watched a small smile cross his face and just before he turned around she busied herself with making it seem like she had just awoken.

Dan's eyes fell upon her. "Good morning." He spoke moving back from the smashed entrance to the old store.

They had traveled for nearly six hours before coming to this small way station. It appeared to be some sort of stop along the path of the train tracks and there were dilapidated remains of old stores of some nature. None of them had any windows remaining intact and Danny had moved them to the rear of the first building they came to for protection. Anuk realized that she had slept for at least a solid seven hours.

"You... you allowed me to sleep longer than you intended." Anuk said to him.

Dan nodded. "You needed the rest." He told her.

"You did not sleep?"

Dan smiled and shook his head. "There are times when I can sleep and still be awake." He explained. "I can rest, but my senses are still very active and I can react more quickly."

"Do you ever sleep fully?" Anuk asked.

"Oh yeah, and I snore like an over aged Grizzly Bear." Dan replied with a chuckle. "I used to keep Julie awake all the time."

Anuk moved next to the still warm embers, sensing an opening to get more information about the man in front of her. "Julie... she is your wife?"

Dan looked up into her eyes and Anuk caught the gasp of surprise before it escaped her lips. His dark eyes smoldered with desire, a desire for her. It wasn't lust that she saw in those eyes, Anuk had seen enough of the cruel lust in the eyes of the butchers who had captured her to know the difference. No... what she saw in Danny's eyes caused a shiver to race through her. And it was by no means a shiver of fear. It was gone in a split second, and she saw him shake his head.

"No... she is not my wife." He said with a smile. "We were an item for a long time."

"You are no longer together?" Anuk asked, for some reason she found herself wanting to hear him say no.

Dan shook his head. "Ever since we came back to earth, things have been different." He answered. "We drew further apart as the days and weeks progressed. I guess it was the natural course of things. We both wanted more than what the other had, at least at the time. We have moved on, but we are still very close friends. At least I hope so... I haven't seen her in a couple of weeks."

Anuk wanted to change the subject suddenly. There was something about this ebony skinned man that caused her to feel things she had never felt before. That he was not completely human had something to do with it, but that was minor. She found herself increasingly attracted to him, and it troubled her greatly. She was about to say something totally irrelevant, but almost as if sensing her discomfort Dan did it for her.

"Let's take a look at your wound." He said turning to face her.

Anuk hesitated for only a split second in alarm. He had already seen her in the most revealing of ways, first in the hotel while dressed as a slave. The clothes they provided to them were not supposed to hide anything. And while his fingers had been stiff and unyielding when they had touched her down there, as if he was not comfortable conducting himself in such a manner, that touch, brief as it was, caused Anuk to immediately become wet between her thighs. Even all during her captivity and the countless rapes, she had never once become wet. Try as she might to imagine different things to ease the pain of her rapes, nothing worked. She was as dry as paper whenever one of those monsters had raped her. Yet with but a single fleeting touch of his fingers, Anuk had felt the wetness seep out of her center. He had never attempted to pursue her in any way, and most certainly, even with her breasts exposed to his gaze when he treated her injury, his eyes had never wandered over her flesh lustfully.

It was this knowledge that caused her to hesitate only that split second before she turned slightly and lifted the work shirt she wore.

Dan looked at the wound and hid his grimace from her. The five inch long cut was beginning to heal thanks to the MEDCOM patches, but there was no denying that it was infected. Dan could detect the smell of the infection and a greenish tint was beginning to form around the edges of the wound. He reached up gingerly and applied just a minute amount of pressure on the wound. Yellow brown puss leaked out from two places and the smell was rank and powerful.

"It is still infected isn't it?" Anuk asked. She had seen the look on his face, and then she captured the wave of rotting flesh when he squeezed her side.

Dan looked up at her and nodded. "It's spreading too." He told her. "Is there a lot of pain?"

Anuk shook her head slowly. "The pills keep it at bay." She told him.

Dan lowered the shirt back down over her wound and returned to his feet. "We'll get you fixed up real soon. You need antibiotics."

Anuk turned to face him, having to tilt her head up to see into his eyes. And in those eyes she saw worry for her. "We do not have antibiotics Daniel." She stated flatly, "Unless you are hiding them somewhere."

Dan tore his eyes from her gaze and bent to stuff items back into the pack he was carrying. "Not with me... but there are some about a click up the tunnel."

Anuk looked at him. "How do you know this? Did you go exploring last night while I slept?"

Dan looked at her. "No... I don't intend to leave your side again." Dan spoke softly, returning the blanket to the pack while she gazed at him with wide eyes.

After a moment of disbelief at the sincerity of his words Anuk shook her head. "How do you know where antibiotics are then?"

Dan stood up and shouldered the pack. He turned to face her and held out his hand. "Trust me Anuk." He spoke.

Anuk looked at his extended hand for a long moment. Her eyes traveled up to his deep dark brown pools and at that very moment Anuk made the decision that would change her life forever.

Anuk placed her small tanned hand into his. "I trust you."

EDEN CITY (FORMERLY JUNCTION CITY UTAH)

Anja walked down the ramp of the Raptor and stopped when she saw Dysea about a hundred meters away next to the Light Hopper. She was talking with Julie, and Anja felt her heart lurch when they embraced tightly. Dysea turned away and headed for the Raptor, and Anja felt a momentary pang of jealousy and betrayal at what she had just witnessed. Her Jade green eyes shifted to Dysea as Julie pulled away in the Hopper and she watched the platinum blond elf walk towards the Raptor. Anja felt her breath catch in her throat as she gazed at Dysea. There was something different about her. She had always struck Anja as exceptionally beautiful, yet there was something new radiating from her. Anja admired the way she filled out the Woodland fatigues, and she found herself imagining what it would be like to feast upon what undoubtedly was a delicious pussy. As far as she had seen so far, most female elves were naturally beautiful. It was the way Walter had created them, to be desirable to men no matter what shape they came in. Yet with Dysea it was much more pronounced; the color of her hair, the shape of her lips and face, and the extreme tightness and delicious curves of her body. Even her pointed elf ears looked scrumptious. Anja had looked upon Julie with lust once she had discovered that side of herself, but looking at Dysea now, Anja found she was gazing at her with unabashed desire and want and above all else... need.

Dysea came to the ramp and walked up to where Anja stood, her emerald eyes alive and brilliant. She looked at Anja with those eyes and for a fleeting moment, Anja thought she saw the same thing radiating from Dysea. Then it was gone.

"I'm sorry I'm late." She explained. "I had some trouble waking up this morning."

Anja shook her head. "It's no problem." She spoke. "Tarifa and the others should be arriving in Salina right about now."

"They drove through the night?" Dysea asked surprised.

Anja nodded. "Marty had a Raptor watching them from long range, but we pretty much cleared out this area of any slavers and mercenaries."

"And Cantel would know this." Dysea said with a dazzling smile. "I'm sorry Anja... I seem to be very distracted this morning."

"That's ok." Anja replied. She hesitated a moment and continued. "I saw you and Julie hugging."

Dysea nodded. "We had breakfast before I came here. It is why I am late." She replied. "She needed to give me some information."

"Oh." Anja said.

"Shall we get underway?" Dysea asked.

Anja smiled. "Sure." She spoke as she turned to hit the button to bring the ramp up.

Dysea moved further into the Raptor and saw Lynwe sitting on one of the benches. She got to her feet as Dysea walked up to her.

Lynwe bowed her head slightly in greeting, "Dysea." She spoke. "I want to thank you for allowing me to accompany you."

Dysea smiled. "I gathered from your reaction when I told you that Aihola was alive that you knew her well. It might be nice for her to be able to relate to someone she knows while we travel back to Eden."

"If I may ask," Lynwe said. "How do you intend to bring everyone back to Eden without it being discovered they are missing?"

Dysea allowed herself a small smile. "We'll just keep that a secret for now." Dysea said as Anja came up behind her and took the seat across from Lynwe. She turned and looked at Anja, feeling a powerful rush of desire sweep through her as she gazed at the gorgeous red head. She turned back to Lynwe quickly, fighting

down the urge to take Anja right where she stood, in front of everyone. “It is only a thirty minute trip to our landing zone, and then you will see your friend again.”

Lynwe nodded and sat back down as Dysea turned and took the open seat next to Anja on the bench. Anja looked at her as she sat down, her eyes never leaving Dysea’s face, and not missing the fact that Dysea could not tear her eyes away. She smiled a dazzling smile that tugged at Dysea’s soul.

“What?” Anja asked. She found herself enjoying the attention from the beautiful blond elf, and secretly hoped that perhaps Dysea felt something more.

“Tell me... tell me about yourself Anja.” Dysea asked softly.

“Me?”

Dysea nodded. “I know so little about you. I have seen you in the gym in the mornings; I hesitated to approach you because I sensed you had much on your mind. You... you cared for Martin when he was injured and that means more to me than you know, especially now. I would like to know about you.”

“There’s not much to tell.” Anja replied with a smile. “Don’t you want to hear about Martin and how I met him? That’s what everyone is interested in for some reason.”

Dysea shook her head with a smile. “I would prefer to learn more about you.” She answered. “I already know everything about my *Martin*.”

Anja looked at her oddly. “What do you mean?”

Dysea shook her head and reached down to take Anja’s hand within hers. Dysea fought with the urge to release her aura and lose herself in this woman’s pleasures, but Martin had told her it wouldn’t be right. It would be paramount to taking away her choice. If she desired Anja as she did, then she needed to discover if Anja felt the same way. Something within Dysea told her that was very much the case with Anja as she gazed at her. She could sense the woman’s interest not only in her but in Martin as well. It was at that moment that Dysea realized Anja was still very much in love with Martin. Looking at her now, Dysea found that the prospect of sleeping with Anja stirred her blood even more than she first thought, and the possibility that she could be sharing *Martin* with this stunning woman did not make her hesitate in the least. “Perhaps in time you will come to understand. I’d like to hear about you though.”

Anja smiled at her, unsure of what to make of Dysea’s comments. There was no mistaking the interest that she was showing, nor the fact that Anja felt a ripple of excitement course through her when Dysea took her hand. She found Dysea nearly irresistible, and as she looked at her face she began to imagine what it would be like to taste her lips and her skin. To feel her body wrapped around her. Even if Martin did not want her, she could still find solace in Dysea’s arms and be close to him.

Anja squeezed Dysea’s hands and began to speak.

“Am I allowed to ask where are we going?” Vengal asked Martin.

Martin had arrived outside the secure quarters where he had been since confined there by Dysea. While the small apartment was comfortable and he received everything he asked for, he was still a prisoner. He had been dressed in complete body armor and fatigues as well as his combat vest and the HK-74 dangled from quick release clasps. Martin had thrust the body armor and vest to him without speaking and waited while Vengal had changed. Word had spread quickly that Lyca Ohtar had been shot and seriously wounded on a mission to New Memphis to save the lives of elves and half elves. Upon hearing this Vengal had cursed his actions over and over. He had allowed Matarn to manipulate him through his sister the Queen and therefore betray all that he stood for.

Martin Hunter had agreed to help him rescue Anuk, asking for nothing in return. This should have been the first sign that Hunter was different and that Matarn and the new Queen were wrong not to trust them. Against his better judgment he had ignored his own instincts and ended up losing his only remaining daughter and from what he understood a man that Martin Hunter considered to be closer than a brother.

They had ridden in silence to the airfield where Vengal saw six heavily armed elves in full body armor waiting for them. The elf driver of the Hopper that had dropped them off only nodded to Vengal as he pulled away. Martin ushered him to the ramp of the Raptor that was waiting on the tarmac. He saw the Wood Elf Ealin, who he knew commanded Hunter’s personal team. As he let his eyes linger on these six elves he realized for the first time just how exceedingly deadly they were. He knew right away that four of them were High Elves

from Pacifica and he was reasonably sure from New Salem. The remaining two, including Ealin who appeared to be the second in command were Wood Elves he remembered from Dysea's personal detachment.

These six elves moved like predators. Their cold eyes watched him constantly from the moment he had left the Hopper. All of them were at least two hundred years younger than him, and he had countless hours of combat experience to fall back on, but Vengal knew that to attempt anything now would result in his immediate and probably very painful death. These six elves surpassed even his Wood Elf Rangers in their now muscular builds and the effortless way they moved. Their steps were light, alert and prepared at a moment's notice to pounce. It suddenly occurred to Vengal that Hunter and the other Genomes had used the past few months to train already very skilled elf fighters. What stood before him now were perhaps the most lethal fighters he had ever been in the presence of, and he had not even seen them in action.

Martin looked across at him from the opposite bench. His attitude and demeanor made it very clear he neither feared nor cared what Vengal could do. "I am fulfilling a promise I made." Martin replied.

Vengal nodded once and turned to look out the rear of the Raptor. The ramp was locked in position halfway up and he could see the tree tops barely a hundred meters below them as they sped through the air. He had never liked flying, and seeing the ground streaking below them made it even worse.

"How was your daughter captured?" Martin's voice interrupted his thoughts.

Vengal turned to look at him. "We received intelligence that this particular group of slavers had several of our scientists that were captured a few weeks earlier." He spoke. "Our intelligence said they would be passing within fifty miles of one of our outlying villages on the border of High Elf territory."

"Had they ever come that close before?" Martin asked.

Vengal shook his head. "The consensus of the Council was that they were only becoming bolder."

"That should have been your first clue that you were infiltrated." Martin told him.

"It was a trap. An ambush was waiting for the scout unit Anuk was part of. They took her and the female elves, they killed the males." The bitter taste of defeat burned his tongue as Vengal spoke. "It was only supposed to be a scouting mission!"

"Someone blew your mission General." Martin told him. "And your Council of Elders is as dirty as I have ever seen politicians."

Vengal glared at him. "It is no different with the High Elves!" He snapped.

Martin shook his head. "No... that is where you are wrong." He spoke leaning forward. "Tarifa knows they are dirty... three of them at least. The others always bow to the will of the three. She's been having them watched for several weeks now. Dysea saw it... that is why the Alliance tried to kill her. And that is why the Elders elected a new Queen so quickly." Martin looked at him. "Doesn't it seem pretty convenient that Matarn's sister was chosen?"

"They are a wealthy and powerful family." Vengal spoke.

Martin nodded, "Perhaps." He said. "How close were you with Dysea when she was Queen?"

Vengal looked at him. "I was one of three she trusted above all others." He snapped. "And my actions have stained my honor for generations to come."

"You don't find it odd that your daughter was taken Vengal?" Martin asked him. "The daughter of one of the most ardent and loyal supporters of the Queen they did not control. And you don't find it odd that the man whom your daughter is supposed to marry is the brother of the Queen they elected in Dysea's place?"

Vengal glared at him. "What are you saying?"

Martin shook his head. "I'm not saying anything." He replied.

Vengal turned at the motion from the cockpit of the Raptor and he saw the female elf in a dark gray flight suit and flight helmet step part way down the stairs.

"Martin... Ben is bringing us in over the site." Endith spoke loudly over the sound of the engines.

Martin nodded. "Thank you Endith." He said getting to his feet.

Vengal stood. "Where are we?" He asked. "If you are planning to execute me, at least give me the honor of meeting death like a soldier."

Martin looked at him. "I have no intention of executing you General. That would be one of the most ignorant things I have ever done in my life, and believe me I've done some ignorant things." Martin watched Vengal steady himself by grabbing a hand hold above his head as Ben brought the Raptor in for a landing.

Vengal looked out the open portion of the ramp and saw black smoke rising into the sky. The lower they dropped the more he saw. At least a dozen Hoppers from light to one Heavy Hopper were smoking ruins, flames still engulfing several of the destroyed machines. He could see dozens of bodies on the ground, twisted in macabre poses of death. The upper bodies of blackened men could be seen dangling from the vehicles, as if they had been killed as they tried to escape. The Raptor settled gently to the ground and Ealin punched the controls for the ramp and it started to lower. Martin waved Vengal forward.

“After you sir,” He spoke.

Trepidation gripped Vengal. He had no idea where he was or what was about to happen, and for the first time in his long life he felt fear grasp his belly tight and squeeze. It was then that he noticed Matarn and several others from his Wood Elf Ranger detachment standing nearby. They were dressed as he was, but they were also unarmed.

Vengal looked at Martin as they descended the ramp and touched the soft earth. He could see tall white capped mountains in the distance which he determined to be south, the land around them partially barren, but they were surrounded by distant treeline on the other three sides. Vengal had been in this part of the country enough times to know where he was and he looked at Martin. “We are in what used to be Arizona.” He said.

Martin nodded. “It still is Arizona. Or more correctly, it is Arizona once more. We control it now.”

Vengal looked at him stunned. “You control it? I don’t understand.”

Martin grinned. “Eden City will only be the center. The City State if you will. There are smaller settlements all across what is left of Arizona and Southern Utah, and some reaching into Nevada now. They are settlements of men, elves and whoever wants to live free and in peace. People who want to raise their children without fear of persecution and death and slavers. Each settlement has a detachment of regular soldiers from Eden City. Each settlement is more than capable of defending themselves. We’ve established regular communications, and in the event of something they can’t handle, we can send reinforcements from Eden within hours.” Martin stepped closer to Vengal. “We are rebuilding Vengal. When Walter created the elves they were intended to be the companions and friends of men. That’s exactly what we are doing.”

“You... you have done all this in the almost five months since being expelled from high Elf territory?” Vengal asked incredulously.

Martin smiled. “It’s amazing what a little honesty and trust will do.” He answered, putting the barb into Vengal. He saw the elf general’s eyes lower in shame.

“The Alliance...” Vengal started.

“When the Alliance realizes what we are doing it will be too late.” Martin told him. “Why do you think Dysea never returned to the Wood Elf capital to reclaim her crown?”

“The Council said she went into hiding for betraying her people. They said she was conspiring with the High Elves to destroy us.” Vengal spoke, knowing the words were a lie even as he spoke them.

Martin chuckled. “Yes... and I’m sure that is not all they said about her.”

“Why are you... why are you telling me this?” Vengal asked. “Why did you bring me here?”

“I told you. I’m keeping a promise.” Martin replied.

“Yes... but a promise to whom?” Vengal asked.

Martin saw movement and smiled. “I’d like to introduce you to two men.” He said.

Vengal turned and watched as a short elf male and a tall human male walked towards them. They were outfitted in fatigues and were well armed, as were all the humans and elves that Vengal could see, with the exception of the slavers that were on their knees a hundred meters distance with their backs to him. Their hands were above their heads, and a dozen elves guarded them closely.

“Martin!” The male elf spoke as he and his companion walked up.

“Thon’hin... it’s good to see you again.” Martin spoke, returning the handshake. He turned to the human man, “Charles... good to see you.”

“Same here Martin.” The older man replied. “We’re glad you could make it. Thon’hin and his boys and girls have been tracking these idiots ever since they entered into our exclusion zone. When we got your message last night, Thon’hin knew right away this was the bunch.”

“Did you suffer any casualties?” Martin asked.

Thon'hin nodded. "One of my flankers caught quite a bit of shrapnel in the chest. We have him stabilized and were about to transport him to the settlement for treatment. The medic doesn't know if he will survive though."

Martin turned quickly, "Endith!" He called towards the open window of the Raptor. They watched as the female elf stuck her head out the window far above them, her long red hair shimmering in the morning light. "Tell Ben to warm it up! Critical casualty for transport to Eden City! Have one of Anja's trauma teams standing by!"

Thon'hin and Charles heard the engines on the Raptor ignite and begin to spool up even before Martin's words died on the wind. "Martin... he may not live." Thon'hin spoke. "Is it wise to possibly waste the fuel?"

"Fuck the fuel!" Martin snapped. "If we can save him... that's what we're going to do!" Martin turned to find Ealin. "Ealin... get that casualty over here now! The medic goes with him!"

Ealin didn't hesitate and sprinted for where the medical Hopper was parked. Martin didn't see the exchange of looks between Thon'hin and Charles, or the glances that the men and women soldiers from the settlement passed among themselves if they were close enough to hear Martin's words.

"Thon'hin... Charles... I'd like to introduce General Vengal of the Wood Elves." Martin spoke motioning to Vengal.

Thon'hin bowed his head to Vengal. "It is an honor General. I have heard much of your exploits."

Vengal looked surprised. "You know of me?"

"Who does not know the name of Vengal, Hero of New Boston?" Thon'hin spoke. "What you did there was inspiring."

"I... I wasn't aware that information made it this far south." Vengal said.

"It has in the form of books and papers." Thon'hin answered. "It is something all our children learn."

Vengal looked at them. "The human children would..."

"All the children of Ash Fork received the same education General." Charles spoke before Vengal could finish. "There are far more humans like myself and the others than the Alliance has led you to believe. There are thousands of us spread all over this land that know and believe that the elves should not be slaves. Before Martin came along we simply lacked the courage or the will to come forward and prove that. Not anymore." Charles looked at Thon'hin. "The Ash Fork Arizona settlement is such a place. We have made it such a place, and so have the ten thousand men, women and children who live there."

"Ten thousand!" Vengal gasped in disbelief.

They turned as the medical Hopper stopped nearby and two medics carried the stretcher bound elf out of the back. The Raptor's engines were screaming in preparation to take off and Martin quickly made his way to the stretcher. He looked down at the injured elf, his chest a mass of bandages, his neck immobilized within the brace. Blood stained the stretcher and his pants. His eyes were glossy, but they focused momentarily to look at Martin.

"He's in severe condition General." The elf medic spoke. "Chances are he won't make it to Eden."

Martin looked at the elf as he slowly lifted his bloodstained hand. Martin didn't hesitate and took that hand in his and squeezed. "What is his name?" Martin asked.

"Thrlas sir," The medic replied.

Martin leaned over close to the injured elf's bloody pointed ear. "*Coi mirima! Fir mai! Faila ava sina lya!*" **(Live free! Die well! Just not this day Thrlas!)**

Martin smiled as the elf's grip on his hand grew stronger and he struggled to move his head. "I will visit you when I return to Eden Thrlas. Don't disappoint me." He said.

The medic standing at the foot of the stretcher stared wide eyed at the medical monitor that rested between the man's legs. Seconds ago it was showing a weak pulse and shallow breathing, not to mention a low blood pressure. As soon as Martin spoke to the elf, the man's vital signs spiked and stabilized.

Martin stepped back as the two medics moved up the ramp into the Raptor. "Ben!" Martin spoke into thin air trusting his implant that he would be heard over the sound of the engines. He was.

"Go Marty!" Ben's voice responded in his ear.

"Turn and burn Ben!" Martin spoke.

Martin saw Ben's head nod in the side of the cockpit, "Turning and burning boss man!" Ben's reply had barely left his lips when the Raptor lifted six feet off the ground, executed a neat one hundred and eighty degree turn and then accelerated to nearly four hundred miles an hour in just under five seconds.

Martin watched it until it was a dot in the sky then turned back to look at where Thon'hin, Vengal and Charles watched him intently. He stepped back to them quickly and smiled. "Well gentlemen... shall we go and fulfill a promise I made."

Thon'hin and Charles smiled and motioned to where the prisoners were being guarded, while Vengal looked at him strangely and followed.

The prisoners were a sullen group, many of them wounded and bleeding on the ground. Vengal saw Matarn and the others escorted forward from where they had been standing. He turned back to the prisoners and his eyes went a little wider. All of the slavers were black skinned men, many of them obese and foul smelling. "They..." Vengal gasped. "These are..."

Martin nodded. "These are the assholes that captured your daughter." He finished the statement.

Vengal's eyes filled with a killing rage as he glared at the men. The obvious leader of the slavers was one of the ones that had survived the ambush. He looked at the tall human and the older elf and he smiled savagely, exposing blackened and rotting teeth.

"Well... well... if it isn't the ass wipe elf General." He spoke. "You're that red head's father. Man she had a sweet pussy. Do you want to hear how she would sling her tight elf cunt on my big dick almost every night! She loved my big black dick... and then I'd give her to my men and she would scream for hours. It was beautiful man!"

Martin saw the twitch in Vengal's jaw and knew he better act quickly. "Who gave you the details to the elf patrol and the location to ambush them? Who told you to capture Anuk?"

"Fuck you elf lover!" The man spat, "Human's rule this world now! Elves are fodder for us. Only the strong survive! His whore of a daughter is in Las Vegas now getting fucked by dozens of men every night! I bet you she is sucking the biggest cocks in the city!"

Martin shook his head. "You are right on only one thing." He spoke coldly.

The black man grinned and looked at Martin. "Yeah faggot, what's that?"

"Only the strong will survive." Martin growled.

Martin moved like a blur, his right hand snatching out to grab the throat of the slaver kneeling next to the leader. The man's strangled yelp was cut off, as suddenly he was hauled nearly eighteen inches into the air and Martin allowed the change to come over him. Before the terrified eyes of the slavers and the shocked eyes of those who did not know Martin they watched as his face contorted and shifted into a snarling visage of a monster. His arm popped and thickened as hair sprouted over his forearm and the hand clutching the slavers throat formed long black razor like claws.

Martin held the horrified slaver off the ground with barely any effort, and brought the man's petrified face within inches of his gleaming white fangs. The pungent odor of urine filled Martin's flared nostrils as the man vented his bladder in undisguised fear. Martin sniffed the man, his face pulling back quickly at the powerful stench of unwashed body. He turned his yellow/black orbs to the leader, the man's black eyes wide in the grip of fear he had never known.

"Unfortunately..." Martin's voice remained normal and his vicious fangs curled into the most savage grin the slaver had ever seen. "You and your cohorts are not part of the strong."

There was a loud gurgling sound and then a resounding snap, and the slaver in Martin's grasp twitched once before going limp. Martin had snapped his neck with a simple twitch of his wrist. Everyone watched as Martin turned and with a howl none of them would ever forget he heaved the body across the open plains. The slavers body landed thirty meters away with a sickening thud.

Martin turned back to face the leader, his features returning to normal quickly. Martin squatted down in front of the terrified man, his nose twitching as he detected more urine and the smell of shit in the breeze. The man had defecated in his pants.

"For your crimes against elves and humans I sentence you to death." Martin's voice had the cold finality of death in it. "And don't you worry my ugly friend... your partner in crime who now controls Las Vegas will be joining you within a few weeks."

"Wait!" One of the slavers screamed. "What... what about a trial? We should get a trial!"

“You just had your trial!” Thon’hin spoke now as he stepped forward, his words spoken with commitment and force. “The shortest judicial proceeding in history I should think.”

Charles turned to the Ash Fork troops that stood behind them. “Hang them!” He ordered. “Once they are dead, leave their bodies for the animals. They need to eat as well.”

Martin grinned at the still wide eyed slaver leader. He saw the brief flicker in his eyes over Martin’s shoulder and then back again, “Not you friend.” He spoke softly. “Hanging is too good for you.”

Martin returned to his feet and looked at Vengal as he drew out the Shakur fighting knife from the sheath on his right thigh. He held out the blade to Vengal. “He is yours General.” Martin spoke. “Do not toy with him, but relieve yourself of the revenge in your blood before it destroys you.”

“My daughter is probably dead!” Vengal snapped. “Revenge is all I have left.”

Martin shook his head slowly. “Anuk is very much alive.” He replied quietly, so that only Vengal could hear him. He saw the elf’s eyes go wide at this news. “She’s injured, but she is being cared for. My brother is bringing her to you.”

“Where? How?” Vengal gasped.

“That is not important.” Martin told him. “Only that she is safe and will be returned to you in a few days. They have to walk quite a distance because of where they are, but we are monitoring their progress.”

“You... you have known this all along?” Vengal asked.

Martin nodded. “And for now that is how it will remain. Tell no one, or we put at risk two people we both care a great deal for.” Martin looked at the slaver. “Now kill him and get it out of your system before your hatred causes more damage than you intend it too.”

Vengal stared at Martin for a long moment. “You... you are unlike any man I have ever known.” He spoke.

Martin grinned. “Careful... words like that sound much better coming from Dysea’s lips and not yours.”

Vengal could not help the smile that split his face. He looked at the knife Martin had handed him and flipped it in his hand returning it to Martin pommel first. “You have given me back hope Martin Hunter.” He said calmly. “I no longer need blood to sate my anger, only to feel my arms around my daughter once more.”

Martin nodded and took the knife. He looked at him briefly before his arm whipped out with the speed of a striking pit viper. Vengal heard the wet thud and soft grunt and his eyes went wide as the leader of this group of slavers slowly keeled over, the Shakur imbedded to the hilt in his forehead. Vengal allowed his eyes to slowly turn back to Martin.

“You... you never intended to hang him did you?” Vengal spoke.

Martin met his eyes as Ealin stepped from behind him to lean over the slaver’s body. He spit on the man’s lifeless form before yanking the blade out of his head and wiping it clean on the man’s shirt.

“I told you... I made a promise. And I just kept it. Why don’t we move to Ash Fork and you can see the general set up of our settlements. We have about two hours before Ben returns to take us back to Eden.” Martin answered him as he took the Shakur back from Ealin. Martin looked up into the cloudless sky as he motioned Vengal to where Thon’hin and Charles waited in the light Hopper.

It is done brother. He cast out the words with his mind.

LAS VEGAS/PHOENIX INTERSTATE TUNNEL

It is done brother.

The words echoed in Danny’s mind and he allowed a small smile to pry his lips apart. He nodded his head and turned back slowly to see Anuk moving up behind him, navigating the fallen rocks and rusted hulks of the four hundred plus year old vehicles that jammed the tunnel.

Dan felt the burning in his blood for her, and had ever since he had smelled the scarf given to him by Vengal in the Raptor. Her rust colored red hair was dirty and grimy, her face dusty but determined. It had taken all of his will power to ignore the sight of her naked breasts while he treated her wound. To him, her body was a wonderland that he wanted to explore for hours on end. Her cinnamon scent filled his senses every waking moment. This was the woman he wanted for his mate. Having her Danny knew would complete the most powerful urge and need he had as an animal hybrid Genome, or whatever he truly was and that was to find a

mate. He had felt Dysea become one with their small group this morning, her mind melding with his and the others, bringing a soothing warmth to all of them. His brother had chosen well as the Alpha male of their pack. Dysea's essence and spirit bespoke of intelligence and strength. She was the first to have joined them in nearly a decade, and after the loss of so many of their brothers and sisters in Mountain City, Dysea was like a breath of fresh air. Dan smiled to himself, happy that Martin had found the first of his eternal mates. He didn't know who else his brother coveted, but he knew there was one other female who stirred his blood in the same fashion as the Wood Elf Queen, and perhaps more.

Martin had always been the most private of their group, perhaps because he was the first and older than all of them by a few hours. While many of their pack would open their minds to the group on occasion, Martin always kept his secrets and desires walled behind mental shields that were impervious to anyone within the pack. There had been challenges to his leadership, especially after they had turned the other members of their Genome unit to keep them from the disease that had ravaged the Genome units across the globe. None of them had come close to succeeding, and over the years they had all come to trust Martin to lead them without fail. Dysea was the only one he knew of to ever have broken through the barriers his brother had in place, and that proved to all of them that she would be a worthy Alpha female in terms of power and wisdom.

Dan shook his head as he realized Anuk had reached where he was standing and was staring at him. Her cinnamon scent washed over him as he looked at her.

"What?" Anuk asked.

Dan smiled. "Justice has been served." He replied softly. "Let's keep moving; those medical supplies are just ahead, and hopefully some real food."

Anuk watched him turn away from her and continue forward. She watched him for a long moment, marveling at how he moved so lightly for a man his size. This was a very different man than she was used to dealing with. When he looked at her, Anuk saw a burning desire in his dark eyes. An almost animal like craving that wanted to possess her, and even though Anuk hardly knew this black skinned giant, she found herself wanting to lose herself in that craving. She knew what lust and savagery looked like in a man's eyes, and that was not what she saw in Daniel's dark eyes. It was a different kind of lust... and for reasons she could not explain... she reveled in the sensations that just being close to him caused to ripple through her.

Anuk's eyes followed him for another moment before she looked out across the expanse of the massive tunnel. The slight movement caught her attention as she shifted her eyes upward until she saw the dark military pack dangling high above them. The rope was holding it secure and it appeared to have been lower through some sort of shaft in the huge ceiling.

"Daniel! Look!" She called pointing to the pack high above them.

Dan followed her motion and he grinned as he saw the pack. Now he just had to find a way to get it down. He gripped the K-12 and pulled it from the web holster on his leg and reached into his vest for the silencer. He looked over to glance at Anuk and froze, his eyes going wide. She was standing with her feet slightly apart and aiming her handgun at the ceiling.

"Anuk! No!" He shouted.

The sharp report of the 40mm shot rang out in the tunnel like rolling thunder, the echo caroming through the huge tunnel like a wave. Danny watched the rope holding the pack snap and the black bundle fell the two hundred meters to the tunnel floor, landing in a cloud of four hundred year old dust. Dan saw the brightness of Anuk's face and the pride in what she had accomplished. She scampered toward where he moved to collect the pack, his eyes searching the darkness far ahead of them as he squatted next to the pack on the tunnel floor.

"I did it!" Anuk exclaimed as she came up. "I always was a good shot my father told me."

Dan turned to look at her, his eyes filled with anger. Anuk's smile vanished instantly. "That was a singularly stupid thing to do!" He snapped at her.

"I was trying to help Daniel!" She snapped back on the defensive. "I thought you would be happy!"

Dan lifted his K-12 and the silencer. "No sound!" He hissed. "Our voices don't carry more than a hundred meters or so. The sound of a gunshot will echo off these walls for hours! Anyone or anything that calls these tunnels home now knows that something else is down here, namely us!" Dan bent over and snatched up the pack. "Fuck!"

He turned again as his keen eyes began searching for a place to hole up until he was sure that nothing was coming down the tunnel. His eyes found the small crevice that appeared to be an old toll booth of some sort. He grabbed Anuk's arm. "C'mon." He barked pulling her towards the crevice.

SALINA

Tarifa stood among the crowd of people in Salina's main square; her eyes searching the many faces for any sign of someone she hoped would be here. There were smiling and cheering men, women and children as they greeted their Queen, but not who she wished for. Aihola sensed this from her and leaned close to her ear.

"Ka uk zhah 'zil imposing 'zil dos inbal descibed ussta ssinssrigg," Aihola spoke to her in Drow. *"Uk orn'la kyorl hwuen klezn inbal calmed p'los contacting dos."* **(If he is as imposing as you say my love, he would wait until things have calmed before contacting you.)**

Tarifa looked at her and nodded with an impish grin. "Thank you *Nya Istel*." She replied softly. "My head is not my own."

Tarifa turned as Kadeem made his way through the crowds and bowed to her and the ministers behind her. "My Queen, Salina welcomes you and the esteemed Ministers to our humble city."

Tarifa nodded her head politely. "You honor me Governor." She spoke.

Kadeem smiled. "We have prepared a rather elaborate feast my Queen. Perhaps you would prefer to freshen up in the private quarters we have assigned for your use while here in Salina. They are on the eastern side of our fair city, and the most defensible as I already confirmed with Dragoon Commander Cantel."

Tarifa detected the very subtle shift in his tone and she smiled. "That would be very welcome Governor, as long as the Commander approves. And you have arranged similar accommodations for my guests Governor?"

"Of course my Queen, however they are in the western portion of the city near where our merchant market is." Kadeem spoke. "I assumed they would want to busy themselves with what Salina has to offer. I hope I assumed correctly."

Tarifa looked at the three Ministers standing behind and to her right. "Minister Raloo, does that meet with your approval?"

Raloo nodded slowly, "Of course my Queen." He spoke.

Tarifa nodded. "Governor, my husband Commander Telan may be joining us in a day or so. Please inform your security he is to be directed to our quarters when he arrives."

Kadeem nodded, "As you wish." He motioned with his hand, "If you will allow me the honor of escorting you to your quarters my Queen. My Assistant Governor will guide the Ministers."

Tarifa smiled and took his arm. "Please... I would like that."

Raloo looked at Treblar and Thimina. "I didn't realize that Telan would be joining us." He spoke.

"Nor did I." Treblar spoke.

Minister Thimina nodded her head. "Tarifa mentioned it to me just before we left. Telan may be able to break away from the training exercise he is on, and he will come directly here."

"She did not mention this in the Council session." Treblar spoke.

"It is not something a woman would think to discuss with other men. Telan is her husband, and it came up among other things that women talk about." Thimina replied with a smile.

They watched as the young looking elf stepped up to them, "If you will accompany me Ministers." He said.

Raloo turned one last time and saw that Kadeem was pointing out something inane along the street he and Tarifa were walking along. Raloo shrugged. Kadeem was in their pocket anyway, and should Tarifa attempt to do something out of character, they would be informed immediately. Raloo was not entirely convinced that she had done this dramatic turn around in only a few short weeks.

Tarifa smiled at the young child that greeted her as they walked, Cantel and Aihola the only others with them. Tarifa held tightly to Kadeem's arm.

"Are they here?" She asked softly, all the while maintaining the charming smiling face to the crowd that gathered along the streets.

"They are waiting for you my Queen." He answered, the fake smile never leaving his face.

"The Ministers?" She asked.

"They will be attended to my Queen." He spoke softly. "Any of them would have to cross almost the entire city to reach where you will be staying. Any number of a hundred of my people would set off a prearranged alarm should they get within ten blocks."

"It seems you have taken it upon yourself to become quite close with those in Eden City Governor." Tarifa said.

Kadeem looked at her, sudden worry in his eyes. "I did it... I did it for my people my Queen. Those that follow the *Falre Lome* protect us from the few small scum that still hide within the mountains. We have prospered more in the nearly half year trading with them than the last decade with the other High Elf cities. I..."

Tarifa held up her hand. "You mistake my comment for criticism when it was merely an observation. I am in no way angry with what you have done, and in truth it is I who should be apologizing to you for neglecting the outlying cities as much as I have."

"You have not been yourself these last months my Queen." Kadeem told her.

"Do you know how many other High Elf cities have been secretly trading with Eden?" Tarifa asked.

Kadeem looked at her, "Five others that I know of my Queen." He answered honestly. "But as Eden City grows, more free settlements come under their wing."

"What do you mean?" Tarifa asked intrigued.

"You must see Eden City for yourself my Queen. I have been there several times and it is a place of wonder. Children play in the streets, humans and elves stroll in the parks together. They work side by side. It is amazing."

"And these free settlements you mentioned." Tarifa asked.

"At last count twenty-three settlements have formed." Kadeem spoke. "We trade with many of them. They number from several hundred to the largest of thirteen thousand in terms of population, humans and elves alike. They have built much smaller versions of Eden City, and receive both financial and military support from Eden."

"Financial support?" Tarifa asked. "How is that possible? Eden City and the *Falre Lome* are still only rumors in most circles. How could Martin have established a financial system already?"

"I do not know the details my Queen, only that it is so." Kadeem answered. They stopped outside the large three story concrete home. Tarifa looked at it, seeing the fresh flowers adorning the balconies above, and the recent security measures that had been put in place, to include cameras and motion sensors. "It is the oldest building within our walls." Kadeem told her. "It is said that there are many tunnels that dot the landscape below our city, and some that even come up into this very building."

Tarifa looked at him when he said that and she saw the glint of knowledge in those eyes. She smiled and bowed her head. "I'm sure they are just myths governor." She spoke.

Kadeem met her smile, "Perhaps." He bowed his head. "I will return to escort you and the others to the celebration just after dark. It promises to be an incredible party."

Tarifa watched him blend back into the streets. Cantel stepped forward and looked at Tarifa. "My Queen... I am going to do a sweep of the perimeter. I will take up position at the front door when I am finished, and insure you are not disturbed."

Tarifa nodded, "Thank you Cantel, for everything."

Tarifa turned back to look at the home and reached out with her hybrid senses, trying to detect any scents that were familiar to her. A small smile split her lips as Aihola stepped up next to her.

"Who do you smell?" She asked, knowing what Tarifa was doing.

"Dysea is here, but her scent is... it is different somehow." Tarifa answered. "I believe it is Anja with her and Radama too." Tarifa opened her eyes. "Martin's scent is very weak, as if he is far away."

Aihola nudged her forward. "We must go in my love." She whispered. "It would look silly to remain out here and continue to stare at the walls."

Tarifa looked at her and almost laughed. They moved to the front door which was already open and walked through it.

The windows in the dining room were covered by thick silk curtains to block the bright sun in the east. It also did not allow for anyone to see into the room, and this is where Tarifa found Dysea and the others waiting. She stopped only momentarily as she watched Dysea rise from the chair. There was something different about her, something powerful and almost animal in nature. This was not the same Dysea who had left her weeks earlier. This Dysea was even leaner and more toned than before, her hair sparkling in the light. Her skin almost glowed in radiance, and her emerald eyes were far brighter than Tarifa remembered. When she saw the smile spread across Dysea's face those thoughts were forgotten and they moved quickly to embrace.

"Dysea!" Tarifa gasped, squeezing the shorter woman in her arms and feeling the extraordinary power of Dysea's embrace.

Dysea released her quickly with a slightly embarrassed smile. "Forgive me Tarifa. I forget my strength."

Tarifa looked at her, holding her hands. "You... you are different Dysea." She spoke.

"I will tell you and Aihola more when we have more time." She spoke. "It is so very good to see you."

It was as if two giddy school girls had discovered one another again as they launched into a series of questions and answers directed at each other. Anja couldn't help but smile as she stood to the side. She saw the tall Drow female, taller than her own five foot three anyway, watching carefully and walked up to her.

"You must be Aihola." She said holding out her hand.

Aihola gazed at this petite red head and rightfully deduced there was more to this stunning young woman than any first glance would tell. She was not entirely human, as her aura was a lighter shade of green than normal humans. She took the hand and found the hand shake to be friendly and warm and accepting. Aihola began to relax then and she allowed a smile to touch her lips.

"Yes. I am..."

"You're Tarifa's lover Aihola." Anja spoke quickly but with a bright smile. "Yes I know. Her scent is all over you."

Aihola turned a deep red, and thanked the gods it would not show through her ebony skin. "You are... you are a Genome?" She asked.

Anja shook her head, "A hybrid actually." She answered, extremely comfortable with who and what she was. She saw the question in Aihola's eyes and waved her hand. "It's a long boring story." She said. She held out the small box. "This is for you."

Aihola looked at her oddly as she took the small box. "What is it?" She asked.

"It is a permanent solution to your... issue." Anja replied as diplomatically as she could.

Aihola eyes grew wide at this news. She had never expected this, already consigning herself to having to take the drug Dysea had given her for the rest of her life. Her fingers trembled as they opened the box and she saw the small container with four pills in it.

"One pill a week for four weeks." Anja told her. "It will counteract the chemicals in your body within one month and return your system to normal. It was quite easy to produce actually." Anja stepped closer to her, apprising Aihola and liking very much what she saw. "That was all... that was all they did you?" She asked.

Aihola met her eyes. "It was enough." She replied softly. "I was barely able to function as it was."

Anja nodded. "True enough." She spoke. "Forgive me for being forward, but we are not going to get many chances like this to talk and learn about each other. I just want to make sure I do all I can to help."

Aihola held up the small container. "This does far more than you know." She replied. "That is all it will take, these small pills?" Aihola asked still disbelieving.

Anja nodded with a smile. "I do good work." She spoke brightly.

Aihola found herself liking this human female immediately. She was honest and up front, and full of optimism, and very easy to look at. Aihola appraised her just as Anja had done seconds before and decided that yes, this woman could share her bed with Tarifa.

"Anja... forgive me." Tarifa's voice spoke and Anja turned to embrace Tarifa.

Dysea looked at Aihola with her emerald eyes, and Aihola found she could not meet her gaze. "Dysea... I... I did not..."

Dysea stepped up to her and took her hands. “Never apologize to me Aihola.” She spoke. “You and Tarifa did only what your hearts told you to do. I do not hold any anger for you in my heart, quite the opposite in fact. We will talk more, but for now let us get going.”

Aihola looked at her, then to Tarifa who had a confused look on her face as well. “Where are we going?” Aihola asked.

Dysea smiled. “You did not think I came alone did you.” She said, “Radama?”

They turned and watched as Radama touched the wood cabinet that held the fine china. It slid to the side soundlessly, revealing a stone passageway that headed down.

Dysea looked at them as Anja and Radama entered the passageway, “This way.”

The tunnel angled downward at a ten degree slope, and was lit with torches every hundred feet or so. The stone walls were cool and worn smooth from centuries of use it seemed. The passageway took them along a twisting path and finally opened into a massive cave where the sunlight poured in from the huge opening in the side. They could see the MH-19 Raptor sitting idle on the ground, having flown into the mammoth opening in the cave and settling to the ground. They were easily two hundred feet above the floor of the cave, the stalactites far above their heads reaching easily fifty feet down from the ceiling.

Dysea led them down the path that had been carved into the rock and twenty minutes later they were on the same level as the Raptors. There were people standing around the ramp and Aihola slowed her steps as she recognized the taller Drow warrior. Tarifa picked up on this immediately and looked at her.

“*Nya Istel?*” She questioned. “What is it?”

“The Drow,” Aihola replied as they walked.

“You know her I take it?” Dysea asked as she fell in on the opposite side of Aihola, concern on her face now as well.

Aihola nodded. “Yes.”

“Why do I sense there is something else in your voice *Nya Istel?*” Tarifa asked, slowing her steps even more, concern clearly on her face. “Is she a threat?”

Aihola looked at Tarifa and Tari’s words came back to her. She took a deep breath and smiled. “She is no threat Tarifa.” She answered.

“You are sure?” Dysea asked.

Aihola nodded. “We had a relationship many years ago.” Aihola spoke softly. “She was the dominant one.”

Tarifa looked at her. “Aihola... I thought that... I thought we were...”

Aihola met her eyes and even though she had shared pleasure with Dysea, it was Tarifa who she worried about upsetting. “It is not as you think *ussta ssinsrugg.*” She spoke softly. “*Lynwe zhah equipped saph natha nesst.*” Aihola’s lips curled up in a small sad smile, “*Natha ves izznarg nesst. Il 'udtila naut zhaun vel'bol ol zhah ulu satiir vel'bol dos lu' Usstan satiir whol weth byr; Ol morfethen ilta hasstn foldraevals, Il zhah unable do'bauth l' culture d'udossta draeval p'los.*” (**Lynwe is equipped like a man, a very large man. She does not know what it is to feel what you and I feel for each other. It makes her angry sometimes, and she is unable to escape the culture of our past.**)

“It has been a long time since you have seen her Aihola.” Tarifa spoke squeezing her hand. “Perhaps things will have changed.”

Aihola nodded, “Perhaps. That she would come with you now is very unlike her.” Aihola looked at Dysea. “Tari... where is he Dysea?”

“He will be waiting for you when we get to Eden.” Dysea answered. “He has been working closely with Julie the last week or so, and they were on a short mission this morning when we left. He is fairly busting at the seams to see you Aihola.” She said with a smile.

Aihola’s eyes smiled at that and she nodded. “I feel the same.” She said. “It has been...”

“Aihola!” Lynwe’s voice echoed loudly in the cave and they watched the tall Drow warrior move quickly to their small group.

Aihola hesitated and she felt Tarifa squeeze her hand once more in support. She had been with Lynwe many times, always as the submissive Drow. The times with her were for the most part quite pleasant, but there

were times when her anger got the better of her and she could hurt you with as large a package of equipment that she had. It surprised her when Lynwe embraced her ever so gently and held her like a lost sister. She held Aihola in front of her with gleaming amber eyes.

“You do not know how glad we were to discover you lived Little One.” Lynwe said softly. “Your brother and I sang a song that night.”

Aihola smiled because she could say nothing due to her loss of words. “How... how is Anari?” She asked finally.

Lynwe’s face changed just a little but she smiled. “She is well. She went with the flying ship to Martin Hunter’s base on the moon Aihola. I do not mind flying high, but that is beyond me. She jumped at the chance.”

Aihola now smiled genuinely. Anari had always been the more adventurous of the two of them and hearing the way Lynwe spoke of her with the emotion that she was caused Aihola to think perhaps Lynwe had changed.

They both heard Tarifa’s gasp beside them and they turned to look at her. Her sapphire eyes were wide and they were gazing towards the rear of the Raptor. Aihola followed her gaze, and was shocked to feel her breath catch in her throat as well as her eyes settled on the tall, heavily muscled man who had walked off the flying machine next to the much shorter and older elf. Tarifa’s gasp had caused him to turn, and Aihola saw his eyes then. Even the few dozen meters that were between them did not dim the brightness of those liquid dark brown eyes. In only a heartbeat Aihola knew what Tarifa meant when she spoke of this man.

Aihola saw that he did not even excuse himself from the older elf as he started toward them. Tarifa did not give him the chance and burst into a sprint towards Martin. He caught her when she leaped into his arms. It did not escape Aihola’s notice, or Dysea and Anja who stood next to her, that there was no kiss between Martin and Tarifa. It was an embrace of something not of passion, but of love with respect.

Tarifa’s heart sang as she felt Martin’s powerful arms crush her body to him, his face buried in her hair. They held each other for several minutes just like that, Tarifa actually suspended in the air in his embrace, the tears flowing from her eyes and splashing wetly onto his shoulder. For Tarifa, this was what she needed. Not the breath stealing kisses, or the pleasure of his enormous manhood, but simply the way his arms could hold her and make everything seem completely focused. She had not seen him in almost six months, and it now seemed like only yesterday. She pulled her head back slowly and took his face in her hands before kissing him very tenderly on the lips.

“Oh I have missed you Martin.” She spoke between sobs.

“No more than I have missed you Tarifa.” Martin answered, nuzzling her cheek with his nose. “It has been far too long since I have held you in my arms.”

Tarifa looked at him with a surprised but brilliant smile. “Your speech is improving Martin. You sound almost like an elf now.”

Martin burst out laughing and spun her around in his arms before setting her down and caressing her face. Everyone had given them a respectful distance and Martin gazed into her sapphire eyes. “How... how have you been Tarifa?” He asked softly.

“I was... I was almost lost Martin.” She answered him quietly. “If not for the support you and Dysea have for me, I would have been.”

“You are stronger than you know Tarifa. Never doubt that.” Martin told her. “And now you have someone that holds your heart, even more than I once did. That makes me very happy.”

Tarifa looked at him her eyes wide. “How... you can smell her can’t you?” She said with a small smile.

“She does smell quite tasty.” Martin answered returning the smile.

“Martin... I...” Tarifa spoke quickly, feeling the need to explain what had happened between her and Aihola.

Martin shook his head slowly. “Do not go there Tarifa.” He told her softly. “You have no need to explain yourself to me or to anyone. And as I’m learning you can not control what your heart tells you, so are you.”

“I... I do not wish you to think that I...” Tarifa said looking into his dark eyes. “My... our time together was..., but... Aihola...”

Martin took a deep breath and took her hands in his. “Walk with me.” He said softly, drawing her towards the front of the cave. Tarifa grasped his arm tightly and held it with both arms as they moved to the

edge of the massive cave and looked out over the expanse of open landscape before them. The cave was easily three hundred feet off the floor of the valley, and it gave them an unobstructed view of the mountains.

“It is possible to love in ways not of physical pleasure Tarifa. I’m learning that as I go along, because it is what I feel for you. You... you have become like the sister I never had, the true sister.” He told her.

Tarifa smiled gently, still grasping his arm. “You have remade Dysea Martin.” She spoke softly. “It suits her you know, and her love and devotion to you wafts from her pores.”

“And I love her with equal passion and devotion, if not more.” Martin said. “She burns like a sun within my blood.”

“But you are not yet complete Martin; I sense that in you and her.” Tarifa touched a finger to his chest directly over his heart. “Not in here.”

Martin nodded slowly. “I know. I am hoping to rectify that one day.”

Tarifa glanced over to the Raptor and her eyes saw Anja standing at the bottom of the ramp, her Jade green eyes watching them. She turned back to Martin. “She still loves you Martin. With all that she is; as does Dysea. Do not wait too long, I don’t wish you to endure the pain I felt when I thought I had lost everything.”

“What about you Tarifa?” Martin asked looking at her. “Does this Aihola complete you?”

Tarifa nodded with a bright smile. “She does Martin. More than I am able to put into words.” She looked at him, putting her hand to his face. “I will always need you Martin, for your own words explain exactly as I feel.”

Martin’s eyes smiled at her. “But for you as well as me... our true souls reside with others.”

Tarifa couldn’t help but chuckle. “You do sound more like an elf Martin. My mother would be very impressed.”

Martin matched her laugh and nodded. “Normya, Dysea’s mother has said the same thing. It must be the company I’m keeping these days.”

“Aihola... *Nya Istel*... knows my feelings for you. The bond we share, and always will share, the three of us.” Tarifa spoke. “That she is strong enough to accept they will never change and she still loves me as she does; it is proof to me that I was destined to be with her; just as you were destined to be with Dysea.”

Martin nodded. “I do.” He spoke softly. “Her scent is clear and powerful. She is quite a find.”

Tarifa nodded. “And she burns within me, just as Dysea burns within you. And... and she sees in you what I do. And that is the future for all our peoples.”

Martin smiled and took her hands in his. “Yes well... that is something for another time and place perhaps. And as for right now let me show you what we have built. How much time do you have before you and Aihola need to return?”

Tarifa smiled, “Several hours. The celebration will not begin until dark.”

Martin nodded. “That is plenty of time.” He took her hand. “Follow me.”

Martin led her to the rear of the Raptor and they walked up inside, but not before Martin gazed at Anja for a long moment. Anja’s heart fluttered within the grasp of his eyes, but then he was gone and she was alone again. She started to walk up the ramp and stopped when Dysea stepped in front of her.

“I was wondering if perhaps you might be able to show me some of the martial arts moves you learned from Daniel and Julie after we have returned Tarifa and Aihola this evening.” Dysea spoke.

Anja looked at her. “Don’t you want to spend time with Tarifa?” Anja asked.

Dysea nodded. “Yes... but at the moment I would much rather spend that time with you.”

A flash of anger blossomed in Anja and her eyes flared. All things aside, regardless of her feelings, Anja would not be second fiddle to anyone. “Dysea I don’t want...”

Dysea could smell the anger on her before she even began to speak and she stepped closer to her. “No Anja...” She spoke, interrupting her words. “My intent is not what you think it to be.”

“It isn’t?” Anja asked.

Dysea remembered Martin’s words to her that morning as she gazed at Anja. “Perhaps in the future, if you are willing.” Dysea said boldly. “But I really would prefer to spend time with you, unless that is not your desire as well.”

Anja looked at her for a long moment. She knew without a doubt that she wanted Dysea, yet she also knew there was much more to her feelings for the blond elf than she was ready to admit to herself. She nodded

with a small smile deciding that it could not hurt to spend time with her. "I... I think I would like that." She said finally.

Dysea stepped even closer and touched Anja's face with her fingers. The warmth of her finger tips sent an electric shock through Anja's veins and she could not tear her eyes from Dysea's face. "You have nothing to fear from me Anja?"

Anja lowered her eyes quickly. "That... that isn't why I..." She said softly.

Dysea shook her head. "I can smell your desire for me as surely as you smell mine for you Anja." She spoke softly, so that only Anja could hear her. Dysea had to be careful. She desperately wanted this woman, to feel her wrapped around her body, to taste her skin. There was an aura that surrounded Anja that even Tarifa did not have. It very nearly matched the aura that surrounded her beloved, and it drew her like a moth to the flame. Yet Dysea also wanted to know Anja in a way that transcended physical means, just as she now knew Martin. "We share something in common you and I Anja Peterson." Dysea spoke softly; her words coming out like a soothing rhythm of soft music. "There are only two people who now hold sway over Martin's heart Anja. Two people that he would give his very soul for if they asked him. I have come to realize that I am one of those people. I had no idea that I would feel attracted to the other in the way I am attracted to you. Yes... I want to taste you, explore you... but more than anything else I want to know you Anja. And I want to know what drives *Nauta Melme* and I to love and desire you so completely."

Dysea turned quickly and walked up into the Raptor leaving Anja as she raised the ramp and contemplated her words.

And I want to know what drives Nauta Melme and I to love and desire you so completely.

Anja's eyes grew a little wider as the meaning of Dysea's words finally hit her and she looked at Dysea as she sat down next to Aihola with a smile and they began to talk.

NEW MIAMI

Marcus entered Yuri's beach front home, all of his senses alive. He could smell the pungent odor of sex and his keen ears picked up the muffled groans and harsh voices coming from the second floor. He had flown here from New Richmond as soon as he had dispensed with Minister Wiseman. The man had begged for his life for a full hour, the Chief Interrogator prolonging the agonizing pain of the acid covered blades and barbed whips. In the end the once proud Minister was a whimpering pile of bloody flesh and Marcus was satisfied. Wiseman's body would never be found as it now resided in the bellies of several berserk Grizz beasts that were kept for disposing of unwanted evidence. Marcus would have preferred to take out his frustrations on Selene. The red headed whore had made him lose face, and that was something Marcus did not appreciate. It irked him that Wallace had been the one to kill her, more than likely after he had raped her endlessly. The human Admiral was almost as ruthless as Marcus was, but there was also something behind those calm blue eyes that Marcus didn't trust.

His Mistress had summoned him here no doubt to punish him, and as he made his way up the stairs he knew how she was going to do it. The sounds of sex filled the hallway upstairs and Marcus walked to the room that he knew would be in use. He pushed open the door and the heat and smell of sex nearly bowled him over. It was a windowless room with only the large round bed in the center. Marcus clenched his fists tight as he saw what he had dreaded.

There were four Genome soldiers in the room, all of them naked and sweaty. The Colonel lay on the bed on his back. Yuri sat astride his lower body with her back against his chest. His hands were wrapped around her huge breasts and he was pawing them like an animal, pinching her nipples until she whimpered, his cock completely embedded in Yuri's tight ass. There was a black genome above her, grunting and slamming his own cock deeply into Yuri's sopping pussy, each powerful plunge into her depths causing copious amounts of male and female juices to squirt hideously from around his pounding shaft. Her lower body was covered in dark bruises from where their hands had squeezed her skin so tight they broke blood vessels beneath the skin. Judging from the amount of bruising Marcus guessed they had been fucking his Mistress for at least a full day. Her taut olive skinned body was slick with sweat that mingled with cum. They had obviously been spewing their loads all over her velvet skin at their leisure.

The reason for her muffled cries became evident when he saw the second black genome standing over her head, his fist tangled in her radiant black hair and he was savagely ramming his nearly ten inch cock deeply into her throat. Horrible gagging sounds filled the room every time he brutally rammed his cock in, and all it was doing was spurring him on. He held her long black hair and was pulling on it viciously, forcing her head back further so he could shove more of his cock into her beautiful mouth. Her silky throat was distended abnormally and Marcus could almost see the thick shaft invading her mouth without regard.

The fourth genome was kneeling next to the pile of bodies madly stroking his glistening cock and preparing to explode over his Mistress's red and bruised breasts. He was the first to cum, his chest swelling with air as he leaned over her beautiful chest and large nipples and sprayed a huge amount of cum over her bouncing breasts. The thick white liquid coated her breasts completely, running down between her firm globes to saturate and pool on her abdomen.

"Fuck yeah! Swallow it all bitch!" The black genome grunted as he rammed his cock deeper into Yuri's mouth and his large balls pulsed with a life of their own as they unloaded an enormous load of cum into her throat. Yuri gagged terribly, her throat flexing and swallowing, trying to keep up with the flow to no avail. Long strands of his cum spilled from her ruby red lips obscenely spread around his erupting cock, rolling back onto her face and into her silky hair.

A third grunt of release and the black genome fucking her tight pussy slammed into her one final time, his ass clenching in release as he spewed deep inside her beautiful cunt. Only the Colonel remained and as his team mate slowly climbed off the bed, his hands lifted Yuri by her beautiful ass cheeks. Her eyes flew open, her lips still locked around the thick black cock in her mouth as he lifted her hips until only the head of his enormous cock remained inside her. Marcus knew what was coming next and he shut his eyes tightly. The Colonel shifted his hands and lifted his hips off the bed while pulling Yuri's hips down savagely. Her hands shoved the black genome away from her mouth and she screamed as that nearly fourteen inch cock savaged her beautiful ass, plunging into her with no regard for pleasure. The Colonel was only worried about getting himself off, and he repeated this action four more times, each time her scream cutting through Marcus as easily as any knife. Yuri was cumming continuously, her sweet juices spilling from her battered pussy like a gushing faucet.

"Fuck yeah! Here it comes boys!" The Colonel yelled out. He reached around the front of her body and grabbed her firm melons viciously, pulling her body down even harder upon his cock. Marcus opened his eyes in time to see his balls swell massively and then Yuri's eyes flew open, filled with tears and she squealed like a pig stuck on a barbecue spear as the Colonel's hot cum erupted within her bowels like a fire hose.

Then it was over and Marcus had to watch as the Colonel rolled over on top of Yuri, pulling his thick softening cock from her now stretched asshole with a loud plop. He slapped the long shaft against her ass cheeks several times and his men chuckled in amusement. Yuri groaned in a contented hum, stretching her lithe body on the bed and sat up slowly.

"I must say boys; it has been an extremely fun time." Yuri spoke now, her voice still tingling in the aftermath of her orgasm. We will have to do this more often I can tell."

"Whenever you direct us Madam President," The Colonel snickered. "Next time I can bring more of my men."

Yuri smiled seductively as she threw her long legs over the side of the bed. Marcus noticed that the sheets were covered in more cum and soaked with sweat and bodily fluids, indicating they had been fucking his Mistress for longer than he first thought. "Now that sounds absolutely divine." Yuri purred. "Make yourselves some food before you leave boys. I wouldn't want it to get out that I left you all depleted of energy and didn't feed you."

The four genomes chuckled as they headed for the door. They all snickered at him as they moved past carrying their clothes, completely oblivious to the fact they were naked. The genome Colonel stopped at the door, his gray eyes burning into Marcus for a split second. "I will report back as soon as our mission is accomplished Madam President." He called back over his shoulder.

"Thank you Colonel." Yuri spoke getting to his feet. "Please leave instructions that I am not to be disturbed for at least another four hours. That is how long it will take Colonel Marcus here to lick my body clean I believe. He likes to take his time."

The Colonel laughed as he brushed past Marcus. "Yes ma'am."

“Come in Marcus.” Yuri spoke sweetly. “I believe you know what to do for failing to capture and kill one old man, his wife and a dozen or so elf slaves. I am beginning to lose faith in your abilities Marcus.”

“They had assistance Mistress.” He spoke.

“Yes... so I understand.” Yuri replied moving to the blank wall and pressing her hand against it. The wall pushed back and exposed a large bar and Marcus watched as she poured a fair amount of the red liquid into the glass. She lifted it to her lips and drank heartily before pouring another and turning to look at him, her dark eyes cruel.

“The local security detachment commander refused to authorize the storage of anti-air missiles in their armory.” Marcus spoke. “With those I could have shot down the helicopters and killed any who survived the crashes.”

“Does this commander still live?” Yuri asked.

“I slit his belly open myself Mistress.” Marcus spoke savagely.

Yuri walked up to him, reaching out with her hand to stroke his face as she glided around him. “And your excuse for allowing an elf sympathizer to infiltrate the highest levels of our government?”

“Selene Torcram’s appointment was not within my purview Mistress, you now that?” Marcus spoke. “Am I to blame now for allowing her the access she had when I was not even in New Richmond for her appointment?”

“You have overall command of the New Richmond Security Force.” Yuri spoke, still moving around him. “The background checks on the ministers are to be conducted every six months and reviewed by you. Was this not done?”

“It was Mistress. Nothing came back to red flag Selene’s actions or sympathies.” He answered.

“So we have had a half elf on our Council Board for several years now and you knew nothing about it?” Yuri asked.

Marcus looked at her, “Mistress?”

Yuri smiled. “Ah... you didn’t know she was a half elf did you Marcus?”

“No Mistress I didn’t.” He answered, taken completely off guard.

“That’s because you did not look hard enough.” Yuri finished. “I’m only sorry that she did didn’t live and return with you. I would have enjoyed tasting her before I killed her.” She walked to the bar and refilled the glass. “What did you think of Wallace?”

“He is the true power behind the throne Mistress.” Marcus spoke.

Yuri nodded. “Yes he is.” She spoke. “The question is; who does he serve? Will he be friend or foe? The resources on that station could be a great boon for us. What is your opinion?”

“I do not believe we should trust him Mistress.” Marcus replied.

“Why?”

“He is motivated only by power.” Marcus replied. “The more he has the more he will want. I believe he will be a threat to the Alliance, and to you.”

Yuri laughed. “Wallace is human and therefore no threat to me.” She spoke. “However, you are correct that he could be a threat to the Alliance. I did not know him well in my time on EDEN but what I saw I did not like. We will deal with him for now. If he becomes a problem we will simply take back the station from him. Have you been able to locate the ruling elves?”

“All but Dysea,” Marcus replied. “I reviewed the reports from my agents before coming here Mistress. Dysea’s whereabouts are unknown, though it is possible that she could be dead. The others shift locations frequently, but we have all of their safe houses marked.”

“And what of the plan that involves the High Elf whore Tarifa?” Yuri spoke.

Marcus looked at her. “It is proceeding according to schedule.” He answered. “The Wood Elf Queen assures our people that they will be ready to attack in two months time.”

Yuri nodded. “It will be rewarding to finally kill that bitch and destroy the two largest elf factions in this country. Once we have secured North America we can expand our other international operations.”

“Yes Mistress.” Marcus said, his amber eyes now gazing upon Yuri with undisguised lust. This always happened. If he remained in her presence for too long, the lust overtook him and he would do anything she commanded just to taste her flesh.

Yuri smiled knowingly. “I see you have finally worked yourself into frenzy.” She ran her tongue seductively over her lips moistening them. “Come Marcus... I grow tiresome of all this cum on my body. Clean me with your tongue as your punishment, and perhaps I will reward you.”

Marcus turned and closed the door behind him before turning back to his Mistress. He was hers to command.

SALINA

Tarifa stood on the balcony of the home in Salina, holding a steaming mug of tea in her hands. The thin robe wrapped around her naked body as she stared at the early morning stars and let the cool breeze play across her flesh.

Her trip to Eden City had been unlike anything she had ever experienced. She and Aihola had sat in the cockpit of the Raptor as they approached Eden City, their eyes growing ever wider as the size and scope of what they saw began to hit them. The influx of humans and elves in the last month alone had caused Eden to expand in size to double what Junction City once was. And after they had landed and were taken around the city in an open Hopper they got an idea just how much. It stunned them both to see elves and humans walking on the streets, shopping at the many stores and even sitting in outdoor cafés laughing and actually spending time together. They could hear the laughter of children, and the hum of construction from all across the city as new buildings and facilities were going up almost weekly. Two fully staffed hospitals operated around the clock, with the one large university that had been built in the center of the city now finished with students rushing to classes across the lush green campus.

The homes were modest, yet very comfortable. Tarifa noticed that no one lived in pompous luxury and it seemed that everyone worked. The city teemed with life. She and Aihola also saw the factories on the outskirts of the main city, producing everything from furniture to the machines of war. It was rare to see anyone walking the streets without some sort of firearm, and it appeared as if everyone knew how to use them.

When Martin showed her the Command Center, the heart of Eden City itself, she was speechless. Twenty-three settlements across two and a half states, numbering from several hundred to thirteen thousand strong, just as Kadeem had told her. All of them linked directly to this one building. A single call for assistance and forces from Eden City would be moving in minutes. And she discovered how they had established such a huge financial wealth. They had started from the beginning and raided every old government place of its precious metals, gold, silver, rubies, everything. With this as their backing, one of the first things they had done was print new money. It was this money that they used in trading with the free settlements and other elf cities. When not trading with Eden, the settlements and elf cities used the Alliance credits, but since many of them were now getting almost everything they needed from Eden or one of its free settlements, their stock of Alliance credits was growing, and since the elf cities did not trade directly with the Alliance, their coffers were overflowing. In only six months, Eden and the free settlements aligned with her had become far richer than all twenty-two High Elf cities combined.

It was these things that were running through her mind as she stood on the balcony. Aihola was asleep in their bed, leaving Tarifa to gaze at the stars and bring her mind into focus. The banging on the door downstairs shook her out of her thoughts and caused her to whirl around. She moved quickly into the bedroom only to see Aihola scrambling to throw some clothes on.

“*Vel'uss orn'la doer ghil a nindol klew'kin,*” Aihola spoke in the ancient Drow language. She and Tarifa had taken to speaking only the ancient tongue when alone, as they felt it brought them closer together. **(Who would come here at this hour?)**

Tarifa smiled as she watched Aihola pull the thin robe similar to hers on over her luscious body and a small surge of pleasure swept through her loins. “*Ka dos insist pholor maintaining nindel gyot udos orn neitar ragar doeb Jabbress; Usstan orn tlu ichl noamuth wund dosst siltrin ulu an'yui l' dobor.*” She spoke. **(If you insist on maintaining that pose we will never find out Mistress. I will be too lost within your flesh to answer the door.)**

Aihola pulled the robe on with a smile and stepped up to her, drawing her into an embrace, pressing their bodies together. “*'Zil tempting 'zil nindel ul'tro ussta bronretla rothe, having dosst ilhar ragar udossa*

while dos ph' pleasuring uns'aa orn'la naut endear ilta ulu uns'aa wun jala i'dol." (As tempting as that sounds my wonderful slave, having your mother find us while you are pleasuring me would not endear her to me in any way.)

Tarifa laughed softly, "But think of the pleasure Mistress." She said, leaning forward and kissing her soft pink lips.

Aihola squeezed her firm ass tightly. "I am trying not too. At least until we discover who is banging on the door at this early hour. Perhaps when I get rid of them you can show me how much you have learned."

"I look forward to that Mistress." Tarifa spoke.

Aihola kissed her gently, "As do I."

Aihola went to the door and her fingers closed around the short barreled automatic on the dresser before she went out into the hallway. She descended the stairs quickly and moved to the door, standing to the side and looking out the small window. She pounded the control panel on the wall and lifted the automatic into the face of Minister Thimina before she brought her hand down again.

"Bang on the door again woman and you will not be able to use your arm for a full day!" Aihola snapped, the automatic not wavering an inch from Thimina's surprised face. She saw a Dragoon move up behind Thimina.

"I tried to stop her, but she would not listen." The Dragoon spoke.

Aihola's amber eyes glared intently at Thimina. "Why are you here at this hour? The Queen still sleeps! Not even the insects are awake yet. Speak quickly before I lose my temper."

The older elf woman smiled in the dim light coming from inside. "I would like to speak with Tarifa." Thimina spoke.

"At this hour woman? You must be insane." Aihola replied. "Are all the High Elf Ministers as lacking in protocol as you?"

"It is very important."

"So is the sun rising in the morning," Aihola snapped. "That does not mean it can be rushed."

"Are you always this protective of the Queen?" Thimina asked calmly. "Or is it because you are the Bounded Lover of our Queen and you are protecting her for some other reason?"

Aihola's face didn't change. "What nonsense do you speak woman?"

"There are but three or four who know the significance of the braids you and Tarifa wear in your hair Aihola." Thimina said calmly, clasping her hands behind her back. "I just happen to be one of them. *L'joining d' vesdrac*, I believe it's called." (The Joining of Souls)

Aihola's eyes went wide now. "How... how do you know that?" She demanded.

"It is a very moving ceremony if I am not mistaken." Thimina said. "We will have to insure it is conducted soon so that it means something to others as well. I am not your enemy Aihola. And I am certainly not Tarifa's enemy."

"*Nya Istel* let her in." Tarifa's voice carried softly from behind her.

Aihola lowered the weapon slowly, as Tarifa stepped up behind her. She moved to the side and allowed Thimina to enter the hallway just inside the house, the door sliding shut behind her.

Tarifa looked at Thimina and sipped her tea calmly. "Would you like a cup of tea Minister Thimina?" Tarifa asked. "It's fresh; I brewed it within the last hour."

Thimina looked at Tarifa, realizing she was on very dangerous ground here. She had been watching Tarifa for months, knowing that something was wrong with her early on. She was not the strong willed young Queen that everyone had come to expect, and she and Treblar had spoken many times in private about this. It was only after this Drow Assassin had come into her life had things changed. The old Tarifa had returned, but there was something decidedly different about her. "You... you must trust me greatly to allow me into your realm here." Thimina spoke softly.

Tarifa smiled sweetly, "Not at all Minister." She spoke very calmly stepping up to her. "You will leave this house now in only one of two ways. You will leave as an ally, or you will leave dead. *Nya Istel* and I are very private when it comes to our relationship, at least for the moment."

Aihola's hand came up and the automatic pressed to her temple. "I will not miss." Aihola growled her amber eyes filled with fire. "And I will know if you are lying."

Thimina felt the beads of sweat begin to form on her forehead as she froze her every movement. Her eyes cut to Tarifa as she stepped in front of her and sipped her tea again. “Why are you here?” Tarifa asked.

“We... Minister Treblar and I wish... we wish to see Eden.” Thimina spoke softly, her throat dry and her voice barely a whisper.

Aihola jacked back the hammer on the automatic in that instant, Tarifa holding the tea in her hands as it froze on the way to her lips. She looked at Thimina, cocking her head slightly to the side.

“And what exactly is this Eden?” Tarifa asked after a brief moment.

“I am no fool Tarifa.” Thimina snapped.

Aihola pressed the automatic harder against her temple. “You will be a dead fool if you do not watch your tone!”

“Tarifa... we are... we are not your enemies!” Thimina spoke quickly, knowing her very life depended on what she said in the next few minutes. She had underestimated the protectiveness and the ruthlessness that Aihola and Tarifa would display, and she knew that the truth was her only way to stay alive, for neither of them would hesitate in splattering her brains all over the wall she stood next to.

“We were with you Tarifa!” Thimina pleaded, “When we first met Martin Hunter! We were with you!”

“And this grants you some sort of acceptance why?” Tarifa asked. “There are only three people who I trust absolutely Minister. And only one of them stands in this room with you and I. May I suggest you begin to make me understand why you have come here, before *Nya Istel*'s finger becomes fatigued and she pulls the trigger.”

“There are four Ministers still loyal to you Tarifa!” Thimina spoke quickly. “The others have sold out our people! When we saw what had happened to you, the drugs Telan had given you, we thought all was lost! And then... and then Aihola came into your life and you became yourself again, but you were different. You accepted your marriage to Telan, which the four of us knew you would never do willingly.” Thimina met her bright sapphire eyes, “Unless you were playing a role for some other purpose.”

“Why should I stand here and listen to anything you have to say?” Tarifa said. “You allowed this to happen! You and the other Ministers have allowed our people to arrive at the brink of annihilation. We stand on the cusp of a war with the Wood Elves that neither of our people will win. And when we have destroyed enough of each other, the Alliance will sweep in and wipe us out completely! I am trying to save my people, and I will do what is necessary to make that attempt. But rest assured Minister... should I fail... Telan, his father and all those who have plotted against me... against our people... they will all die exquisitely painful deaths.”

“So you are playing a role?” Thimina spoke.

“Of course I'm playing a role!” Tarifa snapped. “*Nya Istel* has more common sense in her big toe than Telan has in his entire putrid body!”

“Then allow... allow us to help you in whatever way we can Tarifa.” Thimina said softly.

“Treblar and I know that Martin Hunter and Dysea still live. We know they have built Eden. What everyone else dismisses as unsubstantiated rumor we know to be fact.”

“And how would you know this Minister?” Tarifa asked.

“Because Raloo and the others are idiots who wouldn't know about something that didn't line their pockets with Alliance credits until it leaped up and bit them in their faces!” Thimina snapped.

“Yet they still hold sway over many.” Tarifa said.

“Yes... but we need to change that.”

“I intend too.” Tarifa spoke firmly. “And I intend to do so very soon.”

“I know where they are keeping your brothers Tarifa?” Thimina spoke.

Thimina blinked and Tarifa was in front of her in that instant, her eyes having changed to the black outlined sapphire orbs, her fangs extending to their full half inch length. Thimina gasped and tried to step back, slamming into the wall as Tarifa pressed closer. Her face showed true fear now, and sweat began to break out across her entire face, her lips quivering.

“Minister Thimina... you stand over a maw of blackness at this moment. And it will claim you if you do not tell me where they are. Do not play games with me Minister, do not attempt to bargain for my favor, tell me where my brothers are and how this information came to you.” Tarifa growled.

Aihola smiled from where she stood. She was seeing her love in rare form, and to see the strength and conviction she was displaying at this moment, Aihola knew they were meant for each other.

“It was never my... it was never my intent to hold this information from you Tarifa.” Thimina spoke softly, fear dripping from her words. Tarifa could smell the fear wafting from her pores and she waited. “It was last week, I was returning to the Ministry building because I had forgotten some work. I saw Telan enter Raloo’s office acting very secretive. I found it suspicious and went to the door. I heard Raloo and Telan speaking, and then they contacted Telan’s father. I could hear that windbag say that Tareif’s sons were being held in a remote prison within the Wastes!”

“The Wastes!” Tarifa gasped, “Where in the Wastes?”

“In Kansas, a place called Dodge City.” Thimina spoke quickly. “I do not lie to you Tarifa.”

“Why should I believe you Minister?” Tarifa exclaimed. “You knew what was going on; what Telan and his father were doing to me. Why did you not stop it?”

“The four of us knew that we could not help you if we were dead.” Thimina replied. “We were ready to act in regards to the drugs, we had a plan, but Aihola stepped into the picture and did it for us.”

“So why come forward now?” Aihola asked.

“While Raloo and the others have dismissed these rumors in regards to the *Falre Lome* and Eden, we have not. We put out discrete feelers among certain people that we trust. Several reported back about Flagstaff falling, and then Cedar City. They said the cities were razed to the ground, the slavers butchered and the elves and human prisoners freed. The four of us knew that the only person with the skills and knowledge to do this was your Martin Hunter. We have contacts all over the High Elf cities Tarifa, they have told us of the trading going on between Eden and at least three of our cities that we know of. If we were your enemies Tarifa, this information would already be in Raloo’s hands.” Thimina told her.

“Even if everything you say is true, I am limited in what I can do now.” Tarifa spoke. “While Minister Raloo accompanies us I can do nothing out of the ordinary.”

“Raloo is on his way back to Mountain City.” Thimina said. “He has a family emergency. His mistress has mysteriously fallen ill.”

Tarifa looked at the woman with a small smile, “Your doing?” She asked.

“We may only be four my Queen, but we are not entirely helpless.” Thimina answered. “You are not alone my Queen.”

“And what do you intend to do about the Dragoons with the Holy One?” Tarifa asked her.

“They have fallen mysteriously ill as well my Queen.” Thimina spoke. “If what Governor Kadeem tells me is accurate, they will not recover or wake up for at least four days. And it also appears that Telan will be contacting you this day to inform you he has to leave for New Salem. He will be gone four days as well.”

Tarifa glanced at Aihola quickly. “It seems you are able to do quite a bit for only four.” She said, still not convinced.

“I have come to you this morning because we have done everything within our power at this moment.” Thimina said slowly. “Once we realized you were coming to Salina we knew you had to be planning to meet with Hunter and Dysea. We knew that if we were going to act, it needed to be while you were outside of their grasp. Unfortunately... we have expended our resources in what we have done so far.”

Tarifa stared at Thimina for a long moment before her eyes shifted to Aihola, “*Dosst ssiggrins ussta ssussun?*” She asked in Drow. **(What are your thoughts my light?)**

Aihola looked at her, “*Dos zhaun nindolen lodias alur taga Usstan Tarifa.*” **(You know these people better than I Tarifa.)**

Thimina looked at Tarifa not knowing what to do. While she spoke a few words of the ancient Drow language, amazingly Tarifa appeared to be fluent in it, which was a great surprise as the language hadn’t been used in over two centuries. Not even the Drow that Thimina had known so long ago had used the language. It was thought to have died with their Elders. Thimina did not have any idea what they were discussing and it caused her fear to return.

Tarifa returned her gaze to Thimina, “*Nya Istel...* if you would be kind enough to ask the good Minister Treblar to come inside please.”

Thimina looked at Tarifa as Aihola moved for the door. “My Queen... he is not...”

Tarifa’s eyes glared at her once more. “Should we have an agreement Minister, to not lie to one another?” She snapped. “I can smell him outside the door... being held by my Dragoon guards.”

Thimina was silent as she absorbed this information. She could smell her fellow Minister through a steel door and even with the cool breeze. How...

Aihola motioned the very worried looking Treblar into the room, closing the door behind him. He lowered his eyes to keep from seeing how Tarifa and Aihola were dressed in only the near transparent robes.

Tarifa looked at him. "Good morning Minister Treblar." She spoke.

"And to you as well my Queen," He answered meeting her eyes. "Though I assume this is not cause for celebration?"

"Indeed." Tarifa replied. "Minister Thimina has been kind enough to fill me in on your plans and your actions." She spoke. "Now I feel I should fill you in on something as well." Tarifa waited until their eyes were fixed on her. "I went to Eden City yesterday..." She spoke seeing their stunned expressions. "I saw Martin and Dysea for several hours. It was wondrous to be with them again, if only for a short time. Aihola and I were given a tour of the city they have built, as well as the other things they have accomplished in these last months. They trust me... they trust Aihola... they do not trust you. You've heard the rumors and stories of *Lyca Ohtar*?"

Thimina nodded slowly. "Yes... it is said this warrior can transform into a man wolf... a *Ngauro*."

(Werewolf)

"I will tell you now those stories and rumors are true. Martin and those who follow him have the ability to shift their shapes into *Ngauros*." Tarifa saw the looks of disbelief on their faces. "I tell you this for two reasons... the first is that I am a member of their "pack" if you will; their circle of life. And by virtue of the bond that Martin and I share, Martin expressed to me yesterday before we left that Aihola is now considered a member of their "pack" as well." Tarifa stepped forward towards them, her eyes fully changed and her fangs extended. "If you betray me... if you betray Aihola... if you betray *us* in any way... you betray Martin Hunter. I am one of three who have seen him change his form Ministers. Trust me when I tell you that no force on this planet will protect you from him. Not wind, nor rain, nor the thousands of Alliance troops that he may face, none of those things will save you from his wrath. He will hunt you down and strip the skin from your bones before he allows you to die. Do I make myself very clear?"

Thimina and Treblar could only nod their heads quickly in the affirmative. Tarifa smiled sweetly, completely oblivious to the threat she had just made, speaking as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

"Very well, I will contact Martin. I will ask him what you request, but it is he who will decide what is best for him and his people." Tarifa spoke. She looked at Aihola. "Will you see them to the sitting room my love? I'll contact Martin."

Aihola nodded and motioned with the automatic towards the doorway further down the hall.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

LAS VEGAS/PHOENIX INTERSTATE TRAIN TUNNEL

Anuk opened her eyes slowly, unmoving as she allowed her senses to come fully awake. Her head turned slowly and her cerulean blue eyes came to rest on Danny. He was squatting by the small doorway into the abandoned toll booth they had taken refuge in after her ill advised stunt. He was in almost the exact same position as when he had ushered her off to sleep, looking down the dark tunnel for any danger that might be coming their way.

Anuk had given no thought to the fact that there might be less than friendly individuals within the parts of the tunnel they had not yet traversed; she only thought to... Anuk's eyes grew a little wider. She only thought to attempt to impress Daniel with her skills.

The sudden realization of this fact stunned Anuk. Something had made her want to impress Daniel, to show him that she was not a whiny spoiled brat as he had once called her. She looked at his broad, powerful back as these thoughts raced through her mind. His caramel colored skin almost glowed in the wash of soft white light from the lantern that had been in the pack. His head twitched every few moments as if to search for scents wafting through the stale air of the tunnel. His only derogatory comment had been the initial sentence he had spoken after she fired her weapon. He had not mentioned it after moving to the old toll booth, and he did not mention it while she was practically naked before him as he treated the wound on her side. Anuk had held

the fatigue top across her breasts while his large hands had applied a soothing ointment across the width of the wound on her side. She hadn't realized until that moment how warm his hands were, and they scorched her skin wherever they touched, sending wonderful jolts of pleasure through her, even though they moved very businesslike across her skin.

Anuk had never expected to be able to feel any semblance of pleasure ever again in her life, not after her months of enduring the endless rapes and beatings. She had spent many a night wondering if Matarn would even find her desirable after her ordeal. Daniel's touch answered that question; and it also brought forth another, more powerful question. How could the hands of a man who reminded her so much of her tormentors cause her skin to sizzle in desire, the desire that she wanted his hands to do so much more.

The answer was easy enough to discover as she gazed at his back. Daniel was the first man to ever show her the kindness that she had received in his care. With that single exception when he had allowed the desire and want for her to filter through his eyes enough that she took notice of it, he had been the ever protective man. Even when his hands were touching her skin in more intimate places and with considerably less clothing that Matarn had ever seen her in, he had done nothing more than to treat her wounds with the gentlest of actions. She marveled that a man his size could move so deftly, and with complete and utter control of his actions. There were no wasted motions, each movement measured and almost predatory in nature. He always seemed to be sniffing the air, ever alert to their surroundings. And his eyes, his eyes danced in her mind, so endless in depth she could lose herself forever within them. This was no ordinary man, and while he had told her what he was, there was far more to his persona than he was telling her, or... allowing her to see.

It hit her then, with the force of a wall falling on top of her. She wanted this man. She known him only three days and she wanted this man to possess her and swallow her into his arms.

Anuk shifted her feet slightly, the soft scrapping noise barely audible and yet his head turned quickly and his dark eyes found her.

"You're awake... that's good. We should get moving." His voice carried to her.

Anuk got to her feet and wrapping the blanket around her to ward off the chill, she moved slowly up to where he squatted and knelt down next to him. "Daniel..." She said softly.

"Ummm," He spoke turning to look at her, bathing her with those delicious dark eyes. Anuk shuddered as she gazed into them and she knew it was not from the chill.

"I'm sorry... I'm sorry I did that earlier today." She said softly. "It was foolish."

Danny waved one hand in a dismissive motion, "Water under the bridge as they say." He replied. "How do you feel?"

Anuk smiled. "Better than I have in a few days." She replied. "I think the ointment you spread over my wound is working."

Dan nodded. "It should... that antibiotic ointment will kill just about any bacteria known to exist. Combined with the pills... the infection should be gone from your system within a day or so."

"What will we do now?" Anuk asked.

Dan motioned down the main tunnel in the direction they had yet to travel. "Roughly seven miles further down the tunnel splits. One part goes to Prescott Arizona, and then it was suppose to extend to Phoenix, the other tunnel goes to Flagstaff. The Prescott tunnel ends shortly after the city limits and the portions that were supposed to continue to Phoenix were never finished."

"Which way do we go?" Anuk asked.

"We head for Flagstaff." Dan replied.

Anuk looked at him. "Flagstaff is a major slaver's hub." She spoke, worry in her voice. "They would discover us?"

Dan shook his head with a grin. "We shut that man down weeks ago." He answered. "We freed all the slaves, many of whom joined Eden, and then we moved to Cedar City and did the same thing."

Anuk looked at him with wide eyes. "You are saying you have destroyed the two largest slave settlements east of Las Vegas?" She asked.

Dan nodded, "Yep!"

"We have tried for years to end the threat of those two settlements." Anuk spoke. "How have you managed to do it in only a few months?"

“I have learned over the course of my life never to question Marty and his tactics.” Dan spoke. “He has gotten us out of more firefights and battles without a scratch than I care to recall. He’s saved all of our lives on more than one occasion. His mind is like a computer, always running different scenarios, always figuring.”

“Is he like you... physically I mean?” Anuk asked.

“He’s shorter by a couple inches, but more ripped. More defined. Sometimes I think he’s got muscles in his ears.” Dan spoke with a small chuckle. A laugh that Anuk found she adored and it made her chuckle as well. “That isn’t what is unique about him though.” Dan said.

“What do you mean?”

“His... his aura is power. He exudes strength and dominance.” Dan said his voice carrying a tone of awe in it that Anuk detected. “That’s why he is the Alpha of our pack.”

“I don’t understand... your pack?” Anuk asked looking at him.

Dan nodded returning her gaze intently. He did not know if he should pursue this as far as he wanted. Anuk had been held and raped by men of his skin color for months, forced to endure beatings and torture at their hand. Racism had dwindled to practically nothing in the mid 21st century. Danny did not consider himself black, even though he was. He didn’t consider himself white either. He was a pack member and that was all he ever cared about. Pablo was Hispanic, Cody was a red neck from Montana, and Kenny was a slick Italian from New York. There wasn’t any color within their pack, but he had experienced it. He had no more patience for ignorant black people than he did for whites. Dan wasn’t sure if Anuk would ever be able to trust another man, especially him. Should he tell her some of the most intimate details of the life of the pack, details that no outsider had ever learned? He wanted her, the need almost overwhelming, yet he had controlled it up until this point. Her cinnamon scent filled his nostrils and after only a brief moment he chose his direction for good or ill. “We consider ourselves a pack.” He explained to her, “A unit and a family. We are all any of us has had since we were very small. You know what a wolf pack is right?”

“Of course, we see them sometimes in the spring high up in the mountains.” Anuk answered.

“Well each pack has an Alpha male and at least one, usually two or three and sometimes four or five Alpha females, depending on the size of the pack. The leaders if you will. They are the strongest and most intelligent of the pack.” Dan spoke. “Marty is the Alpha... the strongest and smartest of our pack.”

“He is... he is stronger than you?” Anuk asked surprised.

Dan nodded. “Oh yeah... remember, I told you he is descended from a Spartan King. There are a few of us who are bigger than him physically sure, probably stronger if that was the only measure of strength, but it isn’t and you are smart enough to know that. Regardless, none of us will ever challenge him. We couldn’t beat him even if we wanted to challenge him. He’s stronger and faster than all of us, in more ways than I could begin to explain.” Anuk’s eyes showed her amazement. She had seen Daniel in action and his speed and strength was far superior to any elf she had ever seen, and here he was telling her that this Marty was even more powerful. “No...” Dan continued. “He has done more than just keep us together and help us to survive all these years, he has been our anchor, our source of power, the driving force behind all that we do. It’s like he knows what each of us needs, and he has always... always without fail been there for us, no matter what. That is why we will never challenge him. We love him too much. He’s like our brother... all of us are like brothers and sisters in a way really. It’s how we think.”

Anuk sensed there was much he was not telling her, but she did not push him. She loved hearing his voice swim around her; it was so warm and inviting. “And... and he is this Alpha.”

Dan nodded, “Yep!”

“Is... is there an... an Alpha female?” Anuk asked.

Dan looked at her with a twinkle in his eyes. “Nosy aren’t you?” He spoke.

“I... I find it fascinating Daniel that is all.” She replied.

Dan chuckled. “There wasn’t... until...” Dan looked at her, “Until yesterday.”

Anuk’s eyes grew more interested, “Yesterday? What do you mean?”

“Marty found a mate.” Dan said with a grin, “Which is incredible to say the least. She must be very special, that former Queen of yours.”

“Queen Dysea?” Anuk gasped in disbelief.

Dan nodded slowly. “She joined our pack yesterday.”

“What do you mean former Queen?” Anuk spoke. “She has been our Queen for half a century. She is beautiful and wise.”

“That’s another story.” Dan told her. “I should let your father fill you in on that, or Dysea herself.” Dan saw her shiver slightly even under the blanket. “Are you cold?”

“It is just a chill.” Anuk replied. “I am an elf... unnatural medicines introduced into our systems... while they work quite well... drop our body temperatures lower than normal for a short time. It is why the shot you gave me to purge the drugs from my system took such a toll on me physically. I was not fully recovered from the last beating I received.”

Dan opened his arms without thinking. “Come closer to me.” He said to her. Anuk looked at him with sudden fear in her eyes and Dan saw this. “My body temperature runs about four degrees higher than the normal human and elf. We put off a lot of body heat. It will chase away the chill.”

Anuk saw in his eyes that he had no ulterior motives for his offering, and she chastised herself for thinking such a thing when she desired him so. He saw it was his duty to protect her and keep her safe, and if that included keeping her warm, it was something he would do. She scooted between his legs and pressed up against his hard chest and abdomen, leaning into him. She felt the effects almost immediately, even through the blanket. His body was like a heated rock, waves of soothing warmth flowing from him, and Anuk found herself relishing in the warmth.

“Why do we head to Flagstaff?” She asked, unconsciously leaning her head against his chest. “Wouldn’t Prescott be closer?”

“There is still an engineering team in Flagstaff. They are reopening the tunnel at that end and once they get inside they’ll move to us in vehicles. There is plenty of room in this tunnel for wheeled traffic.” Dan replied.

“How... how do you know all this?” Anuk asked. “You said that we were too deep underground for this implant of yours to work.”

“I know it the same way I know that every lousy sonofabitch that laid his hands on you is now dead.” Dan spoke softly, his words carrying a tone of savage pleasure.

Anuk tilted her head to look at him. “What do you mean? How do you know that?” she asked, feeling sleepy once more with the heat from his body filling her. The depth of her exhaustion was obviously more than she had first realized and sleep was rushing upon her quickly.

Dan didn’t look at her as he gazed down the tunnel, his arms draping over Anuk with a possessive tone to them. He felt her hands grip one of his arms and pull it close to her. Dan smiled, reveling in her cinnamon scent as it saturated the very air around him because of her closeness.

“I know that because my brother made me a promise.” Dan spoke softly, his words barely above a whisper. “And my brother always keeps his promises.”

SALINA

Tarifa stood next to Aihola on the floor of the cave waiting for the Raptor that would bring them to Eden. Her mother stood with the Holy One, Thimina and Treblar only a few steps away while she and Aihola conversed in whispers in the ancient Drow tongue.

“*Tesso uns'aa vel'bol dos ph' talintha Nya Istel?*” Tarifa asked her. **(Tell me what you are thinking)**

Aihola met Tarifa’s eyes, “*Usstan xuat zhaun, Usstan daewl ulu z'reninth ilta, ka whol naubol else, t'yin whol dosst sreen'aur ussta ssinsrigg. Ol zhah dubo though talinthin nind sat lu' xunus naubol whol ji verve.*” **(I don't know. I wish to believe her, if for nothing else, then for your safety my love. It is hard though considering they sat and did nothing for so long.)**

Tarifa smiled lovingly at her. “*Nindel zhah ilro'e vel'bol Martin said 'zil al. Henotep ulu l' letter.*” **(That is exactly what Martin said as well, almost to the letter.)**

“Truly?” Aihola asked.

Tarifa squeezed her hands, “*Dos ph' mzild saph ukta taga dos zhaun Nya Istel.*” **(You are more like him than you know Nya Istel.)**

Aihola looked at her, amber eyes wide at what she was about to ask. It came out before she could stop it. “*Do Dos daewl ulu raise dalharen xuil uns'aa?*” She asked her. **(Do you wish to raise children with me?)**

Tarifa was unable to reply because the deafening sounds of the Raptor's engines filled the cave as the dangerous looking craft appeared from below the cave entrance without warning and slowly began to move into the cave. Everyone noticed two things right away, the cockpit of the Raptor was blacked out, only a small red light could be seen behind the windshield, and the ramp was already down.

Walter was the one who recognized what this meant and he stepped in front of Palina as something drifted across his nose. "No one move!" He yelled. "If you wish to live... do not move from where you stand!"

Tarifa turned wide eyes on him. "Holy One, what is it!" She screamed over the Raptor's engines as Aihola pulled out the automatic from beneath her top.

"Trust me child!" Walter screamed. "Do as I say!"

The Raptor dropped hard to the floor of the cave and the dust partially obscured the seven bodies that rush from the Raptor's rear. They were clad entirely in black as Tarifa had first seen Martin and his team, their weapons thrust out in front of them. They moved with precision and grace, almost running towards where Tarifa and Aihola stood. Tarifa knew in an instant there were no elves in this group.

"High left!" A voice called.

The lead man in the phalanx shifted his HK up to his left and ripped out a three round burst.

"High left!"

"High right!"

"Shift!"

As if guided by some unseen force the phalanx of troops split apart, their HKs spitting death as they went. At first Tarifa did not know what they were shooting at, and then the first body from above slammed into the ground only a few feet from her and Aihola. Tarifa's eyes went wide as she realized they were dressed almost exactly like Martin and his team. She looked up in time to see the first genome reach her and Aihola. His gloved hand reached out and pushed her to the ground.

"Down Tarifa!" Martin's voice barked as his hand shifted to Aihola and he pushed her down as well, covering both of them.

The genome lieutenant lowered his binoculars from where he lay on the small ledge three hundred meters above the action that was happening below. "Do you have a shot on Walter?" He snapped in a harsh whisper.

"Negative! They just pulled him down!" The sniper beside him answered.

"Do you have anything?"

"One of the Ministers!" The sniper answered.

"Take the shot! How did they see us! Shit we are so fucked!"

"You have no idea." The female voice spoke from behind them.

Both the sniper and the lieutenant were rolling before the words finished echoing in their heads. It wouldn't have mattered in the least. Julie and Tari were behind them waiting to pounce, and it was over in a heartbeat. The lieutenant died from having Julie's blade driven through his skull, and the sniper died with Tari's knife severing his head almost completely.

Julie lifted her head and looked far below her.

"Clear!"

"Report!" Martin barked.

"Clear!"

"All clear!"

"Good!"

"Secure!"

"All secure boss!"

“In the rear with the gear,” Came the next voice over the COM, and the tension was broken as Martin and the others turned to look at the lone genome who had been securing their rear flank. He actually sounded disappointed to have missed all the action.

“Check the bodies!” Martin ordered, reaching up to pull away his balaclava. He turned back to where Tarifa and Aihola were getting to their feet slowly. Aihola’s eyes were especially wide as she stared at him in wonder. “Tarifa?”

“I’m fine.” Tarifa replied. “Martin... who... who were they?”

Martin gripped Aihola’s arm and she nodded, still staring at him in open awe. “I’m... I’m fine.” She said.

Martin looked at her. “Where did you hide the weapon? I told everyone to come here unarmed.”

Aihola met his eyes. “I will not lose her Martin Hunter!” She spoke.

Martin grinned and leaned over to kiss Aihola softly on the lips, her amber eyes nearly exploding out of her head in surprise. “Thank you.” He spoke. He turned away quickly. “Jules you copy?”

“We’re on our way down.” Julie answered. “Two targets down, one was a sniper. Marty they were after Walter. And they are... they are genomes.”

Martin was looking at one of the bodies that Kenny had rolled over as Julie was speaking. “Yeah... I’m seeing that.” He replied to her. “Did you strip them?”

“Right down to their skivvies,” Julie replied immediately, “They aren’t very flattering in the equipment department if you ask me, but then again I’m spoiled.”

Martin grinned. “Does that include Tari?” He asked knowing that they were on a private command channel.

Julie grinned where she and Tari were moving down the long path. Martin looked up and saw her turn to look back at the tall fleet footed Drow warrior who had become her constant shadow it seemed.

“I’m working very hard on that part Skipper.” Julie finally answered. “I’m thinking this may just be the one.”

“Well let’s figure that out back in secure territory.” Martin spoke. “You and Tari move to the house within the city and get Cantel and the other Dragoons not aligned with Telan. Have Kadeem get some people down here to gather and preserve these bodies. We may have just discovered a way to get a few extra days to locate War Master Tareif’s sons if the Minister is correct.”

“How so?” Julie asked as she held out her hand for Tari to stop as they got to the side tunnel that would take them up into the house.

“Remember Africa?” Martin asked.

“Which part? The part where we got abandoned by our recovery team? Or the part where we had to shoot our way out of the port in Cape Town,” Julie asked. “I don’t seem to recall liking either one.”

Martin chuckled. “Before Cape Town, after the recovery team ditched us.” He said.

“Ah... I remember now. Devious boss. Very devious.”

“Nobody ever accused me of being a nice guy.” Martin answered. “You got twenty... we’ll meet you at the Raptor.”

Martin watched as his team drew everyone over to where he stood. “Martin... what is going on?” Palina asked. “Who are these men?”

“I don’t know who they are... but I can tell you what they are...”

“Genomes!” Walter gasped as he saw one of their faces. He bent down next to the body. “Martin I recognize this boy. He was part of the Air Force team. I treated him just before the comet came. I thought they were wiped out when Andrews was destroyed.” He spoke returning to his feet.

“They were after you Walter.” Martin told him, seeing everyone’s eyes turn to him.

“Me?” Walter asked.

Martin nodded. “Julie and Tari found a sniper higher up.” Martin replied. “They were targeting you. Do you know why?”

“How did you even know they were here?” Thimina asked, still rather shaken by the events and the violence that had just occurred.

Martin looked at her as he spoke, his gaze causing feelings of nausea to grip her stomach. “I can smell another... genome... ten miles away in a driving rain and thirty mile an hour winds. These idiots were stupid...”

they didn't account for the breeze that washed through the tunnels when you opened the hidden door to come down here. I smelled it at the bottom of this mountain while we were waiting to come up to pick you up."

Dysea chose that time to come out of the back of the Raptor where she had been waiting with Anja. Both of them carried chopped down versions of the HK. Dysea went to Tarifa and shared a brief hug with both her and Aihola in relief. Anja stopped to stand next to Martin.

Martin looked at her. "Think you can do an exam for me?" He asked.

Anja's eyes twinkled at him and she cocked her head slightly upwards in an impish face Martin had never seen her make before. She stepped up close to him so that only he could hear her. "I'll examine *you* for free anytime you want... the dead stiff will cost you though."

Martin looked at her in surprise as she brushed past him, deliberately pressing her right hip up against him as she squeezed between him and Kenny. Martin inhaled deeply and her honey scent washed over him in a powerful wave, her aura strong and her desire for him drifting from her pores clear and pure. So strong in fact that it caused Kenny's nose to twitch and he looked at him after she had passed.

"Jesus Skipper." He muttered softly. "She's hotter than a fire stoked branding iron. She wants you bad."

"Cody will you help me with this body." Anja voice spoke as she bent over the dead genome.

Martin shook Anja's scent from his nostrils and tore his eyes from the way her fatigues outlined her absolutely perfect ass and hips. He looked at the others quickly. "I want everyone in the Raptor. Kenny... you and Pablo hang out here and cover Anja in case any leakers come snooping."

Martin backed towards the ramp of the Raptor as the others moved around him. Dysea stopped and stared at him with her emerald eyes and she squeezed his arm. Dysea had caught the scent of Anja's desire as well and it had immediately set her own blood to burning, for both Martin and Anja. "I told you *Nauta Melme*." She whispered before kissing his cheek and moving up the ramp.

LAS VEGAS/PHOENIX INTERSTATE TRAIN TUNNEL

Anuk's eyes flew open when she felt the large hand clamp over her mouth. An arm pulled her body close against warm iron hard flesh, the body in front of her gripping her tightly blotting out any light. She brought her hands up to begin beating the person, her wide eyes looking up, searching for Daniel. Anuk froze when she realized it was his hand keeping her silent, his arm around her waist pulling her tight against him. She saw his face was tense and he brought his finger to his lips motioning for her to be silent. Anuk relaxed almost immediately, her hands falling gently to his thick arms as he held her.

Dan felt her relax in his arms and he took his hand away from her mouth. He lowered his head slowly next to her pointed elf ear, her cinnamon scent washing over him like a blanket. His lips touched her ear and Anuk closed her eyes as a flash of desire swarmed over her.

"We have company." He whispered in her ear so softly she barely heard it. Her cerulean blue eyes became instantly alert and she nodded slowly letting him know she had understood. She felt him pressing something into her hand, his wrist and forearm brushing hard against her firm breasts and she stifled a gasp at his touch. She looked down and saw the silenced K12 pressed into her palm and she closed her fist around it as he pushed an extra clip into her other hand.

Anuk looked up into his dark eyes as saw him staring at her now. His dark eyes had changed... the whites surrounding his pupils replaced by blackness. His teeth had lengthened in three quarter inch long fangs, and his face was stern. Anuk gazed into those dark eyes with no fear this time for she knew what Daniel was and with acceptance that stunned her, she realized she found him even more attractive.

Dan held up four fingers and pointed to the outside of the toll booth, and then indicated with his motions that they were armed and walking towards them spread out. Anuk nodded again slowly, her fist closing around the grip of the K12. She almost gasped when Daniel slipped away from her with little more than a passing breeze and he was gone into the shadows. She calmed her nerves and moved silently to the opening, inching her eyes around the corner.

There were four of them alright.

Anuk's eyes filled with fear almost instantly and she couldn't tear her eyes away. Whatever walked towards them was neither elf nor human. It was completely hairless, its skin the color of white paste. There

mouths had only thin strips for lips, and protruding past those lips were pointed razor sharp teeth. Their heads were void of any hair or markings, glimmering in the dim light of the tunnel. Their eyes were abnormally large and a deep crimson red in color. Their bodies were not muscular, yet thin and lean, the fingers on their hands easily three inches longer than any normal elf or human, and each finger ended in a razor sharp white nail.

Whoever they were, judging by the way they were moving they were not friendly in the least. And if the long spear like staffs they carried were any indication, Anuk didn't doubt they were here hunting her and Daniel. She shifted her position slightly and brought the K12 up slowly, closing her hands around the grip as she had learned to steady her aim. She cupped her firing hand, arm extended straight, into the palm of her support hand with her elbow slightly bent. Anuk centered the K12 on the head of the nearest creature and slid her finger onto the trigger. She would wait for Daniel to make the first move and then she would begin firing.

A flash of movement directly in front of her caused her to blink and turn. Her eyes went wide and she screamed as the face of another of the creatures appeared in front of her. She saw the hand come up and the razor like fingernails descend on her. There was a moment of agonizing white hot pain and warm liquid gushing onto her face and then Anuk fell into blackness.

Danny lowered the body of the pasty white creature with deadly silence. This fifth creature had been moving along behind the other four as a rear guard sentry, which told Danny that these creatures knew what they were about. The pasty white creature looked stronger than it was and Danny had snuck up directly behind it, nearly ripping its head clean off when he broke its neck. As he felt his finger tips leave the body on the ground, his senses in full combat mode, Danny heard Anuk scream.

It was a scream not of anger or fear, but of pure unadulterated terror, and it ripped through his being unlike anything ever had before him.

“Anuk!” Danny screamed, bursting into a run towards the four creatures in front of him.

The pale things whirled to face him, looks of surprise on their ghostly features that one of the humans they were hunting had gotten behind them. It took only an instant for them to realize that their brother behind them was dead, and this raging bear of a human was bearing down on them with speed no human should have. The first creature raised its staff to strike at Danny, and he lunged forward, driving the point at his chest. Danny simply sidestepped the move, grabbed the staff in his hand and ripped into backwards. The creature sailed ass over elbows twenty meters down the tunnel as Danny thrust it back at him while he ripped it from his hands. He stepped into a swing at the second creature, the sharpened tip of the wooded spear driving deeply into the creatures neck, his attempt to block the blow only causing his own staff to ram into his neck and pierce his jaw as the spear Danny hit him with caved in what little skull he had with the powerful blow.

Dan ignored the other two as his eyes caught a glimpse of a sixth creature leaning over Anuk's body. Rage swelled in Danny's chest and the roar that came out caused the tunnel to vibrate with its intensity. The creatures looked up; giving Danny a flirting glance at Anuk on the ground and his scream became even more savage. Anuk's beautiful face was torn open in three long bloody gashes that stretched across her right eye extending down over her nose to her jaw. It took Danny only a second to see her blood on the creatures' hand and two things took place.

The creature that had struck Anuk died in that split second...

And Daniel Simpson went completely berserk.

RAPTOR 41

You must do something about this Nauta Melme. Dysea told him as they stood near the front of the Raptor.

They were speaking with each other within their minds, both of them raising mental shields around their minds to block out the others. It was the first thing Martin had taught her, and over the course of the next day she had constantly attempted to hammer at his shields with her mind, and he against her mental shields. Martin

had been surprised at the power of her mind, and she had been able to resist all but his most powerful attacks to enter her mind.

What can I do Melda Min?

Do not tell me you can not sense the aura radiating from her Martin. I have only been fully changed for two days and it is as clear to me as the sun in the sky. Dysea told him. *She desires you so badly it is nearly consuming her. It is leaking through what little shields she does have, and within it I can sense the desire for me as well. I am not yet strong enough to resist that for very long my love, not with what I feel for her. It is so powerful and deep.*

Melda Min... you don't understand. I opened my heart to her once before... and she returned it shredded into pieces. He looked at her. *I don't know if I can bear that again.*

Do you love her?

As surely as I love you Dysea; I don't believe I ever stopped loving her.

Then you must tell her Nauta Melme. Dysea said. *You must make her ours; change her... so that she can be with us eternally. You know that is what she wants; you can feel it pulsing in her blood, for if you don't it will destroy you... and Anja... and ultimately me. She is not the same person you knew all those years ago my love. You have said that yourself.*

And if she refuses?

Then you will know for certain and go on. We can go on. But you know what her answer will be my love... it oozes from her pores. Have faith in the woman she has become. She... she will not let you down.

I... don't... I don't know.

“You have to do something *Nauta Melme!*” Dysea burst out with her voice, exasperation clearly layered in her words.

“What do you want me to...” Martin began to shout back, surprising both Dysea and everyone within earshot. His face grimaced and he reached for his head just before he began screaming and dropped to his knees.

“*Nauta Melme!*” Dysea yelled reaching for him just seconds before the shooting pain, unlike anything she had ever experienced, lanced through her temples, “Noooooo!”

Tarifa and Walter came to their feet immediately after Anja, just as every genome on the Raptor dropped to the floor clutching their heads in agony. Anja skidded to a halt next to Martin and Dysea, reaching for them.

“Martin! Dysea!” She cried.

Tarifa's eyes turned to Walter. “Holy One... what is happening to them?” She yelled. “They are... they are in such pain!”

Walter did not answer her, his face wincing in pain as if he was feeling it too, and instead he moved for the cockpit faster than Tarifa had ever seen him move. He took the four steps in a single bound, and could hear Ben and Endith calling out to someone on the radio.

“Don't know... it's happening here too!” Ben shouted into his helmet radio. “All of them are on the deck screaming. I...” Ben saw the shadow next to him and turned to see Walter standing between their seats. His face was contorted mildly, as if he was holding back some great pain of his own. “Doc... what the fuck is going on?”

“Are any of the genomes seriously injured or hurt?” Walter asked quickly.

“No. Not that I know of. Danny was still moving to the rendezvous, but he wasn't hurt.” Ben answered.

“What do you mean?” Walter asked as Tarifa came up next to him.

“Daniel was lost on a mission to Las Vegas last week. He got separated from the others and is making his way towards Flagstaff to meet an engineering crew that is reopening the Flagstaff end of the Vegas to Phoenix Interstate Train tunnel.” Ben replied.

Walter's face grimaced even more, his hand reaching up to put his fingers to his temple. “Daniel is dying.” Walter spoke. “What is his location?”

“Dying?” Ben gasped. “What do you mean? How do you know that?”

Walter glared at him. “What is his location Major?”

Ben looked at Endith. “Bring it up on the HUD Endith.” He told her quickly. Endith operated the console next to her and the holographic imagery map appeared between them. “Here!” Ben spoke.

“Head there now! As fast as you possibly can.” Walter ordered.

“Wait a minute!” Ben spoke. “We have Tarifa and the others on board. Marty said they were the priority should anything happen.”

“Major... listen to me... listen to me carefully. You have some idea of what Martin and the others are. Daniel Simpson is dying... what Martin and the others are experiencing is a residual echo from his screams of agony within their minds. They usually are strong enough to block this type of pain out, and I will help them, but if you do not get us to Daniel’s location as fast as this infernal machine will take us, I will personally rip your heart from your chest and watch as you die, for you will not wish to see what Daniel’s death will make Martin do. Am I making myself clear enough to you?”

Ben turned to Endith. “Jesus... full power Endith, and throw the aux boosters to max thrust!”

“Ben... every radar in three states will see us if we go that fast.” Endith cautioned.

Ben nodded. “Yep, and I’m guessing that ain’t gonna matter a whit if we don’t get to Danny and fast. Do it Little Elf.”

Endith nodded quickly when he used his secret name for her. It was a name that they only used in private with Tina, and if Ben was using it now, then he was serious.

“Aux power transferred; stabilizers at full extension.” Endith spoke sitting back in her seat.

Ben nodded. “Hold on to your hats folks.”

Walter turned as the Raptor jumped to nearly three thousand miles an hour in less than ten seconds. He looked at Anja on the deck, her hand clutching Martin’s as his face was twisted in a visage of extreme pain. He went to the deck next to her, turning to Tarifa. “Help me child.” He spoke.

Tarifa hesitated for only a second, as she had heard the Holy One’s words to Ben, and in that moment, he had no longer been a frail man of almost five hundred years old. She knelt on the deck next to him, looking at him oddly. “What can I do Holy One?”

“At the moment, your connection with Dysea is stronger than anyone’s,” Walter explained. “Take her head in your hands like this,” He gripped Martin’s head on either side and spread his fingers out. “Empty your mind and think of nothing but good things you have experienced with her. Place your forehead to hers and do this.”

Tarifa looked at him oddly, “Holy One how will that help?” She asked.

Walter sighed, knowing he was going to have to reveal something he had not intended. “They are telepathic child. They can communicate with each other within their minds, all of them... and now Dysea. She will feel your thoughts and reach for them, allowing her to shut out the pain. Martin will as well. Your relationship with them will be the link.” Walter could detect Anja’s eyes on him intently.

Tarifa looked at him, her face suddenly pained. “Holy One... I... I am not as close to them as I once was. I told you this before.” She told him. “I have another in my life now. They knew this.”

Walter looked at her. “Then who do...?” Walter’s nose wrinkled slightly and his blue eyes went to Anja, “Anja?” He said softly. “It is you who holds their souls. I can... I can sense an echo from you within them.”

“Me?” Anja asked shocked.

Tarifa looked at her. “Anja... my heart belongs to another. While we still care for one another, both of them desire you more than anything. I knew this... we spoke of these things before. You must help them.”

“How?” Anja asked without hesitation.

“Do exactly what I told Tarifa to.” Walter spoke. “Empty your mind and think of only good thoughts. Think of the three of you together, walking in a mountain stream with the wind against your skin.”

Anja scrambled quickly between Martin and Dysea, their heads almost touching as they withered on the deck under her. Anja took a deep breath and began to shape the thought as Walter said, picturing the three of them walking in a field together, and the bright sun beating down on them, the cool breeze blowing across their skin. Their scents were nearly overpowering to her as close as she was, Martin’s mint scent and Dysea’s wildflower smell permeated her senses, and this threw the overwhelming desire for both of them into overdrive. Anja saw flashes of a strange place, with lush green mountains and warm blue oceans against white sands. There were two towering mountain walls and angry crashing seas. Half hidden images of faces interchanged with the fearsome visages of monstrous wolves and bears. And then there was the face of a goddess, olive complexion with large shimmering blue eyes and flowing raven black hair. An image of wolves running on four legs, two black haired wolves, one blond and one red. They were running among the tall grasses of the plains, playfully nipping at each other.

Anja gasped loudly and her body stiffened as suddenly there was a spike of intense pain in her head. Tarifa went to grab her, fearing she would succumb to what was happening to the others but Walter's hand stopped her. "No!" Walter's raised voice stopped her. "Oh... she is strong! Martin my boy... you never told me this. You never told me she is..." His eyes went a little wider and he looked at Tarifa as he placed his hand on Anja's shoulder. "Let her continue child. She is stronger than any of you realize. Martin knows this and he has reached for and found her mind first. Then they will pull Dysea through. Give her time to make the connection complete. It has already begun." He said softly. "I... I didn't see it before... and it was right in front of me."

"See what Holy One?" Tarifa asked.

Walter met her eyes. "I will share some things with you Tarifa, after this event is over. Things you must never reveal until it is time. Promise me that child."

"Holy One..."

"Have I ever broken my word to you or you to me?" Walter asked.

"No Holy One. Never"

"Then trust in me now." Walter spoke.

Anja was swimming in a sea of pain now, as if she was drowning. The water was closing in around her and she was sinking. She could just see the surface of the water, but she didn't have the strength to swim towards it. She kept sinking further and further into the depths, the light drifting away to nothing. Her panic was growing, and she knew she was losing the fight. Tears formed in her eyes as she realized she was going to lose what she desired most in this fucked up world. A man who had stolen her very essence and she had lost and then found once more, and a woman that caused shivers to course through her just by being in the same room with her. In this one wrenching moment she was going to lose them both because she wasn't strong enough.

You are stronger than you know. Martin's voice carried to her, *Stronger than I ever could have believed.*

Anja felt a gentle caress encircle her mind and then Martin was beside her in the vision, holding her to him as he stroked powerfully for the surface of her pain.

Stronger than I. Dysea's sweet voice spoke and then she was next to her as well, her arm joining Martin's around her dream image. Anja had only to look up and she could see the sun just as they broke the surface of the water of pain.

Tarifa gasped as Martin's eyes sprang open, and then Dysea's. Both of them were heaving for air, their chests rising and falling as they gulped in lungful after lungful, as if they hadn't breathed for hours. Anja's tear streaked eyes opened as well and she looked at him, drinking in the gaze of Martin's dark brown orbs. Martin's hand came up as quickly as a striking viper and he pulled Anja's head down to his, bringing her lips down and kissing her so hard and so passionately that Anja thought she was going to burst. She held his head in her hands, returning every bit of emotion that he was giving her, her tears dropping to his face. When they finally parted it was with reluctance, and Martin stared at her.

I have never stopped loving you Anja Peterson. Never! Martin's words exploded into her mind. *Only Dysea has made me feel what you make me feel. What I still feel for you, and now for her as well. Can you accept that she is as much a part of me as you always have been Anja?*

Anja couldn't contain the joy that was bursting from her, the tears coming freely now. She nodded her head slowly. *If it is possible to love two people as much as I love you and her Martin Hunter, then I can accept anything.*

This has never happened before you know. He told her. *Not until... not until someone has been changed. Changed? What do you mean?*

I will explain later. I must save my brother. Help Dysea, she is still very weak. The powers of your mind appear to be much stronger than hers.

Go. I will be with her and then we will all go and save Danny.

Tarifa was clutching Aihola, Palina, Thimina and Treblar behind them watching the events unfold as the Raptor Ben was piloting tore through the sky. They all jumped back when Martin sat up quickly, and Anja moved to where Dysea still laid, her emerald eyes fluttering. Martin spun around and got to his feet teetering for a moment until Cantel reached out and steadied him.

"Lyca Ohtar? Are you alright?" He spoke.

Martin nodded slowly his eyes going to Walter. "What is happening?" He asked him, not caring who heard him now. "It has never been this strong Walter. His pain smashed our shields as if they were paper."

“You were not prepared for such agony on so concentrated a level. He’s fighting for his very life Martin, your brother is. There is something else I can not sense completely, but he is in agony. I ordered Ben to his location. We must find a way into the tunnel and reach him before it is too late. I will attend to your brothers and sisters.”

Martin pushed Cantel’s hand from him. “Ben!” He screamed.

“We’re four minutes away Marty!” Ben yelled above the roar of the Raptor’s engines.

“Pull up the most recent scan of his location!” Martin spoke as he staggered into the cockpit.

Endith did this before Ben ordered her too, the holographic image appearing between their seats once more. Ben pointed to the small red dots. “This is Danny and Anuk. The tunnel is still a hundred meters thick here Marty. Nothing we have on board will punch through. I could launch every missile we have and it wouldn’t dent the depth.”

Martin’s eyes scanned the image quickly. “Here!” He said pointing. “This ventilation shaft is only a hundred meters behind him. Can you target a low yield bunker buster and clear whatever sits on this entrance.”

“That could crush anyone who is underneath it.” Endith spoke softly.

“I’m willing to take that risk.” Martin spoke. “Do it.”

“Warm up an AN-19 Endith. It’s the lowest yield we have and it will do the job.” Ben told her. “I’m bringing the targeting computer online! I’ll launch in twenty seconds Marty. By the time we get there the debris will have cleared.”

“Drop us right over the opening.” Martin told him. Ben looked at him, eyes wide. He saw the set of Martin’s jaw and nodded. “I’ll leave it up to you how to get us out my friend.”

Now it was Ben’s jaw that tightened. “If I have to drop a nuke on the fucking thing Marty, I’ll give you a way out.”

Martin nodded and turned, walking out of the cockpit. Dysea was on her feet now holding tightly to Anja, and he went to her, his arms going around her and Anja both. “*Melda Min?*”

Dysea looked at him. “I am fine.” She said her hand grasping Anja tightly and unwilling to let go.

Martin nodded and turned not taking his arms from her. “Kenny!”

Walter had gone among the remaining six Genomes and quickly brought them out of their painful states, assisting them with his own mind to re-establish their mental shields. Martin gazed at Walter and wondered how he was able to do this so easily. Kenny stepped up from the back to stand between Tarifa and Aihola, his face still shiny with sweat.

“Skipper?”

“Shift drop!” Martin snapped. “All of us. Unpack the extra uniforms.”

They all saw the glint appear in Kenny’s eyes and he nodded. “I’m on it Skipper.”

Anja looked at Martin strangely now. “Martin...”

Martin drew the embrace he held them in tighter. “Promise me Anja... no matter what you see... no matter what happens... promise me that you will always know I love you.” He told her softly so that no one else could hear his words.

Dysea turned her head to look at her, “As do I.” She spoke with no hesitation.

“I’m going with you aren’t I?” Anja asked. “What... what am I going to see Martin?”

Martin nodded slowly. “Anuk is seriously injured, as is Danny. He’s fighting, but fading fast. I need your skills, but... but I fear what you will witness.”

“I’m not afraid Martin.” Anja spoke.

“Missile away!” Ben’s voice roared and the Raptor vibrated as the air to ground missile left the right wing rack and streaked ahead of the Raptor leaving a blazing trail of smoke and fire.

“When we enter the main tunnel I will throw you towards Danny’s location. We will still be at least a hundred meters in the air, so I trust you have enough skill to use your... your genome abilities to land without killing yourself.” Martin told her.

Anja punched his arm very lightly, “Ha... ha ... very funny.” She said. “I’ll grab my medical bag.”

Tarifa stepped up to Martin. “Martin... this is crazy. The main tunnel is at least a hundred meters high and that is after you fall the hundred meters just to reach the main tunnel.”

Martin nodded. “I know.”

“Then why?” Thimina asked, stepping up next to Tarifa. “Why risk your life when you said yourself that he is fading fast.”

Martin looked at her, his eyes swiftly changing to yellow outlined in black. “Why? Because he is my brother! My pack mate! And he would do the same for me! That is why! Now get out of my way or I will throw you out the back of this fucking aircraft myself!”

“Yeah baby!” Ben’s voice screamed from the cockpit. “I just blew you a big fucking beautiful hole all the way down Marty!”

“Thirty seconds!” Endith added, “Ramp coming down!”

Tarifa grabbed Martin’s arm as he passed her. “Martin...”

Martin squeezed her hand tightly. “You are in charge now. If anything should happen to Dysea or I, Eden City will follow you and only you. Those are the orders I have left.” Tarifa’s eyes grew wide at this news. “Get us out Tarifa.”

Tarifa nodded slowly and reached up to kiss his cheek softly. “I will.” Aihola moved up next to her and in a very uncharacteristic display of emotion for any man she kissed him on the cheek as well.

Martin nodded and moved to the back of the Raptor with the rest of his team as they stood around the lowered ramp. His arm circled around Anja’s waist and she wrapped her arms around his neck, turning to face him, the medical pack over her shoulders.

“Martin?” Walter spoke from behind them. Martin turned to look at him, seeing him take a deep breath. “Come home with your brother and Anuk Martin, or don’t come home at all.”

Tarifa and the others looked at him as if he had gone mad, “Holy One!” Palina gasped. “How can you say that?”

Walter only smiled, his eyes never leaving Martin’s face. Martin returned the smile and as the familiar sensation of those words swept through him he nodded slowly. “I intend too.” He replied.

Anja looked at him as he turned back to face the rear of the Raptor. Ben had slowed to a more sedate speed and as he swept low over the tunnel and began to turn, Martin saw the gaping hole where the ventilation shaft cover used to be. It was now a ten meter wide crater with a dark abyss at the bottom. “Martin... tell me you’ve done something like this before?” Anja asked him.

Martin looked at her with a grin, “First time for everything.” He replied.

“Shit... I was afraid you were going to say that.” Anja said, burying her face against his chest.

The Raptor came to a complete stop over the hole beneath them and Ben turned his head. “Pay back is a bitch! Go get them Marty!” He screamed.

Martin grinned and Anja closed her eyes tightly as he stepped off into nothing.

Danny felt the staff smash into his shoulder and spin him around, dropping him to the floor of the tunnel. Whoever these creatures were, they were faster and stronger than he first thought, at least when they wielded those fucking staffs. His eyes were fuzzy as he lifted his head once more. His chest and arms were sliced open in over a dozen places, his blood leaving puddles wherever he stumbled. He had not changed for fear of being drawn away from Anuk. He was not going to leave her inert form for these monsters to have. He dragged his left leg along the floor; the six inch slice in his thigh was deep, exposing the bone. He held his hand over his leg, attempting to stem the flow of blood, but he knew it was a losing battle. He was getting weaker by the second. The explosion a minute earlier had filled the tunnel with dust as rocks and steel had come crashing to the floor giving him a moment’s respite. He had killed four of the ugly creatures that he knew of, but five more had appeared from the tunnel and attacked almost immediately.

Danny heard the soft popping sound and his eyes lifted skyward. Blood clouded his vision, but he saw the white/blue flashes of light almost like flashes of lightning in the sky, as they fell from the still smoking ventilation shaft. He also saw the small black clad female tuck into a ball as she was hurled directly towards him. Danny began to laugh, blood spilling from between his lips.

“Ha... you motherfuckers,” He screamed, drops of blood splattering the face of the nearest creature as it moved closer to him. “You assholes are so dead! My brothers and sisters are here motherfuckers! It’s time to die!”

Danny screamed as well as the white/blue light engulfed him and what remained when the light cleared was a massive blood stained brown wolf, dragging an injured leg and snapping its muzzle. A muzzle filled with gleaming white fangs. This caused the creature closest to him to stop, its red lidless eyes going wide as it watched the animal the human had become claw its way towards the critically injured female elf.

The creature's head snapped around at the sound of wheezing from one of his comrades and he saw him falling, his chest spurting blood at a high velocity from the four long slashes as he fell. He heard a snarl and stood straight up, watching as two large brown wolves brought down another of his kind, one of the wolves ripping the throat open with an almost playful toss of its large head. Another wolf, darker in color slashed out in mid air with a paw, four rakes appearing across the back of his last companion. The creature staggered forward, only to have the caramel colored wolf snap his skinny leg in its steel trap jaws and wrench his feet out from under him, where a platinum blond hair wolf sprang from the side, lowering its muzzle and ripping open his throat with a speed the creature had never seen. Blood began to fountain into the air as the platinum wolf landed lightly on its paws, only to stagger just a bit only a few meters from him. The creature lifted its shaft, intending to launch its sharpened point at the unsure platinum wolf. The creature felt a presence next to him and he turned his head.

Less than a meter away was the most enormous wolf the creature had ever seen. It stood four feet high at the shoulders, hair as black as the deepest night covering its body. Muscles bunched under its skin like bands of stretchable steel, flexing with the deep rumbling of his breath and the expanding of the huge chest. The snout was long and tapered, but his red eyes could not miss the two inch long fangs that were bared in a vicious snarl. Teeth that were razor sharp and could rend nearly anything in seconds. The creature looked into those glowing yellow eyes and knew instantly that he was dead.

Martin's head snapped forward like lightening, his jaws closing like a huge vice, applying almost two thousand five hundred pounds of pressure per square inch. The creature's head ruptured like a water balloon under such crushing force, and Martin released him quickly, the twitching body slumping to the tunnel floor.

Anja ran with a pronounced limp as she crested the top of the pile of concrete and rocks. She had stumbled when she landed, rolling too much and crashing into the wall, but aside from that Martin's throw had been perfect. She came upon the toll booth and staggered back as she saw the large brown wolf lying next to the red haired elf. The wolf whimpered and Anja raised her arm to cover her eyes as a flash of white/blue light blinded her momentarily. When she lowered her arm again, Anja's jade green eyes went wide at what she saw. Danny held the elf's hand in his, his eyes boring into her.

"Anuk!" He gasped, pain filling his voice. "Treat her first; hurry Anja... please!"

Do not fear what you do not yet understand Anja.

Martin's voice echoed in her head as if he was standing next to her and she whirled around to see the massive black wolf come up behind her. Its pace was measured and even, calmness in the storm, yet Anja could not contain the gasp as she saw the rippling muscles on the legs and the claws of black steel. The scent of the black wolf nearly brought her to her knees as it was a smell she had experienced before. A smell that made her entire body tremble with a desire she could not deny. The fangs dripped with blood, razor sharp and ready to rip any threat to bloody shreds, but she had seen those yellow orbs before, yes she had seen those eyes before and she had fallen in love with them.

"Martin?" She gasped.

Smell the wind Anja. It is me. Do not fear me, for this is what I am. And what you will become should you choose to.

Anja watched as the platinum haired wolf came to stand next to the black one. Half the size of Martin, Dysea brought her muzzle under Martin's thick neck and nuzzled his throat, her tongue licking the blood on his thick black coat of fur. She looked at Anja, her emerald green eyes bright and so very clear. In another flash of white/blue light Dysea was suddenly transformed, returning to her human form, completely naked, and glistening in a fine sheen of sweat. She scrambled past Anja.

"Anuk!" She cried out, going to the injured elf. "Anja help me!"

Dysea's voice snapped her out of her trance like state and she turned away from Martin, scrambling over next to the fallen elf. She winced when she saw her face, the three bloody gashes in her perfect skin open enough to see the cheekbone. Her blue eyes were open, but she was shuddering slightly, her eyes unmoving.

“Fuck she’s going into shock!” Anja snapped tearing open her bag. She withdrew a hypo, handing it out to Dysea. “Inject it into her chest quickly!”

Dysea pressed the hypo to Anuk’s chest and pressed the trigger sending drugs shooting directly into her heart. Anja held the medical scanner over Anuk, running it down her head and chest. “My god, her system is full of poison! Those things must be poisonous. It’s rushing through her system so fast nothing I do will stop it Martin! I’ve never seen anything like it!” Anja removed a long needle and syringe from her bag and bit the plastic cover with her teeth, spitting it aside as she stabbed it into Anuk’s unresponsive chest, shoving down on the plunger of the long needle. “Shit!” Anja cried out, tears coming to her eyes. “No!”

“Bite her brother.” Martin’s voice carried to them over the heavy breathing and sounds of despair.

Anja turned her head, with Dysea and Danny shifting their eyes as well. He squatted behind them, completely naked, the remains of his uniform shredded and left on the ground somewhere. He hadn’t changed completely back, as his eyes and fangs were still very visible.

“Marty…” Danny gasped.

“Your desire for her spills from your pores brother, as does hers for you.” Martin spoke.

“For me!” Danny gasped in disbelief.

Martin smiled gently. “Your desire to protect her, to prove to her that you are not the same as those scum who took her against her will, it has blinded you to the fact that she has come to desire you as much, if not more than you do her. Bite her. It will change her and save her life. Then you will be complete.”

“Martin…that… that would be no better then what those monsters did to her!” Danny screamed. “It would not be willingly.”

“What is our rule brother?” Martin asked.

“Never… never without their consent… unless… they are injured,” Daniel replied softly.

Martin nodded. “Yes… unless they are injured and in danger of dying. She will die if you do not. She is the one you desire brother, I will not bite her, it is not my place. No one can but you. You know the law we have lived by. We will all help her to adjust, to make her come to understand. I think she already does in some way.” Martin’s eyes went to Dysea and the complete and total acceptance of what she had become.

Danny’s eyes found Julie, blood dripping down her chin, the sweat pooling on her skin between her firm breasts, “Jules?”

Julie took a spot next to Martin, squatting next to him. She ran her arm across her lips, wiping away the blood and looked at him with a soft smile. “I will forever treasure our moments together Danny. But this Anuk… she is who you are destined for. We can all smell it.”

“And if she hates me for eternity Martin? Then what do I do? I… I don’t think I can live without her.” Danny demanded.

“Then she will hate you and she will be alive.” Martin replied. “Do nothing and she will die brother. Which do your prefer Danny… that she live and perhaps never speak to you again, or that she die and you will never know. Reach for the unknown brother, do not fear it. Is that not what our pack has lived by for so long, to embrace the unknown? Isn’t that what we have fought for all these years, to embrace the unknown and perhaps finally discover who and what we truly are?”

“It is.” Danny replied softly.

“We are not genomes brother. We have known that for some time, regardless of what Walter would have us believe. We have lived by this code for years Danny, always hoping to discover what we seek above all else. Now reach for the unknown, and do not be afraid.” Martin spoke, his nose twitching. His head turned to look down the tunnel, “For we have a bigger problem coming our way.”

Danny looked at Anja and Dysea. “Look away!” He snapped as he moved closer to Anuk and slid his hands under her head gently.

Dysea took Anja’s shoulders and turned her away from them. “It is not something for others to see Anja. It is a private affair.”

Martin stood up slowly, Anja’s eyes wandering over his naked body in all its glory. She gasped softly as she watched the glistening sweat dripping from his sculpted frame, the power in his legs and arms displayed for all to see. The flat rippled abdomen of steel and the perfectly shaped and powerful ass. Her eyes drifted to his manhood, and her heart did little flips, her pussy becoming moist as the memories of the one night they had

shared rushing back to her. He seemed larger now, and filled with a dominating power that threatened to sweep her away. She felt Dysea's hand take hold of hers.

Is he not the most delicious specimen of a man you have ever seen? She reached out with her mind for only Anja to hear, blocking the others.

Anja turned to look at her, gazing at Dysea's equally naked body with just as much lust and desire. Dysea moved closer to her, pressing her breasts against Anja's shoulder as her lips moved closer to her ear. Anja could smell her so poignantly, the wildflower scent rushing into her nostrils.

You are what we desire Anja. You are what we want and need Melyanna. It is you that makes our blood burn with fire. We... Dysea's voice within her head stopped as she looked up.

"Skipper?" Kenny's voice pulled Anja out of her thoughts, his eyes also focused down the tunnel.

Danny leaned back from Anuk's bloody neck and felt the rush of desire surge through him as he looked at her, tasting her blood on his lips and tongue. His fangs had left two deep puncture wounds in the side of her neck and he watched as they closed slowly, indicating that it was not too late. Danny's brown eyes closed slowly as well, and he lowered his head to her blood soaked chest, exhausted and allowing that exhaustion to now claim him.

Kenny, Pablo, Cody and Julie stood behind Martin as they gazed down the tunnel.

"What is it?" Julie asked softly, her nose twitching. All of them could sense the power and aura of whatever was coming towards them.

"A predator," Martin replied softly. "Protect Anja and Dysea. Create a defensive position around Danny and Anuk. If it gets past me, do not look back, do not hesitate, and get out of the tunnel however you can."

"Martin no!" Dysea screamed rising to her feet, moving towards him. He looked at her as Anja came to her feet too. "I can feel its malice and rage *Nauta Melme*."

"Yes... so can I." He looked at Julie and Kenny. "You have your orders."

"Why must you face it alone?" Dysea demanded.

"That is my duty." Martin replied simply.

It was his duty, his role, his charge. Those words swept through him and filled him with a calm he had ever known. This was his purpose he now knew. He was Alpha... it was his duty to protect those he loved and cared for against everything that threatened them. There were times in his life where he had denied what he could do, what he could become. He did not want this, yet his being called to him and told him this is what he was meant for. Martin smiled inwardly to himself. Tarifa had been right... his time among the elves had improved how he thought and how he spoke.

Anja stared at him. *I... I have found you again Martin Hunter. I can't reach past the unknown if you don't return.* She told him within their minds. Anja did not yet know how to block the others from hearing her thoughts and they all looked at her.

Martin smiled and then turned to move away from his pack mates to protect them. The tunnel was wide and open, and he would battle with whatever was coming towards them where he could use his speed as an advantage. He moved to the center of the tunnel and slowly squatted down, waiting.

Raptor 41

"There!" Endith barked as Ben banked the Raptor in a slow circle over where they had dropped Martin and the others, "The spillway!"

"What?" Ben asked. "What do you mean?"

"Lake Mead Benjamin; the spillway connects directly to the tunnel. If these schematics are correct they would have been able to flood the tunnel in case of a fire." Endith said.

"We don't want to drown them Little Elf." Ben spoke with a smile. "We want to get them a way out."

Endith reached across the space between their pilot seats and punched him. "Think!" She snapped. "The level of the lake has dropped in the last four hundred and seventy-eight years! The spillway is on level ground fourteen feet above the lake surface. It connects here... just south of the split in the tunnel. We can hover a quarter mile away and launch every missile we have. It will be strong enough to blast a hole in the side. It is only six feet thick at this point."

Ben's eyes lit up. "God you are just too damn beautiful and smart!" He shouted. "I knew there was a reason I loved you!"

Endith beamed and looked at him. "And I thought it was because I kissed so well." She said with a grin.

Ben laughed, "That too!" He spoke keying his helmet COM. "Raptor 41 to Eden Control. Get three evac Raptors airborne within the hour! Have General Vengal and his people on one, and tell him we're fixing to blast a hole to his daughter." Ben listened for a moment and his face tightened. "Captain I don't give a rats fuck what standard procedure says. Martin Hunter told me to make him an exit out of that fucking tunnel and that's what I intend to do. Now get those ships airborne, or when I get back there I will string you up by your balls and let the birds pick your fucking eyes out! Do I make myself clear?" There was a pause. "Good. We're moving to 3476.9. Have one of those birds loaded with a double. We're going to expend all our munitions opening the hole and I want to land and reload after. Send a reload crew with the arms bird. And round up every medic you can find at Commander Peterson's clinics. Get on it son."

Ben turned back to see Walter, Tarifa and Aihola looking at him strangely. "What?" Ben asked. "Sometimes you have to motivate your people."

"You threaten to hang them by their balls and let the birds pick out their eyes?" Aihola asked stunned.

"Hey... whatever works." Ben replied looking at Endith. "Set the course and engage."

Walter chuckled and placed his hand on Ben's shoulder. "I should have known there was a reason that Martin refused to have anyone else assigned to EDEN." He said.

Ben looked at Walter... his words still ringing in his ears. "Marty's saved our bacon more times than I care to remember. We would have been dead six times over if not for him; you don't need to motivate me when it comes to him."

"Yes I can see that." Walter spoke.

"You really wouldn't have done that would you doc?" Ben asked.

Walter met Ben's eyes. "What do you think Major?"

Ben shook his head and turned back to fly the Raptor.

LAS VEGAS/PHOENIX INTERSTATE TRAIN TUNNEL

Martin was as alone now as he had ever been in his life.

He was the first to discover he could change his form fully to that of a wolf. He was ten when it first happened, and he was spying on a wolf pack in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. He had wished for a split second that he could be a wolf, picturing the thought clear in his mind and in a flash of white/blue light it was upon him. It had frightened him so terribly he had urinated all over his torn pants. He didn't change for three full months after that. He had questioned Walter carefully on whether the animal DNA within their systems would allow them to alter their forms, and Walter told him it was entirely possible when in moments of extreme stress and emotion.

When he changed again on that wind swept night, he had remained a wolf for the next three days, not wanting to change back. He felt so alive, so free. He taught himself to use his tail to change directions quickly, when to accelerate, when to brake. He watched the wolf pack endlessly, their every movement when they ran, when they walked. How they hunted... how to use his incredibly keen senses. It took him another four months before he brought Danny and Julie out with him. An entire year they spent learning the ways of the pack, until it came to them as it did the wolves, like second nature. It was the night before their sixteenth birthdays when they decided to never tell anyone the extent to which they could change. The powers that be were afraid of them to begin with, and to tell they would only give them an excuse to shut down the project. They shifted into wolf form only as a last resort... and it had saved their lives and the lives of their team on more than one occasion. It had been Martin who suggested they turn the others within their team... their pack as they had come to regard their team mates... when the disease that was ravaging the other teams began.

Martin's senses were a hundred times more acute when in wolf form, though they had taught themselves to carry many of their senses over into human form.

What Martin sensed coming down the tunnel towards him was completely twisted and felt of evil? It was brimming with power and an underlying sense of pride. His keen yellow eyes detected the figure begin to

take shape. It was a man, yet it wasn't. Martin's eyes could detect the subtle differences and what was walking towards him was also a...

A Wolf.

The man wore loose fitting clothes, his dark hair past his shoulders. He was just as tall as Martin, but more heavily muscled. His burning blue eyes glowed in the shadows. There was a strange sort of strap on his left arm that angled across his palm, up the underside of his forearm and wrapped again just below the elbow. It looked somehow burned into his very skin.

I can smell your fear wolf. The voice reached into Martin's mind, brushing past his mental shields as if they weren't even there, a deep angry voice that was filled with rage and pain.

Martin pushed aside the panic at such an intrusion and the power it took to achieve what he had just done. No man or beast had ever been able to breach Martin's mental shields when he was prepared, and this killer had just ripped them asunder. He quickly began concentrating on anything other than his pack mates behind him.

Only a fool does not feel fear. Martin reached out with his own mind, feigning confidence where he felt none, probing and finding nothing but a solid wall. *Who are you?*

I am death.

I do not wish to do battle. My only intent is to safeguard my pack mates. They were attacked by these creatures. Surely you as a wolf understand this.

You know what I am? The voice sounded surprised.

I can smell you as clearly as you smell me. You are an Alpha.

As are you young one, the most powerful I have ever felt. Yet you are inexperienced and you question yourself, your purpose.

Why are you here? Where do you come from?

My Home is far away... far away from here. I... I can not remember.

How did you come here?

I do not know.

Why do you fight?

I must. Honor demands I hold to my oath.

Why.

Blood demands it. Honor demands it.

Does your honor extend to killing the injured as well?

All will fall before me. I am death.

I do not wish to fight you.

Then I will kill you like the pup you are and take your females for myself. You have marked an elf. That is good... I have never had an elf. She smells good; ripe and juicy. I will enjoy listening to her howl under me.

That will never happen.

Who is to stop me? You boast of confidence and power you do not have.

We shall see.

I... I will let you live. Give your females to me. I will kill your weak and you can escape.

That will not happen.

There are many females out there. You would die for these?

I would... happily.

Why?

They are the reason my heart still pumps. Why my lungs still draw breath. I would never surrender them to such as you or to anyone. If it is blood you wish... then come. I will show you blood. I will show you what color your blood is.

Martin stared at the blue eyed man across from him. He squatted like Martin, unmoving and staring at Martin as if he was contemplating something.

You have a familiar smell. And your voice rings in my head as if I should know you.

You and I have never crossed paths before. You side with these white skinned creatures that kill without regard. I have no use for someone like you.

Life is death. The strange man spoke.

Life without purpose is death! Martin exclaimed with his mind. *Life without love is death. Death without reason is stupid.*

There are thousands of females, and yet you would die for these two. You would die to defend them. The human is different... but she is no wolf. Why have you not turned her?

It is her choice to make.

Bah! Alphas take what is ours!

Alphas lead. They insure the survival of their pack! They do not force their will on those they wish to bear strong children with. That is wrong in any semblance or form.

You are strange, yet your words somehow ring true. I... I am certain I know you.

Martin could feel the blood lust at this man's words rushing through him. Here was a man that deserved death; a man who would kill and rape just to sate his own perverted wants.

Enough talk! Martin snapped. *You will not harm my mates or my pack.* He rose to his feet, "If you want them... Molon Labe!" The words felt so right and surged from him before he had known what to speak. It was a language Martin did not know, yet those words flowed from his tongue as if they were second nature.

Martin watched the other man rise to his feet as well, a stunned expression on his face now. His blue eyes shone brighter in the dim tunnel and he stepped forward slowly. Martin could see he was much older than himself, looking as if he was in his early fifties, the dark hair laced heavily with gray. *It... it can't be!* He gasped in his thoughts. *It... it is you! You have finally come!*

Martin stood there his expression confused. "What are you talking about?"

The man grabbed for his head, almost doubling over in pain. His fingers curled around his thick dark hair and he pulled on it savagely. "No! I won't! Not this time! Not this man!"

Martin stepped towards him. "What is wrong? Who are you talking too?"

The man looked at him and Martin hissed at the pain he saw in the man's eyes. He could smell the pain pouring from him with hurricane force. He dropped to his knees smashing his head into the ground, his skin splitting open on the jagged rocks.

"Never! Not this man! I will not listen this time! I will not do your bidding!" The man twisted on the rough dirt now, his body withering in agony. A hysterical laugh split the air, spittle flying from the man's lips. "You will all die! Ha... your time is at an end!"

Martin reached the man, his body twisting on the ground, the muscles straining against the skin as if ready to burst. "What is it? Let me help you!"

Martin jerked back when his face snapped around and those blue eyes bore into Martin's soul. His fangs were extended and his eyes blazed with fear, anger and pain. *Forgive... forgive me my... My King.*

The man's forearm flared with soft golden light and suddenly his forearm was encased in gleaming gold armor from the elbow down and sitting atop that arm was a rounded disc of some sort, easily two feet across. It bore intricate markings on the face, with a large cursive letter S etched into it and it shone with glimmering brilliance even in the dim light of the tunnel. The man extended his arm and Martin watched with horror as all around the edges of the shield/disc, razor sharp blades snapped into place, circling the entire circumference. And then the shield/disc launched off his forearm straight at Martin's head with blistering speed.

The only thing that saved him from losing his head was the fact that the man's arm was quivering, and the aimed throw was not accurate. Martin dodged as fast as his reflexes could carry him, though it was no where near fast enough. The edge of the shield bit deeply into the flesh of his arm, blood spurting from the wound and pain lancing through him. His eyes watched with horror as the shield/disc curved with blinding speed and returned to the man's forearm. The man was staggering to his feet and he launched it again only a mere second after it had returned to his arm. Tears washed down his face as he fully regained his feet, watching Martin dive to his left, attempting to avoid the shield/disc once more. He smiled grimly when the shield sliced across Martin's thigh and sent him sprawling out of control.

"You can not win!" The man screeched. "I am mightier than you!"

Martin grimaced in agony as the shield struck his abdomen this time, careening off after tearing a four inch deep cut into his skin. Pain lanced through his nerves, blocking out all else except the need to get away. He pushed with his bare feet on the dusty and cracked tunnel floor, propelling his body away from this warrior. A trail of thick red blood followed along behind him. His eyes went wide as he felt the hand grasp his ankle and the man lifted him off the floor with a mighty heave. He smashed his shield/disc into Martin's face, one of the

blades on the edge cutting deeply into Martin's head and upper cheek and nearly removing his eye. He could feel his body sailing through the air like a doll and he cried out as his body impacted the tunnel wall, the thick concrete driving the wind from his chest and leaving a huge dent where there was once solid unbroken concrete. He fell to his knees, bits of stone and dirt falling onto his back, the pain causing him to see stars. His vision was fuzzy, as blood continued to pool under him from the three wounds. He heard the sinister laughter and lifted his head as he saw the man approaching.

His only chance was to somehow disable the man's arm so he could not lift it to launch the shield. He could not fall, the thoughts of what would happen to Dysea... to Anja... to his pack. The thought of this monster taking the two most precious things in his conflict ridden life brought forth the power from deep within his soul.

Dysea... the long strands of her platinum hair sweeping around her face, so powerful, so intoxicating; the elegant curves of her elf ears, the sweep of her hips and the maddening scent of her womanhood.

Anja... her Persian red mane billowing in the wind, the texture of her honey lips, the strength of her mind, the compassion in her heart, the burning desire to please him in any way he wished and the overwhelming velvet warmth of her center.

A rage unlike anything Martin had ever felt coursed through him. A blood lust that consumed him entirely, driving away the pain of his wounds. He got to his feet slowly, blood splashing wetly on the ground around him, the pain forgotten, and in its place a burning in his blood he embraced fully.

The warrior stood ten meters away and smiled. "You will die now my King! I can not fight it!" He screamed. He lifted his arm and the shield/disc launched on its unerring path straight for Martin's neck.

As if moving in slow motion, his task clear in his mind Martin jumped back against the concrete wall behind him bending his legs and launching himself into the air with every ounce of remaining power in his limbs. The shield/disc never wavered; never alter its course, its purpose single minded. There was a white/blue flash of lightning and the shield passed not through the body of a man, but under the body of a massive black wolf. Martin's yellow eyes burned with unbridled rage as he saw the look of almost amusement cross the face of the warrior, his jaws opening to reveal gleaming white powerful fangs. Martin saw the man smile sadly as his leap completed with Martin's jaws sinking into his shoulder and wrenching mightily. The warrior bellowed in agony as Martin's jaws clamped down and ripped muscle and flesh from his shoulder and arm like paper. Martin brought his front paw up and raked his razor like claws across the warrior's face, cutting into his flesh and digging one of his eyes from its socket. Martin gulped the flesh between his jaws as he dragged the man down with his three hundred pounds of wolf weight, bones splintering and cracking at the impact. The shield/disc was buried into the concrete wall almost halfway to its center, all but forgotten now.

Snarling like a wolf possessed, Martin slammed his bloody paw down on the man's chest, blood erupting from between his lips as he stepped over the warrior, his yellow eyes burning with hate and the desire to kill this foul creation of a man. As he bared his teeth and began to lower his head to rip his throat from him he saw the blue eye that remained and the gentle smile that creased his mangled face.

The warrior's gaze was clear and free of pain, as if he had been released from whatever he had been fighting within his tortured mind.

I... I am free. His voice clawed its way into Martin's mind.

The wolf stared at the man beneath his dripping fangs, Martin's muzzle saturated with his blood.

You... you have granted me all... all that I have desired for four decades my King; ended my torment at the hands of these abominations. No... no warrior... no warrior has ever... ever dodged a Shi Viska. It is... it is yours my King.

Martin's wolf eyes watched as the man reached across his bloody with his free hand and brought it over the top of his left hand. He closed his good eye and there was a shimmering gold glow before he pulled the strange looking leather and metal covering from his arm.

Who are you? Martin asked him.

I... am one who was lost. Do not... do not leave me to rot in this strange land my King. I... I wish to go home.

Why have you become this... this killer of innocents?

I... I was captured from our land. These creatures... their numbers are few... but they have powerful minds, twisted minds. My... my actions were not... not of my choosing my King.

You... you call me King. Why?

The warrior's remaining eye clouded for a brief moment. *You... you are not yet aware of the blood you carry in your veins Martin Hunter. You must discover it, and soon.*

You know my name?

I know your true name my King. I am not worthy to speak it now. He... he is among you now. He will guide you.

They heard the scrapping of feet and Martin looked up to see his team coming towards them. Dysea and Anja were supporting Danny between them, while Kenny was carrying Anuk.

You have... have chosen well my King. They... they will bear you fine children. As... as will your final Queen. I... I can see your thoughts... you have seen her... in your minds eye.

Hair like night... eyes blue like an Azure ocean. Martin spoke.

She is my... my niece. The warrior coughed heavily, blood leaking from his mouth. *You are... you are stronger than you know my King, stronger than any wolf I... I have ever known... and I have almost two thousand years of life behind me. Your strike... your strike shattered my ribs. The splinters have... have ripped open my lungs and kidneys.*

You are wolf! Martin gasped. Shifting will heal you.

The warrior shook his head slowly. *I have not the strength. It... it is better this way. Our... our people await your return. As we have waited for three thousand years. Will you take... will you take me home My King? I wish... to wish to be laid in my own land.*

I do not... I do not know where you come from!

The warrior's torn lips smiled. *You have always known.*

Tell me what to do! My mate... she is a doctor... she can heal you. Save you! You do not have to die!

Save me? I am already saved. You have granted me that. His good eye twitched and became worried. *They are coming now my King. Take my Shi Viska. Only you can do this. Take my revenge upon them.*

I do not know how to use your weapon.

You are King! It is in your blood! Avenge me!

No! Martin cried as the warrior's eye closed slowly and he breathed his last. Martin stared at his now calm face for a long moment before allowing the change to come over him. In a blink he was human again and he heard the gasps of anguish from both Dysea and Anja at his bloody appearance. The wounds had healed for the most part, but fresh blood still seeped from them. Martin looked at the leather and metal covering that rested on the warrior's body. He picked it up slowly, turning it over in his hands. It appeared as a simple bridle like piece of leather and metal that fit over your arm for decoration.

"Skipper, more of those things are coming down the tunnel." Pablo called urgently.

Martin pulled the bridle onto his arm, feeling the power surge through him. As he stretched it completely onto his forearm it tingled on his skin. The intricate leather ends had carvings on them, the thin metal band stretching between the two bands of leather. Another smaller band of leather encircled his hand, moving directly across his palm perfectly. It was unlike anything he had ever seen, yet he knew it somehow. It was vaguely familiar and he could feel the power surging through him because of it.

Anja held Danny's weight under her one shoulder as her eyes took in the man she loved more than her own life, naked and bleeding from at least three very deep wounds. He was oblivious to the wounds, the one on his face still seeping blood even more than the others. She watched as Martin pulled something onto his arm and gazed at it like he was remembering something for the first time.

"Fuck me... look at this." Kenny called. Their heads turned to see him gazing at the shiny gold shield/disc imbedded in the concrete, and the blood that dripped from its blades. "He... he was fighting this."

"*Nauta Melme... we must go!*" Dysea spoke, her voice urgent.

"In a moment *Melda Min*," Martin replied softly.

"Jesus Skipper those things are almost upon us. You're in no shape to fight them while we evac!" Cady declared. "Let's count our losses and get the fuck out of here."

"They are no danger." Martin said evenly.

"Skipper... they damn near torn Danny and Anuk to pieces!" Kenny replied, moving towards his brother and leader.

Julie saw something in Martin that she had never seen before and she reached out to grasp Kenny's arm. "Wait." She said softly.

"Jules... maybe he's hurt or something. Man he's bleeding badly all over the place." Kenny spoke.

"No." Julie said calmly.

They all heard the soft hum and saw the flash of gold light on Martin's arm. Their eyes went wide when he extended his arm out to where the Shi Viska was imbedded into the concrete and they saw the gold armor encasing his lower arm up to his elbow. Their eyes grew even larger when the razor disc in the wall began to shake and shudder.

"Fuck!" Kenny asked jumping back. "This thing has got an engine or something! It's busting free!"

They watched in awe as the gold Shi Viska broke free of the concrete showering them with bits of stone and dust and leaped for Martin's extended arm.

"Martin!" Anja screamed.

What they saw stopped them all in their tracks as the Shi Viska landed on Martin's upper forearm and he aimed it down the tunnel at the willowy figures appearing in the dust. The Shi Viska leaped from Martin's arm with an audible snap, shooting down the tunnel with the speed of a bullet. They watched in stunned silence as it struck the first shadowy figure, severing the pasty white head and amazingly curved in the air as if it was being directed by some guided hand. The Shi Viska cut across the tunnel with blinding speed and accuracy, even before the creatures had a chance to react. Five more heads joined the first on the tunnel floor before the Shi Viska returned to Martin's arm. There was a flash of golden light and then all that remained on his arm was the leather and metal bridle.

"Now... now he is free." Martin said softly looking down at the dead warrior. He turned as Dysea and Anja lowered Danny to the slab of concrete to sit and his eyes settled on Martin.

Martin moved up to him quickly, seeing his eyes open and looking at him, "Showoff." Danny muttered between dry lips.

Martin reached out with a smile and took Dan's head in his hands kissing the top of his bald crown. "Brother... can we go now, or do you have more surprises for us to endure?"

Danny chuckled out loud and it was an infectious laughter as everyone slumped to the tunnel floor exhausted and their adrenalin bleeding away. Kenny had placed Anuk in his arms and he held her with one hand reaching up and taking Martin's shoulder with the other. "I owe you Marty?" He said.

"For the sixth time." Martin told him with a smile.

"Hey... Columbia doesn't count! I thought we agreed on that?" Dan said softly.

Martin grinned. "So we did." He stood up slowly. "There is a connecting Spillway from Lake Mead five miles ahead of us. They are going to blow the tunnel as our way out."

"Great!" Kenny said shaking his head. "So we have to swim now too."

Martin laughed, his breathing finally returning to normal. "The level of the lake has dropped. There will be no swimming Kenneth."

"Bout time something went our way." Kenny muttered.

Martin looked at Danny once more. "Can you shift?"

Dan nodded. "It will wear me out, but yes." He replied. "Why?"

"I would imagine you want to walk out of here carrying your mate." Martin said.

Martin saw fire return to Dan's eyes and he nodded. "I do."

"Leave Anuk with Dysea and Anja and shift to speed the healing," He said. "We'll leave in twenty minutes."

"Martin..." Julie called. She stood looking down at the warrior on the floor of the tunnel. "He is... he's a..."

"Wolf." Martin spoke, causing their heads to turn to him in shocked silence, "A very old wolf. He is one of us, he goes with us."

There were no snide or sarcastic comments from Kenny this time as he got to his feet. "I'll find a sheet or something to wrap his body in. Cody... you and Pablo find some poles we can rig a stretcher on."

Julie knelt next to the body. "I'll clean him up. He shouldn't be brought into the sun looking like this." She said softly.

“I will help you.” Dysea spoke as she moved to help Julie. She was a new wolf Dysea knew, but she had fully accepted her new life with little question. It had felt so completely right. The fires that had always burned within her, the questions and countless dreams all brought her here. She could feel the same pull as the others, the need to shelter and care for one of their fallen own.

Martin turned and looked at Anja. Her jade green eyes gazed upon him intently. *We heard what you said Martin.* She projected her thoughts into his mind.

Martin looked at her. *What do you mean?*

We are the reason your heart pumps. She said stepping closer to him after ensuring Anuk was safe. *We are the reason your lungs still draw breath.*

Martin scooped her into his arms and crushed her to him, his lips descending over hers. Anja whimpered softly as he kissed her harder than he had ever kissed her before. She plunged her four inch tongue between his lips to do battle with his own, only to find that he won quite easily, which suited her just fine. His hands pressed her tighter, roaming over her neck and down to her ass and she gripped his shoulders even tighter, pushing her body against his wishing he would just tear her clothes from her and take her right here and make her his.

Martin pulled away quickly and stared at her with his smoldering brown eyes, the fire in them causing wetness to seep from between Anja’s thighs.

I intend to do just that. He told her within her mind, *And so much more.*

Dysea’s soft musical voice jumped into her mind as well. *As do I.* She echoed.

Will... will I be like you? Like Dysea?

That is our hope.

Anja’s smile was brilliant. *It is mine as well.*

Martin kissed her softly, lovingly. *I am going to make you scream out my name Anja Peterson, many times over.*

I didn’t stop for hours. Dysea chimed in brightly. *He is such a beast.*

Tonight Anja, tonight you will be ours. In every way your mind could imagine. Martin said.

Ben had ripple fired every missile in his inventory until he had blown a gaping hole ten feet across into the side of the spillway tunnel. As he was landing the Raptor, two other ships appeared nearby and began to set down in a small clearing a short distance away, while a third came towards him and began to land. A smile had passed between him and Endith as they powered down their ship. They had left the cockpit and joined with the dozens of others who had rushed to the newly blown opening and began to clear rocks and chunks of concrete away.

Vengal was working like a mad man, heaving portions of rock to the side that was taking two and sometimes three humans to move. Beside him Ben saw the remaining twelve genomes were tearing at the rock with just as much energy. The Drow warrior Tari mixed in their ranks, adding his strength to the task. The human men and women were wise enough to allow the elves and genomes to do the back breaking work while they cleared the area behind them almost as quickly as rock and concrete was tossed there. Walter stood to one side, Tarifa, Aihola, Palina and the two Ministers watching the events unfold. Tarifa and Aihola were covered in dust and tiny slivers of concrete as they had been among the first to reach the hole and begin clearing.

Tarifa looked at Walter as he stood there, his eyes unreadable. She noticed that his face was different somehow, appearing almost younger looking than he usually did. And he stood rock solid motionless, as if nothing would move him from his spot. This was far from the man who she knew as a frail but immensely wise scholar, and the man who had created the elves. This was someone different.

“Do you sense them Holy One?” She asked softly, so that only Aihola could hear her words.

Walter shook his head. “They are blocking my attempts to communicate with them, whether by choice or by design I do not know. All I can feel are fleeting images of a battle, and it was not very pretty.”

“You did not tell me you were telepathic Holy One.” Tarifa spoke.

Walter looked at her. “I am not... completely.” He answered. “Only with those I have a connection with.”

“You have known me since birth Holy One. Does that not imply a connection?” She asked.

“We do have a connection child. Just on a different level than the one I share with Martin and the others.” He answered. “With them it is different.”

“May I ask why Holy One?”

Walter looked deeply into her sapphire blue eyes. “Do you trust me Tarifa?”

“I believe I have already answered that question Holy One.” She told him. “The better question is do you trust me. Do you trust me enough to tell me what it is that you are guarding so tenaciously. Apparently what you have guarded for longer than many of us have been alive.”

“Do you fear the unknown Tarifa?” Walter asked.

“I don’t understand the question Holy One?” Tarifa spoke confused.

“Do you fear what you don’t understand? Do you fear what your eyes reveal to you, or are you capable of reaching past what you know to be fact, and grasp the unknown.” Walter said. “Do you fear what does not reside within your realm of comprehension?”

“There are many things outside my realm of comprehension Holy One.” Tarifa answered honestly. “As Queen I must look beyond that.”

Walter nodded. “As Queen yes you must. What about as a person, a beautiful young woman. Would you look at a new insect you discover on one of your walks through Mountain City as something wondrous and something to be explored, or would you consider it a nuisance or fear that it might bite you, and crush the life from it.”

“You are making no sense Holy One.” She spoke.

“Aren’t I?” He asked. “You and Aihola share a love that you would never have even discovered if you feared the unknown. Would you have pictured yourself in the arms of a woman a year ago, let alone a Drow woman? Would you have seen yourself sharing the same bed as she, loving her as you would love a man?”

“That is not a fair question Holy One.” Tarifa asked. “No I would never have thought I would be here like this a year ago. What does my love for Aihola have to do with anything?”

“Perhaps nothing, perhaps everything; what do you think?” Walter asked.

“I think you are speaking in riddles again so that you do not have to give a direct answer.” Tarifa told him.

Walter nodded his head with a smile. “True... but behind the riddles are the answers you seek. You...”

“Look!” A voice screamed out causing all heads to turn to the opening, and all conversation to cease.

A light dust cloud obscured the inner portion of the tunnel that had been cleared, and it was here that they first saw the figures. Martin was first, his imposing figure easily seen as he walked out of the dust. Almost directly behind him and spread out to each of his flanks was Anja and Dysea. Between them walked a severely limping Danny, the petite form of Anuk cradled in his arms, her head resting against his chest. Julie, Kenny, Pablo and Cody each carried a corner of the makeshift stretcher that bore the body of the warrior Martin had fought. It was wrapped in the blanket that Anuk had used to stay warm, Kenny finding it among the other items they had left.

They had changed into the fresh uniforms that they had dropped in with, but Martin wore no fatigue top, the blood staining the tank top he wore, marking the wounds he had suffered. A small line of blood trickled down from the wound across his eye. Danny had refused any new uniform, instead choosing to drape the fatigue top around Anuk, and his wounds were clearly visible, blood beginning to seep from the deepest slashes in his flesh once more.

The remaining team members were silent as they watched their Skipper lead the others out of the tunnel. Their wolf like senses knew immediately who was being carried on the stretcher, and they moved forward slowly, almost reverently reaching out to touch the body on the stretcher as it passed them. It was a connection they could all feel coursing through their blood and they fell in behind Julie and the others, moving immediately to take positions next to their brothers and sisters to help carry the burden that was their history.

Vengal and Matarn moved forward with half a dozen Wood Elves, heading directly to where Danny was. Martin saw this and turned to Tony, motioning with his head. Tony and four others broke from the group to intercept them, closing ranks behind Vengal as he passed.

Matarn stared at the large genomes in front of him. “That is my wife to be! Get out of my way!” He demanded. “I will see her.”

“Not today sport.” Tony told him. “In fact... not ever again I’m guessing when she wakes up.”

“Get out of my way you fool!” Matarn snapped, reaching for his knife.

Five K12s came up within a heartbeat, all leveled at Matarn. Tony glared at him with crazy dark eyes. “You might want to think twice about that motherfucker.” He growled.

Vengal had stopped to watch this, his eyes wide. He dismissed it... his only concern was having his daughter back in his arms. He kept moving, watching as the huge genome named Danny limped towards him. Vengal watched him stumble, his leg almost giving out, but Danny clench his teeth and stayed on his feet. Vengal could not believe this man still lived, the wounds he had were grievous, and all of them still leaking blood. Yet he forced himself to continue. Anuk looked like a child in his arms, yet there was something... something about the way he held her that bespoke of what Vengal would never understand. He quickened his pace, so that Danny did not have to cover so much distance and soon he stood in front of the six foot five genome giant. His heart slammed into his throat when he saw her in his arms.

“Anuk...” He almost cried.

“She... she was injured... but she is alive General.” Danny spoke softly. “And she will recover completely. She is... she is stronger than you know sir, and she is very much like you.”

Vengal held out his arms and Danny gently placed Anuk in her father’s arms, tears streaking down Vengal’s cheeks. Vengal looked at her face, the three slashes across her face that had marred her beauty almost completely healed, though there would always be very faint scars. Vengal looked at Danny, as Martin stepped up to him and took most of Dan’s weight now that he no longer held Anuk.

“You... you have given me back my daughter Daniel Simpson.” Vengal spoke softly. “This debt... this debt can never be repaid.”

“Yes it can.” Dan spoke.

“But... but how?”

“You’ll know when the time is right.” Dan said softly.

Anja moved up next to Danny, putting her arm around his waist attempting to take more weight from his injured leg, even though he stood a foot taller than her. “C’mon hero... let’s get you to the Raptor. You need to be in bed, I have to clean those wounds.”

Martin saw Walter moving towards them and he turned to Tony. “Master Chief... give Anja a hand getting hard head here into the Raptor.” He called.

Tony glared at Matarn for another three seconds before he lowered the K12 and moved up next to Danny, taking Martin’s place. “Jesus Commander... why is it that you and the Skipper always get the shit end of the stick?” He asked as he slid his shoulder under Dan’s armpit.

Dan chuckled loudly and looked at him. “It must be in our blood Master Chief.” He replied as Tony and Anja led him towards the Raptor.

Julie and the others carried the body of the warrior up to where Martin stood as Walter and Tarifa stopped in front of him. Tarifa moved up close to him, caressing his face, careful to avoid the long gash that cut vertically down across his left eye. Aihola stepped up to him as well, gripping his arm and squeezing.

“What... what happened down there Martin?” Tarifa gasped. “It... you are... you are injured in many places.”

Walter’s eyes were on the bridle that Martin wore on his arm, a look of shock etched across his features. Martin did not take his eyes from Walter’s face, and Tarifa noticed this as well, her eyes going to Walter.

“Where... where did you get that?” Walter asked softly.

Martin turned slightly and looked at the body wrapped in the wool blanket. “He gave it to me.”

Walter eyed the body, moving slowly to stand beside the stretcher. He reached out with his hand and placed it on the chest of the warrior. Walter gasped softly, and slowly drew his hand back. Walter turned back to look at Martin. “Did... did you kill him Martin?”

“He left me no choice.” Martin answered. “There were things in the tunnel that were controlling his mind. He’s been their prisoner for forty years, killing for them, providing them entertainment. Sick fuckers are what they were!” He hissed. “I had to fight him! He would have killed my...” Martin caught himself. “He would have killed the others.”

“You defeated him?”

“He gave me no choice.” Martin answered, nodding his head slowly. “You have a lot of explaining to do Walter.” Martin said softly. “He told me things... many things. It all came together down there and I want answers.”

“So it seems.” Walter answered. He looked at Tarifa and Aihola, their eyes on him. *Tomorrow Martin; tomorrow I will give you the answers that you seek; the answers that you have sought for so long.* Walter projected his thoughts into Martin’s mind. To his credit, Martin didn’t flinch at this.

What will you do now?

Now? Walter looked at the body on the stretcher. *Now I will say my goodbyes to a friend and a brother.*

Martin’s gaze went to the body and then slowly back to Walter. *What was his name?*

His name? His name was Androcles. Walter answered as he turned and began to follow the stretcher to the Raptor. *And he... he was my youngest brother. Our father named him after our grandfather.*

Martin’s eyes grew wide in horror at this and he turned to watch Walter walk away from him. Tarifa saw this and her eyes narrowed.

“Martin... Martin what is wrong?” She asked.

Walter? Martin spoke. I... I did not know... I...

You gave him a warrior’s death Martin... for that... for that I can never repay you. There was a pause as Walter walked with the stretcher toward the Raptor. *You should know Martin... you should know that your name is not Hunter... my King. Your name is Leonidas... Martin Leonidas.*

Walter...

Tomorrow my King, for tonight you will claim another that is yours. And you will need your attention on that.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

EDEN (FORMERLY JUNCTION CITY UTAH)

[Background Music: *Show me Heaven; Days of Thunder ST, Inama Nushif; Children of Dune ST.*)]

Heaven.

If this was what heaven was, then Anja Peterson wanted to be lost in it forever. All of the failed attempts at love throughout her twenty-eight years, all the groping and pawing for what satisfaction she could gain, the one night of blistering and sensual love that stood out above all the others, all of it had led her here to this one moment.

Her tanned taut body was covered in a fine mixture of sweat and sweet smelling coconut oil. Her small but supersensitive nipples were two hard points on her perfect and exceedingly firm breasts. Her burning nipples were currently crushed against the broad, iron hard chest of the man who had changed her life from the moment he had stepped into it. Martin had told her they were going to possess her, yet even in her wildest imagination, Anja had no idea just how thoroughly he meant those words. They had shared one night so long ago, and little did Anja know that he had stolen her very essence that night and made her his. Anja had thought her time with Danny and Julie had pushed Martin to the distant reaches of her mind. In reality, those times, though pleasurable and fond memories they were, they had only opened the door to the part of her soul that craved the man who now held her in his embrace. In this mad world of new horrors and death they had entered, what she was experiencing now had to be the heaven that she learned of as a child.

The moment he had led her into this room, the soft full moon providing a glowing backdrop through the window, her world had changed. Martin had undressed her slowly, taking his time as he striped the fatigue pants from her quivering legs. His fingertips had danced across her bare thighs and across her firm ass like the touches of a butterfly fluttering across her skin, each grazing touch igniting a burning need within her. He had removed the fatigue top, his smoldering dark brown eyes staring into her jade green orbs as he unbuttoned it almost teasingly, his lips descending to the skin of her shoulder and neck as he pulled the top from her arms. Since returning to earth and discovering herself, Anja had ceased wearing a bra, not that she needed one to begin with. This night that fact only served to increase her pleasure and need by a hundred fold. His hands, so large and powerful, capable of savagely crushing a man’s neck with little effort, traced the line of her heaving

breasts with the gentleness of a new born child, his fingers drawing tiny circles on her skin until they brushed across her nipples. Her hands had clutched at his muscular arms in that moment; her forehead going to his chest as she felt Dysea's maddeningly warm moist tongue trailing along the curve of her spine, licking her skin with sensual movements, her hot breath causing shivers to ripple across her skin. When she felt Dysea press her lush naked body against her back tightly, her firm breasts burning into her flesh, Anja shuddered in release.

Martin had held her as she quivered in that first orgasm, and as her knees became weak he had lifted her gently, laying her out on the bed, gently pulling her soaked panties past her hips and down her legs, tossing them to the floor. Now the moon light pouring into the room bathed her flesh, and her wide eyes watched as he stood before her and removed his clothes in the most erotic striptease Anja had ever seen a man conduct. Her first orgasm hadn't even subsided, and Anja could feel it building again, low in her belly simply by watching him. Dysea's long soft platinum blond hair caressed the skin of her shoulder, and as she watched Martin undress, Dysea's tongue danced across her skin once more, nibbling on her ear, her neck, her shoulders, the sharpness of her extended fangs causing Anja to groan in need and wanton desire. When god and nature had made this man, they couldn't have got it more perfect her mind told her; the cut of his broad chest; the ripple of his abdominal muscles; the power in those long legs and wide shoulders.

Legs and shoulders she had seen in another form as well. The form of the most enormous wolf she had ever seen, even in magazines. His hair had grown longer than she remembered, falling almost to his shoulders now and it was black as night, the same shiny black hair that had covered his entire body as a wolf.

A wolf!

Martin Hunter... this man that her body and mind now craved more than anything else in the world was a werewolf. He was a creature from fantasies and myths, a massive and savage wolf, as large as any bear she had ever seen, with gleaming yellow/gold eyes, flesh tearing white fangs and huge paws that held claws of razor sharp death. This was a creature from her childhood stories and nightmares; from old Hollywood movies; never real and most certainly not about to claim her body for his own. They were myths and legends, spoken about only in small cultish groups. Yet Anja had seen it for herself, experienced it firsthand. She had smelled his overwhelming male scent, experienced the staggering power of his aura, and the intensity of his craving and desire for her. She had seen it in the most beautiful yellow/gold speckled eyes ever to gaze upon her; eyes that had reached beyond her outer shell and gripped her soul. Yellow/gold eyes that she so wanted to lose herself in.

Then there was Dysea... first a breathtakingly beautiful female elf. Another race from her childhood stories, a race of perfect beings, gentle and kind and savage when they needed to be. Her silky soft platinum blond hair, so long and lustrous, her piercing emerald green eyes, the incredibly sexy curve of her pointed elfin ears, and the lush firmness of a body built for pleasure. In her wolf form, her coat was a shiny platinum color, so stunning and soft, her eyes even more heart stopping, but she could not and did not hide the same vicious teeth and claws. Smaller she may have been compared to Martin, but she was no less lethal.

Martin's head had lowered to her abdomen, placing soft lingering kisses across her taut stomach, each kiss sending electric shocks of sweet pleasure through her. Her relationship with Danny and Julie had changed her... made her more wolf like... heightening her sense of smell and vision, taste. It had made her stronger, faster, and physically able to do things that she'd never accomplished before. It also made her more sensitive to touch and smell and their lips upon her body were causing her to see stars. Anja also knew it had only been a precursor to what she knew would happen this night, and that very thought caused her whole being to sing.

She detected the soft scent of coconut just as Martin brought his hands to her calves. The oil coated his skin, and he began to massage it into her legs, his hands powerful and firm, yet each caress caused ripples of delight through her. And then Dysea's hands joined his, and Martin's face descended to the soft Persian red hair above her dripping pussy, his tongue extending out and licking her entire engorged labia with an agonizing slowness that dragged on forever. Anja's body went rigid as she felt her belly clench and another orgasm raced through her; soft lips open in a silent cry of bliss as her sweet honey come poured into Martin's mouth and he drank her essence.

It took forever for their wandering hands to reach her breasts, leaving no portion of her body untouched, her limbs weak with desire and breathlessness. Their lips had followed their hands, searing hot tongues lavishing her body with attention leaving Anja withering on the bed and wanting more.

When he moved between her quaking thighs and stretched his ripped body out on top of hers Anja's arms flew around his back, her nails digging into his skin as she shook in another orgasm, her honey scent

pouring from her, soaking the sheets below them. Dysea's lips claimed hers then and she whimpered in release as their tongues engaged in an intimate duel that left Anja gasping for air. Dysea's eyes went wide for a moment as she discovered just how long Anja's tongue was, and then she deepened the kiss, grinding her own naked hips down on the bed as she exploded in her own orgasm. Dysea pulled away slowly, only to have Anja extend her long narrow tongue and lick ever so slowly the supple flesh of her throat. Martin held himself above her with his arms, smiling as he watched them play, staring into Anja's face and wondering how he had ever let this woman escape him that first night.

When Anja finally opened her eyes she saw those yellow/gold orbs staring back at her. What she saw in those eyes made her gasp. Burning pleasure gripped her as his powerful scent washed over her senses, the intensity and desire for her in those eyes was like a physical force reaching for her, wrapping around her. Her jade eyes went a little wider when she felt his manhood brush against her dripping center, so wonderfully massive and dominating. He was so much larger than she remembered, and her lips parted in breathless gasps as he dragged the entire length of his pulsing, volcano hot cock across her moist labia. The most exquisite pleasure she had ever felt rippled through her, as her back arched off the bed, thrusting her proud breasts up into his face. An invitation Martin did not hesitate to accept, as his lips engulfed one of the nipples between his lips and he suckled like a newborn pup. When Dysea's lips engulfed her neglected nipple Anja's head exploded in colorful stars. Their fangs were extended now and they bit down ever so gently, prolonging Anja's orgasm as they teased her eraser hard nipples with small gentle nibbles of their fangs.

Martin smiled as her arms crushed him to her lithe body with newfound strength, and he used the tip of one of his fangs to tease her hard nipple even more as Dysea's lips moved from Anja's nipple to lick and caress Martin's face. His movement caused Anja to squirm as delicious sensations of pain and pleasure rocked her. Nothing she had experienced in her life had prepared her for what was running through her blood now. Her skin was hot, burning with desire, her blood pounding in her head. When she opened her eyes to gaze at him, they too had changed to jade green outlined in black, her own fangs extending.

"Are you ready to scream for me?" Martin asked her, his voice husky with his own desire and craving, no doubt due to Dysea's tongue finding his ear and nibbling on it, her own hard firm breasts pushing up against his shoulder and arm. His voice was deeper than she remembered, yet with a tone of command and dominance and craving that thrilled Anja to her core. He was going to take her. He was going to take her and make her his. As he had done with Dysea, and as they were doing to her now, they were going to dominate her and take what they desired.

And what they desired was her.

She wanted this. She wanted to be like them completely, not half way as she was now. Anja wanted to be with them, her body screamed for them.

The look in Anja's beautiful eyes gave him all the answer he needed. All the answer he had yearned to have for so many years. Martin pressed the flared head of his cock to her opening and speared her completely in one powerful, soul stealing plunge that seemed to last forever.

Anja screamed.

Anja screamed in the purest form of pleasure she had ever known, as she felt every thick, hot, pulsing inch of Martin fill her completely, until he throbbed within her so deeply it was impossible to tell where her body stopped and his began. Danny had been built almost the same as Martin, no where near as thick, yet he had never been this deep inside her, never elicited this pure, unadulterated and staggering pleasure. Every nerve ending screamed out its delight all at once, every cell in her body erupting in joyous abandon simultaneously. Anja was coming, coming like she had never before, her very essence opening like a moth coming from its cocoon.

And then Martin began to move within her, and Anja knew what heaven felt like. His strokes were long and deep, filled with power and desire. His hands clutched her body tightly, claiming what he so desired. What Anja had wanted him to claim from the very first time she had seen him. Dysea had settled beside them, a smile of love and pleasure etched across her beautiful elfin features as she watched Martin claim what they both desired.

I have never stopped loving you! Martin's voice filled her mind, causing tears to flow from her eyes matching the pleasure that flowed through her blood. *And I never will! We never will! You are ours now! Share in our love! Join us Anja. Be with us.*

It is beautiful isn't it? Dysea's sweet sensual voice sounded in her mind. It calls to you, as it called to me. Join with us and we will be almost complete. For you sense her as I do.

Flashes sprang into her mind now, images of lush forests and white sands. They were the same images as when she had touched their minds on the Raptor. The bronze skinned goddess with raven colored hair and azure blue eyes, so exotic, so beautiful.

When you saved us, she touched our thoughts. Her name is... Martin told her.

Aricia. Dysea finished. And you can feel her desire for us as surely as she can feel ours for her.

Join us Anja. Let me love you... as I have always wanted to love you. Let us love you. This is what I beg of you.

Anja's eyes opened slowly and she saw their faces; their changed eyes, their extended fangs, their scents permeating her very being. This is what she wanted more than anything, to love them and be loved by them. The pleasure had swelled within her belly, threatening to steal away her mind with its intensity. Anja gripped Martin's head in her hands, pulling his face to her breasts. Quickly she released one hand and pulled Dysea's face close to her, their lips joining once more in a symphony of love, lust, and desire. She felt Dysea's burning lips pull away and drag across her skin to her neck.

Yes! Her mind screamed.

"Yes!" Anja's voice echoed, "Yessss!"

Anja gasped when she felt the pin pricks of sweet pain in her breast and on her throat as they both bit deeply into her flesh. Her world exploded into a luminous combination of gold and silver as she felt Martin's huge cock swell even larger inside her and explode. She felt the rise of his searing hot come through the entire length of his manhood, and then it erupted so deep into her womb that everything collapsed into a sheer blinding white light that claimed her for its own.

EVROTAS PLAINS

GREECE

The city appeared ancient on first glance. Six hundred year old building designs, some still bearing the discoloration of the fires that had burned in the sky for years after the passing of the comet. Men and women walked the narrow streets, stopping and trading at dozens of vendor stalls. Their clothing was simple yet elegant, very revealing in the case of the women. All of them appeared to be in excellent physical shape. They did not lack for food in the expanse of the fertile Evrotas Plains. The mountains towered above them on two sides, providing most of the protection that ravaged the countryside after the Sky Fires as they were called here. Men and women of differing colors and creeds, and even many races of elves walked openly and freely among the streets.

There was laughter and songs in the background, the sounds washing over the streets from the many small cafes and taverns that dotted the city. Occasionally a red cloaked man would stop to talk with others on the street. There were no walls surrounding the city and roads led out into the land in every direction. Farms were plentiful, growing everything from plants to sturdy cattle. Vehicle traffic was limited to the main roads, and even then, there were few Hoppers to be seen at this time of day when everyone was at work.

No one noticed the light Hopper as it swerved into the large, near empty lot of the main town building. And no one took notice of the two figures that climbed from the Hopper and proceeded into the three story building. One was tall, with dark shoulder length hair and eyes, a crimson floor length cloak draped over his shoulders. The other was smaller and diminutive, the dark cloak wrapped around the figure and the hood obscuring the head. These two individuals bypassed the normal greeting and reception desk and moved directly to a lone office in the rear of the building, avoiding the few people that were inside. When the door closed behind them, the tall man pressed his hand on the long book case against the eastern wall and it slid easily to the side, revealing a secret tunnel. The two figures entered the tunnel and waited until the bookcase closed and locked before the lights came on inside the tunnel, revealing a tram like train which the two individuals climbed into wordlessly. The red cloaked man activated the tram and it began to move quickly along the track.

The walls passed in a blur as the train accelerated to forty miles an hour, curving gracefully around corners and descending into the tunnel. No words were spoken between the two as they rode. Twenty-two

minutes later the tram began to slow and eventually stopped outside the heavy steel door. They stepped off the tram and moved to the door, the red cloaked man entering a code into the console on the side. The door made several clicking sounds before a hissing noise signaled it was unlocked. They stepped aside as the four foot thick door swept to the right and allowed them passage. Two other red cloaked men met them, bridles on their bare arms, their red cloaks brushing at the dust on the floor. They carried cylindrical objects in their hands, as well as strange looking weapons strapped across their backs. Words were exchanged; the two men bowed to the smaller figure almost reverently and moved out of their path.

They continued down the tunnel as one of the red cloaked men they had passed lifted his wrist to his lips and spoke several words. As they approached the second steel door, it swung open to reveal three more red cloaked men, each armed the same way. The oldest of the trio stepped into their path.

“State your business Captain.” The man spoke firmly. “The Council is in session.”

“I have an urgent message for the Senate Lieutenant.” The man answered, “For the Royal Steward himself.”

The younger man’s eyes grew a little wider and he glanced at the smaller figure next to his fellow soldier. “Is... is it...”

The older man smiled. “It is my brother.”

The reaction in the young soldier was instantaneous. He spun on his heels and looked at the two others. “Open it quickly.” He stammered.

The two men with him scrambled to get the thick door to open and the Lieutenant turned back to his superior. His eyes went to the smaller figure again and he bowed his head deeply. “The way is clear. You will have no more interruptions.”

The captain nodded in reply and waited for the smaller figure to move smoothly through the door.

The entrance into the Senate Hall was a long corridor lined with marble statues of long dead men and women, and brightly colored flags and carpets. The colored glass windows cast a myriad of rainbows to dancing across the walls. The huge fountain in the center of the room sprouted clear fresh water that escaped through four separate drains. Dozens of lively and colorful flowers decorated the base of the fountain as they moved past.

They moved past the fountain, through an archway that led into the Senate Hall. The room was circular in shape, filled with comfortable chairs arranged in a semi circle around a single elaborate gold encrusted chair that was empty. To the right of that empty chair sat another chair, plain in design with the older looking man occupying it at the moment. The three dozens heads, men and women alike turned to watch as they approached the center of the room. The older man sitting in the lone chair, his long white hair held in a pony tail, his face showing the wrinkles of decades of life, but his dark gray eyes filled with the wisdom of centuries looked at the captain as he came to a stop.

“Captain... what is the meaning of this?” The man asked his voice booming and powerful for one who looked so old.

“I... I bring news Steward.” He replied hesitantly.

“News that could not wait until this Senate was finished?” The old man asked firmly.

“Forgive... forgive me Steward... I thought only...”

The smaller figured turned to look at him before stepping forward quickly. “My brother Andreus is trained to follow orders Steward, where I am not.” The female voice spoke now... echoing in the chamber loudly for someone so small. “I demanded he bring me here.”

This comment brought a sweep of murmurs through the gathered men and women in the chamber as the old man got to his feet and reached for the ivory cane that rested against the side of the desk to his left. His gray eyes glared at the figure with intense scrutiny.

“When does a civilian women demand a Centurion to bring her before the Senate!” A male voice echoed from the seats surrounding them. “This is highly irregular!”

The old man moved closer to the still cloaked woman, a young woman by the sounds of her voice. “I know your voice child, as I know your scent.” The old man spoke. “Reveal yourself to this Senate. You are in no danger here.”

The young woman reached up slowly to pull open the cloak and allow it to fall from her shoulders to dangle on the piece of fabric tied around her neck. She reached up and pulled back the hood to reveal deeply

tanned and flawless skin of rich bronze color. Her raven black hair spilled out, falling away to cascade past her shoulders to end just above her buttocks. The dress she wore was more of a wrap than anything else, elegant leather straps with carvings on them across her waist and her exposed shoulders. The simple yellow dress attached to this shoulder strap and plunged deeply between her jutting mounds, exposing the tanned cleavage of her firm full conical breasts. The skin of her face was as perfect as that of her body, smooth and silky, enclosing soft full red lips, and breathtaking azure blue eyes. The gasps from the assembled men and women did not go unnoticed.

“Aricia,” The old man spoke softly, with a distinct hint of pleasure in his voice. “It has been many years.”

“It has Holy One.” She answered.

“How old are you now child?” He asked, moving closer to her.

The young woman smiled shyly. “I have just passed one hundred and ten moons Holy One.” She replied.

The old man looked at her keenly. “There is something different about you child.” He spoke slowly. “You are no longer the impetuous young wolf that once ran these halls. The change... the change is recent too.”

“The sister of Atropos is not welcome within these walls.” Another voice called out from the surrounding chairs.

The old man watched as the red cloaked Centurion’s arm flashed a yellow/gold and his Shi Viska appeared, his eyes changing and fangs extending from his lips. He held up his hand quickly. “Stay your anger Andreus.” He spoke to him. “The sister of Atropos is always welcome here though her brother is not! Keep your tongues!” He snapped to the assembled men and women.

Aricia cast her eyes on the assembled men and women. “I am not aware that the betrayal of my brother has forever cursed his kin within these walls. I do not bear that same betrayal, nor does my father or mother, though this Senate saw fit to strip them of all that was theirs. And my remaining brothers still serve the will of this Senate to this day, without question! We are and always have been loyal to our race. Never again question that loyalty with your words, for if you do I will rip out your tongues with my teeth.” Aricia’s fangs extended and her azure blue eyes darkened.

The old man smiled at her words, delivered most powerfully and without fear. He had known Aricia was strong and fearless, much like her father. She was a proud wolf and backed down from no one even as a child. The reaction of the men and women was predictable, and several Senators came to their feet in protest, though many more remained in their seats, nods of agreement at Aricia’s words touching their heads.

“I demand this whelp be expelled from this Hall!” The older man yelled from near the top. He was a pudgy man and he stared down the long stairs toward the floor where Aricia stood. “She has disgraced this hall with her words and disrespected all of us.”

“I will expel *you* if you do not cease your ranting Dilios!” The old man snapped. “Her words ring true, and you will not speak ill of the niece of the Guardian of the Line in my presence. Do I make myself clear?”

The man’s mouth snapped shut as if he’d just swallowed a bug. The man may have been old, but he was still the most powerful shifter within their midst’s, and no one dared challenge him as the Steward of the Throne.

The old man looked back to Aricia. “Tell me child... why have you come here to this hall?”

“Holy One I have felt my Uncle die.” Aricia spoke softly.

The old man’s eyes went wide, “Dymas, The Guardian of the Line?” He gasped.

Aricia stepped toward him quickly and shook her head. “Not Dymas Holy One,” She spoke slowly and he detected the sadness in her voice, “Androcles has fallen.” She answered.

“My sorrow goes out to you my child, but Androcles was lost over four decades ago.” He replied. “No one knows what happen to him. How do you know this, you... you have never met either of your uncles?”

Aricia looked at him, almost hesitant to answer. “Holy One... I have... he has come Holy One.”

“Who has come child?”

“The Descended One, the heir to the throne of King Leonidas!” Aricia spoke confidently.

The old man’s eyes twinkled and he smiled. “How would you know this little one?” He asked. “You are just beyond a hundred years old, barely past the age that you can take a mate. Your telepathic abilities will not even begin to manifest themselves until you are have another two hundred years behind you. You...”

“I have touched his mind Holy One, touched their minds.” Aricia spoke urgently. “He has reached out to me in his dreams, in their dreams. I can see it as clearly as I stand here looking at you now.”

“Then allow me to see these dreams.” The old man spoke amused. “I’m sure you are mistaken. Your Uncle Dymas would have contacted me if this was the case.”

Aricia stepped up to him without hesitation and bowed her head. The old man reached up and put his palm on her forehead. Their people were all telepathic, the level of the abilities based on a tiered structure, but many chose not to advance this skill beyond the first or second tier because of the great energy it needed. Six was the highest tier anyone had ever achieved and that, after only centuries of life and study. He was considered the upper most of all twenty-two remaining tier six telepaths and he smiled when he reached out with his mind gently and found a solid black wall around Aricia’s mind.

“Lower your mental shields Little One.” He spoke still amused.

Aricia looked at him puzzled, “But Holy One, they are lowered.”

The old man’s eyes looked confused. “That isn’t possible Aricia. You blocked me with far stronger shields than you should have at your age.”

“Holy One I swear to you, I have lowered all shields to my mind.” Aricia spoke softly.

The old man reached out again, touching her forehead once more and probing deeper. The barrier was powerful, more powerful than any he had seen in untold years. It was as if a black wall surrounded her mind, a black wall that appeared utterly seamless. This was not of her doing... something was protecting her mind from him, shielding her thoughts from his gentle probes. Something very strong willed... very determined. Not surrendering. Not retreating against his stronger presence. The old man’s eyes grew wider as he probed deeper; attempting to bypass the wall, move around it. No matter where he moved, the wall was there, unbroken and defiant, almost daring him to try and smash through, daring him to assault Aricia’s mind, and promising untold agony if he did.

He opened his eyes once more and looked at her. “Who has been instructing you Aricia?” He asked softly, so that only she could hear him.

“Instructing me Holy One,” Aricia looked at him confused. “What do you mean? I have received no instruction. What is wrong Holy One? Please tell me.”

“These dreams you say you have had child,” He spoke. “Tell me of them.”

Aricia looked at him. “Tell you of them?” She asked softly, hesitantly. “Can you not see them Holy One.”

“I wish you to tell me what you see in these dreams.” He spoke softly with a gentle smile.

“Holy One... they are... they are different. I see images... my uncle’s Shi Viska on the arm of someone else, glowing in use. I see much blood and I felt his... his suffering. And then his joy and pride.”

“Child that... that is not possible, a Centurion’s Shi Viska can only be used by him. It will not respond to another.” He spoke.

“Holy One... I know this. It is what I see in my dreams however.” Aricia replied calmly, and with far more poise than a wolf of her young age should have had.

“What else do you see child?” He asked her, a sense of foreboding gripping his belly.

“There is an elf female with white/blond hair and piercing emerald eyes of beauty.” Aricia replied, “And a human woman with Persian red hair not unlike the ancient carpets that decorate this hall Holy One. She has the softest shade of jade green eyes Holy One.” Aricia spoke almost wistfully now, as if reveling in the memories and this did not go unnoticed by the old man. Her face changed again and she continued. “I saw creatures with white pasty skin, and large red eyes. Evil creatures, I could almost sense the malice within them.” The old man saw her shudder slightly at the thought and close her eyes briefly. After a moment they opened again. “I saw images of the moon, of many battles, and...” Aricia stopped not wanting to reveal this last part. It was this last image that kept returning to her along with the two women.

“Go on child.” The man spoke softly. “You have no fears here.”

Aricia looked at him and he saw a flash of defiance sweep through her eyes. A flash of strength and courage he did not often see in someone so young. “I saw a black wolf Holy One.” The old man’s face changed then as Aricia continued. “A wolf as black as the darkest night, the largest wolf I have ever seen. Larger than you Holy One and you are the largest among any I have seen, with muscles rippling under its fur, so soft and thick. And eyes, oh Holy One its eyes!” Aricia face was animated now, like a child telling a story.

“Tell us.” The old man spoke urgently.

“Eyes the color of the sun Holy One, eyes that looked confused but familiar, and they looked upon me with...” Aricia shook her head. “It was fleeting... but I saw these eyes. They were speaking to my Uncle. My Uncle was crazed Holy One... in the grips of a bloodlust unlike any I have seen. He was demanding that this man surrender these women to him in return for his own life. The man... the wolf... he spoke to my uncle Holy One.”

“And what did this man say child?”

“*Molon Labe*.” Aricia answered loudly enough that she was heard by everyone in the room. (***“Molon Labe” is the Ancient Greek Term that King Leonidas supposedly told the Persians when they ordered him and his 300 Spartans to lay down their arms.***)

The color drained from the face of the Holy One and Aricia thought perhaps he was having a seizure of some sort. She heard the gasps from the first row of Senators, her head turning to look at them and then quickly back to the Holy One. “Holy One... you... are you well?” She asked quickly.

“Those words Aricia,” The Holy One gripped her arms tightly, almost painfully. “He spoke those words? You are sure?”

Aricia nodded quickly. “I’m positive Holy One, without question. I heard the words in my head clearly, as if I was there.” She glanced at her brother, who looked paler than when they had come in. “Do these... what... what do these words mean? Have I done something wrong?”

The pudgy Senator he had called Dilios, who was so quick to cast her out, appeared beside the Holy One. “Theron we... Dymas...”

The Holy One looked at him, his gray eyes bright. “I have not heard from Dymas in nearly five hundred years. Not since the Sky Fires old friend.”

“Surely he would have contacted you.” Dilios spoke.

“If he was able yes,” Theron spoke softly. “The Alliance has grown more powerful over the last few centuries however. You know this as well as I, ever since the witch made herself known after the passing of the comet. We thought her dead and then she re-appeared.”

“What do we do Theron?” Dilios asked.

“Send for the Mages! Quickly, I wish to test something before we move. And speak of this with no one Dilios. All precautions must be taken old friend.” Theron spoke. He waited until Dilios nodded and began to move away before turning to Aricia’s brother.

“Andreas... you will assemble a small force of Centurions, thirty... no more. Insure they are all Purebloods; for they must be descended from the original lines. You will lead them.” Theron spoke.

Andreas’s eyes nearly came out of his head. “Holy One... I am junior among the officers!” He exclaimed. “They will...”

“***They are Spartans!***” Theron bellowed, his voice booming in the confines of the room. “And they will follow orders! You and your sister are descended from the original bloodlines of the 300! You must be part of this if it is to happen! It is why your Uncle Dymas was chosen as the Guardian of the Line. And insure that one of our senior elfin officers is among the group, the finest Healer that we have. Perhaps Kmyla, she is the senior turned elf is she not?”

“Yes Holy One.” Andreas replied.

“She will do nicely.” Theron replied. “See to it.”

Aricia grabbed Andreas’s arm. “What is going on brother? Tell me! What do the words *Molon Labe* mean?”

“Tell her.” Theron spoke.

Andreas looked at Theron quickly, “Holy One... is that wise?”

Theron nodded slowly. “Andreas... will a Shi Viska respond to anyone other than the Centurion it is branded too?”

“Impossible Holy One.” Andreas replied. “And my Uncle’s Shi Viska was branded to him two thousand years ago. No one could have removed it, and I’ve never heard of it happening to someone as old as he. Not unless...” Andreas’s eyes grew wide.

“Yes... not unless he released his claim to it.” Theron spoke softly. “And what Spartan of the original bloodline of 300 would *ever* surrender their Shi Viska to *anyone* but the descendant of King Leonidas himself?” He asked. “Who would command the power to use it?”

“Only the descendant of the King Holy One,” Andreus spoke his voice fill with awe.

“Tell your sister what she has become part of.” Theron said.

Andreus looked at his sister. “This term you heard sister, it has not been spoken in nearly three thousand years. It is the ancient Greek tongue from the time of King Leonidas. *Molon Labe* is what King Leonidas told the Persian Emissary when he and the original 300, the original Purebloods were instructed to lay down their weapons and surrender.”

“What... what does it mean?”

Andreus smiled. “It means... it means Come and Take them!” He answered proudly. “And it has been the motto of every Centurion since, never to be spoken publicly, only in private amongst our ranks.”

“But... why would that matter?” Aricia asked. “Surely anyone could say this phrase.”

Theron smiled, “The way it was spoken is key, Aricia, because only someone with the blood of The Spartan King Leonidas running in his veins would have the memory of that phrase spoken exactly in the Ancient Greek tongue as precisely as you described.” He answered.

“The Centurions know this phrase Holy One, Andreus himself just told me. Could it not be the descendant of an original 300 bloodline?”

Theron shook his head again slowly. “No child.”

“Why?”

Andreus took his sister’s hand in his. “No one has spoken the Ancient Greek Language in over two thousand years sister. It is a lost dialect except for here in this very valley. No one... not even the Mages are taught this language. Only the Centurions are schooled in the tongue, and they never speak it in public, for fear of severe punishment. And because after the death of King Leonidas... every Spartan warrior, Centurion and human alike, took a blood oath never to speak this term in public again unless in the presence of the descendant of Leonidas.”

But why... why would he give me this gift.” Aricia asked turning to Theron. “Is it a gift Holy One?”

Theron took her hand gently within his. “That is what we are going to find out.” He said. “And yes child... it most certainly is a gift.”

Theron watched as the older elf female stood up from the chair in front of Aricia, smiling and talking softly with the young girl. The two other Mages, both Spartiates, held her hands and whispered to her calmly. Aricia’s eyes were closed in a telepathic trance that the two younger Mages were bringing her out of.

He motioned with a finger for the female elf to join him in another portion of the room where they currently were. It was the Senate library, and was not in use at the moment. The shelves were lined with row upon row of texts and scrolls, some dating back to King Leonidas himself. He watched the female elf come over towards him, her normally tanned skin somewhat pale and drawn. She was one of oldest elves within their community, and highly respected. She had been turned by a first generation descendant of the original 300 and therefore was one of the most powerful non-pureblood Shifters. That wolf had also made her his only mate.

The difference between Purebloods and non-Purebloods was great, as the descendants of the original 300 were considered the most powerful of the Shifters and generally held the majority of the Senate seats and village offices. All of the Centurions, nearly a hundred thousand in total, were descended from the original 300; the remaining members of their military were Hybrids, though all of them were citizens with full rights of every citizen of Sparta. The Spartan people did not place the derogatory meaning to that name within their communities as others did. They had long done away with many of the more violent and brutal practices of ancient Spartan society. To speak such a vile comment in anger was an insult of grave matter. Hybrids were well liked and well respected, and while many of them held positions of political office, they could never hold a seat on the Senate.

Thr’won, as the oldest of the roughly five thousand elves within the city of Sparta itself and her surrounding villages, was the strongest of the non pureblood telepaths and over the years had gained recognition as a healer to the degree that she was named the Chief Mage, and then given training and study to increase her

abilities. She was now the most powerful telepath within the Mage ranks and had ascended to the leadership of that sacred School. This feat alone was cause for thought, as before her no non-pureblood shifter had ever held a position of such importance. In the nearly five hundred years since she had been turned, her ascension to her current position had given way to other non purebloods filling such high ranking positions that were normally filled by the purebloods. In Theron's opinion... this only made their race that much stronger and more resilient.

As elves go, Thr'won was stunning, with long blond hair and ice blue eyes. Her figure was chiseled to perfection due to her time as a wolf and her own elfin abilities. Theron had to smile inwardly, for he knew her husband, and he had no doubts that Thr'won kept him quite satisfied. Elves were the only race on the planet that could keep up with the sexual appetite of a wolf shifter.

There were perhaps four or five telepaths that were stronger than her but none of them were healers, and it gave the elf added status. She was also a close friend of Theron and had been for nearly three hundred and fifty years.

Theron watched her eyes as she stepped over to him, and for the first time since he had known her, he saw that her hands were shaking slightly and she was gripping the sides of her dress. "Tell me!" He gasped.

"Theron... whoever did this knew exactly what they were doing." Thr'won told him as she took the chair near the wall.

"Mistress... the water you requested." The junior Mage held out the goblet of water as she bowed waiting for instructions.

Thr'won took a long sip of the cool water and then looked at the junior Mage. "Aricia is to be accorded full status as a Tier Three telepath Margaret. She will be treated with the same respect and honor as the others, despite her young age, is that clear? If I hear so much as a whisper that disrespects her in any way, I will personally punish that telepath myself. Please inform the others."

Theron's eyebrows went up at this and he watched the junior Mage nod quickly, her eyes wide.

"Yes... yes Mistress. I will... I will tell the others." The Mage answered before bowing once more and moving away.

Theron had never heard of this happening before, and Thr'won was notorious throughout Sparta for holding her students back until they possessed the level of skill that suited her and no one else. She was the finest teacher he had ever seen in his nearly three thousand one hundred years of life, gently coaxing and always there for her students, but her temper if disobeyed was a legendary thing now.

"Where did this child receive her training?" Thr'won asked, her voice filtering back into Theron's thoughts.

"Training you ask?" Theron asked surprised, as he pulled the second chair over to her and sat down. "Aricia has received no formal training. She is barely past the age of Consent and Awareness for a WolfShifter let alone a telepath. You know this."

Thr'won met his eyes. "That is not possible." She spoke stunned. "Theron she has the telepathic shields of a Tier Three user, and she is still a child! And her power is growing. Surely you must have noticed that."

"I did... however I did not probe deeper. And while you might consider her a child, for a WolfShifter she is now considered an adult, and able to take a mate. Our longevity surpasses that of the elves by quite a margin my friend. You know this yourself for I have no doubt you are one of the oldest elves anywhere on this planet. You and the other elves that live among us will survive much longer than your regular kind, and that only strengthens our people." Theron spoke softly. "Besides...it has been quite some time since I have used my abilities for anything more than simple communication, and I did not want to risk triggering any traps."

"And she has had no formal training?" Thr'won asked, still somewhat disbelieving.

"None that are recorded, I checked personally." Theron replied. "What did you find?"

Thr'won looked at him. "I detected the presence of three minds, a male... most definitely an Alpha, an elf female and a human female, both Alpha females."

"She said as much." Theron spoke. "What were they trying to get from her?" Theron asked.

"That's just it... they weren't trying to get anything from her." Thr'won spoke softly.

"I don't understand."

"The initial barrier you found, as well as two I uncovered after probing further were designed in such a way as to protect her mind, not raid it. And protect it from intrusion most ruthlessly I assure you. Anyone... and I do mean anyone, who was not at least a level five telepath with training in breaching telepathic shields would

never have been able to breach the defenses they put in place. It took me three hours alone to breach the first layer, and another two to breach the second, third and fourth layers. Each layer of defense was interwoven with the next. The skills used were basic, almost rudimentary once I realized what I was facing, but still very deceptive and very intricately lay in place. Combined with her own shields... as I said; anyone who was not a Tier Five Telepath or higher would never have breached the shields. And they would very likely be lying dead on the floor. There were some very nasty traps in her mind Theron, some formed by them... some by her.” Thr’won explained. “The human female was the more powerful telepath of the two women, but the elf was not far behind in terms of power. The females have been turned, they are not pureblood, but... they are the two most powerful non pureblood females I have ever seen or felt Theron, they are Alpha females without question, and...” She looked at him. “They have been turned no more than a month.”

Theron’s eyes grew wide. “Impossible.” He said. “The level of skill you are suggesting would take centuries to acquire, even for a skilled telepath! And no non pureblood Shifter could hope to reach the level of power you describe before at least a thousand years as a wolf.”

“Yes I know. But...”

“But what? Speak to me Thr’won!” Theron gasped. “Hold nothing back my friend!”

Thr’won met his eyes and her words came out in a whisper. “The male...the male is definitely an Alpha as I said... and the most powerful Alpha male I have ever felt Theron. His aura was pure, wild, almost unbridled power. It staggered me so intently I had to withdraw. Never have I sensed such untamed passion, barely controlled and yet held in check by the force of his will alone. Even my mate does not have an aura like this at the peak of The Centennial of the Moon, and he is among the strongest of the Alphas.”

Theron looked at her. “No wolf does. Save one.” He shook his head slightly. “Continue.”

“This wolf does not shield his aura, he does not know how, and that may be why I sensed him at all. I should have been overwhelmed by the force of his aura, as you know no female wolf can resist an Alpha when he projects his aura so, and only our laws and love keep the young Alphas from claiming mated females. Even so... we are... affected by these auras if exposed to them for too long.”

“You were not affected?”

Thr’won shook her head. “Not as I should have been. His aura is directed at only three females; the two who he has turned and Aricia. No other.” She smiled shyly. “I... I was disappointed Theron. I have been with my mate for almost five centuries and I have never desired another, I felt a flash of intense desire for him, yet his aura made it very clear he was not interested.” She chuckled. “I felt rejected. No... this Alpha... he knows what he wants and he desires no others. He may not be able to shield his aura, but he most assuredly knows how to direct it. And it is single-mindedly focused on Aricia and these two others. If the two females he has turned were within this city and not already bound to him, they would be the most sought after females here. The Alphas would be fighting in the streets to mate with them. The children they could provide to a strong Alpha male are just what we need as a pack.”

Theron nodded his head slowly and took her hands. “You said Aricia has potential?”

“By the gods yes,” Thr’won replied. “All Shifters are born telepathic, you know that, but no wolf I have ever examined has shields as strong as her at this young age, none. Tier Three mental shields take centuries to develop to any extent, you know this, and as I said, her power is growing.”

“Aricia told me she lowered all her shields.” He told her.

“She did for me as well. She left everything open except for what I found, and only after I breached the other layers. However what she was guarding, she was not protecting consciously. It was subconscious. All of the barriers were; that’s why it was so difficult to breach them. Subconscious shields are infinitely stronger than conscious ones as you know, because they draw on the force of will of the individual. Aricia is strong willed to begin with, she always has been, but these three... it would take me weeks to chart it.”

“I don’t follow.” Theron spoke.

“I have... I have only seen it once before... in a couple that mated at the exact moment of the peak of the Centennial. They formed an unconscious bond between themselves.” Thr’won said. “They were never aware of it, but it was there. She was one of my finest students, and is now second only to me in abilities. The only reason I discovered it was by accident. An unconscious bond has formed between Aricia and this man and these two women. And it is a hundred fold more powerful than what I detected in my student. What makes it even more interesting is that they *are* aware of it.”

“What was this unconscious barrier protecting?” Theron asked.

“It was something intimate that I will not reveal to you or to anyone.” Thr’won replied. “You know that elves are equally as free with our sexuality as Shifters. Let me just say that I will be assaulting my husband when I return home this evening, for several hours at least.”

“And what of these two women,” Theron asked her, “The human and elf female?”

Thr’won nodded. “The human female could enter my tutelage easily at a high Tier Four level, the elf female a high Tier Three, quite easily. They do not lack in power, but they do lack control.” She answered very businesslike now, her composure returning. “And as time progressed, they could easily become the most powerful Tier Six telepaths we have ever seen. Aricia as well... but her schooling would need to start at a lower Tier I suspect.”

“Thr’won my friend, what would you say if I told you she will continue to grow in power and skill? And far faster than anyone you have ever seen.” Theron spoke. “If what I think is happening is indeed happening, then Aricia, the human female and the elf female, in one years time will become the most powerful telepaths on this planet with the exception of one.”

“I don’t see how.” Thr’won spoke smiling, thinking Theron was jesting with her. “Without proper schooling, if their power increases, they will only end up hurting themselves and others.”

“And what if I told you Aricia has formed this subconscious bond with this man and these two women from across two oceans.” Theron told her.

“Impossible.” Thr’won replied quickly. “The females, I can predict their power, and while they are indeed stronger than any non Pureblood I have seen, they would never be able to do this alone. They do not have the control to project even the fleeting images I saw over that great a distance.” She stopped speaking as her ice blue eyes snapped up to his. “Theron... that would mean the male’s power is... it can not be measured!”

“Indeed Thr’won.” Theron spoke.

“I have read your history old friend.” Thr’won spoke, shaking her head slowly. “Only one man possessed an aura of such magnitude. If what you say is true, then this Alpha... this male... he would have to be descended from...” Thr’won saw that Theron was smiling at her. Her eyes nearly careened out of her head and her face lit up with a smile as recognition hit her full bore in the face. “He has come!”

Theron held up his hand, “Softly Thr’won!” He scolded her. “This must not be heard by common ears just yet!”

As the Chief Mage, Thr’won was one of the chosen few who were not Purebloods that knew the entire history of their species. All of those select few Theron now thought, were elves because of their naturally long lives even when not turned, and the inbred sense of honor they all possessed. Thr’won’s face turned red and she took a deep breath to calm her nerves. She squeezed Theron’s hands in hers.

“Forgive me.” She said softly.

Theron shook his head. “No forgiveness is needed old friend. Of all the turned races within our city, among all the Purebloods, elves are the most respected above all others. When Dymas made your race he instilled a sense of duty and honor that humans must cultivate and allow to grow. With the elves it is ingrained, and that is what endears your kind to the Purebloods so much. You have the beauty of angels and the hearts of warriors. Have you never noticed that of all the remaining pureblood Alphas, with no exceptions, all of them have an elfin mate? Some have others yes, but there is always an elf that shares their bed more often than the others.”

Thr’won looked at him surprised. “I... I did not know this.” She said quietly. “My husband has... he has no others. I asked him once... encouraged him even, yet he told me he had need of no others.”

“Spartans we may be Thr’won... but we do know love and devotion. Especially to the mates we claim under the Centennial Moon, as your husband did you.” Theron told her. “You hold a position higher than any non pureblood in the history of our people. A position we look to with honor and great respect. Do not discount your status among our people. Or the power you can wield.”

Thr’won looked at him now. “Theron... if... if this is truly the case, and it would truly be joyous if it is... why has Dymas not contacted you. He is Guardian of the Line.”

Theron shook his head. “I don’t know. We know he used his skills in genetics to create you and the other elves, but we don’t know why he has remained silent for so long.”

“If the scrolls are accurate, no one has heard from him since the Sky Fires.” Thr’won said.

Theron shook his head. "I know. There was a point of great despair for him roughly thirty years after the Sky Fires, but since then I have felt nothing. He is a Tier Six telepath, almost as powerful as you or I, and he has not lowered his shields in all that time."

"And what of these images Aricia has witnessed, her uncle Androcles dying... the Shi Viska on another's arm?" Thr'won asked. "Even I know that is not possible. What does it all mean?"

"Only one could cause a Spartan Centurion to release his Shi Viska, and that is the descendant of Leonidas." Theron told her. "That he was actually able to use it, well that is the most powerful sign that he has come."

"Where... where are they Theron?" Thr'won asked.

"We don't know." He replied. "However I am willing to bet that Aricia does."

"Theron... they were protecting her mind." Thr'won told him, her voice holding a warning in it. "Her inner most desires and thoughts, their desires and thoughts, and that implies a connection far deeper than I have ever seen. Is it wise to probe deeper? I have no wish too, not after what I saw. While I did say the skills they used were rudimentary... they were skills that no telepath should have without at least half a millennia of intense training and supervision. Yet these females have only just been turned, and Aricia is just past the age of awareness, that level of power... combined with his..." She met his eyes. "Theron... they may very well be willing to kill ruthlessly to protect what they consider to be theirs, and make no mistake they do consider Aricia to belong to them and no other. And if what I felt was any indication, she is quite willing to do the same, and she feels the same as they do. The connection between the four of them goes much deeper than just images and visions, deeper than anything I have ever seen. It might be prudent to spread the word quietly that she is not to be courted or mounted by any male, Alpha or otherwise, for she will consider it unwelcome to say they least. And if they sense this... well I shudder to think of the reaction with the power they wield so casually."

"Yes... and I imagine they would feel the same as well." He spoke. "And I have no intentions of probing deeper into the mind of one among three that the King has chosen for a mate and Queen." Theron told her. "I am old... but I am not stupid. And your suggestion rings very true, I will make it so, though I doubt the son of Autolyclus will approve. He has been sniffing in the wind for Aricia for a decade now."

"Midlan is a fool who fancies himself a powerful telepath and superior Alpha." Thr'won snorted. "If I was unmated I would no more mate with him than I would a snake. He pursues Aricia because of her beauty and the fact that her family is dishonored. He knows no other Alpha of Pureblood will court her, and the non pureblood Alphas will only consider her beneath them and not as an equal mate." She met his eyes once more. "Theron... Aricia can not be Queen, by our very own laws." Thr'won spoke softly. "Her family has been marked by the actions of her brother. Her parents hold no love for the Senate, or they for them, though you and I both know they and their children are as loyal as any Spartan."

"A situation we will have to look into after we return." Theron said.

"Return, return from where?" Thr'won spoke. "After what I have seen, if I do not get home quickly and bed my husband, my aura will attract every unmated wolf within miles. And while the thought of my mate fighting for me is delightful, I have no desire for anyone's touch but his. And if I don't get it soon I will burst."

Theron chuckled. "You will have tonight my friend." He spoke. "We will leave in the morning. Aricia knows where they are and that is why you and she are coming with us."

"Coming with you? What are you talking about? Again I ask... Where are we going?"

Theron got to his feet, extending to his full height of six foot. "We are going to find our King." He said.

It was so pure and sweet, so pungent and alive as it filled her senses. She could feel the weight on her body, the heat of the skin pressed against hers, the soft, gentle caresses on her neck and shoulder. Anja's jade green eyes fluttered open, and she gasped softly at the rich detail that now filled her vision. She blinked several times, trying to focus her eyes. Everything was so much clearer and even in the dim light of the moon coming into the room, she could see with a clarity she had never experienced. She inhaled and the powerful smell of mint and sweet wildflowers surged through her nostrils, filling her senses and causing her body to shiver in delight.

“Hi there,” The deep voice filled her ears and she looked down slightly to see Martin’s smiling face, and the beautiful tanned face of Dysea staring at her over the top of her full breasts. Their heads were touching as they gazed at her, both of them completely naked and laying half on and half off her petite body.

“Martin?” Anja spoke softly, “Dysea?”

“Welcome to our world Melyanna.” Dysea said softly, leaning over to softly kiss her muscular abdomen.

“You... you bit me.” Anja gasped seeing Martin’s dark eyes twinkle in response to her words. “You... you both bit me.”

Martin nodded. “Yes.”

“Why?” Anja spoke looking at him.

Martin shifted his body and pushed himself up on his elbow, reaching out to stroke her cheek. “I have wanted to make you like me since that first night Anja.” He said softly. “All these years I have wanted to claim you. When you came back into my life... the desire became even stronger.”

Anja looked at him suddenly, her eyes wide. “Oh Martin... Danny and Julie... I’m so sorry! I didn’t... I didn’t...”

Martin smiled and put a finger to her lips. “That wasn’t the time yet.” He spoke. “You have nothing to apologize for Anja. You needed them... just as I needed Dysea. It... it opened both our minds to so many new things. I knew we would be together. I’ve always known Anja. We just needed to find Dysea first.”

“And I am so very happy you did.” Dysea said softly.

Anja’s Jade green eyes opened wide. “I’m... I’m like you now?”

In every way you can imagine Anja Peterson. His voice filled her mind, causing her eyes to grow even wider.

“Martin... your voice... I... can... I heard it in my mind!” She gasped.

Dysea smiled and moved up next to her on the bed, pressing her face close to Anja’s neck and nuzzling her skin. *Isn’t it wonderful Melyanna?*

You have entered an entirely new world tonight Anja. He spoke to her in her mind. *I have always wondered what I was... who I was... and I am so close to that now. I needed you... I needed Dysea to finally push me towards the answers I have sought for so long. And soon we will meet the last piece of the puzzle.*

Her eyes! Anja spoke surprising herself as she projected her words with her mind. *They... they were beautiful!*

Yes they were. Martin replied.

Anja looked at him, reaching up to stroke his strong features. *You... you are not a genome are you Martin?*

Do you think even a genetically engineered person could become what I become? What you and Dysea can now become? No... I am something different... we are different... and we have been seeking the answer to that question since we were children.

Danny... Julie and the others... they are...?

Martin nodded. *Dan, Julie and I discovered it first.* He told her. *When the disease began affecting the other Genomes that Walter created, we changed the others of our team. They were our... family... and we did not want to watch them die like that.*

That is why you and they were not affected? You made them... you made them like you, something different. That is why they never question you, why they follow you so fanatically.

Martin smiled. *I wouldn’t call in fanatically.* He spoke. *I’m... I’m the Alpha, the leader of our... our pack.*

I... I will be able to change? Like you and Dysea?

Martin nodded. *There is much I will teach you Anja. I’ve already started with Melda Min and I will teach you together.*

Show me! Anja demanded her eyes wide.

Not tonight Melyanna. Dysea spoke. *Tonight is for something different.*

Anja looked at them, feeling the heat begin a slow burn in her body as they looked at her. *What?*

Dysea smiled at her. *Tonight Melyanna... tonight we are going to feast on you. I have wanted to taste you... take you since I first saw you Melyanna. You burn in my blood Melyanna, just as intensely as Nauta Melme.*

Anja felt the heat spread quickly at Dysea's words, and the image of them coupled together screaming in pleasure flashed in her head. Her Jade eyes began to smolder as she stared at the she-elf. *Oh yes.*

Martin's face lowered to her throat and nuzzled her skin, his lips setting fire to her body. *We are going to take you Anja. In every way you could imagine.*

Anja's eyes closed in delight and anticipation. She felt them shift on the bed and then Martin was between her thighs and her eyes burst open as his steel hard cock impaled her with one agonizingly glorious plunge once more. Anja cried out her pleasure, her back arching off the bed as he held his her hips and began to stroke into her with power and dominance. A shadow passed over her face and she turned her head to see Dysea above her, her emerald eyes changed and smiling at her.

Taste me Melyanna. Make me scream your name to the moon.

Anja's mouth was practically watering, her eyes wide as Dysea lowered those luscious thighs on either side of her head. Even as the pleasure from Martin's strokes drove her to new heights of rapture, Anja gazed hungrily at the pierced clit, the platinum blond line of soft hair and the moist pussy lips as they descended towards her lips. Anja released her grip on Martin's powerful arms and grabbed Dysea's taut thighs, pulling her down.

Dysea screamed in unabashed delight as Anja's four inch long tongue pierced her tight pussy and made her scream Anja's name to the moon.

"Werewolves," Martin asked a tone of disbelief in his voice. "Is that like a joke or something Walter? If it is I ain't laughing. You told me you would give me answers today Walter. You owe us answers."

Walter nodded. "Indeed I do Martin. And no it was no a joke."

They sat in one of the conference rooms built within the Command Center of Eden, deep in the center of the ever expanding city. Martin sat on the edge of the long conference table, Dysea, Anja, Julie, the Master Chief and the other genomes present in the room. The only exception was Danny, who still lay in the hospital bed in the main clinic, recovering from the physical wounds he had suffered. All of them had opened their minds to each other, while erecting barriers to anything else within their minds, allowing Danny to be present with his mind, which was very fresh and alert.

Walter occupied the lone chair on the other side of the table, no doubt something Martin had done to put him on the spot and get the answers they all yearned for.

"We prefer the term Shifter." Walter told them. "Werewolf is a term thought up by dogmatic old men who did not understand what we are. A term they used to instill fear of our species, a term for legends and myths that the old Hollywood directors were so fond of using. It no more describes what we are then the term soldier describes you Martin. For you and those in this room are so much more."

"Species...?" Anja asked softly from where she sat next to Dysea holding her hand tightly.

The three of them had remained in bed until only a half hour before this meeting. Anja was still weak from the night's activity, but her entire being was filled with a new awareness of everything around her. The scents were more pungent, the winds on her skin more telling, the subtle shifts of the ground beneath her feet. Martin and Dysea had taken her in more ways than she could remember, and she had relished in the attention and returned it just as passionately. She could still taste Dysea's intoxicating wildflower flavor on her lips, the texture of her lips, and the feel of her nipples pressing into her skin. She had been right, and Dysea tasted sweeter than she had imagined, and Anja had spent quite a bit of time nestled between her silky thighs feasting like a starving newborn wolf. She could still feel Martin's dominating cock possessing her in every way, causing ripples to shoot through her with just the memory of it. He filled her so completely Anja thought she would split open, yet he was so gentle and caring. His touch alone set fire to her body that were still smoldering in desire and need. Five times he had filled her tightness with his own passion, and that didn't include the two times she had drained him with her warm mouth and throat. Her sexual appetite had increased ten fold, and she found she could go on so much longer, and this knowledge had prolonged their lovemaking until the very early morning hours when they had collapsed in each others arms, their spirits still willing, but their bodies totally spent.

"That's why he's the Alpha!" Kenny's loud voice echoed in the room with a tone of mischievousness in it.

“You’d better stop that Anja.” Julie’s voice carried to her. “You’ll get all of us really overworked.”

“Huh... What?” Anja asked turning to look at her.

Dysea was turning red with embarrassment as well and she squeezed Anja’s hand. “Your thoughts are leaking *Melyanna*.” She said softly. **(Dear One)**

Anja’s eyes flew open in embarrassment and her face turned beet red in color as she turned back around to the front of the room. She glanced at Martin in a horrified manner and found only soft and supportive love in those dark brown eyes.

Walter chuckled at this and leaned back in his chair. “As I was saying... yes a species.” He said. “Are we so ignorant to believe that humans are the only species on this planet, or in the universe?”

“So what’s next doc, vampires, maybe a Minotaur or two?” Kenny asked with a laugh.

“Vampires are foul creatures, and have been our enemies since the beginning of time. And while I have never personally seen a Minotaur, I do not discount their existence.” Walter spoke.

“So... so you’re saying Vampires are real?” Julie asked incredulously. “That they existed in the past? That they exist now?”

“I have not seen one since the passing of the comet,” Walter answered. “However they are resilient creatures, just like Shifters, or werewolves if you prefer. I sincerely doubt that there are none left. They were just as prevalent as our kind before the comet, perhaps more so. We just haven’t seen any yet, however I do believe that is going to change rather quickly.”

“Yet?” The Master Chief exclaimed. “I don’t know... giant armored bears, elves, those skinny white fuckers in the tunnel, Acid nomads. There ain’t much we haven’t seen since coming back here Doc.”

“And do you think all of this is a dream?” Walter spoke, “That you will suddenly wake up back on the moon, on EDEN and everything will be back to normal? Did you ever imagine or believe that you would or could be thrust almost five hundred years into the future? I think not. How do you explain that?”

A big god damned freak of nature? Dan’s voice echoed in all their minds from the clinic.

“And how would you define a freak of nature Daniel?” Walter spoke softly. “A person that has abilities you do not? A person that can do something no one ever thought possible. How do you explain that all of you can become a wolf and still retain your thoughts and minds? How do you explain that you can speak with your minds to each other? And only after you turn them? I believe human history shows that not to be the case.”

“But I was able to... I was able to speak with Martin and Dysea before... before...” Anja couldn’t finish the comment.

“Before I bit you in a most delicious spot?” Martin finished her statement with a large grin, “While Dysea was sucking on your neck?”

Martin ducked as two bottles of water flew across the room at him and everyone in the conference room laughed. They turned back to see Walter looking at them with a stern expression, and their laughter died quickly.

“This is no joke!” He bellowed. The tone of his voice reminded them of their childhood when Walter would lose his patience with them. “Martin, how do you explain what you now wear on your arm?” Walter asked him. “What it can do?”

“I can’t.” Martin said softly looking at him.

“Can any of you who saw what it did explain it?” Walter asked, letting his eyes rest on all those that were in the tunnel. He directed his gaze back to Martin. “Did you not tell Anja to not fear the unknown when she first saw you in your wolf form? Did you not tell her that? Is that not the exact way you and the others have lived for your entire lives?”

“How do you know that?” Martin asked shocked.

“I know many things.” Walter spoke. “I know each and every one of you have questioned what you are more than once, you more than the others Martin. You have questioned whether genome is the correct term. You have questioned whether you were genomes at all.”

“Walter you...”

“Have you tried to remove the Shi Viska from your arm Martin?” Walter spoke getting to his feet, his voice rising. “Have you?”

“It won’t... I can’t take it the fuck off!” Martin almost yelled. “It is simple leather and even my Shakur won’t cut the material.”

“Is it real?” Walter asked.

“What?”

“Is it real? Can you feel it? Touch it?” Walter asked.

“It’s branded into my arm for fucks sake! Of course I can!” Martin snapped.

“That’s not possible!” Walter spoke. “It can not be real. It doesn’t exist! You’ve never seen something like it before, so it can not exist. I think you are full of shit and are making it up!”

Martin snarled and lifted his arm. The Shi Viska flared yellow/gold, the ornate armor encasing his arm and the shield appearing. The razor sharp blades extended from the shield, causing those who had not been in the tunnel with them to jump to their feet in surprise. He extended his arm directly at Walter and prepared to launch the shield in anger.

“Martin!” Dysea and Anja screamed in unison, coming to their feet and moving to where he stood shaking in rage.

Their voices were an immediate soothing embrace on his consciousness and allowed him to regain control of his emotions. Martin lowered his arm quickly, holding it with his right hand, his eyes wide. Walter moved around the table and sat next to Martin quietly. “Are you going to tell me that isn’t real Martin?” He asked softly.

Martin looked at him as the armor suddenly flared once more and was gone, vanishing into nothing, leaving his forearm and palm still wrapped in the simple leather straps. “No.” He replied softly.

He looked at Dysea and Anja as they came up to him, their hands touching his body and the tension easing away almost instantly.

“There are many things that we can not explain my King. That we don’t understand, yet that does not mean they are not real.” Walter spoke softly, everyone in the room looking at him as they had heard him call Martin his King.

Anja looked at him. “Walter... you said our kind?” Anja spoke. “What did you mean by that?”

Dysea looked at Walter suddenly realizing something. He no longer appeared old. The lines on his face were gone, his skin almost young again except for the myriad of scars that dotted his cheeks and neck. Her eyes went a little wider and she stepped closer to him, reaching out to touch his face.

“Holy One... your... your face?” She spoke.

They had all noticed it now and Walter reached up to touch his skin, his face creasing into a smile. “Shit! I knew that was going to happen sooner or later.” He muttered to himself. “I haven’t lost control like that in almost twelve hundred years.”

Dysea’s eyes grew wider. “Twelve hundred years!” She gasped.

Walter got up off the table now and looked at them. “Are you all ready to really hear me now children? Now is the time for you to know what you are. Have we decided that perhaps, just maybe, there are things out there that even though we can’t explain them, it does not mean they are false? Can we agree on that? If we can not... then I’m going to walk out of here.”

He saw the slow nodding of heads and he smiled. “Good...” Walter moved back to the chair and sat down. “My birth name is Dymas and I am a Greek. I was born in the city of Sparta in the year 520 B.C., exactly thirteen minutes after my King, and I am one of two surviving members of the original 300, Purebloods as we are called, those that died at Thermopylae, true Spartans all. My story was unremarkable until that battle at Thermopylae.”

“Thermopylae...?” Martin gasped. “Walter that battle took place over three thousand years ago.”

“Yes I know...” Walter looked at him. “I was there.”

“You’re telling me... telling us that you are over three thousand years old?” Martin said.

“I told you once when you were younger that you would live considerably longer than normal humans Martin. Do you remember that?” Walter said. “I was named Guardian of the Line by your ancestor Martin, the ancestor whose name you carry. Your last name is not Hunter as you have used all these years. It is Leonidas. Your name is Martin Leonidas, and you are heir to the throne of King Leonidas. And you are also a Werewolf.” Walter saw the look of shocks on their faces and smiled.

“Contrary to what a movie depicted in the very early 21st century my King did not stand up and call out to his Queen at the end of his life. He saw that I was still alive, albeit barely, and he ordered the honored Thebans that remained and fought with us until the end... he saw that several remained alive and he ordered

them to throw my body off the cliff of Thermopylae into the sea.” All of them could see that telling the story was having an affect on him as his eyes grew moist. “His last words to me were to insure his bloodline line did not die, that the Spartan bloodline did not die and to safeguard all free men and women.” Walter paused for a long moment and then continued. “He knew that the tide was going out and I would be carried past the Persian ships anchored on the coast. I floated on a piece of wreckage that I was able to hold on to for two days before washing ashore several miles past the battle lines. A young woman discovered me... nursed me back to health over the next months... and I returned to Sparta to take my vengeance on the Persians in the Battle of Plataea. I took the young woman as my wife after that and I turned her. It was after my joining ceremony where I was chosen to become the sole Guardian of every descendant of King Leonidas, until the time that one as great as he would return to lead our people again.”

Walter... you said our people? Danny’s voice filtered to all of them.

“Yes... our people.” Walter spoke. “There were ten thousand of us at the time of King Leonidas’s death; Werewolves, all of us Spartans of pure blood.”

“So... these werewolves...” Anja spoke softly, fascinated by this story as she sat next to Dysea. “How long have they existed?”

Walter shrugged. “No one has any idea. Just as no one knows how vampires came to walk among us. What set Leonidas apart was that he knew what he was, a werewolf, and he embraced it. His aura was one of power and mastery. He alone brought us together and gave us purpose. We were a scattered bunch before he gathered us, surviving by our wits mostly, and our ability to shift to the form of a wolf. He gathered us from all over Sparta. Three hundred of us were born within an hour of our King, another ten thousand of us over the course of the next year and we were the 300 he took with him to Thermopylae. It is written in the scrolls, and you will read them one day to learn about your heritage and birth right.”

“Wait...my birth right?” Martin gasped.

Walter smiled. “Yes Martin, your birth right! Do you think I call you my King for shits and giggles?” They all laughed softly, having never seen this part of Walter before. He had always been so reserved and determined. “Why do you think my brother called you his King? Even in his blood lust state he knew who you were. He recognized you from your aura, your scent, but most of all... your will. He released his Shi Viska to you... sensing who you were. A Shi Viska is a Spartan Centurion’s most prized weapon. They are branded with them as young as age seven, part of the Agoge, the Spartan military training. They can not be removed once branded... and they will not respond to another Centurion or individual because they are genetically encoded to that Centurion. In our entire history it has never happened, until now.”

“Walter this is...?” Martin asked skeptically.

Walter held up his finger in a scolding fashion. “Remember your open mind my boy. You have seen what it can do. You controlled it with your mind. Can any weapon you have ever used do what it did? You have used perhaps every weapon known to man.”

Martin glanced at Anja briefly before turning back. “No.” He said softly.

“How do you suppose that Leonidas and the 300 with him were able to slaughter so many Persians? True we had help, but they maintained our rear guard for the most part, except for the Thebans, as the Hot Gates were too narrow for more than our 300. It was glorious those first two days. We killed vampires by the hundreds,” Walter’s voice rose in pitch as he spoke. “They smashed against our shields, died under our spears and swords. They were terrified of us by the end of the first day. And we did not even have to shift during the battle. Leonidas forbid it to protect our secret. That is where the Spartan mystique comes from. Never retreat! Never surrender!”

“Wait... you were fighting vampires?” Anja asked.

Walter nodded. “Of course we were! How do you think Xerxes was able to conquer so much land in that time? He has hordes of vampire soldiers.”

“So you are saying Xerxes was a... vampire?” Martin spoke.

Walter nodded, “A very old vampire.”

“But... but the others with you...” Julie spoke softly. “They died?”

Walter nodded and got to his feet. “Oh do not get me wrong, we may be immortal... but we can be killed, by any number of means just as lethal to any human, it’s just considerably harder to kill us. If left alone

and in peace... well look at me. How old do I look now that I have stopped manipulating my features? This is my normal appearance.”

“Fifty maybe,” Kenny spoke.

“And I am three thousand and sixty-six years old.” Walter replied. “Give or take a year or so. I never really keep count.”

So silver can kill us? Danny spoke.

Walter chuckled. “Silver is something thought up in the mind of some crazed poet perhaps. And that falsehood was only fed by others with just as much ignorance towards our species. We never attempted to dissuade that theory however. We found it quite amusing in fact.” He replied. “We decorated much of our clothing with silver, so no... silver will not kill a Shifter.”

That’s a relief. I thought I’d have to give up my collection of necklaces. Danny’s voice replied.

This brought relaxed chuckles from everyone in the room, and the tension eased even further. “Danny... do you take anything seriously?” Julie asked out loud with a smile on her face.

No. It’s too depressing.

“Enough!” Martin barked. He looked at Walter. “How can I be this person you say I am when I’m a genome? Answer that.”

Walter looked at him. “You are not a genome Martin. I know you have sensed that. I know you have seen flashes of your mother and father in your dreams, flashes of your true home.”

“Walter this is... this is very hard to believe.” Martin said.

“Indeed.” Walter replied. “I suspect it is. But it is something you must hear now. You were born Martin Leonidas, I only changed your name when your protector brought you to me for protection. There are many who do not want to see the return of the Spartan King, and not all of them are our people.”

“So you’re telling me I’m not a genome. That was all something you concocted to protect me?” Martin spoke.

“The genome program was very real.” Walter said. “However, you, Daniel and Julie were never genomes.”

What? Danny’s voice echoed loudly.

“What?” Julie’s voice followed a second behind.

Walter returned to his chair. “When your protector brought you to me for protection, I determined that I needed help. I had spent the last hundred years in America and decided I liked the country. I insinuated myself within the government and used my genetics skills to become the foremost expert in that government. But the times had changed and become perilous, and I was not fool enough to think I could continue to keep the Line safe on my own. I requested the children of two Centurions who were of pure blood and descended from the original 300 to assist me and to remain with you at all times. Julie and Daniel are those children.”

Martin looked at him his eyes wide as Julie got to her feet and came to stand next to him. “You... you mean I have parents?” Julie gasped, “A mother and father?”

Walter nodded. “I know them quite well in fact.” He answered, “As I know your parents Daniel. Truer Spartans there are none.”

“Where?” Julie demanded.

“I have not communicated with anyone in nearly five hundred years, but they were living in Sparta when last I knew.” Walter replied. “That is where most of our people live.”

“But my SEAL Team... what about them?” Martin spoke.

“The defect in the genomes was very real.” Walter began again. “I have never been able to find out what it was that caused them to begin snapping as they did. When you saw it happening to the other teams you assumed it wasn’t happening to you because of your supposed animal DNA.” Walter shook his head. “It wasn’t happening to you because you were not Genomes. You took it upon yourself to turn the rest of your team, who in fact would have died if you had not.” Walter met his eyes. “In essence you made them your brothers and sisters. And in doing so you saved their lives, and formed the very first Spartan Centurion unit that was not of pure blood, all with the ingrained sense of duty and honor that every Spartan has, not to mention an extremely deadly unit of men and women, a match I would suggest for even our elite Centurion Shifters. And they all have the one thing I could not provide.”

“Which was what?” Martin asked.

“The unwavering and unquestioning will and desire to protect you,” Walter told him, “No matter the cost.”

“That was never my intent!” Martin snapped coming to his feet. “I... had no idea that...”

“Of course it wasn’t!” Walter barked back, “Just as it was never Leonidas’s intent that his soldiers would die for him without question. It was there because to us it was the greatest honor and glory to die in the service of our King, protecting his life. Anyone of us would willingly have thrown our lives away to save him, without a second’s hesitation. It is not something he asked for, nor demanded. It is something he inspired in all of us. Because of whom he was. The same as Daniel and Julie and anyone of those of you who remain would do. Tell me I am wrong.” He let his eyes sweep across them, touching each one for a brief second and seeing no one who would refute what he had just said. No one made a sound or moved a muscle for they all knew it was true. Walter took the silence as his answer and continued. “Once I discovered what you had done I...”

“Wait... you knew?” Martin asked.

“Of course I knew. I sensed their awareness the moment they became wolf! I have learned something in my three thousand years of life you know.” Walter sounded almost indignant. “What did you think? That I was some strapping young buck who was making this all up to entertain you!” He boomed.

“There are more of us?” Martin asked quietly.

“More?” Walter said. “Have you been listening to me Martin? There is an entire city of our people; thousands of us, from every race on this planet; every culture. Unlike so many races that have lived in the past, we never cared for a person’s skin color or culture, as long as they honored our own when they were turned. As centuries passed, we moved away from the brutal and sometimes cruel lives we led as Spartans, but we held close to our traditions. I have not spoken with the Steward since the passing of the comet, but I would imagine in the centuries that have passed since then, many of the elves I created, or children they sired have joined our number. Much as you are now Dysea. I did design the elves to be physically desirable in every fashion to men. And werewolves are no different. We have the same needs and desires, though considerably stronger at times, and secretly it was my hope that the elves would become a permanent part of Spartan society. It was the vampires, under the guise of the Alliance that destroyed what I began, twisted it into something evil. Humans are the bane of this planet and there are times when I question my King’s order to me to safeguard them and their freedom.” Walter looked at them. “However it is not an order I will ever refused, no matter my personal feelings. They allowed the vampires into the inner corridors of power before the comet passed, and once in there is no way to rid yourself of them.” Walter laughed at the look Martin gave him. “You must think me to be some crazy old man who had his mind burned from him during the comet.”

“The thought had crossed my mind Walter.” Martin replied honestly. “I mean... everything we have seen and done aside... this is all really way out there.”

“Indeed it is.” He replied. “You are a wolf Martin... able to take the shape of a human. You can smell when someone is lying. Am I lying right now?”

“No.” Martin answered without hesitation.

“It goes back to not fearing the unknown My King.” He spoke.

“You need to stop calling me that.” Martin said.

“I will do no such thing! I have cared for twenty-two descendants of the Line of King Leonidas, and only you have the same aura. The same power! The same will! Only you!” He nearly shouted now. “We have known that one would come! We have waited three thousand years for a man who shared our King’s thoughts and memories and his drive! Tell me my King... why do you see towering walls of black rock and the crash of angry seas. Have you ever been to such a place? Why do you see images of Aricia in your minds? She is beautiful isn’t she?” Walter sensed that Anja and Dysea were looking at him intently now, surprise showing on their faces as well. “And she does love you. All of you.” He said looking at Anja and Dysea.

Martin looked at him. “How... how do you now about that?”

“On the Raptor... when Anja touched yours and Dysea’s minds... I was able to see the images as well. It is Thermopylae Martin! As it was when my King and our 300 first arrived. Before the battles began! If you look deeper, into that place where you do not wish to go, you will see the remainder of those images. You will have to go there eventually to realize your true potential, but until that time know this. You are my King... and every werewolf, all of Sparta will recognize you in a single heartbeat. Do not ask me to disrespect you in such a way.”

Martin was quiet for a long moment. He could feel the touch of Anja and Dysea's hands on his shoulders and back and their fingers sent soothing warmth through him.

"Holy One..." Dysea spoke now, her voice soft. "You... you once told me that you created the Elf High King with DNA from the bloodlines of Kings. Is..."

Walter met her eyes. "When the comet came I was lost. I thought I had failed my King in every way. I did not realize that you had survived Martin, and in my grief I used DNA from you to make the Elf High King. He had a son, but the Alliance killed him before the son was able to have children. By the time of his death I had realized that Martin and the others were still alive on the moon, and I knew they would return and I never created another."

Dysea's emerald eyes fell on Martin then. "*Nauta Melme*... that would mean you... you are the Elf High King." She spoke softly.

"*Melda Min*... Walter just said he never made another." Martin spoke.

Dysea shook her head. "You don't understand. Every elf society, High Elves, Wood Elves, the Drow... all of us... we all had a copy of your DNA to verify any claim that was made for that throne. Even after the death of the High King we preserved the samples in the hopes that one day a King would come; a King that would unite all the elf clans and end the centuries of infighting and needless death; a king that would lead us all against the Alliance so that we could be free." Dysea reached out and took his hands. "*Nauta Melme*... you are that King."

"She is right Martin." Walter spoke.

Martin got up off the table. "I don't want to be a King! Anyone's King! I just want... you let them cultivate these ideas?" He demanded looking at Walter.

"I may have created them, but whatever they cultivated is entirely their own doing." He spoke. "They are just as intelligent and alive as you or I. Their purpose was to help mankind to pull itself out of the abyss... which they did... and then humans enslaved them. I have no more right to take their past from them than you do."

"Walter..." Martin began.

"***You are the King of Sparta!***" Walter roared as he came to his feet, startling all of them. "By god start acting like it! It matters not what you want! You are the King we have waited three thousand years for. You are the King the Elves have so longed for. This is not a matter of what you want. It is simply what is, and the faster you realize that, the longer we will stay alive."

"What?"

"Do you love Dysea Martin?" He asked.

Martin glared at him. "What the fuck kind of question is that? Of course I do! With all that I am!"

"The same way in fact that you love Anja correct?" Walter spoke.

"Yes." He answered immediately.

"Dysea is an elf. She has a mother and a father, just as you did. Does the fact that her ears are pointed in any way distract you from knowing she is a woman? She is stronger than a normal woman and in many ways superior to them. Though as a wolf now, she will notice that she is no different from the other female Shifters, with the exception of her experience in combat and her love for you. Do these things make you see her as somehow different?"

Martin looked at Dysea and she saw in his eyes an adoring love. "Her ears are the second most delicious part of her." He answered with a smile.

Anja grinned and took Dysea's hand in hers. "I can attest to that fact." She said proudly.

"Anja was completely human until you turned her." Walter spoke. "Is she any different to you now? You know her more intimately than anyone with the exception of Dysea. The three of you together have reached past the physical part and joined the wolf part of yourselves, though I must admit... I've never seen or felt a connection so deeply between three people." Walter said. "Or four I should say, considering what you now feel for Aricia." He looked into the air as if sniffing for something, "Daniel... your feelings for Anuk? Do you love her?"

I would die for her. Danny replied instantly.

Walter looked at Anja. "Anja... does your love for Dysea match your love for Martin? Does the fact that she is an elf or that Martin is a wolf make you feel any less love towards them?"

Anja looked at him now, “Never.” She answered without hesitation.

“I’m not seeing the problem here.” Walter spoke. “What more proof do you need to show you I am not some lunatic Martin? What proof do you need to see that will prove what your heart and mind already know to be true? You can feel it in your blood. Running through your veins, as all of you can, just as it runs through mine.” Walter sighed heavily. “I never intended for you to discover this in such a way. Once I realized you and the others still lived and in fact had come back to earth...”

Martin looked at him. “Admiral Wallace? Is he...”

Walter nodded. “He is not pure blood... but he is a wolf; a very old wolf, and completely loyal to you and to our people.”

Martin laughed. “To me... I am...”

“You are his King!” Walter spoke firmly, “And you are my King, as you were my brother’s King. I know you feel the power surging through you Martin. There has not been a wolf of your size or aura since King Leonidas himself. The strength of an aura I have not felt since I stood beside my King that day so long ago. Do you know how long I have waited to feel that again, the power, the purpose, the commitment to all that is good in us, humans and all species alike?”

“You’re not making this any easier.” Martin spoke with a tilted grin.

“Why should I?” Walter spoke. “You need to know who and what you are. You all do?” He said. “The Alliance... the vampires grows stronger every year. How I do not know. They keep devising new killers to throw into the population, new soldiers. Soon they will even come for our city. And then war will come to this planet.”

“I... I killed your brother Walter.” Martin said softly. “Yet... yet you act as if that was something good.”

“You gave him the death he desired. The death he deserved as a Spartan. When I touched him, I saw all that those creatures had done to him. The torture... the lives they forced him to take. Had you not killed him in battle, he would have taken his own life at some point and that would have held no honor for him.” Walter looked at Martin. “You gave him what all Spartans desire, death in the service of their King. Do not mourn him my King... he would berate you for such an act if he were here, as would our mother and father.” Walter lifted Martin’s sleeve and allowed his fingers to caress the bridle he wore on his arm. “He bestowed to you the one thing those monsters could not take from him no matter what they tried. Use it with honor, and then return it to our mother when we reach Sparta.”

“Sparta?” Martin asked.

Walter nodded. “That is our city. I know it survived the comet and more than likely due to its location it has prospered. We will need to go there soon.”

“Why?” Anja asked.

Walter turned to her. “Because our people must know that the bloodline of Leonidas lives on. They must see their King... as well as their Queens. And all of you will need to be trained. You have learned more in the wild than I could have ever hoped for, far more than any Spartan Centurion learns in less than two decades, and I did not exaggerate when I said together you would be a match for even our most elite Spartan Centurions. But all of you lack control and the skill to fully use your abilities.”

Anja and Dysea looked at him with stunned expressions. “You’re joking.” Anja said. “Aren’t you? About the Queen part?”

Walter smiled, “Far from it.” He replied. “While there has never been two Queens,” His eyes gave off a twinkle at them. “Especially two Queens who are so... close shall we say... it is not uncommon for an Alpha to take more than one permanent mate. And since Martin has marked you both... no other male, Alpha or otherwise would dare approach you if they know what is good for them. It does mean you will have the duties and responsibilities of Queen however. Something Dysea is completely comfortable with, and something you will learn Anja. Though how we will deal with Aricia and the situation that will present is something else entirely.”

“What do you mean?” Dysea asked.

“The connection between the four of you is deep as I said.” Walter spoke. “All werewolves are telepathic to some extent; most do not advance that skill past the basic levels however because of the energy and strength needed to use it. Yet the four of you use your abilities to speak easily among yourselves where no

one can reach you. And it does not tire you. And Aricia has blended into your connection now. The barrier you erected in her mind, though done subconsciously, will be discovered the moment she is scanned by a high level telepath like myself. I must commend you on the psychic barrier; it was intricately done, if not very rudimentary in nature. That you were able to do this over so vast a distance with no telepathic training is more than impressive. What made you do this?"

"She asked us too." Anja answered softly. She looked at Dysea and Martin and saw them nod their heads. "What... what we experienced was... personal in nature. Very unexpected, it surprised us... but it was very personal and exquisitely pleasant. Aricia did not want to share that with anyone. And nor did we."

Walter nodded. "Then I will leave it to the four of you to discover."

"We can't leave." Martin spoke. "Eden is still growing. And we can not allow the war between the High Elves and Wood Elves to take place."

Walter nodded. "I agree." He said. "But whatever your plans... you need to advance them. Once the Alliance... once the vampires discover that you are indeed alive and what your true heritage is, they will come after you."

"I thought you said you hadn't seen any vampires since the comet?" Julie asked.

"I haven't. But it is not hard for one like to me to discern where they have recently been. I would know the stench of a blood sucker the moment it walked into a room."

Martin looked at him. "And how would they know what I was? Or who I was for that matter?"

Walter met his eyes. "That is entirely my fault." He answered. "Before I discovered you were still alive I made the mistake of sharing my secrets with an assistant. I was rather intoxicated and she was the very pestering type, not to mention attractive. And I am a wolf after all; we do have the needs of men." Walter spoke with a wry grin. "I did not realize what she was until it was too late. She hid it very well... very well. I have yet to discover how it was she masked herself from me, but she did."

"Who are we talking about here Walter?" Martin asked. "You talk like I should know her."

"You do my boy." Walter spoke. "She is Yuri."

Martin's eyes flew open, matching the look on Anja's face as well as everyone else in the room. "Yuri!" Martin hissed. "She survived?"

"Survived? Martin my boy she is a vampire. A very old vampire, and if there is anything she knows how to do it is survive." Walter answered.

Fuck! I hated that bitch from day one! Danny's voice echoed within their minds.

"Who... who is this Yuri?" Dysea asked.

"Currently she is referred to as the President of the Alliance." Walter replied as he adjusted himself in the chair. "However... she is almost as old as I am, if not older and she has been the bane of our lives for quite a number of centuries. She has remained hidden since the night she got the information from me. She allows the humans around her to run things according to her will. She may have even turned some of them, but I have not seen any myself. She knows I would detect them immediately."

"But you worked for them Walter." Martin spoke, "For the Alliance."

Walter nodded. "I did... however she is not strong enough to defeat me alone, and she knew that. She allowed me to conduct my work, and until it was discovered I was instilling the desire for freedom into the elves she left me alone. After that... I decided to run rather than risk being killed or captured before you returned to earth."

"She used me?" Martin said.

Walter nodded. "She suspected who you were before the comet came. How I do not know. She managed to wiggle her way into the Japanese military posing as a genome, and then defected to us. All of it was done to get close to you."

"What the hell for?" Martin asked.

Walter got to his feet. "He wants you dead my boy."

"Who wants me dead?"

"I do not know his real name... I only knew him as Xerxes." Walter replied.

"Xerxes?" Martin said, "The Xerxes, the Persian King?"

Walter smiled and nodded. "One and the same, and believe me when I tell you he was not happy that we kicked his ever loving ass back then and he hated us even more after that. Werewolves were all slaves to the

vampires at one point in our history. It is a history no one has knowledge of so do not ask, not even the wisest among us. Xerxes is the only son of the Vampire High Lord. The werewolves had begun to revolt by the time Leonidas became King, and our stand at Thermopylae was the beginning of the end for the total reign. And Leonidas is the only werewolf to have ever drawn blood from Xerxes.”

“So what you’re saying is that this vampire is pissed at me because my ancestor handed him his backside three thousand years ago?” Martin asked.

Walter nodded. “In essence yes; Vampires are not known for forgiving and forgetting. They have long memories.”

Martin laughed out loud and shook his head, “Shit... tell him to take a number. I’ve made quite a few enemies since we came back to earth. He’ll have to wait in line. Is there anything else that I should know?” He asked.

Walter got to his feet, “Only one thing.” He spoke. “Because of my attempts to recreate you after the comet, the Elf High King is descended from you. Which means, as you already know, that makes you heir to that throne as well.”

“And?”

Walter looked at Dysea. “That means that Dysea and Anja have now become the Elf High co-Queens so to speak as will Aricia, which makes them just as large a target as you are my boy.” He spoke looking back to Martin, smiling at the looks of stunned astonishment on the faces of both women.

“Oh... is that all?” Martin asked sarcastically.

“Yes... with the exception that you have a traitor here in Eden itself, someone who not only works for the Alliance, but who may very well be a vampire.”

Martin’s eyes darkened. “Do you know who?”

Walter shook his head. “Whoever it is... I would guard myself carefully. And whatever your plans may be. That is why I suggest you act quickly. If this traitor is a vampire, then they have learned how to cover their stench to some extent.”

“Fuck me.” Martin muttered. “This day just keeps getting better and better.”

Wake up little one. The soothing female voice spoke, a voice she easily recognized.

My... my Queen, is that you?

Anuk’s cerulean blue eyes fluttered open slowly, and she heard the gasps of several people. The lights were bright and she lifted her arm slowly to block out the glare as her eyes began to focus.

Move slowly Anuk. You will be very sore, your body as gone through quite a bit in the last few months. This voice Anuk didn’t recognize and her forehead crinkled in confusion.

Where am I?

You are safe now little one. Dysea’s voice spoke again, *And with friends. Your mother and father are here. Do not outwardly show that I am speaking to you within your thoughts child, as that will invite questions we are not prepared to answer just yet.*

Anuk’s eyes began to focus and she saw her father standing in the doorway of the room looking tall and proud as always. Her mother sat in the chair next to her, holding her hand within hers. She saw Dysea standing to the side of her bed beside the shorter, attractive woman with red hair and dimples.

I do not have dimples. The voice spoke, but with a musical laughter to it.

But you do my love. She heard Dysea reply looking at the shorter woman. *And they are so very delightful.*

My... my Queen... what... we were in the tunnel. These foul creatures... Daniel was protecting me. I... I saw him... there was blood... everywhere. He was injured... hideously... but he... he wouldn’t leave my side!

Anuk sat up quickly, the pain that shot through her body and mind causing her to gasp in agony. *Daniel!* Her mind screamed out.

Anuk heard her mother cry out in surprise and worry but then Dysea was sitting on the bed, taking her hand. *Be at peace child. He is injured... but he is safe, as are you.* Dysea’s head turned to the others in the room. “Leave us for a moment.” She barked out the order.

It was the voice of command, and Vengal stepped forward to take his wife's arm, guiding her gently into the hallway of the clinic. Dysea waited until the door had closed before turning back to Anuk.

"Now we can speak freely for a few moments." Dysea said.

Anuk took several deep breaths. "I... I feel different Milady... so different." She said softly, her eyes sweeping the room as she got her bearings. New smells assaulted her nostrils, her eyes blinking rapidly as she tried to focus on what she was seeing for the first time; the tiny speckles of grain in the floor, the different shades of color that her vision was flashing through. Power coursed through her limbs, pure and strong. Her Queen's wildflower scent, mixed heavily with the sweet honey scent permeated her nostrils. She could hear voices... people talking in her mind. "What is wrong with me? I..."

Dysea looked at Anja. "Help me my love. Daniel is not opening himself to her for fear of rejection. We must steady her."

Anja moved around to the other side of the bed and joined Dysea, taking Anuk's other hand. "Breathe Anuk... look at us," She spoke softly. "Deep breaths... let it flow through you, calm you. Your heart is racing, but we can answer your questions. Let us help you."

"We went through the same thing as you Little One. Trust us." Dysea told her as she reached out with her mind to sooth Anuk. "Be calm. You have joined a whole new world, a wonderful world."

Anuk held their hands tightly and took deep breaths as Anja told her. She felt power coursing through her, new sights, new sounds, new smells; a calligraphy of new experiences. It was overwhelming, and the one source of comfort she had grasped at, the one source of her strength these past few days that had held her together was not there.

Anuk looked at Dysea. "She's reaching for Danny. She's terrified and he has been there for her physically and emotionally, and now she's reaching for him with her mind and can't find him."

"Anuk... stay strong Little One." Dysea said touching her face. "I will get the thing you desire most."

Dysea got up and walked quickly into the hallway. She paused seeing Anuk's mother get to her feet, Vengal and Matarn standing in the corridor as well.

"My... my Queen what is wrong?" Anuk's mother gasped. "My child..."

Dysea ignored her and continued down the corridor as her mind found his. She moved steadily ignoring all else to include the cries of Anuk's mother. She reached the door and shoved it open to see Danny standing by the side of the bed wearing his fatigues and buttoning his shirt. Martin and Julie stood with him.

"Daniel... you fool!" Dysea snapped angrily. "You shut your mind to Anuk, and you are the one thing she has come to rely on for strength. You need to go to her now! She needs you more than anything at this moment!"

There was no hesitation in his response and he bolted from the room, dropping all his shields and feeling Anuk's panic sweep through him. "Fuck!" He swore at himself as he half ran, half limped into the hallway with a single minded determination.

Vengal's head turned when he saw the ebony skinned giant smash into the corridor heading for them. He was still limping severely and he knocked over a chair as elves and humans alike rushed to get out of his way. He turned back to look through the glass at his daughter on the bed and he saw her blue eyes open wide as if she had suddenly found something she wanted above all else. Anuk began to scramble from the bed, heedless of the fact that she was almost completely nude except for the skimpy hospital dress.

"Daniel!" Anuk screamed as she lost her footing in the room and fell, Anja catching her before she landed.

"Anuk!" Dan's scream matched her own and Vengal saw Matarn and his wife turn to look at the ebony giant bearing down on them. Martin and Julie were close behind him with Dysea as well.

The next events happened in slow motion for Vengal, and above all else it sealed his decision. Matarn stepped in front of Daniel's charging form.

"And where do you think you are going?" Matarn asked smugly.

Dan looked at him as he stopped. "Get out of my way asshole." He gasped.

"You will have nothing to do with my betrothed anymore!" Matarn barked. "She is my property, and you will not touch her!"

Vengal watched in stunned horror as Danny's eyes changed then, his fangs extending in that instant and the huge hand that snatched Matarn up like he was an insect. He heard Matarn gag and his hands went to the throat that held him as Dan lifted him eighteen inches off the floor.

"You will not touch her ever again you slimy motherfucker!" Danny's voice was cold and filled with barely controlled animal rage. Vengal watched in amazement as with scarcely any effort Danny sent Matarn sailing down the corridor to smash into the wall at the end.

"Daniel!" Anuk's voice filled the corridor as the door to her room burst open, and Vengal watched Daniel's eyes revert back to normal and he staggered over to her, gathering her into his arms and sinking to the floor in front of him and his wife.

"I... I have you baby." He said, crushing Anuk to him. "I got you now and no one is ever taking you away from me again." He whispered his face buried in her rust colored hair, his hands stroking her shoulder and arm. "You're mine Anuk."

Vengal and his wife stood there in shock as they saw the most peaceful expression spread across their daughter's face, her eyes closing with a look of contentment and she curled up into Daniel's arms uncaring that his hands stroked her bare skin in places not entirely appropriate for a man who did not know her. Their eyes grew even further surprised when Anuk opened her eyes again, and they saw the change. Her cerulean blue eyes had grown smaller, the pupils still the color they knew, but the whites of her eyes becoming outlined in black, and small fangs extended from her mouth. Fangs that were exposed even further as her lips spread into a peaceful smile and her head pushed deeper against the chest of the man who held her in his arms.

"NO!" The voice screamed. "She is mine!"

Vengal's head snapped around to see Matarn coming toward them with a furious look of utter rage on his face, his hand reaching for the weapon he wore on his belt. Vengal pushed his wife aside, reaching far too slowly for his own weapon. There was a flash of white/blue light in the corridor and Vengal saw the huge black shadow pass next to him. He heard an unmistakable growl of animal savageness and then he saw the massive black wolf as it lashed out with razor like claws and crush Matarn's arm like dried twigs, blood erupting from the wound to splash on the white walls in the hall, his weapon skittering across the floor. It was the largest wolf Vengal had seen in his lifetime, easily three hundred pounds of muscle and teeth, and the thought flashed through his mind on how something so large could have made it into this clinic. His head turned and he saw Dysea and Anja standing there with a look of amusement of their faces, the genome Julie with a bored expression while she squatted next to Daniel, her hand on his shoulder.

Vengal turned back to see the next white/blue flash of light, and then Martin Hunter was standing there, naked in the hallway, his hand clutching Matarn's throat in its grasp as he savagely slammed him into the corridor wall, imbedding his body several inches into the concrete and plaster, a blow that Matarn should not have survived. Martin's eyes had changed Vengal saw, becoming yellow outlined in black and savage looking fangs extending almost an inch from his mouth. A face he now placed within inches of Matarn's pain filled grimace. This was much different than what Vengal had seen him do outside Ash Fork. His mind told him it was impossible, but Vengal had witnessed it happening right in front of him.

"I guess they don't teach you shit birds in vampire school to never come between a wolf and his mate huh?" Martin's voice growled. "And most especially not... between... the... mate... of... my brother... and... a... **SPARTAN!**" Martin's voice screamed out the last and the words shook the hall they stood in. He felt the word rip through him, sounding so normal, so right. His entire being quaked with power at that word, and it was power he reveled in.

Martin knew his path then, and he accepted it fully as he clutched Matarn tightly, the elf's eyes wide in fear, his vampire fangs now extending.

Matarn's eyes were full of more fear than he had ever known as he gazed into yellow death. His entire body rang out in agony, his arm hanging useless at his side.

"Do not kill him my King!" Walter's voice echoed down the corridor and they turned to see him moving quickly among the stunned men and women in the hall. He moved up next to Martin and looked at Matarn. "How... how did you know?" He asked.

Martin didn't take his eyes off Matarn. "He reeks of blood." Martin answered, "Like he has just fed."

Walter's nose twitched. "Ah... indeed he does, interesting." Walter turned his head and allowed his nose to guide him. After a moment he looked at Julie. "The third floor Julie, a room on this end of the clinic. The elf is still alive if only barely. We must get her to a room and give her blood"

Martin looked at him as Julie took off in a trot. "Won't she turn?" Martin asked.

Walter shook his head. "He would have to drain her dry or feed on her more than once to turn her. And elves are far more resistant to his ilk than humans. She will survive. The better question is what do we do with the child vampire here?"

"Child?" Martin asked.

Walter smiled, his eyes changing now as well, and his fangs extending. "Oh yes... young Matarn here has not been a vampire for more than a year or so. An older vampire would know never to come within range of a wolf's nose just after he's fed, and most especially not you or I my King." Matarn's eyes grew wide and Walter smiled. "Ah yes... you know who holds you so close to death don't you young Matarn. They taught you to fear him didn't they? Do you feel that fear? That is good... very good."

Walter struck with speed that surprised even Martin, his hand striking Matarn just above his ear and dropping him into blackness. Martin allowed his body to drop to the floor and he stepped back looking at Walter. "What was that all about?"

Walter reached down and plunged his hand into the wall where Matarn had been pinned ripping out several thick ropes of wire with barely any effort.

"Walter... we are trying to finish the upper floors," Martin said, relaxing his face and allowing the change to recede. "Not rip them down."

Walter smiled and bent to secure Matarn. "There are two things that young vampires are taught to fear above all else, for it most likely means instant death to them." He explained as he wrapped the wire around Matarn's hands and then his upper body.

"And they would be what?" Martin asked.

Walter stood back up, "The sun... for until they are older the sun means their death... and the wrath of a pure blood wolf descended from the original 300." He replied with a smile, "Namely... you and I. Yes... young Matarn here will sing for me. That was impressive my King, very impressive indeed. All my years and I have never detected a vampire after he has fed. A suggestion though, my King..."

Anja stood next to Dysea watching them, her blood pounding in her head as she gazed at Martin in all his glory. His aura was threatening to overwhelm what little control she was holding onto, and she could feel the fire between her thighs. She reached out to grasp Dysea's hand, only to find that Dysea's palm was sweaty and she was experiencing the same thing, her heart pounding so loudly Anja could hear it as easily as a drum.

"What's that?" Martin asked.

"Perhaps it would be appropriate for you to wait until there were not other eyes around before shifting next time." Walter spoke gently as Martin turned his head, catching the sweet smell of both wildflowers and honey.

"Would... would someone care to tell me just what in the hell is going on here?" Vengal bellowed.

His voice shook Dysea from her almost trancelike state and she looked at him, both he and his wife and several others staring at the very naked Martin. She moved quickly, stepping over in front of Martin, pulling Anja with her to block the fact that he was very much without any clothes on.

"Vengal... I believe it's time we sat down and had a long discussion." Dysea told him, her voice quaking with the lust and desire that was burning in her veins.

Martin grinned his own blood pounding as their scents filled his nostrils and leaned his head close to her curved elf ear, nuzzling the bottom of her delicately pointed four inch long ear, his tongue flicking out to caress the lobe. Dysea's eyes closed in bliss and she gasped softly in delight, her hands reaching back to grab his hips.

"*Nauta Melme*... I... please..." She hissed between clenched teeth, her head leaning back against him, the wolf in her wanting him to throw her on the floor and take her right there.

"Martin... you have to stop it..." Anja spoke in a hushed whisper, her back also to him as she stood next to Dysea, blocking the view of his naked flesh, sweat beginning to bead on her skin from the lust pulsing through her as well for the wolf that was her mate.

Martin turned his head with a smile and bent even lower to nuzzle the side of Anja's neck, nibbling the silky skin of her throat and everyone saw her body stiffen in response, pushing back against him, her eyes closing in sinful enchantment as the rush of sexual energy swelled through her.

"My King," Walter spoke loudly, causing both Dysea and Anja to jump and Martin to turn his head quickly. "I see that I will need to teach you to shield your aura my King, if nothing else but for the sake of your two Queens and their sanity. Your aura is irresistible to them when your emotions run high. As theirs is for you. You must control it, for decencies sake."

"Spoilsport," Martin said with a grin.

Walter shook his head with a smile. "King Leonidas told me the same thing many times when he got this way. It appears I will have to do it all over again."

Daniel still sat on the floor watching the events take place with a shit eating grin on his face. He felt Anuk move in his arms, her face looking up to gaze at him. The feel of his arms around her had erase any concerns or doubts she may have had about anything going forward in her young life, of that she had little doubt. The warmth and strength of his embrace chased all fears and chill from her body and she could feel her skin burning with hot desire for the man who now held her.

"This... this is your brother I take it. The one you spoke of." She said softly, her voice causing both her parents to turn and look at her with surprised expressions.

Danny grinned and looked down into her angelic face. "Yeah... but you caught him in a bad moment." He said softly. "He's usually much more reserved, especially in his choice of clothes."

"Will... will you do to me what he apparently does to them?" She asked him with a smile of love and adoration that promised pleasures Danny knew he could never resist.

Vengal watched as Danny pulled his legs under him and lifted Anuk from the floor with as much effort as picking a flower. He watched as Dan lowered his cheek to Anuk's forehead with a gentle smile, cradling his daughter in his huge arms like she was the most precious item in the entire world.

"Let's worry about getting you healthy before anything like that comes into play." Dan spoke, nuzzling her cheek. "I rather you make that decision with a clear mind and heart."

Vengal watched Danny turn and carry his daughter back into the room she had come running out of only minutes earlier. And if anything was clear to him at that moment, it was that his daughter had already made that decision. Dan stopped and turned to look at him. "General... Anuk is your daughter sir, and you and your wife should be with her. With your permission sir, I will tuck her back into bed, and then leave you and your wife to visit with her. You have not seen her for quite some time, and I'm sure you have quite a lot to catch up with her on."

Vengal helped his wife to her feet and ushered her into the room, stopping to look up into Dan's eyes. He saw the look of peace on Anuk's face, and the brightness of newfound love in her eyes. He returned his gaze back to Danny's face.

"We will talk Daniel Simpson." He spoke. "We will talk."

Dan nodded. "I look forward to it sir."

EDEN CITY COMMAND CENTER

"...twenty-two of the *new soldiers* within the hierarchy of the Wood Elves." Walter spoke to the assembled men and women. "They are the ones driving the call to war. Vengal has confirmed over half of them hold senior positions within the Queen's army. It appears that the new Queen is also one of these *soldiers*."

Martin sat between Dysea and Anja, Danny to Anja's left, followed by Vengal, Lynwe, Julie, Tarifa and Aihola in that order around the table. Tony, Leland, and several others sat along the wall closest to the table listening. On the large monitor in front of them was a clear picture of Admiral Wallace, with the attractive Asian woman sitting next to him, as well as Paul and several other elves.

"This is accurate intelligence Dym... Walter?" Wallace asked catching himself before using Walter's real name.

Walter nodded. "I interrogated young Matarn quite thoroughly Admiral. He was very happy to divulge the information I required. Unfortunately he could provide little else in the way of intelligence outside this push to go to war with the High Elves."

"And what is Matarn's condition now?" Wallace asked in a very cruel voice.

"The poor lad expired I'm sorry to say. It seems he had a rather odd aversion and could not take the sun." Walter answered.

"Couldn't have happened to a nicer fucking asshole in my opinion," Dan muttered.

Vengal nodded. "I happily concur." He said.

It had been a sleepless night for Vengal, understandably so. He and his wife spent the better part of the day with Anuk, just being with her. She had refused however to allow sleep to take her unless Daniel was in the room, and as he had watched Danny lean over and kiss his smiling daughter softly on the lips, his decision had been made easily. He had spent the next five hours with both Martin and Daniel, talking well into the night hours about everything that had occurred. That creatures such as *Ngauro* and vampires existed was enough to shock him to his core, yet discovering that his daughter was now one of the things that he used to read to her about as a child had chilled him completely.

Until Martin had told him the rule that he and the others had lived by up until that point. He had not realized the extent of Anuk's injuries, assuming the faint scars, even though they marred her beauty only a fraction, had been inflicted some time ago. He could not picture seeing his only remaining daughter with her face ripped open to the bone, and after discovering the effect she had apparently had on this ebony skinned giant of a man beside him, he could not imagine what his reaction had been. Daniel had refused to tell him, not wanting to relive the experience, and after Daniel had left them to be at Anuk's side, Martin expressed to him what had happened. Vengal could not remember being so completely horrified at the telling of such an event. And when Martin had touched his hand and passed to him the images of what had taken place into his mind, Vengal had lost what little food he had in his stomach that day. That Daniel had hesitated to turn her for the simple reason he did not want Anuk to reject him spoke volumes of the character of the man that he now knew held his daughter's heart. That he had saved her life, regardless of the consequences was proof enough of that. The images of Daniel standing before his daughter's bloody body, his own body torn and ripped and bloody from the strikes of four of the vile creatures he had seen, and the fact that he would not leave her side no matter how they injured and maimed him, to Vengal it had been the ultimate and deciding event. Martin had decided because of what he and his wife had witnessed, that he should know the truth of everything and Vengal found himself becoming part of the very small circle of men and women who now knew who and what Martin and the others truly were.

Vengal had also seen the images of what Martin had done, and the wave of pride he felt at that moment was unlike anything he had ever experienced. He felt fear, no man or elf and now wolf as he had discovered, was without fear. That Martin Leonidas had discovered all this, and still his first desire was to free elves... to protect those he did not know... that spoke to the King that Vengal now knew him to be.

He had wandered for several more hours among the streets of Eden, watching as the city woke, seeing the elves and men waving to each other in the morning. He had seen them kissing their mates goodbye, or even sitting with and around each other in the many outdoor cafés that dotted the expanse of Eden, enjoying morning coffee before going to their jobs. When he returned to the clinic he found Daniel slumped in a chair beside Anuk's bed, his head resting in the curve of her abdomen, her arms possessively encircling his massive shoulders.

Vengal knew where he belonged, and the decision came easily to him.

"So where do we go from here?" Wallace asked. "We can move on Graham any day. I've got the man so wired for sound I can tell you when he takes a dump and what color it is."

That brought smiles to everyone's faces, but it was Martin who spoke. "Don't kill him." He said. Everyone with the exception of Tarifa and Aihola detected the tone of the order in Martin's voice.

Walter smiled to himself. He was adjusting quickly and that was good.

"After all he has done... why should we allow him to live?" Anisa sat forward in his chair, anger flashing in his eyes.

Martin looked at Tarifa. "I intend to let Tarifa decide his fate." He spoke softly. "He has done more to her than any of us. She deserves that."

“William why do you take orders from him,” Anisa asked. “You are his commanding officer. You...”

“Hold on a moment Marty.” William spoke, turning to look at Anisa.

He’s telling her who you are my love. Dysea spoke within his mind. *He’s turned her.*

Martin nodded almost imperceptibly. Martin, Anja and Dysea had developed a single connection among each other. A connection only they could communicate with and they were able to shield that from everyone else, including Walter, who did not appreciate it in the least. He had been surprised that they had the knowledge and power to do it to begin with, and dismissed it as a child’s attempt at something new. As the day progress however he had attempted on several occasions to penetrate the barriers around their minds, more specifically the one they spoke within, and when they had arrived for this meeting, he had a new respect in his eyes for all of them.

Is that good or bad? Anja spoke. *We still don’t know who we can trust completely outside of those in this room. I’m not comfortable putting our lives in the hands of someone we don’t know.*

It will have no bearing on us, unless he fails to take the station back. Martin said.

That’s what concerns me. Anja said.

Can this station of yours hurt us that much Nauta Melme? I thought you had practically stripped it when you returned to earth.

We did. Martin answered. *Anja... knowing what you know now... who the Admiral is... do you believe Graham could defeat him?*

I wasn’t thinking of the Admiral Martin. I was thinking of that vampire bitch Yuri. She was sharing your bed for almost two years on that station. There’s no telling what she could have done.

Martin looked at her next to him. *Is that jealousy I detect?*

You’re fucking right it is. Anja popped. *You belong to us. To Dysea and I, and when we find her, Aricia. I for one do not intend to share you with anyone else.*

Nor do I. Dysea spoke in agreement. *And after a single night in your arms I can almost certainly guarantee Aricia will be just as jealous.*

Martin chuckled within their connection. *I have no intention of sharing a bed with anyone outside of the three of you.* He told them. *I would be too worn out.*

Good!

Wallace had turned back around in his chair, “Sorry about that Marty. I forgot to share some information with Anisa. I must be getting senile in my old age.”

“You and William are far more experienced than I Commander, and I allowed my feelings for Graham and the others like him to rule my words; my apologies.” Anisa spoke, a new tone to her voice. Intelligence and respect mixed with awe.

Martin waved his hand. “None needed.” He said leaning forward, “But let me make this clear now. As it appears that everyone is apparently looking to me for some reason, I don’t know why since half the time I can’t find my boots in the morning.”

“Don’t forget you brains.” Danny piped in, causing the wolves in the room to laugh in agreement.

Martin grinned and continued. “Any ideas or suggestions, anything at all... no matter how trivial you may think them... I want to know them. Can we at least agree on that?”

“Marty... your operational experience is far superior...” William began to speak as the Centurion he was.

“I am not fool proof Admiral.” Martin spoke, raising his voice. “And you have far more years of experience than I.” He said knowingly, hinting that Wallace was nearly as old as Walter.

Wallace watched Martin’s eyes in the monitor and after a long moment he nodded his head. Walter sat quietly, his thoughts his own, and realizing for the first time how much Martin looked like his King. It was unnerving to say the least.

“We have our plan here to take out Graham Marty.” Wallace spoke. “What can we do to assist you? If what you say is accurate, you’re going to have to split your forces and that is never good.”

Martin nodded. “True enough.” He answered. “Anja... how long will it take the anti-dote for Tareif to work?”

“Twelve hours tops.” Anja replied quickly. “Once I separated the compounds it was easy enough to develop the serum.

Martin looked at Palina who sat along the wall. “Queen Mother... how long will it take before you can safely hit him with the serum?”

Palina thought for a long moment, “When he returns from his evening walk.” She replied looking up. “If we return to Mountain City this evening as we are scheduled too, twelve hours from when we get back which would be early tomorrow morning.”

Martin looked at Anja. *How soon before he could fight Anja?*

Fight safe or reckless? She replied.

Both.

Fight safely... at least eight hours. Fight and be pushing himself four. She answered.

Walter looked at the monitor to see Wallace’s face show the surprise that they both felt, and while Wallace was not strong enough to hear it he was strong enough to know what they were doing. Martin had not shielded their conversation from Walter, and the ease with which the three of them now communicated telepathically was astounding, and it only seemed to be growing stronger as attested to by the fact that none showed any signs of the communication outwardly.

Martin looked at Tarifa. “Tarifa... do you know who all Telan’s agents are?” He asked, “Anyone that could threaten you if we move?”

Tarifa looked to where Cantel sat. “We know there are eight Martin.” Cantel replied. “We have been able to determine that with the equipment you gave to us. However we have only been able to positively identify six.”

“So that is a no.” Martin spoke.

“I am willing to take the risk Martin.” Tarifa told him.

“The problem with that is I’m not.” Martin said getting to his feet.

“You can not continue to protect me Martin.” Tarifa spoke. “You know this.”

“I am also not willing to sacrifice you either.” Martin told her.

“Nor am I,” Dysea spoke looking at her. “And it has nothing to do with your skills Tarifa. These... these new Alliance soldiers are not what you would ordinarily expect. If they have infiltrated Mountain City... then you are in greater danger than any of us.”

“What makes them so dangerous?” Tarifa asked.

“This has nothing to do with protecting you Tarifa.” Martin told her, answering before Dysea. “I’ve drawn up orders to the effect that when we leave... Eden will be in your charge.”

This caused everyone in the room to look at him, for different reasons. “So we’re going then?” Julie spoke.

Martin nodded. “We have to. We can all feel it pulling at us. And I want to see my... my home.”

“Works for me Skipper, I’m always up for a good trip.” Kenny spoke with his usual jovial attitude.

“Where are you going Martin?” Tarifa asked.

He met her eyes. He walked over to where she sat and pulled Tarifa to her feet. “We have to take care of some business somewhere. When we leave I need to insure that what we have begun here continues. We’ll be back... but I’m guessing we’ll be gone for a couple of months at least. It is something we... something we need to do.”

Tarifa reached up and touched his face tenderly, smiling. “It is all over your face Martin. You are going to rediscover your past?”

Martin matched her smile. “I never could get anything past you.” He said. “Dysea and Anja need to come with me, all of my team and Walter. The only person I trust enough to keep doing what we are doing is you. Once Dysea is gone... the only elf with enough strength to keep things together is you.”

“I’ll be able to contact you should the need arise?” Tarifa asked.

“Of course.”

“Then I will do as you ask.” Tarifa spoke.

“I will return with Tarifa and Aihola to Mountain City.” Lynwe spoke up. They all turned to look at the tall Drow warrior as she stood. “I doubt very much that if any of these *new soldiers* have infiltrated into Mountain City they would be able to defeat Aihola and I, as well as Cantel and his men.”

Martin turned to Walter. *Your thoughts?*

Walter nodded. *More than any of the elves I designed the Drow to be the closest to you and the others in terms of abilities and skill. If there are vampires in Mountain City, Lynwe is correct. One would not be able to fight them both and win... and even if there were two vampires... the prospect of fighting two Drow warriors as well as half the Mountain City garrison would not appeal to them. It is the reason Yuri had the Alliance destroy the Drow. Those that survived she conducted experiments on, attempting to manufacture a vampire super soldier so to speak.*

You know... the more you tell me about her... the less I like her, and the fact that I actually slept with her. Jeez! It gives me the willies.

Yes... I do know the feeling.

“Admiral what is your opinion?” Martin asked out loud now.

“The Drow that you sent here, Anari, she is quite impressive My... Martin.” Wallace caught himself. No one noticed that Aihola’s eyes went to the monitor at this sudden check of what the man was going to say. Her eyes drifted to Martin slowly, her head unmoving and she gazed at him. There was something very different about him from two days ago, something very different. “She has taught the elves here in twelve hours, more than I was able to in months. She relates to them much better than I. And she is a natural leader. I also suggest getting Selene to provide as much information as she can as well. When I questioned her, she knew far more than she was letting on. I believe she was still very frightened at the time. Now that she is back with her family it might be different.”

“In that you are correct Admiral. She came to Leland the moment she landed in Eden and has been giving us mounds of intelligence.” Martin replied.

“Excellent. I thought she might.”

Martin looked at Tarifa finally, “Tarifa?”

Tarifa looked to where Aihola sat quietly watching her. “*Nya Istel?*”

Aihola nodded without hesitation. “There are few who could stand before both Lynwe and myself *ussta ssinssrigg*. That is no boast, it is fact.” **(My Love)**

Tarifa nodded and looked back to him. “I will be safe. Do what you must and we will flush out the last two Alliance agents.”

Martin nodded. “Very well... once your father is clear minded enough to fight, you will contact us... and we will hit the camp where your brothers are. Danny... you and General Vengal will conduct that attack. The last Raptor sweep gave back thirty-six infra red signatures. Plan for fifty bad guys and adjust your load out accordingly. This is your target...” Martin brought up the high altitude image of Dodge City, Kansas. “Your mission... your prep. Clear?”

Dan nodded all business now. “Consider it done.”

“Me, Anja, Dysea, Leland and twenty others will infiltrate the Wood Elf capital. The General assures me that once these twenty-two soldiers are taken out, that the remainder of them will defer to Dysea without question.” Martin said.

“You’re going in pretty light aren’t you Skipper?” Kenny asked.

Martin nodded, “For reasons which I will not get into at this time.” He answered. “Let’s get down to the nuts and bolts shall we.”

Martin stood in the small park near the center of Eden, allowing his senses to swim in the scents sweeping through him, trying to make some sense of everything that had happened in the last two days. He knew it to be true... knew it because it was in his blood, and he could feel it racing unchecked through every pore. He lifted his arm and pushed the sleeve of his fatigue shirt up, letting his eyes wander over the Shi Viska. He ran his fingers over the intricate markings, caressing the soft leather, how it seemed to be alive on his skin, sensing his mood.

We will be there soon my King. The musical voice sounded within his thoughts. *You will be among your kind soon... with us... with me.* The voice sounded hopeful.

Don’t call me that Aricia. Martin replied.

It is what you are.

Perhaps... but it doesn't sound right coming from you. As it doesn't sound right coming from Anja or Dysea. Not from the three of you. Please.

What... what should I call you?

My name for starters would be good.

My Lord... I could never do that... you...

How did this happen when you are so far away?

I don't know... I have heard the Chief Mage speaking when she thought I was sleeping. She says that we have a connection. I do not know how this came to be. Is it possible to feel what I feel... for you... for Dysea... Anja? I have never met you...met them... yet it fills my very being.

As it does ours Little Wolf, it burns within our blood.

Where are they? They... they are blocking me.

We are preparing to initiate some very unpleasant things on some very unpleasant people. Martin spoke. I told them to block all telepathic communication except for me to protect them.

I do not... your speech is confusing My... Martin. His name rolled from her lips with ease and he could feel her pleasure at saying it, and the pleasure it gave him hearing it.

Martin smiled. That is better, sweet... like the chimes of the ocean breeze.

They discovered what we did Martin. I was not strong enough to stop them. It shames me.

Did they hurt you Little Wolf? He felt a flash of anger course through him.

No... no... they only wished to discover why I have developed such skills for my age. They meant me no harm.

Tell them they are not to do so again Aricia. I forbid it. As King...I... I will severely punish whoever does so again. And it will not be pleasant. Tell them that. You speak with my voice Little Wolf. Your mind is yours and yours alone. It is not for others to intrude upon. Not even I have that right. And no male is to come near you. You belong to me. To us!

Are... are you claiming me Martin?

I am. We all are. If... if that is your wish as well Little Wolf.

It is... so very much.

Then I will not have them touching your thoughts without your consent. Even I will not do that!

But... but your mind provides me so much... so much joy, So much peace.

You may have my mind whenever you wish Little Wolf. It is open only to the three of you. No others.

What are you preparing to do my... my Love?

He turned to look at some children in the park as they played. I'm going to lead an attack that will stop a war between the High Elves and the Wood Elves. The Alliance... the vampires... they are pushing them into a conflict that neither can win. It is being driven by some rather nasty individuals. I captured one this morning because I smelled him after he fed on an elf. These Vampires are rather disgusting creatures, drinking the blood of others. Yuck!

Martin... you fought... you fought a vampire? Her voice carried worry in it.

Do not fear Little Wolf. Dymas was present and it was a young vampire apparently. We must do this before we can come to you.

But we are coming to you Martin. We are leaving as you and I speak. Do not rush into this I beg you.

It must be done now or it will destroy all I have worked for these last months. All we have worked for. I won't allow that. I will be fine Little Wolf, do not worry.

They are vampires!

Yes they are! And I discovered today that they don't like Purebloods, and most especially not me. A piece of knowledge I will use against them.

When?

We leave in twelve hours. I will see you soon Little Wolf. We look forward to holding you in our arms.

Martin could feel Aricia smile and a sensation of love swept through their minds. As do I.

Theron stood with Thr'won on the small landing pad as the thirty Spartan Centurions finished loading the equipment they would carry onto the transport. It was a sleek looking ship, gunmetal gray and tapered forward. Its wings swept back making it appear like a large bird of prey.

“Holy One!” Aricia’s voice carried across the landing pad. “Chief Mage Thr'won!”

They turned to see Aricia running towards them. She had changed into the standard Spartan Centurion combat uniform, as directed by Theron. It was black in color with body armor covering all but the joints of her body. The collar fit snugly around her neck, the entire uniform conforming to her substantial curves. It was made from a fabric that would mold and shift into whatever form they desires, so that when they were in wolf form, they were equally armored.

Theron held out his arms to help her stop as she ran up to them, “Easy child!” He spoke. “Why do you rush so?”

“Holy One we have to leave now!” Aricia exclaimed.

“What? These things can not be rushed Aricia.” Theron spoke. “We are loading the last of our equipment, and we will leave tomorrow as planned.”

Aricia’s jaw took on a firm set to it and she stood up straighter, all five foot five of her. “We must leave within the hour. He battled a vampire this morning! And he is leading an attack against others with my Uncle Dymas within twelve hours. We must leave now!”

Theron and Thr'won were looking at her wide eyed, “Vampires!” Theron spoke with a gentle smile. “Child we have seen no vampires in nearly five hundred years.” Theron smelled Andreus moving up to them, a look of concern on his face for his sister.

“I have spoken with him! With Martin! With my... with our King!” Aricia said determinedly.

“Aricia,” Thr'won spoke softly. “That is not possible child. Perhaps in your sub conscious, but you are no where near strong enough to have such a conversation while you are awake. The telepathic power that requires is not... it is not possible for one so young.”

“I have spoken with him I tell you!” She demanded. “He is... he is being reckless... rushing into such a confrontation! We... we must go to him!”

“Aricia we do not even know his name.” Theron spoke. “Only that he does now exist child, thanks to your vision. We...”

“It is not a vision I tell you!” Aricia snapped. “His name is Martin! Martin Leonidas! And I am not a child!”

Theron saw the flash of anger in her eyes and looked at Andreus. “Andreus... what did the parents of the last of the line name their first born. It would be listed in the secure archives. No one has access to this information except the Centurions. Look it up for us so that we can show your sister she is not right about everything.”

Andreus pulled the small data pad from his belt and began to search. Thr'won looked at Aricia. “Child let me help you relax. The trance must have taken more out of you than I first thought.”

“I do not need to relax Milady.” Aricia spoke. “We need to leave now! That is what I need.”

“Aricia... this is getting out of hand!” Theron spoke more sternly now. “You are not strong enough to do what you have said. It is not possible to...”

“Holy One?” Andreus’s voice spoke softly, his head coming up, his eyes wide as he stared at his sister.

Theron looked at him. “Yes... what is the name Andreus? Speak quickly for I grow impatient with your sister!”

“Holy One... the parents of the last of the line named their first born...” He looked at him. “They named him Martin Leonidas Holy One.”

Theron’s eyes grew wide in shock and he looked at Thr'won, seeing the stunned astonishment on her face as well. They both looked at Aricia now. “Andreus... we depart in thirty minutes! Make it so young Spartan, no matter what you have to do.”

Andreus nodded quickly. “As you order Holy One.” He gasped before turning and breaking into a sprint screaming orders as he ran.

“Theron... we can not rely...” Thr'won began.

“No one,” Theron gasped looking at her. “No one but the Spartan Centurions have access to that information! There is no way she should know this... unless she is speaking the truth!”

“That is what I have been trying to tell you!” Aricia snapped.

“Aricia... what... what else did he tell you?” Theron asked, “This Martin Leonidas?”

“Forgive me Holy One... Milady Chief Mage... he... he told me I speak with his voice when he says that my mind is my own. He... he said as King... he forbids anyone to touch my thoughts again without my permission, and he will severely punish whoever does. He... he said it would not be pleasant.” Aricia spoke. “He also said...” Aricia stopped redness flushing against her dark tan.

“Speak Aricia.” Theron spoke. “Hold nothing back.”

“He has... he has claimed me. They have claimed me. He says... forgive me... he says no other male is to approach me.” Aricia was very embarrassed about revealing this, and it showed in her face, but Theron detected the satisfaction in those azure blue eyes.

Thr’won’s eyes went wide at this and she stepped back. “Why that impetuous male... that is typical Alpha behavior.”

Theron broke into such laughter that Thr’won looked at him wide eyed as well. She had never seen him laugh so heartily in all her years. She saw a new spark in his eyes and sensed a rush of blood through his veins as he laughed.

“Theron... what is so damnably funny?” She demanded.

Theron looked at her, wiping tears from his bright eyes. “I have waited nearly three thousand years to hear such an order delivered exactly as he told her to speak it! That order Thr’won... that simple but single order is all that I need to confirm what I first felt when Aricia described to me the wolf she saw.”

Theron turned to look at the Spartans rushing to complete the loading, “**SPARTANS!**” He bellowed, causing all of them to stop what they were doing and look towards him. “Spartans... our King awaits us! The descendant of Leonidas has come Spartans! We go now!”

CHAPTER NINETEEN

EDEN (FORMERLY JUNCTION CITY UTAH)

Aihola bounded up the hilltop where she had seen Tarifa disappear with Martin a short time ago. Their Raptor was standing idle on the tarmac below waiting to return them to Salina. She walked confidently through the trees, safe in the knowledge that nothing dangerous could get this close to Eden without Martin knowing about it.

He was everything that Tarifa had told her he would be. He was tall, very handsome in a rugged down to earth way, exceptionally powerful; he had a commanding presence when in the room with people, and he was a man who was very divisive in his thinking and his actions. Aihola felt something vaguely familiar about him when she first saw him and even the times since. She had kept trying to place it in her head, but it was always just out of reach on the edges of her mind.

She stepped into the small clearing, “*Udos inbal ulu sevir Tarifa ussta ssinsrigg, nind ph' feithin.*” She called out, her amber eyes searching around the expanse of knee high grass. **(We have to leave Tarifa my love, they are waiting.)**

Aihola stopped in the middle of the clearing, confusion on her face. Her mind suddenly had a terrible thought... what if Tarifa came up here to be with Martin. That single image, of them entwined within each other, sent a terrible stabbing sensation through her gut. She loved Tarifa, without question, and though she knew the relationship Tarifa had shared with Martin was intense, she thought it was over. Tarifa had told her it was different now, that while they may still love each other in a way, it would wasn’t physical anymore. What if that wasn’t the case?

Her eyes spotted the small bundle, half buried in the grass and she moved forward closer, squatting down and reaching out to push aside the grass. It was a genome uniform that had been removed and folded neatly, and then placed on the ground. Her heart began to race as she twisted it around to look at the name tag.

HUNTER

Aihola cast aside the uniform as if it scalded her and she staggered back on her legs, stumbling to her ass and cursing as she whirled around, her mind suddenly coming alive with the reason that Martin felt so familiar to her.

He knew! How could he know!

Aihola froze as she completed her turn to escape for she came face to muzzle with the largest, most dominating and frightening black wolf her eyes had ever set upon. The wolf's eyes were yellow gold in color, its lips curled back to reveal the razor like teeth in a vicious snarl. Teeth that could easily rend her flesh from her bones with no effort. It stood easily four feet at the shoulder with rippling muscles and fur as black as any night she had seen. She could feel its hot breath on her face, not foul as she expected, but mint smelling. And then Aihola's mind opened wide in realization of why he was so familiar to her. And her blood turned icy cold in fear.

Xun dos treemma elghinn sanguine? Martin's voice filled her mind, cold calculating and totally devoid of any emotion. *Whol dos ph' veirs ulu ol nin taga dos rin'ov inbal tlus.* **(Do you fear death vampire? For you are closer to it now than you have ever been.)**

Aihola's amber eyes were wide as he spoke to her in the ancient Drow language. How could that be... no one knew...

Dos hass'l l' ze'zhuanth sanguine ooble' xuat dos Aihola? Ol ann'ishen Usstan tlun al versused wun nindel. Vel'bol xun dos treemma sanguine? Telanth queelas. **(You mean the ancient vampire tongue don't you Aihola? It appears I am well versed in that. What do you fear vampire? Speak quickly.)**

Martin stepped closer on padded paws almost as large as both her hands together, with steel like black claws of razor sharp death, pushing his muzzle up against Aihola's forehead. He saw her eyes close as if accepting her death, her breath coming in short gasps.

You apparently know who I am Aihola, even if I do not entirely. I know you can hear my thoughts within yours vampire. Do not test me, for you will lose. I will tear your face from your body before you have the chance to take a breath. Speak to me!

"I... I know you are the descendent of... of the Spartan King." Her voice quaked as she spoke, her throat dry and her lips suddenly without any moisture in them, "The descendant of King Leonidas; the... the eternal enemy of the vampires, the slayer of thousands of vampires. The man most feared in all their history; the King that the Spartans have waited three thousand years for. And I know I could never defeat you."

Do you enjoy feeding on the blood of others Aihola? On Tarifa's blood? The rage in his words was an almost palpable thing and it shook Aihola to her core.

Aihola's head came up. "I have never done this!" She snapped. "It is..."

Martin stepped closer, growling deep in his chest, his fangs now touching the skin of her forehead. Aihola's eyes closed slowly in acceptance of her fate. Her only thoughts here at the end were that she would never see the one person who she loved more than her own life. And they would never raise children as her love wanted.

"Before... before you kill me... would you please tell... tell my love I will always hold her in my soul. I would have... I would have been nothing without her." Aihola felt the tears rolling down her cheeks.

There was a long moment of silence when all Aihola could feel was the warmth of his breath on her forehead and the savage pounding of her heart. There was a flash of white/blue lightning and then Martin was in front of her naked and squatting easily on the ground. There was no flicker of desire in her eyes at what she saw; and she saw everything, in its entire splendor, for she could barely breathe due to the fear that gripped her tight. She huddled before the direct descendant of the one man in history that had killed more vampires than all others combined. Fighting him never entered her mind, for she would not even reach her weapons before he shifted again and those jaws of steel razors shred her to bits in seconds.

"Why would I tell her this?" He asked.

"I... I love her Martin." Aihola spoke softly. "Take my life if you must, but please... I beg you not to tell her what I am."

"Vampires do not love." Martin snapped.

Aihola looked up at him slowly. "I am not completely vampire. I am still elf." She spoke softly. "And I... I do love. With every breath I take I love. All of it for one you know as well as I now do."

“Yes... I know. You lack the stench of Matarn, who was turned. You smell of warm blood and a beating heart... and I am curious as to how that is and also how you are able to mask your unique scent.” Martin spoke.

“It was the vampire wench Yuri my High King.” Aihola spoke.

“I am not your King.” Martin growled.

“But you are.” Aihola said quickly. “I... I suspected who you were after questioning the Holy One on our trip to Salina. He hesitated when speaking of the DNA he used, but he did tell me where the DNA came from. I am still elf my King and I do not wish to die. I would not lie to you now, it would serve no purpose.”

“Leave Aihola... leave and go back to your masters and never return here again. Never contact Tarifa, never see her again.” Martin spoke

“Then I ask that you kill me now my King, for without Tarifa in my life I am nothing.” Aihola spoke softly. “I do not wish to be away from her, it causes an ache in my heart that would never heal.”

Martin cocked his head to the side slightly and looked at her. “You truly love her.” He said softly.

“With all that I am. As you once did, and as you still do in a different fashion even now.” Aihola answered.

“Tell me how you came to be like this.” Martin said.

“My parents were captured when the Alliance destroyed my people.” Aihola spoke. “The vampire witch turned my father into a vampire! A monster! She had drugs injected into him, forced my mother to mate with him in the hopes of breeding soldiers. She did this to all the surviving Drow. I was born only half vampire, my King. As was Tari, and all those with him. We have their strengths, but none of their weaknesses.”

“If that was the case... why are you here?” Martin asked.

“She had hoped to breed killers.” Aihola spoke. “Instead she bred us. We do not drink blood, our hearts still beat. The sun is not our enemy. We eat normal food, and we don’t thirst as vampires do.”

“I would think that is what she would want.” Martin spoke, “All the strengths of her kind and none of the weaknesses. Why are you different?”

“She... she wanted killing machines my King, heartless beasts that drank the blood of their enemies. My... my people have always been strong willed... wanton slaughter has never been part of our history. It was against the code of honor we lived by as Drow. The survivors of the Alliance genocide retained that will and determination. It is why I was scheduled to die... I would not slaughter a human family to prove I was truly a vampire.”

“So you don’t need blood to survive?” Martin asked. “You can’t turn someone from your bite?”

Aihola shook her head quickly. “If... if I am injured... blood will sustain me... heal my wounds... but I do not need it to survive. I hate the taste of it... it makes me sick! And our bite can not make someone a vampire. That part... that part of the vampire gene was lost during the experiments on us. When she discovered this she flew into a rage and ordered additional experiments on us to be done. Many of my kind died... they did terrible things to us. They forced me...”

“I know what they have done Aihola. I can see it in your mind, which leads to my next question. Why aren’t you attempting to shield your thoughts from me?” Martin asked her.

“To what end?” Aihola questioned him. “You have only just discovered who you truly are, but your powers are already beyond what any of us possess. I have no wish to die as I said. We hate the Alliance with every fiber of our beings. It is why Tari brought my kin to you; he knew our only hope for acceptance was with the humans and elves of Eden. It is why I decided to help Tarifa at first.”

“At first?” Martin asked. “Why do you say that?”

“I am no fool my King. I know you can see my thoughts. I love her with all that I am. I would give my life in her defense without a moment’s hesitation, no matter the odds.” Aihola told him. “You can see this.”

“She... she speaks the truth my King.” The male voice spoke softly. Martin had not turned his head as he had smelled Tari moving up slowly several minutes ago. Aihola’s eyes darted to either side of his naked form, realizing that Dysea must also be out there somewhere in the shadows.

Aihola’s brother held out his hands to show he was unarmed, his amber eyes never leaving Martin, as he slowly made his way to where his sister knelt. Slowly he lowered himself to the ground beside her. That they were brother and sister was obvious, they had the same angular shaped faces and lips, and while all Drow had the amber color eyes, those who were related had the same tint to them. “I offer you... I offer you my life for

my sister's. She is younger than I... and has been away from the Alliance butchers and their influence far longer."

"Tari no...!" Aihola hissed.

Tari looked at her. "You have found something... you have found something I will never have Aihola. You have someone who loves you. That you love in return. You must be allowed to pursue that. It is not something I will ever have... no matter what I wish."

"Both of you shut up and let me think!" Martin snapped. They watched him move to where his clothes were and quickly pull them on. As he was speed lacing his boots he looked at them and saw that neither of them had moved an iota from their positions on the ground. "I'm not going to kill you, now get up." He said. "If I had wanted you dead I would have killed you in the first ten seconds Aihola. And Dysea would have torn your throat out before you were half way up this hill Tari."

Aihola looked at him. "I do not wish Dysea to rip my heart from my chest Martin." Aihola spoke softly. "I can feel her watching me because of what we shared once. I have no more wish to feel her fangs upon me than I do yours. Even less... for that night we shared with my love."

Martin smiled almost gently. "I think we both know they are no danger *Melda Min*."

Aihola and Tari turned at the movement to their right and they saw the brilliant platinum colored wolf walk purposefully from the shadows of the trees. The shiny platinum hair covered her entire body in a thick silky coat, and Aihola stifled a gasp as she realized that Dysea was just as beautiful in the form of a wolf as she was as an elf. Emerald eyes gazed upon her, as she saw the ripple of muscle under her fur, the smaller but just as lethal teeth and claws. The flash of white/blue didn't startle Aihola and then Dysea was naked in front of her, emerald eyes boring into her. Aihola let her eyes linger for a moment on the Wood Elf Queen's luscious tattooed body and then she looked into her eyes.

"And Anja? Does she wait to tear our lungs from within?" Aihola asked.

"*Melyanna* is occupied with her duties as medical officer." Dysea replied softly. "It is only *Nauta Melme* and I. We thought it best this way."

Aihola met her eyes bravely. "I... I hope in time... you can find it in your heart to forgive me Dysea." Aihola said softly.

"Time will tell." Dysea spoke in almost a whisper. "But... you must tell... you must tell Tarifa. She has a right to know Aihola. She loves you as completely as you love her."

"Will... will you allow me to... to tell her when I feel the time is right?" Aihola spoke. "I do not wish to lose her Dysea. She is all that is beautiful and good in my world right now. I can not lose that."

Dysea looked at Martin and saw him nod after only a moment's hesitation. She held out her hand for Aihola to take and waited until she had pulled her to her feet. "Then we will keep your secret Aihola, and yours Tari." She met Aihola's eyes, reaching up to caress her face. "Do not fear losing her Aihola... she is stronger than you might think."

"It has always been my intention to reveal what I am to her." Aihola said softly. "And I will. I give you my word."

Dysea nodded. "Tell us what you know." She spoke with no malice or anger in her voice.

"I will tell you everything I can." Aihola replied.

"As will I," Tari spoke quickly. "It is my wish that you will allow us to continue in this operation my King, even knowing what... what we are. Daniel has chosen many in my group to accompany him and General Vengal. It has made us proud. And it will help us... it will help us to burn away the hate we all hold for the Alliance."

"All of the other Drow are like you?" Martin asked.

Aihola and Tari both nodded, "Lynwe, Anari, all of us yes."

"How are you able to block your vampire smell from overpowering everything else?" He spoke moving to sit down on the ground in front of her. They took this as a sign to do so as well and Tari joined Aihola as she settled to the ground in front of him while Dysea went to retrieve her uniform. She rejoined them in moments fully dressed and Aihola answered.

"I do not know the technical terms," She answered. "It has to do with a small chip that was placed in our bodies. It masks the vampire genes almost completely, allowing our natural scent to be dominant."

"The only reason to do that is because they knew you would be fighting wolves." Martin spoke.

Tari nodded. "My education in the vampire history was more extensive than Aihola's my King. I was able to study much more before they realized we did not turn out like they had wanted us too. The books and data pads were not so much history, but how to fight werewolves; how to defeat your sense of smell, and your claws and teeth. No lone vampire who is not at least five hundred years old stands a chance against a single wolf let alone many. Your natural strength is far superior to a new vampire's, and while your kind is born with it, vampires must grow into it."

"This school... where is it?" Martin asked.

"It is one of the new cities near the ocean my King. I do not know which as they never allowed us to leave the building we were in. I only knew this because on quiet nights I could hear the ocean waves crashing onto the beach and smell the salt in the air." Tari replied.

"These vampires in my capital, will they have this ability to block their scent?" Dysea asked.

Aihola nodded quickly, "Without a doubt." She replied. "I don't know how many experiments she conducted after we were deemed failures, but if Matarn is any indication, then the experiments are continuing and she is succeeding. There could be several dozen... there could be hundreds. I don't know."

"Do you know how we can detect them?" Martin asked.

"Do you... as wolves do you have the ability to see in grayscale?" Tari asked.

Martin nodded. "We can switch to it if needed. We tend to stick with the color receptors though, as they provide more visual acuity and depth perception."

"Grayscale is most often the best way to detect a masked vampire. Their bodies do not radiate heat, but they do appear denser and the flow of blood within their veins appears white in color." Tari replied. "However they can also hunt by infra-red, which makes them especially deadly at night. I know she was working on attempting to develop vampires who could walk during the day, and bear the sun... but I don't know if she succeeded. Once Aihola escaped I made the decision to take what was left of my people and flee at the earliest opportunity. Your arrival gave us that opportunity."

"Will you be able to protect Tarifa?" Martin asked. "Do not boast Aihola. Give me an honest answer for Tarifa must survive if what we have begun is to continue."

Aihola nodded without hesitation. "I will die for her Martin. And yes... Lynwe and I can protect her, even if the two agents we have not identified are vampires. Lynwe... Lynwe is particularly hateful of them. The witch... the witch had horrible things done to Lynwe and Anari." Aihola paused, looking at them and trying to decide if they needed to know Lynwe's secret. They needed to know... to understand the hatred Lynwe carried in her for vampires.

"Tarifa has told me... my love has told me how well... how well endowed you are Martin, and I have... I have seen it this day."

Dysea glanced at Martin with a seductive grin as he turned red in embarrassment. *You are very well endowed Nauta Melme... a fact that leaves Melyanna and I gasping for air more often than not and feeling exquisitely full.*

Martin looked at her and shook his head. *You have turned into a little vixen Melda Min.* He told her with a smile.

Only for you my love. Only for you.

Martin looked back to Aihola. "Why is this important Aihola?"

"Lynwe... Lynwe was changed somehow. She... she is now like you in that way." Aihola spoke seeing their looks of astonishment. "She is not able to have children, and that is the wish of any female Drow warrior. It has left Lynwe with an intense hatred of vampires."

"Jesus... I can see why." Martin replied.

"My love Tarifa, she will be safe Martin Hunter." Aihola spoke confidently. "Of that you can be assured. I will allow no harm come to the woman who holds my soul."

"Martin... Danny is fixing to load out." Julie's voice came through on his implant COM. "Tari was going with him but he can't be found."

Martin got to his feet and looked at Tari. "I am speaking with Tari right now, getting some last minute information that only he was able to provide. He will be down shortly. Let Danny know Jules."

"Copy that... my King!" Julie spoke with a chuckle.

Martin shook his head in disgust. Since discovering who and what they were, and who Martin was, his team had been teasing him mercilessly, ignoring Walter's repeated attempts to stop them. Dysea smiled at his reaction.

Martin looked at Tari and Aihola. "Your secret will forever be safe with us, until the time you choose to reveal it."

"To my love yes... to others I can not. I fear what they would do to me. Especially your people, once they discover we exist." Aihola said rising to her feet. "That aside... you have my loyalty... never question that, on my love for Tarifa I swear to you my King."

"And mine as well." Tari spoke.

Martin nodded slowly. "Tarifa is waiting for you." He said. "We will see you after all this is over." Aihola was shocked when he stepped up to her and embraced her with warmth and gentleness. He placed a soft kiss on her head. "Be safe Aihola... and know that because of your love for Tarifa you have my trust. Do not betray that trust." Aihola shuddered inwardly, for she understood the veiled threat he had just given her. Any betrayal on her part, Aihola knew would end in an extremely painful death.

Aihola nodded slowly, her amber eyes bright. "And you my King." She looked at Dysea, bowing her head slightly, "My Queen."

Dysea smiled at her as she moved off quickly through the trees. When she was gone, Martin looked at Tari. "I find myself wanting to trust you and the others Tari. You have fought with us now... lived among us if only these last few weeks. And all of you have shown that you want nothing more than to live free and in peace. That says quite a bit."

Tari smiled sadly. "The Alliance considers us failures." He spoke softly.

Martin stepped up to him. "I do not. I consider you allies and friends. Breaking away from them as you did took more courage than you know. Do not discount that, or what you mean to your troops. I will do everything that I am able to keep you from having to experience that again, though as I think you have already discovered, the humans and elves of Eden are far more accepting of those not like themselves."

Tari nodded. "And that has given many of my people hope and the will to live on." He replied.

"Then it should give you that same hope." Martin told him. "And you should not resign yourself to never feeling love Tari. I know for a fact it is out there, waiting for you. Now get going... Danny is waiting."

Tari's eyes looked puzzled for a moment but he nodded his head and bowed slightly before moving off in the direction of the airfield.

We can trust them Nauta Melme. Regardless of what the Holy One will say. They are our friends and allies now. She said.

I believe we can too. Anja's thoughts joined theirs. *I had one of those Drow carry a child three blocks into the east clinic today because she had gotten separated from her mother. Martin the man waited with her, played cards with her until we contacted her mother and when her mother did come, he volunteered to walk them home. That does not show me a desire to do anything but be normal.*

Martin nodded slowly. *I have no doubt Aihola and Lynwe can protect Tarifa. And I do not question Tari and the others, or their desire to find peace. The question we have to figure out is how do we protect them and the others? Namely from men and women like us.*

SPARTAN TRANSPORT CRAFT 2000 FEET OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN OCEAN

Theron watched as the pilot of the transport set the crafts flight controls to automatic and turn back to face him. The moon was just coming up and casting a long glow across the water.

"I have established a course that will take us around the major human and Alliance radar concentrations of either coast Holy One. We must maintain this height and speed to avoid being detected until we reach the Atlantic Ocean Basin." The Spartan pilot explained. "Once over the Atlantic we can increase to cruising speed. Do we know where we are going?"

Theron shook his head. "Not yet, but we will soon." He replied. "Patience Commander."

The pilot nodded. “We have waited three thousand years Holy One, we can wait another few hours. It is true?”

Theron smiled. “It is indeed.” He replied. “I will be in the back with the others if you need me.”

The pilot nodded and faced back forward as Theron turned and moved to the rear of the craft. He stopped just inside the personnel area and looked across the wide expanse of the interior. Their transport was designed to carry almost three hundred, and yet only thirty-eight were now aboard. The Spartan Centurions had spread out towards the back of the craft closest to the doors. All of them wore the matte black armor that covered their entire bodies, with the exception of their major joints. The body armor was designed to stop most small arms weapons fire, which was usually all the human settlements around Sparta had. Though the heavier calibers of weapons did often times penetrate the armor, the armor’s ability to change its basic configuration at the molecular level allowed the wearer to Shift to his or her alternate form to heal, while conforming to their wolf or bear shapes. When in wolf or bear form, the armor covered the major portions of the animal’s body, even the head and neck, making these Shifters far more deadly than those of his time who had no protection except their wits and speed.

Each Spartan wore the signature crimson floor length cape and cowl over their shoulders. When each Spartan shifted, the cape would change its configuration as well. It blended into the armor on the back of the wolf or bear who wore it at the molecular level. No one knows where this armor came from, or how it came to be in existence, and as far as Theron knew, only a Spartan Centurion of Pure Blood could wear it. The many other additional Spartan units, Hoplites and pilots all wore standard gray uniforms and body armor.

Aside from the Shi Viska that each Spartan wore, each carried an unbreakable but collapsible Titanium alloy spear that rested in the long sheath on their legs. The spear when extended was six foot in length and with the press of a button a pointed razor sharp tip would extend from one end, while the other end was weighted with an ornately carved knob. Strapped to the opposite leg was a long bladed ritual Spartan knife that could easily cleave a man in two in powerful hands. The bladed weapon and the spear were remnants of a time long ago, but the Spartans were unwilling to part with that part of their history. A fact that made many of the first generation purebloods walk with pride. Strapped securely across the back of each Centurion was their primary weapon.

The Spartan P190 light infantry weapon was a cut down version of the main weapon carried by Spartan Hoplites. A sub machine gun that fired an explosive tipped caseless round of ammunition. Very accurate and extremely deadly, and in the hands of a Spartan Centurion... devastating to almost any enemy.

Theron would never detract from the training of today’s Spartan Centurions. All of them, men and now even the females, were taken from their families at age ten and inducted into the Spartan military in the Ceremony of Agoge. Though no where near as brutal or traumatizing as his Agoge almost three thousand years ago, it was still as far as he knew the most rigid and brutal training to exist to this day. They served for twenty wolf years in the Spartan military, and then if they chose, they could move on to other purposes in life. Many of the younger men stayed on, while many of the females such as Aricia decided to enter different vocations. The only exceptions to this rule were the children of the Senate members, and as he thought about that his eyes fell on Aricia.

Aricia was the youngest of five children born to Arion and Macaria. Arion was a first generation Pureblood, his father dying at Thermopylae beside his King. Macaria was descended from the line of Hercules and Deianara, and Theron had no doubt that was where the young Aricia got her strength. Arion had pledged his life to Sparta after his father’s death, and served with great honor in the battles that followed. When he became too old to take the field of battle he became a member of the senate. It was here that he proved himself to be forward thinking and open minded, and the staunchest supporter of changing with the times while anchoring their people in the rich culture of their past. Arion was the reason that there were so many museums and higher Universities within the confines of Sparta. He believed, as did his dead King, that one could change with the future, but still remain tied to the past. He served on the Spartan Senate for nearly two thousand years, until his oldest son Laertes, a senior Spartan Centurion officer was convicted of raping a young female wolf who had supposedly turned aside his attentions. Laertes had been banished from Sparta, his father stripped of his Senate seat and all wealth. It was all Theron could do to keep his other three sons within the Spartan military, as they had proven to be fine officers. Now... no Pureblood Alpha wolf would consider taking Aricia as a mate and many if not all of the beta wolves would see her as beneath them as and only mate with her for pleasure. None

would grant her what every female wolf wanted, and that was children. No non Pureblood would take her as their primary mate either, again seeing her as dishonored and only capable of giving them pleasure. The only male who had shown interest in Aricia was Midlan. His father was a senior Senate member, and as Thr'won had said, Midlan considered himself to be a superior Alpha male. He had pursued Aricia for almost a decade now, always sniffing around, waiting for her to reach the age where she could mate. Now that she had passed that milestone, he was becoming more and more insistent that she mate with him. To her credit, Aricia had refused all his advances, which only seemed to incite and enrage him more.

Lately he had been causing trouble for her parents who now owned a small trading shop on one of Sparta's busier streets, and Midlan had been using his father's status as a Senator to cause troubles by driving customers away with whispered words and veiled threats. Theron knew Midlan only wanted Aricia because of her youth and beauty, as he could use her as a trophy of sorts. It saddened Theron to see her have to endure this, but there was nothing he could do.

Thr'won was sitting with Aricia, and they were talking softly, Thr'won being the inquisitive elf that she was, attempting to discover all she could about Aricia's new abilities it seemed.

Theron's eyes shifted to where the second elf in their company was. Kmyla sat smiling between two hulking Bear Shifters. She was another elf who had been within Sparta for centuries, turned by an older second generation Alpha who had died in a climbing accident five years earlier. This had caused Kmyla to become reclusive, as like Thr'won she had loved her wolf mate dearly, all the more so because he never took another after her. She had started to come out of her self imposed funk within the last two years and was once more back to the fun loving elf officer the Spartan Centurions knew her to be. She was a strong telepath, and an exceptional Healer, trained by Thr'won herself, as well as an exceptional looking woman even for an elf, with deep brown hair and gray/green eyes. Due to her still relatively young age, Kmyla was being courted by many of the third and fourth generation Alphas, but it seemed her only interest now lie with Aricia's brother Andreus, a second generation Pureblood, and while many still sought her attention, she returned none of it except for that given by Andreus.

He watched as Andreus saw him and began to come forward. A tall and powerfully built brown Alpha wolf, Andreus was an exceptional Spartan officer, and had risen to his current rank in spite of the shame that clouded his family. He had not noticed it before, but looking at the thirty Spartans, he now realized that there was only second generation pure blood Spartan Centurions among the group, with four third generation Bear Shifters. Though the Bear Shifters were considered Spartan Centurions, none of them would be able to advance past the rank of Commander because one of their parents was a Bear Shifter that had mated with a pure blood wolf. This did not happen very often and usually only because the two shifters had fallen deeply in love and they were willing to accept that limitation, as ridiculous as Theron and many others considered it. Bear Shifters, Lion Shifters and other animals were very rare now, and of the few that still remained, most lived within the limits of Sparta. It was here they were accepted without question, and not hunted like rabid animals. Theron recalled that both of the Spartan children Dymas had requested were from this group. He recalled that the young boy Daniel's mother was a bear shifter from the African continent, while the female Julie's father was a lion shifter from the Asian continent. Both of their families were well respected Spartans within the community.

Theron turned to look at Andreus as he stopped in front of him. "You have chosen no First Generation Spartans Andreus, and your number include two Bear Shifters. I specifically told you only Purebloods." Theron spoke softly. "Why have you done this?"

Andreus looked embarrassed. "Forgive me Holy One... this is... this is my personal team. I have worked with them for over two decades. I know them and trust them completely Holy One. You did not specify who I was supposed to gather Holy One, and forgive me... Hakim and Lin Po are members of my team; I did not think that they are non Pureblood. I... I do not think of my men in such a way Holy One."

"And nor should you." Theron spoke after a long moment. "You have done well Andreus... dismiss my earlier statement. They look fit and competent. I don't doubt their skill. You have questions in your eyes young Spartan. Speak them."

"Holy One I have been looking over the last reports sent to you by the Guardian of the Line before the Sky Fires." Andreus said holding up the data pad. "He mentions this unit that the King leads several times."

Theron nodded. "Yes he does. The King and those two Spartan children chosen to help protect him turned their military unit when a defect appeared in the others that Dymas had created. They did it to save their lives, and I would imagine because it would be in their blood to protect what they considered to be their pack."

Andreas nodded. "The Guardian mentions that they were almost as capable as a Spartan squad Holy One. That is... that is most impressive."

Theron nodded. "Indeed it is. Would you expect anything less from one who is our King?"

Andreas shook his head. "My father has told me stories of King Leonidas Holy One. About his drive... his passion... his ability to motivate his men. No... it does not surprise me at all."

"Have you told them who it is we seek? I must admit I lost myself there for a moment after your sister's words." Theron asked.

Andreas shook his head. "I thought perhaps we should wait until we know exactly where he is Holy One. They sense something is happening, and that it relates to our King... but I haven't told him we know for sure he lives."

"Excellent Andreas, you will make a fine Spartan Captain one day. When we do tell them, make sure the others know about this unit he has Andreas... for if any of them remain with him, they will undoubtedly be driven to protect him at all costs, as would any Spartan. They are to be treated as full Spartans, for their experience is superior to even yours in some ways. That they are not Purebloods will mean nothing to them, as I am quite sure they would die for him just as willingly as you or I. I also do not want to charge into a situation blind and have the fury of our King unleashed on us for being foolish enough to injure or kill one he considers a friend." Theron spoke.

Andreas nodded. "I will make it so Holy One."

"Your parents Andreas? How are they?" Theron asked.

Andreas looked at him. "They... they are well Holy One."

"And your sister's decision to not let Midlan mount her? How do you feel about that?" Theron asked.

"My sister is strong willed and independent Holy One." Andreas spoke. "And she is far more intelligent than any of her brothers. I would never question my sister in such a matter as that. Personally I think he is beneath her, far beneath her. Aricia is... she is different... and she does not deserve what has been done to her."

Theron nodded slowly. "No she does not. Your father though, how does she feel about it?"

"My father wishes only grandchildren Holy One. He would rather see her mate with Midlan simply to perhaps have that chance and to come out from beneath the cloud that hangs over our family." Andreas said. "I do not agree with him, nor do my brothers."

"You and Aricia still hold to your belief that Atropos is innocent don't you? All of you do." Theron said softly.

Andreas met his eyes. "I know my brother Holy One. He is not capable of such an act, and no one will convince us otherwise."

"The evidence convicted him Andreas." Theron spoke.

"Perhaps," Andreas said softly. "However... evidence can be false Holy One."

"And yet you still serve?" Theron spoke.

"Atropos would never allow us to do otherwise!" Andreas said. "He threatened to beat us all if we dishonored him further by leaving the ranks of Centurions."

"You still see him?" Theron asked surprised.

"He is our brother Holy One." Andreas told him. "We can no more dismiss him as we could not dismiss the loss of a limb."

Theron nodded. "So he is." He said softly. "I will keep your words to my ears only, son of Arion. Simply because I believe as you do."

Andreas nodded, "My thanks Holy One. I must tend to my men." He bowed his head and moved back towards where his unit sat. Theron smiled as he saw Kmyla's gray/green eyes fall on Andreas with desire and wolf lust. He moved to where Thr'won and Aricia sat alone, taking the seat across from them.

"Aricia... are you doing alright?" Theron asked.

Aricia smiled and nodded her head. "Chief Mage Thr'won has been teaching me exercises to help me to calm my mind and help sort out the flashes I see from my loves?"

Theron's eyebrows narrowed at this. "Your... your loves?" He asked his eyes flicking to Thr'won.

Thr'won took Aricia's hand as her face flushed in embarrassment. She looked at Theron with a smile. "The connection she shares with our King also extends to the females Theron. What she feels for one, she feels for them all, and they for her. She allowed me to experience a very small portion of what she is feeling with them and it is quite wondrous." Thr'won looked at Aricia with a smile and then looked back to him. "They have never met one another, but the depth of the love and connection they have for each other is something I have never seen or experienced before."

"It is not something you should be embarrassed about Aricia. There are many such relationships within Sparta. You know this. We are far more accepting than humans." Theron spoke.

"Thank you Holy One." Aricia said shyly.

"We will reach the Atlantic Ocean in three hours at this speed." Theron spoke. "Is it possible for you to obtain a position of some sorts that we can use to localize our search for them child?"

"They are in North America Holy One, that much I am sure of." Aricia replied confidently. "But the distance between us is still too great for me to get a more exact location. Our King is shielding himself from everyone at the moment, even Dysea, Anja and I. We do not want to disturb him right now, as his thoughts are jumbled and mixed. He is musing something over in his mind."

"Can't... can't this Dysea or Anja tell you?" Theron asked.

Aricia shook her head. "Our connection is stronger if Martin is involved, and all I can get from either of them at the moment are fleeting images. It is growing as we get closer, but it will be some time before I can touch them individually. They are preparing for battle that much I do know."

Theron looked at her. "Can you project an image of the king and this Dysea and Anja to Chief Mage Thr'won so that she can pass it to our Centurions?" He asked.

Aricia looked at him. "May I ask why Holy One?"

"I do not wish to have harm come to them if we are forced into a confrontation." Theron spoke with a gentle smile. "If what you and the Chief Mage have told me is true, our King seems to be quite protective of the three of you, and injuring one of his chosen mates would not be the best way to introduce ourselves."

Aricia flushed with embarrassment. "Forgive me Holy One... I did not think of that." She said.

"There is nothing to forgive young Aricia." Theron told her. "You are protecting what you consider to be yours. He is our King however, and we need to know what they all look like so that we can protect them."

"Of course Holy One," Aricia said.

Thr'won smiled and squeezed her hand. "We have time and that can wait until you have used the methods I taught you to calm yourself child." She said. "Your heart is racing... and you need to rest. We are on our way Aricia. You can rest now... at least for the moment. I want you to sleep for at least an hour before passing their images to me. Is that clear?"

Aricia nodded. "Yes Milady."

Thr'won nodded and motioned Theron forward where they could talk while Aricia closed her eyes and leaned back in the seat. The elf Mage led Theron forward, leaving Aricia in peace and stopped by the side hatch of the transport.

"She has to rest Theron." The elf told him as she turned to him. "She is correct in that their power is stronger when our King is within the loop, at least over this great a distance. Yet she is very new to telepathy, as they all are... and it is draining to her."

"They are in North America Thr'won?" He gasped his eyes wide.

She nodded. "Yes... I know. To project images over that distance is one thing, but to have actually communicated with her as she has said?" Thr'won said shaking her head. "His power is indeed great, but he does lack the finesse of a refined telepath, for she is weak after each communication. That will come with training and skill, and I'm beginning to think you may be right in what you told me. Their connection is growing... becoming stronger with each passing hour. It is simply amazing, unlike anything I have seen."

"North America is quite large." Theron spoke.

"She needs rest old friend." She told him, "An hour at least, preferably two. She will be able to find him, have no doubt of that. But the stronger she is, the stronger their connection will be. She allowed me a glimpse of this Dysea and Anja. It wasn't very clear... but even what I saw... the elf is exceptionally beautiful, I did not doubt that."

"As is all of your kind Thr'won," He told her.

“The human female however... for a human Theron she is equally as stunning,” Thr’won spoke.

“Do I detect a note of disapproval in your tone old friend?” He asked her with a smile.

Thr’won looked at him, “Hardly.” She said.

Theron smiled. “I will bow to your wisdom Thr’won. We have a general location right now and that is good. Allow her to rest until we reach the Atlantic Ocean, three hours at least. I know this is straining on her, but at this moment, Aricia is the only map we have to our King.” He said. “Without her we are lost.”

Thr’won nodded. “Three hours is enough.” She said. “She is stronger than even I thought my friend. She will make a wonderful Queen.”

“That isn’t possible.” Theron told her, shaking his head, “You know this Thr’won, as much as you or I prefer otherwise. We are not above the law, and neither is the King.”

“Then I suggest that we find a way around the law Theron.” She told him, “For all our sakes.”

MOUNTAIN CITY

The return to Mountain City was uneventful to say the least with everyone lost in the thoughts of what was going to occur over the next forty-eight hours. True to Minister Thimina’s statement, Telan’s two Dragoons remembered nothing from their four day stay in the Salina medical clinic, and both looked peaked as they climbed into the Hopper for the return trip. No one spoke on the return back, Tarifa content to hold Aihola’s hand the entire way while her mother and Walter caught up on some much needed rest. Lynwe rode with them, sitting next to Walter, her amber eyes glancing back and forth between Tarifa and Aihola almost the entire trip. She remained in the Hopper when they returned until Cantel had secured the vehicle and then he led her up to Tarifa’s home along a back path that was almost never used. Her cloak swept around her feet, the hood hiding her features and her shimmering white hair.

Telan was waiting for Tarifa when she walked into her home, and taking a deep breath she once more played the part of new wife. It was not as easy this time, so soon after seeing Martin and Dysea, and what they had accomplished. And it was even harder for Aihola to leave her with the man they both detested beyond all others.

Aihola chose to try and relax by going to their tub and filling it with steaming hot water, and once filled she striped and slid into the water, allowing it to sooth her muscles and cool the rage she felt growing in her.

“May I join you?” Lynwe’s voice carried from the darkness in the corner.

Aihola sat up quickly, her arms going to cover her breasts as Lynwe stepped from the shadows. She wore only a long thin robe, and the outline of her enormous breasts was easily discernable, as was the outline of the huge cock that dangled between her thighs. Aihola felt a fleeting surge of pleasure as the memories of the times Lynwe had taken her rushed to into her mind, but she quickly beat them down. There may have been some pleasure in her times with Lynwe, but most of it was not hers, and since Dysea and Anja had cured Aihola of her affliction, she no longer considered the times with Lynwe pleasant experiences.

Aihola sat up straighter and nodded her head slowly, “Of course Lynwe.” She said softly.

Lynwe stepped fully into view, her lean muscular body rippling under her skin and she untied the robe, seductively pulling it aside slowly, revealing her thighs and shoulders before dropping it completely. She stepped slowly into the tub, lingering for a long moment with her thick cock practically dangling in Aihola’s face. As she lowered herself into the water she thought she would have gained more of a reaction from Aihola given her affliction. She settled close to her, her amber eyes never leaving Aihola’s face.

“I... I have missed you Aihola.” She said softly.

“You have had Anari with you Lynwe.” She replied. “And she is one who truly cares for you.”

“You do not care for me Aihola?” Lynwe asked, reaching out to stroke her cheek.

Aihola closed her eyes as she felt the small thrill shoot through her that Lynwe’s touch always had produced in her. Whatever her faults Lynwe was a beautiful woman, her breasts, while very large were firm and stood out proudly, the nipples dark and inviting. Aihola remembered the nights under Lynwe as she drove that long thick cock into her belly. The pleasure had been great, but the pain over rode that as Lynwe would lose control in a fit over what the Alliance had done to her, and her strokes would become too deep and powerful, and then they became painful.

Aihola opened her eyes as she took a deep breath once more. "Not in the way you wish me too Lynwe." She spoke. "My heart is my own now, and I choose who I give it to. And I have chosen already."

"Ah... yes... the High Elf Queen." Lynwe spoke, "A tasty morsel no doubt. Are you the dominant one in your relationship Aihola? Does she make your blood burn for her? Can she do what I do to you?"

"Your hatred of the Alliance and that witch has made you cruel Lynwe." Aihola spoke softly. "You do not know how to be gentle. I am not like you, I hate the Alliance as much as you, but I have not let that hatred rule my heart. That has allowed me to love Lynwe."

Lynwe reached up and ran her finger along the braids in Aihola's hair. "You have broken one of the most sacred taboos of our people by taking her into your bed Aihola. You know this."

"Our people are dead and gone!" Aihola snapped. "We are all that is left! I believe as Tari does that we can not cling to ancient customs and rituals. We must live in the present if we are ever to escape the past."

"Pretty words... but do you believe them?" Lynwe asked. "Does she know what you are?"

"I will tell my love when I feel the time is right." Aihola spoke.

"Your body betrays you Aihola." Lynwe spoke. "It always does, and that is what I so love about you."

Lynwe's hand snapped out to roughly paw Aihola's breast, pinching the nipple. Her amber eyes grew wide when Aihola didn't react as she expected. Aihola should have moaned in delight and been coming right there, instantly submitting to Lynwe's demands. Instead she remained stoic. Lynwe moved in front of her and dragged her now hardening cock across Aihola's leg, grabbing her firm ass and pulling her against her crotch. Her face showed even more surprise when Aihola again did not react. Her pussy did not part willingly as it had so many times in the past, and the only wetness she felt was from the soothing hot water.

What Lynwe did see was that Aihola's amber eyes were growing angrier by the second. She leaned back slightly her own eyes wide in surprise. "Why are... why are you not..."

"Release me Lynwe." Aihola told her in a low voice, the anger trembling beneath her tone.

"You should be..."

"My body is my own now Lynwe!" Aihola snapped. "Now release me!"

"No! I have waited so long to feel you again!" Lynwe said grinding her now completely engorged cock against Aihola's unresponsive pussy, pulling her closer. "I will have you Aihola! I will..."

Lynwe's head jerked back viciously and she froze when she felt the cold blade of the knife press to her throat. She gasped when she saw Tarifa's face above her, her fangs extended and her sapphire eyes now outlined in black.

"You will have nothing Drow witch!" Tarifa snarled viciously. "Release her now or I will cut your throat where you stand! You will not have her against her will. Never again! She is mine!"

Lynwe stared at Tarifa. "You could not hope to defeat me High Elf bitch!" She snapped.

"Are you so sure you wish to stake your life on that?" Tarifa asked her calmly, her voice cold and tinted with warning.

"I will take you as well and watch you squirm under me as I fuck you and beg me..." Lynwe's words stopped as she felt the prick of another blade against the underside of her jaw. A blade now held in Aihola's hand.

"Tarifa begs only for my touch!" Aihola growled, "For my lips on her skin. You will do nothing Lynwe, for by my brother's own words, I will watch you die under my blade if you so much as breathe at my love in a threatening manner."

"Aihola... Aihola I... She does not know what you are!" Lynwe spoke, her voice now filled with pleading. "She could never love..."

Tarifa leaned close to Lynwe's face, pressing the blade tighter against her adam's apple and staring into her amber eyes. "I know exactly what *Nya Istel* is Lynwe!" Tarifa spoke in a soft voice. "Do you think me such a fool?" Aihola's eyes grew wide at this proclamation, and she stared at Tarifa in horror. "It is you who do not know what Aihola is, and you never will."

Tarifa flipped the blade in her hand expertly and drove the blunt end of the pommel down onto Lynwe's temple. The blow was perfect and Lynwe went limp as blackness claimed her stunned eyes.

Aihola could not move as she watched Tarifa haul Lynwe from the water and dump her beside the tub. Fear gripped her heart as she gazed at the woman who had given her all that she had ever hoped for in her

tortured life. And now she felt it all slipping away. Tarifa pushed Lynwe's body over and then turned to look at Aihola seeing the horrified expression she wore.

"*Nya Istel?* What... what is wrong?" Tarifa asked, thinking Lynwe had injured her in some way. Tarifa lowered her body into the water, the thin robe floating on the surface as she moved close to Aihola. "My love... what is it? Tell me please." She spoke her hands reaching for Aihola's face.

"He... he lied to me." Aihola gasped. "He said... he said he would allow me to tell you." Tears began rolling from her eyes now, and she moved to get out of the pool.

"No!" Tarifa gasped, pulling her back and wrapping her arms around her. "What is wrong... tell me! Do not shut me out *Nya Istel!* I beg you."

"Martin... he told me... he told me he would not reveal to you what I am!" Aihola cried. "He said he would allow me to tell you... to tell you I was..."

"That you are half vampire?" Tarifa spoke softly, her fingers going to Aihola's face and pressing to her cheek. "*Nauta Melme* did not reveal this to me *Nya Istel*. He would never break a promise to you... to one he considers a friend. To one he knows holds my heart."

"But... but how?" Aihola asked.

Tarifa pointed up and Aihola followed her motion, seeing the window above them in the ceiling, with the wide metal trim. "I have known what you were since that first night in this very room *Nya Istel*. When you took me against the wall, I saw... I saw your teeth in the metal. I asked the Holy One what exactly the Alliance had done to you while you were their prisoners. He told me of the witch Yuri. He told me what she was... I was... I was shocked. I had never imagined such things could exist, but I finally began to understand what he has meant all these years when he has told me not to fear the unknown. When he has told me there is so much out there that I have yet to experience."

"The Holy One... he knows... he knows?" Aihola gasped.

Tarifa nodded. "He is a genome... like *Nauta Melme* and the others. He has known since you first came into my life."

Aihola felt her heart leap. Tarifa did not fully grasp what Martin and the others were. The Holy One had not told her everything, yet he knew what Aihola was. And Aihola now knew what he was, she had known since their meeting in Eden when he and Martin had stared at each other for so long. Aihola knew that they were communicating telepathically. It was the only thing they could have been doing. And that made Walter a wolf like Martin and the others. That made the Holy One a hunter of her kind. Yet if he had told Tarifa about her, why did he not tell her about Martin and what he truly was. Why did he let her live? Why...

So full of questions Aihola? That is a sign of intelligence and wisdom. Two traits that you are very strong with I have learned. Walter's voice filled her mind, causing her eyes to go wide.

Holy One? She reached out.

You are no threat to us Aihola. I have known this from the first moment you set foot in Mountain City child. Your developing love for Tarifa only confirmed this to me. She loves you child, more than she loves even my King. Love her in return. Martin and I will protect you and the others; you should have no fears about that. You are not the enemy Aihola. You and the others are but more unwitting victims. Walter's voice was warm and gentle in her head. *Love her in return Aihola, and if you are able... try to quench the fire of hate in Lynwe's heart that threatens to consume her. Enjoy your time now child... for soon events will begin happening, and you will need to be prepared.*

Aihola's eyes blinked when his voice drifted away, and she looked at Tarifa. "Tarifa..."

"I do not care what you are *Nya Istel*." Tarifa spoke urgently. "You have shown me more love and caring than anyone in my life save *Nauta Melme*. And it is you who now holds my heart so tightly within your grasp. I do not want to lose that. Ever."

Tarifa's lips lowered and claimed Aihola's in the sweetest and most passionate kiss they had ever shared. It was a kiss of hunger, need, craving, love and desire, and it set Aihola's body on fire. She wrapped her arms around Tarifa, crushing her firm body to her own, and returned the sizzling kiss with equal feeling and passion, falling quickly into her role as Mistress. She fought Tarifa's tongue for a brief moment before Tarifa surrendered with a whimper and allowed Aihola to claim what was hers.

It was a long and sensuous moment before they parted, both of them out of breath. Aihola took Tarifa's face in her hands softly nibbling her wonderful lips as she pulled away. Her eyes grew wide suddenly.

“Telan...”

Tarifa grinned. “He lasted even less time than before my love.” She spoke, her eyes glittering with undisguised desire. Desire for the woman she held in her arms. “And I wanted to be with you.”

“What of your father Tarifa?” Aihola asked. “What of our plans?”

“My mother sent me the signal. She has injected my father with the anti-dote Anja developed. It will be morning before we know anything.” Tarifa replied. “I wanted... I wanted to hold you... to taste you before we begin to remove the scum from my city. I did not know when we could be together. I... I did not suspect what Lynwe would do however.”

“She... she has so much hate in her my love.” Aihola said glancing at Lynwe’s limp form. “I do not know if she knows how to love anymore.”

“You care for her?” Tarifa said softly, stroking Aihola’s shoulder.

“I do care for her, whatever she may think. She is not a bad person.” Aihola spoke. “It’s just... no one except Anari has ever shown her love. And I believe that even though she may care for Anari, she only reminded her of what she had become. What those monsters made her into.”

Tarifa rested her forehead against Aihola’s, reveling in the feel of her beloved’s arms around her, the sensation of her bare breasts against her skin. She looked over to Lynwe’s large beautiful body and made her decision.

“Then let us teach her love.” Tarifa spoke looking at Aihola. “Let us teach her what it is to love and to be loved.”

Aihola met her eyes. “What do you mean?”

“She desires you, that much is very obvious.” Tarifa told her. “Let us show her what pleasures she can have with someone that cares for her. If that is what you wish.”

“You... you would do this for her? For me?” Aihola asked, stunned.

“I would do anything for you *Nya Istel*. You know that.” Tarifa said. “And it pains me to see the agony Lynwe endures inside. You and I can teach her to know what it feels like. We can teach her that not everything is hate and death.”

“Tarifa... she is... she is Drow, a dominant Drow. I...”

Tarifa touched her lips with a finger silencing her words. “No one but you holds my heart Aihola. No one but you could make me feel what you do, not even *Nauta Melme*. Pleasure can exist outside of our love, but know that you and only you will could ever rule my soul, and only you could possess me as you do. And I hope you feel the same.”

“And... what of Martin; what you share with him?” Aihola asked her eyes on Tarifa’s face.

“My times with *Nauta Melme* were exquisite pleasure *Nya Istel*.” She spoke softly. “But he does not have my heart and soul. Dysea and Anja possess his being, as he possesses theirs. He is different... something I can not touch calls to him. Would I love him again? Never without your consent, for you possess me now, in every way. And the pleasure you give to me is so very unique and will never be overshadowed by another. That is not possible. I would hope you feel as I do, for if not I will have to work harder Mistress.” She spoke that last part with a seductive smile of need and want.

Aihola’s eyes were bright in the dim light and she kissed Tarifa longingly, not as her Mistress, but as her friend and her beloved. “I do my love.” She whispered finally after they had parted.

“Then let us show Lynwe what it can feel like to touch that love.” Tarifa spoke.

“What... what is it you wish to do?” Aihola asked, though she had an idea... and the thought was very thrilling to say the least.

Tarifa leaned close to her ear.

MOON BASE EDEN

The moon.

Anari still could not believe she found herself on this wondrous station. She had gleefully sat in the cockpit of the Raptor awash in the wonderment of the stars as they had circled around the planet and come to the moon only a few short weeks ago. When she had reached this place it was as if another world had opened to

her. Gone from her thoughts was Lynwe and the constant death they had run from for two years. Gone from her thoughts was the deteriorating relationship she shared with the hateful Drow warrior. Lynwe had never been able to get past what the Alliance had made her, and it transferred to all that she did, to include her relationship with Anari. That hatred had begun to infect Anari, and she could not stand it, knowing she had to get away. The trip here had been the perfect escape. And she had found not only herself, but the beginnings of what could be a serious relationship. Something she craved more than anything.

Anari remembered that night, a week after arriving. She had been training the elves that Admiral Wallace had chosen to be his fighting force. As she pushed them, she pushed herself even harder. She was sharing quarters with a female elf who had been a slave on the Asian continent. She was an attractive elf with long brown hair and expressive eyes, and the usual petite but very delightful elf figure. Since having her drug dispenser removed, she had become a bubbling elf, keeping everyone's spirits high when they were along and not having to play their roles. It was after a particularly long hard day of training that Anari had returned to their quarters to relax under a stream of hot water. So lost in her own thoughts Anari had not heard Hetyon come into their quarters. Up until this time she had always waited for the female elf to depart before showering or changing her clothes. She was not yet ready to allow anyone to know how different she was. Hetyon changed all that when Anari heard her gasp from behind and she had whirled around without thinking. Hetyon's eyes had grown wide at what she saw. Hetyon had taken a liking to the Drow that Anari had discovered later and now seeing her dripping wet and sporting an incredibly thick male organ, Hetyon could not tear her eyes away.

Anari had snatched a towel from the rack and held it in front of her, her skin flush in embarrassment and shame under her dark complexion. Hetyon stepped closer to Anari, her eyes becoming heavy with passion that Anari did not see at the moment.

"Anari... Anari... is that... is that beautiful thing real?" Hetyon had asked her almost breathlessly, her eyes locked on Anari's groin.

Anari looked at Hetyon, surprise in her eyes at the question. It had not been spoken with malice or fear; it had been spoken with the unmistakable sound of lust. "I should... I should have told you Hetyon. Forgive me..." Anari had said.

The female elf with Asian features had dropped to her knees in front of Anari, her hands encircling the large ebony cock in her dainty hands, her dark eyes clouded over in lust. Anari had hissed in pleasure as it seared through her veins. "Hetyon... please don't..." She gasped. "It... it has been so..."

"So long?" Hetyon spoke, her voice husky and demanding. "I have not... I have not had a choice in so long about who would take me and who would not Anari." She spoke, her hands stroking the ten inch shaft, watching amazed as it grew in size and heat. "You came here... so strong... so powerful... you! I want you to take me Anari! Please!"

Anari nearly lost it then when the young elf's warm mouth engulfed her engorged shaft, swallowing it almost to the base in her velvet throat. She dropped the towel, her hands going to Hetyon's thick brown hair and entwining in the silky strands. Her neck muscles strained, resisting the attempts to ram her thick cock down Hetyon's throat. She did not want to be Lynwe. She wanted to feel pleasure... to give pleasure in return. She was not like Lynwe. Anari had pulled Hetyon to her feet then, her amber eyes wide in passion and lust for this young elf female.

Hetyon had stood in front of her, lips shiny and wet from salvia, her own breasts now erect and her nipples threatening to break the fabric of the shirt she wore.

"Hetyon... I... I am Drow." Anari had gasped out.

"I don't care!" Hetyon had told her. "I have waited for so long to have someone hold me in their arms without hurting me. I was... I was attracted to you the moment you came here. You seem so powerful and confident. Yet you are a woman... and I was drawn to that." Hetyon's hand closed around Anari's raging hard shaft squeezing gently. "Now I know the truth of you and I want you all to myself. Take me Anari!" She had gasped. "Take me and make me yours! I beg you!"

It had been the look on her face that pushed Anari over the edge, and into an entirely different world of love and pleasure. She had taken Hetyon then. She had striped the gorgeous female elf right there in the shower and taken her three times within thirty minutes. Hetyon's cries of pleasure and urging only served to incite her more, not to mention the warmth and extreme tightness of her slick pussy. Hetyon had responded to Anari in ways Lynwe never had, cooing softly in her ears, her hands exploring every portion of Anari's flesh, taking

Anari with her velvet mouth, while pinching her firm breasts in her hands, swallowing Anari completely, and drinking down her juices. When they had moved to the bed, it had only gotten better, as Anari learned of the pleasures of female flesh, spending hours exploring Hetyon's beautifully trimmed pussy and firm ass. Anari let go of all her inhibitions, and more often than not found herself happily feasting on Hetyon's delicious pussy while her thick cock was buried in Hetyon's throat.

It had been Hetyon to give Anari her first ever kiss, pulling down her beautiful Drow face to her own while Anari was stroking into her depths with powerful plunges. The moment Hetyon had claimed her lips Anari exploded deeply inside the female elf, and forever sealed them together.

When they had risen the next morning, exhausted and sore, Anari had feared how Hetyon would react. The female elf had come out of the shower with her usual bubbly nature undaunted, immediately going up to her and pulling her close for a blistering kiss. Anari had stared into her dark eyes for a long moment.

"I... I am yours Anari" Hetyon had told her softly. "Whether by fate or by choice I am yours. I... I know you are Drow... and that you must be dominant in all that you do. All I ask... all I ask is that you... treat me with respect outside of our bed."

Anari could not have stopped her heart from soaring any higher when she heard those words, and she had taken Hetyon's face in her hands and tenderly kissed her lips. "Drow I may be... but I would never disrespect the one who I wish to share my life with, in or out of our bed. If you... if you will have me Hetyon."

The female elf's eyes were brighter than any sun Anari had seen and she nodded quickly. "I... would have you Anari." She spoke. "Very happily I would have you."

That night had begun Anari's new life and she had thrown herself into her position with undisguised glee. By day she trained the elves, and trained them hard, teaching them all sorts of deadly and lethal fighting skills known only to the Drow. The nights she spent in Hetyon's arms, being pleased by her lover, and returning that pleasure without question or doubt. That she was happily lapping away at a female's pussy, and breaking one of the longest running taboos in Drow culture did not matter to her in the least. It was now her life, and she intended to treat her chosen mate how she deemed. If that meant snuggling on their bed while making her lover cum continuously with her tongue, she would happily and continually do so.

This was what occupied Anari's thoughts as she stood in the long corridor staring up at the stars above, while gripping the HK74 in her hands tightly. She heard the hiss of the airlock opening and Admiral Wallace joined them with the petite Asian female beside him.

The Admiral was a large man, imposing and fearsome, but he was honorable and respectful to those that followed him. Anari could detect something different about him at first, something wild and untamed, but that had quickly fallen from her mind as he told her what he needed. He wasted no time and moved right up to her, taking in how the soldiers she had trained continued about their business as professionals.

"We just got a transmission from earth." Wallace spoke. "Tarifa's mother was able to inject the anti-dote and we will be executing our attack in eight hours. Are you ready?"

Anari nodded. "We are ready Admiral." She answered confidently.

Wallace stepped closer to her. "Are you able to detect any vampires among Grahams' forces?" He asked her in a low whisper.

Anari's eyes went wide as he said this and she glanced left and right, naturally trying to find a place to escape to if needed. She felt Wallace's hand grip her arm and her amber eyes darted back to his face. He leaned close to her, inhaling deeply and drawing back slowly. "My King was right." He spoke softly.

"Your... your King?" Anari gasped.

Wallace nodded. "I know what you are Anari." He said softly. "Your vampire genes are well masked, but not from a wolf that knows what to look for, especially one as old as me."

Anari's eyes were wide in fear now. She knew without question that only a Wolf Shifter with at least a thousand years behind them could detect her vampire genes that the chip she had embedded in her skin masked. And she also knew she could never defeat a Wolf Shifter of that age.

"Your fear is unwarranted Anari." Wallace spoke so that only she and Anisa could hear him. "I may be an old Wolf, but I trust my King explicitly. His transmission explained to me what was done to you and the others. What they had forced you to become. And your time here has proven to me you are no enemy of mine, else you would already be dead. You have nothing to fear from me."

"Admiral I did not want to..." Anari began speaking.

Wallace shook his head. “Whatever hatred I may hold for vampires Anari does not extend to you. Breath easy Drow warrior, for you and I are allies in this fight, and whatever comes in our future, we will face it together.”

Anari looked at him. “Then he is who I suspected him to be.” She spoke.

Wallace nodded. “He is the descended of Leonidas. And he is our King.”

“I hold nothing but hatred for the Alliance and their scum.” Anari spoke, “And most especially for vampires. But I do not let that hatred cloud my reason Admiral.”

Wallace nodded. “Yes I know. If it did, I would not smell Hetyon so heavily upon you.” He smiled at her. “You have taken her as your lover?”

“It is a love I intend to maintain Admiral. Something I have lacked for many years.” Anari said.

“That is good.” Wallace told her, looking at Anisa by his side. “Something I have lacked as well until now. Now back to my question... are you able to detect your kind among any of Graham’s cronies?”

Anari shook her head. “I have not up until now.” She said. “But that does not mean that the witch has not improved her methods.”

“Is there a way for Anisa and I to detect them?”

“You must use grayscale vision,” Anari replied immediately. “Their blood will appear white as it flows in their veins.” Anari replied without hesitation. “And their body mass will appear heavier than normal humans.”

“I will take the Command Center when we move, and I will need you to lead the attack against the engineering spaces. Graham’s supporters won’t expect an attack that early in the morning, so we should be able to pull it off. He has shown an ability to pull more to his side than I thought, so be aware that there may be more assisting him than we have been led to believe. Are your people ready?”

Anari smiled with a vicious grin. “We are ready Admiral.” She told him. “And we will be victorious.”

MOUNTAIN CITY

Lynwe’s eyes fluttered open and the first thing she realized was that her hands were securely tied to something. She tested the bonds discretely, twisting her wrists in such a manner that was supposed to loosen the ropes. The second thing Lynwe noticed was that she was completely naked and stretched out on Aihola’s bed, which had been pulled away from the wall and now was in the middle of the room. Her hands had been secured to the frame underneath from what she could tell. She stopped moving when Aihola appeared next to her, also completely and gloriously naked. The Elf Queen Tarifa appeared on the opposite side, also quite naked, and extremely beautiful.

“Aihola... I... I demand you release me.” Lynwe snapped.

Aihola shook her head as they sat on the edges of the bed on either side of her. “I think not Lynwe.” She replied. “You taught me to tie these knots if you remember.”

“Aihola... let me up this instant!” Lynwe demanded. “I will not allow you to...”

“To what Lynwe?” Tarifa asked reaching out to stroke Lynwe’s flesh, drawing her nails along her ribcage and watching her huge breasts heave with her intake off breath. “Dominate you as you have dominated Aihola so many times in the past?”

“Don’t touch me High Elf!” Lynwe spoke, her words a soft growl. “I am a Drow warrior! I am dominant in all things! I take what...”

Aihola’s hand dropped to Lynwe’s thigh, caressing the taut muscular flesh with her fingers. She saw Lynwe’s heavy male balls draw up tightly to the base of her huge fourteen inch cock. “Yes Lynwe we know. You take what you want!” She spoke casually, her fingers continuing to stroke Lynwe’s flesh.

“Stop that!” Lynwe gasped loudly trying to shake her hips to knock Aihola’s hand away.

“You were ready to take her against her will just a little while ago.” Tarifa spoke softly. “Yet now you are angry and defensive. Why is that Lynwe?”

“I said don’t touch me!”

Tarifa smiled at her burning amber eyes. “I am touching you Lynwe. And I intend to do so much more!”

“No!” Lynwe barked. “I will not allow this!”

Aihola leaned over Lynwe's body, their breasts dragging against each other making Lynwe clench her teeth as her cock began to thicken with the pleasure that motion caused. She lowered her lips to Lynwe's neck and suckled her chocolate skin softly while Tarifa's face lowered and nibbled Lynwe's ear lobe, her own breasts pressing hard against Lynwe's shoulder and arm, her nipples fully aroused and burning points against Lynwe's flesh. Lynwe hissed, shaking her head as they drew away from her.

"No! I... I do... not want this!" She spoke, her voice losing some of its force.

"You are filled with so much hate Lynwe." Aihola spoke softly her words warm and soothing, "So much anger."

"I embrace my anger!" Lynwe spoke quickly. "I embrace my hatred!"

"At what cost Lynwe?" Tarifa asked, lowering her lips to Lynwe's nipple, grazing them across the hardening bud. "At what cost to you?" Tarifa continued. "You have allowed your hatred to blind you to all else around you, even to those who care about you."

"Stop it!" Lynwe gasped as Tarifa engulfed her nipple and sucked gently, teasing it with her tongue.

"Let us help you." Aihola spoke now, brushing her own lips across Lynwe's cheek and across her lips, her tongue dancing over Lynwe's soft pink lips.

Lynwe turned her head to the side. "No!" She gasped. "This is not right!"

"Why isn't it Lynwe?" Tarifa asked softly. She leaned over the tall Drow warrior's body, slowly dragging her firm breasts against Lynwe's massive globes, careful to make their nipples meet and caress each other. "It is not wrong to feel pleasure."

Lynwe gasped as she felt Aihola's small hands encased her now rock hard cock and stroke it several times. "Please... please... not like this! I don't want... I don't want to be weak."

Tarifa lowered her face close to the Drow and stared at her with eyes of sapphire. "This is not weak Lynwe." She spoke softly. "This is who you are. You are not the killer you make everyone believe. You lash out because it is all you know. You lash out because you think no one will find you desirable. You hurt others because you are trying to prove you aren't weak." Tarifa dropped her head lower and once more dragged her tongue across Lynwe's tasty skin. "Let us show you what pleasures can come from being strong Lynwe." She spoke, almost cooing the words as she circled Lynwe's opposite nipple with her tongue. "Aihola and I will show you that you are strong Lynwe. And that you lose nothing of yourself."

"Stop it please!"

"Why? Does the pleasure course through you?" Tarifa asked as her hand slipped across Lynwe's hard abdomen, caressing her ebony skin with fluttering gentleness. "Is that what is wrong to you, that you should feel no pleasure?"

"Stop it!" Lynwe practically yelled. "I am a Drow warrior! I am..." Lynwe's eyes flew open wide as she felt soft warm lips engulf the head of her burning cock. Pleasure surged through her legs as Aihola's lips pulled more of her length into the confines of her tight throat, quickly sinking past seven inches. Aihola's lips were stretched obscenely wide around the thick shaft, her small hand pumping the remaining seven inches while her saliva coated the exposed shaft.

Instinctively Lynwe lifted her hips off the bed, trying to ram her cock down Aihola's throat. Tarifa shook her head and stretched her body atop Lynwe's pushing her hips down with her hands.

"No Lynwe." Tarifa spoke softly. "Fight the urge. Control it. Let Aihola please you! Let her show you pleasure, as I will when she has emptied you." Tarifa looked into Lynwe's wide amber eyes, her massive breasts heaving against her own chest and causing ripples of pleasure to surge through her own body. Tarifa could feel her pussy becoming moist in excitement, and she ground it down upon Lynwe's hard abdomen stimulating herself. The burning in her veins was increasing and fueling her own lust. She could already smell Aihola's sweet cherry blossom scent filling the room, telling her that Aihola was deriving just as much pleasure from sucking Lynwe's huge cock as Lynwe was experiencing from having it sucked.

Lynwe knew by now she would have been ramming her huge pole into Aihola's throat, intent on only pleasing herself, heedless of her partner's needs, however her hands were tied securely, and Tarifa was applying too much weight on her hips to allow her to fuck Aihola's throat in this condition. Lynwe could feel the blood pounding in her head, stars beginning to form as another three inches of her cock slid between Aihola's warm lips. It was never... it was never like this. Aihola was playing with her, nibbling her thick cock as it pushed into her throat. Her tongue was dancing around the main vein, teasing it and driving her mad. Aihola's hand went to

her heavy hot balls, gently coaxing them, tickling them with her nails attempting to draw the prize she so wanted from their depths.

Tarifa's lips had once more descended to Lynwe's neck, and with her extended fangs she was nibbling on Lynwe's delicious skin, the tip of her tongue tracing every contour, every muscle. She licked the underside of Lynwe's ear, tracing the outer ridge of her delicately pointed elf ear, eliciting a gasp of sheer delight from Lynwe.

Lynwe's world exploded in a flash of bright lights and colors as her come rocketed up the length of her pulsing cock and erupted into Aihola's hungry mouth. Her body was rigid, her arms pulling the bindings tight, her teeth clenched in sheer bliss as pleasure ripped through her unlike anything she had felt before. She was vaguely aware of Aihola pumping her huge cock with both hands, milking her length as she drank down what Lynwe was offering to her. Drank it down with a gusto Lynwe had never seen from Aihola before. Her cum was spilling from the corners of Aihola's lips in an almost constant stream, and still Aihola would not release her erupting cock from the prison of her soft lips. She could see Aihola grinding her ass down on the heels of her feet as she too was coming madly, her juices pouring down the insides of her thighs. She was aware of the warm liquid spilling across her firm belly and retained enough presence of mind to realize that the High Elf Queen was experiencing her own orgasm as well, humping Lynwe's abdomen.

And then it was over, and her body slumped onto the bed. She watched in a dazed fashion as Aihola licked her still hard cock clean with her tongue before tracing her tongue up Lynwe's body as Tarifa slid off her abdomen. Aihola lavishly licked Tarifa's cum from Lynwe's belly, relishing in the flavor of her love. Lynwe saw Tarifa's face through the haze now and she watched as the High Elf Queen and Aihola shared a passionate kiss, their tongues dancing together over the top of Lynwe's huge heaving breasts. Lynwe's eyes were wide as she realized they tasted her as well, her come mixed in with Tarifa's. It was a blistering hot kiss, Aihola's hand coming up to grasp the back of Tarifa's long black mane and hold her place. It should have disgusted Lynwe, made her avert her eyes, but by the gods it was sending electric jolts of pleasure through her once more just by watching them.

When they finally parted, they had looks of extreme pleasure on their faces, their eyes closed. "Hmmm... she tastes good Mistress." Tarifa spoke softly, stunning Lynwe with her words. "Much better than I thought. Will you allow me to taste her?"

Aihola smiled wantonly and licked Tarifa's lips. "Perhaps in the future, but for now do as we discussed slave." She spoke as calmly as her racing heart would allow.

"Thank you Mistress." Tarifa answered almost longingly.

Lynwe's eyes were wide. They had shared no harsh words, Aihola's command given with a soft kiss and caress, with Tarifa smiling in the desire to please her. The High Elf Queen disappeared from sight as Aihola's bright amber eyes were suddenly in her face.

"Do you see Lynwe?" Aihola spoke, her lips so close to Lynwe's that she could feel her breath on her skin.

Lynwe's eyes began to moisten. "Aihola... I... I..."

Aihola leaned forward quickly, kissing her deeply, thrusting her tongue into Lynwe's mouth and teasing the roof of her mouth before she drew back. "We are not done yet Lynwe. My slave wishes you to feel more."

"Aihola... I can not... Ahhhhhhh!" Lynwe's eyes flew open once more as the hot velvet heat encased the head of her steel hard cock and then easily swallowed six inches of her near bursting shaft.

"Ahhhhhhh!" Tarifa echoed Lynwe as she braced herself on Lynwe's hips with her hands and sank another three inches of her massive pole inside her seething hot pussy. She was facing away from Lynwe, sweat adorning her body, her black hair swinging wildly about her tanned shoulders.

Lynwe's face contorted in sheer blissful agony and she tensed her body to shove her entire fourteen inches into the Elf Queen. Aihola's hands on her hips stopped her, forcing her hips down.

"No Lynwe!" She gasped, watching her beloved hovering over Lynwe's hips with nine inches of her gut filling cock inside her. Her beautiful pussy lips were stretched wide around Lynwe's shaft, Tarifa's eyes closed tightly, biting her bottom lip. "Let her pleasure you! Let her show you what pleasures you can have." Aihola whispered in Lynwe's ear. "Stop thinking of yourself as being cursed Lynwe, start thinking of yourself as blessed with a gift. You are a beautiful woman Lynwe, strong and proud. Let us show you what love is. What it means to be gentle and caring."

Lynwe suddenly felt her hands being cut free and she immediately grabbed Tarifa's hips and prepared to ram her thick cock fully into the elf Queen.

"No Lynwe!" Aihola's voice froze her. She felt her lips next to her ear. "Do it my way Lynwe, and I can promise you more pleasure and release than you dreamed. You must give of yourself to receive of someone else. Let her adjust to you Lynwe, for you are larger than she has ever had, even larger than her *Nauta Melme*. Enjoy the sensations as she moves a top you, breathing deeply. She is so tight isn't she?"

Lynwe closed her eyes and listened to Aihola's voice in her head. Her hands rested on Tarifa's hips, but she did not pull her down as her instincts told her to. Instead Tarifa wrapped her hands around Lynwe's wrists and sank further down on her dominating Drow cock. Lynwe's body was on fire, sensations she had never experienced ripping through her very being. It wasn't... it wasn't supposed to be like this. Pleasure like this should not exist. Yet she was experiencing it first hand. Lynwe and Tarifa gasped together as with a final five inch plunge her pussy came to rest on Lynwe's burning balls. Shivers of ecstasy rumbled through them, Lynwe's balls throbbing madly as she felt them bang against the pussy of this elf Queen.

Tarifa fell back on Lynwe, her hands dropping to Lynwe's hips, holding her in place as she rocked her perfect ass back and forth in tight hard circles across the enormous cock buried in her tight pussy. No one had ever been this deep inside her. Not even her *Nauta Melme* had been so far inside her belly. This pleasure was different... staggering and powerful... yet oh so pleasant. The pleasure with Martin and Aihola was far beyond what she was experiencing now because of the depth of feeling involved, but Lynwe's cock was causing her pussy to feel things she'd never felt before.

Lynwe reached around to Tarifa's chest and almost without thought covered her firm breasts with her hands, gripping them tightly, her fingers pinching Tarifa's nipples, but gently and almost reverently.

"Ahhhhhhh Lynwe..." Tarifa gasped. "Do... do you see?"

Lynwe lifted her hips off the bed slowly, hearing Tarifa gasp and clench her pussy down tightly on Lynwe's cock. Lynwe let out a throaty groan next to Tarifa's ear as staggering pleasure surged through her cock when Tarifa squeezed her shaft with her pussy muscles. Her eyes were wide as she suddenly felt a warm tongue bath her balls with saliva. She felt Tarifa stiffen and clamp down almost painfully with her pussy as Aihola's tongue stabbed her pierced clit and sent Tarifa over the edge. Lynwe cried out as Tarifa's hot cum flooded from her, bathing her pulsing cock. When her powerful muscles clenched her, Lynwe knew it was too much for her to stand. She tilted her head back and screamed as her searing cum blasted deeply into the convulsing elf Queen's belly, and triggered yet another orgasm within Tarifa. Aihola's tongue set them both off almost immediately after Lynwe's first eruption by dragging her tongue up Lynwe's balls and across her beloved's eraser hard clit.

Lynwe came for almost a full minute, blasting her come into Tarifa's spasming pussy. Her hands unconsciously caressed Tarifa's glorious body while she emptied her come into her, holding her possessively. With a final small upward thrust, Lynwe was spent and she slumped onto the bed exhausted. Tarifa allowed a small smile to cross her face as she slowly slipped from on top of Lynwe, her huge cock sending tingles of pleasure through her as it slid free of her pussy. Once on the bed fully, Tarifa moved over next to Aihola, her eyes sleepy and her body fully sated. Aihola gathered her into her arms and pulled her head to her breasts, feeling Tarifa's arms pull her tight, their legs entwining.

Aihola stared at Lynwe as she felt Tarifa drifting fast to sleep in her arms. After several moments, her chest heaving in exertion, Lynwe turned her head and met her gaze. Her eyes took in the tight body of the Elf Queen and she felt a small surge of pleasure in her loins. She rolled over onto her side, her amber eyes wide as if she had found a new toy and she reached for Tarifa.

"No Lynwe." Aihola's voice stopped her dead.

Lynwe met her eyes. "Aihola..."

"You see Lynwe. You can control it." Aihola said softly. "Can you lay there and tell me what you have just experienced is not the most incredible thing you have ever felt. Can you?"

Lynwe shook her head slowly. "It was." She spoke finally. "I... I have never felt so..."

Aihola reached out and touched Lynwe's face gently. "Let us teach you love Lynwe." She said. "Tarifa is willing... as am I. I... I thought sharing her with you would make me angry. I know now that the depth of what she and I feel for each other is beyond that. She will never deny you attention Lynwe, but you must return it. She will never hurt you, and you must never hurt her. She is my love... and I will kill any who harms her Lynwe. That includes you."

“Aihola...”

“Listen to me!” Aihola spoke. “Stay with us. Let us show you what you can have Lynwe. You are as desirable a woman as either of us has ever known. And you have your special gift. Leave the hate behind you Lynwe. Stay with us. She will do anything we ask of her in our bed; and she has already shown you the pleasures she can give you. She... I... we can do so much more. But you must never disrespect her, in our bed or in public, for she is Queen and I will not allow it.”

“And you Aihola?” Lynwe asked softly.

“I love Tarifa with all that I am Lynwe. That will not change, ever. And she loves me just as deeply. I have found peace in her arms Lynwe, and we wish to share that peace with you.” Aihola spoke. “You don’t have to be alone anymore! Come into our embrace Lynwe, for we have much to do in a few hours and we need our strength. Do not remain alone.”

Lynwe moved closer, pressing her body up against Tarifa’s back and sandwiching the Queen of the High Elves between her two Drow lovers. She felt another flicker of sexual energy course through her as her cock snuggled against Tarifa’s firm ass cheeks, but this she fought down herself and she rested her head on the pillow staring at Aihola, feeling the sense of peace filling her. She felt the small tears roll down her cheek as she smiled.

“Perhaps... perhaps it is time I accept who I am and attempt to rebuild what I can.” She spoke softly.

“You will never be alone Lynwe... Tarifa and I will help you.” Aihola said.

“I... I am without words Aihola.” She said.

“Honor her Lynwe. Honor her and no words will be needed.” Aihola spoke leaning over and kissing Lynwe softly on the lips. A kiss that Aihola noticed she did not flinch from in the least. She smiled. “We must sleep, for tomorrow our lives will change.”

Lynwe then did something she hadn’t done since discovering what the Alliance had turned her into. She stretched out her long arms and took Aihola and Tarifa in her embrace, the three of them falling into a content filled sleep. None of them knew what was going to happen tomorrow, but for this one moment they had each other. And that was enough.

MOUNTAIN CITY

“Hello Papa!” Tarifa spoke softly, looking at her father lying in the bed looking up at her.

Tareif looked at his daughter and found her could not contain the tears that washed down his face. He held his arms open and Tarifa fell into them as easily as she would have as a small child. Palina stood next to Cantel and another Dragoon officer watching, tears rolling down her face as well.

“My daughter... I... I have wronged you so!” Tareif cried. “I wish... I wish to take my own life after what I have done to you child.”

Tarifa leaned back quickly, “Never speak like that again Papa, ever!” She gasped. “Papa you were not yourself! They were controlling you.” She said, grasping his face in her hands, seeing the tears streaming down his face, “Controlling us! The drugs they used made them able to plant suggestions within your mind. You could not refuse their directions, no matter how much you knew it was wrong.”

“Who... who did this?” Tareif asked softly.

“Telan,” She answered. “His father and their Alliance supporters. We have learned much in the last few weeks, but we still do not know the extent to which they have infiltrated our cities and our government.”

“Fal’sas and Klas,” Tareif exclaimed. “They... they hold your brothers Tarifa!”

Tarifa shook her head. “Not for much longer Papa. Daniel Simpson and General Vengal are waiting for word from me to rescue them.”

“Vengal? The Wood Elf Ranger leader?” Tareif asked. “Why... why would he help us?”

Tarifa slid back a little as her father pulled himself to a sitting position on the bed, and she watched his eyes grow larger when he saw the two tall Drow warriors in his bedroom. The taller of the two was standing by the door, her amber eyes ever alert, watching outside the small window, her hand gripping the unusual double bladed knife. The second Drow warrior stood close behind Tarifa, almost possessively. Cantel and the other Dragoon made no move to protect them, or subdue the Drow. Tarifa grasped his hands.

“There is much I must tell you papa.” She said. “You have many questions in your eyes.”

“Tarifa... there are two Drow in my bed chamber.” Her father spoke softly. “You sit there calmly and my Dragoons stand at ease.”

Tarifa nodded. “They are not our enemy papa. And neither are their tribe mates who currently stand ready to rescue your sons and my brothers.” Tarifa reached behind her and took Aihola’s hand, pulling her closer. “This is Aihola of the family Anatyla. She has been my bodyguard for several months now, and she is also my lover and will one day become my soul mate. Lynwe is a dear friend who accompanied us back to Mountain City to help Aihola protect me.” Tarifa did not see the look she passed across Lynwe’s face at her words. She had not expected Tarifa to refer to her in such a way. When they had awakened, she had been gone from within her and Aihola’s embrace, and for a fleeting moment Lynwe had felt an ache inside her. She was beginning to understand what Aihola meant, and when she looked at Aihola and found her eyes open and looking at her with friendship and caring, Lynwe knew that her life would never be the same.

Tareif’s eyes flew open wide at this news. He looked at Aihola, standing proud and calmly next to Tarifa. She bowed her head to him slightly.

“It is an honor War Master Tareif.” Aihola spoke softly. “And it is good to see that you are yourself once more. We will need your skills and leadership.”

Tareif turned back to Tarifa. While it was not uncommon for female elves to develop relationships, their society did not frown on such things, that his daughter the Queen was sharing a bed with a Drow stunned him. They had been dire enemies not so very long ago. He felt Tarifa’s hand touch his weathered face.

“I see the questions running through your head papa.” She said with a smile. “I will answer them all for you, but you must trust me. This is not a game; the Alliance is not playing tricks on your mind any longer. You are once more yourself.”

“You... you said Vengal and Simpson are going to rescue your brothers.” Tareif spoke. “He was... he was one of the genomes with Hunter.”

Tarifa nodded. “Yes... they did not go where the Council of Elders directed them. They have built a great city just outside High Elf territory. Mother discovered what Telan and his family was doing and her actions by going to them for help set everything in motion.”

Palina stepped up to the bed now and took her husband’s hand. “I have my husband back.” She spoke, kneeling next to the bed and dropping her forehead to his cheek. “That is what matters most to me.”

Tareif closed his eyes as he took in the smell of his wife’s hair, his wife of almost three hundred years, the mother of his children and the owner of his heart. Tareif squeezed her in his embrace before grabbing the blanket and tossing it aside. He pulled his legs over and stood up taking a deep breath, his mind clear and focused for the first time in months as his natural elfin system began to reassert itself quickly. He turned to his daughter as she stood up.

“What is happening Tarifa?” He asked.

Tarifa smiled. “There are some things you need to know papa. But as the Holy One is so fond of telling me, you must not fear the unknown. What I’m going to tell you will... it will shock you and make you doubt many things. Just know that is all very true.”

“I don’t understand child.” Tareif spoke. “What are you talking about? You mentioned Simpson... and if he is involved then I have no doubt Hunter is as well. Where is he? What is he doing?”

“At the moment papa he has taken it upon himself with Dysea to stop the war between our people and the Wood Elves.” Tarifa spoke. “His is the most dangerous task... and I worry for him... for them...” Tarifa felt Aihola grasp her hand and squeeze tightly. “But it is... it is his actions that have given us the opportunity to stop what could very well mean the end of us.”

“I don’t follow.” Tareif spoke.

Tarifa took his hand. “You will papa. You will.” Tarifa turned to where Lynwe stood by the window. “Lynwe... would you send the signal to Eden that my father is fit and himself once more and they can begin.”

Lynwe nodded. “It’s about time.” She spoke. “My blood is burning for some action.”

Aihola looked at her, a flash of concern in her face. She stepped over to her quickly. “Lynwe...”

Lynwe met her eyes and smiled. “Have no fears Aihola Little One.” She spoke confidently. “After... after what you and Tarifa have shown me... the hate does not rule me anymore. It still burns... but now it is

tempered with the knowledge that I am more than what they made me think I was. And I hope that you will continue to help me see this.”

Aihola smiled and nodded. “I believe Tarifa and I would like that Lynwe.”

Lynwe nodded. “Then let’s get this moving so we can return to more pleasurable actions.” Lynwe tilted her head slightly activating the communications implant within her jaw. “Eden Center... this is Drow one nine four. We are set. I say again we are set.”

The response was short and very much to the point.

“Drow one nine four copy. All units from Eden Center...Execute! Execute! Execute!”

DODGE CITY, KANSAS

Danny lowered the macrobinoculars from his eyes and looked at the dark clouds that were brewing in the east. Dodge City only had a population of roughly thirty thousand before the comet passed, and now it was nothing but an empty shell. Dilapidated buildings and factories were the only sign of the once bustling beef industry that had sustained the city. Wind swept through the streets blowing century’s old garbage about the deserted allies and roads, and not a single window remained in place, even the jagged pieces long gone.

Danny lay beside Vengal and Tari on the battered and weeds strewn bridge that was once a highway through the city. All of them wore desert type fatigues to blend in better with the predominant terrain that was abundant in The Wastes. They had been sitting in almost this exact spot for the last six hours, studying the run down factory building less than a mile away. The weathered and barely legible words NATIONAL BEEF stood out on the side of the factory.

“I got nothing.” Danny spoke finally.

“I can see nothing either.” Vengal spoke lowering his glasses.

Tari turned his eyes from the long lenses he held and looked at Daniel. “Daniel... we have been here for six hours viewing this building and have seen no signs of life. This does not bode well.”

“I agree.” Vengal spoke. “It is nearly a hundred and ten degrees out here. We have seen no signs of power to run cooling units, and our three other teams have reported the same thing. No vehicles... no signs of vehicles... not even any guards or scouts.”

Dan nodded slowly, “Which means one of two things. We have the wrong location... or we were lied too.”

“In which case this is a trap and they are here somewhere waiting for us to make a move. Which means whoever is here is very well trained so as not to give away their position, and it probably also means we are outnumbered.” Vengal spoke.

“Yep.” Dan agreed. “We can’t get a heat return from the Raptor because of the high temperature inside the building, which means we are blind as fucking bats.”

“Something is here.” Tari spoke softly. “I can feel it.”

“If this is where they have been holding the sons of Tareif... there should be some signs of vehicle traffic, foot movement, or some indication of life. They can not stay inside this entire time, especially considering the heat in the buildings during mid day.” Vengal spoke. “This heat would sap the life from anyone... even one such as you Daniel.”

Dan nodded. “No arguments there.” He spoke. “My balls are sweating enough just sitting in this sun.”

“Let us assume that the information is correct.” Vengal spoke. “Why would we see nothing outward sign above ground?”

“Underground.” Tari spoke turning his head to look at them. “It has to be.”

“Dodge City doesn’t have a subway or rail system.” Danny spoke.

“The Drow is right.” Vengal said.

“But...” Dan’s eyes narrowed, “A sewer system!” He spoke. “Fuck me... why didn’t I think of that before?”

“It would allow them unhindered movement throughout the city.” Tari said. “As well as make sure there are no signs above ground they are here.”

Dan twitched his head. “Team from lead. Moving ever so carefully people, I want you to check your areas for manhole covers or sewer entrances that show signs of recent use. Be very cautious people, I’m still not convinced this isn’t a trap. Contact me back if you have something. You have ten minutes.”

Dan brought the binos back to his eyes and moved them to the top of the ten story building to their west. He could just make out the barrel of the sniper rifle from under the urban camo blanket, and the shapes of his sister sniper and her elf spotter. “God... you with me?”

Dan saw the almost imperceptible movement of the gloved hand, “Thought I would catch some winks Danny. It’s unusually boring up here considering you attract so much attention.” The female voice replied. “Tguil was just about to launch into a rendition of Bad Moon Rising that I’ve been teaching him.”

Dan smiled. “Trina... swing your scope about ten degrees north and tell me if you can see the dry river bed.”

Dan watched and waited. If he didn’t know what to look for, he would have never noticed the slow steady movement of the barrel of the weapon, or the movement of the spotter glasses just to the left of the weapon.

“Affirmative,” Trina spoke softly, “Lots of sand and dirt, not much else. The canal walls look like they haven’t seen water in years.”

“Can you spy the canal walls along the back of this factory?” Dan asked.

“Stand by.”

Dan watched her for several moments, saw her spotter adjust the tripod of the 20mm sniper rifle ever so slowly.

“Well hello there.” Trina’s voice sounded in his receiver. “Danny I got two vehicles... looks like light Hoppers sitting outside what appears to be an old service tunnel entrance for the canal.”

“Targets?” Dan asked.

“None in view,” She replied. “Tguil is seeing lots of footprints in the dirt with his spotter scope though.”

Dan looked at Vengal who nodded. “It has to be.” He spoke. “We...”

“One from four. Copy?”

Dan raised his hand quickly. “Go Four.”

“Skipper... I’m sitting on top of a sewer grate in the back of the maintenance shed. It’s cool to the touch.” The voice spoke.

“It leads underground four. Stands to reason it would be cool.” Dan told him.

“No... you don’t get it. It’s got frost on it!” The voice spoke. “Like there is some sort of coolant pipes running underneath. I’m getting a slight vibration as well. The ground around the cover is wet where the frost has melted.”

“Can you get a TAP into the cover?” Dan asked.

“Working on it now Skipper stand by.”

Dan looked at Vengal once more, “Thoughts?”

“It is what I would do.” Vengal spoke. “If I was holding prisoners that I did not want to be found, the Wastes is a perfect place. And if there are no outward signs I was in the area, the Nomads would not come around sniffing.”

Tari nodded. “I agree.” He said. “This area of the Wastes is notorious for seismic vibrations since the Great Fire. The nomads, if they moved through the town, would think nothing of it.”

“Four... how far away from the main factory are you?” Dan asked.

“Two hundred meters east Skipper. This maintenance shed is on the edge of the truck yard.” The voice spoke in the background softly. “Skipper we’re getting a feed from the TAP. It appears to be a tunnel of some sorts. Well worn... but definitely man made and it leads right towards the factory.”

Dan nodded. “That’s our entry point folks. It’s underground. All teams converge to Four’s location. Very discretely people... we don’t want to wake anyone up just yet. Maintain radio silence unless engaged. God... you keep a watch on that entrance and let me know if anyone brings flowers.”

“Roger that Skipper. Can I let them in if they are roses? I like roses.” Trina’s voice said in reply.

Dan chuckled softly. “I’ll make sure I get the flowers for you God.” He spoke looking at Vengal who was shaking his head. He and Tari had heard all of the conversations as they were all on the same command channel.

“You... you and your people laugh in the face of danger and the unknown Daniel.” Vengal spoke. “That is most impressive.”

Dan’s face grew serious. “No General... we’re scared shitless. We always are... we may be what we are... but damned if we don’t feel fear. It’s just our way of coping with it.”

Vengal stared at this giant of a man for a long moment. “I believe my daughter Anuk has chosen well with you Daniel Simpson. I just wanted you to know that.”

Dan nodded his head. “If nothing else... at least I don’t smell as bad as that vampire bastard huh?” He said with a grin.

Vengal chuckled and shook his head once more. “Indeed.” He said.

“Tari... lead us out.” Dan spoke. “We got some elves to rescue.”

The Alliance soldier’s eyes ballooned out of his head as his air was cut off and he was dragged from the chair. His weapon fell from his hands, but didn’t clatter to the grated floor and he was pulled back into the shadows of the tunnel. He struggled; kicking his feet, but whoever held him was incredibly strong and simply carried him along like a rag doll. A large shadow past in front of him and his eyes flared wider as he saw the hulking ebony giant appear in front of him, eyes dark as night and some very wicked looking fangs protruding from his upper jaw.

“Hi.” Dan spoke to the terrified soldier. “I have a delivery and just wanted to know where I should take it.”

“Who... who are you?” The soldier hissed out, still trying to pull the thick arm from around his throat.

“Me? I would be more concerned about the half vampire that currently has a hold of your throat, and is looking quite thirsty.” Dan spoke.

The soldier’s eyes cut to where Tari now leaned his face forward, his half vampire fangs protruding quite clearly in the dim light, and his amber eyes holding nothing but hate. “Oh shit man!” The soldier pleaded, fear in his eyes now. “Don’t make me one of you! Please!”

“How many bad guys are down here with you?” Dan asked.

“Forty one!” He replied quickly. “I just guard the tunnel man please! I ain’t like them!”

“You are holding prisoners right?”

The guard bobbed his head quickly, “A couple of elves. We have been for close to a year. I think they’re brothers or sons or something from some elf queen bitch!”

“Alive?” Dan asked.

The guard looked at him. “They...”

“If you lie to me... I’ll slice open your throat for him.” Dan spoke lifting the Shukur fighting knife. “And then you can walk around undead for the rest of eternity.”

“Fuck! Yes... they’re alive!” The guard gasped. “We... were allowed to beat on them as much as we wanted... but not kill them! They’re fucking elves man! Slaves!”

Dan stepped close to him, his eyes hard and unflinching. “That is where you are wrong friend.” He growled, “How many guards?”

“Forty-one like I said.” The man replied quickly. “Jesus don’t kill me.”

“Keep talking and I won’t.” Dan told him.

“Most of them are bunked in the warehouse now. They should be there getting ready for the shift change.” The guard chattered. “The three officers are in the control room down the corridor about three hundred meters to the right.”

“The elves?” Tari growled in the man’s ear.

“They are one floor down!”

“How many guards are with them?”

“Four! Two outside the room... and two inside the room, that’s it.”

“No other surprises?” Dan asked.

“No! This facility is secret! No one else knows about it!” The guard said. “It’s run by those... by those genome bastards.”

“Genome?” Dan asked stepping closer. “What do you mean?”

“They work directly for the Alliance President! They’re worse than Marcus man! And she’s turned them all.”

“Turned?”

“You know... into vampires!” The guard said.

“And three of them are here?”

“In the control room like I said.” The guard spoke. “The others left to go to...” He stopped, his eyes searching for a way out.

Dan pressed the knife against his throat, “Where did they go, and how many?” He asked.

“They... they went to the Wood Elf capital man; Jesus don’t kill me! There are eight of them that left from here. Another sixty or so, those are still in New Miami!” The guard gasped. “There’s something big happening there! I don’t know what!” Dan looked at Tari and nodded. The guard saw this and his eyes got big. “Hey... you told me you wouldn’t kill me!” He gasped.

Dan nodded. “I said I wouldn’t kill you. I’m not going to... he is.”

The guard opened his mouth to scream but the only sound was his neck snapping in the tunnel as Tari wrenched viciously, nearly twisting his head off with his enhanced strength. He lowered the body to floor and then looked at Daniel.

“Daniel... I do not drink blood!” Tari spoke defensively. “It is vile and inhuman.”

Dan smiled. “I know that.” He answered. “But he didn’t. Fear does wonderful things to a person’s brain my friend. You should know that.” He looked at Vengal. “You and Tari take six men and get Tarifa’s brothers. God... you copy?”

“Five by five,” Trina replied from her position outside on the ten story building.

“Send a burst to Marty. Tell him he’s going to have company on top of what he’s already got. Genomes; and they are all vampires.”

“Fuck!” Trina gasped. “I’m on it.”

“Daniel?” Vengal asked. “What are you and the others going to do while we are getting Tareif’s sons?”

Dan met his eyes. “Trust me when I tell you, you don’t want to know.”

The three genome vampires had been members of the Air Force’s unit of the genetically enhanced soldiers. In the first month after her staged defection Yuri had been staying at Andrews Air Force Base in high security lock down, these genomes guarding her. It was easy enough to seduce them and turn them. She was a beautiful woman, and they were men after all. The women had been only slightly harder to turn, and they had their uses as well.

This underground compound in the Wastes was their secret facility when not in any of the Alliance cities. The three vampire genomes were leaning back in their chairs, the control room filled with monitors and computers. Nothing ever came into the city anymore; even the Nomads avoided Dodge City because it had been stripped of everything worth while. None of them were watching the monitors at their backs, intent as they were on the card game they were playing. They did not see the two guards outside the large hatch as Tari and Vengal flashed onto the monitor, their blows deadly and very quick.

Vengal lowered the body of the guard softly and watched as Tari did the same thing. Both men were dead, their necks broken.

“Excellent form.” Vengal spoke softly with genuine admiration.

Tari grinned. “And you General.”

They moved to the door paused three seconds and then shoved it open. The first guard had been correct, and there were only two guards inside the room. Tari leaped the few meters between him and the closest, angling all his two hundred and six pounds into a vicious shoulder block that took the human Alliance soldier just under his arm pit. The air rushed from his lungs as he went down, Tari reaching up and using his vampire/elf strength he drove the man’s head into the floor with a sickening crunch of bone.

Vengal had only to take three steps into the room and he swung his arm straight out at the second Alliance guard, driving stiffened fingers into the side of the man’s neck. The guard’s eyes went wide and then he went down like a limp noodle as Vengal had hit the pressure point near his jugular vein.

The two elves were tied to chairs sitting back to back. They were slumped over in the chairs, the ropes holding them digging into their skin. Tari and Vengal both winced as the room filled with the rest of their team. There were signs of horrible torture on the bodies of both men, scars criss crossing their chests and backs; wounds that had to have been inflicted over and over in the exact same spot for the scars to form as they had. There were what appeared to be cigarette burns over every exposed portion of their bodies. It was easy to see that their legs were broken and had never been allowed to heal properly.

Vengal leaned over the first elf, agony in his features as he looked at what they had done to the proud High Elf Dragoon. He reached out gingerly, touching the elf on the face and watched as his dark eyes opened. Vengal could see the pain in the young man's eyes and he felt more anger flare inside him than he had ever felt.

"Your... your name Dragoon." Vengal asked softly.

"Fa... Fal'sas." He croaked out the words.

"Stand easy now Fal'sas, we are here to take you home." Vengal spoke as Tari moved to the second elf, checking for a pulse.

"H...home?"

"You are the son of War Master Tareif yes?" Vengal spoke as he untied the young man.

Fal'sas nodded his head slowly. "My bro... my brother?"

Vengal looked at Tari as he leaned over Fal'sas's shoulder. "Your brother lives Dragoon of the High Elves. Do not move fast, for your system will be weak." Tari handed the injector kit to Vengal. "Inject them General. Anja says it will accelerate their systems and speed healing."

"Gen... General?" Fal'sas spoke, looking at Vengal with his good left eye. His right eye was swollen shut, a nasty cut across the eyelid.

"I am Vengal, young Dragoon, and General of the Wood Elf Rangers." He spoke. "My Drow companion and I are here to take you home. You have endured enough, and it is time you returned to your family."

"Vamp... vampires." Fal'sas forced out the words.

Vengal nodded. "Yes young Dragoon, I know of the vampires. You need not be concerned. I have brought the cure for vampires." He lifted the injector and plunged it into Fal'sas arm.

Tari looked up at the groan from the Alliance guard, his eyes going wide when the Wood Elf Ranger closest to the man snapped out with his blade and slashed open the man's throat. "No!" Tari hissed loudly. "They will smell the blood! Fuck!"

Fully turned vampires have an incredible sense of smell when it comes to blood, able to track prey for miles. These three genome vampires were no different, and they picked up the scent of blood immediately. Their heads turned to the row of monitors almost in unison.

"Fuck! We have a security breach!" The obvious leader of the three spoke. "Lower level by the elf prisoners!"

"Shit! Look at this!" Another spoke, and they turned to see at least half a dozen men, women and elves, dressed in desert camo on the monitor, the weapons they were holding spitting death into the security force based in the compound. There was no sound coming from down the hall so they had to be using silenced weapons.

"You two... take care of those assholes. Don't kill them all so we can interrogate them." The leader spoke. "I'll contact headquarters."

As he reached for the radio, a sustained burst of weapons fire impacted the radio console, showering him with sparks and bits of glass as it exploded into a thousand pieces.

"Sorry guys, I can't let you do that." Danny spoke. "We have a party to go to tonight, and they are the guests of honor." Dan was standing just inside the doorway, Kenny to his right and Pablo to his left.

"Are you kidding me?" The leader snapped. "It's Simpson... from Team 12."

Danny smiled. "Glad to see my reputation has preceded me." He spoke.

"You can't beat us Simpson." The leader growled. "We're stronger and faster than you will ever be. We aren't genomes anymore."

“Yeah... you’re blood sucking vampire motherfuckers!” Dan growled. “I know. I can’t say it’s done much for your looks though. All three of you could use about six hours of intense sunlight. You’re kind of pale.”

“You shouldn’t have come here Simpson.” The leader spoke.

“You know... I have been hearing that for a lot of years.” Danny said, “Seems I still ain’t got it through my head yet.”

“Kill them!”

Two things happened in that moment.

There was a flash of surprise in three pairs of vampire eyes at the white/blue flash of lightning in the small room, and then there were screams of agony as three wolves leaped for the kill.

Danny cleared the table with one easy bound, his steel trap jaws closing around the throat of the vampire/genome leader and tearing upward with razor sharp teeth. The vampire’s throat erupted like a Christmas package, dark blood fountaining into the musty air, as Danny rode him to the floor, growling savagely the entire way.

Kenny took down the vampire/genome to the right with much the same move, while Pablo snapped his jaws shut on the third vampire’s knee and crunched through flesh and bone. The vampire screamed as the nubs of his leg bones ground together. Pablo’s jaws released the leg as the vampire/genome fell, and his large wolf head snapped up with blinding speed and closed over his screaming face and crunched shut, caving in the vampire’s cheekbones and sinus cavity, silencing the screams. Blood erupted around Pablo’s muzzle and he spat out flesh, shaking his wolf head and snorting loudly in disgust.

The flash in the small room caused Danny and Kenny to turn as Pablo shifted back to human form, spitting out blood and flesh, dragging his hand across his bloody mouth. “Fuck me!” He screamed. “Good Christ they are some foul tasting motherfuckers!”

If wolves could laugh, then Danny and Kenny would have been rolling on the floor amid all the death. Two more white/blue blinks and they were human once more, blood staining their faces and bare chests.

“It ain’t funny man!” Pablo bitched still spitting onto the floor.

“Next time don’t bite so hard!” Danny laughed as he canted his head. “General?”

“We have them Daniel!” Vengal’s voice filled the receiver. Dan turned as he heard the voice close by as well and he saw Vengal appear in the control doorway a few seconds later, supporting the badly wounded elf in his arms.

Vengal froze as he looked at Daniel, his eyes traveling to where Pablo was still spitting on the floor as he pulled his boots on. Vengal looked back to Daniel and saw him pulling on his pants.

“Perhaps I should not ask.” He spoke, seeing the three dead vampires on the floor, looking as if they had been torn apart by animals, which Vengal knew they had been.

“Good idea.” Dan spoke.

Tari appeared as well supporting the second elf and his amber eyes glittered in savage glee. “Well done Daniel!” He exclaimed. “Well done! We must go. There is an acid storm moving in on our location and we don’t want to be stuck here.”

“Fuck no!” Dan snapped, speed lacing his boots and half throwing on his fatigue top. He gathered up his combat vest and HK. “One to team! We have the targets! Proceed to exfil point most ricky tick. There’s an acid storm inbound, and I don’t want to hang around.”

“Two is moving. Will secure LZ!”

“Three is outbound!”

“I’ll bring up the rear Skipper! Head out with the targets!” The leader of Team Four spoke.

Daniel looked at General Vengal. “Shall we?”

“Yes... I have no desire to remain here for the duration of an acid storm. I must... I must work on my tan as you say.”

Danny burst out laughing as they headed out of the control room.

“Inbound back to Eden Skipper.” Dan’s voice filled the speaker in Tareif’s home. They had turned it into a temporary command post, and it was filled with senior Dragoon officers. They had been listening to Daniel report from his location. “I want to get these boys stable before we do any hopping back and forth to Mountain City.”

“My sons?” Tareif almost yelled into the radio.

“Your sons are stable War Master.” The new voice filled the room. “They are strong and proud.”

“Who is this?” Tareif asked.

“General Vengal, Wood Elf Ranger Commander War Master Tareif.” Vengal’s voice was confident and full of authority. “I give you my word as one father to another Tareif. Your sons will not leave my charge until they are back among you. You should be proud... they endured more than even I would have been able to. They have earned the name Dragoon.”

Tareif stood there shock on his face at hearing a senior officer of his enemy guarantee the safety of his sons. He took a deep breath. “I will hold you to that General.” Tareif spoke.

“As well you should my friend. Martin Hunter?” Vengal’s voice continued.

“Go ahead General.”

“You have my personal authority to use my Rangers in whatever way you deem necessary. After what I have seen these monsters are capable of... well... let’s just say I will not weep for any traitors among my people. Kill them all my Queen.” Vengal spoke.

“We will Vengal.” Dysea’s voice answered.

“War Master?” Martin came on the COM now. “I give it no more than two hours before they realize what has happened. I suggest you prepare yourselves.”

“Martin... Martin Hunter... you...” Tareif spoke.

“Not necessary War Master.” Martin’s told him. “You can thank me by helping Aihola and Lynwe keep your daughter safe.”

Tareif looked at Tarifa who was smiling. “That I will have no problem with I assure you.”

“Good. I have four flights of Raptors on standby in Eden.” Martin spoke, “Loaded for bear. Do not hesitate to call upon them if you see things are not going your way. I have to go; we are almost at our meeting. Good luck everyone.”

Tareif leaned over the table taking deep breaths, holding back the tears. Palina came up to him and embraced him from behind, followed by Tarifa and her younger sister.

“They live.” Tareif spoke softly. “My sons... our sons... your brothers... they live. All this time I have waited to hear those words. And they come from a man who is not elf, and stands to gain nothing by his actions.”

Aihola didn’t flinch when she felt the tingle in her head. *Holy One?*

Tell them who he is Aihola. Explain to them... but do not yet reveal what he is, for that is more information than they need to have at the moment.

Is that wise Holy One.

It will give them purpose to succeed child. He will need to leave once he finishes these tasks.

Leave?

He will return as he said, but he needs to discover his true self and he can not do that here. Allow them to know who he is... his elf heritage... and it will be much easier for Tarifa to continue what he has started while he is away.

I understand Holy One.

Good. I am currently moving through the lower section of the city with two Dragoons. We are tracking what appears to be one of your mystery agents. And unfortunately it appears to indeed be a vampire. Be on your guard child. All of you.

Aihola stepped forward quickly. “But he does stand to gain from his actions War Master.” Aihola spoke.

Tareif turned to look at her as did everyone else. “What... what do you mean?”

“He gains the beginning of peace between the High Elves and the Wood Elves. The beginnings of peace that can spread across the planet,” Aihola spoke.

“Why would this matter to him?” Tareif asked. “He builds his own city. What does he gain by peace between elves?”

Aihola looked at Tarifa who was staring at her. “Don’t you see my love?” She said softly. “Queen mother you spoke of him yourself.” She asked looking at Palina. “The Holy One told us who he was in our trip to Salina.”

“*Nya Istel* I don’t understand?” Tarifa said.

“The Holy One made the Elf High King with DNA he had preserved from the 21st century, from the descendant of a long dead King.” Aihola said.

“Yes... so?”

“Don’t you see my love?” Aihola said with a smile. “Martin is the descendant of that King. He has the blood of Kings in him. And when the Holy One thought he had died during the Great Fire, he made the Elf High King from Martin’s DNA that he had with him. Martin is the descendant of the Spartan King Leonidas. This is the DNA that the Holy One used to create the Elf High King.”

Tarifa’s hands went to her mouth in shock, Palina and most of the Dragoons in the room looking at her in astonishment.

“*Nauta Melme... Nauta Melme* is the High King?” Tarifa asked.

“He is the ancestor... yes. And now that he is alive and among us, his DNA will match what we have in our archives, just as it will match those in the Wood Elves archives, and anyone else’s archives.” Aihola spoke looking at Tareif. “Martin Hunter is the Elf High King... and he just gave us orders War Master.”

War Master Tareif felt the smile creep across his face and he took a deep breath. “Yes he did.” He spoke. “He did indeed.”

NEW MIAMI

Yuri looked up from the desk she was sitting at as the Vampire/Genome Colonel entered the office quickly. She detected the disc in his hands and the stern look of his face, and knew immediately something was wrong.

“What is it Colonel?” She asked. “Have you brought news of more failures? Your men have not performed as well as expected recently.”

“That’s because you have not told us who we are facing.” The man spoke. He was the first Yuri had turned into a vampire, not to mention fucked silly. He was the only one who she allowed to speak with such forceful tones to her. Perhaps it was because he always fucked her ass so well. The vampire witch loved getting fucked up the ass, and he was only too happy to oblige.

“What do you mean?” Yuri asked him. Unknowing to the Colonel, she was thinking the exact same thing about the man.

“We’ve lost contact with our secret prison.” He spoke. “They missed their scheduled communications window thirty minutes ago. That’s never happened before so I had the techs patch into the control room feed.”

Yuri watched him place the disc into the drive on her desk and the picture came alive on the monitor of the wall. The camera was panning across the control room in Kansas and she saw the bodies of the three vampires on the floor twisted in death. Blood was everywhere; two of them had their throats ripped open, while the third was missing almost his entire face, his skull crushed by a massive force.

Yuri got to her feet slowly, “The sons of Tareif?” She asked.

“I have a team moving there now, but they are most likely gone.” The Colonel replied. “Madam... Yuri...” He spoke. “You did not tell us who we were facing here.”

Yuri whirled on him, her fangs showing now and her eyes hard points of anger. “I see three dead vampires! Nothing more!”

“Three of my men that were ripped to shreds,” The man snapped right back.

“You would do well to watch your tone with me Colonel.” Yuri growled. “I am nearly three thousand years old, and you would not stand a chance against me. You are strong... but you are still a child compared to me.”

“I’m no fool Yuri.” He spoke. “I serve you because of what you made us... but also because of what power that brings. And I find you intoxicating. I have no wish to fight you, or challenge you, but if you expect us to succeed you have to be honest with me.”

Yuri watched as he adjusted the picture and suddenly there was a long underground tunnel and then the black head of a wolf intruded into the picture, its jaws snapping shut on the camera. Yuri felt the blood surge through her and she sighed heavily. "A... a part of me had always hoped he was not the one." She spoke.

"What was that?" The Colonel asked.

Yuri looked at him, the anger she felt a moment before gone. "I have allowed you to see more and experience more because you were the first I ever fully turned in all my years. Do you remember the scrolls I gave to you to read?"

"The ones about the ancient Spartan War and your brother?" He asked. "Yes I remember them."

"The scrolls said that one day our hated enemy's descendant would walk among us again." Yuri spoke, looking at him. "It is why our father sent Xerxes to kill his ancestor to begin with."

"You're talking about Leonidas? The Spartan King?"

Yuri nodded. "Leonidas began the rebellion that continues even now." She spoke. "He has killed more vampires than any other in our history. The scrolls predicted that his descendant would come one day, and that he would come and finish the job that Leonidas began. It is why Xerxes sent me here. To watch and prepare and to possibly discover who this descendant is. Make no mistake... the Spartan's are very good at keeping secrets. And we do not have enough power to fully take control of Sparta and find this descendant ourselves. That is the reason we have not already conquered the city." Yuri moved to the long bar in the office and poured herself a tall glass of the red liquid. She glanced at him, holding out the bottle. "It is fresh... a twelve year old elf child. It's quite delicious."

The Colonel walked up next to her with a nod and she poured him a glass of the bright red blood.

"My task was to watch." Yuri spoke. "Watch Dymas, he is the Greek the Spartans chose to be Guardian of the line of Leonidas, a survivor of that very first battle at Thermopylae."

"Survivor?" The Colonel spoke. "I thought all the Spartans were killed."

Yuri shook her head. "Two survived. One left before the death of Leonidas at his own order, the second those vile Thebans tossed from the cliffs of Thermopylae before we slaughtered the rest. Dymas was the Spartan they threw from the cliffs. He was named as Guardian of the Line after our defeat at Plataea."

"This is Walter we're talking about right?"

Yuri nodded. "All of those he has cared for were descendants of Leonidas. We were able to kill some through the years, others died in an assortment of manners befitting their foul race... but we never discovered the one who would retain Leonidas's memories and his drive. He escaped us." She spoke moving now to the couch and sitting down. "I used my skills to infiltrate the Japanese genome program and then faked my defection. I wanted to get close to Hunter. He was a descendant of Leonidas, and I needed to make sure he was not the one. And if he was to kill him before he realized what he was. The comet put a stop to that as I was trapped on earth when it came as you know. Dymas thought he had failed in his task and that is the reason he began making the elves."

"That's why you had us kill that elf King?" The Colonel spoke.

Yuri nodded. "Walter used Hunter's DNA to make him, and I could not take the chance that he would somehow develop into who the Spartans were waiting for. That would have put us against two enemies, as the elves were beginning to revolt against our rule as well."

"You're saying Hunter is this descendant?" The Colonel asked.

"The more information we gather... the more it is becoming apparent yes." Yuri answered. "Somehow Dymas discovered he was still alive on the moon, and instead of trying to use Hunter's DNA to create another King... he began to instill the desire for freedom into the elves. Waiting until Hunter returned to earth."

So you... you believe the rumors we have been getting are true; the rumors of a free city hidden in the mountains?" The Colonel asked.

Yuri nodded once more. "That is the biggest sign to me that Hunter is the one we have feared. He would have the same drive and will of Leonidas... and freeing slaves was what drove that man."

"I'm still not getting something here." The Colonel spoke. "Leonidas was human... how did he become a werewolf?"

"He did not become a werewolf." Yuri spoke. "He was born a werewolf, as were the 300 others who met us at Thermopylae. I do not know how this came to be. Only my father has such knowledge. The hybrids... ones not of Pureblood... they are soldiers... albeit very well trained soldiers and shifters... but the Purebloods

are the most dangerous. They are who we as vampires fear the most. And Leonidas was the most powerful to have ever lived up until that point.”

“If you knew all this... then why not just have us kill Hunter in New Memphis?” The Colonel asked. “Why have us target Anja Peterson?”

Yuri looked at him. “We have fought a war on two fronts for the better part of five thousand years.” She spoke. “Leonidas and the Spartans were only half of it. Four hundred and seventy years ago the leaders of the resistance on our second front had a child, a daughter. They knew we were winning and they sent her away before we could kill her. We tortured them for years. But they never revealed to us where they sent her. My father believed that they sent her to join with the descendant of Leonidas. Together they could rally support from everywhere. And if they came together it would signal that what the Ancient Scrolls said was coming true.”

“And what did they say?”

Yuri met his eyes, “That the descendant of Leonidas would take three Queens. And they would sit together in judgment of all Vampires.” Yuri got back to her feet and moved to the window looking out over the ocean. “Anja Peterson is that daughter. I knew it the moment I smelled her stench on Martin when I first met him. They had met before and did not even know it. Now however, if she is with him... then at least part of the Prophecy has come true. And if he has turned her into a wolf... and if that elf bitch Dysea has joined him as well... then my friend, he will be even more powerful and harder to defeat.”

“You said three Queens.”

Yuri nodded. “Yes... no one knows who the third Queen is. She has not come into the picture just yet. That is why we must defeat them now.”

“Well if the attack on our secret facility is any indication, then they are already moving against our people within the Wood Elf command.” The Colonel spoke.

Yuri nodded. “And that is his flaw.” She said softly.

“What do you mean?”

“If he is the true descendant of Leonidas... with his memories and his drive and aura... then he will be driven to help the elves first.” Yuri spoke. “Admiral Wallace is not aware of my existence... though if Dymas has been able to contact him that will change. Why do you think I accepted his offer of the Raptor blue prints without any avionics? I have my own set of blue prints for the Raptors stolen from EDEN’s computer. As we speak Marcus is on his way there to take control of the station.”

“Marcus?” The Colonel spoke in shock. “That elf hybrid couldn’t find his ass with both hands and a flashlight.”

Yuri chuckled and stepped closer to him. “True... but he does have his uses.” She spoke seductively. “And when we have control of EDEN... we can use it to our own means.”

“And Graham?”

Yuri laughed again. “Graham will jump at the chance to be part of what we have. If he does not... then I will have Marcus feed on him until he is nothing but a shell. Martin Hunter may stop the war between the elves... but once I determined who he may be and where he came from... my true intent was to take EDEN. The elf war was a secondary thing only.”

“And you trust Marcus to do this more than you trust me?” The Colonel asked.

Yuri smiled and brushed her red lips against the man’s cheek. “Jealousy does not become a vampire of your strength my dear Colonel. Marcus is merely a tool... he laps at my body as if I was a goddess. You on the other hand... you take my body and use it as I intended when I first turned you. There are few in my almost three thousand years of life that have fucked me as you do. And of them all... you are the finest. I would much rather play with you... than have Marcus whimper at my feet. Taking EDEN is beneath your skills... and besides... I have more pleasurable needs that I require you to fill at the moment.”

“So the elves are nothing?” The Colonel asked.

“Not at all,” Yuri replied. “If united they could be a powerful force against us... but there is no indication that is happening, at least none that we have seen up to now.”

“So what now?”

“Now?” Yuri asked. “Now I have need of your delicious talents Colonel.” She spoke moving to the desk. The Colonel may have been a vampire, but he was still a man, and he felt the surge of lust in his cock at

her words. He watched as Yuri moved to the desk and leaned over it, seductively drawing up the thin dress she wore, exposing her firm legs and the fact she wore no panties. She looked over her shoulder at him, her dark eyes alive with lust. "I believe you like it when I take this position don't you Colonel. It allows you to stroke deeper into my ass does it not?"

The Colonel grinned savagely and began to walk towards her unbuckling his pants. Yuri leaned further across the desk, her eyes turning a reddish tint as she felt him line up the head of his huge cock with her puckered asshole. Her mind remembered the nights with Martin... and just before his huge cock impaled her tight ass and caused stars to erupt in her eyes she wondered if Martin still loved her.

As she loved him.

MEDICINE BOW MOUNTAINS NORTHERN COLORADO

Shit. Dysea and Anja heard Martin swear in their minds, turning to look at him as he used a finger to feel around the inside of his mouth.

They were sitting in the small cave just inside the limits of the Wood Elf capital city. Leland and the combination of remaining Shifters and Wood elves had traveled with them to this part of the city. Here they had been greeted by senior officers within Vengal's Rangers and brought to this small hidden cave secretly while they waited to move. Martin's back was against the wall, Anja and Dysea leaning against his body.

Perhaps next time you will not bite the camera Nauta Melme. Dysea spoke softly, humor in her voice as she ate the power bar. *And simply rip it down.*

Martin looked at her while Anja chuckled to herself. *Very funny.*

She has a point Martin. Anja spoke now taking the piece of bar Dysea offered her. *No one told you to bite it.*

After what Danny said they did to Tareif's sons my anger got the best of me. Martin spoke.

Just so you remember this lesson. Dysea spoke. *Melyanna and I would not be happy if you could not adorn us with your kisses for several days.*

Anja turned and looked at Dysea. *We always have each other Dysea, if Martin is not up to the task.*

Dysea smiled at her brilliantly. *Yes we do.*

When this is over...

Promises... Anja said

Promises... Dysea finished.

They turned as Leland came into the cave followed by two Wood Elf Rangers they didn't recognize. They got to their feet as he came over to them.

"The genome/vampires that Daniel said came here are meeting with the Queen now. It appears they have discovered we have taken Tareif's sons." Leland reported.

"And the others?" Martin asked.

"They are rousing their individual units." Leland said. "If we are to move Martin... it needs to be now. We must hit them before they leave the city."

Martin nodded, "Agreed." He said. "Melda Min you and Anja take half the force we brought with us and go with Leland." He looked at Leland. "Give me two elves you trust to take Ealin and I and the rest to where these vampires are staging the troops. Will they come over to us Leland?"

The elf Ranger that had come in with Leland stepped forward. "General Vengal's word was passed among the soldiers Martin Hunter." He spoke. "None of us was looking forward to a war with the High Elves. Knowing now that our Queen and so many are these... these vampires you speak of. You need not worry about that. We will join you the moment you attack."

Martin nodded, his nose telling him that the elf was telling the truth. "Good."

"Should we split up Nauta Melme?" Dysea asked. "Aren't we stronger together?"

"She's right Martin." Anja spoke. "We..."

Martin held up his hand, "The more of your people that see you the better Melda Min." He spoke. "If we hit them from two directions they will be confused and unable to react accordingly. And do not Shift unless you

have too!” He told them. “Neither of you is experienced enough in wolf form to stay in a prolonged battle. Shift only if you need to heal. We don’t need your people shooting at us as well as the bad guys.” They both nodded, knowing he was right. “And we must try not to contact each other telepathically either. It will drain our reserves faster in battle.”

“Martin... we won’t be able to...” Anja stepped up to him, caressing his face. “You’d better not die Martin. I will be so pissed at you.”

“And you will not wish to see me angry.” Dysea spoke.

Martin chuckled. “I have no intention of dying.” He spoke. “Don’t worry. We...”

My loves...

Little Wolf! The three of them exclaimed together as Aricia entered their minds.

SPARTAN TRANSPORT GULF OF MEXICO 100 MILES OFFSHORE

Theron watched as Aricia’s face relaxed in her seat. Thr’won was next to her, their hands joined as Aricia had allowed her to enter the connection she shared with their King and his two mates.

My loves...

Little Wolf! Their voices joined together in a chorus of love and affection that caused Thr’won to gasp at in surprise.

My loves... where are you? Aricia asked them.

Little Wolf... who is with you? One of the females asked.

Chief Mage Thr’won Dysea. She...

You were told her mind is her own she-elf! You were told to leave her alone! Anja’s voice screamed out within the connection of their minds.

Thr’won was nearly overwhelmed with the wave of anger directed at her from the two females. And then the nausea gripped her stomach as the force of the rage that followed their anger caused lances of white hot pain to shoot through her temples smashing the telepathic shields she had in place as the descendant of Leonidas spoke. It was the most savage anger she had ever felt, and it was directed at her.

I warned you! I told you never to invade her mind without her consent! You may have more control than us she-elf... but we have more power and now you will pay for disobeying me. Martin’s voice growled within her mind.

Theron’s face looked stricken as he saw Thr’won gasp in agony, her face twisted in pain. “Thr’won! What is it?” He grabbed her arm. “Thr’won!”

He will not save you woman! I will protect what I love. We will protect who we love! Martin’s voice echoed in the confines of her mind, shattering the shields it had taken her nearly five hundred years to perfect. Mental shields that no one had ever breached before.

Thr’won felt the fury sweeping her away, and in that wave she saw the face of the black wolf, its yellow/gold eyes blazing in rage.

My Love! No! Aricia’s voice cut through the pain and blackness, and Thr’won gasped again as the savage pain was instantly gone.

Little Wolf? Martin spoke, his voice different now, soothing and calm.

My love... I gave her permission. Thr’won felt the waves of anger directed at her subside quickly, and her breathing returned to normal, but her heart was racing out of control, her pulse pounding. The anger was gone, but the suspicion remained. *She asked me Martin. I led her here.*

Thr’won felt the auras of the two females recede to the background, not leaving the connection, but swarming around Martin, always with him, supporting him.

For what purpose Little Wolf?

Thr’won... she is the Spartan’s Chief Mage. Our people’s my King, she and the Holy One wanted only an image of you and Anja and Dysea to give to those with us. So that we may protect you when we reach you.

I do not need protection. Martin's voice carried, all of the rage and anger Thr'won had felt seconds ago now gone.

That's debatable. Anja's voice spoke with a hint of playfulness in it.

Melyanna is correct Nauta Melme; you do have a tendency to get into trouble. Dysea's echoed.

I can't help it if half the planet doesn't like me. Martin spoke. *It's not my fault.*

There are many that would do you harm my King. Aricia said.

Little Wolf... I asked you not to call me that. It is not right coming from your lips Aricia. Martin spoke causing Thr'won's surprise to fill the connection.

My love... will you listen to Chief Mage Thr'won? For me?

Her pulse pounds out of control. Anja spoke softly. *Calm yourself Chief Mage or you will begin to hyperventilate.*

Thr'won took several deep breaths. *Forgive me my King.*

There is nothing to forgive. Martin replied quickly. *You came with Aricia's consent, and I apologize for my actions.*

No... you were only protecting what... what you love. I should have had her ask before I entered. How... how is this possible? Thr'won asked.

I was hoping you could answer that. Martin answered.

I... I have never felt the depth of connection that you share with the others. Thr'won spoke. *It's almost as if... if you are one mind, and... and that now includes Aricia.*

Go figure... I always was an oddball.

Thr'won heard the soft laughter of Anja and Dysea in her mind, so musical in nature that it allowed her to relax even more and breathe evenly.

You think! Anja spoke.

My King we... we are approaching North America. I asked Aricia to allow me to enter your bond so that I... so that I can provide an image of you and your... your mates to our Centurions. So that they will know what you look like.

Is that necessary?

Oh stop Nauta Melme! Dysea spoke again. *Here Little Wolf.*

Aricia and Thr'won gasped together when the images, as clear as if they were standing in front of them appeared within their minds. Thr'won was the first to regain her senses.

What is your location my King?

Colorado. At the Southern tip of the Medicine Bow Mountain Range. How many in your group?

Thirty Centurions my King, all very experienced. Thr'won replied.

There is a little used entrance into the city tunnels on the western slope of the largest... Dysea began.

Further directions are not needed Milady. Once when land we will find you by your scent. Thr'won told her.

Tell whoever leads these Centurions that no elf is to be injured unless they attack first. I'm trying to stop a war... not start one. Martin spoke.

I will tell the Spartan Commander sire. Thr'won replied. *What... what will you be doing My Lord?*

They seem to have an infestation problem down here. Martin answered. *I'm going to clean it out for them.*

Infestation, I don't understand what you mean My Lord.

Just follow the path of dead blood suckers. You'll find us. Martin spoke. *We need to go. I will see you soon Little Wolf.*

Be... be careful my loves. Aricia replied.

The connection was broken then and both Aricia and Thr'won opened their eyes slowly. Thr'won paused and closed her eyes again as she felt a tingle against her mental shields, a lingering tendril of great power requesting entry and she lowered them enough to reach out. It was then that Martin's voice filled her head clearly. He was alone... without the two females.

Thr'won?

Yes... yes sire? She asked surprised.

Aricia is in your charge. She is to be protected at all costs, Anja and Dysea as well. His voice was insistent and very clearly not making it a request. Make that very clear... is that understood?

Completely sire. Thr'won answered immediately.

Forgive my actions earlier. I was... I was only protecting...

Your apologies are much appreciated... but they are not needed my King. You were protecting what you love. That is something I understand very well.

I will... I will need your teachings Thr'won... if I am to understand who and what I am. I feel... I feel something pulling at me... just beneath the surface. It calls to me and I do not know what it is. Martin's voice in her head was soft now, and it filled her with a sense of renewed purpose and a sudden respect for this young man of staggering power. We all will.

Our people... our people have waited a very long time for you my King. Thr'won told him. You... you honor me with your trust and your words.

Thr'won?

Yes My Lord.

Come quickly Thr'won. For I think we will need the help more than I care to admit.

Thr'won's eyes sprang open then as he left her mind and she saw Aricia and Theron looking at her. "Chief Mage... are you alright?" Aricia asked.

Thr'won smiled. "Yes child, I'm fine." She looked at Theron. "I have what we need old friend."

He stared at her for a long moment, "And?"

Thr'won looked at Aricia with a smile and squeezed her hands. "I want you to rest now Aricia, for a short time only. Close your eyes and use the breathing techniques I taught you."

She watched as Aricia did as she was told leaning back in the seat. Thr'won gripped Theron's hand and rose from the seat, pulling him forward.

"What is it Thr'won?" He asked.

"He is in Northern Colorado Theron, The Medicine Bow Mountains." She told him softly. "Theron... his directives to me were clear, after Aricia left the bond they share. She is to be protected at all costs, this Anja and Dysea as well."

"He is..." Theron began to protest.

"I have felt our King's anger Theron! He thought I entered Aricia's mind without her permission. I have felt his power, and the small bit that touched me was far more than I care to experience again!" She hissed. "Do what you must but Aricia does not go unprotected, and when we find Dysea and Anja they as well. Trust me old friend... when you see his image you will... you will understand. And no elf is to be injured unless they attack us first. He was very clear on that. The elves... they will play a major role... only he knows how... but they must not be harmed."

"Show me."

Thr'won closed her eyes and passed the image of them to him. The females came first, stunningly beautiful... more so than Theron had ever seen. And then he saw the image of his King and he understood why. Theron could not contain the intake of breathe that left his body and he was flung back three thousand years to the day he last saw his King, standing so proud, so tall, standing among his Spartans. His 300.

Theron opened his eyes slowly, a smile of great satisfaction spreading across his face. "I will tell Andreus." He spoke finally.

"Theron?" Her voice stopped him in the middle of his turn and he looked at her, having never heard this tone of seriousness in her voice before. "We must hurry my friend." She spoke the words. "With all the haste this flying machine has, we must hurry."

Theron moved with a speed he had not displayed in three thousand years.

CHAPTER TWENTY

NORTHERN COLORADO MEDICINE BOW MOUNTAINS

The Wood Elf Ranger squatted next to Martin on the little used narrow path above the main promenade that swept through the entire city and extended up into the portion of the city that rose above ground and spread out into the surrounding valley.

“There should only be one more.” The elf spoke softly. “They all came here after they received the transmission. The eight you described were already inside. There are four of the twelve Elders inside as well. Three remain with the witch who calls herself Queen. The other five have been helping us since the Alliance showed up in such numbers, and they are hidden now, waiting until we have regained control.”

Martin looked at him. “Why is that?” He asked.

“One thing Queen Dysea and General Vengal taught us Martin Hunter is to be prepared.” The elf answered. “We will keep them hidden and safe until we succeed. They did not like it... but it is how it must be. If the Queen is... if Dysea falls... we will still have leaders who will follow her values.”

Martin nodded in approval at the strategic move. “I knew there was a reason I loved her.” He spoke with a small smile. “She’s drop dead gorgeous and she’s far smarter than I am. Come to think of it... all three of them are.” Martin saw the look on the elf’s face and waved his hand. “It’s a long story.” He spoke. “What is your name by the way?”

“Kamuil... My King.” He answered softly.

Martin’s head snapped around to look at him. “Excuse me?”

“Did you think she would not tell us who you were?” Kamuil spoke. “You are the Elf High King. The one we have waited for centuries to rediscover; the High King that would unite all elves. And you have taken Dysea and Anja as two of your three Queens.” Kamuil looked at Martin carefully. “Why do you think that your orders were followed without question... without complaint. Why do you think we follow a human female without regard? Why do you think our soldiers now stand ready across this city to stand with you?”

“I was kind of hoping because they liked me.” Martin said.

Kamuil allowed the smile to spread across his face. “That is without question My Lord.” He answered.

“And Dysea told you all this huh?” Martin spoke.

Kamuil nodded. “Word began spreading within an hour of your arrival here.” He answered with a nod. “By now it has reached even the outer most parts of the city. I... I have to say my Lord... three Queens? That is most impressive.”

Martin met his eyes for a long moment. “You’re kidding right?”

Kamuil grinned. “Do you know how many men have shared Dysea’s bed in the last hundred years My King? And I know this because I was a member of her Royal Guard until we thought her lost months ago.”

“Well... it’s not exactly something I think about on a daily basis, so no.” He replied with a grin.

Kamuil chuckled. “Two.” He answered, “The first lasted an hour my King, and it was due only to the pressure from her mother, and until you stole her heart... not in the last eighty-two years. To have stolen our Queen’s heart... as far as many Wood Elves are concerned... that is all we need to know. Dysea led us with wisdom, honor and conviction her entire time as Queen. Our people loved her... worshiped her.” Kamuil’s words were spoken with a great deal of steel in them, and an undisguised loyalty. “There were many among us who thought she would never take a mate, as driven as she was to lead our people well; that you were able to steal her heart and soul with such ease; that only serves to reinforce our loyalty to you as well. And now that she has told us you are the Elf High King... that our Queen... that she is your mate and now the High Queen of all elves; that... that is truly incredible.”

“Well... you have no idea how much she means to me.” Martin answered. “And don’t call me King.”

Ealin laughed softly. “He does not like that name for some reason.” Ealin told his fellow elf.

“That is not something I will do.” Kamuil spoke. “Your love for our Queens is obvious in the way you look at them my King.” The elf replied. “We can all see it. And that is why we follow you; and them.”

“This King stuff is getting really old. Can’t anyone just call me by my name?” Martin said, looking at Kamuil. He saw that the elf’s jaw was set and nothing he said would change his mind. “Let’s just make sure no one dies today.”

“*Lyca Ohtar.*” Ealin spoke softly motioning to the doorway they were watching.

Martin allowed his eyes to adjust and he used his wolf vision to zoom in on the doorway. He could just barely make out chairs and the legs of at least nine individuals, and he switched his vision quickly to wolf grayscale, the colors of the surrounding world fading out until everything he was seeing was in different shades

of gray. Power sources showed up as moving light gray movement, and he saw the telltale white veins and blood as Tari had said they would.

“They have never gathered like this before.” Kamuil spoke softly from his other side.

Martin nodded. “Something big must be brewing.” He spoke. “And I’m betting they know we snatched Tareif’s sons back. I’m detecting at least three vampires in the room, and I that’s only because I can’t see the rest of the room from here.” He looked at the elf. “Where’s your imposter Queen?”

Kamuil hissed quietly. “That creature was never my Queen!”

Martin grinned. “Ok... then where is that creature?”

“She remains in the throne room with the three remaining elders who have betrayed us.” Kamuil answered. “They are working with the Alliance as well.”

“How many Alliance troops are within the city itself?” Ealin asked.

“Only the ones that have been training us in their weapons,” He answered immediately. “I put their number around two hundred and fifty. We were never able to determine exactly how many there were because they kept coming and going with no restrictions.”

“So we figure at least that many?” Martin spoke, nodding his head. “Ok... how did the training cycles work?”

“They would supply a group weapons, train us in their use and then that group would return to their own city with a shipment of weapons and equipment.” Kamuil replied.

“They just let them return to the other cities?” Martin asked surprised.

“They usually only sent two or three liaisons with each returning city group.” Kamuil told him. “They have already been dealt with.” Which meant they were already dead Martin thought. “The cities closest to Eden have already begun moving their entire populations, per yours and Dysea’s orders. Most of them are only a few thousand strong, and the personnel you sent to them are assisting. Queen... Queen Anja directed us to give the proper inoculations before leaving, and as our people depart they are receiving the shots. The larger cities will await the transports to move their people.”

“They did all that?” Martin asked equally surprised.

“They are your Queens. They know you have been working on the military issues, and they took it upon themselves to insure other concerns were addressed.”

“And your people know why this is being done?” Martin asked.

The Ranger nodded. “Our cities are closer to Alliance territory, and therefore more vulnerable to retaliation. Our people understand they will be safer within the boundaries of Eden my King.” He explained. “We have had to move in the past... so it is not something we are not used too.”

“With any luck this will be the last time they’ll need to move ever again.” Martin spoke.

“There!” Kamuil spoke, his own keen eyesight catching the movement of the Alliance soldier. “He is the overall Commander of the troops conducting the training. A human called Colonel Wilson.”

Martin noted right away the man was a vampire with his vision and he looked at Ealin nodding slowly. “That’s all of them?” He asked.

“He is always the last to arrive.” Kamuil replied.

Ealin looked back along the trail at their small force. He turned back to Martin. “*Lyca Ohtar*, why didn’t we bring Cody or the Master Chief with us? We could have used their... talents.”

Martin returned his gaze. “I have them doing something else.” He answered calmly. “I don’t like the fact that the Alliance has been so willing to supply the Wood elves with weapons and training in order to start a war with Tarifa’s people. It doesn’t make sense to me.”

“A war between our peoples would weaken us, making it easier to conquer both of us.” Kamuil spoke in response to Martin’s comment.

Martin nodded slowly. “That is true... but I have a feeling... nothing solid really... that all this is not their main operation. Not their main purpose.”

“And the others, you have sent them to where you think the main operation is?” Ealin asked.

Martin nodded. “I hope so.” Martin looked up toward the ceiling. *Dysea? Anja? What is your status?*

We are in position Nauta Melme. Dysea answered immediately. *It appears... it seems all of the Alliance officers have departed. All that remain are soldiers, and none of them are vampires.*

That's because all the officers came to my sector for a meeting. I got close to thirty of them in one room. He replied. *My guess is they know we got Tareif's sons back and are trying to figure out what to do.*

Martin... all of them are vampires! Anja's worried thoughts echoed.

They didn't see the cruel smile that crossed Martin's face, Yep... more than likely. It makes your job easier now. Melda Min... why didn't you or Anja tell me about the orders you issued.

You were concerned with the military aspect of retaking my city Nauta Melme. Anja and I determined we could handle the rest.

Martin my love... Anja spoke. Dysea was Queen of these elves. And I am a qualified surgeon and doctor. We are more than capable of handling the small issues.

I know that.

Then trust in us, as we trust in you.

Martin smiled at the tone of her voice. Anja... you're taking lessons from Dysea. Your speech is different; you're starting to sound more like her.

The length of Melyanna's delightful tongue gives her incredible linguistic skills Nauta Melme. Dysea spoke with sensuous warmth in her voice.

Martin heard Anja chuckle softly and he could almost see her nuzzling Dysea's ear when he felt Dysea's sigh of desire within their connection. I think you like my tongue because of its other talents. Anja's voice was soft like a whisper.

Well... it does have the ability to...

Ok you two enough. Martin scolded them with an inner smile. *I'm about to start a war here... and I don't need to walk around with that picture in my head.*

It will keep you going Nauta Melme.

Grouch! Anja spoke.

My love... would it have made a difference? Dysea asked him with that voice she used when she desired him, and the blood was pounding in her veins. It was soft and seductive and so very hard to resist.

Well... no... I know where my capabilities are better directed.

And that is one of the reasons we love you so. Dysea told him.

Do you two share everything?

Of course! Anja exclaimed. *Dysea shares everything with me and I with her. We're women... we have this connection.* She answered with a hint of amusement in her voice.

And where exactly do I fit into this connection?

You fit quite nicely inside us Nauta Melme. Dysea spoke, her voice dripping with passion even in his mind.

Mmmmm... that's an undeniably delicious fact, Anja spoke sweetly, her voice carrying the same passion. *And I'm sure Aricia will agree.*

You know... He began to say.

Yes Nauta Melme, you wish to say something?

What's that Martin?

Martin shook his head. Never mind. You two be careful. I've grown rather fond of both your tails, and I'll be very upset if either of you get them shot off. Not to mention that Aricia would be quite angry, probably with me. Martin heard the almost musical laughter in his head from both of them.

Martin... we love you. Anja told him, her soft words washing over him like a blanket, wrapping him in their embrace. He felt Dysea joining in that embrace and he smiled, feeling the love they were passing to him. He was unable to see their faces as he returned that warmth and love to them, but he could almost feel their smiles. Just before they broke the connection they passed it to one other who was not with them just yet.

Martin looked at Kamuil and Ealin. "Gentlemen... I think it's time we started this dance don't you."

The savage grins of all the elves in their group were all the answer Martin needed.

SPARTAN TRANSPORT

[Background music playing "Blow me Away" HALO 2 ST]

Theron stood at the rear of the transport, looking upon the Spartan Centurions as they readied themselves to enter battle. Most had never seen actual combat before, yet as with King Leonidas himself, his descendant seemed to have a knack for finding trouble. Theron found that information very refreshing.

“Spartans!” He called out, waiting until their heads had all turned to him. “Spartans... I will now reveal to you what many of you already suspect. The descendant of King Leonidas has arrived Spartans, the descendant that bears his same aura, his same passion and drive. The wolf we have waited patiently for over almost three millennia has come. I have felt his aura Spartans! And I have not felt one like it since I stood beside King Leonidas himself on the field of battle nearly three thousand years ago!” Theron smiled. “He will be our King once more Spartans! All of you must now know... most of you were selected for this mission because you are Purebloods, original descendants of the 300. Those of you who are not...” He let his eyes drift to the Bear shifters. “Feel proud men... for this day you will become The Royal Spartan Guard of the new King and his Queens no matter your blood!”

Theron saw their looks of astonishment at this pronouncement, and he also felt the pride swelling within their chests that quickly followed.

“Chief Mage Thr’won is passing to you an image of our King and two of three he has chosen as his queens.” He saw Theron close her eyes where she stood next to Aricia, both of them now adorned in the same armor as the Centurions, Aricia with a strange expression on her face, a small smile that washed over her. He watched as Andreus and his men closed their eyes as well, accepting the images she was sending them. “Beautiful beyond measure are they not! Burn them into your souls young Spartans, for they are now your purpose in this life! Never retreat! Never surrender! That is Spartan law! Their orders you will follow without question, without hesitation, for one of the bloodline of Leonidas would not ask of you which he was not prepared to do himself! You will die for them willingly, as they would die for you!”

Theron watched as first Andreus’s eyes opened, then the others within his command. He saw fire in their wolf eyes and he felt power surge through them. He smiled once more.

“Hear me Spartans! The descendant of King Leonidas has issued two orders already.” Theron spoke. “He has passed these orders telepathically through your commander’s young sister Aricia, and on to Chief Mage Thr’won. That feat in itself should leave you with no questions! What Spartan of Pureblood, or any blood, would have the telepathic ability to communicate over so vast a distance as he did when he first touched Aricia? Only one I tell you... and that is the descendant of Leonidas! His orders were simple and clear, his Queens will be protected at all costs! He has included Aricia in this order as she was the first he touched. At all costs Spartans! If it threatens them in any way... it dies! Is that clear?”

“**Oupote thanatos!**” The Spartan war cry shook the inside of the transport, reverberating through the frame of the aircraft and it drowned out even the engines as the pilot brought them in for a landing. **(Ancient Greek, meaning Never Death.)**

“His second order was also very clear! He fights beside elves, as do you!” Theron spoke, his eyes settling onto Kmyla. “They have proven themselves to you... and to our King. They are not to be harmed. They are our allies in this fight, and as we all know, they are honorable allies. It appears our ancient enemies have reappeared Spartans, and while the foulness of their stench still echoes in our valley... the peace uneasy we have there does not extend here. If it is human and it wears an Alliance uniform, you will destroy it with great prejudice! If it is a vampire, I and your King expect it to die within a blink of this becoming known! Do not shift unless absolutely necessary, for unlike the elves within our own ranks, these elves are not yet aware of our existence. We shall keep it that way until otherwise directed by our King.”

Theron drew out the collapsible titanium spear on his right leg and extended it in one smooth motion with a flick of his wrist. He slammed the weighted end to the deck of the transport, the report echoing through the transport.

“Spartans prepare for battle, for it will be a glorious day!”

Andreus glanced at his sister, seeing her look of astonishment at Theron’s words, and moved up quickly next to him as his troops made their final checks on their equipment.

“Holy One... my sister... she is... she is dishonored.” Andreus spoke, his face clearly showing his shock at the order. “Does... does the King not know this?”

“No he doesn’t. And if he did I don’t think he would particularly care Andreus. You must know the truth of this... and I forbid you to speak this to anyone! Your... your sister has touched both him and our new

Queens in a way never before seen.” Theron smiled and placed his hand on Andreus’s shoulder. “Have faith young Spartan. This King, as with King Leonidas himself, he is different. And his orders will be followed explicitly. Is that clear?”

Andreus nodded, “Always Holy One.”

Theron nodded, “Then assign two Spartans to each of his chosen Queens and two to your sister, and make sure they have additional Spartan uniforms that will fit the Queens. Chief Mage Thr’won and your sister will guide them to his Queens. You and I Andreus... you and I will lead the remaining to our King. He will need to meet his new Captain!” Theron saw Andreus’s eyes go wide and his smile grew. “Make it so young Captain. Make it so.”

WOOD ELF CAPITAL

“...know that our facility in Dodge City was recently attacked by unknown forces.” The Alliance Colonel spoke as he stood at the front of the room. “All attempts to contact our liaisons that have returned with the elf groups to other cities have failed, so we must assume they have been eliminated as well. Tareif’s sons are gone and undoubtedly returning to Mountain City as we speak. Three of our brethren fell with the entire garrison at the facility. They were torn to pieces, and the Matriarch now believes the Descendant has come, and it appears he has turned others.”

There were murmurs among the thirty-three gathered vampires. Many of them had been turned only in the last decade, some in the last year like the Wood Elf Elders, the Colonel being the oldest vampire among them with nearly a thousand years of life behind him. They were the new breed of vampire, supposedly stronger and faster than older vampires due to the advanced genetics experiments conducted on them in recent months. They had no aversion to the sun, which gave them a huge advantage, but all of them had been schooled in regards to their history and what they should fear.

All of them feared the Descendant of Leonidas.

“Fear not brothers!” The Colonel spoke. “We will prevail. Even now... our forces within this city are moving to take control of key positions. The elves are unaware... as our sister elf has kept their questions in check. We...”

The explosion sounded distance, but it still caused the room to shudder with vibrations, cutting off the Colonel’s words. His eyes went wide and he moved to the communications panel, stabbing at it with his hand. The worried expression of the Alliance Lieutenant came into view.

“What is going on?” He demanded.

“Colonel! The elves... they have launched a major attack against the garrison here! Across the entire city! They are turning on us!” The human nearly yelled.

“Activate the defense perimeter you fool!” The Colonel snapped. “Order all troops to disperse to their positions and prepare to hold...” The man’s face showed his shock when the lieutenant’s head burst apart like an over ripe melon and his was gone from the picture, “Lieutenant!” The Colonel screamed.

He saw movement filling the camera, dark fatigues and then the long platinum hair came into view followed by Dysea’s face. She smiled sweetly. “Hello Colonel.” Her voice purred softly. “As you no doubt are now aware... my people are taking back our city. None of your troops will survive I’m afraid.”

“Dysea!” One of the Elf Elders gasped, coming out of his chair as her emerald eyes focused on him.

“Ah... Minister L’tas.” Dysea spoke with a smile, “How nice to see you again. I’m sorry I could not be there to greet you personally... but I’m quite sure *Nauta Melme* will insure your death is quite violent. I hope you have enjoyed your time as a vampire Minister,” Dysea spoke, her eyes changing and her fangs extending. “For it will end this day.”

“I will kill you she wolf!” The Colonel screamed at the monitor as Dysea rose from the chair.

Anja’s face appeared next as she squatted in front of the monitor, her own eyes changed and her fangs out. “Pardon us... we have more of your men to slaughter. It’s been nice chatting with you... but you seem to have a bigger problem now.” Her head motioned into the room and the Colonel froze.

They watched Anja’s face crease with a snarl and her hand flashed forward, ripping the monitor from the desk it was on.

“Colonel what do we do?” The Elf L’tas asked, his voice almost a squeak.

The Colonel stood to his full height before he turned slowly, his eyes going to the back of the room.

“Colonel what is it?” L’tas spoke seeing his face, and turning to look where his eyes were focused. The elf’s eyes grew wide in horror.

“Well this is quaint.” The voice from the back of the room caused all of them to jump and whirl around reaching for weapons. “Is this a private blood suckers’ party, or can anyone come?” Martin spoke.

The vampires in the room were bringing up their weapons when Martin pulled the trigger along with the seven elves that flanked him. The HK74s unleashed eight flaming cones of death, the Teflon coated hollow points ripping into flesh. The screaming began, joining in chorus with the sound of the weapons fire as thirty-two vampires began to die. The Teflon coated rounds traveled with such velocity that the kinetic energy of the bullets struck with devastating force, pulping organs and shattering bones, while opening huge gaping wounds that even a vampire could not survive.

Martin saw the Colonel smash through the glass of the room and into the outer corridor and he whirled to Ealin and Kamuil. “Finish them!” He screamed before running for the door.

“Their heads!” Ealin called out to his fellow elves. “Aim for their heads!”

And the killing continued.

Martin switched to grayscale wolf vision as he burst into the corridor, sweeping toward the direction the vampire Colonel had run.

Then he followed.

“What is happening?” Matarn’s sister Falnynn screamed.

The throne room was being guarded by four Alliance human troops with heavy weapons. They were nervous and filled with fear, knowing that they were not vampires and even one bullet would mean death for them. Their eyes darted back and forth over the corridors they guarded, their fingers resting on the triggers of their machine guns.

“It... it is Dysea. She has returned.” One of the Ministers spoke from the wall panel. “The entire grid is locked down! All I can see are elf troops swarming through the streets!”

“Where is Colonel Wilson?” Falnynn demanded. “He promised me this would not happen!”

There was the loud crack of gunshots, of tearing flesh and gurgling blood and the four Alliance troops guarding the entrances flew back from the doorways, their bodies slashed open as if by scalpels, each with a single hole in their heads. Falnynn came to her feet as the Ministers with her whirled around towards the two entrances. They watched as two females walked slowly from the shadows of the entrances. Their uniforms were damp with sweat and splashes of blood. One had hair the color of Persian red silk, bright jade green eyes glimmering in the dim light. The other they knew well by her shimmering platinum hair. Each of them clutched a smoking K12 in one hand and a very bloody Shukur fighting knife in the other.

“I would imagine your Colonel Wilson is now suffering from the same fate you will suffer in a few moments.” Dysea spoke, her words measured and delivered coldly.

Falnynn’s eyes narrowed and her vampire fangs extended in rage. “Dysea... it is so good to see you. I have wanted to taste your blood for some time bitch.”

Dysea chuckled as she and Anja split apart further. “I’m sure.” Dysea answered her eyes never leaving Falnynn’s face.

“I am stronger than you former Queen!” Falnynn snapped, “Stronger, faster, and far more deadly. Colonel Wilson is almost a thousand hundred years old, and your pitiful skills will not compare to his when he arrives.”

“Good. I did not want this fight to be short.” Dysea spoke as she circled the female vampire.

Falnynn glanced at Anja, who was gazing at the three Ministers intently. “Who is your pet Dysea? She is quite attractive. Does she share your bed?”

Dysea smiled sweetly. “Oh *Melyanna* shares much more than my bed Falnynn.” She spoke tossing aside the K12 and the knife. They watched Anja do the same, a wicked gleam in her jade eyes. “*Melyanna* and I share a lover as well as each other.” Dysea continued with a killing rage filling her eyes. “You see... our lover... our mate... he turned us with his love.”

“Turned you?” Falnynn spoke now, her face changing.

“Oh yes.” Anja spoke now. “Something we both embraced with relish.”

“Who is this vampire?” Falnynn demanded. “And why do you stand against me?”

Dysea laughed, “Vampire?” She chortled. “Please Falnynn... I would not let one of your kind near me. You are foul creatures... and you deserve the death I will give you, many times over.” Dysea stopped in front of her, ten meters away. “You know who I speak of. You have learned of my mate in your silly vampire school.”

“Mate?” Falnynn asked, her eyes growing wide.

“Yes... I believe you know him as the descendant of the Spartan King Leonidas.” Dysea spoke with a smile. “My love Anja and I are his mates.”

“You are...” Falnynn’s eyes held real horror in them now.

“We are your death!” Dysea screamed as the two white/blue flashes of lightning signified the change.

Falnynn’s vampire face was locked in an expression of eternal horror as the large platinum blond wolf descended upon her with a savage snarl and flashing razor sharp teeth. Dysea struck her full in the body, raking her paws down Falnynn’s chest, black claws slicing through garments and flesh like butter and then bounding off before she could react.

Dysea had learned more and more over the last few days on how to control her body in wolf form, Martin passing this information along to both of them within the connection they shared. Both of them were amazed at the speed and agility they had, their wolf forms thickening with muscle mass. Dysea’s normally hundred and fifteen pound body increased in size and mass to that of a hundred and forty pounds of hair and teeth, while Anja’s hundred and five pounds increased to a hundred and thirty pounds. Dysea’s long bushy tail snapped out as she landed nimbly, allowing her to keep her balance and not stumble. Her powerful hind legs tensed immediately, like bands of flexible steel, and launched her into the air once more. Falnynn turned just in time to catch Dysea’s weight full in the chest once more, only this time Dysea rode her to the ground, her hundred and forty pound wolf body driving the air from Falnynn’s lungs.

Dysea did not hesitate as *Nauta Melme* had taught her and she snapped her powerful jaws shut around Falnynn’s head, her razor like teeth slicing through flesh and crunching on bone. Dysea ignored her muffled screams as Falnynn’s fists pounded on her muscular hairy sides in utter agony, the pressure of Dysea’s jaws crushing her cheekbones and her own jaw causing white hot pain to rip through her body. Her legs were kicking back and forth, more a nervous reaction now, her arms falling and becoming limp at her sides. Dysea continued to bite down until she heard the crack of Falnynn’s skull. She spat out the head of the dying vampire elf, snorting in disgust, blood showering her platinum coat. Instantly she turned to see Anja’s Persian red fur, her powerful legs spread out as she whipped her head back and forth, the snapping of the vampire elf’s neck clearly audible in the room. The second of the vampire elf Ministers lay on the cold floor, his eyes open in death. Dysea grinned in her wolf form, realizing Anja had torn his throat open even as she had leaped at the elf she was now killing. *Nauta Melme* had complimented both of them on their strength in wolf form, but Anja’s physical power seemed to almost double when she shifted, and she was using that strength now.

Her head snapped around at the strange sound, and the new scents filled her nostrils. Her emerald eyes narrowed and her wolf ears flattened against her head as her tail extended straight out instinctively in suspicion.

The head of the vampire/elf Minister rolled back towards her slowly, his eyes open in surprised death and Dysea snarled in warning.

Melyanna!

Anja was beside her in a heartbeat, her ears laid back and her muzzle dripping blood as she attempted to spit out the foul taste of the vampire. They both reached out with their senses, detecting eight different scents, three females and five males. The rush of air pushing their scents toward them suggested they were bearing down on them quickly but cautiously. It was strange, but they both felt something familiar about these scents.

Eight! Anja spoke.

We must split them my love! Divide them as Nauta Melme taught us! Dysea replied. *I will take those on the right, you...*

“That will not be necessary my Queens.” The familiar voice reached out from the shadows startling both of them.

Two wolves looked at one another, and then stared back down the corridor. The voice was familiar to them, as if they had heard it before.

If you can hear our thoughts then you must know we will never surrender! And we will take far more of you before you kill us. Dysea growled out the warning as well as projecting her thoughts into the darkness.

It is I Anja; Dysea. It is Aricia.

Two flashes of white/blue lightning and they were back in human form, their eyes still staring down the hall, still tensed to shift back into wolf form to fight. Every muscle poised to strike without mercy.

“Little Wolf?” Anja asked softly.

Yes. The voice replied. A voice they knew well, as it sang out its musical tones within their blood. *We have sealed the entrance, but you... you are exposed my loves. And I will not allow the men with me to see you in such fashion. I have stopped us far enough away so that you may gather yourselves some covering.*

Dysea and Anja turned quickly and moved to the tattered remains of their uniforms, gathering them up quickly, and placing them over what they would cover. They both felt the excitement burning in them to meet one who they knew so well, but had never seen.

“Aricia!” Dysea finally called out.

That was all it took and they heard boot steps come charging down the corridor towards them. They watched three large men and a single woman sprint into the room clad in black body armor and red cloaks. Their heads and faces were covered by the strange black helmets, adorned with elaborate engravings and they carried what appeared to be sub machine guns of some kind. They moved immediately to all four corners of where Anja and Dysea stood and turned to face outwards, their weapons held at the ready.

Dysea gripped Anja’s hand tightly as they saw Aricia come into the light, and both of them felt a rush of desire sweep through them. Her raven black hair reached almost to her buttocks, her azure blue eyes wide and clear and bright. She wore the same type of armor, but no helmet, and the smile on her face was brilliant.

Aricia could no longer contain herself and she broke into a run up to them, feeling their desire, their combined auras directed at her and matching what she was projecting towards them. Thr’won entered the room a short distance behind Aricia, her eyes wide as she took in the force of the auras they were projecting to one another. It was not saturating the entire room as it should have been, but was directed only between the three of them. It was incredible, and not something she’d ever seen done with such complete ease. She saw Aricia stop between them, their faces going to nuzzle her, their hands drawing her close into their embrace. Not as one would a sister or relative, but as one would embrace a lover. Aricia returned the embraces with equal feeling Thr’won noted, and with no embarrassment in the least.

Her eyes swept the room and grew even wider when she saw the bodies of the three dead vampire elves and then the blood staining the bodies of the Queens. The two Spartans assigned to guard Aricia had joined the small circle around the three women, all of them facing out against potential danger.

“Spartans!” Thr’won barked, bringing her hands together in a resounding clap. “The uniforms you brought! Quickly! And give them something to wash away the retched stench and blood of these infernal creatures they have slaughtered.” Thr’won added with just a touch of pride.

They had stood against four vampire elves and killed three, scaring the fourth so much he had decided to run and had met death at the hands of a Centurion’s Shi Viska. Thr’won let her eyes linger on them as they dressed, tanned, lean and muscular, both of them, with lush young bodies and long, healthy shiny hair. The she elf Dysea was taller than Anja by several inches, but the red head had a more defined musculature similar to Aricia’s in nature. Anja’s breasts were larger, though not by much, and Thr’won could detect not an ounce of body fat on either of them at first glance. They were the perfect specimens of Alpha females, and Thr’won knew her king had chosen well.

Thr’won gave them a moment as Aricia helped them to quickly pull on the uniforms, and she stepped between the Spartan guards and looked at them. “My Queens... it is a distinct honor to finally meet you.” She told them respectfully, bowing her as she spoke.

Dysea and Anja looked at her, their eyes searching the elf Mage. Dysea was the first to step up to her, having pulled the uniform on first, and she took her hands. She lowered her forehead to touch Thr’won’s surprising the Chief Mage.

“You... you are a Wood Elf.” Dysea spoke softly.

“How... how could...” Thr’won gasped, stunned that Dysea knew that. “I... I have been a Spartan for as long as I can remember my Queen, as you are now. My mate... my husband turned me when I was very young. It is all I know. All I want to be.”

Dysea smiled. "As I am sure it will become to me as well Thr'won, a fact that both Anja and I look forward too with relish." She answered. "Perhaps when there is time we can share our individual moments when the men we so love claimed us?"

Thr'won smiled warmly. She liked this young elf Queen. She was strong and intelligent, that radiated from her aura easily, but she had not a touch of arrogance in her. "I believe... I believe I would like that." She spoke.

Dysea turned back to Aricia as Anja stepped up to her now. Thr'won had to stifle the gasp she felt as she sensed the telepathic power and potential in this human female. Dysea was powerful, yes... but what radiated from Anja was unlike anything she had ever felt from a non pureblood wolf so soon after being turned. Thr'won would have to reevaluate her status of this young woman.

My apologies Chief Mage, Anja reached out with her thoughts. I believe I over reacted earlier. I tend to be rather protective of...

Thr'won took Anja's hands quickly while shaking her head. *As I said my Queen, there is nothing to apologize for. You were only protecting what you love.*

Telepathy was not a normal form of communication, and even Tier Six telepaths, while the most powerful of their people, exhibited the signs of stress when communicating with their minds. The signs were slight for the powerful telepaths, a tiny crinkle of the corners of the eyes, perhaps a slight twitch of the lips, but Anja Peterson showed none of that in the least. Her thoughts were powerful, focused and very clear, and Thr'won noticed that Anja's power was helping her in a way, bleeding off, making their communication less stressful for her. This human female had within her almost as much power as their King, and for a moment Thr'won's eyes went wide as she realized they shared that incredible power easily. While most of the focus and clarity came from their King, it was their connection that allowed them to pass the power between them so it strained none of them in the least. Even Dysea, who she thought of as only a Tier Three telepath, communicated without the least bit of strain.

I can see the questions in your eyes, but we don't know how this came to be Thr'won. Anja told her, erecting a very strong barrier around the two of them so they could talk privately. And she did it with barely any effort.

It is amazing my Queen. Thr'won told her, the excitement running through her very real. *I have never felt such clarity and focus. Even our most skilled telepaths have not refined their communications to such an extent. How... how long have you been able to do this?*

We don't know. Anja answered her. *It began shortly before Martin turned me.*

Before! Thr'won gasped

We were hoping that working with you will help us to better understand it. Anja told her.

My Queen... I am not the most powerful of our telepaths. There are four who are much stronger than I.

Anja nodded, *Perhaps Thr'won, but it is you who now holds our trust, and we will allow no other to see our thoughts. That prevue resides only with you now.*

Thr'won felt nothing but honesty and acceptance from this young woman, and pride swept through her at Anja's words. And as with Dysea, there was not an ounce of arrogance in her words or her actions. Thr'won nodded quickly. *I will do what I can my Queen. I believe we should begin as soon as we return to Sparta.*

"And we will." Anja spoke out loud now. "But first we have to complete several tasks."

"Dysea... Anja..." Aricia spoke now. "Where is Martin? He is not with you?"

The doors to the throne room burst open at that moment, and in a single movement that thundered in the hall, all six Spartans spun around, the bridles on their arms flashing a yellow gold as their Shi Viskas appeared instantly, and their P190s dropped over the top of the shields to level at the half dozen elves that skidded to a halt at what they saw.

"Hold!" Dysea and Anja yelled simultaneously, Spartan trigger fingers stopping in mid squeeze.

"My... My Queen?" Ealin gasped. He and the elves with him were covered in splattered blood and bits of flesh. They had slaughtered the vampires in the room to the last, sending three round bursts into the heads of all thirty-two of them before they had left them.

"Ealin... you were with *Nauta Melme*." Dysea began. "Why are you here? Where is he?"

"The leader of the vampires was able to escape our ambush." Ealin spoke moving forward cautiously, his eyes on the six unmoving figures in black and red, their weapons never leaving the center of his chest.

Anja placed her hand on the shoulder of the Spartan closest to her. "They are friends Spartans." She spoke. "Lower your weapons."

Thr'won was surprised at the tone of command in both Dysea and Anja's voices, and the way they so easily and correctly referred to the Centurions as Spartans. Their order was followed without hesitation and six P190s dropped into ready positions once more, but the Shi Viskas remained active and very much ready to use.

"Martin left to chase him." Ealin continued. "As we were coming here to reinforce you, we saw him moving onto the second promenade. We saw... we saw more of these men and women chasing him. We did not know what to think... and there was no way we were going to catch Martin. I decided to come and find you."

"Ealin..." Dysea spoke. "You will issue a Priority One Alpha directive. No one wearing uniforms like this is to be attacked. They are allies and are to be treated as superior officers in all respects. Give them a description of the uniforms and do so quickly."

Ealin didn't hesitate and turned activating his implant as Dysea whirled to face Thr'won. "*Nauta Melme* is alone!" She spoke, worry her voice. "This witch vampire spoke of this Colonel Wilson. She said he was almost a thousand years old. What does that mean? Why is his age of any matter?"

"Vampires grow stronger as they age my Queen." Thr'won replied, realizing what this meant. "Even as strong as you and Anja are, I doubt you would have been able to defeat a vampire of that age."

"And Martin?" Anja asked looking at her.

Thr'won looked at her. "I don't know." She spoke. "If I am correct, the King is only just now realizing his full potential. He... I don't know."

"Then we will find him." Dysea spoke reaching out with her thoughts.

Anja beat her to it and shook her head. "He's blocking us my love."

Dysea looked at her. "I know every centimeter of this city *Melyanna*. We will find him."

"Then let's stop sitting here jawing and get to finding him." Anja spoke.

Dysea, Anja and Aricia didn't hesitate and began moving for the entrance. Thr'won lifted her wrist as she followed.

"Theron..."

Theron lifted his hand and Andreus and the Spartans with him stopped running. Much of the area they were in had already been evacuated, or the elves were remaining behind closed and locked doors.

"Thr'won what is wrong?" He spoke, lifting his wrist as well.

"We have the Queens. They are safe." Her voice carried to him. "However it appears the King is following the vampire leader through the city. A human... Theron... and if our information is accurate, this vampire is nearly a thousand years old."

Theron looked at Andreus. "And we do not know how long the King has been shifting, or what his abilities are." He spoke.

"That is my concern as well." Thr'won's voice replied.

"Thr'won... mark our position and follow us. Andreus has an imprint of the King from the images and he is tracking him by scent, but he is far faster than we thought. Faster than any wolf Andreus has ever tracked." Theron answered. "We will continue from our location. Intersect with us along the upper promenade."

"We are moving Theron."

He turned to Andreus. "You still have the imprint Andreus?"

"Yes Holy One. He is still moving but we are closing slowly. He's becoming more cautious now. Perhaps he senses this vampire somehow."

"Then by all means Captain, let us continue."

Martin landed lightly on the balls of his feet after his ten meter leap from the level below. His HK swept out in front of him, his eyes searching. They settled on the female elf huddling by the bench near the arrangement of concrete planters. She was clutching two children in her arms and her eyes were wide in fear. Martin moved quickly over to her, placing his hand on her shoulder.

“Are you ok?” He asked.

“You... you are... the High King.” She was able to stammer out.

“A human... did you see him?”

The elf pointed down the promenade. “He... he went there.”

Martin nodded. “Take your children and go.” Martin told her. “Don’t stop... don’t look back. Just go.”

The female elf needed no further encouragement and ushered the children forward. She looked at Martin as she got to her feet. “Thank... thank you my King.”

Martin nodded. “Find a room or home and get inside. Do not come out unless elves direct you to do so.” Martin unclipped his HK from its quick release straps and held it out to her. “If you do not know them, or they are human... start shooting and don’t stop until they are dead. You have a full magazine.”

The female nodded and took the HK. “Sire... you will be unarmed.”

“Go! We have not yet secured the entire city and there may still be dangers. Protect your children. Go!” Martin told her.

The female elf didn’t hesitate and she grabbed the arm of the younger elf child and began running. Martin moved away from the planters, pulling his left sleeve up. He rolled the sleeve tightly and looked at the bridle. He pictured it with his mind, and with a yellow/gold flash the armor encased his forearm up to his elbow, and the Shi Viska appeared on top of the armor almost humming with unnatural power.

“Unarmed no,” Martin muttered to himself. “Scared shitless... well that’s another story.”

His heart was racing, his blood pounding in his head, all of his wolf senses at their peak. Whoever he was hunting was smart. This vampire was nothing like the others. He was more intelligent, and stronger, and perhaps the most deadly he had yet encountered since discovering they even existed. Awareness flooded through him now, of his surroundings, of who he was. It was like a light had suddenly blossomed within him, like someone had thrown a switch in the center of his chest. The fear was still there, still lingering on the edges on his consciousness, but now that same fear was fueling his senses and adding to his heightened awareness.

Martin began moving again in the direction the female elf had told him. Shadows were everywhere, being cast by the slivers of sunlight entering from gaps in the ground high above. The promenade narrowed into a shallow corridor now, and Martin chose to stay in the middle giving himself time to react to a threat from either side.

“I can sense your fear young Leonidas!” The voice carried over the nearby silence and the very distant gunfire.

“Well good for you.” Martin muttered as his eyes swept along the shadows.

“I know who you are Pureblood!” The voice rang out once more.

“Like I’m trying to hide that fact asshole,” Martin muttered again. His eyes detected movement to his right and he stopped.

“I want him alive! No weapons! Batons only! Subdue him, but do not kill him!”

Martin’s eyes picked up additional movement on his other side and a small smile split his face, “Time to dance.” He said.

Seven Alliance troops broke from cover on each side of him, all of them racing right for where he squatted, collapsible batons in their hands.

Outnumbered as he was, Martin did the only thing he could.

He attacked.

He leaped at the closest Alliance soldier to him on the east side of the promenade. The edge of the east side fell thirty meters to the first level below, the number of shops and stands fewer in number. The flash of fear reared in the soldier’s eyes before Martin’s booted feet planted into his chest driving him to the ground, driving the air from his lungs and crushing three ribs. Martin spun to his right snatching the wrist of the next trooper and twisting it savagely as he continued his spin. The man screamed as his shoulder was yanked from its socket and his body lifted into the air. His screams increased as Martin used his greater strength to throw the man toward the edge of the promenade several meters away. They diminished only when he dropped from view, his body flailing madly as he sailed over the edge into nothing.

Theron and Andreus came up short as the detachment of Spartans guarding the new Queens came dashing around the corner. Theron noted immediately that the images of his Queens did not due them justice. Aricia stood between them as Thr'won moved up next to him.

"Have you seen him?" Theron gasped.

Thr'won shook her head. "Dysea brought us straight here." She spoke. "He was blocking them telepathically."

Theron turned to the platinum blond elf. "He's protecting them from what he is doing." He spoke. "My Queen... I am..."

"I know who you are Steward of the Line." Dysea spoke before he could finish. "*Nauta Melme* is still blocking us."

"Damn!" Theron swore, "Andreus?"

The Spartan Captain shook his head. "He is close Holy One... but the wind is shifting in this portion of the tunnels, perhaps because we are so close to the surface. I'm detecting many scents now, but he is very close."

"Where? There are only two tunnels here!" Theron snapped. "We..."

The horrifying scream from above them interrupted his voice and they all turned their eyes skyward. The body of the Alliance trooper slammed into the ground between Andreus and Theron, both of whom stepped back only inches, with a devastating crunch and the wet sound of a skull cracking open.

Theron looked up once more. "Andreus... I believe we have found our King." He spoke.

Dysea, Anja and Aricia stepped forward holding hands. "You have no idea Theron." Anja spoke just before the three of them bent their legs and propelled themselves straight up towards the ledge twenty meters above them.

Theron looked at Thr'won quickly. "Oh... I like them already Thr'won" He spoke with a smile before bending his legs and following the Spartans that were already leaping up to follow their Queens.

Theron adjusted his body in mid air as he cleared the edge and landed next to Andreus on the slight incline leading up to where Martin was fighting. As Thr'won dropped lightly to her feet next to him they noticed their Queens squatting in front of them, and the Spartan Centurions flanking them.

"Spartans what are you waiting for? We..." Theron's gaze traveled in the same direction everyone else was looking and his words trailed off as his eyes grew wide.

"C'mon Vampire!" Martin screamed as he stepped into a ridge hand to the throat of an Alliance trooper. The man's legs blasted out from underneath him like a shot, kicking up into the air as his throat was instantly crushed. The momentum of the blow carried his legs completely over his head and his body slammed back into the earth with loud thud to join the seven others already there.

Martin didn't stop as he deflected the blow from the baton and drove his balled fist into the face of the baton's wielder. The man's nose and face blossomed into blood and crushed cartilage and he began screaming, his hands going to his face. Martin executed a spinning back roundhouse kick that rammed into the temple of another trooper, the sound of his neck and skull breaking very evident. He drew back his left arm and then drove the Shi Viska shield into the chest of another trooper. The blades were extended and slashed deeply into the man's flesh. As he opened his mouth to scream, Martin backhanded him in the face with the edge of the shield. No sound came as his neck snapped from the force of the blow and his body was tossed several meters into the air.

"What's the matter vampire!" Martin screamed once more, "Can't do it yourself! C'mon you fucking coward! You want me... come and get me!"

There were three Alliance troopers left and they stared at Martin with a mixture of fear and anger in their eyes. His eyes had changed to yellow/gold orbs that were alive with killing lust, and his fangs were fully extended. The Shi Viska glowed upon his arm, as if waiting to leap off and claim lives of its own accord. The bodies of their comrades littered the ground all around them. This mad man had gone through them like a buzz saw. He had...

Martin smiled and lifted the Shi Viska. "You should have run when you had the chance." He snapped. "I'm not a forgiving person!"

The golden shield leaped from his arm, razor sharp blades extending and locking into place as it bore down on the three men. The shield cleaved through the first man's arms, arms that he had risen to protect himself and it continued on with little resistance, severing his head from his body. The second two had turned to run as the Shi Viska executed a tight hundred and eighty degree turn and sped after them. It sliced clean through the midsection of one trooper before separating the last trooper's legs just below the knees.

Martin turned to face the vampire as he strode around the corner of the building, holding out his arm as the Shi Viska zipped in and returned to its spot, waiting for its master to release it again.

"Most impressive! You truly are the descendant of that dog Leonidas." The vampire spoke as he strode around the corner of the building, his features now fully that of a very old undead warrior. His skin was pale and his fangs were in full view, his eyes burning blue lights in the shadows.

Martin grinned savagely. "I'll take that as a compliment."

"I was planning to capture you and hand you over to the High Priestess. She would have rewarded me greatly." Wilson spoke as he came to a stop.

"I'm sorry to have disrupted your plans." Martin spoke as he rose to his full height of six feet two inches.

"It is no matter, our plans continue unhindered, and your actions here are merely a minor inconvenience." Wilson told him confidently. "I would imagine the High Elf Queen is already dead... and Mountain City is a burning wasteland."

Martin smiled. "You don't actually think I'm that stupid do you?" He spoke. "I've had people infiltrating Mountain City for the last two weeks. That battalion of mercenaries you sent against them from the north? Well... right now they are providing fertilizer for the ground to grow. And I would imagine that the Alliance troops you sent to assist your agents in Mountain City are encountering far more trouble than you thought. Tarifa is quite safe asshole. You aren't smart enough to out think her father." Wilson's jaw twitched enough that Martin grinned even further. "Touch a nerve there did I vampy boy?"

"You are no match for me!" Wilson screamed. "I am nearly a thousand years old, far more powerful than you!"

"Let's find out sport." Martin growled, "If you have the balls. You do have balls don't you?"

"I will enjoy drinking your blood descendant of Leonidas." Wilson spoke.

"I don't think so vampy boy." Martin replied lifting his arm. He launched the Shi Viska directly at Wilson, watching as the blades extended, still dripping blood from the Alliance soldiers it had claimed.

Wilson calmly stepped to the side in a blurred motion as the Shi Viska passed over his right shoulder. He felt the breeze of the weapon as it sailed by and he laughed. He turned back to Martin who stood there calmly. "You have failed to learn the first lesson the Spartans teach young descended one. Never release your weapon at a vampire who can move faster than it can. Your aim leaves something to be desired."

Martin smiled. "There's nothing wrong with my aim." He spoke. "And you should know something about me before I kill you, three things actually."

"And what is that?" Wilson spoke as he began walking towards Martin.

"Well... one... I fucking hate vampires!" Martin replied calmly. "Two... I don't fight fair, and three... three is the most important. I never miss what I aim at asshole, and I wasn't aiming at you."

Martin looked up quickly, Wilson's eyes going wide and following his. Martin jumped back, landing several meters in front of the line of Spartans as the Shi Viska flew above their heads and cut through the steel cables holding the three ton lighting power distributor suspended in the air. The cables snapped with loud reports and the rectangular box dropped like a bomb.

Wilson had no time to move, no time to react and the box came down on top of him, instantly crushing his skull and pulverizing his body beneath the giant distributor.

Martin held out his arm and the Shi Viska obediently returned, clicking back into place on his forearm and with a flash of yellow/gold it vanished.

Theron and the others stood there with wide eyes and disbelieving looks on their faces. Only Dysea and Anja wore knowing smiles and they slowly stood up as Martin turned to look at them, his eyes still yellow/gold orbs, and looking positively beautiful as far as they were concerned.

Aricia clutched both Anja's and Dysea's hands tightly as she felt his aura envelope her, threatening to sweep her away. "This... this is Martin?" She gasped softly.

Anja leaned close to her ear. "He's beautiful isn't he?" She spoke quickly as she and Dysea got to their feet and ran the few meters that separated them.

"You're late." Martin said as they picked a side of him and pressed against him tightly, their heads going to his in love and relief.

Then Dysea punched him. Hard.

"Don't you ever do that again *Nauta Melme!*" She barked. "Shutting us out like that!"

And then Anja punched him even harder in the opposite arm, "Asshole." She called him.

Martin chuckled and drew them both into his arms, kissing one and then the other. "It's nice to see you too."

Martin looked up as Theron walked up to him quickly, his heart racing as he gazed upon a young man that was almost an exact twin to the King he had served almost three thousand years earlier. He bowed his head low in deep respect. "My King... we have waited a very long time." He began. "I wish to..." Theron looked up and saw that Martin wasn't looking at him. His eyes were staring at something behind him, and Theron followed his gaze.

Aricia clenched her fists as his eyes fell upon her and she felt his overwhelming aura envelope her in its sweet embrace. She felt the waves of desire and love, the force of his passion and need, all of it directed at her and it threatened to sweep her away as he drew closer to her. Her nails dug into her palms as he stopped in front of her, towering over her by at least seven inches. His head dropped quickly and Aricia gasped as his lips brushed against her hair and cheek setting fire to her body in ways she had never experienced before. She felt him inhale deeply, his large chest directly in front of her face, expanding with air. The blood pounded in her ears and behind her eyes, threatening to overwhelm her. She whimpered softly in need when his hands came up and caressed her face, his fingers brushing across her lips as he took her face in his hands.

"Hello Little Wolf." He spoke the words Aricia had waited to hear since their minds had first touched. Her azure blue eyes closed slowly as she heard his voice, soft and warm against her cheeks like the breeze from the Evrotas plains in the summer, his mint scent combining with the heat of his aura filling her nostrils and making her lightheaded.

"My... my..." Aricia's attempts to reply to him were lost as Martin lowered his face and his lips descended upon hers.

Aricia groaned in unabashed delight, her arms wrapping around his shoulders as he lifted her into his arms and he claimed her. Aricia had never been kissed before, and his lips set her body on fire as she pressed tightly against him, molding her lithe figure against his steel hard frame. His tongue probed delicately, dancing across her teeth, before reaching out to touch hers. Aricia's grip on his shoulders tightened and she met his tongue with her own, searching and exploring new territory, new sensations. Every nerve ending in her body was singing out in delirious abandon, wanting more, demanding more. Her wolf blood was raging within her veins, threatening to overwhelm what little control she had left.

Martin sensed this in her as well and slowly, reluctantly he drew the kiss apart before he too lost all semblance of control and he took her right there in front of everyone. He nibbled on her bottom lip gently before looking into her beautiful face. He smiled as her eyes opened slowly to gaze at him.

I would... I would not stop you... my love. Aricia spoke within his mind.

Martin smiled warmly, brushing his nose against her cheek. *No Little Wolf. When I claim you... when we claim you Aricia... it will be with soft sheets beneath you and our bodies touching yours. And never without your consent.*

Aricia's smile was beautiful and she lowered her forehead to his, closing her eyes. *I will look forward to that day with all my heart.*

And so will we. Anja and Dysea's voices entered their thoughts as one as they stepped up to them. Martin had lowered Aricia to the ground and the four of them huddled together, allowing their love to swarm around each other.

Therwon had stood to the side during all this, and once more she had felt the power of his aura surround her and pass through her as he directed it entirely to the three women and no one else. Even Kmyla and the two Spartan Centurion females had sensed the power of his aura, and had watched as it concentrated on only the

three. That they were speaking within their minds was obvious to Thr'won, as she could feel the power of that bond more than anything else.

It was Theron who finally interrupted the moment, clearing his throat loudly.

"My Lord and King?" He spoke. Martin pulled away from Aricia and turned to look at the older man. "Sire... I am Theron..."

"You are the Steward of the Line," Martin said, surprising Theron. "Yes I know. And the only Shifter that is older than Dymas."

Theron's eyes opened even further. "Dymas... Dymas lives?" He asked stunned.

Martin nodded with a smile. "Yes he does. He gave me a rather stern lecture when he finally revealed to me what my heritage is. Needless to say I was..."

"Unbelieving My Lord?" Theron spoke.

"That's a little on the mild side... but essentially correct." Martin answered, bringing Aricia's hands to his lips and kissing them gently before moving to stand in front of the old man.

"Yes... I would imagine it would be quite a shock sire." Theron spoke, "And now?"

"Now?" Martin said, looking at him. "Well I think having blood sucking vampires trying to kill me kind of sold me on the idea that Dymas wasn't yanking my chain. But I'm still iffy on this whole King thing."

Andreas and the Spartan Centurions were far younger than Theron, and therefore they were aware of the slang that their King was using, and several of them, including Aricia chuckled softly at Martin's reply.

Theron looked at him undaunted. "You are the descendant of King Leonidas sire. There is no question of that. You are the King we have waited for."

"No question at all?" Martin asked.

"None my Lord," Theron replied. "And your attempts at levity are unappreciated sire. Our people have waited many centuries for the coming of Leonidas's descendant. I would ask that you take this more seriously."

"Seriously?" Martin said his voice hardening. "I never take anything serious while I'm fighting a war, it gives me a headache!" Martin tilted his head up. "This is Raptor One. Status reports, all units!" He spoke, moving away from the others, leaving Theron with an astonished look on his face.

Thr'won stepped up to him quickly as Andreas motioned his Spartans to stay with Martin. "Theron... you must be patient old friend." She spoke. "He has never been among his people. He has never read their history. He has been raised outside of our world his entire life, always thinking he is something else, but feeling the strange pull of the wolf nevertheless. This is all new to him... to all of them. You have felt what I felt Theron. He is far more powerful than even I first thought, and he desires nothing more than the answers to the questions he has asked all of his life. We must not push him. He needs guidance... not demands. He will not forsake his heritage or his people, you know that as well as I, but he will follow his own path. Just as Leonidas did old friend."

Theron looked at her for a long moment before nodding his head. "I... when I first saw him... he looks so much like my King Thr'won. It is uncanny, and I..." He took a deep breath. "You are right of course. I..."

They all turned as two dozen elves came into view running up the promenade led by Ealin. Andreas and the Spartans remained alert, but knew the elves were not their enemy. Ealin and an elf wearing a large radio moved up to where Martin stood wary of the new soldiers.

Ealin held out the handset. "Something is jamming our short range implants. I have teams sweeping the city looking for it." Ealin spoke. "I have Ben on the radio and he is circling the mercenary column that was moving against Mountain City."

Martin took the handset. "Ben... talk to me!"

"We nailed them pretty hard Marty!" Ben's voice carried to everyone. "I have three ships orbiting the area and sweeping any survivors! You want prisoners boss?"

"Fuck no! Kill every one of the slimy bastards! They want to move against my allies, then I'm not gonna give them a moment to consider they fucked up! Any word from Tareif or Danny?"

"Danny got back to Eden with Tareif's sons, rearmed and reloaded and headed for Mountain City." Ben answered. "I think the Alliance had more forces in the area than we thought Marty. I haven't left my orbit here, but there's a lot of smoke coming from the city, and we're ten miles north of it."

"Did Tareif call for the alert birds?"

"Not to my knowledge." Ben replied.

“Launch them anyways!” Martin ordered. “I’m going to leave Dysea and Anja here to help expedite the evacuation of the city. Get those transports up and moving Ben, something tells me the Alliance was ready for us and Tarifa and the others are in deeper than we know. The Alliance damn sure had more troops here than we first thought.”

“Understood! What are you going to do?”

“I’m moving to Mountain City.” Martin replied. “Maintain your orbit until those sorry bastards are all dead or as close to dead as you can determine. Once you can break your flight away, move on Mountain City to provide support if needed.”

“I’ll keep trying to raise Tareif or someone on the ground there.” Ben spoke. “Endith knows most of their frequencies and she’s already scanning them.”

“I’ll see you soon Ben.” Martin handed the handset back to the elf radio operator and turned to Ealin. “Form your forces into four groups and sweep the city again. I don’t want any surprises when the transports start to arrive. If it’s part of the Alliance kill it. Period!”

Ealin nodded with a smile. “Consider it done.”

“Get moving.” Martin spoke, “And Ealin... watch your asses.”

Ealin smiled and threw a sloppy salute before leading the elves off. Martin turned as Dysea and Anja came up to him. “Treat them, load them, and get them the hell out of here.” Martin spoke. “You don’t have enough troops to stay and hold the city. The moment the transports get here, start moving them out.”

Dysea took his hand. “*Melyanna* and I will handle it.” She spoke. “Go and help Tarifa.”

Martin leaned over and kissed her softly, and then pulled Anja to him for a kiss as well. He watched them move off, stopping only to hug Aricia before they moved out, the four Spartan Centurions following them.

“Theron?”

“My Lord?” Theron stepped up to him.

“You have a ship I assume.” Martin asked.

“Yes sire.”

“Then let’s go.” Martin spoke. He looked at Andreus. “You are my Captain?”

“Yes sire. Spartan Commander Andreus.”

“Spartan Captain you mean. You just got promoted.” Martin told him. He looked at Theron. “I can do that right?”

Theron smiled. “Indeed sire.”

“Good. Andreus assign two teams of two to stay behind here. They’re only job is to hunt down any vampires that may remain. They will report only to Dysea or Anja. No others. Is that clear?”

Andreus nodded, “As you order My Lord.” He replied turning to point at four Spartans.

Martin stepped up in front of Theron. “I can’t leave until I know the elves are stable Theron.” He said softly. “I know... I know what I am now. Who I am... well I’m hoping you can help me with that. I see many things... places I have never been to... battles that I have never experienced.”

“What you are experiencing my King, are images of Leonidas himself, battles we fought together, if I am correct.” Theron said.

“How is that possible?” Martin asked.

Theron shook his head. “I do not know. You have in your veins the blood of Leonidas. He was the most powerful of us all... as you now are. There have been twenty-two of his descendants through the centuries, yet none have had anywhere near the same aura as him... none except you. He reeked of power, of control. As you now do. As I stand here beside you, it is like when I stood beside him. That is what I feel. The same drive, the same passion, the same aura. It emanates from your very pores. I do not know how it is possible my King, but I will help you to explore it, if that is your wish.”

Martin nodded slowly. “It is Theron.”

Theron looked into Martin’s deep brown eyes and smiled. There was no arrogance, no superior attitude; there was only loyalty and devotion. And the desire for knowledge of who and what he was. “I would be honored to help you discover all that you wish my King. As for the elves, if they are your allies then they are allies to us as well. We have many within our city, and I do not doubt their honor or skill. That you must complete what you started... well I would expect no less from a descendant of Leonidas sire. We will help in any way we can.”

“Let’s get to this ship of yours then, and we can talk on the way.” Martin spoke.

MOUNTAIN CITY

Tareif winced as another explosion shook the building he was in. They had been prepared for battle Tareif knew, but not on this grand a scale. Alliance troops had somehow found their way into Mountain City against all odds, and now at least two battalions of them were wreaking havoc on the streets and levels of his home. He and Cantel and a detachment of Dragoons had split from his daughter nearly two hours ago, pitched battles waging in the streets on the ground and those suspended within the trees. Several of their main thoroughfares high in the branches had already come crashing down due to explosions and fighting. They had slipped into this building only minutes before so that Tareif may get some sort of picture of the battle that was raging within his city.

“The implants that Martin Hunter provided us are being jammed War Master!” Cantel spoke above the roar of the battle raging outside. “It has to be something short range.”

“And what of our radios?” Tareif asked.

“Radama is almost to our location. He’s moving up to us from downstairs. His detachment holds the bottom floor. And he has a pack radio, as do all the others within the city loyal to us. Martin Hunter thought this a possibility, and had us secure and hide the radios just in case.” Cantel told him.

“The more I hear of this man...” Tareif spoke. “The more I curse what the Alliance did to me Cantel.”

“That is over now War Master!” Cantel told him.

The door to the room they were in slid open and Radama appeared, the bulky radio secured on his back. He moved immediately to where Tareif and Cantel knelt.

“War Master...” Radama spoke loudly. “It is an honor to fight beside you once more!”

“Have you heard from my daughter?” Tareif asked.

Radama nodded. “Queen Tarifa is on level nine! She told me to tell you she is moving with her detachment south along the outer promenade! Much of the fighting is taking place on the lower levels, with sparse engagements scattered across the upper levels. Daniel Simpson landed twenty minutes ago with a large group from Eden, and they have secured the landing platforms. He is leading a small team down to ground level to find the source of the jamming.”

“Do we know how they entered the city?” Tareif barked.

“The sewers War Master,” Radama answered, “Both on the west end and in the south. Tarifa believes it is the sewage treatment plants. It’s the only possibly way to reach into the depths of the city as they have without detection.”

Tareif nodded. “It will also limit their ability to send in wave after wave. I estimate no more than two battalions have breached the city, but they are commandos and are causing confusion and death as they go. Do we have forces near the plants?”

“General Faradi holds the west side of the city with four companies of Dragoons. They are battling the Alliance forces on six levels.” Cantel spoke. “Colonel G’muil has his four companies aligned to protect the civilian areas.”

Tareif nodded his head. “Have Faradi break off one squad to find and close the entrance in the west. Use explosives if he has too. We can repair the facility, but we must insure that they can not breach the city with additional troops. G’muil does the same in the south... we...”

Tareif’s implant radio crackled and came to life with a voice he did not recognize. “Anyone on this channel, I need a sitrep.”

Radama had heard it as well in his implant and he grabbed Tareif’s arm. “It is Daniel Simpson War Master.” He spoke.

Tareif nodded. “Daniel Simpson, this is War Master Tareif.”

There was a laugh in Tareif’s ear. “War Master! I have to say sir; you sure know how to throw a party. Thanks for the invite.”

Tareif couldn’t help but smile at the levity of his words, “My sons Commander?”

“They are tucked into a nice warm bed, with several very attractive elf doctors and nurses cooing over them. They were hurt bad sir, but they are tough cookies. They’re going to be fine.” Dan replied. “We found what was jamming our implants, and I let them know we didn’t appreciate it. They stopped.”

Even amidst the sounds of battle and death, Tareif couldn’t help but laugh even more. These men and women with Hunter were fearless. “I understand you have secured the landing platforms Commander.”

“Yes sir!” Dan answered. “I have four Raptors inbound loaded for bear! We stripped them bare and each one has sixty personnel per ship. Julie has two, and Tari split off from my team and is commanding the other two. There are Drow among them War Master.”

“Do not worry Commander.” Tareif spoke. “Our forces already know that the Drow stand with us in this fight. Two of them fight beside my own daughter. Direct two of your ships to the northern platforms and have them begin to work their way down. The other two must land outside the wall on the east and move in from there. A stray rocket from the mercenary unit that was moving from the north opened a hole in the wall there. I do not know if any Alliance troops were able to penetrate from that side, but fighting is reported in that part of the city.”

“Please tell me that Ben took out the mercenary column.” Dan said.

Tareif’s smile was savage. “I heard from your pilot only a short time ago. He was able to establish communications with a sniper team overlooking the city, and they in turn relayed the message to my forces. The mercenary column is no more. He and his three other ships are moving south, and I have asked them to remain airborne as cover and orbit the city.”

“Outstanding!” Dan replied. “Where do you want us?”

“If you would please act as a sweeper team,” Tareif spoke. “We will use this as our command channel. What level are you on?”

“The jammer was in what appears to be an eatery of some sort on the ground level. We’re in the southeast corner.” Dan answered.

Tareif nodded. “Yes I know it. Begin sweeping your team northwest towards the center of the city. I will lead the forces with me southeast and we will meet you in the center on level four.”

“We’re on it.” Dan spoke.

Radama pressed the handset of the radio into his opposite ear harder and listened. “Hold on.” He spoke to Tareif. His eyes grew wider as he listened. “Yes... yes I will tell him.” Radama looked at Tareif. “That was a relay station from north of the Wood Elf capital. They have retaken their city, and transports from Eden will begin landing in minutes. Martin Hunter boarded a strange ship with humans. The operator called them Spartans Daniel. Do you know who they are?”

They couldn’t see the smile on Dan’s face. “They are friends Radama.”

“They are heading here with a small force of perhaps twenty.” Radama finished. He will contact us when he touches down.”

“Daniel Simpson,” Tareif broke in. “How long has Martin Hunter been infiltrating his forces from Eden into Mountain City? There are far too many of you to be a coincidence.”

“He started it about two weeks ago.” Dan replied, “A few dozen each day. Radama was one of the first to arrive. He likes to be prepared.”

Tareif smiled. “So it seems.” Tareif got to his feet. “I will meet you on level four Commander Simpson. And please... do not hesitate to show any Alliance forces you might run across a warm welcome to Mountain City.”

Tareif heard Daniel laugh in the implant, “My pleasure War Master.”

SPARTAN TRANSPORT

Martin ran his finger inside the collar of the new armor. “It itches.”

The two of them stood away from the other Spartans in the transport, giving them some semblance of privacy. Theron stood with Andreus and Thr’won near the front of the transport.

Aricia looked at him with a loving smile as she reached up, securing the crimson cape on his shoulders. “It is new armor my love, the King’s armor. You will grow accustomed to it.” She told him softly.

“And this stuff conforms to any shape?” Martin asked, running his hand over his left arm.

Aricia nodded. “Every Spartan Shifter wears it.” She answered. “It will stop most small caliber weapons, and it will armor you when you are in the form of a wolf.”

“How does the Shi Viska work with the armor over it then?” Martin asked.

“It still works in the same way.” She told him. “It will just activate over the body armor.”

Martin stared at her, taking in the contours of her face, the gentle curve of her lips, and the shape of her azure blue eyes. *What are you thinking?* He asked her.

Aricia met his eyes, the dark brown pools the most beautiful color she had ever seen and so deep that you could lose yourself within them forever quite easily. She placed her hands on his chest, her palms flat against the armor, feeling his chest rise and fall as he breathed.

How this came to be. She replied within their link.

Do... do you regret what you and I share Aricia? What you share with Anja and Dysea? He asked.

No. She replied instantly, *Never. These last few days... since I first saw you in my mind. It has been wonderful. I have felt things I have never experienced before, wonderful things. I just don't know how it came to be.*

Well... I can't say it is second nature to me either you know.

Aricia smiled. *That is not what I mean.*

Then what Little Wolf? What troubles you?

I would rather not speak of it now my love. She stroked his cheek with her finger. *Will you allow me that for the time?*

Little Wolf I would never force you to do anything you did not wish to do. Martin told her. *It is not in my nature to do something like that. And I love you too much to dishonor you in that way.*

Why do you love me Martin? We had never met until this day. We did not know each other existed until only days before this one. How is it that we can feel... that I can feel what I feel for you? For Anja? For Dysea? And feel it so completely that it burns in my blood?

Martin smiled. *Hell if I knew the answer to that I'd be a god.*

Aricia smiled at the expression on his face. *I'm being serious.*

It's no different for me Aricia. In the last week I've discovered that I'm a werewolf... that vampires and all sorts of unsightly creatures exist...and many of them want me dead for one reason or the other. And then I find out that I'm now King to two races of people. Not exactly everyday business boardroom stuff you know. I have a hard time picking out the color of my socks most days, and now I get hit with all this.

Aricia met his smile with soft musical laughter, and she dropped her head to his chest. *I find that very hard to believe my love, but I do see your point.* She felt his powerful arms encircle her and pull her close to him. She could hear his steady even heartbeat, feel the rush of his blood through his veins, and his mint scent filled every portion of her awareness.

What I feel for you... regardless of whether I can explain it or not, it is very real Little Wolf. I love you with the same intensity and passion that I love Anja and Dysea. I can't explain it... and to be honest... I don't really care how it came to be. Only that it is. His voice echoed in her mind.

My love, will you allow me to explore what we have at my own choosing; at my own pace? It is all so new to me. Aricia asked him, pulling her head from his chest and looking into his eyes once more.

Martin took her face in his hands and leaned over to kiss her softly on her lips. Her lavender scent washed through him, and he inhaled deeply allowing it to flow through him and fill him completely. *Do I have to stop calling you Little Wolf?*

Aricia smiled at him. *From your lips... from Anja and Dysea... those two words are music to my heart.*

And I don't have to stop letting you know how much I love you?

I would be bereft of all happiness if you did that. She told him, pressing her forehead to his lips with a smile.

Then I will do as you ask Little Wolf. Martin said, pulling her once more into his embrace and feeling her arms encircle his waist and squeeze just as tightly as he was holding her.

Theron looked at Andreus as they watched their King embrace Aricia.

“I have never seen her look so at peace and filled with such happiness.” Andreus spoke softly.

“Theron?” The Chief Mage spoke.

“Yes I feel it too.” Theron answered, knowing what she was going to say.

Andreus looked at him. “Holy One, what do you mean? What do you feel?”

Theron smiled. “Something I haven’t felt in quite a long time young Captain.” He replied, emphasizing the word Captain.

“Twelve enemies unarmed,” Thr’won spoke softly, “With only the Shi Viska as a weapon; and to have commanded it in such a way. It was almost alive.”

Andreus looked at her. “I’ve... I’ve never seen anyone do that with the shield; slight alterations yes, but to direct it like he did?”

Theron nodded. “Indeed. We must hide his presence when we return.”

“He will never agree to that. Nor will the Queens.” Thr’won spoke. “They are too inquisitive Theron. They will want to wander the city, see the people. Anja is a doctor... Dysea has more compassion in her than anyone I have ever met. We will not be able to confine them. They won’t allow it.”

“We must!” Theron told them. “There are those among our own people who do not want to see the return of Leonidas’s bloodline to the throne. Even among the Senate! They need instruction... time to absorb who and what they are. All of them.”

“What do you suggest old friend?” Thr’won asked.

“We will develop identities for them.” Theron spoke. “They will be travelers from North America. Stray Alphas perhaps?”

“Theron you will never be able to mask the two Queen’s auras.” Thr’won said. “They are the strongest Alpha females we have ever come across. They will attract every male within twenty miles of Sparta if they venture into the city and people do not know who they are. And how do you propose to mask the King’s aura?”

“We do not need to mask their auras.” Theron spoke. “Their auras already indicate to any Alpha with half a brain they are mated. I can teach the King to mask his aura enough to not give away who he truly is.”

“Believe me when I tell you old friend, they will not tolerate advances on them from any male. And some of the Alphas will be very foolishly persistent.” Thr’won spoke.

Theron smiled. “Yes... and if they happen to pound a few of our Alpha males into submission all the better. The younger third and fourth generation Pureblood Alphas are becoming arrogant.”

“As are some of the second generation,” Thr’won spoke dryly. “Midlan comes to mind immediately.”

“Chief Mage...” Andreus spoke. “You do not consider me arrogant do you?”

Thr’won laughed softly. “You are a Spartan Centurion and your father would never allow it Captain.” She spoke. “And you have already signaled your intent to take Kmyla as your mate, as tradition dictates. No... I’m speaking of many of the Second generation Alphas and Betas who seem to think they are above the others, Midlan chief among them.”

“This must be done.” Theron spoke firmly. “They can stay in the old palace in the western mountains. It has had a caretaker family there for three hundred years now. We have always allotted the palace for visiting dignitaries. It will not be suspicious. We can say they are the pack leaders of a group in North America and they have come to visit Sparta for a few weeks to determine if they want to move there.”

“Started by whom?”

Theron looked at her, “Androcles and Dymas.” He replied. “Then it will not look suspicious if they are seen with Aricia or Andreus. We will limit the number that will know who they really are. Andreus I will need you to choose six Spartans from the Guard to shadow them wherever they go, in civilian attire.”

Andreus nodded. “Consider it done Holy One.”

“And the others?” Thr’won asked. “How do explain them Theron?”

“One thing at a time Thr’won,” He replied with a smile. “We...”

The co-pilot stepped from the cockpit quickly. “Holy One, we are receiving a low band transmission from this Mountain City. They are requesting to speak with the King by name!”

“Who is it?” Martin’s voice caused them to turn and they saw him standing there, his face emotionless.

“A Daniel Simpson sire.” The man replied. “He said it was rather urgent.”

“Where can I speak with him?” Martin asked.

“The headset beside you sire?” The pilot replied, motioning to the side of the aircraft.

Martin looked at Theron, his eyes unreadable, but his aura projecting suspicion and anger. “We will talk Theron!” He told him, his voice not happy, as he put the headset on. “Raptor Two this is Raptor One. Go!”

Dan’s voice exploded from the speaker over their heads. “Skipper what’s your ETA?”

Martin looked at the Spartan pilot. “How close are we?”

“Nineteen minutes sire.” He answered immediately.

“Two zero Dan. What’s your status?”

“We have most of the city secure!” Dan reported. “I’ve met up with War Master Tareif and we are currently moving to the north east corner. There is a pocket of Alliance troops that have Tarifa and her group pinned down. We discovered how they were getting into the city and closed the holes. They hit us with at least three battalions boss. Julie is sweeping from the west and Tari just joined with Tarifa’s group. Our Coms were being jammed initially, but we’re clear now. We got lots of wounded boss, and I ordered Eden to launch every available Raptor we have for the transport of serious WIAs.”

“Stand by Danny.” Martin spoke. He looked at the co-pilot. “How many can this ship hold?”

“Three hundred sire.” He answered. “If we secure the seats, we can fit four hundred of their wounded with ease.”

Martin turned to Andreus now. “Captain... begin that immediately. Do we have a medic?”

“Yes sire, Kmyla is one of our finest.” Andreus motioned to the dark haired female elf that had come forward at the mention of wounded.

“Prep for wounded Spartan, lots of them.” Martin spoke.

Kmyla nodded with no hesitation and headed back into the transport barking out orders to the others as they began lifting the webbing seats.

“Danny... we can carry four hundred!” Martin spoke. “Where’s the primary CCP?”

“Northwest platform Skipper.”

Martin nodded. “We’ll land there. I’ll bring my Spartans in from behind the Alliance position.” Martin didn’t see the swell of pride in the chests of the Spartans who had heard his words, but Andreus noticed this, as well as Theron.

“Marty... that ain’t the biggest problem.” Dan’s voice spoke again. “Eden center informed me they detected thirty-two contacts in high orbit moving away from the planet thirteen hours ago. Everyone was out of contact at the time. They must have used the planet’s mass to mask their approach until they punched it.”

“Raptors?” Martin asked stunned.

“The signatures matched boss.”

“The Alliance didn’t have the avionics to...” Martin stopped and his eyes grew wider. “Yuri!” He gasped.

“Skipper... we’ve also lost contact with Admiral Wallace.” Dan spoke. “They are trying to re-establish contact on another frequency, but no joy so far.”

“Danny... tell me their flight profile isn’t headed for EDEN.” Martin said.

“Right for EDEN Skipper,” Dan spoke. “And we have no way to warn the Admiral.”

MOON BASE EDEN

“Hello Senator!” Wallace spoke as he walked into the office.

Their attack had started the moment Daniel had rescued Tareif’s sons, and almost immediately it had gone straight to hell.

Anari hit the engineering sections of EDEN with a hundred and thirty seven elves and humans she had spent the last month and a half training and drilling in secret. They followed her without question, as she had proven to be an exceptional leader. She wasn’t afraid to get “dirty” with her troops, and endured the same training regime as they did. She ate with them almost every night, always playing the part of submissive elf slave, just like the others. When she was finally left alone, she and Hetyon spent the evenings together. Always.

In the first sixteen minutes of the attack, fully half her force was killed or seriously wounded. The human Senator had somehow swayed many more of the civilian population over to his side than anyone had first thought. They were waiting for them when the attack began.

If not for the superior training she had given the forces under her, they would have lost in that first hour.

Admiral Wallace had taken the rest of their paramilitary force and attacked the control center. This had been an easier battle, as many of the technicians and senior officers still on the station were loyal to Wallace. Even so the Admiral had still lost nearly a third of his forces due to the confined fighting space. If not for the elves in both groups, with their superior speed and strength, the battle for EDEN would have ended much differently.

Wallace stepped into the room now, glaring at Richard Graham as he cowered behind the office chair. His eyes cut over to the corner of the room where a half clothed female elf was huddling. Graham had clearly been in the process of raping her, and this sent Wallace's wolf blood to roaring.

Admiral William Wallace III was born to Elizabeth Wallace in the year 1055. He was turned by a Second Generation non Pureblood when he was only eleven years old. The Shifter that turned him had been seriously wounded in a battle with bandits, and set upon the boy as a means of food. Upon seeing the determination and will of the child within his jaws, the old Shifter couldn't bring himself to kill the child. They ended up nursing each other back to health, and Wallace returned to Sparta with the old man. There he was adopted by a childless family and raised as a Spartan. His determination and will earned hi respect and honor among the Spartans, and when word reached Sparta that the bloodline of Leonidas had continued with the birth of Martin Leonidas, he used his position within the military of the United States to help The Guardian of the Line in his plan to safeguard the child.

Wallace had seen many horrors in his nearly fifteen hundred years of life, murders, rapes, even genocides. He had killed more times than he cared to remember, loved only two women in his life, and in all his years had never experienced the depravity of the man who cowered before him. He saw Anisa move to the female elf out of the corner of his eye.

Anisa.

This female elf was most precious possession in his life right now. An elf of Asian features, stunningly beautiful as Dymas had intended all elves to be. She had been his constant companion for the last six months, strong willed, extremely intelligent and completely in love with him. William had known two women in his life that he had truly loved, and what he felt for this petite female elf surpassed what he had felt for both his previous lovers combined. Anisa was the only one he had chosen to turn, and only after she discovered what he really was and cradled him in her arms without fear or revulsion. Three weeks after discovering what he was Anisa asked him to change her, and he had done so without hesitation.

"Please... don't kill me!" Graham pleaded from the floor of the office.

Wallace brought up the K12 in a blink and leveled it at the man. "Oh no Senator, I have something much better planned for you, by my King's order."

Graham looked at him confused. "King?"

Wallace stepped closer, the K12 never wavering. "You do remember a very attractive elf by the name of Tarifa don't you? You raped and beat her several times before giving her to your bastard son! She'd like to have a word with you. Probably several words if I'm correct. Before she cuts off your withered cock and feeds it to you."

The internal com on EDEN buzzed and then cleared.

"Admiral Wallace!" It was the voice of his second in command Colonel Frank Wilson.

William moved to the communications panel on the desk, his aim remaining center of Graham's head. "Go Frank!"

"Admiral we have a problem!" Wilson reported. "You'd better get up here and fast!"

Wallace cursed under his breath as two elves under his command rushed into the room, armed to the teeth. "Anisa?"

"Go *Nya Cundu*." Anisa replied. "I will stay with this child and the others until the medic gets here."

(My Prince)

Wallace looked at the two elves. "Bring that sack of shit to the command center." He growled.

The two elves grabbed Graham and lifted him between them as they followed Wallace out of the office and up the short flight of stairs into the main Command Center of EDEN. Wallace looked at his XO.

"What's wrong Frank?"

Wilson turned to look at him, a bandage on his forehead and blood still leaking down the collar of his uniform.

“Admiral... we can’t raise Eden on the surface.” Frank spoke. “Something is jamming our transmissions from down there. It’s being beamed directly at us.”

“A jammer on the surface?” Wallace asked moving to the console.

“It’s the only thing it could be sir. And that’s not all.” Frank adjusted the controls and brought up a holographic image of the earth and the moon. Wallace saw the thirty-two red dots appear on the large sensor image. “These ships just appeared ten minutes ago.”

Wallace looked at the sensor image, his face frowning, “Raptors?” He spoke looking at Frank.

“Yes sir, on approach to EDEN.”

“Martin?” Wallace asked, though part of him already knew that answer.

Wilson shook his head. “Commander Hunter has been keeping us apprised of his aircraft production unit numbers sir. Surface Eden has only built twenty-one new Raptors. Almost all their capabilities have been in Mark Nine transports of which they’ve built forty-one. We have seven of those on the secondary landing pads. He has thirteen Raptors working the attacks on the elf cities, and eight providing air support and recon. Five are down for maintenance, and the last nine are on standby for follow on missions. This isn’t Commander Hunter.”

“Frank we didn’t provide the Alliance with the avionics package upgrades for the Raptors enabling them for space flight.” Wallace spoke.

“I know sir. Which means the Alliance got them somehow.” Frank answered. “Or they jury rigged their ships.”

“You don’t jury rig a ship for space flight!” Wallace snapped. “How far out are they?”

“At their current speed, they’ll be setting down in thirty-nine minutes.” Frank spoke.

“Fuck!” Wallace swore. “If you strip a Raptor of everything inside, how many fully armed troops can it hold?”

“Sixty.” Frank answered.

Wallace’s fist slammed into the console. “We can’t fight two thousand fresh troops!” He nearly shouted. “Weapons platforms?”

Wilson shook his head. “When Anari and her team hit the engineering spaces, the first thing Graham’s people did is disable the weapons platforms. It will take at least two hours to realign them and get them operational.”

“Can’t we seal the access ways?”

“It will only slow them down Admiral.” Frank answered. “And we still don’t know how many of the civilian population is with us. Anari is still reporting sporadic fights with armed civilians.”

“I did not lose nearly two hundred people taking back this station to lose it now!” Wallace screamed.

The laughter caused them both to turn and they saw Graham sandwiched between the two elves, his lips in a sadistic snarl as he laughed.

“You haven’t won Admiral!” Graham spoke. “I’m still going to beat you.”

Wallace lifted the K12 and pulled the trigger three times. The rounds punched into Graham’s chest, blowing him backwards out of the grasp of them elves holding him and sending him sprawling over an unoccupied console. “Asshole!” He muttered. He turned back to Frank. “Do what you have to Frank, but burn through that jamming. I need to speak with Martin.”

MOUNTAIN CITY

Aihola skidded across the small open area and landed next to Tarifa. Automatic weapons fire zinged over her head and slammed into the metal benches that they were pinned down behind.

Tarifa looked at her wide eyed, “*Nya Istel* that was a crazy stunt! Don’t do it again!” Tarifa screamed at her.

Aihola smiled at her lover and Queen. Both of them were soaked with sweat and grime from nearly four hours of sustained combat. Their fatigues were torn, their bodies dotted with scrapes and bruises and minor cuts. They had started out with forty-four under Tarifa’s command, and while they had battled across almost the

entire city, they had only lost three elves to enemy fire. With Aihola and Lynwe leading them, the elves assigned to protect Tarifa had slapped down superior forces all across their drive to this platform. Even then, Aihola felt nothing but pride and love for the elf female looking at her with those sapphire eyes. Tarifa had stood beside her and Lynwe even in the thick of the smoke and fighting, never flinching and always shouting orders. Tarifa's father was a legendary warrior among elves across the planet, and Tarifa was earning that same reputation with her actions this day.

They turned as Lynwe slid across the floor of the room and slammed hard into the bench they were crouched behind. Her shimmering white hair matched Aihola's in color now, matted with sweat and dirt. Tarifa looked at her and the memories of their previous night flashed quickly through her mind. Lynwe had indeed changed. Twice she had saved Tarifa's life, and led three charges against enemy positions. Yet she was not acting reckless or acting in a way that would get her or anyone killed. She had saved the lives of several elves this day, and she fought like she had something to live for. Tarifa was glad, and knew that Aihola was as well. Both of them wanted to share what Lynwe could offer them again.

"Your father is below us!" Lynwe spoke loudly. "He and Daniel Simpson are moving up through the vent shafts on the outer pylons! He is on channel 36!"

Tarifa nodded. "They will come up on the enemy position to the west!" She spoke. "I estimate there are no more than twenty holding us here."

Aihola nodded. "They have the better position my love. We should wait for your father and Daniel to attack and then rush them from here."

Tarifa canted her head slightly. "Papa!"

Her father's voice filled her receiver. "Tarifa! We are almost upon them! Martin Hunter has landed on the northwest platform and is moving in from the opposite side with roughly twenty of what he calls Spartans! We will attack in two minutes!"

"Once you begin your attack, we will rush them from our location! They will be overwhelmed." Tarifa spoke.

"You have made me proud this day daughter!" Her father spoke.

"We should all be proud papa!"

Tarifa looked at Aihola. "We will need a long hot bath when this is done *Nya Istel*." She spoke.

"Yes I know. You smell almost as bad as me." Aihola replied with a smile. "A bottle of your mother's wine would be very nice as well."

Tarifa laughed and ducked her head lower as she turned to look at Lynwe. "I hope you would see fit to join us Lynwe?"

Lynwe winced as bullets flew over their heads and banged into the steel frame of the wall. "I would like that very much Tarifa." She replied.

Aihola leaned over Tarifa's body and looked at her. "So would we Lynwe." She spoke confidently.

They heard the sound of strange gunfire and their heads turned to the front of them. Screaming filled the air, and all incoming fire in their direction ceased. The weapons fire sound was deeper and much faster, like a mini chain gun.

"Papa!" Tarifa yelled into her implant. "Is that you!"

"No! We are still several meters below your position! It sounds like buzz saws!" Tareif replied. "What weapon makes such a noise?"

"The good kind I assure you War Master." Martin's voice filled their coms. "We are clear Tarifa! Bring your forces out slowly while we sweep forward."

"How... how did he get there before us?" Tareif asked in wonderment.

Tarifa looked at Aihola and she slowly got to her feet, Aihola beside her. Lynwe stood as well, her HK pointed out in front of her, still cautious. Tarifa led her small force forward past the steel benches that had been protecting them until they could see the twenty odd men and women that surrounded Martin. All of them wore strange body armor and long red cloaks, with matte black helmets that covered their heads and cheeks, with a single portion extending down the bridges of the noses, leaving only a small portion of their mouths and eyes to be seen.

Tarifa smiled when she saw him and her HK lowered. "Martin!" She yelled, waving to him with a dazzling smile and breaking into a run.

Aihola and Martin saw him first, Tarifa oblivious to the danger. The lone Alliance officer staggered to his feet, blood pouring from at least a dozen bullet holes in various parts of his body, the automatic pistol very evident in his bloody fist.

“TARIFA!!” Aihola screamed, using her half vampire genes to race forward at blinding speed.

“Tarifa no!” Martin’s scream was just as loud as he broke into a run towards her as well.

Tarifa’s face twisted in confusion, her head turning toward where Martin was looking. She saw the Alliance officer then, and flung her body to the side, bringing her HK up, but far too slowly.

There were four blinding flashes, everything moving in slow motion. Even as Tarifa watched with wide eyes, she knew there was no way she could dodge the bullets. Martin’s weapon was coming up and belching yellow flame as he ran towards her. There was a flash of a shadow and then billowing white hair next to her. Tarifa’s eyes widened as Aihola’s body moved in front of hers and she watched as each single bullet tore into the chest of her lover. Blood erupted from Aihola’s chest, each bullet staggering her back. Tarifa could see Aihola’s eyes as each round punched into her, the pain in those amber eyes like a knife ripping through her gut. Tarifa heard Lynwe scream in rage, saw her father just appearing from around the corner of the benches, his eyes wide, and then Aihola’s body slammed into hers from the concussion of the bullet strikes, sending them both tumbling to the ground.

Aihola’s body came to rest on top of hers, blood pouring from the wounds in her chest, and leaking from between her lips.

Tarifa could not tear her eyes from Aihola’s face, and the eyes she had come to love so much flickered briefly and she saw Aihola smile.

“I... I... love you...” The words were spoken softly, yet they thundered in Tarifa’s ears as if they were gunshots.

“NO!” The scream echoed across the platform as thunder rolled across the sky.

Then silence fell.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

MOON BASE EDEN

“How long?” William Wallace snapped.

“Twenty-nine minutes Admiral!” Wilson replied.

“Ideas people! I need ideas!” Wallace bellowed.

“We must evacuate the station!” Anari’s voice echoed over the COM.

Anari squatted in the corridor of the main engineering section. Her fatigues were sweaty and blood stained her shoulder where she had taken a bullet through the meat of her upper arm. The wound was painful but not life threatening and the medic had simply slapped a bandage on it and given her a shot for pain.

The battle to retake EDEN had been more ferocious than any Anari had fought in throughout her hundred and twenty-six years of life. She had watched many under her command fall, and more still that battled by her side, never falling back and always pressing forward. Hetyon had remained with her throughout the fighting, protecting her with the possessiveness of any lover, but not letting her feelings rule her actions.

Anari looked down the corridor at the dozens of seriously wounded she had, as well as the walking wounded. Many of them were looking at her as she spoke into the implant. She was down to less than half her original strength, and from a military standpoint, her unit was now ineffective.

“We can’t do that Anari!” Wallace’s voice filled the station’s COM channel. “We just got control back!”

“Admiral... I am down to less than half my operational strength!” Anari spoke calmly. “I have many wounded... several that are in serious condition and some that will not survive. I can not hold against a superior force such as what is coming Admiral Wallace, you know this.”

“I will not retreat!” Wallace nearly yelled.

“Admiral Wallace... this is not Sparta!” Anari snapped, her anger getting the best of her.

Frank looked at Wallace in the command center. “Sparta?” He asked. “What the hell is that about Admiral?”

“Anari...” Wallace started.

“Admiral... I have fought beside Martin Hunter as have you.” Anari spoke. “You longer than I. Would he wish us to remain here and die, as well as lose this station? Spartans you both may be... but neither of you are fools.”

Wallace stared at the sensor image of the approaching Raptors. The thought of retreat brought forth a vile taste in his mouth, but he knew the Drow spoke the truth. His King would never forfeit the lives of men and women, especially the injured. They may both be Spartans, and while they would never retreat or surrender if that was the only recourse, he knew their first priority was to their people. It may not have been the Spartan law his people had honored for centuries, but it was the law he had followed for decades. And it was the law his King would follow, as he had proven many times in the past.

“Anari... start moving your people to the secondary landing pads!” Wallace barked out the order. “You know the path?”

“Yes Admiral.”

“Then go.” Wallace turned to Wilson. “Start broadcasting on all internal channels. All civilians that want off this station are to begin moving to the secondary platforms. Advise them if they are armed in any way they will be shot before they exit the air locks. No exceptions.”

“Yes sir.”

“Admiral... the Senator is still alive!” One of the elf security officers said.

Wallace glanced back seeing Graham’s body on the floor; three bullet holes center mass of his chest. He walked over to the man slowly, smelling the blood and urine that washed through the air. Bubbles were pouring from between his lips and Wallace knew he was hard hit, and probably lung shot. “I had orders to bring you back so that Tarifa could have your ass.” William Wallace spoke looking at the dying man. “You ain’t even man enough to live that long.” He looked at the elf security officer “Fuck him. Let him reap what he sowed.” Wallace spat. “Anari... do you have any explosives left?”

There was a pause. “Yes Admiral... roughly six of your anti-personnel mines and three blocks of explosives.”

“Anari, set booby traps on everything that you can!” Wallace ordered. “Leave the mines active to create maximum kill fields, and do it as you pull your people back from the engineering sections. Understood?”

Anari’s reply was filled with savageness, “Perfectly Admiral. We may be leaving the station, but that does not mean we have to just give it to the Alliance.”

Wallace grinned savagely. He liked this Drow, even if she was half vampire. She understood how he thought as a Spartan. “No we do not.” He said. Wallace looked at Wilson. “Frank... how long?”

“Twenty-six minutes sir.”

“Keep trying to burn through the jamming!” Wallace spoke. “I need to speak with Martin. And stand by to initiate a Broken Arrow. They want this station... they’ll earn it with blood.”

MOUNTAIN CITY

“Make no mistake... you may be my kind or not, but one more twitch and I *will* ventilate your brain cavity!” Dan growled.

His K12 was pressed squarely to Andreus’s temple, his hand unwavering.

The moment Aihola had fallen into Tarifa’s arms, the smell of her blood filling the air around them, the Spartans with Martin knew what she was. Her blood reeked of vampire genes, and by instinct alone their weapons had come up in defense of their King, who had thrown himself towards the fallen vampire. Danny, Kenny and Julie had brought their own weapons up in response to this movement with equal speed as the Centurions and now, twenty Spartans were staring down the barrels of nearly three dozen HKs held by elves; High elves and Drow alike. Theron stood wide eyed next to Andreus, Thr’won and Aricia on his opposite side. Danny and the others had moved just as fast as the trained Spartans.

“They... they are vampires!” Theron gasped.

“They are my friends!” Martin shouted as he knelt next to Aihola, Tarifa clutching her upper body in her lap rocking back and forth softly, sobbing, the tears falling into Aihola’s dirty cheeks.

My love. Aricia reached out to Martin as she stepped closer, none of the elves stopping her. She stepped slowly around Julie, Martin's scent all over her, and Julie and Kenny realizing this was the last of their leader's women.

They are only half vampire Little Wolf. Aricia could hear the pain in his voice. *They are the product of Alliance torture and experiments. Not true Vampires. They have all the skills of vampires,* Martin turned to look at Aricia, *But none of the weaknesses. They can't turn someone with their bite. They eat normal food, they are warm blooded. They are my friends.*

"Lower your weapons." Aricia spoke out loud, turning to look at her brother.

"Sister!" Andreus hissed.

"Do it!" Aricia snapped. "They are friends of our King brother."

"My... My King?" Andreus's eyes went to where Martin was kneeling next to Aihola, his hands reaching for her face. Every instinct told him to begin shooting and not stop until everyone around their King was down.

"Lower your weapons Spartans!" Martin spoke, his voice carrying to all of them. "We are among friends here!"

Andreus did not hesitate, and his P190 dropped to his side, as did the others. If they could not trust their King, who could they trust. Andreus noticed the looks of astonishment from the gathered elves at Martin's words to them, and he looked at Daniel.

"Our mission is the same as yours Pureblood. We... we are all Spartans." He spoke to Dan. "He is our King."

Danny nodded slowly as he lowered the K12. "And he's also the closest thing to a brother I have ever had. I won't let anyone hurt him."

"You are Daniel Simpson?" Andreus asked.

Danny nodded. "Yeah, so."

Andreus reached up and slowly removed the matte black helm he wore. "I am Andreus, the King's Captain."

Martin knelt next to Aihola, gently taking her head in his hands. Lynwe and Tari were huddled on the ground next to Tarifa, Lynwe's eyes flooded with tears, the liquid streaking the dust on her face as she gripped Tari's arms. Tari had taken two superficial wounds in the shoulder and lower neck, but his uniform was still soaked in blood as they had bled quite badly.

Aihola's chest was saturated with dark red blood, the four holes evident even through the dark uniform she wore. Two of them had punched into her chest just above her left nipple. Two more had torn into her abdomen. Bright red blood stained her cheeks and lips and Martin knew she had taken at least one bullet through the lungs. The medic looked at him and slowly shook her head. Tarifa cradled her in her arms, too shocked to do anything other than weep as she squeezed Aihola, hoping that her arms alone would keep her lover alive.

"Aihola open your eyes." Martin spoke softly, brushing her blood stained white hair from her cheeks.

Her amber eyes fluttered open and Martin could see the pain in them. "It... it hurts." She gasped, blood leaking from her lips. Tarifa reached forward quickly, wiping the stains away from her lips.

Martin nodded slowly. "Yes Little One it does." He spoke. "Remember what you told me Aihola, before you left Eden."

Aihola squeezed her eyes shut in agony, the pain lancing through her, shaking her head. "My... my love?"

"I'm here *Nya Istel!*" Tarifa sobbed. "I have you."

"I'm... I'm sorry my love." Another wave of pain wracked Aihola's body and she groaned loudly. "I... I wanted... wanted to grow... old with you."

Tarifa clutched her chest. "Don't leave me please *Nya Istel!* I... I have just discovered you! Please... please don't leave me. Not... not like this."

"Are... are you hurt?"

"You saved me Aihola." Tarifa spoke.

A bloody smile split her lips and Aihola nodded, "As... as it should be." She croaked out.

“Aihola!” Martin snapped, drawing her amber eyes back to him. “I’m going to bend over Aihola. You know what you need to do.”

Theron stepped forward a sinking feeling in his gut at what his King was suggesting. How could he be willing to do this? To allow her to...

Aihola shook her head. “No.” Aihola gasped out, her breathing becoming more ragged and labored now. “It... it is wrong.”

Her words struck Theron. A vampire saying it was wrong? Who were these people?

“Who am I Aihola?” Martin asked her.

“You... you are... you are the High King.” She wheezed. “My... my King.”

“Blood will heal your wounds Aihola.” Martin told her, feeling the others look at him their eyes wide when he said that. “You told me this.”

Aihola shook her head again, more vigorously this time. “It... it is vile!” Blood splattered Tarifa’s fatigues as she spoke.

“Martin...” Tari spoke, his eyes moist. “Many of us... we have sworn never to do this, even if it saves our lives.”

This drew attention from all of the Spartans, and their eyes grew a little bit wider as they looked at Tari. Aricia drew closer to Martin, kneeling down next to him, her hand going to his shoulder.

Martin nodded and looked back to Aihola. “I know that Little One. I need you to do this.” He told her. “You have too.”

“Wrong.” Aihola sputtered, shaking her head.

Martin gripped her face, heedless of her blood spilling over his hands. “You know what I am Aihola.” He spoke. “You know what we have begun here... and in Eden. I need it to continue. You are part of that. A very important part, just as Tarifa is. She needs your strength, your love. You are stronger when you are together.”

“It... it is wrong my King.” She said, gripping Tarifa’s hands tightly as another wave of pain ripped through her.

“There are times female Drow... when what is wrong... is ultimately the right choice.” Aricia spoke softly.

Aihola’s pain filled eyes looked at Aricia. “You... you are...”

Aricia nodded. “I am.” Aricia answered the question before Aihola could finish. “If you are a friend of my King... then you are a friend to me as well. You are not destined to die here this day she elf. Your King is attempting to make you see this. Listen to him.”

Aihola heaved in a breath. “I... I do not want... want to die.”

Martin lowered his head, his own eyes moist. “If... if we are to succeed... I need... I need the elves ready, all elves Aihola, including the Drow.”

“Tar... Tari...” Aihola began.

Martin’s head came back up and he glared at her. “Damn it Aihola, Tari is not their Queen!” He shouted. “You are!”

This pronouncement caused Tari and the other Drow in the area to look at Martin in stunned shock. Only Lynwe kept her eyes focused on Aihola, a smile spreading across her features.

Aihola shook her head. “No...”

“Martin...” Tari spoke moving closer. “There... there hasn’t been a Drow Queen since just before the Alliance wiped out our people. She was killed in a raid by the Alliance six months before they destroyed our last village. That is why many of us turned to becoming mercenaries; those that weren’t taken by the Alliance for their experiments like our parents.”

Martin didn’t take his eyes from Aihola’s face. “Your mother was Queen Tari.” He spoke, staring into Aihola’s amber eyes. “She didn’t die as you believe. She went into hiding and only returned during the last attacks to die fighting with your father. They were both captured in the end. She gave birth to you while a prisoner of the Alliance as part of their experiments.”

“The vampire witch turned our father into a vampire!” Tari yelled.

Martin nodded. “Yes she did. And they allowed him to rape your mother. And you were born first Tari. Exactly one minute before Aihola. But your mother *was* the Drow Queen.”

“That... that can’t be,” Tari spoke stunned. He moved forward slowly, his own amber eyes going from Aihola to Martin. “They... they told us we were born a year apart.”

“But it is true.” Walter’s voice broke into the silence. “And who would you believe more Tari... the Alliance butchers or the voice of your High King?”

Many heads turned at the sound of his voice as he walked up the path. Theron’s eyes went wide when he saw him, “Dymas!” He gasped, starting forward.

Walter held up his hand stopping him as he leaned over Martin’s shoulder, his hand coming to rest on Aricia’s shoulder. His uniform was covered in blood, and he had several slashes from what appeared to be a knife of some sort on his chest and arms. He winced when he saw Aihola’s bloody face and her wounds.

“Do you trust your High King Aihola?” Walter asked her softly.

Aihola met Martin’s eyes and nodded her head. “He... he is my... my King Holy One”

“Do you trust me child?” Walter asked, bending over to take her hand.

“You... you are... you are the Holy One.” Aihola gasped, blood spilling over her lips again.

“Then trust us now.” Walter spoke. “Martin is telling you the truth Aihola. It is I who told him this, for I was there when the Drow prisoners were revealed. And only you and Tari now know our secret. You are Queen of the Drow, and as your brother, Tari is their military commander.”

Martin squeezed Aihola’s head gently. “Now do you see?” He asked her. “The elves will need their Queens if we are to win this fight we have started today.”

“I... not from you,” Aihola gasped, “I will not... take blood... not... not from my King.”

Tarifa leaned her tear streaked face close to Aihola’s; placing her cheek to Aihola’s heedless of the blood that stained her skin. “Then mine *Nya Istel*.” She spoke softly without any hesitation. “Take it from someone who loves you more than her own life. I need you *Nya Istel*. I could not bear to lose you now.”

“My... my love... no...” Aihola’s eyes closed as she felt Tarifa’s skin against hers.

Tareif pushed closer from where he squatted, drawing the High Elf knife from his belt as he settled next to his daughter. He held it out to Tarifa as he met Aihola’s eyes. “You told me once, not so long ago Aihola of the Family Anatyla. You told me my King had given us orders. He has done so again child, this time to you.”

Tarifa didn’t hesitate and used the knife to cut a deep slice into her forearm. Blood immediately began to seep quickly from the wound and she held it out in front of Aihola. “Take it *Nya Istel*.” She spoke. “If you love me Aihola... take it.”

Aihola’s eyes met Martin and she saw him nod slowly. She reached up with bloody quivering hands and took Tarifa’s forearm without resistance and opened her mouth slowly. Her vampire teeth were fully extended and she bit down over the wound Tarifa had cut into her flesh and began to feed.

Tarifa hissed softly, feeling the pain of Aihola’s teeth, but also the unbelievable pleasure that surged through her veins, causing her body to become hot and sweat to break out on her skin. She closed her eyes and pulled Aihola’s head tightly to her body, letting the sensations course through her.

Aihola’s eyes opened wide as pain wracked her body once more, but this was the pain of healing. She could feel the wounds repairing themselves within her body, the torn flesh knitting back together, and the two broken ribs where the bullet had punched into her upper abdomen. The bullets were being rejected, pushed back out of her body, until they squeezed from the very holes they had entered and the flesh sealed behind them as they fell to the ground. Aihola had drunk blood only three other times in her life and it had been the most disgusting thing she had ever done. The blood tasted like rotting flesh smelled, vile and putrid. As the pain coursed through her from her healing wounds, she began to feel the pleasure seething through her as well. Tarifa’s blood tasted so sweet and delicious, just like her skin and her juices. It was like the finest wine she had ever sipped, and she pulled her arm closer, relishing in the taste and the sweet pleasures that were shooting through her ravaged body. Tarifa did not deny her, she would never deny her, and she pulled Aihola’s body closer, holding her even tighter, her free arm wrapping around Aihola’s head and stroking her hair as pain and pleasure joined them as one.

Martin watched as Aihola finally loosened her grip on Tarifa’s arm, her teeth retreating from her soft skin. The puncture holes in Tarifa’s arm sealed almost immediately, and Aihola relaxed in the arms of her lover. She coughed once, a deep heaving cough, and then rolled over to vomit on the ground. Tarifa didn’t flinch and she ripped off her fatigue top and pulled Aihola’s head up to wipe her lips clean of the blood and vomit. She was exhausted from the loss of blood and slumped against Tarifa, totally spent.

Martin slid his arms under her body and lifted her easily into his arms, her amber eyes coming to meet his as Tareif helped his daughter to her feet. “Tari take your sister to the transport. The battle is over for both of you today.” He let Tari take her from him and he looked at Tareif just when he heard the static in his implant.

“Eden Center to Raptor One! We’ve burned through the jamming and are receiving an urgent Priority Alpha message from Admiral Wallace!” The voice echoed.

Martin got to his feet. “Patch it through now!” He barked.

“Admiral I got Commander Hunter!” Wilson barked.

Wallace stepped to the panel. “Martin?”

“Admiral, what is your status?” Martin’s voice filled the command center.

“Martin we have sixteen minutes until thirty-two Raptors land and begin unloading Alliance troops!” Wallace reported. “We have retaken the Station, but took heavy losses in the process. We’re down to under a hundred effective fighters, with at least two thousand Alliance troops closing on us. I’m pulling all non-essential personnel out and sending them to you. Do you copy?”

Martin spun around and looked at Dan who had heard the transmission as well. “That’s it.” He spoke, his eyes wide. “The war between the elves was never her intent. That was only a means to an end. This entire time her whole objective was to seize control of EDEN.”

“That’s how they got the avionics to upgrade the Raptors.” Dan said. “She must have had that information all these years.”

“Admiral... Broken Arrow!” Martin barked without hesitation. “I say again Broken Arrow.”

“Martin... I can hide in unused areas and...”

“Damn it man! I will not lose you or anyone else to that bitch. Broken Arrow!” Martin snapped. “Launch in the Mark Nine’s and trail along the surface until you clear the Mare Basin. Once the Raptors are down shoot straight for the gap! By the time they realize you have gotten off the station it will be too late. They won’t have the fuel to chase you.”

“Sire...”

“I am giving you an order Spartan! As your King! You... you will initiate a Broken Arrow! You are too important to throw your life away! There will be another time Admiral! I give you my word! We can retake the station at a later time! If you do not follow that order, I will personally fly a Raptor up there and I will fucking shoot you myself! Is that unclear in any way Admiral?”

There was a pause on the COM before Martin heard his voice. “I understand sire. I will initiate a full status Broken Arrow.”

“Admiral...”

“No My Lord... you are correct. Anari told me the same thing, and your voice has only confirmed that for me. My apologies! Our people come first! I will initiate a Full Status Broken Arrow in ten seconds.” Wallace’s voice spoke calmly, firmness returning to his words. “I will see you at the escape coordinates sire. We will have many wounded.”

“We’ll be waiting Admiral.”

MOON BASE EDEN

Wilson looked at Wallace for a long moment. “Admiral... what was all that about? You called Commander Hunter a King.”

Wallace looked at him. “Yes I did. Do you believe in fate Frank?”

“Yes sir I do.”

Wallace nodded. "Fate has just granted us a lease on life my friend." He spoke. "Initiate a Full Status Broken Arrow. We have twelve minutes to purge the data bases. Set the destruct charges on all computers once they are purged. No one is to remain behind Frank." Wallace turned to the door. "Anari... do you copy?"

"Yes Admiral."

"We were able to burn through the interference and contact Martin on the surface. I have initiated a Broken Arrow emergency throughout the station. You are closest to the engineering sections. Disregard my previous instructions and set all your remaining explosives on the power generators and the core. Do you copy?"

"Understood Admiral." Anari spoke, "And the civilians?"

"If they are not already part of our group... then they can reap the rewards for not siding with us when the Alliance gets here. Anyone who is not physically identified by a member of the resistance is to be shot on sight if they are not already in the secondary bay. Pass the word along."

"Yes sir."

"Anari you have twelve minutes to set the explosives and reach the secondary platforms. Do not make me come looking for you she elf." Wallace spoke.

"Trust me Admiral... you won't have too."

"Anisa?" Wallace spoke.

"I am here *Nya Cundu*." Her voice answered almost immediately. Wallace smiled at the tone of her voice and the way it filled him.

"Anisa... I need you to help Paul pull all the wounded to the secondary pads." William said. "I will send a security team to the infirmary to assist you, but you must pull all our people out of there now."

"I understand." Anisa replied. "William..."

"Have no worries Anisa... I have no intention of leaving you for at least the next eight or nine centuries." Wallace spoke with a smile.

Anisa's musical voice chuckled. "And here I was hoping for just a few decades." She answered, "Though I much prefer your idea. I will see you soon *Nya Cundu*."

Wallace turned to Frank, seeing the look on his face. "Admiral... is there something going on that I need to know about?"

"Frank old friend... I believe it is time I shared some history with you, but right now let's get off this station shall we. I'll get the encoded computer relay chips, you set the timers. We are out of here in seven minutes Frank."

"Suits the shit out of me," Wilson spoke.

MOUNTAIN CITY

"It has been a long time my friend." Theron spoke as he embraced Walter near the edge of the platform.

"Far too long old friend." Walter said with a smile and equal feeling. "I was wondering when I could expect you. Once I realized that somehow they had touched Aricia I knew you would discover it soon enough."

"Why have you not contacted us sooner Dymas?" Theron asked as the female elf in Spartan uniform came up to them slowly. "Dymas this is Thr'won. She is the Chief Mage of Sparta."

Walter looked at Thr'won and saw her smile shyly. "I... I always hoped that some of my elves would make their way to Sparta." He said.

"There are nearly five thousand of us in Sparta Holy One." Thr'won spoke still somewhat in awe. She had only heard of the Guardian of the Line, and read about him in the scrolls.

Walter chuckled softly. "Please my name is Dymas... or Walter as I go by now." He told her, taking her hand and drawing her closer to them. "How old are you Thr'won?"

"My mate turned me when I was only twenty-five Dymas." Thr'won replied. "I was quite young and foolish at the time. My family and I were captured by the Alliance slavers and sent to Europe. I was able to escape once we arrived, and foolishly thought I could rescue my mother and sisters. I was wounded terribly, and left in the wild to die as punishment. My mate discovered me and turned me. It was quite the frightening experience Holy One."

“I imagine it was, yet you remained and are this Alpha’s mate?” Walter spoke.

“He nursed me back to health, never leaving my side. And he was... he was very handsome. He claimed me under the Centennial of the moon, and I have not looked back since.” Thr’won spoke.

“That is indeed impressive. And you have taken the position of Chief Mage... even more so for a non Pureblood.” Walter spoke.

Theron smiled. “She is a powerful telepath Dymas, one of our strongest. It was Thr’won that discovered what was buried in your niece’s mind.”

Walter turned and saw Martin squatting with Andreus and Tareif, Danny and the others close around them. The beautiful young woman knelt very close to Martin as they all looked at the image on the data pad. “She looks like my sister.”

Theron’s face changed. “Dymas... forgive me, my heart mourns for Androcles.”

Walter looked at him. “Our King gave him a beautiful death, and that is all any Spartan desires.”

“Dymas... he...” Theron began.

“Yes I know old friend. He is the image of Leonidas himself, with the same aura and power.” Walter spoke. “I was overwhelmed myself when he first returned to earth after the comet. Have you met his queens, Anja and Dysea?”

Thr’won nodded. “Oh yes. They had just finished killing three elf vampires, and frightened the fourth so much he chose to run and die under the shield of a Shi Viska rather than face them.”

Walter grinned. “Yes... that does sound like them.” He shook his head. “They are the two most powerful non Purebloods I have ever felt, and both of them have been turned less than a month.”

“They are true Alpha females.” Thr’won spoke.

“Yes they are. And so much more than I believe even we understand, as is the King.” Walter spoke. He looked at Theron. “My wife? My parents?”

“They are well.” Theron answered quickly. “I visited your mother and father before we departed. They will greet us when we return to claim Androcles’ body. And Dia... well she was beside herself with joy, and it took all I knew to convince her not to sing to the moon in relief. It would have attracted too much attention.”

Walter met his eyes. “Things have not changed I take it?”

Theron shook his head. “They have grown worse if anything.” He answered. “That is why we must keep the King’s existence secret for the first few weeks he and our Queens are in Sparta. They need time to study and train and adjust.”

“That will be very difficult old friend.” Walter spoke. “You have seen him in action. He is so much like Leonidas it scares me. He follows his heart first, his mind second. And blocking his aura... well that will be a chore all by itself. He has never had to shield it before, and while he is getting better... I fear the few things I have been able to pass to him are not enough.”

“So I’ve noticed, however between you and I, we should be able to teach him enough to mask it to the point he only appears as a strong Alpha.” Theron replied, “I take it the Drow half vampires are part of what his heart tells him to do?”

Walter nodded. “They are no threat to us Theron. If anything they are perhaps our strongest ally now. Every one of them was subjected to hideous experiments on the orders of the High Priestess Yuri. Aihola... the one our King saved earlier... she figured out who he was long before anyone else. They are close friends, and her brother and the others have been fighting beside the men and women of Eden for months now. It was they who gave us the information on the vampires we have faced the last two days, and the way to detect them. He will protect them Theron, at all costs.”

“And so shall we.” Theron spoke.

Walter looked at him quickly. “The Queens... I forgot to ask! They are protected?”

“Rest easy Holy One, two Spartans apiece guard them,” Thr’won answered quickly. “If I’m not mistaken I believe they are already on their way back to this city Eden.”

Walter nodded, “And Aricia?”

“Two Spartans as well,” Theron replied. “However that might become an issue.”

Walter shook his head. “She is the third Queen old friend; there is no issue with that.”

“Unfortunately there is.” Theron replied. “Your sister and brother-in-laws’ oldest boy Atropos, he was convicted of raping a young female wolf who denied him attention. He was banished and your sister’s family dishonored. It was all I could do to keep Andreus and your other nephews within the ranks of the Spartans.”

Walter looked at him wide eyed. “Atropos! Impossible! A finer example of a Spartan I have never seen.”

“The evidence was quite compelling Dymas, and Atropos provided a confession.” Theron spoke. “You must have sensed some of it after touching Aricia as you did.”

“The connection was only fleeting before they threw up powerful barriers to block me, but I did sense something odd.” He answered. “Then our laws will not permit her to be Queen.”

“No.” Theron spoke. “And judging by what I have seen so far, that will not sit well with either Martin or his two other Queens.”

“No it won’t old friend. No it won’t.” Walter spoke. “Is there nothing we can do?”

“We can work on that when we return to Sparta. How many does he have with him?” Theron asked.

“Only nineteen of his original unit still lives.” Walter answered. “The Alliance killed the remaining members in an attack just after they arrived on earth. Daniel has turned who he has chosen for a mate. She is a Wood elf with red hair and blue eyes. Young in age but she is strong willed and will give him strong children as they grow together.”

“He is the Pureblood that held the weapon to Andreus’s head?” Thr’won questioned.

Walter nodded. “They know the pull of the pack, and Daniel and Julie have been with him since they were two years old. They are beyond loyal, and no doubt Daniel thought Andreus was going to harm their friends. It is the reason why they began turning those in their unit when things began to go array with the genomes I created.”

Thr’won nodded. “He is quite strong, as is this female Julie. She is the second Spartan child with him I assume?” She spoke.

Walter nodded, “Since they were two. They arrived six months after Martin’s father released him to my care. They have grown up together, always thinking they were something other than what they are. It has made them very close.”

“And his parents never inquired of him?” Theron asked.

Walter shook his head. “I never heard from them again.”

“Why?” Thr’won asked curious. This was new information to he and she found it fascinating. She looked embarrassed quickly and lowered her head. “Forgive me.”

“Thr’won I have told you before to stop doing that.” Theron spoke. “As Chief Mage you are equal to even the Senate members. Though even many of them do not know what we will tell you now.”

Thr’won looked even more curious. “I will guard this information with my life.” She said.

“The parents of the descendants of Leonidas have appeared throughout the centuries. Tests were always done to confirm this, and then the child, whether boy or girl was put in Dymas’s charge. The parents were never heard from again.” Theron explained.

“They simply vanished.” Walter continued, “As if they never existed. I tried to find the parents of three children when their lives were lost for one reason or the other, but I never could find them. I stopped trying after a few centuries.”

“The other twenty-two descendants were all killed.” Thr’won spoke. “This did not bring them forward to question how?”

Walter shook his head. “Sixteen of them were killed after they had come of age. They were murdered by vampire assassins or their henchmen. The remaining eight died of natural causes in the course of their lives, all accidents. My position at the time Martin was brought to me put him in a position of protection nearly from the start.”

“The Genome Program?” Thr’won asked.

Walter nodded. “I had just begun it. When one of the first test children died suddenly I used the opportunity to replace him with Martin. Six months later I was able to replace two others with Daniel and Julie. They have been together ever since. And of the twenty-two I have raised and protected; only Martin bears the likeness and power of Leonidas.”

Theron shook his head slowly. “He has felt the pull of the wolf for all these years and did not know what it was. That is incredible. How long has he been shifting?”

“I believe he discovered it when he was still a boy. He hid it from everyone but Daniel and Julie. Of course... they could Shift as well... and it began there. Theron... they have learned more outside the confines of Sparta than anything I could have imagined. They taught themselves by watching a wolf pack that lived near the facility they were staying in. Everything that our Spartans are taught as children during the Agoge they learned in the wild, without the constraints we apply to young ones. They are wilder, more restless, and infinitely more cunning. There were times when I could see them... I could see them running in the forests. His size... his size as a wolf... it matches Leonidas in every way Theron. When I first saw him slipping through the trees I could barely breathe.”

“I caught glimpses of this as well within Aricia’s mind.” Theron replied. “Will he return to Sparta with us?”

Walter nodded, “Without question. He has many questions that he knows only Sparta and his people have the answers too. I believe he looks forward to it. But he will finish what he has begun here first. At the very least he will insure the elves are protected from the Alliance while he is gone.”

“How will he do this?”

Walter shook his head. “That I have no idea. There are only three people walking this planet that have free access to what resides in his thoughts. And I sincerely doubt they will reveal that to anyone. And to be honest... I don’t know if I want to see what’s in there anymore. Something tells me it would not be a pleasant experience.”

“Then we will help as much as we are able until he deems it time to return home.” Theron spoke.

“The city is secure for the most part.” Tareif told them, pointing to the holo image. “I have Dragoons returning through every level and checking every building. They will turn over every crate and check every door until they are sure no more Alliance troops remain.”

“What about the Alliance agents?” Martin asked.

“We were able to kill seven.” Tareif replied. “The Holy One chased down two of them himself. The last one escaped... but we know who he was, and he will never show his face within this city again.”

“Telan?” Martin asked.

Tareif shook his head. “The scum escaped as well. His father is proclaiming him a rogue and denouncing him to the heavens for his actions so that he does not lose face. The Council members that supported him have also escaped, though I doubt they will last long.”

Martin swore under his breath. “They had far more troops here than we thought.” He said. “It was no different than in the Wood Elf capital. Tareif I suggest you have your Dragoons across all the High Elf cities begin extensive security sweeps.”

“That will not go over well with the Elders of any city my King.” Tareif spoke.

“I don’t give a rat fuck.” Martin snapped. “Tell them I ordered it. Hell I got plenty of enemies already, a few more won’t matter.”

“The word spreads rapidly that you exist.” Tareif spoke with a grin. “It will not make the politicians happy.”

“Fuck’em if they can’t take a joke!” Martin said with a smile. “I’m more concerned with the people than the politicians. As far as I’m concerned all politicians can go right straight to hell.”

This brought chuckles even from Andreus and the Spartans that surrounded Martin. They would not leave his side for any reason, and no matter where he went, there were at least three Spartans within arm’s reach of him and Aricia.

“May I quote you on that my King?” Tareif asked.

Martin grinned. “Will it accomplish anything?”

“More than you might think.”

“Then quote me.” Martin spoke. “Aihola and Tarifa will remain in Eden for the time being. At least until we know Mountain City is completely safe. Danny I want you to take Kenny and Julie and five Raptors from Eden and move to the emergency point we established with the Admiral. They should be arriving in ten hours,

so get some rest first. Verify they are friendly and then guide them directly to Eden though the western approach.”

“And if they ain’t friendly Skipper?” Dan asked.

Martin met his gaze. “Shoot them down.”

Dan nodded. “Will do Skipper. War Master... you got someplace that we can catch some shuteye. Our pilots will need the most rest.”

Tareif nodded. “Cantel... take them to the safe house in the Market District.” He replied. “It is well stocked and out of the way. I will have some of my Dragoons link up with your ground crews to assist them.”

Tareif looked at Martin. “If... if that meets with your approval my King?”

Martin nodded. “We need to start working together... so that’s the best place to begin. Tareif... the Dragoons and High Elf military is now completely under your overall command.”

Tareif’s eyes went wide. “Sire... there are many senior Commanders... they will...”

“They will follow my orders, which means your orders or I will have them removed.” Martin told him. “Until we determine who we can trust and who we can’t... I’m going with the people I know and trust. If I bruise a few egos in the process... piss on them, they’ll get over it.”

Tareif chuckled. “You do so have a way with words sire.” He said.

“Where you headed Skipper?” Dan asked.

“I’m heading back to Eden. I got a hunch about something, and I want to test it. Eden is the best place to do that.” Martin said. “We will maintain an open command channel and I want everyone on the com. We’ve taken down the jammers, so the implants should work. KISS.”

Danny, Julie and Kenny nodded with a smile. “KISS.” They spoke together.

Tareif looked at him. “Sire... what is this KISS?”

Martin grinned. “Keep It Simple Stupid.”

MOON BASE EDEN

Marcus entered the Command Center, his anger already at a boiling point. They had seen the hundreds of flashes from inside the station as they were descending onto the landing pads, and upon entering EDEN his fears were confirmed. As his two thousand troops spread out throughout the station with the maps given to them by Yuri, they were discovering just what all the flashes of light meant.

EDEN’s Command Center was operating on emergency battery power for the lights, while everything else was offline. The corridors had been dark except for the emergency lights, the heads of many men and women poking out of the doors. The glass double doors into the command center were shattered and jammed open. Every computer console was destroyed completely, nothing left but circuit boards and sparking and smoking wires. The computer drives along the wall were all destroyed as if explosive charges had gone off inside the machines, rupturing outward

Marcus turned to the human vampire Captain that was his second in command on this mission as the man came up to him. “What is your status Captain?” He asked.

“Main power is offline, and if what the engineering chief is telling me is accurate, we won’t be able to restore power for at least a week, and that will only be auxiliary power Colonel.” The man spoke.

“What happen here?” Marcus asked.

“It appears they activated some sort of failsafe.” The Captain answered. “Every computer, every data storage unit, and every hard drive had a small explosive charge in it. When activated, it destroyed everything we could use. And I do mean everything. We would need to bring up new computers from the surface to even begin to try and attempt to restore function. Not that it would matter anyway. Main power is gone.”

“What do you mean gone. The President said this station had a Class Five nuclear reactor powering it.” Marcus spoke.

“It did.” The man replied. “When the self destruct was activated the reactor core was purged and jettisoned into space. The power surge fried all the circuits for nine sections around engineering. All the wiring needs to be replaced, and then we would need to find a compatible reactor.”

“Nothing works?” Marcus asked.

“If we can get auxiliary power restored, we can power life support and minor systems.” The Captain told him. “But until we get a new reactor core and replace the damaged wiring and computers, that’s about all we will have. No production facilities, no weapons and...”

“And no fucking defenses!” Marcus spoke the rage in his voice evident. “Do we have communications?”

“We have short range coms only, here in the station. I have a tech working on the long range transmitter and receiver right now. He says he can get it fixed, but he needs eight hours to do that.” The Captain explained.

“Disperse the men into teams of four and have them sweep the station completely, to include the secondary pads where Wallace and the others escaped from.” Marcus spoke. “Be alert for traps and surprises they might have left.”

“The engineering chief says there are quite a few bodies down there, looks like they were fighting just before we showed up.” The Captain said, “Weapons scoring all over the corridors, brass on the floors.”

Marcus nodded. “Apparently Graham’s reign finally came to an end.” He spoke coldly.

“Colonel! Captain! You’d better see this.” The voice yelled at them from across the center.

They moved through the destroyed computers and data storage units until they reached the top of the small flight of stairs. Lying at the bottom of the stairs was Richard Graham. Marcus chuckled and moved down the stairs to stand above him.

“Well Senator... I’m impressed that you survived.” Marcus spoke.

“Help... help me.” Graham croaked out, blood leaking from his mouth, and soaking his chest.

“Help you? Now why would I want to do that?”

“Use... use to you.” Graham said.

“A use to me?” Marcus smiled viciously. “I sincerely doubt that Senator.”

“Please... please... help me.”

“And what do you offer me for a chance at immortality.” Marcus asked.

Graham’s eyes looked confused. “Immortality?”

“Why yes Senator Immortality.” Marcus spoke. “That is something that interests you isn’t it?”

“What... what are you?” Graham asked.

Marcus’s amber eyes glowed in the dim light and he smiled, exposing his vampire fangs.

Graham’s eyes went wide. “What am I Senator? I am your future!”

With lightning like speed, Marcus lowered his head and sank his fangs into Graham’s neck, and then he began to feed. Graham screamed for only a few seconds from the intense pain, but then Marcus dug his fangs in deeper and his eyes fluttered and closed. It took only a few moments for Marcus to drain Graham of his remaining blood, and when he pulled back his lips and lower jaw were slick with red. He stood up slowly before turning to look at the Captain. He watched the man hold out the cloth and he smiled as he took it and wiped his lips and jaw.

“There are civilians on this station.” Marcus spoke. “Round them up and confine them to one section. Our troops will need food Captain. Any elves among them?”

“There doesn’t appear to be no.” The Captain replied, his tone one of disappointment.

“A pity, they make such pleasant toys, and we could feed on them for days before they died or turned.” Marcus spoke.

The Captain looked at Graham’s body. “Keep him or incinerate him?”

“He could prove useful as the President has said.” Marcus spoke. “Remove him to the infirmary. It will be several hours before the change is complete and he wakes up to an entirely different world. I need to contact the President from my Raptor it appears. Keep me informed of the status of repairs, and when the long range transmitter is fixed.”

“Yes sir.”

NEW MIAMI

“...It is interesting that I did not know of this.” Yuri spoke from her office in New Miami. “I was on that station for two years and never heard of such a fail safe system. It seems Martin was much better at keeping secrets than I first thought.”

Marcus nodded in the video of the monitor. The picture was fuzzy due to the distance, but his voice was clear. "Whatever it did... it has wreaked havoc with the entire station. The reactor core was jettisoned into space, and when we repair the power core, it will only provide auxiliary power."

"How long Marcus?" Yuri asked, her anger starting to seethe.

"The Chief Engineer here states he can have the auxiliary power fully restored in three months... perhaps four. It depends on how fast we can get replacement computers that are compatible with the systems here." Marcus answered. "Getting main power back on line is another issue. We need a nuclear reactor Mistress. I believe the one powering EDEN was a Class Five."

Yuri's face crinkled. "That will be extremely difficult." She replied. "Most of the nuclear reactors we have are only Class Two. After the comet passed anything larger than a Class Two reactor was destroyed or scrapped for pieces. It was one of the many ignorant things that the government got passed during their short reign."

"Could we not use two or three of our Class Two reactors?" Marcus asked.

"And risk the entire Alliance discovering what we have?" Yuri spoke. "No! I will not allow my brother to gloat and harass me!"

"Without the reactor Mistress, this station's weapons and defenses will not be operational." Marcus spoke.

"I know that you fool!" She snapped, rising to her feet. "We will just have to find another one! There must be a Class Five somewhere on this infernal planet." She moved to the balcony over looking the ocean. "Hunter stopped our attempt to start a war between the High Elves and the Wood Elves. All of our personnel were butchered. The Wood Elf capital was emptied within six hours of our defeat, and reports indicate all the major Wood Elf cities are now deserted as well. They have fled to Eden."

"Tarifa?" Marcus asked.

Yuri looked back at the monitor. "Your obsession with that elf bitch annoys me Marcus." She spat. "Perhaps next time you will pay more attention to where you are putting your cock. It took my surgeons seven hours to reattach your toy, do not forget that."

"I serve you Mistress." Marcus spoke.

"Telan is demanding that we protect him, his father demands we protect him." Yuri spoke.

"Why not simply kill them Mistress?"

"If we do, then no elf will help us. And they might still be of use." Yuri replied. "Continue with your repairs Marcus. What of Graham?"

"He... he has joined us." Marcus answered. "I did not give him a choice."

"Good. When he recovers enough send him here. I can put his new skills to use. He is just the twisted kind of man I need for a certain position." Yuri said.

"As you order Mistress," Marcus spoke.

"Transmit a list of everything you need and I will insure you get it." Yuri told him. "Contact me daily with reports. I will attempt to contact Hunter in the next day or so."

"Contact Hunter Mistress, what purpose does that serve?" He asked.

"Intelligence Marcus!" Yuri snapped. "Why else? Now leave me until tomorrow."

Yuri switched off the monitor and turned back to the balcony and the ocean. The breeze caressed her body, blowing open the light robe she wore, and her nipples hardening. She sensed the Colonel walking up behind her, two tall glasses of fresh blood in his hands.

"You heard Robert?" She spoke.

He was completely naked and reached around to hand her one of the glasses as he planted a light kiss on her shoulder.

"I will start putting teams together in the morning to begin searching." He spoke in reply.

"Though I am curious as to why you want to contact Hunter."

Yuri smiled. "I have shared his bed." She spoke. "I know him, his moods; his attitude. And it will be interesting to see his reaction to our taking control of EDEN."

"Interesting," He spoke.

"What do you have in mind for tonight Colonel?" She asked.

"Tonight I believe you need a little tension reliever."

Yuri smiled as she sipped the blood. "I think you may be right." She told him. "What did you have in mind?"

Robert bit down on her shoulder, his fangs sinking deep into her flesh and causing her to wince in pain and pleasure. Two small streaks of blood slowly careened down the front of her shoulder. "A little of this... and a little of that." He spoke in a husky voice.

Yuri smiled. "I do so like a man who knows what he wants."

EDEN (Formerly Junction City)

Dan tossed his gear onto the couch as he entered his apartment. They had returned only a half hour before with the survivors from MOON BASE EDEN. The seven Mark Nine transports had been filled with nearly four thousand men, women and children. It had taken them almost six hours to get everyone unloaded and established in the refugee center before screening them and assigning them quarters began in the morning. Dan hadn't been this tired in a long time, and after almost thirty-six straight hours of combat ops and he was operating on adrenalin alone. He went immediately to his bathroom and turned the water on for an extremely hot shower and then he was going to sleep for a week. He striped out of his uniform and grabbed a towel before stepping into the shower. The hot water hitting his skin began relaxing him almost immediately. He stood under the stream for a long moment, letting the tension and stress bleed off into nothing. He didn't know how long he stood there before he smelled her cinnamon scent, but when he turned she was there beside the shower, gloriously naked and her cerulean blue eyes smiling at him.

"Anuk!" He spoke, standing straight up and out of the stream of water.

"I've been waiting for you Daniel." She spoke softly, stepping into the shower with him, the hot water immediately drenching her hair and covering her perfect body.

"I was... I was going to wait until tomorrow before I came to see you." He spoke as her hands came up to touch his broad chest, sliding across his skin gently.

"I did not want to wait." Anuk spoke to him in a whisper.

"Anuk... I..." Dan began speaking.

Anuk pressed a finger to his lips as she pressed her lush naked body against his rock hard one.

"Daniel... you have made me what I am now." She said softly.

"I... I did it to save your life baby! I... I don't... I couldn't lose you!" He spoke meeting her eyes.

"I know this Daniel." She said, her fingers caressing his cheeks. Anuk looked at him, the blood in her veins pounding out of control, and this man was the cause. He had protected her without question, without doubt. He had almost been killed keeping those creatures away from her. He had treated her wounds, never once in an inappropriate manner, even when she was exposed for his eyes to see. She could feel his desire for her, his aura burning with need, yet he was holding it back, not willing to unleash it. Anuk smiled at him, as she knew he had to feel her own aura. Dysea told her it would be irresistible to him if she truly desired him as he did her. And Anuk had no doubt that was exactly what she wanted. Her face looked up into his, and she could see the passion in his dark eyes, his jaw twitching as he restrained himself. "Why... why don't you take what is yours Daniel?" She asked softly.

"Take?" Danny gasped. "You... you are not mine to take Anuk! You don't belong to anyone."

"But... I am what you want." Anuk spoke. "I can feel your aura Daniel. It is... it is surrounding me... embracing me... and yet you deny it, even when you feel what I am projecting to you."

Danny lowered his head, his arms extending out past her head on either side to brace his body against the shower wall. "I don't... I don't want to be like those monsters Anuk."

Anuk smiled warmly at him. "I had never been with a man when those beasts took me Daniel. And after the first few times..."

"Anuk please." Danny spoke closing his eyes.

"No... you must hear me." Anuk said. "After... after the first months I was lost. I thought... I knew that if I was ever rescued... I knew no man would ever want me. And then you came into my life. The way you looked at me... the way you touched me. It... it set me afire. You were so kind... so gentle... I fell in love with

you the second day we were together Daniel. I want to be yours, now... tomorrow... next week... forever. I want to be wrapped in your arms for all eternity.”

“Anuk...”

“Do my scars lessen your desire for me Daniel?” She asked him, her heart feeling a jolt of fear.

Danny looked at her. The scars had faded to almost nothing now, but they were still visible. Three long streaks across her forehead, over her right eye and down her cheek to her jaw, “Never!” He hissed in a loud whisper.

“Then what holds you back my love?” She asked him as relief flooded through her. “Is there someone else that holds your heart? Or are you simply afraid you will break me? I assure you, you can not.” Anuk smiled and her cerulean eyes were so bright and beautiful. It was that smile that finally broke down Dan’s will.

Anuk gasped and closed her eyes when she felt him release the shields guarding his mind and his aura. She gasped at the desire for her that she felt engulf her, the passion... the need and the want. All of it washed over her in an instant, and she felt herself become instantly and incredibly aroused beyond anything she ever thought she could feel. His hands came away from the wall and grabbed her waist, lifting her into his arms and stepping back against the shower, pinning her to the wall. Anuk’s eyes opened and she looked into his eyes, seeing that they had changed and his fangs had extended. That rush of desire flooded her as well, and then her eyes and fangs became like his. She wrapped her arms around his broad shoulders, the contrast of her fair skin color against his caramel complexion sending shivers through her.

She had no more time to think as his lips came down on hers and claimed her soul. Her firm breasts crushed against his iron chest, her nipples burning into his flesh as his tongue sought and found hers and they tangled in a delightful combat of lovers. His hands dropped down to her skin, tracing her flesh, caressing the skin of her back, and down her spine causing ripples of intense passion soaring through her veins. The blood pounded behind her eyes, in her ears, her skin burning in her own need and desire. His hands curved around her firm ass cheeks, sliding sensuously down the outsides of her thighs and pulling her legs tighter around his hips. She groaned loudly within their kiss as she felt his huge manhood brush against her now dripping pussy. His flesh was hot and dominating and so very large. Anuk wondered for a moment if she would be able to take all of him, but those thoughts exploded into colors as he speared her in one smooth motion.

Anuk’s head flew back and she screamed. “Ahhhhhhh! Yeesssssss!”

She screamed to the heavens as she felt every thick scorching hot inch of his beautiful cock enter her in one fateful and heart robbing plunge that sent her into a world of bliss she had never experienced before.

Danny could barely control himself, Anuk’s cinnamon scent flooding every pore, robbing him of his breath. The heat of their combined auras and desire seemed like it was superheating the air around them. The velvet tightness and heat of her pussy caused his legs to become weak and he could do nothing but stand there holding her beautifully shaped ass in his large hands as she shook almost violently in orgasm. He clenched his teeth in denial, wanting to prolong what he sensed was her very first orgasm, her sweet liquids pouring from her drenching his pulsing cock and spilling onto their thighs. Her scent grew more aroused and stronger as she came in his arms, and this only served to heighten Danny’s pleasure that much more as her pussy clutched at his near bursting cock, milking him endlessly.

“More!” Anuk cried out. “Please... more!”

Dan did not disappoint the woman who held his very essence in the palm of her hands. He tucked his face between her shoulder and her neck, nibbling the gentle curve of her elf ear and hearing her gasp in delight as he began to stroke into her. Anuk let out a small cry every time she felt his thrust home deep within her. Never in her wildest dreams had she ever imagined he could touch so deep within her. He was reaching into her belly with every stroke, driving her into a state of pleasure that surpassed rapture and entered into euphoria. Her eyes were open, yet all she saw were white jolts of delicious pleasure. Her lips were parted yet no sound came out as her lungs were seized in bliss. Every time she felt his large balls pressed against her hairless pussy, it sent her over the abyss, and one raging orgasm followed another. Her juices coated his battering cock and literally poured down her thighs and mingled with the water and their sweat.

Dan felt the tightening in his belly, the heat and tightness of her pussy too much for him to fight. His chest heaved and he put his lips to her ear.

“Anuk... I... I can’t...”

Anuk felt his huge cock expand even further inside her and she wrapped her arms around his head tightly as lances of pleasure exploded from her own belly, more powerful than anything she had yet felt.

“Make... make me... yours!” She gasped into his ear.

Her sweet words against his ear ended all his resistance and Dan threw back his head and howled as his cock ballooned and he felt the hot cum rush up his length to erupt deep in her womb. Anuk’s body went rigid as she felt him blasting into her, filling her with his seed and claiming what was his. She felt a sense of peace and love wash over her, unlike anything she had ever known, and as he continued to empty his searing hot come into her belly, Anuk cried, the tears pouring from her eyes as he healed her, and purged all the vileness she had experienced in the last year of her life. She was his mate now... and Anuk had every intention of being the only mate he would ever desire or need.

It was not something she needed to worry about as Dan held her head in one hand and the small of her back in the other and allowed his senses to run completely by instinct, and those instincts burned Anuk into his very soul.

She was alive.

Aihola’s amber eyes fluttered open slowly and took in her surroundings. The lights were dim in the room, the starlight from the large window casting a beautiful glow into the room, enhancing the small light by her bed. She felt something silky and soft in her hands and she looked down to see the raven black hair that lay across her abdomen, Tarifa’s sleeping face pointed up at her, the lower portion of her body in the chair next to the bed. The memories of what had happened washed back into her mind and she gasped.

Tarifa’s head came up instantly, her sapphire eyes wide. “*Nya Istel!*” She spoke.

“Tarifa! Where...”

“Be still my love.” Tarifa spoke grasping her hands and moving up onto the bed. “You are safe now. We are in the hospital in Eden. Martin had us flown here immediately once you were stable.”

“Tari... Lynwe...”

Tarifa smiled as she looked at her. “They are safe and resting. They were here for a time, but Anja ordered them both to sleep before she went off duty. How do you feel my love?”

Aihola looked at her, eyes wide and she pulled Tarifa’s head to hers, covering her lips with her own and kissing her as hard as she could. Tarifa groaned a delightful sound and kissed her back with equal fervor and force. Their tongues danced a tango of love and worship before finally they parted, both of them gasping for breath. Aihola stared at her lover, her friend and her reason for living.

“You... you saved me.” She said softly.

Tarifa smiled, tears in her eyes. “I would die for you *Nya Istel.*” She spoke without hesitation. “And it seemed... it seemed only fair since you saved me my love.”

Aihola looked at Tarifa, her amber eyes going to her arm. She took it gently in her hands and pushed up the sleeve to reveal the bandage on her forearm. Slowly her eyes moved back to Tarifa’s face, seeing nothing but an adoring love in those sapphire eyes, an adoring love for her.

“Tarifa... you...”

Tarifa took her face in her hands and shook her head. “Do not dare to question your actions my love. It was within my power to save you *Nya Istel*, and I would willingly do it again. Over and over... if it meant you were with me always.”

“What... what Martin said?” Aihola asked. “It is not true. Is it?”

Tarifa smiled and got up off the bed going to the table. She took the wooden box and brought it back to the bed. She sat back down and put the box in Aihola’s lap. “The Holy One gave this to Martin. He brought it here shortly after returning from Mountain City. He said it belongs to you now.”

Aihola looked at the cherry wood box, her hands shaking as she undid the latch and slowly lifted it. Her eyes grew wide when she saw what was inside, “By the gods!” She gasped.

The necklace glittered even in the dim light, the chain made from diamonds and rubies and the large pendant at the end intricately carved and lined with a glowing amber colored gem. Aihola looked at Tarifa.

“This is... this is...”

Tarifa smiled, “The necklace of the Drow Queen. Yes I know. The Holy One has had it in his possession all these years. He gave it to Martin, who in turn brought it here for the Queen of the Drow Elves. For you.”

“My love I...”

Tarifa brought a finger to her lips and shook her head. “Word already spreads among your people *Nya Istel*.” She said. “Lynwe has been proclaiming your glory since returning. If ever your people had purpose... it is now. They had a vote within two hours of Lynwe informing them, and all of them have pledged to you their faith and devotion. It was your mother’s necklace Aihola, and now it is yours. You are Queen.”

Aihola looked at her. “I do not want this if it means I can not have you.”

“You will always have me.” Tarifa told her with a smile. “That is without question or debate. Besides... it does help that we are both Queens now. Who can tell us what we can do or not do?”

Aihola smiled. “That is true.” She spoke.

“I know Martin and the others are leaving.” Tarifa spoke, “For several months at least. He will leave us in charge of what he has started here as High King. And together we will continue that.”

“Yes we will my love.” Aihola spoke, her amber eyes growing passionate. She looked around. “Are we alone?”

Tarifa saw that look and felt her own passion rise. “We... we are Mistress.” She said in a husky voice full of desire.

“Then why are you not in my bed slave?” Aihola growled in want and need. “I want to feel you against me while we sleep.”

Twenty seconds later... that was not the case.

Dysea contained her gasp of incredible delight as Anja’s wonderfully long tongue trailed across the inside of her satiny thigh with measured intent. Her long fingers entwined in Anja’s silky Persian red hair and her belly tightened in anticipation. Their auras were running hot for each other, and had been since they had returned to the home they shared with Martin. Whether it was the fighting or the aftereffects of that, neither of them cared as they had not tasted each other in days, and both of them were burning with need for each other as well as Martin.

“Please... *Melyanna*... don’t... don’t tease me!” Dysea gasped.

Dysea wore a simple button down white shirt that was now unbuttoned and open to reveal her firm breasts and her maddeningly hard nipples. Sweat was beginning to form between her breasts, adding a fine sheen to her already deeply tanned skin. Her thighs quivered when Anja delicately traced the outer folds of her pussy with a fingertip.

For her part, Anja wore only one of Martin’s t-shirts, which covered her breasts, but barely extended past her firm ass, leaving her tanned thighs and powerful legs free for anyone’s eyes to drink in. At the moment, she was squirming on the couch, driving her hips down into the soft cushion, stifling her own needs and dripping pussy until the moment she would have Dysea shuddering in orgasm. She adored the Wood Elf Queen’s pussy, so wonderfully perfect in shape and smell. Her wildflower scent was strong and pure, and Anja was awash in it now, as close to her pussy as she was.

She let her tongue trail up Dysea’s thigh once more before looking up into the beautiful face of her lover and meeting her emerald eyes. Dysea’s pointed elf ears, so elegantly curved and tapered were turning a soft shade of red even under her tan, signaling that her passion was building into the extreme.

“I like teasing you Dysea, my love.” Anja spoke, dropping a fluttering kiss to her skin just above the thin patch of platinum hair above her opening. “You taste so much sweeter when I build you up to it.”

Dysea’s lips parted in a wordless response as the sensations tickled her skin all over. “Oh... I will... I will have my revenge.” She gasped.

Anja smiled and dragged her body agonizingly slow up the taut body of her elf lover, making sure to press her larger breasts firmly to Dysea’s, their nipples scraping together, separated by only the thin fabric of Martin’s t-shirt. As she looked into Dysea’s face, her emerald eyes closed in bliss, Anja smiled. They had this effect on each other from the moment Martin had turned her. They could not deny the attraction between them, or the attraction that pounded against them for Aricia. They were just as comfortable within each others embrace as they were when Martin held them in his powerful arms.

Anja lowered her face to Dysea's, extending her tongue out and tracing the tip up her throat. Dysea's eyes popped open, emerald outlined in black and she grasped Anja's face pulling her face close.

"Give me your tongue!" She gasped.

Anja needed no further encouragement and cover Dysea's lips with her own, plunging her four inch long tongue into Dysea's mouth and entwining it with hers. Dysea's arms wrapped around her back, pulling her closer, both of them on fire now, and needing nothing but the release they could give to each other.

The chime on the door broke that desire almost instantly.

They looked at each other, two different shades of green gazing into the other, their breathing nearly out of control. Anja dropped her forehead to Dysea's and they shared a soft chuckle.

"*Nauta Melme* would not knock my love." Dysea spoke with a smile, her finger tracing Anja's cheek. "He would simply come in and possess us."

"I... I know." Anja answered. "But if I don't have you soon... I'm going to burst."

Dysea kissed her softly. "More reason for you to get rid of whoever is there. I have not had my fill of you, and I intend to have all of you before this night is through."

Anja's jade eyes glittered in desire. "Oh... I love it when you talk dirty to me like that."

Dysea chuckled and lifted her hips. "Go get rid of our guest."

"Why me?"

"You are on top of me, and considerably less worked up." Dysea said, grinding her wetness against Anja's thigh to prove her statement.

Anja grinned. "I see your point." She spoke. She kissed Dysea hard, with need and passion. "Don't you move."

Dysea shook her head. "I wouldn't think of it." She spoke as Anja scrambled to her bare feet and went to the door. She punched the side panel in frustration and her eyes came up as the door slid aside. "What is..." Anja's eyes went wide and her words stopped completely.

Aricia stood in the doorway, a blanket wrapped tightly around her. She and the other Spartans were staying in a small house only a hundred meters away from Martin's home. A quick glance and Anja saw four of those Spartans standing guard in front of their home.

"Little Wolf!" Anja exclaimed taking her hand and pulling her into the house. She saw Dysea scrambling from the couch, pulling the shirt closed around her glistening body as Anja slapped the control panel once more, closing the door.

"Aricia... what is wrong?" Dysea asked as she came over to them and saw the look of tension on Aricia's face.

When the door closed tightly it hit them. They both inhaled sharply as Aricia's aura joined theirs, and the air became so thick with heated passion it was hard to breathe.

"I... I couldn't resist it." Aricia gasped. "I... I didn't want to resist it."

"Oh my!" Dysea spoke in horror. "We... we were shielding *Nauta Melme* Anja, but we... we didn't shield from Aricia."

Anja took Aricia's hands. "I'm so sorry... Little Wolf." She gasped. "Quickly... come inside and we can cool our passions."

Aricia shook her head. "No!" She spoke looking at Anja. "I... I want this." She spoke, her words heated and filled with uncontrollable desire. Her aura was blanketing the entire room, and quickly engulfing both Dysea and Anja, who though more able to control the heat sweeping between them, were nonetheless quite affected.

"Aricia..." Dysea took her other hand. "This is not... this is not of your doing. Our... Melyanna's and my passion for each other is what triggered this in you. It was not our intent."

Aricia looked at them, her azure blue eyes alive with burning need and barely controlled desire.

"Don't... don't you see my loves!" She rasped out. "If... if I did not want this as well... it would have no hold over me as it does!"

Aricia had felt it for more than an hour now, so close to them as she was. She could have raised a shield to block it, knowing that they had forgotten in their passion that she was now an intimate part of their telepathic connection. However she had wanted to experience what they obviously felt for each other, and as their passion and auras had increased in power, Aricia found herself reveling in the new sensations that coursed through her

as well. Her skin had begun to heat, the clenching of her lower belly, just above her womanhood. The moistness that had begun seeping from her, filling the air around her with her pungent lavender scent. It had taken all her willpower to hold back the flood gates that threatened to erupt within her, and she had wrapped the blanket around her near naked form and rushed from the house to be with them. She wanted them, she needed them, just as much as they wanted and needed her.

“Aricia we...” Anja began.

Aricia didn't let her finish her statement and tossed the blanket aside to reveal her gloriously naked body. Her legs were long and muscular, and ass perfectly shaped and powerfully firm. Her hips were slim and sexy, her waist narrow and her abdomen rippling with muscles much like Anja's. The rise and fall of her firm breasts showcased their size and firmness and the half dollar sized bronzed areolas with pencil hard nipples erect and standing proudly in desire finished off the erotic and desirableness of her body. She pulled Anja into an urgent embrace and covered her lips with her own, her breasts mashing against Anja's, her hands pulling her tightly against her.

Anja had always been weaker when Dysea kissed her, and Aricia was no different. The moment she felt Aricia's tongue demand entry into her mouth, she surrendered to the heated desire that had been building in the last few minutes between her and Dysea and even more so since Aricia had entered the room.

Aricia's eyes flew open and then closed dreamily when Anja's arms wrapped around her waist and she felt her plunge that four inch tongue into the never explored reaches of her mouth. Anja's tongue had a life of its own it seemed, never stopping, always dancing with hers in unison, playfully tapping her teeth and gums claiming what she wanted. Anja's hands gripped her ass, pulling her closer, grinding their hips together and Aricia felt her legs become weak.

Dysea had moved up behind them, totally immersed in the auras they were projecting for each other, the heat of their desire and passion saturating every pore of their bodies. She pressed her body tightly against Aricia's back, her nipples burning into Aricia's tanned skin and eliciting a gasp of pleasure as Anja kissed her. Dysea smiled... knowing the pleasures that *Melyanna's* tongue could produce from just a single kiss. She laced her fingers in Aricia's satiny raven colored hair and lowered her lips to the soft skin of her shoulder, trailing her moist tongue along the edge of her shoulder and slowly up her neck tickling the lobe of her ear. Aricia's hand came up to reach behind her and grasp Dysea's head, her lips pulling away from Anja's kiss and turning to look at her with passion clouded eyes. Dysea did not hesitate and plunged her lips down to Aricia's claiming her as well.

Anja wasted no time, dragging her warm lips down Aricia's chest, her hands coming up to cup those firm globes of flesh. She engulfed an erect nipple within her warm mouth and suckled gently. Aricia gasped against Dysea's kiss, her hands gripping Anja's head tightly. Anja continued to trail her tongue down Aricia's taut abdomen, feeling the muscles clench as her tongue tickled the dark bellybutton. Her hands dropped too and she used her fingernails to trace up the outside of Aricia's thighs while she nuzzled the thin patch of black hair above Aricia's dripping center. Her aroma filled Anja's senses to overwhelming, powerful and sweet-smelling, promising hours of untold pleasures. Her scent and aura was a powerful thing and it had taken hold of both her and Dysea, driving them to new heights. Their scents mingled in the air, thick and palpable. Dysea had lowered one hand to continue manipulating Aricia's breasts, molding them, dancing across their firmness and teasing her painfully hard nipples to the extreme.

Anja stared at Aricia's center, her mouth nearly watering in anticipation. Her pussy was beautiful, equal in every way to Dysea's. Almost completely smooth except for the thin line of raven colored hair, and now completely open in intense desire and pulsing with blood. She reached up with a single finger and touched Aricia's fully unhooded clit, now standing proudly at attention. She felt Aricia's thighs quiver in delight and she smiled, knowing she was about to feast quite well. She traced her hands around to grip Aricia's clenched ass cheeks and blew softly on her exposed clit, feeling her body tense within her grip. Anja's eyes were ablaze as she gazed at the prize in front of her, and her desire surged out of control. She covered Aricia's entire pussy with her lips and drove her four inch tongue as deeply into Aricia's tight opening as she could.

Aricia's eyes flew open wide, her thighs going rigid. She grabbed Anja's head in her hands, her stomach muscles clenched tightly as the most unimaginable wave of delicious pleasure surged through her body and she screamed. White flashes of light exploded before her eyes, Dysea's own lips descending to her taut breast and engulfing a nipple just as the first orgasm of Aricia's young life ripped through her being. Her fangs were fully

extended, her head resting back on Dysea's shoulder, her azure blue eyes wide and delirious, as the orgasm flowed from her into Anja's willing mouth. She could actually feel Anja drinking her juices down, some of them slipping past her lips to coat her chin and cheeks, an event that did not deter Anja in the least, gripped in her own orgasm as she was, pushing her firm ass down against the heels of her feet as her juices flowed out of her.

Dysea's eyes were open wide, her face pressed against Aricia's breast, holding the younger woman tightly as amazingly she was gripped in the throes of a much unexpected orgasm herself. Neither Anja nor Aricia had touched her pussy and yet she was experiencing a powerful orgasm just from feeling Aricia's and Anja's pleasure and having their scents swarm around her. It was almost dreamlike in fashion as she felt Aricia's hips humping gently against Anja's glorious tongue, her entire upper body rigid, her breasts almost searing hot to the touch.

It was a long moment before Aricia was able to retain some semblance of her own mind, lost as she had been in the new bliss of pleasure that had rocked her. She was weak and held tightly to Anja and Dysea both as Anja placed fluttering kisses across her abdomen as she rose to her feet. Aricia looked down as Anja and Dysea shared a deep, tongue filled kiss over the top of her breasts.

Dysea's eyes closed as if she was savoring a fine meal. "Delicious." She spoke in a soft whisper.

Anja got fully back to her feet, but still helped to support Aricia in her arms as she traced her sweat covered neck and throat before kissing her just as deeply, Aricia tasting herself on Anja's lips and tongue. She drew away after nibbling on Aricia's bottom lip and nuzzled her neck with her nose.

"I'm sorry Little Wolf... but you taste so deliciously wonderful." Anja spoke in a husky voice still seething with ardor and craving.

Aricia's chest heaved as her breathing returned to some semblance of normal, but her blood still burned in her veins and behind her eyes, her body still on fire and signaling she was more than ready to continue.

"Please... please tell me there is more." She gasped out the words, her voice thick with yearning and need.

Dysea smiled dreamily as she nuzzled Aricia's ear. "Oh yes Little Wolf..." She gasped. "There is so much more if you are sure this is what you want and you are willing. Will you share with us my love?"

Aricia looked into Dysea's emerald green eyes, filled with so much hunger and desire for her that it took her breath away. One glance into Anja's jade colored eyes and Aricia saw the exact same thing. That was all she needed to know.

"Oh... oh yes." She gasped. "I have never been more sure of anything."

Anja kissed her softly, lovingly and smiled. "We should probably move to where it is more comfortable." She spoke in that same husky voice. "Our bed is very big."

"Where?" Aricia asked in undisguised anticipation.

Martin walked into his home several hours later, exhausted and spent. All he wanted to do was take a hot shower and then crawl into bed beside the warmth of Dysea and Anja and sleep for hours. The first thing that hit him was their auras, filling their small home, powerful and unchecked, their desire spilling from the three of them in waves. His eyes found the blanket on the floor and he lifted it to his nose, inhaling deeply and smelling Aricia's sweet passion. He smiled to himself and discounted the shower since it was in the bedroom and he had no intention of disturbing his Queens. He tossed his gear onto the chair by the door and moved to the couch where he took off his boots and stretched out his frame. He was asleep in minutes, the cries of his Queen's passion lulling him into a deep restful sleep. One he hadn't had in a long time.

Aricia felt the warmth of the sun on her skin and allowed her eyes to open slowly. She lay on her side on the soft sheets, her head resting on something firm yet soft, and she felt the weight resting on one of her legs. As her eyes came into focus she discovered she was staring down Anja's muscular but completely feminine abdomen. There was no mistaking the ripples of her lean muscles, or the curve of her hips, as Aricia had spent quite a bit of time exploring that same abdomen and so much more the previous night. The memories of the

previous night came rushing back to her and sent a surge of pleasure coursing through her body. Never in her wildest dreams had she imagined she could experience such raging bliss in the arms of another woman, let alone two. She could feel Dysea spooned against her back, her long leg draped over Aricia's, her beautiful elf face buried in Aricia's hair and her warm breath on the back of her neck.

The night was a blur, the images and tastes coming back to her. She could still smell their mixed passion; still taste Anja's sweet honey on her lips and Dysea's wildflower aroma in her nostrils. She had explored their flesh with gleeful abandon, memorizing every sensuous curve and valley, every taste of their skin. And they had returned the pleasure to her three fold, their lips and tongues exploring every centimeter of her flesh until she was screaming in rapturous glory. She couldn't remember how many times they had sent her over the edge, and Aricia smiled warmly as she realized she didn't care as long as it continued for the rest of her life.

I was hoping that very same thing. Anja's musical voice echoed in her thoughts.

As was I. Dysea spoke.

I smell food. Anja spoke, her body shifting on the bed.

Aricia's eyes flew open and she sat up, heedless of her nakedness. *Martin!* Her mind echoed as she caught his pungent mint scent and the power of his aura. *He is here!*

He does live here Little Wolf. Anja replied with a soft chuckle, throwing up a mental shield around their three minds, which Dysea quickly reinforced. They knew Martin would never force his way through the barrier, but it immediately put Aricia at ease as they spoke.

Aricia turned and looked at them on the bed, staring up at her with two shades of beautiful green eyes. *I... I have never been... been with a man, my loves.* Aricia told them. *He... he is an Alpha... his aura is so powerful, and he directs it only to the three of us.*

We are all he desires Little Wolf. Anja told her.

I can feel his desire for me, for us. It races unchecked throughout his body. Aricia said. *He is my King... I could never refuse him, not with the way his aura affects me.*

Dysea sat up and reached out to stroke her cheek. *Do you fear he will demand from you what you are not ready to give Little Wolf?*

I... it is not because I don't want too. I do... by the gods I do... it pounds in my blood every time I am near him. But he is so... so large and powerful. Aricia said.

Dysea took her hands. *Nauta Melme will never take from you what you do not offer to him Aricia. When he first... when he first turned me... I had to practically beg him. He wanted too, I could feel it within him, but he held back for fear of hurting me.*

It was no different with me. Anja told her. *And he promised you didn't he?*

Aricia nodded her head slowly. *He did.*

Little Wolf... you have a part of him, just as Melyanna and I do. Dysea spoke. *I could never be satisfied with another, nor do I think could Anja.*

Never. Anja echoed Dysea's words.

You may not have shared his bed yet, but do you think any man could affect you as he has? Dysea spoke.

There... there are many Alphas who have tried to court me. Aricia spoke. *None of them have even stirred an interest from me, yet with Martin... with Martin I... my head pounds, my heart races, my blood burns for him. But because...*

Because you are dishonored the others merely wish to have you as a trophy, and you think Martin is the same way. Anja spoke.

Aricia looked at her stunned. *How... how did you know that?*

We saw it last night, in the grips of our pleasure. It flashed from your thoughts. Dysea answered shyly. *Aricia he is not like the others.*

He must not know! Aricia spoke urgently. *I can't allow him to know.*

He is not like the others Aricia, I know you feel that. Anja said.

Do you think Nauta Melme cares for some silly law that makes no sense? Dysea asked her, taking her hands in hers. *What we share... the four of us, is something that was destined to be. I have come to realize that whatever else has happened in our pasts, once we all came together, all the pieces that had been missing came together.*

My loves... I...

Do you trust us Little Wolf? Anja asked.

Yes. She replied without hesitation.

Then trust in the knowledge that when you are ready, you will experience Martin's love just as we have. And you will never yearn for anything else. And no man... and no law will keep him from making you his. He will wait for hundreds of years if he has too, but you are a part of him, just as you are part of us now.

Bask in his attentions Little Wolf. Let his love for you flow through you as it does us. Dysea told her. *When you are ready... all you need do is tell him. He won't pressure you into it. He doesn't know how.*

He is sort of dense in that respect. Not like most men who tend to think with their cocks first. Anja chuckled as she spoke. *Dysea and I had to practically tie him down before he realized how much we wanted him.*

Yes... but that was the fun part Melyanna.

It sure was. Anja agreed.

Aricia couldn't help but smile at their words and she looked at them with love before leaning over to kiss them both deeply.

They all felt the tendrils of power gently knocking against the barrier they had erected in their minds. Since Anja was the one who had first established the barrier she lowered the shield enough to allow them to hear Martin's voice within their minds.

Ladies... breakfast is getting cold. His deep voice filled their minds.

Coffee? Anja asked.

Already poured, but you have to untangle yourselves from bed. It is almost noon. He answered.

Nauta Melme you take such good care of us.

Martin chuckled within their minds. *All in a days work. Now throw something on and come eat. You need to regain your strength. That includes you Little Wolf.*

Anja smiled and took her hand. "C'mon... he makes a mean omelet, and if my nose is any indication, he is in rare form this morning. Onions... steak... tomatoes... and cheese!"

Aricia watched as Anja bounded across the living room dressed in only the same t-shirt she had on last night. Martin stood in the kitchen, fatigue pants and boots already on, but naked from the waist up. She had wrapped herself in the sheet from the bed and stood there just watching him. There were many scars on his chest and back, but they didn't detract in the least from his physical dimensions. The tattoos only seemed to enhance his aura and power. He was definitely a Spartan by birth with the rippled abdomen, bulging muscles in his arms, and broad square shoulders. His hair fell almost to his shoulders now, the mustache and goatee neatly trimmed. She watched Anja move into the kitchen and perch herself on the counter and take the coffee he held out to her. Her powerful legs grabbed him by the waist and pulled him close for a deep kiss. Dysea leaned over the stove and sniffed at the omelet cooking in the pan. She too wore the same shirt she had been in last night, and Aricia saw Martin slap her ass cheek lightly causing her to jump up. She turned to him and he kissed her as well, Anja looking on and drinking her coffee with great relish.

Aricia moved to the edge of the small kitchen and stopped unsure of what to do. She felt him turn to her and smile. Then he was in front of her, leaning down to inhale her scent and nuzzle her neck. Aricia hissed softly, her eyes closing in delight feeling his aura wash over her, yet it simply enveloped her in its love and warmth and there it stopped.

"Good morning Little Wolf." He spoke softly.

Aricia opened her eyes and saw his face only inches from her, his dark brown eyes shimmering with love and adoration. "Good... good..."

Martin covered her lips with his and kissed her, Aricia's hands coming up to take his face in her grasp. The kiss nearly overwhelmed her, but she realized there was nothing sexual to it. She could feel the desire and want for her but it was a kiss of passion and love and above all respect. And then his lips were gone and she was looking at him again.

"What would you like to eat Little Wolf? These two sex pots probably wore you out last night. I apologize." He asked her with a glint in his eyes.

“Perhaps if you were more attentive to our needs *Nauta Melme*, Anja and I would not have to enjoy each other so much.” Dysea suggested as she sipped her coffee and leaned back against Anja on the counter.

“Where would the fun be in that?” Anja asked playfully, leaning down to nuzzle Dysea’s elf ear. “I so enjoy how you taste my love.”

Aricia blushed crimson, but that passed quickly as she realized Dysea’s words were so very true. She saw Martin roll his eyes at their antics and she chuckled. “You... you can surprise me.” She replied.

“Surprise you I shall. Coffee?”

“Please.” Aricia answered watching him move back to the small stove. Her eyes went to Anja and Dysea and saw them smiling knowingly at her.

Told you. Anja’s voice filled her head.

“We’re set Skipper.” Tony’s image was on the large screen in front of them.

“No problems?” Martin asked.

“Negative. We set it up just like Tunisia. We’ll orbit just off the coast as long as we have the fuel for.” Martin nodded. “I don’t think it will be long.” He spoke. “Maintain the secure coms and I’ll get back to you.”

“Roger that.”

The screen went black and Martin turned to the others at the table.

“Would you care to explain that?” Walter asked.

Martin shook his head. “Not at the moment. But maybe you can explain to me now why I have to assume some alternate identity?” Martin asked as he settled into the chair across from where Walter and Theron sat in the conference room of Eden’s Command Center.

Theron sat to Walter’s left, while Anja, Dysea and Aricia sat together on Martin’s right. Theron leaned forward in the chair. “My Lord... we are only...”

Martin held up his hand quickly. “Don’t try to bullshit a bullshitter.” Martin spoke.

Theron looked at him confused, “Sire?”

Walter smiled. “Now is the time for all honesty Theron.” He said. “Now we must supply everything... no more half truths. He knows who he is, and he deserves the full truth.”

Theron looked at Walter and slowly nodded, “Very well.” He said turning back to Martin. “When you return to Sparta my King you will be able to read the ancient scrolls where all this information is readily available. What I will tell you now is basically the short version.” Theron sat back in his chair. “Sparta was once ruled by two Kings... descended from the Agiads and Eurypontids lines. Both are considered descendants of Heracles but the Agiads were considered senior if you will. King Leonidas was such an Agiads. There was always a workable relationship between the two Kings even before the birth of Leonidas, his death however changed all that.”

“How so?”

“Leotychidas was the Eurypontids King during the same period as Leonidas. He was also a Shifter... albeit no where near as powerful or inspiring as Leonidas. He knew this... and always hated it. He coveted the power and devotion that Leonidas held. And he secretly despised the Spartan way of life, our warrior mentality and what he considered to be his curse.”

“The ability to Shift?” Martin asked.

Theron nodded. “His skills, what they were, leaned more to the naval side of Greece’s power, and he envied that Leonidas could command such loyal ground soldiers. He also did not believe that Leonidas should confront Xerxes at Thermopylae, for fear of causing greater death among the Greek people. He sided with the Ephours in that regard, and that is why Leonidas decided to take the 300 to the Hot Gates. He knew that if Xerxes was not stopped then all of Greece would have fallen, and our kind would have been wiped out.”

“Why?” Martin asked.

“All of the history is not known...” Walter replied. “Much of it was lost before Leonidas even came to power, but we do know that at one point in our history we were slaves to the Vampires. Leonidas and the 300 started the rebellion that continues to this day. Walter and I were part of the Spartan officers that led the final battle at Pleatea that finally crushed Xerxes and his advance.”

“I’m not understanding why I need to hide who I am.” Martin spoke.

“Leotychidas betrayed Sparta when he was bribed by a family that collaborated with Xerxes and he refused to destroy them.” Theorn spoke. “He was tried and sentenced to exile and his grandson advanced to the throne. Throughout the remainder of our years as a power the Eurypontids line was never trusted again. Around 300 A.D. roughly, the Kingship of Sparta was pass solely to the Agiads line, and the descendants of Leonidas were the sole heirs. I was chosen as Steward of the Throne until the descendant of Leonidas... the descendant that the Ancient Scrolls predicted would come... until that descenant came. That descendant is you.”

“How do you know that for sure?” Martin asked.

“The Scrolls said this descendant would carry with him the same aura as Leonidas himself.” Walter said. “That he would have the same passion and drive as Leonidas. That he would be the image of Leonidas in every way, to include in wolf form.”

“That doesn’t answer my question.” Martin said.

Theorn took a deep breath. “Dymas and I are the only survivors of the Battle of Thermopylae. We are the only ones left among our people that fought beside our King. The only ones among our people that actually remember him as he was.” Theron looked at him. “You are him Martin. In every way possible... physically and mentally.”

“Ok... if what you say is true...”

“It is true!” Theron bellowed. “You have seen it yourself. Dymas has told me of your visions. Told me what you have seen in your dreams. These are Leonidas’s visions. What he saw when he was alive.”

“How is that possible?” Martin said.

“We don’t know.” Walter said. “I told you I cared for every descendant of the Leonidas line since that day. None of them have come close to the power you wield. None of them ever came close to your size in wolf form. And none of them ever saw visions and images of Thermopylae before the battle began. Just as you have. Do you wish to deny it now?”

Martin looked at the table, feeling everyone’s eyes on him. Thr’won leaned forward. “This is true my King?” She asked softly. “How long... how long have you been having these visions?”

Martin looked at her. “It’s been about six years now.” He replied softly. “Flashes of places I’ve never been too. Ancient battles. Walls of bodies. Smashed ships. I’ve never considered them anything more than dreams.” He looked at Theron and Walter. “Are you trying to tell me I’m somehow the incarnation of Leonidas?”

“No.” Theron spoke. “He would never have trusted these vampire elves as you do. He would never have made them allies. He would have slaughtered them in a heartbeat.” He looked at Martin. “In many ways you are very different from him, but the resemblance is unmistakable, and the power of your aura alone leaves no question.”

“If that is the case... why do I have to hide who I am?” Martin asked.

“Because for the last six hundred years or so, the descendants of the Eurypontids line have been pushing to take power. They are not happy that we wait for a fictional King, as they put it, to return and lead us.” Theron spoke. “They would much prefer to change the laws put in place almost two thousand years ago, and then take power with a King of their own.”

“Is that such a bad thing?” Martin asked.

“There has been an uneasy peace within our land between our kind and the vampires.” Theorn spoke. “They are not strong enough to attack us openly, so they rely on deceit and treachery. We are not strong enough to launch a full scale attack against them, especially not with that witch Yuri holding power within the Alliance. She is almost as old as her brother Xerxes, and over the centuries she has been turning more and more into vampires. If a King of the Eurypontids line ever took power, I fear we would be slaves once more. They are pacifists and will not fight for anything they believe in, except the advancement of their own wealth and power.”

“I take it then there is a descendant of this Eurypontids line in Sparta now?” Martin said.

Theron nodded slowly. “He is a member of the Senate and over the years has gathered quite a following. His name is Autolycus, and nearly half the Senate is now in his pocket. He is a pompous arrogant fool, as is his only son.”

“I’ve known a few of those in my day.” Martin spoke. “What makes him so dangerous?”

“I believe he is working with the vampires to usurp the rule of Sparta so that either he or his son may become King and surrender all that we have gathered and cultivated through the centuries.” Theron spoke.

Martin’s jaw tightened at this news. “Do you have any proof?”

Theron shook his head. “Whispered rumors from the dark corners of Sparta, nothing more.”

“And you can’t initiate a full investigation I take it?” Martin asked.

“Not without proof of some sort. If I did... the Senate members that I still hold sway over will abandon me in a heartbeat. Even some of them question whether Leonidas’s descendant will actually come.” Theron spoke.

“So if I do go some of them still won’t believe who I am?” Martin said.

“Not until you are tested.” Theron replied. “And you can not be tested until you have had at least two or three months in Sparta to study and train.”

“Tested how?”

“I will not reveal that now.” Theron spoke. “And do not ask me about it. If the line of Euryptiods learned you existed and were in Sparta, they would demand a test immediately and do everything within their power to insure you failed. Even by having you killed. It must be done this way.”

“But Yuri already knows who I am.” Martin spoke. “If what you say is true... wouldn’t she pass this information along to this Autolycus person?”

“That is a risk we will have to take.” Theron replied. “Though interfering that much into our affairs would undoubtedly turn many of the supporters of the Euryptiods line against them. We...”

The panel on the table began beeping and Martin reached out to touch it. “Hunter.” He barked looking at the screen.

“My King... My King we are receiving a uncoded transmission from an Alliance repeater station asking to speak with you. By name.” The elf operator on the screen spoke, clearly shaken at this news.

Martin let the small smile play across his lips. “Put it through.” He spoke.

“Sire?” The elf was taken aback.

Martin nodded. “Put it through. They are calling to gloat. I intend to let them. Transfer it here on a narrow beam so they can only see me.”

“Yes... yes my lord.”

Walter looked at him. “Martin what are you up to?” He asked.

“I’m taking out an insurance policy.” Martin replied. “I hope.”

The screen flickered for a moment and then cleared as the image of Yuri appeared. Martin looked at her, remembering her beauty... and now her betrayal. Dysea, Anja and Aricia looked at the screen and saw Yuri’s face as well as her drop dead gorgeous figure. They each thought the same thing and glanced at one another.

“Martin!” Yuri exclaimed with a brilliant smile. She wore a light terry cloth robe and stood in her office in New Miami, the ocean behind her in the distance. “I must say Martin... you look just as delicious as I remember you.”

Martin got out of his chair and moved to stand at the end of the table, folding his arms across his chest. “I must grudgingly agree Yuri. You don’t look a day over... hell you don’t look a day over twenty-five hundred years old.”

Yuri smiled sweetly. “Ah... so you have discovered what I am then?”

“A back stabbing slut vampire bitch comes to mind right away.” Martin replied. “If you give me a moment I could come up with a lot more colorful metaphors.”

The eyes of everyone in the room went wide at his statement, and they all saw the twitch in Yuri’s lips. “Come now Martin... I was the best you ever had. Admit that.” She said with a smile.

Martin chuckled. “You aren’t even in the same league as what I got now Yuri.” He said.

“Oh... I suppose you mean the human bitch Anja... and the she elf Dysea.” Yuri spat. “You mean to tell me they give you more pleasure than I did. Come now Martin... why do you fool yourself?”

“Is that jealousy I detect Yuri?” Martin asked humor in his voice.

“Hardly. A human, regardless of what she is, and an elf?” Yuri boasted. “They could not possibly compare to me.”

“You’re right Yuri.” Martin said shaking his head. “I’m sorry... let me re-phrase that. They are a considerable step up in the world from you.”

Real anger flashed across Yuri's face now and her fists clenched. "Have you discovered who it is you really are Martin? Or is Walter... or Dymas... still keeping that information hidden from you even now?"

"Gee... does Thermopylae ring a bell? Or how bout the fact that my ancestor handed your brother his vampire ass before he died." Martin spoke. "And I intend to do the same thing if not more Yuri."

"How do you propose to do that Martin? I have taken EDEN from you." Yuri spoke confidently. "Your elf armies are no match for what I can array against you. Who will you turn to... that silly child Tarifa? Did you kill the Drow when you discovered what they were, as Leonidas would have done. They were some of my best work you know."

"Actually... Tari and the others gave me the information I needed to slaughter your big bad vampire boys. Quite easily I might add." Martin spoke.

"I'm surprised you didn't kill them on sight considering your blood line." Yuri spoke.

"To the best of my knowledge, Leonidas was famous for being able to adapt." Martin said. "I've just taken that to the next level."

"It is no matter." Yuri spoke. "I have EDEN."

"What you got is a hulk of a station that you will not be able to fully use unless you can find a Class Five Nuclear Reactor. And I know for a fact that even if your idiot tech boys can fix all the systems, without the reactor you might as well shit in your hands Yuri." Martin smiled. "You didn't learn everything about the station while you were there dear. And you damn sure didn't learn everything about me. So why don't you tell me what it is that you want Yuri... cause you caught me in the middle of an exceptionally pleasurable moment."

"I want your surrender of course." Yuri spoke confidently. "You underestimate what I am capable of. Surrender yourself to me and I will spare the lives of your friends."

Martin chuckled loudly and he met her eyes on the screen. "I got a counter offer for you." He spoke.

"And what might that be my dear Martin Leonidas?" She asked sweetly.

"It's simple really." Martin spoke standing straight up and lacing his hand sbehind his back. "Everything west of the Mississippi is mine, and everything east is yours. I'll even let you keep your slave island on the west coast. At least for now."

Yuri couldn't contain her laughter at this and her breasts shook as she laughed. When she finally looked at the screen again, she had to wipe away the tears. "Oh Martin, I see your sense of humor has remained. Very well... why should I agree to this Martin? Tell me please. I need another good laugh."

"You know what... I'll do you one better. I'll show you." Martin said reaching for the COM panel on the table. "Raptor Six this is Raptor One."

"Raptor Six go!"

"Master Chief... the vampire bitch doesn't believe me. Please fire one." Martin spoke.

"Firing One!"

The ocean scene in the monitor behind Yuri blossomed into a mushroom cloud, that appeared to be quite a distance off the coast. The sound however was very clear, a low rumble spread across the screen. They watched as she turned quickly to look out over the balcony behind her and she saw the mushroom cloud rapidly getting larger in the distance, reaching into the sky.

"What you just witnessed was the complete destruction of the Alliance's newest oil producing off shore rig with a 2 kiloton suitcase nuke." Martin spoke. "If I'm not mistaken... it cost you quite a bit of money to build. And it had some of your best oil people on it."

Yuri turned back to the monitor, her eyes turning to red orbs and her face twisted into a snarl. "There were two thousand people on that facility." She snarled.

"Two thousand one hundred and sixteen to be exact." Martin answered.

"You killed them." Yuri hissed.

Martin looked at the screen, not seeing the looks of disbelief from everyone behind him at the table. "Your agreement to my terms Yuri."

Yuri glared at him. "We can build more such facilities Martin!" She snapped. "We..."

"Raptor Six this is Raptor One. Fire Two."

"Raptor Six roger! Firing Two."

They saw Yuri flinch once more and the sound of breaking glass and concrete could be heard in the background as another mushroom cloud appeared in the background, this one much closer. The walls of where she was standing vibrated enough that they could be seen in the monitor.

“That was one of your wonderful little vampire schools in the Florida Keys Yuri. If my information is correct... six thousand of your newest blood suckers, and their handlers.” Martin spoke. “Another 2 kiloton suitcase nuke.”

Yuri looked at the monitor, her face a mask of savage rage, her eyes nearly glowing. “I will carve your heart from your chest and watch you die descendant of Leonidas!” She spat the words.

Martin glared at the screen. “Your agreement to my terms Yuri.” He said again. “My patience is growing thin.”

“Why you...”

“Raptor Six... this is Raptor One. Prepare to fire.”

“Wait!” Yuri snapped.

“Raptor Six standby.”

“What... what do you want?” Yuri asked, her rage seething.

“Like I said. Everything west of the Mississippi River is now mine. You can keep what you got. And for now the slave transfer island that used to be California. No Alliance aircraft will overfly my territory, and no Alliance unit larger than a platoon will cross the river into my... into Spartan territory. As of this moment, myself, Anja, Dysea, Walter, Tarifa and Aihola are off limits. If any one of them happens to stub a toe getting out of the shower and I discover it was due to the Alliance meddling, you will answer to me.”

“And what will you do Martin?” Yuri spat. “Attack me with your elf army? Elves are no match for a vampire.”

Martin smiled. “I beg to differ... but we won’t go into that now. Do you agree?”

“What happens if I don’t? What happens if I decide to come after you?” Yuri demanded.

“Then Yuri I will launch every nuke I have left in my inventory. All twenty-two of them. And they aren’t the small suitcase nukes I just used. They aren’t clean nukes Yuri. You’ll be able to go into the facility in Key West in about a week and pick up what’s left. If you don’t agree to my terms, then twenty-two of your cities will be obliterated from the face of this planet in a heartbeat, and the entire eastern seaboard will be uninhabitable for centuries.” Martin spoke. “Beginning with New Miami, and your lovely beach front property. And since I know for a fact you don’t have nuclear weapons, there isn’t a damn thing you can do about it.”

“You wouldn’t dare!” Yuri hissed.

“Wouldn’t I?” Martin said. “For someone who was banging me for almost two years, you didn’t learn a whole lot about me Yuri. As much as you like to think otherwise.”

“You would destroy millions of humans Martin.” Yuri snapped.

“I wouldn’t.” Martin spoke. “You would. Just think how it will go over with the humans when they discover you are a vampire and allowed millions of them to die because you don’t like me. Just think how it will sound when they discover that we... vampires and werewolves... have been at war for the better part of three millenia right under their noses. And for those who know what you are and work with you... fuck them. They deserve death.”

“Do you think me a fool?” Yuri said. “You will be consolidating your power, growing stronger.”

“As will you.” Martin said. “I have almost three million elves that now look to me for leadership. They were suppose to help mankind pull itself from the ashes, that is what Walter created them for. You twisted that Yuri and you turned them into slaves. Just as your kind made my people slaves so long ago. You twisted that and humans began to think they could take from them whatever they wanted. That ends today. I’m not strong enough to stop you completely... but one day I will be. And when that day comes... I’ll find you... and it will be me who rips the heart out of your chest. And then I’ll eat it while you watch you blood sucking vampire bitch. We are done talking... agree to my terms or I’ll launch right now and let the chips fall where they may.”

Yuri glared at him in the monitor. “Very well Martin Leonidas.” Yuri spoke. “You truly are the descendant of that hated man, for the Martin Hunter I knew would never have sacrificed so many.”

“Like I said Yuri. You don’t know me as well as you thought you did.” Martin spoke. “Don’t break the agreement Yuri... for if you do... I’ll bring fire down on you the likes of which your kind has never seen before. And I’ll finish the job my ancestor started.”

Martin punched the communications panel and the monitor went completely dark, plunging the room into silence. No one moved... no one spoke as Martin stood there, his head lowered.

“My King?” Theron finally spoke softly.

“This is bigger than just us.” Martin spoke softly. “This is bigger than we can imagine. There is far more to the hatred between our peoples than we know Theron.”

“What do you mean sire?”

Martin shook his head. “I don’t know.” Dysea sat in her chair small tears running down her cheeks at the words he had spoken. Anja and Aricia held her hands tightly. They watched him turn back to the table and touch the COM panel. “Master Chief?”

“I’m here Skipper.”

“Proceed to the rendezvous coordinates. You have your load out?”

“Roger Skipper. They weren’t too happy about it, but they finally saw the light.” Tony’s voice replied.

“Very well... I’ll meet you there.” Martin switched channels on the panel. “General Vengal? War Master Tareif?”

“We are here sire?” Vengal’s voice came over the intercom.

“Gentlemen... please inform this asshole Ambrose character he has exactly three days to free every slave, human or elf, within the city limits of Las Vegas and get out of our territory or I will personally come down there and rip his balls out through his nose. Your forces are in position?” Martin said.

“I am just finishing inspecting my lines sire.” Tareif answered. “I wanted to insure Aihola was recovering before I departed Eden.”

“Our combined forces are in position sire.” Vengal answered. “Once Tareif gets to his jump off point... we will be ready. If he does not meet with our requirements we will begin with our missile launchers and artillery and work our way into the center firing zone we have established. After that... we will send in our light armor and infantry with Raptor air support.”

“Good... stick with the plan we worked out Vengal. I don’t believe Tareif disagrees.” Martin said.

“On the contrary sire, it is a most impressive plan.” Tareif’s voice answered.

“I want Ambrose alive gentlemen.” Martin spoke. “If at all possible I want that slave trading perverted fucker alive.”

“We understand sire.”

“Contact me if you need anything else. Leonidas out.” Martin pressed the button on the panel and looked at it for a long moment, realizing he had just used the name Leonidas to refer to himself. Walter and Theorn had small smiles on their faces.

Martin finally looked up and met their eyes. “I’ve bought us a year. Maybe eighteen months.” He spoke softly. “After that... all bets are off.”

“Sire...”

Martin held up his hand. “I know what I am.” He spoke moving around the table toward Aricia. “I accept everything you have told me, it’s hard to deny it with what I feel running in my blood. It’s a gift... a gift I intend to use as my ancestor did.” He stopped behind where Aricia sat. “Let’s get one thing straight before this goes any further. I am not the King you both knew. I have his blood in my veins, I don’t doubt that, I revel in it actually. And in many ways I feel we are alike, but I am not him. I will do things how I see fit to do them, not according to dogmatic views of others far older than me, or what the two of you tell me Leonidas himself would have done. I will listen to your counsel, and most of the time I will probably take it, but there will be times I won’t.”

Theron rolled his eyes. “You are already more like him than you think.” He spoke softly, eliciting smiles from those in the room. “He was just as obstinate as it appears you are.”

Martin grinned. “One week. We’ll leave in one week, and return to Sparta. That will give me enough time to set things in motion here and to share my plans with those that need to know.”

“And Yuri?” Theron asked.

“Yuri will not break the agreement she has made.” Martin spoke.

“How do you know that sire?” Theron asked. “She has been a thorn in our side for centuries.”

Martin nodded. “Yes I’m sure she has. She also isn’t stupid. She knows full well I will do exactly as I say I will. She learned enough about me in those two years to know that.”

“You... you don’t have these nuclear weapons do you?” Walter asked.

Martin met his eyes. “Yes I do.” He replied. “And I will use them if I have too, make no mistake about that.”

“There is something else you aren’t telling us sire.” Theron said getting to his feet.

Martin nodded. “It is not something that is either important or relevant at this moment. One week gentlemen. I have some things to do before we leave, and I need to get started on them.”

Martin turned and headed out of the room leaving them sitting at the table.

“How can he be so sure she won’t break the agreement?” Thr’won asked. “She’s a vampire Priestess.”

Theron was looking at Anja intently as she toyed with the coffee mug in her hand. “He’s sure.” She said getting to her feet with Dysea and Aricia. All of them with a smile on their faces. “She’s in love with him.”

This pronouncement caused Thr’won, Walter and Theorn to look at her as if she was mad. She smiled as the three of them followed Martin out of the room. Walter looked at Theorn. “Is she serious?” He asked. “Were you able to detect anything from them?”

“I...” Theorn began to speak.

“No he wasn’t.” Anja’s voice replied to the question, causing them to look back at the door.

Anja stood there with Dysea and Aricia on either side of her, all of their faces very stern looking and not quite friendly.

“I will say this once... and only once.” Anja spoke. “Our surface thoughts are open for anyone to sense, that is part of being telepathic it seems. However... beyond that... our thoughts... and those of the man the three of us love, belong to us. Do what you just attempted against Theorn... and you will spend the remainder of your days in a coma from which you will never wake up. Do I make myself clear?”

Theron met her jade green eyes. “As you order my Queen.”

“Then we will not speak about this again.” Anja said and the three of them turned and left the room again.

Thr’won turned to look at him. “Theron?” She gasped.

“I... I tried to probe them.” He spoke taking deep breaths. “I will not attempt that ever again I assure you.”

“I told you!” Thr’won hissed. “I told you they have more power than anything we have ever seen! And now that Aricia has joined that connection it is even stronger.”

“Yes I’m well aware of that now.” Theorn said. “I won’t question your counsel again old friend. I...” Theron felt the gentle tapping on his mental shields, and with great care he lowered them expecting the worst.

Theron? Anja’s voice came to him soft and gentle.

My... My Queen? He noticed that it was just the two of them in the connection, and Anja had erected very strong barriers around them.

This is all very new to us Theron. She spoke. I do not wish to be enemies, it seems we have enough of those already. We will share anything you like unless it invades our privacy. All you need do is ask. You must understand however, that we are not like what you are used to, and we will protect each other, lethally if we have to.

I’m beginning to see that my Queen.

We want to learn all we can Theron. About our people. Our history. Dysea and myself especially. They are our people now aren’t they?

Theron smiled. *Indeed they are My Queen.*

We lack the education that Aricia has in that respect. Will you help us?

Theron felt a surge of pride in his chest. *It would be a distinct honor Milady.*

Would you establish a regime of schooling for Dysea and I when we get to Sparta? We will do whatever you feel is necessary. If we are to understand our roles, we need to understand who we are.

That is something I would be glad to do Milady. I thank you for your trust in me. He said.

Martin trusts you Theorn. And if he trusts you... then we trust you as well. Anja spoke.

Theron nodded. *That statement means more to me than you know My Queen. I will begin establishing a schooling regime today using the data banks in our ship. It will give you a small sample of what to expect when you reach Sparta.*

Thank you Theron. I will see you when we return.

Theorn blinked and the connection was gone. He looked at Walter and Thr'won slowly, a smile spreading across his face. "My friends we have work to do."

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

NEW MIAMI

Two days later

The body of the Alliance communications officer slammed against the wall with a resounding crunch as his back snapped and popped in several locations. His body slid to the floor, his eyes open in death, blood leaking from between his lips.

"I will kill that vile fucking werewolf bastard!" Yuri screamed as she stepped back from the body of the communications operator. "I will peel the skin from his bones and drink his blood as it spills to the floor! Then I will heal him, and do it all over again, and I will continue to do it until he is begging me for death!"

"That is not something I think he will do." The Colonel spoke from behind her.

Yuri whirled on him. "Do not anger me Robert! You are not above my wrath!"

"I'm also the only one who can get your vampire blood to sizzling." He spoke. "Kill me... but I'll be hard to replace."

"You think very highly of your skills Robert!" Yuri spoke, her eyes still smoldering orbs of red, "Perhaps too highly."

The Colonel shrugged. "I just listen to the sounds you make when I'm pile driving your tight ass. They're quite delightful. Unless of course you are just faking them, in which case you can just kill me now. That would be too much for my ego to take."

Yuri glared at him, the three others in the room gawking as if the Colonel had lost his mind. No one had ever talked to her that way, and survived anyway. Yuri eyes began to relax and they returned to her normal dark color as a smile crossed her face. "Ah Robert... you do know how to defuse a situation." She spoke with a gentler tone now.

"I have the preliminary reports, but you have to promise not to kill any more officers." He said. "You're killing vampires that take time and effort to train Yuri. I'll bring in some elf slaves if you feel the need to kill something, just not our officer corp."

"Very well," She spoke. "I believe I have vented most of my anger, for now." She moved to the table and settled into the chair.

"Well it ain't good, I'll warn you before hand." The Colonel spoke. He touched the panel on the table and the monitor on the wall came to life. It showed the twisted remains of what was once a large super oil platform twenty miles off the coast of Florida. "It was a clean nuke like he said, no radiation, but there's nothing left to even set down with a transport. I have one of our coastal patrol boats enroute, but they won't find anything."

"What about the training facility and students?" Yuri asked, her anger still there but simmering now.

"Totally destroyed," He adjusted the picture and what appeared was an aerial view of a large crater in the ground and everything within half a mile it seemed was flattened and scorched. No buildings were left standing, and no vegetation lived.

"What are the losses?" She asked.

"Six thousand four hundred at the school; twenty-two hundred at the oil platform," Robert Moran replied. "None of them have families so they won't be missed."

"The oil will!" Yuri snapped.

Moran nodded. "We can make it up from other facilities until the other platforms come online."

"And when is that?" Yuri asked.

"The second of the super platforms is scheduled to begin production in three months." The new voice spoke.

Yuri and Moran turned to see Deval walk into the room, several data pads in his hand.

“Perhaps Minister you could explain to me how they got a nuclear weapon onto our platform?” Yuri spoke taking the glass of deep red liquid that Moran handed to her.

“Our security was top of the line Mistress.” Deval spoke as he settled into the chair and took the second glass Moran offered. “In truth I do not know.”

“Hunter and his bunch were Navy SEALs, remember that.” Moran spoke. “They could take down oil platforms like ours in their sleep. Not to mention that wolves would not register on any of our motion sensors or infra red scanner. They were all tuned to human and elf signatures. Somehow they got on the platform and disabled the security console in the lower level before setting the nuke.”

“So you are saying they swam there, changed into wolves to board so they wouldn’t set off the sensors, made their way to the control room, disabled the security systems and then got off without being seen?” Deval asked skeptically.

Moran nodded. “That’s exactly what I’m saying. You forget Minister... I was around back when Hunter and his team were the crème de la crème, before the comet. They never failed to accomplish a mission. Not one. They could swim the twenty miles to the platform, set the nuke and be back in time for dinner.”

“We can dispense with the name Hunter as well.” Yuri spoke. “He obviously knows who he is, and the fact that Wallace was able to get off the station in time means that he knows who Martin is. Wallace would never have left that station for us if Martin had not ordered him too.”

“Why not simply launch a full scale invasion of the elf territories now?” Deval asked. “We are bound to run across the city he is supposedly building.”

“If only it were that simple.” Yuri spoke.

“What do you mean?”

“He will do exactly as he said he would Deval.” Yuri replied as she sipped the glass of blood. She looked at Moran. “This is excellent Robert, thank you.” Yuri stood up and went to the window. “No... Martin Leonidas will most definitely launch the missiles he says he has. And in the process he will kill thousands of our kind, and if he wipes out thousands of civilians to do it, it will not matter to him.”

“Let’s pull our people out of the cities then.” Deval spoke. “Establish the schools elsewhere away from the population centers.”

“It won’t matter.” Yuri said softly.

“Why not?”

“Robert, would you be so kind as to explain to Deval what I’m talking about?” Yuri said.

Moran looked at Deval. “Radiation,” He said. “Specifically Neutron radiation, the same type of radiation found in most of the atomic weapons of the late 21st century. This type of radiation will kill one of us almost instantly. Next to the sun... it is the deadliest weapon that can be used against us, because in effect the sun is a neutron radiation generator. It can lay dormant in the soil, on vegetation, sometimes even in enclosed spaces with no air circulation. Enough molecules of it will dissolve us from the inside out within seconds, even decades later.”

“And Hunter knows this?” Deval asked.

“His name is not Hunter.” Yuri spoke. “His name is Leonidas.”

Moran nodded. “He knows... that is why he threatened to launch the missiles.”

“Do we know if he really has these weapons?” Deval asked. “I was under the impression that nuclear power, with the exception of our reactors, was destroyed long ago.”

“The weapons were; those that were left here on the planet after the comet.” Yuri answered. “Our people destroyed them worldwide.”

“Then how did Hunter... how did Leonidas get them?” Deval asked.

“EDEN.” Yuri replied quickly. “They had a stockpile of five 2 kiloton tactical nuclear weapons, and exactly twenty-two RNEP or Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrators. At the time it was the most advanced nuclear missile in the world. It would appear it still is.” She spoke dryly. “He must have brought them with him when he returned to earth.”

“So they are at this city of his then?” Deval asked.

Yuri laughed. “Minister Deval we are not getting through to you. Do you think the descendant of Leonidas would store such weapons within the city he is building? Do you think him such a fool?”

“Forgive me Mistress.” Deval spoke. “It has been several hundred years since I studied my scrolls.”

Yuri shook her head. “No... he has these weapons and they are stored somewhere in the area he has told us we can not go.”

“That’s a big area Yuri.” Moran answered. “And we got word of a massive troop movement of elves and humans headed for Las Vegas two days ago, right after the attacks. Ambrose is screaming for help.”

“Let him scream.” Yuri spat. “I loathe that fool. Whoever turned him should be shot.”

“Well... do we still support Telan’s father? Telan has gone underground, and his father is claiming he has gone rogue. He’s basically tossed him to the wolves. Martin will find him... and I doubt he’ll live very long after he does.”

“If it does not put us a risk...yes,” Yuri answered. “Telan’s father might still be of use.”

“If the agents we still have in the area are right, Ambrose won’t stand a chance. Martin has MLRS support, artillery, air support, and a whole hell of a lot of elves.” Moran spoke.

“You think highly of the elves Robert.” Yuri said. “Why is that?”

“I think highly of any enemy that is well trained and fearless.” Moran replied. “You forget Yuri... Walter made the elves, and Walter is a Spartan first and foremost. All of them have that sense of duty and honor ingrained in them. And it appears Martin has at least for now, united the High Elves and the Wood Elves even with our efforts against him. That gives him a sizeable force right out of the gate.”

Yuri nodded. “Indeed it does.” She agreed. “Our equipment is superior though, and our people are far stronger than any single elf.”

Moran nodded. “I’m just saying we shouldn’t underestimate them. And if he has taken on the role of Elf High King... it makes them that much more dangerous.”

Yuri stepped up to him, drawing her hand across his chest seductively. “Robert... you impress me more and more.” She spoke, “And not just with the size of your cock.”

Moran smiled and shrugged his shoulders. “I do try.”

“Are we to do nothing?” Deval asked.

Yuri returned to the chair she had occupied earlier. “Direct all our immediate resources to repairing the systems on EDEN and finding a Class Five Nuclear Reactor. If we have that station and its weapons grid we can nullify Martin’s missile threat. EDEN had a very powerful automatic laser cannon array, and if we can repair it that solves our problem.”

“I assume it won’t work without the reactor?” Moran asked.

“Unfortunately no. We can repair many if not all of the major systems, but the weapons grid and productions facilities need the reactor.” Yuri spoke. “Reach out to our people across the planet and have them begin to search every known location of a nuclear reactor, every missile factory, every power plant. There has to be one out there somewhere.”

“What about Ambrose?” Moran asked.

Yuri looked at him. “Fuck him!”

LAS VEGAS

The place once known as the City of Sin was now a smoking ruin. What the passing of the comet had not destroyed nearly five hundred years earlier, the might of elves and men had obliterated in only two days. There was not single building standing above three stories. All of the once grand hotels that housed the Alliance slave traders and other wealthy buyers of slavers from across the world were shattered remains. General Vengal and War Master Tareif had walked their artillery fire in from three different directions while an entire squadron of Raptors under Ben’s command flew close air support for an entire day, emptying their full payloads upon the city and then returning to reload. The combined bombardment from the MLRS batteries and the self propelled 200mm cannons under the command of the two elf Generals was devastating to say the least.

The gang members and slaver mercenaries within the city limits numbered close to ten thousand, the slaves, elf and human alike and the civilians closer to thirty. The night prior to the attack beginning a force of a thousand elves and humans, hand picked and trained by the remaining Shifters under Martin had infiltrated the city. For seven hours, this force had one task. Bring out any who did not want to die, and every slave they could

find. The tunnels and sewers that Danny and Radama had used only the month before were filled to overflowing with those that escaped.

The slavers for the most part did not think Martin would attack, or at the very least thought the Alliance would send help. They were wrong. Almost to a man, none of them had ever been on the receiving end of heavy artillery fire, the constant boom of the explosions, the whistling of shrapnel as it whizzed through the air, the shaking of the earth beneath their feet, vibrating through their bones. To the untried or untested one hour of this maddening pounding was bearable, two hours brought forth the fear, after three hours you found yourself going mad, and after four hours of constant shelling, you were mind numb, and therefore very dead.

When the shelling ceased in the early morning hours of the second day, the slavers and mercenaries who had survived rose up out of their holes, their faces slackened by fear and the constant threat of death, only to see the equivalent of two divisions of troops, elf and human, spearheaded by Scorpion Tanks advancing on the city.

Many threw down their weapons and surrendered in the face of such force, walking toward the lines of troops and tanks with their hands held high.

They were shot where they stood.

The order had gone out already; direct from Martin's lips. Direct from the mouth of their High King. Surrender terms had been offered long ago and refused. It would not be offered again. There were no prisoners taken.

What had been the talk of the encampment from the troops since the beginnings of the battle were the actions of Martin and his Spartan Royal Guard. Word had spread that these strange men and women in black body armor with flowing crimson cloaks were Martin's people, and that he was their King as well, which made Dysea and Anja and the exotic looking female their Queens. The elves also learned that they were descended from these same people, for they were who the Holy One used as templates for the elves. And the Spartans treated the elves with respect and honor, and even had a female elf among their ranks. Martin and these Spartans did not sit in the rear when the ground troops advanced. They were on the front line, elves and humans to their flanks as they advanced across the blackened landscape to commence the final clearing of the city. There were brief but vicious firefights, the slavers and mercenaries realizing that they were not being allowed to surrender, fighting to the death. They had no other recourse.

Street to street, destroyed building to destroyed building, the battle raged for eight hours, pockets of weapons fire, and the often chainsaw like sound of the Spartan P190s echoing across the devastated city.

After eight hours the city fell silent, the silence broken only by the occasional gunshot that ended the life of some would be mercenary or slaver.

Tarifa and Aihola stood with Lynwe and Anja outside the large tent that was being used as the trauma center for the injured. There were not many elves or humans who crossed through the tent flaps, and most of Anja's work had been on the slaves and humans freed from Las Vegas. Anja's two Spartan guards stood ever alert close by, always within arm's reach of her, while Tarifa and Aihola had a mix of Drow and High Elf security, all equally alert and intent on the protection of their Queens.

Tarifa and Aihola were dusty, their uniforms stained with soot. They had been among the first to enter the city, albeit under heavy guard. A group of slavers had come running around a corner and were cut down before Tarifa and Aihola had a chance to even raise their weapons. They had looked at each other knowingly and allowed the rest of the troops to form and move around them; while they drifted back out of the battle. Tarifa did not doubt that her father had ordered the Dragoons to protect her and Aihola at any cost.

They all turned when the Raptor swooped in low over the tent, and flared once before settling to the ground. Tarifa looked at Anja.

"This will be the three Kings and their entourages." She spoke quickly. "My mother and grandmother were able to contact them via messenger. They initially refused to come, not believing that the High King had returned."

Anja looked at her. "What made them change their minds?"

Tarifa smiled. "I had my mother tell them that if they didn't, whatever support they received from my people would stop immediately, and I would send my father to negotiate a new trade agreement." Tarifa looked at Aihola and chuckled. "It is well known that my father hates politicians and his only form of negotiation is from the barrel of a weapon."

Anja couldn't help but smile herself and she shook her head. "I see why Martin was first attracted to you Tarifa." She said. "You have audacity."

Tarifa looked at her, reaching out to take her hand. "Anja... you have Martin's heart and soul now; You, Dysea and this Spartan woman. Do not doubt that."

Anja nodded and squeezed her hand in return. "I know that... but it does not mean I can't appreciate a woman who is now like a sister to him; a woman with brains and courage." She said.

Tarifa smiled. "I see that Dysea's constant influence has improved your speech, as it did Martin's."

Anja laughed and nodded her head. "I suppose it has." She replied.

They turned as the group of Dragoons escorted the entourage of elves over to where they stood. Anja knew right away who the Kings were; they carried themselves with an arrogance that she had not seen in Tarifa or Dysea. She also knew right away Martin would not approve of them. She saw Tarifa stiffen in the growing light, noticing their behavior as well.

"Tarifa what is the meaning of this!" The closest King began before they had come to a complete stop. He was of medium height and with long dark hair, gray just touching his temples.

Anja saw that the other two Kings were going to allow this one to be the spokesperson, as they appeared younger in age. There were a dozen members of their respective entourages, all of them with an air of superiority that Anja found distasteful.

"You threaten to unleash your father on us! Threaten to end decades of established trade agreements. You demand we come here to see this supposed High King!" The elf continued. "I do not respond well to threats young Queen of the High Elves. And now I see you stand beside a Drow as well! I should have known their vile kind would be involved in all this! You..."

Aihola held up her hand quickly, stopping Lynwe from stomping on the smaller elf King. "No Lynwe." She spoke softly. "Words are needed here, not violence."

"He demeans you Aihola, in front of others!" Lynwe snapped. "I would have his head for such statements."

Aihola looked at her, "Perhaps later my friend." She spoke with a smile. The elf Kings and their entourages heard this, as well as the chuckles of the other Drow and the Dragoons all around them.

"Do you consort with the enemy now Tarifa of the High Elves." The first King spoke again.

"My mother always told me you were arrogant Thresian, you only reinforce her words. Now shut up you blithering idiot!" Tarifa barked. "You stand in the presence of one of the High Queens you fool! Quiet your foul tongue or I will have it removed!"

The elf glared at her. "How dare you speak to me in such a way! Your people may be more powerful than mine Tarifa, but you have no right to speak to me this way. Where is this Queen you speak of? Where is this supposed High King?"

Tarifa glanced over at Anja, who by now had leaned up against the pole of the tent entrance with an amused expression on her face, her arms folded across her chest. She raised her hand and waved.

"Hi there," Anja spoke. "I guess that would be me."

Thresian turned back to Tarifa with a look of horror on his face. "What blasphemy is this Tarifa? She is... she is a human. You consort with humans and Drow Tarifa? I expected so much more from you when you made your play for power. Do you think I am a fool?"

"Actually... yes I do." Tarifa spoke, turning to Aihola and taking her hand. "This is Aihola of the Family Anatyla, she is my friend, my confidant and my lover you moron, and a far better lover than I expect you will ever be for a female considering your pompous self righteousness. She is also the Queen of the Drow, and you will speak to her with the same respect you speak to me, or I will allow Lynwe to do what it is she so desires to do for your attitude and words towards her Queen."

Thresian's eyes were wide as Tarifa finished speaking. "The... the Drow have not had a Queen for over a hundred years!" He gasped. "There... there are barely any that remain."

Aihola smiled sweetly, but her amber eyes burned. "We escaped from the Alliance some time ago, fully three hundred strong. And the word is already going out that the Drow once more live, and as my mother bore the role of Queen before her death, I will do so now, as my High King has directed me." She spoke in an even voice, the calm of her tone betraying the anger in her eyes. "As for my relationship with Tarifa..." She turned to look at her and with a fierceness that shocked the Kings and their entourage they kissed passionately for a brief

moment. Then Aihola turned back to Thresian. “That is our business... though I do tend to agree with her assessment of you. I pity your mate if you have one.”

“I will not stand here and listen to these insults!” Thresian bellowed. “I will...”

“Sit down and shut the fuck up! Or I’ll have you shot.” The deep voice spoke from behind them.

The Kings and their entourages spun around and the intake of breath was audible in the still air. Martin stood in backdrop of the sun gathering over his shoulder as it climbed into the sky. His body armor was dusty and sweaty, blood staining his face where a piece of shrapnel from a grenade had nicked his cheek. He supported Ealin under one shoulder, who was limping severely. Dysea and the exotic looking beauty walked beside him on one side, while almost twenty of the strange humans in black body armor and crimson cloaks were alertly spread out. One of them supported Ealin under his other arm, and he was carrying both their weapons.

Anja saw this and came forward quickly calling for a medic from within the tent, “Ealin.” She spoke his name. Two of her medics appeared almost magically carrying a stretcher.

Anja pulled the stretcher over to where he was as the human and an elf held it steady. Ealin grinned as he sat down on the stretcher. “I zigged when I should have zagged my Queen.” He spoke with a grin.

“Perhaps next time Ealin my friend,” Andreus spoke as he handed him his weapon. There was a great deal of humor in his voice. “You will heed my warning to fucking duck.”

Ealin laughed as well and nodded his head. “Yes I will Andreus! Yes I will.”

Anja looked at the elf who had brought the stretcher out. “Take him to table four. Tell Oplea it appears to be a lower fracture with small lacerations. She will know what to do.”

The elf nodded and they began carrying Ealin into the tent. Anja turned to Martin, who lowered his head next to her neck and inhaled deeply. Anja’s eyes closed in dreaminess as he nuzzled her neck.

“Hi.” He spoke into her ear in a whisper.

Anja got control of her senses and looked at him. She saw the small cut on his cheek. “The same grenade?” She asked.

Martin shrugged. “It was a powerful grenade.” He replied as low laughter could be heard among the elves and Spartans with him.

Anja nodded. “Uh-uh.” She spoke. “Did Andreus tell you to duck as well?”

“In much stronger terms my Queen.” Andreus said with a smile.

Anja laughed. “I bet.” She turned his face to either side and then stepped back from him. “You’ll live. And I’ll let you bleed for a while longer as punishment for being so reckless.”

Anja kissed him quickly before moving to where Dysea and Aricia stood and stepping between them as they leaned over to nuzzle her in the same fashion Martin had.

Andreus felt movement to his left and turned his head to see his second step close to him. “Captain?” he whispered.

“Speak your mind Dekton.” Andreus said equally in a whisper.

“These are our Queens Andreus?”

“They are.”

The young Spartan smiled. “Your sister and the she elf fight like demons, and the flame haired one carries the attitude of a Pureblood Spartan woman.”

Andreus smiled. “Amazing isn’t it.” He said.

“It is the work of the gods if you ask me.” Dekton said.

“You may be right my friend. You may be right.”

Martin turned to look at Tarifa and Aihola with a smile. He stepped up to them, taking Tarifa’s hand as he lowered his head to touch Aihola’s forehead. “It is good to see you on your feet again Little Drow.” He spoke softly.

“I have you to thank for that my King.” Aihola replied.

Martin shook his head. “I believe that honor goes to Tarifa. But I’ll gladly take the credit if she doesn’t.” He joked.

Tarifa and Aihola laughed softly as did Lynwe and the others nearby. Martin turned and looked at Thresian and the others. “These are...”

Tarifa nodded, “King Thresian of the Northern Elves; King Anotan of the Moon Elves and King Knon of the Cave Elves.” She spoke, “Just as you requested sire.”

Martin looked at her. “Tarifa... I have told you...” He saw the set of her jaw and shook his head. “Jeez... elf women are just as stubborn as human women.” He muttered causing Tarifa and Aihola to smirk at him. He turned back to the three Kings. “Did you bring your little gizmos?” He asked, “The DNA encoders?” Three elves stepped forward and handed them to their respective Kings. Martin waved them forward. “Come on, before I bleed out all over the ground.”

The three Kings just stood there in silence. Martin held out his hand to Knon who was closest to him. The elf King handed him the encoder and Martin brought it to his face to dab the narrow end against his bloody cheek. He handed it back and did the same with the other two before wiping his cheek free of the old blood. He took a small spray bottle from a pouch on his belt and squirted it onto his cheek. The three Kings stood there in shock as the skin immediately closed the small wound right before their eyes.

Martin looked at them. “Ok... what’s the verdict?” He asked.

The three elf Kings stood shoulder to shoulder now as they activated their individual DNA encoders. The small boxy devices narrowed at one end and held the sample of the Elf High King DNA in the broader portion. There were three lights on the device and in seconds they were all blinking green. This caused the faces of the three Elf Kings to look up at Martin their eyes wide.

“You... you are...” Thresian stammered.

“The High King,” Anotan spoke in awe.

Martin shook his head. “Shit... I was hoping maybe that wasn’t the case.”

Dysea stepped up to him and slugged him in the arm. “*Nauta Melme* stop it!” She scolded him.

Thresian turned his head to look at Anja, who was standing next to Aricia, their bodies touching. He was the first to drop to one knee, his arrogance completely gone. The others quickly followed suit. “Forgive me my Queen! My King! I... I...” He nearly shouted.

“Are a King of elves, so get off your damn knees man!” Martin snapped. “All of you!”

Their heads came up at his words, and they quickly regained their feet looking at him. “Sire... you... you are the Elf High King!” Thresian stammered. “There can be no mistake. You lead us all. We must submit to your will. We...”

“Will continue to lead your people as you have all these years,” Martin interrupted him. “You will find I am not what many of you expected. I will not dictate to you what to do, or how to do it. You have led your respective people for a reason. They thought you wise enough to lead them. I have no intention of changing that. My only goal is to unite the elves under one banner, and to free them of slavery across this planet. We have started that here, and I wish you to join with us. The High Elves, The Wood Elves, the Drow... you are all one people, though differences you may have.”

“Sire... you are not elf.” Knon spoke.

Martin shook his head. “No... would you like me to stretch my ears? I always wondered what I would look like.” He said with a smile.

The expression on his face caused all three Kings to burst out laughing. They did not see Martin extend his hand behind him, nor did they see Andreus drop the collapsible titanium spear into his palm.

“The man you know as the Holy One... he used my DNA to create the Elf High King. Like you... I am not completely human. And like you I abhor the slavery the Alliance has brought to this planet.” Martin said. “I intend to begin changing that... and this city was the first step. What I want is your help. Your peoples may not be large in number, but you are elves, and that is what matters.”

Anotan nodded and bowed his head. “My people are yours to command sire.”

“As are mine.” Thresian spoke.

“Mine as well.” Knon spoke last.

Martin smiled. “You will command them... as you do now. We’ll just be more of a family.” He said. “There is one thing you should know about me up front though.”

“Sire?” Thresian asked. “What is that?”

Martin held up his hand and depressed the trigger for the spear. In the blink of an eye the matte black shaft extended to its full eight feet and the titanium shone in the rising sunlight. The eyes of the three elf Kings went wide at this and they stepped back.

Martin looked at them, his eyes now yellow orbs, and his teeth in full extension. “I fucking hate vampires!” He growled.

Martin took one step and plunged the spear through the chest of Thresian’s chief aid, blood exploding out the back of the elf as the spear head burst from his flesh covered in gore and skin, his eyes going wide. However his eyes were no longer the eyes of an elf, but the eyes of a vampire, dark and unfeeling. His mouth opened to scream and his fangs were clearly visible.

Martin stepped up to the dying vampire, his skin beginning to smoke as the sun grew higher. “How’s that feel blood sucker!” Martin growled, twisting the spear viciously in his hand. “Bet you didn’t think the sun would hurt you huh? Your masters forgot to tell you that it only works if you are not injured. Your kind really is stupid as rocks!”

Martin ripped the spear from the vampire, more blood and gore splashing on the ground as it pulled flesh and parts of internal organs out the way it had gone in. The vampire elf staggered back, holding his chest, his entire body beginning to smoke now. A small fire burst out on his arm and he began to scream in a higher pitch.

“Andreus!” Martin spoke.

“Sire?”

Martin looked at the bloody spear with a vicious smile. “I like this thing. I want one!” He said. Andreus couldn’t help the smile that crossed his face.

“I believe we can arrange that Milord.” He replied.

“Good. Now shoot that blood sucking shit bird and stop his screaming.” Martin growled.

Andreus stepped forward, his P190 coming up in a smooth fast motion and he fired a perfect three round burst into the head of the vampire, his peeling facial skin and head exploding from the force of the bullets. In seconds all that remained of him was decayed flesh and exposed bone.

No one in the entourage moved as the Spartans, Dragoons and other elves pressed closer.

Martin looked at them. “Gentlemen... welcome to the real world.” He spoke.

EDEN (Formerly Junction City)

Julie felt the sun rising, casting warmth through the window as she allowed her fingers to slowly caress the smooth fleshy surface of the appendage currently laying across her chest, the tip just touching the nipple of her left breast. The appendage was tapered at the end, no larger in circumference than a nickel, but it quickly expanded to nearly five inches in circumference and was smooth and warm to the touch and charcoal gray in color. The appendage extended down between her breasts, across her flat stomach and out of sight under the sheets. Julie snuggled back against the hard and very warm body, relishing in the feel of the skin against hers. Her hand wrapped tightly around the appendage as she shifted, not wanting to release it from touching her skin.

“Don’t do that.” Tari’s voice echoed in her ear as he shifted and put his lips next to her ear.

Julie smiled. “Why?”

“Because it tickles,” His raspy voice told her, as his tongue flicked out to tickle her ear.

“It didn’t seem to bother you last night.” She told him, basking in the attention his tongue was giving her.

“Well... it was involved in much more pleasant activities at the time.” He answered.

Julie watched as the appendage slid down her chest and out of sight under the thin sheet. “Tari... don’t you dare.” She spoke.

“You didn’t complain last night.” He told her in her ear.

Julie’s eyes closed in bliss as the appendage gently caressed her pleasantly sore pussy and her thighs quivered. With a burst of strength, she rolled over on top of him quickly, spreading her body out on top of his lean muscular form. She covered his lips with her own and kissed him deeply, her tongue dancing across his lips and tangling with his as his arms slid around her waist.

“You are a bad man.” Julie whispered to him with a smile when she broke the kiss.

“Is that a good thing, or a bad thing?” He asked with a grin, his amber eyes bright and clear.

“As far as I’m concerned that’s a very good thing.” Julie answered.

And Julie meant that in every sense of the word, as the memories of last night flooded into her mind.

(Eight hours earlier)

Julie had asked Martin if she and Tari could skip the operation in Las Vegas as a personal favor to her. It was a silly request, as she knew Martin had already excluded her from the attack plan. They had been together since childhood, and while their skin color was different, Martin knew what she wanted and needed almost like a brother would, and had removed her from the plan even before she thought to ask.

Julie had been attracted to Tari since the first day they had come to Eden. He was tall, lean and muscular, just as she liked her men. His white hair and amber eyes caused her knees to go weak every time she found his eyes on her. The interest was there, that she had no doubts of, but he had always held back, never letting it advance to the point of physical contact. It was almost like it frightened him. Julie knew she wanted him, and it appeared she would have to be the one to initiate that. She had come to his apartment in Eden the night before with a bottle of wine, feeling silly. This was supposed to be the man's job, not the woman's, yet Tari had a pull on her that Julie had never felt before. She assumed he was just unfamiliar with the dating practice and did not know how to proceed.

His apartment was on the fourth floor of one of the new buildings in downtown Eden, and as she reached up to knock on the door, she discovered it was open a crack already. Tari was a Drow elf, and half vampire at that, and more than capable of taking care of himself. Julie had pushed the door open and entered the apartment, closing and locking the door behind her. The wolf in her was on the hunt, and she had no intention of leaving until she got what she wanted. His apartment was sparsely furnished, yet large. There were several holo photos of Aihola his sister, but not much else. She could hear the water running in the bathroom and with a sly seductive grin; Julie began stripping her clothes off as she ascended the stairs. She caught his scent then, the smell of rum and spice, and it tickled her nostrils, causing sweet sensations to ripple through her already aroused pussy.

Julie stalked down the short corridor, seeing the light coming from the bathroom. She didn't look into the dark bedroom as she passed and made her way to the open door, easing her head around the corner and seeing Tari standing in the steam of the shower. His lower body was obscured from view, but his hands were extended up on the wall, displaying his powerful back, and also the jagged scars that crisscrossed his skin. Julie had never seen these before and she winced, trying to imagine the pain they had caused. His white hair was shoulder length and plastered to his head but pulled back over his elf ears. Julie moved into the doorway and leaned against it striking a sexy pose as she saw him make to come out of the shower.

Tari stepped from the shower then and looked up, his amber eyes going wide at seeing her there. Julie's eyes were even wider though as she looked at him. The charcoal gray tail extended out from his tailbone nearly six feet in length and five inches around, tapering to the size of a nickel at the end. It danced through the air with a life of its own it seemed, the smooth flashy surface wet and glistening with water. Her eyes dropped to his crotch and she saw a very well endowed ten inches of Tari. His cockhead was large and normal, but the base of his cock was thicker and wider than the rest of him, almost as if it was an animal's cock.

"GET OUT!" His voice screamed, shocking her out of her trance like state, her dark eyes going back to his amber ones. Amber eyes that now held fury she had seen in only one other set of eyes before. Martin had killed twenty-three men that night in a fit of rage unlike anything she had ever seen over the loss of one of their own.

Julie bolted from the bathroom; tears bursting from her eyes as she ran down the hallway, attempting to pick up her clothes as she dashed for the door. She made it down the stairs to the door and had it open before he somehow caught her. His palm hit the door, slamming it shut and she felt his hands grab her shoulders sending tingles down her arms and spine.

"Don't go!" His voice came out in a hoarse whisper next to her ear. "Please... please don't go."

"God... what did... what did they do to you?" Julie sobbed as she leaned against the door.

"Julie... Julie I... I want you to look at me." He spoke softly.

"I'm sorry! I shouldn't have come!" Julie spoke quickly, not turning around. She felt his hands leave her skin and a deep sigh leave his lungs.

"Then go." He spoke, the pain in his voice very real and it cut through her like a knife.

“You should have told me!” Julie snapped.

“Told you what? That the Alliance made me a monster?” Tari spoke, his voice never rising in anger, only in resignation. “What I feel... what I feel for you I have never felt for anyone in my life. I never... I never thought I would be able to feel this after what they did to me. It was not something I wanted to give up so easily on. It was silly of me and I apologize.” Julie heard him take a deep breath. “Now you know. Now you can go.”

Julie felt him turn away from her, his rum and spice scent filling her senses, tickling her nose and driving her mad with desire. She turned around quickly and saw him moving down the corridor.

“Tari?”

He stopped in the hall, one hand holding the large towel around his waist, and she could almost feel the embarrassment and shame he felt wafting from his pores. She watched him take another deep breath, “Leave Julie.” He spoke softly. “It’s better this way.”

Julie used the shirt she held in her hands to wipe her eyes of tears as she stepped closer to him. “Does... does it hurt?” She asked him quietly.

Tari shook his head slowly. “No it does not hurt. It is a part of me, just as any arm or leg. I’ve actually gotten quite good at controlling it.” Julie heard him laugh softly. “They gave me vampire genes and an animal’s tail and cock. They didn’t think to alter my mind though. Not exactly what they were hoping for I’d say.” He turned slowly to look at her. “I butchered thirty-nine of them before I left with the others. Bled them dry like dogs with my teeth for what they did to me. What they took away from me.” Tari tilted his head with a sad smile. “Then I puked my guts out for the next two days.” He looked back to her. “Leave Julie... end this here, before it gets started. All I ask is that you say nothing of what you have seen. Only my sister knows, and that is how I would like to keep it.”

“Tari...”

“Julie... I have never experienced these feelings before; the feelings of emptiness and loneliness. I don’t like them, and I do not wish to experience them any longer than I have too. Please... go now.” He spoke.

“I don’t want to.” Julie spoke, allowing her heart to lead her wherever she was going with this.

“Julie... I’m a monster.” Tari spoke. “Do you understand that?”

“And I’m a werewolf.” Julie told him.

“That is not...” Tari’s eyes grew wide. “What did you say?”

“Martin did not tell you?” She asked moving closer to him.

“Tell me what?”

Julie smiled gently. He had known; somehow Martin had known what Tari was and he knew that allowing her to tell Tari would make it easier for both of them to accept each other. “I’m a werewolf Tari. Just like my brother Martin. Like Danny. Like the other Spartans.”

Tari looked at her, realization crossing his face. “But... but Martin... he is... he is the descendant of Leonidas; the Spartan King, the destroyer of vampires, of what I am. We... we are enemies.”

Julie stepped closer. “Do I look like an enemy to you?” She asked; her shock at seeing what Tari had beneath the towel was quickly passing and being replaced with desire. A desire that was sweeping through her more intense than anything she had ever felt. “And you are not fully vampire. Martin, me... the others... we never knew vampires existed until recently. We’ve never been raised like full Spartan children. We don’t have the same misgivings.”

“Julie... perhaps this is not such a good idea.” Tari spoke seeing the fire in her dark eyes beginning to ignite. “My... my equipment functions just like... if I make love to you we will... we will not be able to separate for several hours.”

Julie grinned, all hesitation gone from her body now, as the wolf in her blood began to assert itself. “I like the sound of that.” She spoke moving closer to him.

“Julie please...”

Julie stepped up to him, placing her hands on his still wet skin. She looked at him, her eyes turning to yellow orbs. “Tari... do you want me?” She asked in a low hungry voice, the voice of a female wolf about to claim her mate.

Tari looked down as Julie pulled the towel from him and his cock sprang to life, banging against her abdomen. “I do not think that is in doubt.” He spoke. “The better question is... do you know what you are doing? Once I start I will not stop until you are screaming my name.”

Julie pressed her naked body against his flesh and looked at him with a passion filled gaze. “Then you had better get started.” She spoke.

Julie gasped as suddenly she was in his arms and he pushed her back against the wall, his lips descending to cover hers and his tongue plundering, searching and taking all he wanted. Julie groaned in need herself, her pussy already very wet, and she ground her hips against him, feeling his cock grow and thicken even more.

Tari pulled back from her, his amber eyes wide with hunger and desire. “Julie... I... this first time will be rather fast.” He spoke, his chest heaving.

“God Tari... just fuck me will you.” Julie gasped, pulling his face to her and kissing him again.

Julie’s eyes went wide when she felt the flared head of his manhood press against her slick opening, parting her engorged labia. She gasped into their kiss, not in pain, but in unexplainable pleasure as Tari slid fully half his cock into her in one plunge. She felt him stretch her, fill her in a way no one ever had. He held her completely off the floor now, her legs wrapped around his waist and with a powerful stroke of his hips, he filled her completely. Julie’s head flew back banging against the wall, as Tari filled her with nearly fifteen inches of throbbing power and maleness. Her eyes were wide in unabashed bliss as her body responded immediately, her belly clenching, the fire exploding and then her come was erupting from her and she bit down hard on his shoulder, her fangs drawing blood from him.

Julie rode the power of her orgasm, feeling him stroking into her with long smooth thrusts, each time causing her to shudder in a mini orgasm as she felt his heavy balls slap against her ass cheeks. She saw stars behind her eyes, her wolf blood pounding in her ears, wanting more and needing more. Her hands pulled at the skin of his back urging him deeper into her, to claim what he wanted. Her yellow eyes caught sight of his tail as it rose behind him, she watched as it snaked its way around her waist, touching her skin and lighting more fires within her. She felt the tip of his tail drag down her lower back and delve between her ass cheeks, but she was powerless to stop him. She didn’t want him to stop. He couldn’t be doing this, not what he was planning, she...

Julie’s yellow eyes opened even wider as she felt the tip of Tari’s tail spread her virgin ass and slid inside her. She screamed as several inches followed the tip of his tail into her bowels, causing her to hunch her ass forward and impaling herself around the bulb of Tari’s cock. Her pussy lips stretched wider than ever before, anchoring her on his raging steel hard manhood, while another four inches of his warm beautiful tail burrowed into her tight ass.

“TARI!” Julie screamed at the top of her lungs as she felt his cock swell to unbelievable proportions and erupt deep inside her blasting his searing cum into her belly three times... four times... six times... while his tail was nine inches deep in her ass and beginning to fuck her silly. Julie began to come as well. And come and come.

Tari made her scream his name, for several hours at least, when she wasn’t kissing him so hard he couldn’t breath.

(Present)

Julie looked at him as she sat astride his lean body, his beautiful amber eyes and handsome face. His white hair was plastered with sweat and she reached up to push it from his cheeks. She felt his tail retreat and slowly begin to stroke the skin at the small of her back, while his hands reached up to do the same to her shoulders. She cooed softly and simply rested on him, feeling his wonderful cock between her thighs. It was the first time since he had pulled her down around the bulb at the base of his tool that her pussy had been off his cock. She was wonderfully sore, her whole body aching. She felt pitifully empty in both of her openings, but feeling his body under her was what she needed now, and he seemed to know that, simply content to stroke her skin with her naked on top of him.

“Tari...” Julie spoke, lowering her head to his chest.

“I know... you will leaving in a few days.” He said, his fingers never ceasing to caress her skin.

“I have to go Tari.” Julie spoke, lifting her head to look at him. She placed a finger to his lips and traced the smooth pink flesh. “If I am to understand fully what I am, if we are to understand what we are, we have to go. It is the only place we can get the answers we have sought for so long.”

Tari nodded, kissing her finger. "I know this Julie." He spoke. "I will wait for you. I feel you have vexed me now."

Julie chuckled and kissed his chin. "That's good." She said with a smile. She stared at him for a long moment. "Tari... I want you to come with me. With us?"

His amber eyes grew a little wider. "Come with you? Into the heart of werewolf country; the very city where my kind is most hated?"

Julie nodded slowly. "I know what dangers you would face, but you aren't completely vampire, and I want to be with you now. I don't want to lose what we have found here."

"Yes." Tari spoke.

Julie looked at him wide eyed. "You'll come?"

Tari took her face in his hands. "You have given to me something I had resigned myself to never having Julie Collins. I have no intention of allowing you to return to your people so that some wolf can take you from me without a fight."

"Tari... no wolf is going to take me from you." She told him, kissing him softly on the lips. "None of them have your exceptional talents I'll bet."

"I... I apologize for that." He said shyly.

"Don't you dare apologize Tari!" Julie stammered. "I've never felt so full. It was absolutely exquisite!"

"Well... we will skip it for a day or so. I don't want you so sore you do not enjoy yourself." He spoke stroking her cheek. His face became serious. "Julie... about what I told you last night. I..."

Julie shook her head and then laid it upon his chest. "I didn't hear anything except your professions of love for me." She said softly. "That is all that mattered to me."

Tari smiled and wrapped his arms around the woman who now meant more to him than his own sister. And he had no doubts that would not change for many years to come.

TWO DAYS BEFORE DEPARTURE FOR SPARTA

Thr'won leaned back in the chair, slowly taking her fingers from Martin's forehead as she did. She opened her eyes and took a deep breath. They were alone in his home, Anja finishing up details with the two hospitals on procedures while she was gone, and Dysea visiting with her mother.

Martin looked at the elf Mage, his dark brown eyes intent and questioning, but he waited patiently while Thr'won composed herself. He watched as she took a sip of water and then looked at him, placing her hands in her lap.

"So what's the verdict doc am I dying?" He asked.

Thr'won chuckled at his words. She had discovered over the last two days that her King had quite the sense of humor, dry and witty. She had listened to Martin and Daniel Simpson trade barbs back and forth for nearly an hour as they worked side by side with the Spartan Guard to load equipment onto their transport.

"No my King... you are far from dying." She replied.

"That's a relief... but if I have to tell you or Theron to stop calling me King, I think I'll keel over and have a stroke." Martin told her.

"That is not something we can do Milord." She said softly.

"Bull!" Martin spoke. "You can... maybe not Theron... but you can. I don't want people to worship me Thr'won. I'd much rather have their respects."

Thr'won looked at him. In the last two days she had learned far more about this young King than even Dymas knew as Guardian of the Line. To say that his telepathic abilities were off the chart was an understatement. He had allowed her glimpses into his dreams, his visions, far deeper than anyone had ever treaded before with the possible exception of his Queens. His mind was a roadmap unlike any she had ever seen; mountains and valleys, peaks and low points, hundreds of directions, thousands of doors. Many of those doors were shielded by barriers that even she as a Tier Six telepath could not hope to breach. They were his deepest thoughts and most treasured moments, and they were behind shields that not only did he protect, but his Queens as well. She could feel each of them inside his mind, Anja more so than Aricia and Dysea, due to her own power, but they added their own will to his, making the psychic barriers that much more powerful. He was

without question the more powerful of them, and amazingly they drew a portion of their own power from him almost naturally, thereby enhancing their own skills.

“I truly do not see that as being a problem... Martin... based on what I have seen. You draw people to you like a moth to flames. You inspire them to greatness. It is a skill that Theron has told me many times that Leonidas had.” Thr’won spoke, her voice soft and full of wisdom. “And like King Leonidas... you do it without thinking.”

“And here I thought it was my good looks and charm.” Martin said grinning at her.

Thr’won matched his smile. “I have never felt the power you could bring to bear with your mind Martin Leonidas. The scrolls speak of such power once or twice, but they are not as clear as I would like them to be sometimes. Already you are beyond what I am capable of; Anja is not so far behind you, and Dysea and Aricia not far behind her. It is very unusual for two people to have such a connection as you do, let alone four. It’s almost as if you feed off of each other. While it’s true you and Anja are technically much older than either Dysea or Aricia, the two of you share something more. You love them equally, as they love you and each other, but you and Anja are different somehow.”

“I have felt that as well.” He spoke, “As if somehow we are closer in our experiences.”

Thr’won nodded. “It is very strange... when Anja allowed me to probe her I saw many of the same images that you have. Visions of places you have never been by your own admission; battles that you have never fought. It’s almost otherworldly.”

Martin chuckled. “Well aside from the moon I can assure you I’ve never been to another world.” He said, “Though there are times when I wish that was the case.”

Thr’won matched his soft laughter. “Don’t we all?” She said. “You are without a doubt the most powerful Alpha to have lived since the time of Leonidas, and I dare say even more powerful than him.”

“Why doesn’t Theron like me?” Martin asked suddenly.

Thr’won looked at him stunned. “Like you? Martin you are his King. He loves you.”

“It just seems that many of the things I do, who I am, he doesn’t approve of.” Martin said.

“Do not judge him Martin.” Thr’won spoke. “He has waited nearly three thousand years for your coming. There are times when he wishes things could be as they were. And I believe you remind him... I believe you remind Theron and Dymas both of the King they thought they had failed. I’ve heard them speaking in whispers, they say you could be his twin. I believe they have conducted themselves all these years trying to make up for what they perceived as a failure to die with their King at Thermopylae. That is what has driven them all this time.”

“Walter... Dymas... he has told me his story of how he survived.” Martin spoke. “What is Theron’s?”

“I will tell you his real name... the name he was known by at the Hot Gates.” Thr’won replied. “To tell you more would be his decision and not mine.”

“Tell me.”

“His name was Aristodermos.” Thr’won spoke. “And I will say no more.”

“Aristodermos,” Martin spoke softly as if deep in thought. “He... he was a Peer; a Spartan officer.”

Thr’won looked at him shocked. “How... how do you know this?”

Martin met her eyes. “I don’t know. I just do.”

Thr’won got to her feet slowly and went to the small kitchen counter to pour herself a mug of tea. “Anja told me something similar.” She spoke. “She told me she saw visions of her mother, clear in her mind as if she was there.”

“Why is that strange?” Martin asked moving to sit on the couch.

Thr’won looked at him. “According to Anja, her father told her that her mother died three months before she was born. Her mother was kept on life support so that she could deliver her when she came due.”

“I take it that is not normal?” Martin asked.

Thr’won shook her head. “I’ve never heard of such a thing, and Anja says that the pictures she saw of her mother when she was older were not the woman in her visions. As I said... you and she share a closer connection for some reason, telepathically at least.”

“What is Sparta like?” Martin asked her.

Thr’won smiled. “It is a beautiful city, the mountains on three sides, the Evrotas River Plains. The view is quite spectacular from the villa you will be staying at.” She replied, “It is larger than Eden, but not as modern

in its appearance. We have kept many of the same structures from hundreds of years ago. It helps to fool travelers that pass through the city that do not know we exist. There are shops, cafés, and entertainment venues, much like here. Our style of dress is somewhat more revealing, but that is a left over from the days of ancient Sparta, and it is accepted with ease. Ancient Sparta was a harsh culture in some respects, because of the age they lived in, but women had much more freedom in Sparta than other places.”

“Does all of Sparta know we exist?” Martin asked.

Thr’won took a seat on the couch opposite him, “The actual citizens of Sparta yes. And everyone is a citizen now, not just the Spartan Centurions as in ages past, nearly three hundred thousand. Quite a few are not Shifters, but they live among us, accepting who and what we are without question. Some have married Shifters. Only travelers from outside Sparta truly do not know what we are.”

“To have kept that secret for so long,” Martin said. “That is quite a feat.”

“We are a strong people.” She answered. “You and our Queens will make it stronger.”

“Dysea is also an elf.” Martin spoke.

Thr’won smiled. “The moment my mate turned me I became a Spartan completely. Dysea is much the same way. Queen of the Wood Elves she may be... but the moment your love turned her... she became a Spartan in her heart. The very air around her is charged with excitement at leaving.”

Martin chuckled. “Yes... I know.”

“May... may I offer a suggestion sire?” Thr’won spoke.

Martin looked at her sternly, but nodded. “Go ahead.”

“Anja and Dysea... your aura surrounds them, flows through them. Their auras, as powerful as they are, pulse for no one but you. An Alpha will sense this and not come near them if they think with their brains and not their cocks.” Thr’won spoke, causing Martin to look at her in surprise and laugh. “Make Aricia yours before we return to Sparta Milord. She is just past the age of mating, and she is one of the most beautiful young wolves in Sparta. You know her family is dishonored, and because of that no Pureblood will have her. And if they do, it will only be a physical thing.”

“I gave her my word I would not pressure her Thr’won.” Martin spoke getting to his feet. “I don’t want her to feel it is her obligation, I want her of her own free will. I want her to feel that she loves me, and then make that decision.”

“She already feels that My King... forgive me but you are just too dense to realize it. As you once told Daniel not so long ago, you are so intent on being the gentlemen and not pressuring her as you say, that you are completely missing the fact that she desires you so intensely, her aura burns through even Theron’s mental shields.” Thr’won spoke with a smile seeing his look. “Her aura burns for you. It wafts from her pores whenever she is near you. She is able to control it enough where you do not sense it, but others do. Your Spartan Guard is comprised of older males, and they can smell it on her. They know who she is to you, but if you do not mark her, they will not be able to protect her without some suspicions rising, especially with Midlan sniffing at her heels. What Dymas and Theron have taught you, what I have taught you and your Queens will allow you to shield your auras enough that you will not overwhelm everyone around you. Unless you mark Aricia as yours, she will have to endure the Alphas and Betas constantly nipping at her to bed with them only for pleasure. She is a female wolf My King, and she does have desires as well as you.”

“Won’t others be able to sense me on her?” Martin asked.

“She is far more skilled than even I gave her credit for.” Thr’won answered quickly. “If you make her yours, she will have no problems muting your aura on her, just like Anja and Dysea. Once you flow through her veins, she can control what others sense with ease.”

The chime on the door rang and Martin looked at her. “I will consider what you have said Thr’won.” He spoke warmly as she walked up to him.

“I have no doubts you will do the right thing.” Thr’won spoke.

Martin followed her to the door and it opened to reveal Andreus and Dekton with one other Spartan of Martin’s Royal Guard. They bowed to Thr’won as she passed and walked into house as Martin moved to get a mug of coffee.

“Grab a mug and cop a squat.” Martin spoke looking at them.

“I’m sorry sire?” Andreus spoke confused. He had not yet learned all of his King’s slang words.

Martin smiled. “Get yourselves a cup of coffee and sit down.” He said.

“Sire... protocol does not...” Andreus began.

“Do I have to make that an order Andreus?”

Andreus looked at Dekton and the other Spartan and then back to Martin. Serving this King was going to be very interesting indeed. He smiled. “No sire.”

“Good.” Martin said as he moved back to the couch. He waited for them to pour coffee and take seats on the couch across from him. Martin sighed, knowing he was not going to break them of all their habits, “The volunteers?”

Andreus sipped his coffee and nodded. “Dienekes and my second officer Dekton have volunteered sire.”

Martin leaned forward. “And you do not have a problem with what I want from you?” He asked, looking at them.

They were silent for a long moment and then looked at Andreus. He smiled and looked at Martin.

“Sire... your entire Guard volunteered for this duty. I chose Dekton and Dienekes for their experience.”

Martin chuckled. “It’s nice to know I’m well liked.” He said. The comment had no effect on the men and he smiled. “Ok... baby steps first.” He said. “Dekton?”

“I have protection of the elf Queens Tarifa and Aihola sire.” He spoke.

“And you have no problems that Aihola is half vampire? And that you will probably take orders from her as well as Tarifa?” Martin asked.

“My Lord... does she have your trust?” Dekton asked.

Martin nodded. “She does, without question.”

Dekton nodded. “Then if it is a threat to them, I will erase it.”

Martin smiled. “Very good.” He said. He turned to the younger of the two Spartans. “What is your task Dienekes?”

“I will choose a hundred elves and humans Milord, the finest of the lot.” He answered. “I will take them to a remote location and I will train them as *Krypteis*, Secret Soldiers. No one will know of them, or what they are capable of. They will answer only to you.”

Martin nodded. “And what will their mission be?”

“I will teach them to hunt vampires sire.” Dienekes spoke coldly.

“I don’t want mindless machines Dienekes. Train them to the best of your ability, but know that each one of them is an asset. We may find others that are like Aihola and the Drow, ones who have been tortured by the Alliance or subjected to experiments.” Martin told him. “It seems I have inherited my ancestor’s distaste for vampires, but I am able to look past the surface sometimes and see things, like I did with the Drow.”

“I will follow your orders sire, without question.” Dienekes said.

“That’s just it! I want questions, ideas, comments.” Martin spoke. “I am not some all knowing God! I have faults, I don’t see everything. I want those close to me to know that and not be afraid to say something.” He looked at Andreus, “Especially if they are going to lay down their life for me.”

“What you ask of us sire... it is difficult.” Andreus spoke.

Martin nodded. “I don’t doubt that. I know what years and years of training does. How it makes something like second nature to a mind. It is why I wanted us to take part in the attack on Las Vegas together. I wanted you and the others to see I am not infallible. I’ve known what I am for many years Andreus, but I’m only just discovering who I am now. Theron, Dymas even the Chief Mage... they will be driven to guide me and protect me. I’m not one who likes to be guided. I want you and the Spartan Guard to show me what it means to truly be who I am.”

Andreus looked at Martin for a long moment before nodding his head slowly. “That will be an honor sire.” He said finally.

“Good. Dienekes, Danny gave you a list of sites that could suit your purposes. Have you gone over them?”

“I have sire. I believe I have found one that will be perfect.”

Martin nodded. “Let’s see what you got?”

“Do not need one of your bodyguards!” Tarifa spoke loudly. “We are perfectly capable of taking care of each other!”

Martin looked at her and Aihola from across the table in Eden's command center. "I beg to differ." He said softly.

Tarifa looked at him as if he had lost his mind, and she could sense that Aihola was doing the same. "You... you don't trust us anymore Martin?" She asked stunned.

Martin reached up and removed three odd looking objects from around his neck. He got to his feet and moved around to where they sat and set one down in front of Tarifa and one down in front of Aihola. He tossed the third to where Dekton stood by the doorway, before sitting in the chair between them.

"That could not be further from the truth." Martin said.

"Then why leave one of your Spartans here... to watch over us?" Aihola asked softly. "Surely Lynwe and the guards we already have are sufficient. And you said the Vampire witch would keep the agreement she made."

Martin nodded. "Yes I know." He said. "Dekton is not here to watch you, to report to me, or anything like that. He will answer to and follow your orders and your orders alone, yours Tarifa... and yours Aihola. He will not answer to your father, not to your mother, or even Vengal, but only the two of you; because only the two of you will have these." Martin said reaching out and touching the strange objects on the table. Each was red in color and shaped oddly like a key of some sort.

Tarifa picked up the object. "And what is this?"

"The primary firing key to twenty-two nuclear warheads placed in six secret locations. Each one is targeted on an Alliance city along the eastern seaboard. Each one will destroy the city and everything around it for a fifty square mile radius, including every vampire in the area. Dekton has the alternate key that must be used as well, but without one of these two keys... the missiles can not be launched."

Tarifa and Aihola stared at him. "I don't... I don't understand sire." Aihola spoke softly.

"The radiation in these weapons will kill everything within it's radius to include vampires, as I said." Martin spoke softly. "It will also render it impossible for vampires to go anywhere near these areas for hundreds of years. Neutron radiation is lethal to them. Even a few pin drops will kill them. It is the same radiation that the sun produces, in a much higher concentration." He leaned back in the chair between them. "When I leave... you two are the only ones I trust enough to have the capability to launch these missiles."

"Why?" Tarifa asked.

"Because our goals are identical," Martin said. "Not just for elves, but for everyone. You will be able to contact me should the need arise through Dekton, but the two of you are the strongest and most influential elves now. Once Dysea leaves with me, the only elf Queens left on this continent. And I know both of you will protect what we have started with your dying breaths. You know the agreement I gave to Yuri, and while I'm gone you will have the ability to make her pay should she not adhere to that agreement."

"Do you think she will break it?" Aihola asked.

Martin shook his head. "She is many things... but I don't believe she is stupid. She knows me well enough to know I meant what I said. She'll discover sooner or later that I have returned to Sparta, and that may make her bolder in her actions, but if she knows you have the means to do what I told her I would do... she won't be stupid."

Tarifa took the key in her hands and draped the nylon cord around her neck under her uniform without a sound. After a long moment Aihola did the same. Martin nodded. "Good." He said. "We agree on the Council positions?"

Tarifa looked at him and after a quick look at Aihola, who nodded, she turned back to Martin. "No current Elder will hold a position on the new Council until we can determine they are not complacent in some way with the Alliance. As it stands right now... *Nya Istel*, myself, Thimina and Treblar are the only members outside of you. Given what happen with King Thresian's aide, they have all agreed to undergo testing to insure no more vampires are among them. Once that is complete, they will join us on the Council."

"There are five Wood Elf Elders that did not side with the Alliance. Dysea trusts them, and they were forced into protection until after the battle." Martin spoke. "Once you have thoroughly vetted them, I suggest allowing them to participate on the Council as well. We will keep it at thirty for now... but it will grow in size as more elf clans come forward."

"Martin... Selene Torcrum has asked to be a part of this as well." Tarifa spoke.

Martin looked at her. "And?"

“It was her information that gave you the location to the places you attacked isn’t it?” Tarifa asked.

Martin nodded. “Yes.”

“She has risked much over the years, hiding her true heritage and the actions of her family.” Aihola spoke, “Even while living among the enemy. She could be a valuable source of information and she is also a scientist.”

“Do you both agree?” Martin asked.

Tarifa nodded. “We do.”

“Then why are you asking me?” He spoke.

“You... you are the High King.” Aihola said.

Martin shook his head, “To others maybe... to the two of you... no.” He held up his hand as they started to protest. “I don’t want to hear it. Dekton?”

“Sire?” He spoke stepping forward.

“If either of them refers to me as sire or King again you will personally shoot them.” Martin spoke. “Is that clear?”

“Martin... you!” Tarifa began speaking.

“No!” He interrupted her. “You are both Queens... almost like... almost like sisters to me now. You have my full support in all that you do. I will not second guess you, and I will not have you act as you think I would act.”

They were silent as he stared at them. Aihola leaned forward. “Can we come to you for your opinion then Martin?” She asked.

He smiled. “I have lots of those.” He spoke quickly.

Tarifa and Aihola couldn’t help the smiles that creped across their faces. “And what is your opinion on allowing Selene to be on the Council?” Aihola asked.

“Good choice. But watch her for a time longer. She was among the Alliance for many years.” Martin said. “She may need help in adjusting to what we have in mind for the Council of Elders.”

Aihola looked at Tarifa with a smile. “I told you my love.” She said.

Tarifa met her smile and nodded. “Yes you did.”

“Ok... now that we have that out of the way, Dekton will take you to your new home.” Martin said.

They both looked at him. “What?”

“You are strongest when you are together because of your love for each other.” Martin said. “Jeez! I sound like a shrink or something.” He saw their expressions of humor and shook his head. “And Eden will ultimately be the seat of power for all elves. Some of your people have taken over a new home that has just been completed and begun moving your belongings here from Mountain City Tarifa. Aihola... since you had little... Lynwe and Tari decided to go on a shopping spree for you. It is your home now. Dekton has already approved the security measures, and I have technicians installing some really cool gadgets.”

“Martin... I did not want to move here.” Tarifa said softly. “This... this is your city.”

Martin shook his head. “This is our city now. And this is where you belong. It’s already settled.”

“You are an insufferable ass you know that!” Tarifa barked; her words harsh but delivered with a smile on her face.

Martin laughed at her words. “Yes I do.” He replied.

Aricia stood in front of the window, the light from the full moon bathing her body in a soft glow. She held the sheet around her naked form, her raven black hair cascading past her shoulders ending just above her perfect ass. Since their first night together, Aricia had stayed with Martin, Anja and Dysea within their home, much to the chagrin of Theron. She had spent many hours exploring their flesh, and having them explore hers, but what her wolf blood burned for was the touch of a man, and only one man. Her azure blue eyes were studying Martin as he walked in the small garden that was behind the home. It was comprised of flowers and sweet smelling plants maintained by an older couple who lived not that far away. The brick walkway circled around the garden, two benches occupying each end of the walkway. He carried a mug of coffee in his hand, and he was shirtless. The loose fitting cloth pants were all he wore, and she could see every portion of his sculpted upper body with exacting detail. She counted nineteen scars on his chest, back and arms, though none

of them marred his beauty in any way, at least not to her. He was a true Spartan and he moved with measured grace and confidence, no wasted motions. She could feel his aura pulsing in the night air, and even though Theron and the others had taught him to shield it, Aricia could feel the part that wanted her leaking out from around his psychic shields.

It was powerful and almost alive, pulsing with need and hunger and it wanted her.

Aricia had experienced the auras of other Alpha wolves who wanted her, for pleasure only she knew because of her dishonor, but none of them could match what Martin was projecting, and she knew he was blocking the full force of it. He was keeping his promise to her, not pressuring her in any way, but showing her love and affection at every turn. She knew Anja and Dysea basked in the power and feeling of his aura when he wrapped them in it, and their auras returned it to him equally. They wrapped her within the embrace of their auras as well, and powerful though that embrace from them was, it paled to what she felt leaking from behind Martin's shields. And it was directed only at the three of them.

"Go to him Little Wolf." Anja's voice spoke softly from behind her.

Aricia turned and saw them on the bed. Anja lay on her stomach, her hand holding the data pad Theron had given her to study. The second sheet from the bed covered her firm ass and part of her legs, but nothing else. Aricia discovered that Anja and Dysea were not shy, and they hardly wore anything in the way of clothing when they were together alone in their home, attested to by the fact that Dysea was completely naked, the data pad she was reading resting on Anja's ass cheek, her long fingers stroking Anja's skin as she read. Aricia had taken to doing this as well, after what they had shared and continued to share it seemed silly to try and cover herself from their eyes.

"I... I do not know what to do." Aricia spoke softly.

"Your desire for him burns in your veins Little Wolf, as it does ours. *Melyanna* and I have been augmenting your psychic shields so your aura does not leak out, but Martin flows through us as well and soon we won't be able to help you. His aura and desire for us is too strong, as is ours for him and he has been blocking that from us since you have been here." Dysea spoke now, turning her head to gaze at her.

"He is blocking you as well?" Aricia asked surprised.

"Little Wolf... we are all connected." Anja told her. "Somehow... and none of us knows how this started... somehow this connection we share goes much deeper than we know. Thr'won has said she has never seen anything like it, nor has she read anything like it before. We can shut the other out for short amounts of time, as we have done with Martin so we can help you. But his aura calls to us Little Wolf, just as it calls to you. And he is using all he knows, as well as what Walter and the others have taught him to shield that from us... so that we can help you."

"Soon it will overpower your psychic shields as well as ours no matter what we do. And then it will affect all of us, and turn us all into babbling fools until we sate that desire." Dysea spoke again.

"Yes but a babbling fool in Martin's arms is such a wonderful place to be." Anja said dreamily.

Aricia moved to the bed and sat down looking at them. "How... how do you control it?" She asked.

"Lots of sex! Martin doesn't seem to mind, considering he's on the receiving end of it most of the time." Anja quipped with a cheerful smile.

"*Melyanna* you are such a slut." Dysea spoke with a grin.

Anja beamed at her. "But you can't live without me can you?"

Aricia laughed at their antics. They had played much the same game with her for the last few days, ever since their first night together. And Aricia enjoyed it immensely, but now she knew why. They burned for Martin just as badly as she did, and if he had been blocking them to keep from affecting her, it was going to have an effect on all of them.

"Do not be frightened Little Wolf." Dysea spoke looking at her. "And you won't regret it. Not one moment. We want you to join us completely, and not just in body, but in our minds as well. Something I believe you want just as badly as we do."

Aricia looked at her, her emerald green eyes smiling at her, "So very much." Aricia said.

"Then go to him." Anja spoke touching her hand. "He has too much honor in him to break the promise he made to you. It has to be you who approach him."

"I shouldn't be afraid of him should I?" Aricia said.

Anja and Dysea both smiled. "Do you love him?" Anja asked.

“Yes.” Aricia replied with no hesitation.

“Then you have your answer.” Anja told her. “Now go... Dysea and I have to keep reading these infernal data pads that Theron gave us or we will never fit in.”

Aricia looked at them one final time as they went back to reading their individual pads and then she rose to her feet and left the bedroom.

Aricia moved along the walkway, her eyes and senses attuned to the man in front of her. He could smell her easily she knew, yet he squatted on the short grass unmoving, the moon bathing him in an almost unearthly light. As she approached him she took in the outlined of the muscles in his back and shoulders, and the numerous scars. She could feel the tiny vibrations in the air and in her mind as he held back his aura behind psychic shields more powerful than anything she could ever hope to obtain. How could he feel this way for her knowing that she and her family was dishonored. How could she desire him so much it was painful to hold back?

How could...

Does it feel right to you Little Wolf? His voice reached into her thoughts. His voice was soothing and warm and just the sound of it in her mind caused her body to quiver.

Yes. She answered almost immediately. She watched him rise to his full height, towering over her by nearly eight inches.

I'm trying Little Wolf. He told her. *With all that I am. It just keeps getting harder and harder to hold back. I'm sorry.*

Aricia stepped up to him quickly, looking up into his face. *Then... then don't hold back my love.* She told him, her azure blue eyes bright.

I have too. You are not ready. You...

Aricia took his face in her hands. *I was frightened of you. You are so much more powerful than me. I questioned how you could feel what you feel for me.*

Martin smiled. *You are far stronger than you know. And...* He stopped when Aricia released the sheet with her hand, slowly allowing it to drop from around her body and let it fall to the ground. *What are you doing?*

Aricia looked up into his face; saw the yellow eyes flecked with gold, the hunger burning in them, the desire pulsing through them. All of it directed at her, for her; for Anja; for Dysea. *I am claiming what is mine.* Her voice echoed in his head. *If... if my mate will have me.*

His lips claimed hers before she had an opportunity to take another breathe, his arms crushing her to him as his tongue probed for and found her own. It was a powerful tango, and it the midst of the kiss Aricia felt them falling to the soft grass below, Martin pulling her into his lap. Her eyes grew wide when she felt his steel hard cock press between her thighs. Somehow he had removed his pants and they were flesh against flesh. She could feel the undeniable fire racing through her blood, her azure blue eyes now narrowed in change, and outlined in deep black. Her fangs extended as his lips descended to her throat, nipping and biting gently, his hands stroking the skin of her back. His fingertips were playing her body like a fine musical instrument, strumming her skin and feel her shiver in ecstasy. She felt his mind reach for hers, all his psychic shields lowered and Aricia gasped not only from his burning lips on her neck, but from the force of his aura as it enveloped her. It swarmed around her like a cloud, almost liquid heat that was so thick she felt she could cut it with a knife. Her arms wrapped around his shoulders, her mouth open in bliss, as she let his aura course through her and mingle with her own. This was not something that was normal, Aricia knew this. She swam in his mind, all his shields and doors open for her to explore. He had opened himself completely to her, exposing his soul, and in an instant Aricia did the same and their minds became one.

She didn't feel the flared head of his cock slid across her opening, already slick with the juices that were pouring from her. His hands never stopped, stroking her skin tracing the contours of her thighs right down to her calves. He was in no hurry now, Aricia was his and she knew it. She allowed a small gasp to escape her lips as he nudged into her slowly, gently prying apart her engorged labia and sheathing himself just inside her velvet heat. Aricia's eyes were wide as she felt him, incredibly huge and hot. Already she felt as if she would burst and he was barely inside her. Her nails dug into his shoulders as she quivered in a small orgasm, his hands gripping

her ass cheeks and lowering her down with agonizing slowness. His lips claimed her left nipple as the huge head of his cock pressed against her hymen and stopped. His tongue teased her eraser hard nub mercilessly, flicking back and forth. She could feel the strain on his arms, the power he wanted to use to sink into her, to possess her. He was waiting for her she realized. He would go no further unless she decided. Aricia looked down between their bodies, past his clenched and rippled abdomen, at the nine inches of thick beautiful cock waiting to follow the three inches already inside her. Waiting to plunge into the depths of her belly and seal them forever.

Aricia lowered her lips to his and with one single movement pushed down hard. She cried out into his lips as the blinding pain scorched her brain, her fangs biting into his lip. Her hymen resisted and then tore open as two more inches of his steel hard tool slid into her. Martin didn't draw back from the pain of her bite, his arms holding her tightly, his tongue dancing across her teeth, even as his blood coated their tongues. Her stomach clenched in breathless pain, her thighs taut and rigid, and then her eyes grew wide. She pulled back from their kiss and gasped again, not in pain, but in pleasure unlike anything she had ever experienced before. She felt his cock move within her deeper still, her hands clutching his neck, her teeth clenched together as she shuddered almost violently in another orgasm; an orgasm that set fire to her entire body, burning away the child that remained and bringing the woman out. Aricia couldn't contain the scream of rapture as his entire cock sank completely inside her. When her pussy lips came to rest on his seething hot balls she went rigid in another mind-blowing orgasm, throwing her head back and howling to the moon above her. He wrapped one arm around her waist and reached up with the other, drawing her head forward so he could kiss her.

And kiss her he did. Aricia whimpered as his kiss stole what little control she had left away, and she surrendered to the heavenly tortures ripping through her lithe body. He moved inside her, slowly at first as she grew accustomed to his enormous size, and then more urgently. Soon he was practically lifting her with his one hand and then driving back into her body with dominating twelve inch plunges.

Aricia's eyes sprang open when she felt soft lips upon her neck and billowing hair caressing her skin. Anja's face was next to hers, and then Dysea's angelic face, both shrouded in the moonlight, their eyes changed, and their naked flesh glistening with sweat. Their combined auras saturated the air around them, and she felt Martin's strokes into her become deeper and more powerful. She felt his body go rigid and his already huge cock expand even more buried in her belly. She cried out as she felt his throbbing shaft stiffen inside her and his come race up the length. It stretched the walls of her pussy, conforming to her body, allowing her to feel his come reach the head and erupt like an exploding volcano deep within her belly and into her womb. Aricia screamed in abandon, her own orgasm gripping her with an enormous hand, pleasure jolting her every nerve, touching every part of her body. Anja's and Dysea's lips claiming her nipples within their soft warm mouths as she became one with them.

In mind and body.

Theron shook his head from where he stood next to the home that he and the other Spartans were staying in. The home was only a hundred meters away from Martin's house, and Aricia's cries of rapture had brought all of them running outside. Even from this distance, their auras were overwhelming, as all four of them came together. Theron felt Walter come up next to him, rubbing sleep from his eyes.

"This is a problem." Theron spoke.

"This is a gift." Thr'won's voice spoke from behind them.

They turned and looked at her. "He should have waited!" Theron hissed. "They should have waited!"

Thr'won looked at him. "How long can you prolong destiny Theron my friend?" She spoke softly, a smile on her face. "And do not tell me you don't feel it. I am already mated and I can feel it pounding in my blood."

They turned as the sound of four wolves singing to the moon cut through the night air. A male and three females they all knew from the pitch of the howls.

"The Centennial of the Moon," Thr'won spoke looking up at the clear sky. "And three became four... and the future of Sparta and our people just became so much brighter."

"We hope." Walter spoke softly.

They turned at the shifting sound to their rear, and the whispered female voice. Kmyla was holding Andreus's hand tightly, the female elf shifter obviously affected by the combined auras only a hundred meters away. Her skin was flush, her eyes changed and she was looking at Andreus with passion and desire.

"Andreus... if you don't claim me... if you don't claim me now I will never speak to you again!" She hissed to the Spartan Captain next to her, Andreus's eyes wide in shock, but he too could feel the fever burning him as well as he gripped Kmyla.

Theron couldn't help but chuckle as he shook his head. "Unbelievable! They are turning their own Guard into raving lunatics." He stepped forward a little. "Go Andreus! Make her your mate before you regret it for the rest of your life! All of you... go and find someone willing, preferably an elf, for only they will be able to handle your passion this night. And for pities' sake, don't claim a mate unless you are sure!"

The Spartans did not have to be told twice and they were gone, the passion of their King and Queens coursing through all of them.

Theron turned back to Walter and Thr'won just as a softer pitched cry of passion filled the air. "By the gods... he is claiming them all under the Centennial of the Moon!" Theron spoke.

Walter smiled to himself. "He always did have incredible stamina." He spoke. "That was Dysea."

"Our jobs just became infinitely harder Dymas my friend." Theron spoke.

Walter nodded as he looked at them. Thr'won didn't appear affected by the staggering scent of the auras being carried on the wind and he looked at her oddly, "Thr'won... why are you not affected?" He asked. "Even mated as you are... you should still feel it."

Thr'won smiled and pointed to her nose. "Olfactory blocks Holy One." She answered.

Theron looked at her. "You encouraged him didn't you?" He spoke, yet his voice was not as harsh as he intended it to be.

"I told him to not wait until we returned to claim Aricia." Thr'won said.

"Why would you do this?" Theron asked insistently. "Protecting him became that much harder now."

"I know you have seen it Theron." She spoke. "The connection they four of them have is beyond anything we have ever experienced. With what we have taught them, now that they have come together they will be able to shield their auras more easily. And I saved some poor Alpha male, possibly Midlan himself, from having his innards ripped out. You know what would have happened if some stupid Alpha came sniffing around Aricia, trying to get her to bed with him. The King would have butchered him in a heartbeat, and I shudder to think what Anja or Dysea would have done. That would have put their lives in far greater danger."

Walter nodded. "She's right old friend." He spoke.

"This way Theron, he has marked her, and no Alpha will attempt anything. At least not if he has any brains." Thr'won replied. "Wait... tomorrow you will see the difference. All of them will be calmer and more in control. Our King has been shielding himself from all of them so that Anja and Dysea could augment Aricia's psychic shields. It was bound to leak out or fail completely given the depth of what they share. I'm amazed he was able to contain it for so long. You did not notice it?"

Theron and Walter shook their heads slowly, almost sheepishly. "No."

"He is our King Theron. As much as you and Dymas might wish it otherwise, he may be descended from Leonidas... but he *is not* Leonidas. He has been using everything you taught him these last days to shield Aricia from his aura, his desire for her and his two other Queens." Thr'won spoke, "As you asked him too. He thinks you don't like him Theron, and he is trying to gain your approval." She saw the stunned expression on his face. "May I suggest you begin to look at him as a man as well as our King? Perhaps you might begin to see more of who he is."

They turned as another female cried out in obvious passion, her voice carrying across the distance easily. Thr'won smiled. "And that would be Anja." She spoke softly. "He has claimed them all under the Centennial of the Moon my friends. That by itself is an omen we can not ignore."

Theron looked up at the full moon casting its glow across the land and slowly nodded his head. "We can do this." He spoke. "It will be harder in some respects, easier in others. We will need the help of others we trust. Dymas...?"

"My mother and father will be there to retrieve Androcles's body." He answered. "My father is First Generation... he will help however he can. Daniel's parents as well... not all of those we surround ourselves

with can be Purebloods. His mother may be a Bear Shifter, but she is as loyal as any Spartan, unless something has changed in the last six hundred years since I've seen them."

Theron shook his head. "If anything she has increased her influence among the people." He answered. "She supports her mate unquestionably... and some of the more rigid Spartans laws, but she is able to blend it with common sense. They own a very popular and successful eatery in the Western Market District. I will contact them before we land to meet us at the landing pad."

"Have you decided what to do with the others?" Thr'won asked.

"All of them have requested to be allowed to go through a much shortened version of the Agoge." Walter replied. He saw her look of surprise. "I was surprised as well," He continued. "All of them have far more operational experience than the majority of our own Spartans. I believe it is because they wish to be accepted for who they are. And by virtue of who turned them, all of them have pureblood within their veins now."

"I have assigned families to each of them." Theron spoke. "Families that are loyal to me and the Agiads line. Many of them are childless and will bring them into their homes and families without question."

"We have a start my friend." Walter spoke. "Two months... perhaps three and we can reveal who he truly is."

Theron looked at him, "If we are given that time." He said softly, "If we are given that time."

Tarifa was lost in her own world of delicious pleasure at the moment. Aihola's hands were gripping her head tightly, her quivering thighs locked over her shoulders as her moans of delight filled the air. Tarifa's hands were gripping her lover's firm breasts, pinching the rock hard nipples as her tongue flicked madly back and forth across Aihola's engorged clit. Her cherry blossom scent was overpowering, Tarifa's lips and cheeks slick with Aihola's juices. What made it even more incredible for all of them was that Lynwe was behind Tarifa, her powerful hands gripping Tarifa's hips as she drove that thick beautiful Drow cock into Tarifa's tight pussy with slow, measured and electrifying fourteen inch strokes. The pleasure was ripping through all of them, Tarifa's tongue plunging into Aihola's pussy on Lynwe's downward strokes and flicking across her clit as she slowly pulled out.

Lynwe felt reborn in so many ways because of the two women who withered beneath her in pleasure. The anger and hatred that had gripped her so tightly for so many years was slowly slipping into the past. It was still there, lingering just beneath the surface, but it no longer controlled Lynwe's actions. They had shown her what love could be. They had given of themselves willingly, showing her physical pleasure unlike anything she had experienced before. They had shown her tenderness, and shown her what she could be if she only would reach beyond the hatred and anger.

Lynwe had always turned away from the feelings with Anari, letting her anger drive her, to fuck her with no regard for Anari's pleasure. It was what Lynwe thought Aihola and Tarifa were doing at first, until she awoke one morning and her entire fourteen inch cock was completely buried between the soft lips of the High Elf Queen, and Aihola was lapping away at her huge balls like a kitten. Tarifa's eyes were watering, her lips anchored around the base of Lynwe's cock. Lynwe had reached down immediately and grabbed her head, intending to grind her cock even deeper choking her, overwhelmed by the sensations. Aihola's soft voice next to her ear stopped her.

"No Lynwe... let her pleasure you." She had whispered, her lips brushing her sensitive elf ear. "We don't do this for us Lynwe... we do this for you."

From that moment on, Lynwe had changed. She allowed their caring for her to flow over her, and she screamed out for the feelings. She knew she would never divide them, they were far too in love with each other, this Lynwe knew, but that they were sharing of themselves with her in such a fashion is what finally broke the wall.

Lynwe now stroked into Tarifa's sweet tight pussy with long, slow powerful plunges. The pleasure for both of them was exquisite, and at times Lynwe could not believe she was fucking the Queen of the High Elves. Her amber eyes went to Aihola's withering form, lost in the grip of another orgasm produced from Tarifa's tongue. The knowledge that Tarifa was swallowing not only her lover's come, but Lynwe's as well was driving Lynwe mad. She had fucked Aihola just moments before, relishing in the soft fluttering kisses Aihola adorned her shoulders and face with as she started gently and prolonged the pleasure for both of them until she could

contain herself no more. Aihola had come three times before Lynwe buried herself completely inside her new Queen and erupted. Now... Tarifa was receiving that as well as Aihola's own delicious juices as Aihola shuddered in another orgasm.

Lynwe was amazed at the stamina of the two of them. They never seemed to tire of each other's bodies, and Lynwe could only hope that one day she found what these two women had found with each other.

Lynwe hissed when she bottomed out deeply in Tarifa's belly and her tight pussy clamped down on her throbbing cock. Her fingers dug into her hips and Tarifa's come soaked face came up quickly from between Aihola's still quivering thighs.

"Lynwe!!" Tarifa cried out, grabbing her wrist with one hand as her face contorted into intense pleasure.

Lynwe felt Tarifa's juices flooding from her in a rush, bathing her burning cock as her powerful pussy muscles milked her. Lynwe knew she had lost once more and she stroked one last time into Tarifa, driving her cock even deeper into the High Elf Queen before burying her face in Tarifa's sweet smelling hair and erupting inside her.

It took her a full minute to empty herself into Tarifa, and then they both collapsed onto Aihola's firm body on the bed. After a long moment she felt Tarifa turn her head and her lips touched hers and she opened her amber eyes and returned the soft kiss, probing tentatively with her tongue. This was also something else they had taught her, and Lynwe discovered she enjoyed it immensely. When Tarifa's lips left, they were immediately replaced by Aihola's and then they too shared the warm passionate kiss.

As they usually did, Tarifa and Aihola moved to one side of the bed, folding into each other's arms, and then welcoming Lynwe's larger body to them, allowing her to share in their warmth and love. This above all else was what Lynwe had come to cherish more than anything and she pressed her body tightly against Tarifa's back, her arms going around to rest on Aihola's hip. That was when they heard the wolves howling in the night sky.

Tarifa's head turned slightly, her raven hair caressing Lynwe's cheek, "Wolves?" She questioned. "They sound so close."

Aihola smiled knowingly, the only one among them who knew what it truly was. "I saw them the other day and asked Martin." She explained using the story she had devised with Martin. "They are returning to the area because they do not fear Martin and the others. He leaves food for them, and they are allowed to move freely along the edges of the city."

Tarifa accepted this easily enough, though Aihola saw the questioning look in Lynwe's eyes. "He is part animal I guess." Tarifa said. She glanced over her shoulder to nudge Lynwe's chin with her nose. "We need to discuss our arrangements Lynwe."

Lynwe felt a moment of despair and looked at her quickly. "What... what do you mean?"

Tarifa's hand went to her hip and slipped around to her powerful ass cheek and pulled her close, holding her tightly against her back. "Not that arrangement silly." She spoke as Aihola chuckled. "We are quite happy with that."

Lynwe smiled and placed her forehead against Tarifa's neck. "I thought..."

"No Lynwe..." Aihola told her. "When you are ready to build your own life, you will know. Until that time... you are always welcome in our bed, and in our lives."

Lynwe looked at her Queen and nodded slowly. "What did you mean then?"

"We are having a meeting tomorrow in the Command Center." Tarifa spoke, turning her body between them so they could all see each other. "We have decided to allow Selene Torcrum to sit on the High Council of Elders."

Lynwe looked at them for a long moment. "Is... is that wise? She was a Minister for the Alliance for many years. Regardless of what she says she has done, or what her family was doing."

"That is why we decided to allow her on the High Council." Aihola spoke. "We feel that she had ample time to betray her parents and what they were trying to do. We even went so far as to investigate what we could about hidden routes and where the freed elves went. None of this information ever leaked out, and that tells us she was true to her people."

"Then why tell me?" Lynwe asked. "I am only..."

"Tari is leaving with Martin and the others, and he has left you in command." Aihola spoke, seeing her look of astonishment. "He has full faith in your abilities Lynwe, as do we."

“I will endeavor to fill his footsteps adequately while he is away.” Lynwe spoke after a long moment.

“We want you to assign a Drow to each Council member.” Tarifa said. “We will announce this to everyone tomorrow, but we want you to watch over Selene.”

“Me? Why? I thought you trusted her.” Lynwe asked.

“We chose you because you are uniquely qualified to follow her and never be seen. She will have a Drow officer just like the others, but we want you to watch over her in ways she is not aware of.” Aihola explained.

“Then you *don't* trust her.” Lynwe said.

“Let's just say... *Nya Istel* and I feel there are very few we can fully trust until we are more established.” Tarifa told her.

Lynwe looked at them, questions in her amber eyes. “Do... do you trust me?”

Tarifa and Aihola both chuckled softly and Tarifa wrapped her small hand around Lynwe's flaccid, but still incredibly large cock. “Lynwe... if we didn't trust you, do you think for a minute we would allow you to turn us to whimpering mounds of flesh with this deliciously magnificent tool?”

Lynwe couldn't help the smile that crossed her face. “No... but I'm not exactly in a position to do anything when I'm so deeply buried within one of you. I can't even see straight most of the time.”

The three of them shared a laugh that only lovers understood and Lynwe pressed tighter to Tarifa's smooth body. “I will assign the Drow first thing in the morning.” She said softly.

“And tomorrow we will have our first meeting and try to determine who is truly on our side and who isn't.” Tarifa spoke.

“And what of those who are not on our side?” Lynwe asked.

Tarifa looked at Aihola with a loving smile, Aihola pulling her head tightly to her full breasts. “Then they will disappear.” Aihola answered with a savage grin. “And we will never hear from them again.”

Martin and Dysea had been planning to move all of the Wood Elves into Eden for months, and their recent operations had only moved up that time table. During the last week, everyone had settled into new homes ballooning Eden's population to almost a million humans and elves. There were shortages of housing for the massive influx, but with so many hands to work, new buildings and homes were already seeing their foundations laid. Humans took in displaced elf families, and vice versa. There was no complaining, no fighting. Eden's laws prohibited it, but that wasn't the cause. The moment a new elf or human entered Eden's city limits, the change was obvious to even the most unintelligent. Humans and elves worked side by side and walked the streets without fear. Their children were schooled together, they sat in the outdoor cafés laughing and talking. The mentality had set in deep over the last few months, the mentality that they were all equal.

Trade routes to the other settlements were established and well guarded. People traveled without fear of attack or slavers. Criminals were dealt with immediately and with extreme prejudice. The humans and elves would not tolerate anything that endangered what they were building, not this time, and those few slavers or mercenaries that attempted to kill or steal were just as quickly shown a noose or a bullet. Almost every elf and human was armed in some fashion, and while there were not any official police, members of Eden's military walked freely on the streets and just the sight of them was reassuring. They would stop to talk with people, drink coffee, play with children in the parks. They were open and amicable, never hostile or arrogant.

The ranks of Eden's military swelled as well, and Tarifa and Aihola, now co-ruling Queens as Martin had issued the decree just two days before, had quickly appointed Tareif and Vengal as interim military commanders until the foundation was laid for more permanent leaders. Unlike the governments of humans so many centuries earlier, governments that debated and maneuvered, taking months to pass simple legislation that would help their people, Tarifa and Aihola put together their list for the High Council in a day, and now they would see if it would actually work.

The lightly armored Hopper stopped in front of the building with Eden's Command Center buried within and Tarifa and Aihola stepped out, Dekton within arms reach of both of them. Half a dozen High Elf Dragons were also present and they all turned quickly at the mass of men and women who approached them on the sidewalk. The man leading them Tarifa knew well, and Telan's father had not let recent events weaken his pompous attitude in the least as he led the mass of nearly a dozen elves. He had been denouncing Telan publicly

for his actions against Tarifa and her father and amazingly still had quite a bit of support from other high ranking High Elf officials and three of the High Elf Council of Elders who had conveniently been absent during the attack.

Anlain stepped forward until two Dragoons blocked his path. “Queen Tarifa, a moment of your time if it pleases!”

Tarifa looked at him, her sapphire eyes burning. “We have nothing to discuss Anlain.” She snapped. “We are on our way to a meeting. Good day!”

“Do not dismiss me child!” Anlain barked. “I have three Council Elders here! I am still a powerful man. I...”

His words stopped as suddenly Tarifa stood in his face, her five foot eight height allowing her to stare into his face with barely controlled rage.

“I will dismiss you whenever it pleases me you pathetic little man!” Tarifa snarled. “You are nothing to me! Nothing! And the lackeys that follow you who once called themselves Elders have no more power fool! The High King has dissolved all other Councils except the one we will establish. And these fools will not be on it!”

“You have no right to do this!” Anlain barked. “You...”

“Do not speak to me about rights after what your son has done!” Tarifa nearly screamed.

“My son was acting of his own accord! I had nothing to do with it! I...”

“You are a liar!” Tarifa snapped. “I may not have enough proof to connect you directly, but rest assured I will find it.” Tarifa said. “And when I find your son Anlain, I will cut off his tiny cock and balls and send them to you by courier for what he has done to me and my father.”

“Why you...”

“Watch your tongue viper!” Aihola snapped, stepping up beside Tarifa. “Choose your words carefully old man, for the High King has many ears. And trust me when I say he does not like you already.”

Tarifa grinned. “And when you talk to your son Anlain... give him a message for me.” She spoke, pulling Aihola to her and kissing her fiercely in front of everyone, drawing smiles from the Dragoons and even Dekton. “Tell him that Aihola gave me more pleasure with her fingers, then he was able to illicit from me with that vile excuse he called a cock. I finished him off quickly and watched the drugs I was giving him take effect so that I could rush into the arms of the one person who made me scream in rapture whenever her lips were upon me! I begged her to let me feast on her!” Tarifa smiled at the look of horror on Anlain’s face. “Tell your son that Anlain. And tell him he should pray it is I who find him first, for if Aihola discovers him before I do, his death will be exquisitely painful and long.”

“Your majesty... you can not dissolved the Council of Elders.” One of the men with Anlain spoke now. “You...”

“The Elf High King dissolved the Council fool.” Tarifa barked, “Not that you were worth anything when you were on it Falbas.”

“We do not...”

“If you speak those words I will have you shot right here for sedition!” Tarifa growled silencing the man. “Return to your city Anlain, and do not come back here, for you and your cronies are not welcome. Now... good day gentlemen.”

Tarifa spun around and marched away holding Aihola’s hand tightly as the Dragoons fell in behind her. Aihola leaned close to her. “You never begged me to allow you to feast on me my love.” She spoke in a whisper.

Tarifa smiled and looked at her with desire in her eyes. “Perhaps I will beg tonight Mistress.” She spoke.

Aihola matched her smile and leaned over to nuzzle her neck. “I think that is appropriate slave.” She spoke.

They were meeting in Eden’s Command Center, where the large conference room provided them the most security and space. Seated at the table were the three Elf Kings that Martin had met outside Las Vegas, Tarifa, Aihola, Ministers Thimina and Treblar, Selene Torcrum and the five Wood Elf Ministers that had survived the vampires and fought alongside their people before being locked into rooms for their protection

during the final battle. Also present were the interim selections from the twenty-three settlements totaling seventeen elves and six humans. It was a number that Tarifa had been surprised at initially, since many of the settlements were made up of more humans than elves. She accepted it however and said nothing.

Tarifa and Aihola sat side by side at one head of the rectangular table, something that they hated, but the others demanded.

“As we all know...” Tarifa began. “Martin and the others will be departing for Sparta tomorrow morning. I asked for this meeting now to make sure we are all in agreement with the decisions we have made to this point. We will be able to contact him if needed... but he has faith in what we can do, and I for one do not want to lose that faith.” Tarifa saw all of them nod gently. “We have been enemies in the past... but that is the past. We have been given a future... and I for one would like that future to continue.”

“If I may your majesty...” The human spoke from the far end of the table. Tarifa recognized him as the representative from Ash Fork, the largest of the settlements.

Tarifa nodded, “Of course Charles.” She said.

The man stood. “I have heard many questions whispered as to why there are more elves representing the settlements than there are humans. It is odd considering humans make up the majority of the populations in the settlements. I feel I must answer that question in everyone’s minds now.”

“Charles... that is not necessary.” Tarifa told him.

“On the contrary... I believe it is.” Charles spoke. “The elves... your people were created to help us rebuild from the ashes of a disaster. That did not happen. You were made into slaves and treated like inferiors. It smacked of what once filled this country so many hundreds of years ago. That was called slavery as well. Our selections were fair and open, and to be honest, there were more elves elected to be this Council’s representatives because the majority of humans feel we have not yet earned the right to lead again. And elves make far better politicians than we do.” This brought a round of soft laughter from everyone in the room. “With the exception of two of the settlements, each representative elected here received over ninety five percent of votes. The two other settlement representatives received ninety one and ninety three percent of the votes. We are behind this Council and all of our combined efforts fully.”

Tarifa smiled and nodded. “Thank you Charles. Aihola and I spoke of this very thing last night, and now you have made us all aware of it. We all appreciate your words.”

Charles nodded as he sat back down and he saw that everyone else agreed with Tarifa’s words by their own nods.

“The twenty three settlements and the representatives that they have elected, as you all know, will make up the Eden Advisory Council.” Tarifa spoke, looking at the men and women sitting at the table. “It will be their job to bring forth issues to the High Council for actions. And it will be their job to monitor what we here on the High Council do, and how we conduct ourselves. Martin has chosen me to lead the High Council, and Aihola to lead the Advisory Council. We will swap those positions in two years time. We will serve for four years until elections are held by the people. Everyone here will relinquish their positions among whatever clan you represent for the duration of your time on either Council and then you can return to your former position unless reelected by the people.”

“What will be the King’s duty Tarifa?” Thresian asked.

Tarifa smiled. “Martin’s words to me were quite simple and to the point. He will leave the “political bullshit” as he called it to us and concentrate on the military readiness.” Tarifa could see the smiles of knowing from many at the table. “He will not attempt to usurp our decisions as long as they benefit our people and our future. He will control the military of Eden, but he has made it clear he will adhere to any decision by this Council concerning its use as long as, once again, it benefits our people and our future. He will be open to anyone who wishes to speak to him, but he has requested that only myself or Aihola being issues to him or our Queens.”

“And what of the Queens Tarifa? What will their duties be?” Thimina asked.

Tarifa smiled. “Anja will be head of Eden’s Medical Establishment, and due to their own exceptional fighting skills Dysea and Aricia will be assisting Martin with the military. They have assured me that like Martin, they will not interfere in what we do as long as it benefits our people. Human, elf and whoever else wishes to join Eden.”

Aihola leaned forward. “We have been given an opportunity here my friends.” She spoke softly. “An opportunity to finally bring about what the Holy One intended for all of us. The Great Fire dragged us apart, but now have a chance to bring everyone back together.” Aihola looked at Tarifa and took her hand. “I for one would like to grow very old with the one that I love.”

“And what of the Alliance? They will not simply let us continue to build our future Milady.” Charles asked.

Tarifa looked at him. “Yes... the Alliance. We have all told our children of the creatures of ancient legend and myth. Bed time stories and horror stories told around camp fires and tables. As we have all now experienced first hand, it appears at least some of these myths and legends are indeed true. Vampires it seems do exist, and they control the Alliance. The President of the Alliance is apparently some sort of Vampire High Priestess. So the nightmares are real my friends, and it is they we must fight.” Tarifa kissed Aihola’s hand softly and got to her feet. “Martin has given this Priestess an ultimatum of sorts, and while I will not go into the details for everyone here, suffice to say this ultimatum has given us at least a year, perhaps eighteen months to prepare our people, and to continue to build what the High King has started.” She walked around the table slowly. “We *will* have to fight. There is no question about that, but I hope everyone here feels as I do in that what we have started here is very much worth fighting for, and dying for. Freedom is never free my friends, we all know this. It comes with the highest price of all. I am willing to pay that price if it means in the end that any children I may have, your children, all of our children will live in freedom. We have fought already for so long, and while the threat has receded for the moment due to Martin’s actions, it has not gone away entirely and we must be prepared to begin fighting again.”

“And this is where the King goes, to gather allies?” Treblar spoke.

Tarifa turned to Dekton, standing quietly in the corner of the room, only five steps from where she and Aihola sat. She saw him nod just a little. “Our King... Martin... he has discovered his history. Who and what he is. His people are Spartans, much like Commander Dekton here.” Tarifa pointed to him. “They have waited for their King to appear far longer than we have waited for a High King. He is going home to learn about his past and his people, and assume his role as their King as well as ours. He will not be gone long, a few months perhaps, but it is something that calls to him. Something he must do.” Tarifa returned to her chair next to Aihola. “Commander Dekton he has left behind as personal guard to Aihola and myself. He would not have done this if his wish was to abandon us. We must have faith in him, as he has placed far more faith in us and what we must do.”

“But how will we keep the Alliance from interfering with what we do?” Knon asked. “They are everywhere.”

“Martin has claimed everything west of the Great River.” Tarifa told them. “Anything east belongs to the Alliance. We are not yet strong enough to remove that slavers island in the west, but we will be. My father and General Vengal now lead Eden’s military while Martin is away. They are sweeping the entire area of what is ours, mainly to rid ourselves of slavers and mercenaries who would do us harm, but also to let the people know the High King has come and what we are building.”

“The Wastes take up much of that territory Tarifa.” Thimina spoke.

Tarifa nodded. “Yes... but it also gives us a much larger cushion from Alliance territory and influence. The land will return to what it once was eventually, but for now we have ten states to govern, far more than any of us have had before as one people. We can do this. Together.”

“Then I suggest that we get some food and some tea brought in and we start getting to it.” King Anotan spoke.

His words brought chuckles and nods of agreement from everyone in the room. Tarifa looked at Aihola and nodded, knowing they had begun something wonderful here. Aihola squeezed her hand as she got to her feet. They saw Aihola rise and their voices became silent.

“Many of you... perhaps all of you... I don’t know... still hold animosity towards my people.” Aihola spoke. “I will not stand here and apologize for actions and decisions that were not my own. I will tell you two things about the remaining Drow...”

Tarifa looked at her. “*Nya Istel*... you don’t...”

Aihola smiled. “I am not afraid my love.” She said softly. “And they have a right to know if we are to truly make this work.” Everyone’s eyes were on Aihola and Tarifa now, interest very evident. Tarifa nodded

slowly. “The Drow who remain... we have far more reason to hate the Alliance with every fiber of our existence than many of you in this room. Not only did the Alliance destroy our people... but they conducted horrible experiments on those they captured and kept alive. The Vampire Priestess turned my own father into a vampire... and then ordered him to rape my mother countless times. Tari and I are the result. We are half vampire... as are all my people.” Aihola saw their faces range from shock to horror, but surprisingly not in one face did she see distrust. “We have their same strengths... but none of their weaknesses. They thought to create monsters, but instead created us. Many of us were forced to endure genetic experiments and other horrible tortures while under their thumb, and we bear the scars of this even now. When the High Priestess realized she had failed in her attempt at creating warrior vampires... we were nothing more than fodder for them. I escaped a year before my brother, because I would not slaughter a human family to prove my loyalty. My brother Tari led the others to Eden and freedom. The High King... Martin... he accepted us without question, without constraint and he believed in us when no one else would. Because of that... the second thing I must tell you is this... my people have sworn an eternal oath that we will all die in service to Eden and no other. I dare say we want this to work more than anyone else because of what it now means to us. We will do everything in our power to bring about what we all want for our futures.” Aihola took a deep breath. “I just felt you should all know.”

They watched her return to her chair next to Tarifa, her head held high and proud as she took Tarifa’s hand once more.

Tarifa looked around the table once more. “Is there anyone else who would like to say something before we call the meeting to session?”

“Milady?” Dekton’s voice spoke from behind her. “I would like to speak, if you would allow it.”

Tarifa looked just as surprised as Aihola and she nodded quickly. “Please.”

Dekton stepped up the table so that everyone could see him. He removed the matte black helm he wore over his head to expose his longer than shoulder length brown hair and his deep blue eyes. Everyone took in the tall Spartan, easily over six feet and two hundred pounds, the black body armor covering every portion of his body except for the joints, the crimson cloak scrapping the floor.

With a casual flip of his hand Dekton tossed the data pad onto the table. “My King has authorized me to say this, and I don’t particularly care for questions so don’t ask any. That pad contains some history of my people, of my King’s people, what he deemed you all needed to know. You may disseminate it as you please. I am a Spartan Centurion, and you may refer to me as Spartan or Commander and nothing else. My name is for the two Queens I protect, no one else. I have been trained in the fires of combat since age eight in what we Spartans call the Agoge. Know that we Spartans are trained; we are *expected* to defeat twenty of the enemy before we die in battle. We do not retreat, we do not surrender. My King asked me to stand and protect these two he considers his friends, and I did this because it is what he wished.” Dekton looked at Tarifa and Aihola. “I see now why he wished them protected. They have spoken words of great honor and truth today and it has made me proud to listen to it. My duty is to protect them, and I assure you this I will do without regard for station or status. If it is a threat to them, it will not exist moments after it reaches my ears. I will not hesitate, I will not pause, I will not discriminate. I am one... you are many...” Dekton smiled in a cruel sort of way. “And you will lose.”

Dekton looked at Tarifa and Aihola and bowed his head, “My Queens, thank you for the time.” He spoke before returning his helm to his head and stepping back into the shadows.

Tarifa and Aihola watched him for a long moment before turning back to the table and seeing that everyone was quiet. “I...” Tarifa began, at a loss for words.

King Anotan was the one who broke the ice again. “Now that we have that out of the way, can we get down to the business our King expects of us.”

This brought relaxed laughter from everyone in the room once more, and they all turned to the tasks ahead. Tarifa reached for the data pad Dekton had tossed onto the table as Aihola turned to look at him. She reached out with her mind and the little telepathic control she possessed trying to touch Dekton’s mind. It was like looking at a solid black wall. His eyes turned to her slowly.

What is it you wish Aihola of the Drow? His voice filled her mind, neither hostile or joyful, but calm and even.

Aihola kept her face expressionless even though surprised swept through her. *I... I’m sorry. I did not...*

Our people are all telepathic Milady. His voice answered her, Some more than others, but the Centurions more so than the average Spartiate. My King told me you possessed this ability due to the vampire genes in your blood. He also told me you know what I am, who and what he is.

I do. Aihola replied.

It took courage to reveal what you did she-elf. It was not something they needed to know, but you told them anyway. I see why my King honors you and Tarifa. Dekton told her. And I will do no less. You have shared blood with your beloved Tarifa. Our Chief Mage believes this may allow you to communicate with her telepathically as well. May I suggest you work on this, as it will allow the three of us to communicate more privately.

I do not like that I have these genes in my body Dekton. Aihola said.

Something you have already proven Little Drow. He replied, his voice almost sounded affectionate. Yet you do have them, and you need to learn to use them to defeat our enemies and achieve what it is we all wish in the end.

Will... will you help us?

Dekton's nod was imperceptible to all but her, After what I have seen this day... I would consider that an honor.

How old are you Dekton?

I am a second generation Pureblood. He answered.

That doesn't answer my question.

I have seven hundred and nineteen years Little Drow. I am the eleventh child and sixth son of my parent's children, and I am the youngest.

Do your parents still live?

Dekton nodded. My mother lives in Sparta. My father was lost almost four hundred years ago. He was killed by an Alliance officer, a Vampire.

I'm sorry.

Do not be sorry. He died a beautiful death. Dekton replied. You have much work to do Little Drow; perhaps you should get to it before someone suspects we are communicating.

Aihola turned around slowly, maintaining her composure. Thank you Dekton.

You are welcome.

SPARTAN TRANSPORT EDEN AIRFIELD

“Wow!” Endith spoke as she and Tina entered the cockpit of the Spartan Transport. The two pilots turned in their seats and looked at the elf and human females.

“This is very cool!” Tina said in way of agreement as their eyes took in the expanse of the cockpit.

The cockpit of the Spartan ship was similar to the Raptor, but much larger and roomier, and quite a bit more advanced. Instrument panels surrounded both pilots, but there didn't seem to be any actual flight controls with the exception of what appeared to be a throttle control on the pilot's right hand side. The senior pilot smiled as he looked at them, both of them very attractive even with their long hair pulled back.

“You are the pilots his majesty told us to expect?” He asked.

Tina looked at him and nodded. He appeared to be close to Ben's age and very good looking, but since Endith had come into their lives, the three of them had grown far closer than they had expected, emotionally as well as physically. “Tina.” She said, holding out her hand. “This is Endith.”

“I am Laertes, First Commander. This is Denes my second.”

Tina and Endith nodded to them. “Fine ship you got here.” Tina spoke. “What do you call it?”

The man looked at her oddly. “Call it?” He asked. “It is a transport. That is all.”

Endith and Tina shared a look and turned back to the pilot, “Oh... a transport.” Endith spoke. “We fly those.” She pointed out of the cockpit window to where the Raptors were parked and the two pilots turned just as one dipped its nose and soared off into the brightening sky.

Laertes turned back and looked at them a new respect in his eyes. "All we have are these transports. There are some smaller ones identical to this, but we do not use them. We don't have many pilots."

Endith had turned and was studying the instrument panel behind the pilot's seat. Tina was examining the co-pilot's console and she nodded. "Yeah... so we hear." She spoke. "That's why we're here."

Laertes chuckled. "You are instructors?"

Endith looked at him. "Do you have a flight manual for this machine?" She asked. "I would very much like to study it."

"Denes... give the she elf the manuals." Laertes spoke with a grin. "It took us two years to become proficient in flying this transport."

Endith took the two thick manuals and gave one to Tina as they settled on the bench behind the co-pilot. Tina looked at him as she opened the manual, Endith already beginning to read. "How long is the flight?" Tina asked.

"Fifteen hours at cruising speed." Laertes replied. "Do you intend to read the entire manual on the way there?"

Tina nodded. "Yep."

"Denes and I were hoping you would join us for something to drink once we engage the autopilot." Laertes flashed a smile at her.

"Nope." Tina replied settling into the seat.

Laertes looked at her oddly, "Perhaps... perhaps your friend then? I understand female elves are very open."

Tina looked at him with her blue eyes and then turned to Endith. "Endy..." She spoke using the nickname she and Ben called her. "This nice pilot wants to know if you'll join him and his friend for something to drink once we are airborne."

Endith looked up from the manual quickly and laid a blistering kiss onto Tina's lips, including lots of tongue, which Tina eagerly returned as the two pilots looked on in stunned silence. After a moment Endith pulled back and gazed at Tina with beautiful blue eyes and a smile. She looked at the two pilots and her smile grew wider. "Not interested." She answered before settling back onto the seat and putting her face back into the manual.

Tina shrugged as she looked at them. "Sorry..." She spoke before opening the manual she held.

The two pilots looked at one another and then shook their heads before going back to their duties.

Theron watched Martin as he stood on the lowered ramp as the rest of the men and women going with them were boarding. He had to admit that Thr'won had been right. The following day after Martin had claimed his three Queens under the Centennial of the Moon, all of them were different. He could feel the calm and peace that flowed through them, just as Thr'won had predicted, and Aricia seemed a hundred fold more confident and energetic than when they had arrived. He walked up next to Martin slowly, passing the others as he went. The three Queens sat together, talking quietly to each other, though they all looked tired. The female elf with rust colored red hair and incredible blue eyes sat next to Daniel Simpson, the half vampire Tari next to Julie. Anja had chosen several medical technicians to accompany them, including the humans Doctor Marrow and Doctor Taggart, both men joining them from the thousands that had come from the base on the moon.

"My King," Theron spoke softly as he stepped up next to Martin. "Everyone is aboard Milord. We should depart."

Martin turned to look at him. "I'm about to enter a whole new world aren't I Theron?"

"In some respects sire." Theron replied honestly. "But I have noticed you and those that follow you have the amazing ability to adapt almost immediately to any change."

"Considering the life we have led... it was the only way to survive as long as we did." Martin answered.

"It usually is sire." Theron spoke. "I do not think you will be disappointed sire."

Martin smiled. "No I don't think I will." He reached over to the side and touched the panel, the ramp beginning to rise as he looked back to Theron. "Never fear the unknown, for we don't know what we might find."

Theron smiled as Martin moved back into the transport and took a seat on the floor of the aircraft between Aricia's legs. She was speaking with Anja and Dysea and Theron watched as almost without thinking, she draped a leg over his shoulder and Anja and Dysea pressed closer so their hands could drop to his shoulders.

Theron nodded at his King's words, "A wise choice of words my King." He muttered to himself. "Wise indeed."

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

SPARTA

Martin stared out the computer screen sized window as the pilots of the transport brought them in slowly over the valley below. Almost everyone not from Sparta was crouched close to the windows with anticipation and curiosity. It was in the nature of any species to be curious, and this was very evident now. No one had been able to sleep for the last hour and a half of the flight. Many had slept enough in the previous thirteen hours to last them a life time it seemed. Card games were worn out after the fifth hour, and everyone decided to sleep the remaining time away. Until now.

Martin could just make out the outlines of the mountains in the distance, the peaks reaching high into the night sky. His heart had begun beating faster quite a while ago, and now it was racing nearly out of control. He saw Anja and Dysea in the next window, excited expressions of their faces, as if they were entering a new world. Martin felt the hand on his arm and he turned to see Aricia's gorgeous eyes looking at him.

"Your heart races my love." She spoke softly, her azure eyes smiling at him.

Martin smiled and nodded. "I'm nervous." He replied.

"We will help you my love. All of us."

Martin took her hand in his. "I know."

"Sire?" Theron's voice interrupted them and Martin turned as he got to his feet, Aricia still clinging to his hand. "I just spoke with my people at the landing site. There are half a dozen Senators loyal to... to us... waiting to meet with you. Daniel and Julie's parents are also present, as are the men and women who have agreed to sponsor and house the others within your team." He spoke. "There will be roughly two dozen others who will be within your employ at the villa, and those you will meet when you arrive at the actual villa where you will be staying."

Martin looked at him, "Servants?" He asked.

Theron shook his head. "No sire, these are men and women who have willingly served the line of Leonidas for as long as I can remember. They tend the villa's gardens and maintain the property. They are well paid and do their duties by choice and they are completely loyal. They have been told you are a distant descendant of the line of Leonidas, a cousin perhaps, but other than that, nothing more."

Martin nodded slowly. "I won't have to meet with them long will I?"

"No Milord." Theron replied. He glanced at Aricia and saw her clinging to Martin's arm. "Aricia... perhaps it would be better if you returned home."

Aricia glanced at Martin and then nodded her head. "If you think this is best Holy One. I will..."

"No." Martin spoke firmly.

"Sire... it might draw questions from..."

Martin looked at him, his eyes narrowing. He stepped closer to Theron. "Aricia stays with us. She is my mate... she is Anja and Dysea's mate. She stays with us. There will be no discussion on that. Are we clear Theron?"

"Sire... you have marked her. She will be safe. It would look odd if Aricia were to accompany you to the villa and stay with you there. It..." Theron spoke, trying to keep his voice calm. He could sense other eyes on them now, including those of Anja and Dysea.

"My Love..." Aricia started. "It is alright. I will..."

"No!" Martin spoke. "I am playing a role for the moment, is that not correct Theron? I am Alpha wolf from North America, turned by Dymas?"

"That is the story we are using Milord, yes. Only those present at the landing zone who we have allowed will know who you really are." Theron spoke.

Martin nodded. "And they will know I have taken Aricia as my mate?"

Theron nodded. "This was in the transmission I sent to them, yes. They will not be happy sire... I can tell you that."

"They'll get over it." Martin spoke, "Andreas!"

Andreas stepped forward from his position five feet from his King, "Milord?"

"You are my Captain?" Martin asked his eyes never leaving Theron's.

"Yes sire."

"The first individual who attempts to remove your sister from my side, you will shoot that fucker in the head. Is that understood?" Martin growled.

"Sire?" Andreas looked confused.

"Theron... I told you once... I will listen to your council, and most of the time I will take it. This is one of the times where I will not. You will not control me... nor will anyone else. If this is going to be a problem for you... turn this transport around and take us back." Martin spoke.

Theron never took his gaze from Martin's, but he could detect the eyes of many on him, including the not to friendly gazes of Anja and Dysea. "Leave us!" He snapped.

His words carried to everyone, and within seconds a very large space cleared around the two of them, Andreas pulling his sister back. Theron stared at Martin, the set of his jaw and the steel in his eyes. Theron's words from two nights ago echoed in his head and he moved closer to Martin. He could feel the power within the young man, the pulsing of his aura, threatening even now to smash the barriers he had up. "Sire..." He spoke softly. "You know the reason I suggested this?"

Martin nodded. "She is supposedly dishonored. I don't care Theron."

"Her family was striped of all that they had. Her father was a senior member of the Senate, and he lost that. When he discovers that you have taken her as a mate he will not approve. He will think you are not a Pureblood, and that Aricia is only a toy for you." Theron spoke.

"Isn't that what she would be to any Pureblood in Sparta?" Martin asked, "A toy?"

Theron nodded slowly. "Yes."

"And we can't tell him who I really am?" Martin asked.

Theron shook his head quickly, "At least not right now. His anger at the Senate and by proxy you, it might drive him to do something reckless."

"Then her father can suck it up and drive on." Martin snapped. "Is there anything he can do to her?"

"The only thing he could do now is disown her." Theron spoke, thoughtful for a moment. "And that... while not much better than her present status... that would at least neutralize a potential problem."

Little Wolf... how do you feel about that? I don't want to bring you anymore pain or shame than has already been put upon you. Martin reached out and touched her mind. He had allowed Aricia to hear everything so far.

Would I be with you my love?

Always.

Then I don't care what my father does.

Martin shook his head. "No... she stays with me. Her father will do what he must, and we don't care."

"Do... do you love her that much Milord?"

Martin was taken aback by the question and his building anger quickly bled away. He looked at Theron. "I do." He whispered. "She is part of me now Theron, just as Anja and Dysea are. I will not bend on this and I will kill anyone who hurts her, without regard, without pause. And that includes her father."

Theron stared at Martin for a long moment and then the smile spread across his features. "Now that is what Leonidas himself would have told me sire! That is why I have no doubts about who you are! None!" His words came out forcefully but the smile never left his face. "You are not the King I served Martin Leonidas... but damned if it will not be an honor to serve you nonetheless!"

Martin looked at him. "I have much to learn don't I?"

Theron put his hands on Martin's shoulders. "Not as much as you might think sire. Not as much as you might think." He smiled and slammed his hands down on Martin's shoulders as a father would. "We land in seven minutes sire. Let me be the first to welcome you home."

There were close to a hundred people crowded into the landing pad area. They stood silently as the ramp on the transport lowered slowly; finally locking into place as ground crew members secured the landing struts and began to connect several hoses. Theron was walking down the ramp before it had stopped moving and he stepped off now moving directly to where the five men and one woman stood in a line. Dilios looked at him as he came up to them.

“Theron... the pad is secure. I have a dozen Centurions guarding the outside to insure we are not disturbed. The psychic deadeners are all active as well.” Dilios reported. “An excellent idea to wait until you could use the shadow of a daily supply transport to drop in.”

Theron smiled. “That wasn’t my idea Dilios... that was one of the pilots the King brought with him. An elf female... the best they have behind the man who commands all of the King’s air crews.”

“He... he has his own flying ships?” Dilios asked shocked.

Theron’s smile never left his face. “In just under a years’ time my friend, our King has united almost every elf tribe on the North American continent and begun building a city of his own. It is a truly amazing place. He has an army that surpasses our own, to include a sizable air force.”

Dilios looked at the five men with him, their faces also showing their shock. “This is a sign Theron.” He said softly.

“Indeed it is.”

“And his Queens... they came with him as well?” The female asked.

Theron nodded. “They did Senator Arete... and I have no doubts they will impress you with their beauty.”

Their faces turned as Walter walked up to them a smile on his face. Dilios’s eyes grew wide. “Dymas!” He nearly shouted, going to the man and embracing him like a brother. The others crowded around him as well.

Walter smiled and shook their hands and shared their embraces. “It... it is very good to finally return home my friends. Very good!”

“When you did not contact us for so long we thought you had been lost as well.” Arete spoke. “All of Sparta will rejoice your return, and what you have brought with you.”

Walter chuckled. “Well... that must be kept to a minimum.” He said. “Everyone must think I have returned only for a few months. We must follow the plan we have set in motion. A great deal relies on it for now.”

Arete nodded, “Of course.” She said smiling. “You sound like Theron now my friend.”

Walter nodded. “So many years away from here has made me paranoid.”

“Your mate awaits you Dymas!” Dilios spoke motioning to the side where the female with billowing black hair was fairly busting out of her shoes. “Go to her Dymas... we can talk later.”

Walter needed no further encouragement and broke immediately towards the woman with long purposeful strides. It wasn’t common for a Spartan as old as Walter to show emotion openly, but after nearly five hundred years of not seeing the woman who had saved his life so long ago, Walter didn’t care. He broke into a run halfway across the landing pad and saw his wife break from behind the Spartans assembled to run towards him. The woman of medium build but natural beauty threw herself into the arms of the taller man while smiling men and women looked on. Dozens watched as three other younger females and four men broke from the ranks and moved to the pair. Walter’s eyes filled with tears as he saw his children rushing out to meet him. He looked at his wife.

“You brought them Dia?” He spoke softly.

His wife’s eyes were filled with tears of her own. “They... they knew something was going on the moment they saw my mood after Dilios told me you were coming home. I could not keep them away my husband.”

Walter kissed her deeply, the only woman who had shared his heart in three thousand years, just as his children swept around them.

Theron turned back to the Senators as they watched a dozen men and women, humans and elves file out of the transport, their eyes taking in all around them with awe and new discovery. “He brought many of the men and women he trusts most.” Theron explained to them. “Some of them just recently returned from the moon.”

“The moon!” A senator gasped. “Theron you jest!”

Theron shook his head. “No Polynikes. It is how the King survived the passing of the Comet. It is a long story... which I will relate at a later time.”

“Theron what of Wallace?” Arete asked. “The Spartan Peer who left so long ago? He was with the King for a time wasn’t he. At least that is what your reports stated.”

Theron nodded. “He remained behind to help the two elf Queens establish order in North America. He has found a new home there with an elf mate, and did not wish to leave. His actions will be honored.”

“You said the elves also consider him their King.” Another Senator asked.

Theron nodded. “Another story which can wait until later, but it is partly Dymas’s doing. The elves consider him their High King and...”

They all heard the gasps from the assembled people as the towering young black man walked down the ramp, the diminutive red haired female elf at his side, holding his hand tightly. The others of SEAL Team 12 followed Danny down the ramp, Julie holding Tari’s hand tightly also.

Theron smiled. “Ah yes... the two Pureblood children Dymas requested so long ago.” He spoke. “Daniel and Julie... and those they have chosen as their mates.” He looked at the Senators. “Impressive are they not? All of them. This is the group of men and women the three of them chose to turn rather than watch die. This is the pack they formed without even the knowledge of who and what they were my friends. They did it by instinct alone.” Theron was smiling as he spoke, the pride in his words very evident. He motioned to them with his hand, “Daniel Simpson... the son of Melancton and Malaika, and Julie Collins... the daughter of Hali and Kim So. The others were among those created by Dymas... so they have no parents or lineage, but they were turned by Purebloods, and they will be treated as such.”

“That is why the families are here?” Arete asked.

Theron nodded. “I asked families that we know and trust who were without children to take them in.”

Everyone grew quiet as the majority of the Spartan Royal Guard came down the ramp next, fanning out around the bottom of the ramp, their eyes searching for threats even among those they knew to be friends. Theron saw them begin to walk down the ramp and he smiled. “My friends... behold your Queens.”

All eyes were now focused intently on the ramp as they came down slowly, talking to each other in whispers. Anja was in the middle, Dysea to her right, Aricia on her left. They held hands, all of them nervous and their knuckles going white with the strength they held each other’s hands. Aricia had told them that Spartan women loved their long hair, and both Anja and Dysea who normally wore their hair tied up in some fashion let their hair down halfway across the ocean. Aricia had brushed both their heads of hair out until the color shone with heath and youth.

Arete was not the only one in the landing pad who gasped in awe at the sight of the three of them as they walked down the ramp. Almost on cue, the men and women gathered in the bay dropped to one knee, causing the three of them to stop abruptly and look around in shock. Only the Senators remained standing with Theron. Dysea’s hair shone the brightest due to the platinum blond color and the lighting in the landing bay, and it outlined her deeply tanned skinned. Anja’s Persian red hair curved elegantly around her face, matching Aricia’s in its rich dark color and shine.

Dilios stepped closer to Theron. “Theron... Aricia...”

Theron looked at him. “Aricia is now Queen my friend. He claimed them all under the last Centennial of the Moon not three days ago. He knows of her dishonor and he does not care. We will discuss the ramifications at a later time, but he was very clear on this. I for one am not going to refuse him, and I doubt you will want to challenge him once you see him.”

“He is that commanding?” Dilios asked.

“He is Dilios.” Theron turned as the landing bay grew so silent you could hear the birds chirping half a mile away. “See for yourself.”

Martin walked down the ramp side by side with Andreus and they were speaking in whispers as well. Theron felt the swell of pride once more as he watched. Until Leonidas had become King, no Spartan Captain would have ever dared walk next to his King engaged in conversation like they were. He knew that Martin and Andreus had spent many hours together over the past few days, sometimes alone, sometimes with Daniel, and it appeared as if Andreus had now become one of the few he trusted without question. Everyone had turned to watch Martin exit the transport, and they watched him slow and come to a stop at the bottom of the ramp and look up into the sky.

Martin let his eyes wander around the landing bay, a sensation unlike anything he had ever felt before cascading through his body, a sense of peace and serenity; a sense of home. He looked over the top of the landing bay walls at the mountains in the distance, feeling like he had seen them some time before. His eyes went to the hard packed earth underneath them and he knelt down on one knee, reaching out with his hand to scoop some into his palm. Martin brought it to his nose and inhaled the scent, ignoring the smell of scorched earth from the transports engines, and seeking the scent of pines and minerals. A scent of long ago.

He looked up at Andreus. "Andreus?"

"Milord?"

"I've... I've come home Andreus." Martin whispered to him.

Andreus smiled. "Yes sire. Yes you have."

Martin stood back up and gazed at him, a look of wonderment on his face. "This is Sparta?"

"It is Milord."

Anja, Dysea and Aricia stepped up to him slowly, feeling everything that was sweeping through him. He looked at them, his eyes wide and alive more so than they had ever seen them. His sense of joy and happiness was coursing through them as well. Anja yelped in surprise when Martin snatched her up and spun her around, Aricia and Dysea looking on with tears and smiles.

"I'm home!" Martin yelled, his voice carrying across the landing bay. Martin allowed his psychic shields to drop completely and his aura burst forth in all its intensity as he soaked up the tendrils of life and memory all around him, allowing them to course through his being.

"By the gods!" Arete gasped as she sank to one knee, followed by the other Senators as the force of his aura swept over everyone in the bay like a wave. When Anja, Dysea and Aricia allowed their shields to drop and bask in the sensations of what Martin was feeling, even the Spartans standing guard staggered from the force of their presence.

Theron turned quickly to Dilios, "The psychic deadeners!" He gasped.

The Spartan officer behind them stepped forward quickly. "They are active Holy One! At full power!"

Theron breathed a sigh of relief and nodded. The deadeners would keep their combined auras from spreading beyond the landing bay, and Theron did not want to take any chances even as remote as this site was. He turned back to see Martin standing with his forehead pressed to Aricia's while Anja and Dysea pressed up against them both. The power radiating from them was unlike anything anyone in the bay had ever felt, and whatever doubts remained among the men and women were quickly dashed aside. Everyone watched as Daniel stepped up to Martin and stood beside Andreus.

"Hey Skipper." He spoke.

Martin looked at him as Julie came up next to them. Martin reached out and took Dan's arm, pulling Julie into their embrace. "We're home." He said. "This is where... this is..."

Julie groaned and hit him lightly in the ribs, "Your breaking my ribs you buffoon!" She barked out, but a dazzling smile was plastered across her face.

Danny and Julie had never seen Martin so animated before, and his joy filled them as well, for they were feeling the same things surging through them.

Martin looked at Andreus. "I'm acting like a little kid aren't I?" He asked.

Andreus couldn't help but smile. "I don't have to answer that do I Milord." He asked.

Martin laughed and shook his head. "No." He answered. He felt Dysea's arms circle around his waist with Aricia's as Anja squeezed in between him and Danny.

"Shit Skipper... I ain't seen you this happy since the Buffalo Bills won the Superbowl back in 2062." Dan spoke.

Martin looked at him. "Remember the party we had?"

Julie laughed. "I'm surprised you do. We drank enough booze that night to sink an aircraft carrier. You didn't wake up for a day and a half."

They all turned as Theron walked up to them. "Sire... the Senators are waiting." He spoke, but a smile was on his face as well.

Martin nodded, "Yeah... sorry about that." He spoke taking a deep breath and bringing his psychic shields back down into place.

Theron looked at Daniel and Julie. "I believe you will be most interested to greet who awaits you children of Sparta." He spoke motioning with his head.

Dan and Julie turned and saw the small knot of men and women standing off to the side of the bay. The two oldest women had tears streaking their faces. Dan looked at Theron. "That..."

"Your families," Theron spoke, answering the question. "And they have been waiting five hundred years for this day. I suggest you don't keep them waiting any longer."

Martin slapped Dan in the back of the head gently. "Go on man! Don't be such a coward."

Martin watched as they began to walk towards the small knot of people. He looked at Theron and nodded. "Lead away." He spoke.

Martin walked with him as they covered the distance between them and where the Senators stood. They all dropped to one knee again as they stopped.

"Sire... may I present..." Theron began to speak.

"Senators of Sparta," Martin spoke, "Men and women who do not bow to me. Get up... all of you."

Dilios and the others looked at Theron, their eyes wide. Theron smiled and nodded his head. "I told you he was different Dilios."

Danny found himself shaking as he looked at the shorter woman in front of him. Her skin was a deep chocolate color, her black hair long and luxurious. Danny knew she had to be much older than the sixty odd years she looked, but he knew. This was his mother. The mother he never knew he had until only a few short weeks ago. He looked at the man standing just behind her, tall and proud, a jagged scar running across his cheek, his dark eyes burning bright. His skin was deeply tanned, burned a dark bronze by years in the sun. He was the equal to Danny in height and physical dimensions in every way, and it was the same face Dan had seen in the mirror thousands of times over the years.

Danny returned his eyes to the woman, who was now reaching for his cheeks. His eyes closed as her rough hands touched his skin and he brought his hands up to cover hers as feelings of love and comfort flooded him. He knew these hands.

"You... you remember don't you?" The woman's voice spoke softly. "You remember when these hands held you as an infant. I... I am Malaika... and I am your..."

"Mother." Danny finished her words softly. His arms lifted the much shorter woman into his grasp and he buried his face in her neck, inhaling deeply. "You are my mother!" He gasped, feeling her arms grip his shoulders as she wept unashamedly.

Malaika beat his shoulders gently. "Put me down Spartan!" She spoke.

"Stop it mother!" The young woman spoke from behind her, tears in her eyes.. "You have prayed for this day for centuries. Now it is here! Enjoy it."

Malaika held Danny's face in her hands, her tears streaking her dark cheeks. She turned, taking his hand, "These are your sisters Elenia and Tamara and your younger brothers Kumas and Palentes."

Danny looked at them, his eyes wide and starting to fill with tears as he embraced each of them tightly. Malaika took his arm and motioned to the man who stood beside her.

"Daniel... Daniel this is..."

"Show yourself Spartan!" Melancton bellowed loudly interrupting his wife.

Danny looked at him for a long moment before slowly reaching up to unbutton his fatigue top. He pulled it off and handed it to Anuk who stood just behind him. She took it, her own eyes teary and she watched as he pulled the t-shirt off as well exposing his powerful upper body. Anuk saw the looks of horror and pain cross the faces of his mother and sisters, and yet the looks of pride that flowed from his brothers and the giant of a man in front of him. Danny's father circled him, as if inspecting a piece of meat in a store. He gripped his arms and chest and his rough fingers traced the scars that nineteen bullets and a myriad of knives and shrapnel had caused over the years. He traced the long scar across Danny's abdomen that the steel pipe had caused.

"You have seen battle." Melancton spoke returning to stand in front of him.

Dan nodded slowly. "I have, more than my share."

"Battle in service to our King is the highest honor Spartan?" Melancton spoke.

Dan looked at him and shook his head, “No... battle in service to my brother and our pack is more.” He answered firmly. “And he has the scars to prove his service to all of us.”

Anuk was watching the face of the older man and she could tell he was on the edge of losing it himself. And then he did.

“My... my son.” Melancton’s voice was hoarse when he spoke, and in very un-Spartan like fashion he embraced Danny in a bear hug that would have crushed a smaller man, a bear hug that Danny eagerly returned his own tears now falling openly.

Anuk held his fatigue top tightly to her chest, smiling as her tears slid down her cheeks. Her cerulean blue eyes detected Danny’s mother looking at her, and his sisters and brothers moving up to circle around her. She didn’t flinch when they leaned close to sniff her, and touch her long rust colored red hair. She was equal in height to his mother and sisters, but like Danny and his father, his brothers towered over her.

Malaika stepped in front of her, taking in the elegant curve of her elf ears, and the softness of her lips. This she-elf’s skin was healthy and tanned and the uniform did nothing to hide the firmness of her body beneath it. Her dark eyes inspected the three long scars that cross her face but they were very faint now and only marred her beauty a fraction. She leaned close to Anuk and drew in a deep breath though her nose before pulling away. She reached up and softly traced the scars on Anuk’s face. “My son’s Spartan blood burns within you she elf.” Malaika spoke.

“It does Milady.” Anuk answered softly.

“And your blood burns within him most strongly.” She reached up again to trace the scars on Anuk’s face. “No doubt these are the cause?”

“He has claimed me as his... as his mate.” Anuk replied softly, “Something that I have thanked the gods for every day since.”

“Did you have to beat him to get him to do this she elf?” Malaika asked.

Anuk couldn’t help the smile that split her lips and she looked at Danny with an adoring love. “I did Milady.”

Malaika laughed at this and shook her head. “It runs in the blood it seems! I had to do the same thing.” She said before pulling Anuk into a warm embrace. She looked at her after a moment, taking her face into her rough but tender hands, “To have claimed the heart of a Spartan warrior she elf? That is an accomplishment that many have attempted, and far fewer have succeeded in doing. You join elite company child. What is your name?”

“Anuk Milady.”

Malaika nodded. “And welcome to my family Anuk. It is an honor to have you among us.”

Danny beamed his smile ear to ear and as he glanced over and saw Julie within the embrace of her father, Tari speaking with her mother with a smile as well, Julie caught his gaze and nodded. Martin was right. They were home.

Martin turned his head as Theron was introducing the Senators and telling him a little of each one. His eyes caught the movement near the side of the transport, and he saw four Spartan soldiers escorting the plain metal casket on the hover platform from the side towards the much older looking man and woman that Walter and his wife stood next too. The older woman’s face was streaked with tears and the man’s eyes were moist.

Martin looked at Theron quickly. “Excuse me.” He spoke before turning and moving for the side of the transport, the crimson cloak billowing in his wake.

Theron looked at him as he walked away. “My Lord?”

“Theron... what is going on?” Dilios asked surprised.

“I... I don’t know.” Theron answered as he began to follow Martin. This caused the Senators to follow as well.

The Spartan detail commander saw Martin only a few strides away and he quickly stopped the procession of the casket and he and the others bowed their heads as Martin slowed and stopped beside the metal casket. Men and women began to press close behind him, this event not planned.

Walter stepped away from his parents and moved over next to Martin. “Sire... this is not necessary.” He spoke. “You...”

Martin held up his hand as Walter felt two pairs of hands grip him. He turned to see Dysea and Anja pulling him back gently.

“This is something he needs to do.” Anja whispered to him.

They guided him back to stand next to his parents, Aricia already beside Walter’s mother, holding her arm and whispering to her.

Martin spread his hands on top of the casket, looking down through clear glass at the face of Androcles. The landing bay had grown silent as a tomb now, no one daring to make a noise. Martin caressed the casket reverently.

“I am... I am home Androcles.” He spoke softly to the glass, his voice carrying several rows back due to the silence of the bay now. “You... you asked of me two things fellow Spartan, before your life left you; that I take your vengeance upon those who tortured and defiled you, and that I bring you home. It was you who started me on this journey of discovery Androcles, and it is you who have instead brought me home. For that honor my friend I return to you what you gave to me without a moment’s thought... for I have not earned the right to continue wearing it.” Martin reached down and yanked up the sleeve of his body armor, gripping the bridle of the Shi Viska with his fingers and closing his eyes. There was a flash of yellow/gold and everyone who was able to watch gasped as the bridle came away from Martin’s arm with barely a pause. Martin placed the bridle on top of the casket as if he was caressing a brittle flower, smoothing it out until it was almost flat. “Know two things Androcles of Sparta... if you can hear me in the heavens. My first born son will bear your name in honor of what you have done, and you will lie beside my ancestors in a place of glory.”

This pronouncement brought gasps from the assembled men and women, many of the women with tears flowing freely, and the men with moist eyes.

“Theron?” Martin spoke, turning to look at him.

“Milord?” Theron stepped forward.

“The remains my ancestor, of Leonidas, where are they interned,” Martin asked.

“Thermopylae sire.” Theron answered. “There was a monument built there in honor of him many hundreds of years ago. We secretly moved his remains there after it was completed.”

Martin nodded. “Androcles will be buried next to him.” He spoke.

Theron nodded quickly. “I will see to it sire.”

Martin turned and walked quickly to where Walter stood. Aricia stood on one side of the older woman, holding her arm tightly, the old woman leaning against her for support. Anja and Dysea stood next to her, their eyes moist. Walter stood beside his father, the resemblance uncanny. This man was over three thousand years old, which meant that the woman was as well.

“Sire...” Walter spoke, his voice heavy as he held back the emotion. “Sire this is my mother Hestia. And my father Panos.”

Martin looked at them before slowly going to one knee in front of them, causing eyes to go wide and gasps to become even louder. Theron stepped forward to say something but Dysea lifted her arm keeping him back.

“I ask your forgiveness.” Martin spoke softly.

Panos held back his tears and reached down to slam his hands upon Martin’s shoulders with enough force to cause shudders through Martin’s body. He grabbed the body armor as best he could and with surprising strength for a man of his age he pulled Martin to his feet. “The King of Sparta... The King of Sparta does not bow to anyone!” Panos bellowed. “Least of all to the parents of the warrior he has so honored this day!”

“I have taken a son from you sir.” Martin spoke softly. “I have no father. No mother. Allow me to serve in his place as your son.”

“I have asked for no such thing Milord.” Panos spoke clearly stunned. “Dymas has told us what you did. You saved my son. You gave him a beautiful death in service to his King. That is all any Spartan wishes for.”

Martin nodded. “I know. It is not something you asked for... however it is something I ask of you.”

Hestia stepped up to Martin slowly. She reached out with her hand, touching his face. “Sire... will you show me his last moments.”

“Hestia!” Panos gasped. “That is...”

“Martin you do not have to do that.” Walter spoke quickly. “Mother... it is not a pleasant experience for our King. He does not wish to relive it.”

Martin took Hestia's hand in his gently and looked at Panos. "Sir?"

Panos looked at his wife before nodding his head. Theron stepped forward once more ignoring Dysea.

"Sire... this is not appropriate." He spoke. "Androcles was..."

Martin looked at him. "Theron... this is one of those moments." He spoke firmly.

Theron stopped talking immediately, took a deep breath and nodded his head. Martin turned back to Hestia and placed her hand on his cheek while he gripped Panos's hand. He reached into his mind and unlocked the door to that moment of his life, felt Walter's parents flinch as he established a connection with them, and then they too saw the door open and the memories pour out.

They saw the tunnel, the creatures with white skin, the grievous wounds suffered by Danny and Anuk, the retribution handed out by the Spartans their King had turned. They experienced the blood and the sounds as if they were there. They saw their son, the savage battle he had fought against his King in a mind craze driven by the white creatures. Then they saw they black wolf. Walter's mother gasped loudly when she saw that wolf and its yellow gold eyes. Her eyes sprang open then and she looked at Martin as the last words of her son echoed in her head. And then the connection was broken. Hestia reached up and stroked the scar on Martin's face that began just above his eyebrow and ran vertically across his eye and ended on his cheekbone.

"You... you have not removed the scar my King." She spoke softly.

Martin shook his head. "And I don't intend to." He replied. "It will always remind me of who put me on this path, and the honor he had at the end."

"I accept your offer sire." Hestia spoke, strength returning to her voice now. "I believe it is what my son would have wanted."

Panos nodded after a moment. "My mate has always been better with words than I sire." He replied.

Martin smiled. "Yes I do know that feeling." He spoke. "And I have three that are smarter than me."

Panos smiled. "In three nights we will have a feast in Androcles honor." He spoke. "I hope my newest son and his mates will attend."

"I would not miss it." Martin spoke.

"Milord... there is much we have to do before you settle in for the night." Andreus spoke now from behind Martin.

Martin looked at him and nodded. He turned back to Panos, "Three nights." He said before reaching for Dysea's hand and pulling her and his other two Queens with him.

No one had who witnessed the events this night would ever forget them. And word would spread rapidly among those completely loyal to Martin and the line of Leonidas that their new King was indeed a descendant of that hero.

The villa was all one level, and perched on top of the tree covered hilltop overlooking Sparta. The construction appeared like the buildings in the city, ancient and worn until you stepped inside. The villa was as modern inside as their home in Eden had been. The layout was large and comfortable, with spacious rooms and many windows. Most of the windows were open due to the warmth of the night, with only a soft cool breeze blowing. The villa was surrounded by meticulously cared for flower gardens with ornate brick walkways through them. A six foot high stone wall surrounded the immediate grounds, but the motion sensors and perimeter infra-red seekers were very much active. There were twenty-two men and women who made up the staff of the villa, cooks, gardeners, and housekeepers. Among these twenty-two men and women they had seven children, and all of them lived in the large two-story building on the east end of the grounds. Pine trees reaching hundreds of feet into the night sky dotted the area around the villa filling the air with the scent of pines and the flowers from the garden.

Martin sat in the main sitting room with Theron and the Senators as Anja, Dysea and Aricia explored the villa like giddy children. They met all of the workers at one point or another, and their noses drew them quickly to the kitchen where an older woman was baking some delicious smelling sweetcakes. They were just as much an enigma to the workers as the workers were to them, as Aricia had never been inside the villa. They learned the old woman's name was Helen, and once she began talking as she moved around the kitchen from one task to another, the three of them became enthralled in her words. Many of the other workers, to include the children, all girls since the boys had already begun their Agoge training, found their way to the kitchen to get a glimpse

of the ladies they would serve, and what they discovered was not what they had expected. One small girl sat on either side of Dysea, stroking her hair and the curve of her elf ears in fascination. One four year old girl sat in Anja's lap feeding her bits of the sweet cakes, while Aricia was brushing the long dirty blond hair of another. All of them were listening to Helen regale them of stories from hundreds of years ago. They were stories that the workers had heard dozens of times before, but now they sat listening once more as if they were brand new so much was the draw of their new employers.

It was after midnight when the mothers chased the children to bed, and with gentle smiles and hugs they were gone. Anja remained to help Helen finish the last of her baking, while Dysea and Aricia moved to the main bedroom. The main bedroom was more of a sitting room really, with two large comfortable sofas and several chairs. A glass top coffee table was decorated with fragrant flowers and candles. Twin double doors opened onto the patio while another door provided access to a huge walk in closet with rows and rows of clothes for all four of them. The other side of the closet opened into a massive bathroom with a Jacuzzi like tub, and large shower. Another door leading out of the bathroom opened into the main bedroom itself and both Dysea and Aricia had to smile when they saw the bed. It was obviously newly installed and easily large enough for six people, with fluffy pillows and thick quilts. And it was quite comfortable as attested to when Dysea and Aricia striped naked and got under the covers and were asleep in minutes.

Anja found her way to the bedroom and saw her lovers sleeping soundly in the bed, their limbs entwined, their platinum and raven colored hair spread out over the sheets. Anja smiled as she quickly striped out of her uniform and moved to the shower, where she climbed into the enormous stall and stood under the long luxuriating hot stream of water as it beat down on her tired muscles. Anja's head came up when she smelled him, and she smiled as the shower door opened and his gloriously naked body entered the stall with her.

Martin moved up behind her and pressed up against her body, lowering his lips to the hollow between her neck and shoulder dropping a soft kiss on her skin, "Hey there." He spoke softly as his hands came to rest on her hips.

Anja's eyes closed in delight as his lips sent shivers through her flesh and his touch ignited her hormones immediately. His aura engulfed her wholly, her senses floating in his scent and presence. This is what Anja craved more than anything. Aricia and Dysea could send her pleasure receptors into overdrive, but it was Martin's touch that took them beyond overdrive into uncharted territory. While Aricia and Dysea could and did elicit intense orgasms from her with their lips and tongues and hands, Martin could give her an equally powerful experience just by caressing her skin.

"Hi." Anja answered, leaning into his embrace and pressing back against him. She felt his enormous cock press against her flesh in the crack of her ass as his fingers fluttered down the outsides of her thighs causing shivers of pleasure to ripple through her. "Aricia and Dysea are already asleep." She said softly.

"Tonight I just want you." His voice whispered in her ear as his arms encircled her waist, his hands grabbing her large breasts and pulling her close to him as he pressed his face into her wet hair.

Anja sighed in enchantment and relished in the sensations his powerful arms caused. She turned slowly within his embrace, and lifted her face to look up at him. His lips descended and they shared a warm kiss that had Anja's hormones igniting in mad dashes. They parted after a moment and she looked into his beautiful dark brown eyes.

"How are you doing Marty?" She asked him softly, reaching up to stroke his cheek.

"Theron and the others are finally gone." He answered and the relief in his voice was evident. "It's kind of overwhelming really. It's like everything has suddenly hit me all at once Anja." He looked at her, and for the first time since she had known him, Anja saw doubt in those eyes. "I'm... I'm sorry that I have changed your life Anja."

Anja put a finger to his lips. "I have loved you since I first saw you Martin Hunt... Martin Leonidas. Because I was too dense to realize that and I let you get away is not your fault. And don't you dare apologize for making me what I am now. I wouldn't change that for the world. I'm a werewolf..." She chuckled as she stroked his cheek. "I love saying that. I'm stronger, faster, I'm more aware of life all around me, and I adore being able to touch you with my thoughts. What you have given me has made me able to love you just as completely as you love me, as you have always loved me. It let's me love Dysea and Aricia completely, also without question."

Anja wrapped her arms around his shoulders and he lifted her up, her legs going around his waist and her ankles locking at the small of his back. His hands dropped to her ass and he held her as if he was holding a child.

“Don’t ever question how much we love you Martin.” She continued softly. “You have changed all of us. I love Dysea and Aricia just as completely as I love you, and they feel the same about me; about you. I’m not going to try and begin to explain how that can be... only that it is and we all cherish it.”

“We have entered into the unknown here Anja.” He said.

“Aren’t you the one who told me not to fear the unknown?” She said with a smile.

“I don’t fear it.” Martin replied. “I just don’t like not being able to predict what will happen.”

Anja wiggled her hips downward, brushing her pussy against his cock and feeling him immediately spring to life. She smiled seductively. “I know what is going to happen now.” She said in a husky voice, dragging her four inch long tongue up his neck and throat.

Martin tilted his head slightly. “And what is that?” He asked.

“We are going to face the unknown together starting tomorrow.” She answered. “But tonight you’re going to put that huge beautiful cock of yours inside me and fuck me until I scream your name.”

“Oh really?” Martin spoke with a sly grin, as he dragged the length of his tool across her opening and watched her eyes close and her teeth clench as electric jolts of pleasure coursed through her. “Why would you think that?” He spoke. “I’m not some oversexed man that you can...”

Anja covered his mouth with hers and shoved her tongue between his lips as she pushed her hips down onto his proudly erect cock. She gasped within their kiss as the first five inches slid easily into her slick wetness, and she felt his body tense, his hands gripping her ass tightly, the urge to pull her down completely onto him almost unbearable. Their lips came apart, small strands of saliva falling between their water covered bodies as Anja gazed at him with fire in her Jade green wolf eyes. Her limbs tingled with delicious ripples, her belly beginning to do a slow burn.

“This female wolf wants her mate! All of him!” Anja spoke boldly, her fangs extended now. Her eyes echoed the need of her velvet pussy, and her honey scent became aroused and pungent, filling the air around Martin. He smiled as his eyes changed as well, breathing in her arousal.

Martin leaned close to her lips, her large breasts pressing against his bare chest, her nipples burning against his skin. Martin adored Anja’s breasts due to their size and firmness. Her breasts were larger than Dysea’s or Aricia’s by a good amount, and her nipples whenever she was heated like now were the most tasty treats Martin could latch his lips onto.

“Then this wolf must give in to the demands of his mate.” He growled.

Anja’s head flew back as his hands pulled her down completely onto him and the remainder of his wonderfully thick twelve inch cock filled her in one heart stopping plunge. Her lips parted in a breathless cry as she felt his lava hot balls press against her ass cheeks, his entire throbbing cock filling her like no other had. It was almost as if his cock grew in size and girth when he changed even this little bit, and he stretched her as no man ever had. As he only could. The clenching in her belly spread quickly to her pussy and in seconds, just having the heat of his pulsing cock inside her sent Anja over the edge. Her head came forward and her nails dug into the skin of his shoulders as her orgasm flooded through her in a powerful wave. Her hips quivered atop him, each movement sending small jolts of desire through her. She felt her juices bathing his scorching hot shaft and balls and he simply held her tightly, content to let her relish the sensations ripping through her.

After a long moment, she pulled her head from his chest and looked at him, her chest heaving, her nipples scrapping against his skin. She could still feel him deep inside her, burning hot and hard as steel. “I... I take it... I take it we aren’t done.” She spoke between gasps.

Martin smiled and kissed her hard, his tongue plundering, taking what he desired and this sent Anja’s blood to boiling again. His hands gripped her ass tighter and he began to stroke into her, using his incredible power to lift her nearly off him and then drive her back down. Anja simply went lax in his arms, laced her fingers behind his neck and allowed her King and love to plunder her body as his tongue plundered the depths of her lips. This part of being a wolf Anja loved as her body quivered from the strength of his thrusts into her, and she basked in the pleasures that shot through her with every downward plunge onto his dominating cock. He had possessed her very soul that night so long ago, and every time he took her now, it only served to reinforce and strengthen her love for him.

Martin clenched his teeth, as he pulled away from Anja's lips, her breathing coming in short cries of pleasure. His fangs bit into the skin of his lower jaw drawing blood as he pounded his cock, fully twelve inches long and scorching hot into this beautiful petite woman who was now his mate. Her fingers raked across his shoulders and she began to drive her hips down upon him with force, meeting his thrusts into her center. Her pussy spasmed and clenched on his pole, alternating between milking his length and releasing its own juices as Anja was lost in a world of continuous small orgasms that were rocking her body now. Anja pushed her face against his neck and bit down on his shoulder with just enough force to break the skin and cause Martin to lose his battle.

With a groan of defeat his huge cock swelled even more and Anja screamed in rapture as she felt his come boil up the length of his cock and erupt like a volcano within her womb. She clutched him tightly to her, swallowed in the sensations each blast of his come within her caused. Her own belly clenched and unclenched as her orgasm matched his in intensity and power. The small triangle of red hair just above her aching clit was saturated with their combined juices, and just as he always did, heedless of that fact, Martin clutched her to him even tighter.

Anja stroked his long hair now, as he nuzzled her neck and shoulders, spreading butterfly kisses across her skin in delightful abandon, his fangs nibbling gently.

"You... you are so good to me." Anja whispered into his ear with a smile of contentment and sleepiness. Martin's lips nibbled her ear lobe and she groaned. "You sound tired."

"Can we fall asleep just like this so you don't have to move?" Anja asked. "I want to fall asleep with you inside me."

"I think we can arrange that." He whispered in her ear. He held her with one arm and turned the shower off with the other before stepping out of the stall. Anja gripped his head in glee as each step he took caused residual ripples of steaming delight to course through her. He walked into the bedroom and saw that Dysea and Aricia had separated almost by instinct. Martin lowered Anja to the bed and with slow movements he unlocked her legs from his back and rotated her slowly to the side as he lowered himself behind her, pulling her tightly to him, not once removing his cock from within her velvet heat.

Anja cooed softly as his arms pulled her tight and she felt Aricia roll towards her in a dreamlike sleep, reaching for her. Anja opened her arms and pulled the younger woman close, Aricia's head going to her breasts. She felt Martin's hand reach behind him and pull Dysea close to his back as her arm snaked around his waist and rested on Anja's hip.

Aricia's azure blue eyes fluttered open as she kissed Anja tenderly. "I... I claim him tomorrow night." She said in a low sleepy voice.

"And I the night after," Dysea spoke from behind Martin in a similar sleepy voice.

"Do I get a say in this schedule?" Martin asked with his own tired smile.

"NO!" The three of them spoke together.

Martin smiled and snuggled his face into Anja's damp hair at the base of her neck before allowing sleep to wash over him.

Martin woke up the next morning, the sun beating down on his upper body. He spread his arms out reaching for a warm body and lifted his head when he found no one. The smell of sweetcakes and grilled steak reached his nostrils and he grinned, his stomach responding to the smells. He threw the sheet aside and headed out of the bedroom half awake, letting his nose lead him. He walked down the corridor heedless of the fact that he had no clothes on, his bare feet padding on the cool floor. He reached the dining room which he remembered was adjacent to the eat-in part of the kitchen. He rounded the corner.

"Something smells really good!" He spoke rubbing his eyes. "Why didn't anyone..." Martin froze as his hand came down and he looked at the faces staring back at him. The eight person table was full, Dysea being closest to him, followed by Aricia and then Anja. Theron sat next to Walter and Dilios, with Walter's father and Thr'won completing the table. Helen stood behind the large stove, two other kitchen helpers frozen in their spots. All of them were staring at him, frozen in place.

One of the younger female kitchen attendants dropped her eyes and then the pots she had in her hands. The crashing noise sent Dysea and Aricia into motion as they were the closest. The three of them were dressed in light terry cloth robes, and Anja remained in her seat calmly sipping her coffee, a smile on her face.

“Excuse me!” Dysea spoke as she turned around in front of Martin’s naked form, remembering she had done this same thing not so long ago. She was going to have to explain to Martin he could not walk around naked she thought to herself. “I’m sorry... truly. He... he does this all the time. He...”

Martin caught Dysea’s wildflower scent and his eyes widen and he lowered his head to her neck inhaling deeply. “Good morning *Melda Min*.” He said his voice throaty and deep.

Dysea hissed in delight as she tried to push him back out the door and not having much luck as his aura pulsed through her veins, making her head swim, “By the gods *Nauta Melme*... not here!” She gasped, pushing back against him and trying to guide him out of the room.

Aricia had grabbed his arm by now and she tried to drag him out as well. “Martin... we... we have guests!” She spoke sternly.

Martin pulled her too him with a quick yank and nuzzled Aricia’s neck, causing her knees to grow weak and she slumped against him, still attempting to push him out of the room.

“Good morning Little Wolf.” He growled into her ear in the same voice.

“You... you beast!” Aricia gasped, clearly affected by his aura and that of Dysea, who by now was beginning to sweat.

Even as affected as they were by his aura, and their own pounding need, Dysea and Aricia finally got him out of the room. Anja chuckled as she heard Dysea yelp in surprise as they chased him back down the corridor.

Helen looked at her young assistant. “Close your mouth Layna!” Helen snapped. “Have you never seen a naked man?”

The young girl looked at her. “Not... not that...”

“Enough girl... save it for your dreams! Back to work!” Helen barked.

Walter and his father burst out laughing, while Thr’won looked at Anja with a stunned expression. “Is... is he like that every morning?” She asked.

Anja grinned and sipped her coffee, “Pretty much.” She said evenly, but with a hint of dreaminess in her words. “We kind of like it.”

“He is... he is...” Thr’won couldn’t get the words out.

Anja smiled and looked at her, “Deliciously so.” She spoke with no embarrassment at having five men at the table with them.

Dilios and even Theron could not hold back the laughter now and Panos pounded his son on the back. “Oh I like my new son!” Panos bellowed. “He has balls!”

As the words left Panos mouth, even Helen broke out laughing and she had to step back from her stove as Dilios roared so loudly he fell out of the chair he was sitting in, dragging Theron with him in a fit.

It was forty minutes before Martin returned wearing urban pattern fatigue pants and boots with a black t-shirt. Dysea and Aricia came in right behind him, now fully clothed and Aricia moved to the ever present coffee pot and poured out two mugs as Dysea sat next to Anja. Martin ignored the looks he got from everyone, as he looked very pleased with himself, but there was no missing the looks of content satisfaction on the faces of Dysea and Aricia. Martin settled into the chair on the other side of Anja and looked at her with a smile, while Aricia perched on the same chair as Dysea, their shoulders touching.

“Good morning.” He said calmly, leaning close.

Anja smiled and kissed him softly, reaching up to brush away a strand of Dysea’s hair from his ear. Anja could taste Aricia on Martin’s lips and she smiled. *You are insatiable*. She spoke within their connection.

When I have Queens that look as good as the three of you what am I supposed to do? He replied taking the coffee from Aricia. *I’m a wolf*.

You are a beast. Dysea’s voice echoed, *But a very good beast to us*.

I still get him tonight. Aricia spoke.

The four of them laughed together regardless that they had company, and this caused the others to look at one another. This was the first time they had seen the four of them actually communicating telepathically, and just like Thr'won had reported, none of them showed the least bit of strain in doing so.

"Is there something funny sire?" Theron asked.

Martin looked at him, "Inside joke." He said quickly, turning to look at Thr'won. "I apologize for my earlier appearance Thr'won. I'm not used to having people in my home, and I forgot where I was."

"That's... that's quite alright." She answered, still somewhat flustered.

"Now perhaps someone can explain to me why everyone is here?" Martin spoke.

"We were explaining to your mates... before you took two of them away..." Theron began speaking somewhat sternly.

"Theron... this is one of those moments!" Martin said.

Theron couldn't help but chuckle and nod his head. "Considering the reasons... I will not mention it again."

"Good. So what's on the agenda for today?" Martin asked, "Shopping with my mates; a movie and lunch on the town perhaps." Martin saw their expressions and he laughed. "I'm joking people... relax."

"Word has already spread of your arrival." Theron spoke causing Martin to look at him as Helen brought over a plate with a thick steak, several eggs and four slices of thick toasted bread. The smell of the food caught Martin's nose once more and he looked at the steak his mouth watering.

Helen placed her hand on his shoulder and smiled. "You will need your strength sir." She spoke with a knowing glance at Anja and the others.

Martin grinned and sliced off a portion of the steak putting it into his mouth and chewing, savoring the finely cooked meat. He looked at Theron. "And how did that happen?" He asked.

"We don't know." Walter replied. "But it appears as if our cover story was the one spread. A strong Alpha from North America and his three mates have come to Sparta with some of their pack."

Martin cut another piece of meat and looked at Anja as she placed her chin on his shoulder, staring at the meat. Martin held it out to her on the fork without a thought and she plucked it off with her teeth. "So everyone who was at the bay last night is not as trustworthy as you first thought?" He spoke.

"They were told to say nothing." Dilios spoke. "However that did not happen... but at least they spoke of the cover story we designed and not your actual identity."

Martin had cut three more pieces of meat and Dysea was the next to lean over, the smell of the steak filling her nose. Again without thought Martin held it out for her and she snatched it with her teeth. He stabbed one more and held it out for Aricia who did the same before he put another into his mouth. Helen took note of this more than anyone, but she kept her thoughts to herself.

"So our plans are still intact?" Martin asked as he chewed.

"It would appear that way for the moment." Theron said. "Panos has agreed to accompany you, Dymas and Dilios in a tour of the Senate building and government offices. Helen has volunteered to give your mates a tour of the city to shop for stores for the villa here. All of you will have access to funds set aside for the King's return, so please feel free to purchase whatever you would like."

They all watched as Anja nudged Martin and he stabbed another piece of steak for her, which she promptly popped into her mouth. The same sequence followed again for Dysea and Aricia, and they did it while acting as if it was the most normal thing in the world.

"When does my training start?" Martin asked.

"Excuse me?" Theron asked confused. "What training?"

"The shortened version of the Agoge that the others are doing," Martin replied. "When do I start?"

Theron looked at Walter and the others before turning back to him, "My Lord... that was not in any plan." He spoke softly.

"It is now." Martin replied.

"Sire... your combat skills are superior to most of our Spartans already." Theron answered. "I dare say that only the most senior Spartan Centurions could match your experience or level of skill."

"I will not lead men I don't train with." Martin told him, his jaw firm. He didn't see the flash in Panos's eyes or the slight glance he gave to his son.

“My Lord... there is a class of Spartans that begin their advanced combat training this afternoon.” Panos spoke up, ignoring the look Theron gave him. “I believe that Melancton’s son, your friend Daniel, he and some others will be with this class.”

Theron looked at Panos his eyes wide. “It is not possible!” He said. “There is too much he must learn as it is!”

Martin looked at Panos. “Will this training still allow me the time to receive whatever else Theron feels I need?” He asked.

“It should Milord.” Panos replied. “ACT is for those Spartans that have already fully completed their Agoge, their initial training. With the exception of several overnight exercises the training is held during the day, and consists mainly of physical and mental groupings that build experience.”

Martin nodded. “Then I’ll do that.” He spoke. He looked at Theron. “After the training I’ll continue with whatever you feel is necessary Theron.”

“Sire... the political situation is much more delicate. I believe you will better suit Sparta’s needs if you devote your time completely to my lessons and those of Thr’won.” He spoke.

Anja snagged another piece of meat that Martin held up for her and then got to her feet. “His decision is made Theron.” She spoke firmly, her hand resting on Martin’s shoulder. “There will be no more discussion on that. And I want to inspect the hospitals and clinics as well. There may be some things I can learn from your doctors here. Can that be arranged?”

Walter leaned forward before Theron could reply. “I can escort you around for that Milady.” He said. “I was going to do that very thing anyway because I have been away so long. I will speak to the Chief Physician today and schedule that for tomorrow or the next day perhaps, if that is acceptable?”

Anja nodded and grasped Dysea’s hand as she moved behind her. “I am going to change and then we can leave with Helen” She spoke leaning over and kissing her softly on the lips. She then leaned over and kissed Aricia in much the same manner before turning to head for the bedroom.

Dysea nodded. “We’ll be waiting.” She turned back to look at the others. “I would like to visit the schools you have, and study how your education system works. Is that possible?”

Theron ignored her and looked at Martin. “Sire... we were not prepared to have the Queens out and about doing different things.”

Martin looked at him oddly. “Did you expect them to remain here all day and relax?” He asked.

“Actually Milord... I did.” Theron spoke.

Dysea looked at Theron from her seat, her emerald eyes narrowing somewhat. “We will not be bound to this place while we are here.” She snapped. “These are my people now as well, and I want to learn about them as much as I am able. I find education to be a wonderful thing and was hoping to learn some things that perhaps might be applied to elf and human children in North America.”

Martin sat back in his chair looking at Theron. “If you are expecting me to support you on this Theron, it’s not going to happen. I’m not going to tell them they have to remain here. They wouldn’t listen to me even if I did. I support them in whatever they want to do, that is part of why I love them so much. Dysea’s combat experience is nearly the equivalent of my own, Anja’s not far behind that and Aricia is more than capable of taking care of herself.” He spoke. “Regardless of what any of you think.” He saw Aricia turn to look at him with an adoring glow in her azure eyes.

“I just thought that...” Theron started.

“Thought that because they are women I would want to keep them safe? They are my mates, not my possessions. They share my life as well as my bed, and I’m quite sure they’d kick my ass if I tried to do what you suggest.” Martin spoke. He pushed his plate away from him and leaned across the table. “Let’s get one thing straight... Dysea, Anja and Aricia are their own persons. And if I am King... that makes them Queens correct?” He asked softly, his voice not carrying past where the others sat.

Theron nodded. “Yes Milord.”

Martin’s eyes narrowed. “Then why in the fuck are you arguing with us about it?” He barked his tone angry. “I am stronger because of who they are! And no one will keep them locked away!”

This caused Helen and the kitchen staff to stop and turn to look at the table. The room was silent and Theron sat back in his chair as well, his face drawn tight.

Theron looked at Martin and nodded his head, “Very well.” He spoke. “I will make the arrangements.”

“Do that!” Martin said.

“My King... I believe the Holy One is merely attempting to minimize the opportunities for events we do not control to happen.” Thr’won spoke softly. “At least until we reveal who you are.”

Martin nodded. “I understand that, but I’m not going to allow anyone to confine the women I love to this home, regardless of the risk. They have as much right to explore and see their new home as I do. Events will happen regardless of what we do, and I’ve made my decision. This conversation is over.”

Dilios rose to his feet quickly. “Sire... our transportation is outside.” He spoke, attempting to defuse the situation. “We can leave as soon as you are ready.”

Martin nodded. “Then let’s get to it.” He spoke.

Helen watched as everyone filed out of the room, the Steward being the last one and not looking happy in the least. She had heard some of their conversation but not all due to the whispering. She sensed Layna come up beside her.

Helen?

Yes Layna I sensed it as well.

They were communicating telepathically. I could not penetrate the shields they had up Helen. No one has mental shields that I can’t breach. I’ve never felt anything so powerful.

Were you detected?

No... I kept my presence mingled in with the surface thoughts of everyone in the room.

This is no mere distant descendant of our King as that old wind bag would have us believe. She spoke.

Our contact at the landing bay did say the aura he felt sweep the interior was unlike anything he had ever felt. It was enormously powerful, with untapped potential. Layna spoke. *He was drunk when he made his final report, and his comments were dismissed.*

Helen nodded. *Perhaps we should speak to our contact and question him more carefully.*

The young woman looked at her. *Whatever is hidden behind those shields is unlike anything I have ever tasted.* She said. *The four of them are linked in a way I have never seen. Whatever they are masking... it bleeds through their shielding. The flame haired one... Anja... her aura reeks of potential, as does the she elf and Aricia... but his... his is beyond measure.*

Helen looked at her. *Can it be detected?*

Layna shook her head. *Not unless the person doing the scanning is a Tier Six like you or myself, and even then only if they were looking for it. I only caught the faintest flash because his anger grew. I detect Dymas’s teachings within them, and Thr’won. They were taught to mask their auras well.*

Did you see the way they reacted to him when he nuzzled them, the she-elf and Aricia? Helen asked. *That is most unusual. And then how he fed them from his plate without thought or care. Those are the signs of a Pureblood Alpha... not some distant cousin.*

What are you saying Helen?

I... I don’t know. There is something about him. Helen said. *They tell us he is some distant descendant of Leonidas and swear us to secrecy... and yet publicly they are saying he is just a strong Alpha discovered and turned by Dymas.*

Why tell us one thing and publicly have something entirely different? Layna asked.

They wouldn’t... unless they were attempting to hide his real identity. Helen spoke. *They know we only serve the Line of Leonidas. Never in our history have we served another. Theron tells us he is a distant descendant and we are honor bound to serve him. Publicly they give him a different identity, so he will not garner attention.*

Why?

That is what we must discover, though I don’t believe he is a distant descendant. Helen spoke.

What do you think he is then?

Helen looked at her. *Inform the others of what information we have and insure our contact is sober and then have someone question him thoroughly.*

Helen... who do you think he is?

If what we have felt him shielding is any indication Layna... then we may very well have the direct descendant of King Leonidas among us. Helen spoke seeing Layna’s eyes go wide at this. *Speak of this with no*

one Layna! Not yet! I will confer with the Oracle tonight after I have spent time with his mates. Perhaps then I will know something more. Do only as I tell you, nothing more. Our lives may depend on it child.

Layna nodded and hurried from the kitchen.

They wore casual outfits so that they blended in with the citizens of the city as they walked the streets. Due to her elf heritage and not being ashamed of their beauty Dysea wore the most revealing outfit, a long soft blue pant suit that hugged her exceptional figure like a glove. There was a split up either side of the pants revealing bare leg up to the middle of her thighs. A leather belt was cinched around her waist, the top of the outfit held up by a glittering gold band that wrapped around her elegant neck. Her tanned shoulders were bare, and the middle of the pantsuit was cut like an oval, revealing the deep cleft between her firm breasts and the skin of her upper abdomen.

Anja and Aricia wore nearly identical summer outfits of gray and red. The gray pants fit quite snugly, outlining their legs and firm asses, the soft red shirt tails tied in the front exposing their own abdomens while they held in full breasts. All of them wore their hair down, shining in the sunlight, and they carried handbags as they moved along the streets to the different vendors with Helen.

Helen would watch them as they shopped, haggling over prices with the vendors as any smart Spartan woman would. They chatted with each other and her, asking intelligent questions and always smiling. They greeted men and women alike in friendly tones and waves. Helen could just detect the almost imperceptible tremor around them and she realized this was the sign that they were talking telepathically with each other. Helen, like Thr'won had been, was amazed with the ease of which they talked within their minds. Much of the time they held hands, not as friends would do, but as lovers, and this revelation shocked Helen. It was not uncommon for women to have a relationship in Sparta, and unlike years in the past it was not looked down upon. What surprised Helen was the depth of this relationship. It was obvious to even the unintelligent observer that these women loved each other deeply. Added to the fact that they all shared a bed with the same man, a man Helen suspected was something much more than what she and the others were told, it was setting off alarms in the back of her mind, and they weren't alarms of danger.

Helen waited until they had been shopping for almost three hours before asking her first serious question. They had stopped at a small café on one of the busier streets, with children playing in a park across from them. Once they were seated and coffee and tea served Helen looked at Dysea.

She lifted her tea to sip it and spoke, "Would I be too bold if I asked how you and Milord Martin were introduced Milady?" Helen asked.

Dysea met her eyes. "Helen please I am Dysea. If we are to become friends I would prefer to not stand on formality." She spoke, her emerald eyes glittering in the sunlight.

"I don't believe any of us would." Aricia spoke softly.

Helen smiled with genuine warmth, surprised at the words. Aricia she knew from others was not arrogant or pompous. The dishonor on her family was still spoken of in rumors and whispers in the back rooms of Taverns, and how it was not just. That this elf and human female felt the same way was surprising. "Dysea it is then and you honor me with your words."

"It is courtesy." Dysea replied as she sipped her tea. Dysea smiled and took a deep breath. "How I met *Nauta Melme*?" She spoke. "The short version... My people were investigating attacks on our villages and..."

"Forgive me... your people?" Helen asked.

Anja smiled and looked at Helen. "Dysea is too humble Helen. She was... actually she still is the Queen of the Wood Elves." Anja said.

Helen looked at her wide eyed. "You... you are a Queen?" She gasped.

Dysea chuckled. "I consider myself to be a caretaker now more than a Queen. All of us had a hand in the actions that brought us here. Martin... Martin saved me from the Alliance Assassins that helped some traitors among my people to usurp my rule. When we were exiled by those we thought would be our allies we decided to build our own city where all free men and women and elves could live. We've done quite well actually."

Helen leaned forward. "You built your own city?" She asked. "We... we have heard of a large event happening in North America that concerned the elves, a revolt of some kind."

Dysea nodded. "The Alliance attempted to start a war between my people and fellow elves. Martin led the operation to stop them. We freed my people of the Alliance influence and brought peace to most of North America. At least the part we control anyway." Dysea took a sip of coffee. "I have shared his life since the day he rescued me, his bed for nearly that long, and he turned me almost a month ago to this day."

Helen attempted to conceal her look of shock at this information, hoping she succeeded as she lifted her tea to hide the quivering of her lips. "That is quite a tale Dysea." Helen said finally.

Dysea smiled. "Well he did tell me life with him would be an adventure." She spoke. "So far he hasn't been wrong."

Helen looked at Anja. "Mila..." She smiled. "Anja?"

Anja grinned as she held her coffee in both her hands. "My story is no where near as grandiose as Dysea's."

"Stop it *Melyanna!*" Dysea spoke.

Anja smiled and leaned over to kiss her softly. She looked at Helen. "I've known Martin since before the comet. We shared a single night together, and from that moment on he's been in my blood. It took me a while to figure that out as dense as I am, but once we returned to earth it all kind of came together."

Helen looked at her. "Returned to earth?" She spoke. "What do you mean?"

"Martin and I were assigned to a military unit before the comet came. That unit was stationed on the moon at a station called EDEN." Anja explained. "Things got kind of screwed up when the comet passed and we ended up coming over four hundred years into the future. I don't begin to try to understand that... I'm a doctor of medicine and genetics, not astrophysics and space/time continuums. All I know and care about is that I finally saw the light and Martin came back into my life. He turned me two weeks after Dysea, and I haven't looked back since."

"So he was a member of a military unit... before the Sky Fire?" Helen asked.

Anja nodded. "He was the leader of the unit. To my knowledge one of the most decorated soldiers in the military at that time."

Helen looked at Aricia. "How... how do you factor into this Aricia?" She asked. "You are from Sparta."

Aricia nodded. "When Dymas contacted the Holy One to let him know he was alive, I was there. It was all put together rather quickly, and I ended up getting on the transport with my brother Andreus." She replied. "We got to North America just as this battle began and we fought with Martin throughout it. We remained for almost two weeks and then returned here. He claimed me under the Centennial of the last Moon."

Dysea smiled. "That was a wonderful night." She said.

Helen looked at her, her eyes darting between them. "He... he claimed you all under the moon?" She asked. She saw the shy nods and shook her head slowly, "That... that is most impressive." She said. "But after what I saw this morning I'm not surprised." She blurted out before she could stop herself. Her eyes flew open. "Oh forgive me!"

Anja, Dysea and Aricia burst out laughing at the horrified expression on Helen's face when she realized what she had said. Anja squeezed her arm. "It is fine Helen." She spoke. "He is rather gifted in that department. Something all of us are quite delighted by."

"You share him?" Helen asked timidly.

Dysea nodded. "And each other." She spoke unashamed of her words.

"I suspected as much in only the short time I have known you." Helen said.

"We are not ashamed of that fact." Aricia spoke quickly.

Helen nodded. "Nor should you be." She replied. "It is rare to..."

"Aricia... now this is a pleasant surprise." The male voice spoke from behind them.

Anja and Dysea felt Aricia stiffen slightly at the voice and they looked at her. *Little Wolf?* Anja spoke quickly.

It is... it is Midlan. Aricia answered and her voice within their connection was laced with hate and disgust.

They turned to look at the tall, brown haired young man standing on the other side of the pedestrian divider.

Midlan was the son of the Spartan Senator Autolycus. While not an unattractive man, he carried himself with an aura of arrogance that was both demeaning and superior in every way. He was lean and semi muscular,

but his time walking in the footsteps of his father was taking its toll, and he was not in the same shape he was when he finished his Spartan training several centuries earlier. Two other young men of the same age were standing on either side of him and all of them were dressed in casual brown outfits.

Wait... you mean this overbearing turd is the son of a Spartan Senator? Dysea asked.

Aricia laughed softly and relaxed. She was no longer the same woman she used to be, for she had a man who had claimed her not for a trophy but for love. And she shared a love with two women even more beautiful than her.

Well... I wouldn't consider myself beautiful. Anja spoke. *Dysea is the beautiful one. I'm just plain.*

That is nonsense Melyanna. Dysea spoke. *Little Wolf is more beautiful than both of us.*

And she tastes delicious too. Anja agreed.

Stop it both of you. Aricia exclaimed even as her face blushed.

“Where have you been Aricia?” Midlan asked stepping up to the divider. “I have been looking for you. And please... introduce me to these incredibly beautiful young female wolves.”

Just ignore him. Anja spoke. *Maybe he'll get the point and go away.*

Dysea looked at Helen. “Helen is there a shop nearby that sells lingerie?” She asked.

Helen smiled as she realized that they were ignoring Midlan and his cohorts, who she considered to be fools anyway. “Why yes there is... just half a block down this street.”

“I asked you to introduce your friends Aricia.” Midlan spoke again. “Ignoring me will not make me go away.”

Aricia shrugged. “I was hoping it might. I have no desire to speak with you Midlan, so you may continue on your way.” She said out loud.

“Aricia your actions do not endear you to my affections.” Midlan spoke.

Aricia turned to look at him, her azure eyes narrowing. “I no longer need your feigned affections Midlan, not that I ever did really.” She spoke. “You can keep moving.”

Midlan reached down and moved the barrier aside stepping inside with his two goons. He got to within five feet of Aricia and she hit him with her aura.

When a male werewolf/shifter claims a female as his mate, his aura leaves an imprint on the female's aura that is easily detectable to other males, not to mention the scent of his body all over her would remain with her for many days. Aricia knew this and waited for the moment when she would get the most reaction from Midlan. Her aura was not only saturated with Martin's more powerful one, but it was also laced with Anja and Dysea's imprint as well, as theirs was with Aricia.

Midlan came to an abrupt halt like he had suddenly hit a wall as her aura washed over him. His nose crinkled and his eyes grew wide. He looked at her his face showing his anger. “You have... another male has claimed you!” He snapped.

Aricia smiled from her chair, looking up at him. “He not only claimed me... he possessed me!” She spoke. “He was my first... but you know that. And he has had me many times since that first night, and each time has been more glorious than the last for he is large and fills me to overflowing.” She spoke proudly and with no small degree of smugness. “He claimed me under the Centennial of the Moon, just as he claimed his other two mates.” Midlan's eyes went to Anja and Dysea, and they both smiled sweetly at him and waved. “I never desired your feigned attentions Midlan, and now that I have found true love, thankfully I won't have to settle for something less than I deserve.”

“Deserve?” Midlan snapped. “Your family is dishonored! You are dishonored! What fool would claim you as a mate!”

Aricia smiled. “Someone considerably more intelligent than you it seems.” Aricia replied in a sarcastic tone. She felt a swell of pride within herself and as she spoke she vowed to never allow anyone to demean her again for something which was not her shame to bear.

“We're having lunch here.” Anja spoke from her chair. “The café for sniveling whiners is down the street.”

Midlan glared at her. “Do you know who I am?” He almost yelled.

Dysea looked at him. “You seem to be of the opinion that we care.” She answered evenly.

“I am Midlan, son of Autolycus, Senator of Sparta!” Midlan spoke hotly. “You will show me respect she-elf!”

“You are nothing when held against the wolf that holds our hearts.” Dysea snarled back at him. All conversation had ceased in the café and all eyes were upon this platinum blond elf as she slowly got to her feet. “And respect is something earned you fool, not demanded. A real man would know this without strutting about like a peacock demanding respect where none is given. Do yourself a favor and move from this place before you are embarrassed further.”

“I will say who is embarrassed here!” Midlan snapped. He motioned with his head to the two men with him. “Seize her!”

Anja snapped out and grabbed Aricia, pulling her back in her chair. *We'll let Dysea handle this.*

Dysea was a blur of motion, her natural elf speed and agility enhanced to inhuman proportions when her beloved changed her. Her tempered fighting skills were second only to Martin as many people had commented recently. It was these skills she employed now. The first man was three times her size, and as he reached out to grab her, Dysea slipped under his reach, grabbed his wrist and elbow and launched him over her right hip. With a grunt and howl of surprise he sailed cleanly over the table, Anja calmly ducking out of the way and he smashed into the next table shattering the ornate wood table and landing with a thud of pain.

Dysea continued within the same motion, spinning around and knocking aside the second man's arms as he reached for her. She continued her spin and grabbed the front of his shirt using his own momentum to ram him down to the top of her table. Her left hand dropped to the side in a split second where she snatched aside the long dress and revealed the Shukur fighting knife strapped to her silky thigh. She grabbed the handle and drew the knife, bringing it down with great force onto the man's shoulder. The blade pierced his flesh and drove down with such power it cut through his flesh like butter and embedded into the wood surface of the table as he screamed in pain.

Dysea spun back to her right, her other hand dropping to her right leg and snatching the Shukur knife from that thigh and with the speed of a striking pit viper the point of the blade came to rest just under Midlan's jaw freezing him in his forward motion.

A burly older man came rushing from the inside of the café and slammed his foot down on the chest of the man Dysea had tossed aside as he struggled to get to his feet. He jammed the barrel of the P190 into the man's chest. “I would not if I were you.” He spoke.

Dysea's emerald wolf eyes gazed at Midlan with undisguised fury, her teeth extended to their full mid change length. “Do you wish to test yourself against me little man?” She growled. “I guarantee you coward... you will lose.”

“You have no idea what you have done.” Midlan spoke his voice angry.

Dysea smiled and lifted the blade a little higher, forcing him to lift his chin. “Be glad I am a forgiving she-elf Midlan, for I will not tell my mate about what has happen here this day. And I will not tell him of your disrespect for Aricia, another of his mates. If he knew... have no doubts you would be a stinking pile of corpses on the ground right now.”

“I will...”

“You will do nothing son of Autolykus!” The older man thundered. He held the P190 hard against the thug's chest. “The son of a Senator you may be... but you have attempted an assault against three mated females before the eyes of hundreds. I would be well within my rights to shoot you dead where you stand for your actions this day. If the she-elf will not argue for charges to be brought against you, then take your scum and be gone. Or I will.”

Dysea lowered the Shukur slowly spinning it expertly in her fingers before sliding it into the sheath on her thigh with one motion. Anja leaned over the man pinned to the table and smiled at his inability to remove the knife from his shoulder.

“That's looks painful.” She said. “Let me fix that for you.” Anja grasped the knife quickly smiling as the man screamed and then wrenched it from his shoulder with barely any effort.

He slumped from the table falling to his knees, his eyes glaring at Dysea with hate. But this time there was fear mixed with that hate.

Anja wiped the blood from the blade with a napkin before flipping it expertly in her palm and holding it out to Dysea. “Good as new my love.” She spoke loud enough for many ears to hear.

Dysea took the blade and smiled sweetly at her. “Thank you *Melyanna*.” She spoke. She turned back to Midlan as he glared at her. He began to turn but stopped when Dysea spoke his name. “Midlan...” She waited

until he faced her, his face filled with anger and embarrassment. “Be mindful of your actions Midlan... my mate is not as forgiving as I am. Pray you do not discover that.”

Midlan spun around and marched off as Helen came to her feet in stunned shock. The older Spartan came up to them with a grin on his face a mile wide as he slung the P190 over his shoulder. He bowed his head slightly to them.

“That was a most impressive display Milady, most impressive.” He held out his hand. “I am Demetrius. Your guide Helen here can vouch for my honor.”

Helen stepped forward. “I can Milady. Demetrius is well known for his stories and his honor.”

Dysea smiled brilliantly. “I am Dysea sir.” She replied. “And your honor was never in question.” She looked at Anja and Aricia as they came up to her and nuzzled her face, not caring in the least the eyes that saw them.

Demetrius for his part didn’t bat an eye. “You are new to Sparta?” He asked. “We have many elves among our city, and I have never seen one move like you just did. Where did you acquire such skill?”

Anja looked at him. “We arrived last night with our mate, and members of our pack.” She replied. “We are from North America, and our mate taught Dysea almost everything she knows, though she was an accomplished warrior before he turned her.”

“*Melyanna* stop.” Dysea spoke blushing.

“Indeed! Well if it pleases you one of these days, perhaps you would introduce me to your mate. He sounds like my kind of Spartan.” Demetrius spoke.

“Demetrius... forgive us for the damage.” Aricia spoke digging into the pouch on her belt. “Allow us to pay you.”

“Put your money away daughter of Damara.” Demetrius said softly. He saw Aricia’s head come up and look at him surprise. “Yes I know who you are Aricia. Rest easy child, you and your brothers and sisters are not the only ones who do not believe your brother guilty of such a heinous act.” He saw the expressions on Anja and Dysea’s faces. “You know of what Aricia’s brother was convicted of?”

“Yes.” Anja spoke defensively.

“Stay your claws Milady,” Demetrius spoke with a knowing smile. “I knew the moment I smelled your auras that you shared much more than Aricia’s company. I have many years behind me, and I am not as dense as some alphas. Rape is considered one of the three most heinous crimes among our people. It is especially horrible for an older wolf to commit it on a young female just past the age of mating. I served with Aricia’s brother for sixty-five years before receiving my own platoon of Spartans. He is not capable of such an act. There are many who feel as I do Centurion and civilian alike.” He turned and looked inside the café. “Please... I offer you a table inside so that we can sit and talk. I would like to hear about North America. And the wolf shifter who was bold enough to defy the Senate and claim this gorgeous young female for himself, not to mention pass on such skills to an incredible picture of elfin beauty and tame the sharp tongue of flame hair there.” He said looking at Anja.

“Rest assured Demetrius,” Dysea spoke. “Her skills are just as sharp as her tongue.”

“Now why doesn’t that surprise me?” He answered. “Please...”

They all looked at him with smiles and turned to Helen.

“Go... let him regale you with stories of times past.” Helen spoke. “I will return to the villa and begin to prepare dinner. Go!”

Demetrius swept his arm to the side and motioned them into the café. They did not see the look that passed between Helen and Demetrius before he followed them into the café.

TWO DAYS LATER

Martin stood next to Danny and Julie in the open field just outside the treeline, the remaining Genome Shifters and Tari aligned behind them with thirty other Spartans. The battered and smashed hover bus was parked behind them. All of them were dripping with sweat from exertion their shirts tied in a haphazard fashion around their waists or heads, all of them adorned with cuts and bruises. One Spartan sat on the ground, his ankle black and swelled to the size of a tree trunk.

They had arrived expecting a work out, but little did they know how much a work out it was. The first thirty minutes was a standard warm up, with stretching exercises and minor calisthenics. The next five hours however proved to be something none of them had experienced since going through Basic Underwater Demolition training and in Tari's case nothing like he had ever experienced.

They started with a ten mile run in the mid day, the sun beating down on them and soaking them with sweat in the first five minutes. All of them were wolf or Bear shifters, and the run was a minor thing as all of them with the exception of Tari had run much greater distances. What followed became a grueling obstacle course that covered six additional miles, climbing rock faces and tress, going through bogs and muddy creeks, swimming across a raging river and having to cross a thousand foot ravine on a tree limb that was only twelve inches wide. They were not allowed to shift, the Spartan instructor telling them they needed to complete the course in human form to truly learn the intricacies of running vast distances as a wolf or Bear.

Once they finished the obstacle course, they were met by an additional five Spartan instructors and thrown right into a class on setting mines and booby trap made from the land itself. That class took an hour, and then launched into another six mile jaunt through another grueling course that looped them around the city of Sparta along the ridges of the mountains. When they reached their rendezvous, it was weapons training now, firing on the move with the P190s and assorted small caliber pistols. By now, their limbs were burning in exertion, and simply holding the weapons up to fire them was painful. After thirty minutes of the constant noise and vibrations of firing weapons, they were ordered to take off once more, this time a five mile sprint across open plains and fields. Bodies fell, rocks on the ground caused cussing, bruises were adding up quickly and still they pressed forward.

Andreas had told the senior instructor Martin was an Alpha from North America turned by Dymas. The senior instructor, a grizzled Spartan of almost twenty five hundred years in age had only grinned in response. He thought to break Martin and show him that Spartans were the true warriors of any century. As the day progressed however, he noticed that the newcomers were different. They should have fallen at the first obstacle course, as many of the younger Spartans should have. All of them reached the demolition portion, which had never happened before in his five centuries of running this course. The run across the mountain tops should have caused a few more to be lost, yet to the surprise of the weapons instructors when they reported, all of them had appeared.

The senior instructor decided to investigate why the normal number had not fallen out already and he shifted into wolf form to follow this group as they raced across the open plains. As he sat atop the small hill, what he saw was unlike anything he had ever seen. This newcomer that Andreas had brought to him had taken the leadership role almost naturally. They sprinted in two files across the barren once plowed fields, the newcomer and the black skinned giant circling the files shouting encouragement, screaming out strange songs. He watched a Spartan stumble and fall to the ground in a cloud of dust and dirt, and the newcomer was instantly there, drawing the Spartan back to his feet, running at his side until he rejoined the files. He witnessed this three times, and each time either the newcomer or black man would sprint back and pull the Spartan to his feet. Even the Drow elf, who he discovered from one of his instructors smelled of vampire blood, kept pace with the files, his white hair billowing behind his shoulders, not unlike the long hair of all the Spartans. They were moving faster across the plains than any group of trainees he had ever seen. When they stopped halfway across he was stunned. They remained standing, walking in small circles, the newcomer and black man moving among them, talking to them. He watched the Drow elf move to one of the taller Spartans who had fallen, his shoulder obviously dislocated. The elf took the shoulder in his hands, stroked the arm and then yanked it back into place. He touched the Spartans head, whispered something to him and saw the Spartan nod. By now all of them with the exception of the black female and six other females in the group had removed their t-shirts, their skin glistening in sweat. Amazingly, the newcomer said something which he couldn't hear, but seconds later it had all of them roaring in laughter. After one minute they began again, at a blistering pace once more, falling into the two files.

The instructor followed them as they crossed the plains, slowing as they reach the far wood line. To the shocked surprise of his seven instructors, all of them had made it once more. This was unheard of to him and his fellow instructors, yet like the Spartans they were, they launched without pause into another class on tactics and movement. The senior instructor kept his distance as he walked around the small grouping they had made. The newcomer and the giant black man whispered to the others between instructors, urging them with soft words he

could not hear. They shared the water given to them, not enough for all of them since no group this large had ever made it this far. Yet they made the three skins of water spread among all of them, not taking more than the next man or woman. He had expected the six Bear Shifters to be among the first to drop out due to their size and the reports of barely making it through their Agoge training. They were said to be discipline problems, balking against authority, loners. Yet what he saw was not this. Fellow Spartans leaned on them, and they on others. When the skins were almost empty and it was given to them to finish, they refused, instead giving it to the smaller Spartans.

He noticed the cuts and bruises on all of them and the Drow elf did smell of vampire blood from the small cuts that adorned his body. He also saw the savage scars that criss crossed the elf's back and chest and said nothing. The new comer and black man were covered in scars as well; all those that had come with them adorned with a myriad of bullet wounds and blade scars of some fashion or another. The Spartans that moved with them were by contrast free of such markings. Until he saw the single Spartan in front, his ankle had swollen black and blue and the senior instructor knew it was severely sprained at the least, more than likely broken. He was doing his best to hide the ankle, draping his sweat stained t-shirt over it. When it came time for the final leg of the course, they groaned as they got to their feet, but not one of them complained.

"Leave your wounded!" The senior instructor bellowed. "He will slow you down!"

Martin stepped up to the Spartan and put his shoulder under one arm pit, while another Spartan did the same.

"We started this together, we'll finish it together." Martin spoke.

The senior instructor shrugged. "You must reach the western tree line by nightfall." He spoke pointing to the base of the mountains on the far side of Sparta. "How you get there is unimportant. You have forty minutes starting now."

They watched him and the other instructors walk to the three hover cars, climb in and move off. Martin looked at the eastern edge of Sparta two miles away. The others crowded around him all looking at the same thing.

Martin nodded. "Ok... I'm open to suggestions." He said, "How far to the western treeline?"

"Two kilometers to the east side of the city... seven kilometers across the city itself... another two to the western treeline." A Spartan spoke.

"Eleven kilometers." Martin nodded. "Ok... we've done worse."

"Nothing is coming to mind at the moment Skipper." Julie spoke from beside Tari.

Martin's eyes caught movement and he saw the large hover bus just beginning to come out of the treeline a quarter mile away. "He did say how we got there was unimportant right?"

"He did." The wounded Spartan he supported spoke following Martin's eyes.

Then everyone else's eyes followed their gaze and smiles broke out.

"They say fortune favors the foolish and the brave." Dan spoke before he and a dozen others sprinted towards the bus.

Martin nodded. "Which one are we though." He asked. "Brave... or foolish?"

The Spartan looked at Martin with a grin. "Brave does not begin to describe why we do this." He spoke. "Foolish comes to mind though."

Martin and Julie laughed as did the remaining Spartans. "Then I guess that makes us some of the biggest fools on the planet." Martin spoke before he and the others followed Danny.

Panos looked up from the counter he stood behind when the data pad crashed to the top. The senior instructor stood in the doorway of his antique shop.

"Who is he?" He asked.

Panos looked at him. "What do you mean Lander my friend?" He asked.

The Spartan instructor stepped up to the counter. "Do not play games with me Lander." He spoke. "You asked me to allow twenty of these newcomers into my ACT class knowing that the ones who were to begin today were the worst of the lot; loners, misfits, miscreants who barely passed their own Agoge training."

"I knew this yes." Panos spoke. "I take it they did acceptably?"

“Panos you must take me for a fool? This newcomer... the one with the black hair and scar on his eye... I...” Lander stopped speaking.

“Tell me old friend.” Panos spoke.

“He is a leader of men.” Lander spoke finally. “Not someone made... but someone born to lead men. I put him with thirty Spartans who were sure to fail on their own, for any number of reasons. What I saw at the end... I saw a Spartan Phalanx that nothing will shatter. They finished the course Panos,” He saw Panos’s eyes go wide. “The first time! No one has ever finished the course the first time! Not in all my years as an instructor. No one! He forged these men and women. When they started the day they were individuals... when they ended it they were a unit!”

“How many finished?” Panos asked.

“All of them!” Lander exclaimed. “I gave them forty minutes to reach the final checkpoint. Forty minutes to travel eleven kilometers. Nobody could do that. You know what they did? They commandeered a hover bus! They took over a hover bus filled with citizens returning from Athens and they drove it to the checkpoint! It took me an hour to calm the driver down enough that he would not have us all arrested!”

Panos settled onto the stool behind him as he bellowed in laughter, causing heads to turn and look at him. “I said he has balls!” He spoke after moment. “Even more than I first thought it seems.”

“Panos... we have known each other for more than two millennia. You made me Guardian to your youngest daughter. Dymas was my sponsor and helped trained me. My father and you fought together.” Lander spoke. “Do not tell me this is some Alpha wolf Dymas has turned. Who is he?”

Panos looked at him. “Do you believe in fate Lander?”

“What do you mean?”

“Do you believe in fate? Do you believe that everything happens for a reason?” Panos asked.

“In many instances yes,” He answered. “Why?”

Panos nodded. “Dymas said something to me just before the Sky Fires. It was the last communication we had with him until he returned just three days ago.”

“What did he say?”

Panos looked at him. “Dymas told me that day he would only return to Sparta now in one of two ways. He would return upon his shield as any Spartan should, or he would return with the blood of Leonidas at his side.”

“But Dymas is not...” Lander’s words stopped and his eyes grew wide. He felt heat sweep through him and suddenly the air in the shop became stuffy. He grabbed Panos’s arm. “If you jest with me Panos I will strike you regardless of your age.”

“You said it yourself old friend... a man not made to lead others... but a man born to lead others.” Panos spoke. “You must speak of this with no one! It has been decided to keep his true identity secret for a time. You know the Eurypontids pushes to abolish the one Agiad rule and install a King that they control?”

Lander nodded. “That is not uncommon knowledge.”

Panos nodded. “If they learned that the blood of Leonidas... his direct descendant as Martin is... if they discover he is alive and here in Sparta they will stop at nothing to kill him.”

“Panos... his aura is nothing more than a strong Alpha.” Lander spoke.

“Dymas and Theron taught him to shield his aura from others so that is what it appears like. I was in the landing bay when he came to Sparta Lander. He gripped the dirt of Sparta in his hands and that shielding came down. It was like... it was like I was back in the presence of Leonidas himself!” Panos said. “And his Queens? Their beauty almost rivals that of Aphrodite herself.”

“What... what do you wish of me Panos?” Lander asked.

“Train him as a Spartan, but do not recognize him. He will be furious if he is granted less than any other. I understand he is already a warrior unequalled, but now he must learn the ways of the Spartan.” Panos spoke softly. “Those he gathers around himself... they are his armor. Include Andreus and those Spartans he indicates to you, for they are his Royal Guard. He has laid the groundwork for you my friend. Now it is you who must shape them into the Phalanx for Sparta. They will be our spear head. And a mighty one it will be.”

Lander nodded slowly. “I will do as you ask me old friend.” He spoke.

“War looms on the horizon Lander, the others as old as I can sense it. Be prepared old friend.” Panos spoke. “And train our King like you have trained no other.”

NEW MIAMI

TWO DAYS LATER

“...appears he is now in Sparta.” Moran reported dropping the data pad on Yuri’s desk and settling into the chair next to Deval, his eyes looking across the desk at Yuri.

Yuri scooped up the pad her eyes going wide. “What?”

Moran nodded. “We caught wind of it from our people in Eden and I just got the confirmation from our sources within Sparta.” He spoke. “He arrived at the beginning of the week with his women and around twenty of his people. He is staying at the villa in the mountains overlooking the western edge of the city.”

Yuri read the pad quickly. “This says they don’t know who he is.” She said looking at him.

Moran nodded. “Our source says they are keeping his identity secret for the time being.” He said. “They are saying he is an Alpha from North America for the time being. They’ve had to accelerate their plans, but so far they are still in motion.”

Deval looked at them. “Why would they do that?” He asked. “What plans? I didn’t know we had assets inside Eden.”

Yuri took a deep breath and nodded leaning back in her chair. “We have several inside Eden,” She told him. “Only one is in a position to give us this kind of intelligence. They must have kept it secret from even many of those close to him.”

Moran nodded. “It appears that way. Wallace did not return with him. He is still in Eden acting with Tarifa and the Drow witch.”

“Do I detect anger Robert?” Yuri asked.

“If you had let me kill the Drow when I wanted too, Marcus wouldn’t have let them escape and we would not have half the problem we do now.” Moran spoke.

“We did not know that the experiments hadn’t worked.” Yuri spoke. “Killing them would have been a waste at the time.”

“The experiments didn’t work!” Moran spoke. “And now we have three hundred half vampire Drow elves out there that will follow their new Queen without question. A new Queen I might add that has more reason to hate our kind more than anyone. Even Leonidas.”

“I wouldn’t discount Martin’s hatred for us,” Yuri spoke rising and going to the bar. She poured a glass of blood from the bottle and looked at Moran, offering it to him. He settled back into his chair holding the glass as she poured another for herself, not offering one to Deval. “Once he learns the full history of our two people’s I do not doubt that his dislike for us will increase ten fold.”

“But he has the Drow fighting for him.” Deval spoke. “They are half vampire and he has accepted them.”

Yuri returned to her chair. “They are not completely half vampire either.” She said. “They can not turn someone with their bite, and blood will heal their wounds, but they have none of our weaknesses. I should have had their minds wiped when I began the process. Their damned Drow honor kept them from becoming like Marcus.”

“Tari went with him, and that he has survived this long tells me they appear to feel as Martin does.” Moran spoke. “He’s not dead... so they must know his history.”

“Can we trust this Spartan? Why would he help us?” Deval asked.

“He has helped us for many years.” Yuri answered. “I will not reveal his identity because he is in a position to effect what happens there.”

“How?” Moran asked.

“The Eurypontids line is pushing to have their laws changed so that they can install their own King. Many people it seems are tired of waiting for the descendnat of Leonidas.” Yuri replied. “If a King of the Eurypontids line rises to power, our conquest of Sparta will be much easier.”

“A Spartan will help us bring down his people?” Deval gasped.

Yuri smiled. "With what he has been promised, he'll help us bring down the planet if we asked." She looked at Moran. "Send word to our source. If it is possible without endangering himself try to have Martin or that bitch Anja assassinated."

"Why not all of them?" Moran asked.

"Because then those that do know who Martin really is will know there is a traitor among them." Yuri said. "And they will act accordingly. If that happens the Eurypontids line will never have a King come to power."

"He's taken a Spartan female as his third mate." Moran told her, seeing her eyes grow a little wider.

Yuri smiled. "All the better if we can kill Anja."

"Why not the she-elf. Her combat skills and experience are superior to this Anja's. And the Spartan girl he's taken is only a few years past the age she can take a mate. She..."

"Her name is Aricia." Yuri said.

Moran nodded slowly. "How do you know that?"

"We are the ones who helped set up her brother." Yuri spoke. "Her family has no honor in Sparta now. She is little more than an afterthought, and her voice will carry no weight. And her death even less. No... the she-elf can fight and organize, but Anja can fight and she is a healer. If we kill her before she realizes her full potential... let's just say it will be a devastating blow to Martin."

"He can always find another doctor that can fight." Moran spoke.

Yuri shook her head. "You don't understand. She is the daughter I told you about before. If she realizes her full potential, she will become almost as powerful as Martin himself. If she realizes her full potential, then all of her people that we have chased into hiding will come out. That is not a front that we wish to open Robert. The Spartans on one side and her people on the other... that would be more than even we could handle with our allies."

"Her people." Moran said. "You've said that before Yuri. What are you talking about?"

Yuri looked at him. "A discussion perhaps for another time."

"If Leonidas is gone from Eden we should attack immediately." Deval spoke.

Moran laughed. "That would be one of the stupidest things we ever did." He spoke. "He may be gone, but do not doubt who controls Eden. He has left Tarifa and the Drow witch in charge of the administration of Eden, but the elves still consider him their High King. Tarifa is no child and the Drow witch wouldn't hesitate to hit us. Do not think for a minute he hasn't left them the means to launch those missiles he has. And they will use them if they have too."

"Have we been able to get any assets into Eden besides who we have?" Yuri asked.

"I've dispatched a dozen over the last week. Separate cover stories, separate ways in, no knowledge of others." Moran spoke. "They'll establish themselves and make nice nice until we say it's time to do bad things."

Yuri laughed. "Oh Robert I do so love your way with words." She spoke. "What of our search teams?"

"Nothing yet, but we have thirty of them out there." Moran replied. "Deval?"

"We can bring the second oil platform on line in two weeks." He spoke. "I've ordered additional workers and equipment sent there and they can finish the work ahead of schedule."

"Excellent!" Yuri said. "That is good news."

"I've also dispatched five teams to Siberia in a dual role." Deval spoke. "They will search for additional minerals and oil, but also Colonel Moran has given me the locations of several sites that may have a Class Five Nuclear Reactor still in working order."

Yuri leaned forward. "Truly?"

Moran nodded. "As I was putting the list together I remembered that the Russians had abandoned several old Nuke plants in that area in the early 21st century. They wouldn't have been on our initial list, and since Deval's people we already going to be in the area, I'm sending teams with each of his groups."

"That is good news." Yuri said. "Perhaps things are not as bad as we first thought."

"Graham has been squealing to see you since his first visit with you." Robert said. He saw the look of disgust flash across her face and he chuckled. "I thought you said he would be a useful tool."

Yuri looked at him. "That does not mean I like the way he looks at me. I may be a very old Vampire, but I am also a woman and he looks at me like a piece of meat. His conversion to being undead did not temper his sadistic tendencies."

“Should I have him killed.” Moran asked casually. “Cause if he touches you I’ll rip open his throat myself.”

Yuri looked at him surprised. “Robert... you are possessive of me?” She spoke softly with a smile. “Let’s just say I don’t like to share.” Moran spoke.

Yuri apprised him with an almost affectate look before turning to Deval. “The breeding?” She asked. “It proceeds on schedule.” He replied. “We’ll have half a million before the end of the year.”

Yuri nodded. “Excellent. We should...”

The panel on her desk buzzed and she touched it. “I asked not to be disturbed.”

“Mistress... there is a priority transmission for you from...” The voice said.

“From who!” Yuri snapped.

“He says he is your brother Mistress. He says he is your brother Xerxes.” The voice replied.

Yuri’s face hardened. “Wonderful. Just what I needed today. Patch it through to my office on narrow beam.”

“Yes Mistress!”

Yuri turned in her chair and faced the monitor on the wall. It came to life, fuzzy at first and then the face began to take shape. Dark skinned burned by the sun, a gleaming bald head, what appeared to be at least a dozen ring piercings all over his face, and a long, five inch long scar that extended from the right corner of his mouth back to his ear. The face held no emotion, and the dark eyes were small orbs of black that could chill you to the bone.

Yuri smiled, but her smile held no affection in it. Her eyes had also become black orbs, yet these orbs burn with hatred.

“Xerxes my dear brother.” Yuri spoke coldly. “To what do I owe this honor?”

(Yes... my Xerxes looks like the actor from the movie 300. He looks like a vampire even in that movie. So that is where the credits go to. Disclaimer ho hum.)

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

NEW MIAMI

“Dear sister.” Xerxes spoke, his voice deep and powerful even on the monitor. “You don’t sound happy to hear from me.”

Yuri snorted. “I’m never happy to hear from you Xerxes. Now what is it you want, I was involved in something very entertaining and you interrupted that.”

“Ah Yuri... are you playing with your food again?” Xerxes asked with a low chuckle that carried the distinct flavor of malice and distaste in it.

“Unlike you brother... I don’t have to brutalize my prey before I feed.” Yuri replied leaning back in her chair. “I find that it’s much sweeter when I take my time.” She traced a finger up between her large firm breasts teasing him, “And so much more pleasurable. Something you are infinitely unfamiliar with.”

Xerxes’s jaw twitched in the transmission. “Then you have finally turned someone I take it.”

Yuri smiled sweetly. “Oh yes... and he is wonderfully well equipped, much more so than even you brother. And he makes me scream to the heavens.” Her face changed in a heartbeat from that angelic pose to one of a stone cold killer. “Now what do you want?”

“There have been rumors sister.” Xerxes spoke evenly, “Rumors that have reached the ears of our father.”

“And were these rumors begun by your lap dogs dear brother?” Yuri asked. “Or did you have the courage to start them yourself?”

“The rumors say that the descendant of Leonidas has arrived Yuri.” Xerxes spoke.

“If you actually read the reports I send to father Xerxes, you would know that those are not rumors.” Yuri told him calmly. “They are quite true.”

“And you did not think to contact me?” Xerxes said. “Sister I am injured.”

“Father placed me in charge here Xerxes, not you!” Yuri snapped. “He prefers how I handle things discretely, unlike your attempts at control, which regularly include mass slaughter.”

“That dog of a werewolf gave me this!” Xerxes roared his hand coming up to the scar on his face.

“Father told you not to continue your campaign after the second day brother. Leonidas and his 300, not to mention their simple squires and servants, slaughtered over twenty thousand of your men those first five days, among them seven thousand of father’s precious Immortals.” Yuri spoke as she got to her feet. “And they nearly took your head as well if I recall. With nothing but a handful of Spartans and their squires they actually breached your tent and almost killed you. If Leonidas had not been so tired from killing your men, he would have thrown his spear straighter and impaled you through your pitiful throat. Be thankful so many died to save your hide.”

“Do not anger me sister!” Xerxes snapped.

“Or what Xerxes, you will rape my ass as you did in the past!” Yuri snapped right back, her snarl twisting her beautiful features into something feral, “Never again Xerxes! Never again! I guarantee you that. Now unless you have something of importance to tell me, I have business to take care of elsewhere!”

Xerxes’s face changed. “I’m finishing my campaign here Yuri and I thought I might stop in and say hello to my beloved sister.”

“You can’t be serious?” She barked, her features showing her shock. “Father would never allow that.”

“But he has allowed it Yuri.” Xerxes replied. “I’m to bring my forces there for rest and recuperation, as well as to pick up an additional shipment of elves for the mining pits. Don’t worry sister, you are still in charge, and he made it clear I am to take your orders.”

Yuri glared at the screen. “Oh and you will Xerxes. You will.”

“And the descendant of Leonidas sister; what will you do about him?” Xerxes asked calmly.

“What I have always intended to do Xerxes.” Yuri replied.

“Fuck him you mean.” Xerxes said as he smiled cruelly. “That is what you did for two years isn’t it? You had him in your grasp, literally, and you did nothing. Does father know about that dear sister?”

Yuri smiled just as cruelly. “Perhaps if your reports were as thorough as mine brother, you would still be commanding the High Guard and not I. Unlike you, I tell father everything, no matter how miniscule or private. I don’t keep secrets from him, again unlike you. Perhaps it is why he put me in charge here after you failed so miserably. Father knows that in the end our goal will be achieved, and the descendant of Leonidas will be dead. And I won’t slaughter millions just to accomplish this.”

Xerxes jaw line twitched once more in annoyance and anger. “I will be finished here in four months sister. I will see you shortly after that.” Xerxes spoke. “Pray the descendant of Leonidas is dead before I get there.”

“I will do things my way Xerxes, remember that!” Yuri spat at him. “Not yours... and certainly not according to the fools you employ. You would do well to remember that.”

“Oh I will sister. I will. I look forward to seeing you soon Yuri.” Xerxes spoke with a mocking smile.

“Oh I can hardly wait.” Yuri snapped before stabbing the panel ending the transmission. She threw her glass across the room, shattering it against the wall and splattering blood. “Fuck!” She screamed.

Moran looked at Deval and motioned with his head for him to leave. He waited until the man had left and the door slid closed before going to the panel and locking it. He turned and looked back to Yuri who had moved to the large bay window, her arms crossed in front of her.

“Yuri?”

“Not now Robert.” She snapped. “I am not in the mood!”

He moved up behind her and stopped, not touching her, but providing his presence so that she could sense him. “So that is Xerxes huh?”

“Yes.”

“Pleasant fellow,” Moran spoke sarcastically, “If a bit short on brains. And what’s with all the rings on his face? Is he a faggot or something?”

Yuri chuckled softly at his words and pressed back against him, feeling the tension begin to leave her slowly. “Robert... you do have a way of soothing me with your words.” She said.

“I don’t like to see you agitated.” He replied.

Yuri turned slowly and looked at him. “Robert do I detect warmth for me in your voice?”

Moran looked at her. He had always thought her to be stunning, even when he first saw her in the holding cell the day after her supposed defection. She had given him a hard on even then, and she still did to this day, even though he was technically considered undead. “Does he do this to you all the time?” He asked softly.

Yuri nodded slowly. “I... I may be a vampire... but I am still a woman. I do have some dignity, and Xerxes took that away from me many years ago. It has taken me many years to recover it. I have hated him ever since.”

“Does your father know?” Robert asked reaching up to touch her but stopping his fingers just shy of her skin.

Yuri shook her head. “I never told him for fear he would not believe me. Xerxes was... until Thermopylae Xerxes was always the favorite. He could do no wrong. The power he had acquired made him think he was truly god like. He thought he could take whatever he wanted, including his own sister. I prayed that day... I prayed that Leonidas would kill him. I wished for it. After the second time he raped me because of his losses, I laughed at him. As Leonidas and the Spartans slaughtered his men, I laughed at him. Leonidas may have been the child of slaves... but when he died that day he was more a King than my brother ever will be.”

“There was more than once?” Moran asked stunned.

Yuri nodded. “Seven times he raped me.” She answered, “Each time like a dog! He tied me to a horse rail like an animal in his rage!” She hissed the words. She felt more than saw him flinch and his hands lowered to his sides. Yuri turned to face him then, her dark eyes scouring his face. “What are you thinking Robert?”

Moran looked at her. “Then all the times we have... I have reminded you of him, of what he did to you?” He said.

“No!” Yuri spoke quickly. “That is not true!”

Moran looked at her. “You made me a vampire Yuri. Now... now I have to know why? Why didn’t you just bite Leonidas, kill him and get it over with? You had plenty of chances. Or better yet... why didn’t you just kill me?”

“Martin was a task I was assigned by my father.” Yuri told him. “That’s all he ever was. I never had feelings for him... regardless of the bed we shared. And that will not keep me from killing him like the animal he is when the time comes. I still shudder at the times he held me, the vileness of having to sleep with him, knowing what he really was. And I couldn’t kill him because I wasn’t sure who he truly was back then. I suspected... but if I had killed him and he was Leonidas’s descendant then my entire purpose would have been for naught. I would have never gotten off that station alive.” Yuri turned around and walked to the balcony doors and swung them open, allowing the setting sun to come into view. It was low enough that only half the patio was bathed in the light. Moran stepped towards her as she stepped into the part that was now shadows. “You on the other hand Robert. You are different. When I first saw you that day, I knew I wanted to turn you. To make you like me so that you would stay with me.” Yuri looked at him. “I made a vow after Xerxes had his way with me the last time. I vowed no man would ever do that to me again, that no man would ever have me that way. And I kept that vow for almost three thousand years. Until I met you.”

“Yuri I don’t want to remind you of your fucking pervert brother raping you in your ass!” Moran nearly screamed.

“But you don’t!” Yuri spoke quickly stepping towards him, leaning into him. “You don’t Robert! In three thousand years you are the first man I have allowed to have me in that way, like an animal. Many have desired it... it is a curse from my mother that she had such perfection in that way, and I inherited it. It is no doubt why my father still stays with her. But you... I *wanted* you to take me in that way. I wanted to feel your power, your size filling me like that. I knew from the first moment I saw you that I wanted you to dominate me. It was and continues to be glorious in every respect.”

He looked at her as if she was crazy. “You’re joking right?”

Yuri smiled. “It does appear ridiculous doesn’t it?” She spoke softly. “You are the second largest man I have ever had inside me Robert. And I tell you now; no one makes me feel the pleasure you do.”

“Not even Martin?” He asked. “You slept with him for two years.”

Yuri nodded. “I did. But as you no doubt know, he wasn’t always there. I used that time to learn as much about EDEN as I could. Apparently not enough given the damage Wallace did, but I can count the

number of times he had me on both hands Robert. He was larger than you in that regard, but he did not do to me what you do.”

“He’s sleeping with three different women at the same time.” Moran spoke defensively. “He must be doing something right.”

Yuri chuckled. “Robert I have been sleeping with men... vampires and humans for three thousand years... I think I have a tad bit more experience than the whores that occupy his time. Outside of the few times that you and your soldiers have had me... who is it that always remains at my side? You Robert.”

“I don’t want to do that anymore.” Moran spoke looking at her. “I may be a vampire and technically dead... but I don’t like sharing you. Not anymore.”

“There it is again.” Yuri spoke softly, reaching up to touch his face. “That tone of possessiveness when you speak of me.”

Moran met her eyes. “I guess I still retain enough of my human side to fucking hate having to share my woman.”

“So you consider me your woman?” Yuri spoke with a smile.

“I guess I do.” Moran said. “If that is going to be a problem...”

Yuri’s eyes glittered in the evening sunlight. “Bite me Robert.” She said softly.

He looked at her. “Excuse me.”

“Bite me.” Yuri told him. “Vampire’s do have wives and husbands Robert. Those we wish to spend eternity with. In order to seal such a pact we share blood, each other’s vampire blood.”

“Yuri... Yuri you have never let me bite you before.” He spoke.

Yuri smiled. “Yes I know. Nor has anyone else in my lifetime. Do you wish to spend eternity with me?”

“Does that mean exclusive like?” He spoke. “No one else gets to...”

“Only you Robert,” Yuri replied with a smile.

“And you are ok with that?” he asked.

“I find that arrangement quite to my liking yes.” Yuri spoke.

Yuri gasped when he pulled her to him, crushing her lithe body against his powerful one. She felt the pin pricks of pain as his teeth sank into the flesh of her neck in an instant and Yuri smiled in bliss as pleasure surged through her. His strong arms held her tightly, possessively, and Yuri realized this was what she wanted. As she smiled, her own vampire fangs extended and without a second’s pause she bit deeply into his neck and they began to feed off each other. This was what she wanted and as all thoughts or feelings of Martin Leonidas raced from her mind, Yuri felt the pleasure surge through her body and she groaned in delight.

Yes... this was what she wanted.

EDEN

ONE WEEK LATER

2ND WEEK OF MAY

“Leland is finishing his sweep through the lower portion of our new lands.” Tareif spoke, holding the data pad in one hand and the enormous mug of coffee in the other. The mug had become his constant companion after a Raptor flight with Leland and Cathy. She had introduced him to the dark liquid, the aroma powerful. When he first tasted it, his taste buds had screamed in delight, and since then he was never without a mug of the steaming brew.

His uniform was still dusty from the many miles he had traveled, the HK74 he had used for the last three weeks leaning up against the wall behind his chair, immaculate and ready to fire. The effects of the mind control drug fully gone from his system, he had returned to the famous and often times reckless War Master he was known to be. He had led his four battalions of Dragoons and another complete division of elf and human troops on a wild and destructive path through three states, cleaning out slaver and mercenary scum, freeing thousands and thousands of elves and hundreds of humans. Nearly twenty-five thousand strong, it was the largest force he had commanded in his almost three hundred years of life, and he was the happiest elf on the planet.

He employed his Dragoons as scouts and Special Operations teams, sweeping ahead of his main force in small numbers to harass and send back intelligence. He had a combined force of forty-three Scorpion Battle tanks and four dozen heavy Hoppers for troop transport that his people had modified in such ways that it boggled the imagination. Some now sported heavy chain cannons, others carried abandoned mortars welded to the tops. The human engineers from Eden and those that had come from the base on EDEN were ecstatic about the field improvising his troops had conducted, and hundreds of them flew out to reinforce and even improve the make shift weapons platforms.

Tareif commanded a full Battalion of MLRS IIIs that he used as his personal shotgun so to speak. Four times he was forced to employ these rocket launching monsters against mercenaries that would not surrender or release their slaves. Four times they left nothing but rubble in their wake. He had three batteries of the 200mm self propelled artillery pieces that were his main long ranged weapon, and they were devastating. Tareif had no knowledge of such weapons before this last month, and he spent hours with the human commanders of these units to learn what they could do.

Vengal sat beside Tareif, his dress much similar, though he had been able to change his uniform before coming to the meeting. He commanded an identical division of troops, his entire force of Wood Elf Rangers acting as his scouts and Special Operations troops. Like Tareif he was another happy elf, his wife complaining in an amused tone to Aihola at one point that she could not get husband back from having so much fun.

The two of them, High Elf and Wood Elf military leaders had also spent much time together. They had formed a bond when Vengal insured the safety of Tareif's sons to him, and neither man was willing to let that bond slip away. Both men knew war, as both had fought for countless years against the Alliance and the mercenaries. They knew what they were doing was merely the lead up to a larger battle to come, a battle that could well see both of them killed. So they drilled their men and women like task masters, in tactics and redundancy, over and over, so that their tasks became like breathing to them. The bond was growing between them, and growing between their men and themselves. Whether human or elf, the troops of these two divisions were growing to love their commander in every regard. It was very basic for most of them, if they knew their officers cared for them, ate the same food, slept in the same conditions, those men and women would fight through the very pits of hell for that leader.

Tareif and Vengal were rapidly gaining that fame, and they were instilling it to the officers under them.

Military training had increased ten fold due to the number of volunteers. Admiral Wallace, already commanding great respect due to his actions on EDEN in saving so many lives, had been appointed by Tarifa and Aihola to oversee the training. With the remaining elves and humans that had survived the battle of EDEN, he set about to train warriors second only to Spartans. His senior instructor... a Drow female named Anari.

Factories were working almost twenty-four hours a day, schools were open, children played in parks, elves and humans worked side by side, day in and day out. As each day passed in Eden they came to love their new lives even more.

Tareif looked up from his pad and met his daughter's eyes. "He will return to Eden at the end of the week." He finished. "After that... we will have only small units out helping to establish new settlements for the thousands that have been freed."

"And the routes to the High Elf cities; are they secure?" Aihola asked from her chair.

Tareif nodded. "As well as we can secure them." He replied confidently. "No slaver or mercenary would dare enter our territory now."

"Even so papa, ensure that any supply convoy or transport to the cities outside our ten state areas is heavily guarded." Tarifa spoke.

It was just seven of them in the room, as this was a meeting of the Council of The Defense Ministry and the six positions for that had not been filled completely. Minister Treblar and King Anotan were the only ones that had been chosen so far, and their seats were temporary. Tarifa and Aihola agreed that Martin should be the one to choose the members of this Council as he would deal with all matters in the defense of Eden. Selene Torcrum had been a godsend to all of them because of her wealth of knowledge about the Alliance and their practices. She had been the unanimous choice of the twenty-four full Council of Elder positions to hold the title of Chief Secretary of Eden.

Tarifa felt more than saw Dekton shift behind her. He had become a constant fixture in her and Aihola's lives. No matter where they went, he was always in the shadows protecting them. Always alert, always waiting

to defend his charges. Tarifa and Aihola had often spoken with each other in regards to him, and admitted only to each other that they both felt much safer with him always around. He never commented at meetings like this, always standing behind either Tarifa or Aihola, never moving around the room, always ready to pull them both to safety against some unknown threat. Aihola had told her what he had said to her, and over the last two weeks they did indeed discover that they now had a telepathic connection of sorts. She and Aihola had been practicing whenever they got the chance, Dekton helping them to understand their new abilities and the responsibility that came with it. They could swim freely within each other's minds now, experience each other's desires and fears, and it had brought Tarifa and Aihola closer together and more in love than either of them could believe. Yet even with their new found abilities, neither of them could penetrate the black wall that was Dekton's mind. He was much more powerful than they were, yet he had never been put out or angered at what they attempted.

Dekton? You have something you want to add? Tarifa asked, reaching out with her mind, feeling Aihola mingled in the tendrils of her thoughts.

Tarifa felt the wall around his mind drop ever so slightly. *It is unwise to discount the Alliance. The vampire High Priestess will no doubt test our readiness to the extreme without actually breaking the agreement she made with our King. The easiest place for her to turn others against you and Aihola is outside the realm of your control.*

The High Elf cities not within Eden's sphere of influence, Aihola spoke now. She and Tarifa kept no secrets from one another.

Yes. Perhaps it would be prudent to have your father's troops within these cities begin monitoring known Alliance sympathizers.

Tarifa moved the data pads around on the table as if she was looking for something so as to disguise the conversation they were having. She heard Dekton chuckle within her head.

We do not want a Police State Dekton. Tarifa snapped more harshly than she intended.

That is not what I meant Milady. He replied, not showing if her outburst disturbed him or not. It was one of the more infuriating traits he had. He almost never showed any sort of emotion. Anger, hate, love. Nothing. Tarifa and Aihola knew practically nothing about him, and he never gave them a window into that part of him.

What did you mean then Dekton? Aihola asked as she sent a soft reprimand of her love through the bond they shared.

There are elves you trust in these cities yes?

Of course. Tarifa answered. *They have been friends of my family for centuries.*

Everyone is a potential gathering point of information and they don't even know it Milady. Invite them here to Eden. Talk with them, eat with them. Your discussions with them can provide intelligence boons that would otherwise be lost to us. And they won't even be aware they are working for you.

That sounds an awful lot like spying. Tarifa spoke.

Do you wish to see this city succeed Milady? Protected at all costs against harm? Dekton asked.

Not at the cost of liberty.

And what liberty are you taking away by having family and friends to Eden for dinner and conversation? I am aware of none. Dekton said.

Are all Spartans as shrewd as you? Tarifa asked.

Only those that wish to see you and Aihola succeed in your duties Milady. At the moment that is limited to those in this room, the King and his Queens. Dekton replied. *Others still have doubts about what you do, and the power the two of you wield. That frightens your enemies. And that is good. It makes them sloppy.*

How do you know all this? Aihola asked quickly.

I see and hear things Little Drow. He replied in an almost affectionate tone. *I walk the streets at night after you and Tarifa have retired. In the shadows.*

If you are out skulking about at night, then who is protecting us? Aihola asked.

You are never alone. Dekton spoke softly. *Ever.*

You spy on people! Tarifa gasped.

I protect who my King ordered me to protect. And I will do that... regardless of what I have to do.

Dekton answered. *The others are becoming suspicious. We should continue this at another time.*

And then the walls around his mind sprang up once more, impenetrable and unreadable.

"Tarifa?" Selene spoke from her chair. "Are you alright?"

Tarifa looked at her and nodded. “Yes... I’m sorry. I was looking for the information on known Alliance sympathizers.”

Treblar held up that data pad. “It is on this intelligence brief Milady.” He replied. “I was comparing it to recent intelligence we have obtained from those we have freed in the last few weeks. There are hundreds more documents to pore over, but the intelligence is firming up.”

Tarifa looked at Aihola. “*Nya Istel* what do you think?”

Aihola nodded. “I believe it is something we must do, at least for the immediate future. And I believe Martin would do the same thing.”

Tarifa nodded. “So do I.” She said.

“Do what?” Vengal asked.

Tarifa looked at her father and Vengal. “We want all known Alliance elf sympathizers within the High Elf cities outside of Eden placed under surveillance.” She said. “It is to be discrete and they are only to watch.”

“Why not just arrest them now?” Selene asked. “We have enough evidence against many of them.”

“They could lead us to others.” Aihola replied. “We have the means to stop a full scale invasion by the Alliance,” Aihola saw their eyes go a little wider at this information. “However the Vampire witch will no doubt attempt to instill fear among our own people against us. If we can discover this information first... we can fight it.”

Tarifa felt relief wash over her as she saw the heads of everyone around the table slowly nod in agreement.

“I will see to it.” Vengal spoke up. “Tareif you still have to get your division fully situated and it will give my Rangers some additional work. I’ll send word to Cantel in Salem City.”

Tareif nodded. “Very well. We do need to discuss...”

Dekton stepped forward now, surprising everyone, “Tomorrow.” He spoke firmly.

Tarifa and Aihola, not to mention everyone in the room looked at him. “We have quite a bit to cover Dekton.” Aihola spoke.

Dekton nodded. “Perhaps. But it will do no good if all of you work yourselves into the ground. Everyone here has been fighting or in meetings for this or that for almost two weeks. Our King would not want the people he trusts most to work themselves to the point of exhaustion. He is doing that day after day as we speak because he needs to. No one else need do that. It is my duty to protect Tarifa and Aihola. This just happens to be another way of doing that.”

Treblar laughed and sat back in his chair. “I agree with the Spartan. I have been to more meetings in the last two weeks than in the last two decades. I suggest we each take two days to rest and recuperate. And I include our Generals in that as well. We have done quite a bit in two weeks, and we have much more to do, but not at the cost of our health.”

Two days alone with you Nya Istel. I’m not going to complain about that. Tarifa spoke to her.

Aihola smiled. *Nor am I.*

Tarifa nodded. “Then I will see everyone back here in two days at nine o’clock. General Vengal if you would issue those orders before you retire?”

Vengal nodded. “I’ll see to it right away.”

Tarifa got to her feet and looked at Dekton for a long moment. His dark eyes were like his mind, unreadable. “Thank you.”

Dekton bowed his head slightly. “It is my duty.” He spoke.

Lynwe squatted on top of the roof of the twelve story building, her amber eyes focused on the window on the apartment building across from her. These last two weeks, indeed these last two months had been life altering for her, all of it in a good way. The hate for the Alliance still burned within her, but now it was buried deep. Aihola and Tarifa had taught her how to feel again, how to love. Her time with them had been like applying a soothing balm to an open wound. They never denied her attention; indeed she had shared their bed almost every night with the exception of his last week. And each time she had learned new things about pleasure that she had never experienced before. While she still could not bring herself to taste them in the way

they shared each other, they had taught her the pleasures of kissing, and Lynwe discovered she enjoyed that immensely. And both Tarifa and Aihola could kiss oh so well.

When they had asked her to conduct this task, she had thought it was their way of getting rid of her, but after reflection and the fact that they kept insisting she visit them at least for a few hours soon, Lynwe knew it was because they trusted her skills. This is what Lynwe lived for. She was a master of the shadows, always able to move without being seen, without being heard. Her half vampire genes increased her visual acuity even more than the normal elf's enhanced vision. Her hearing was superior, her reflexes unmatched, and her strength far greater than any human or elf, almost a match for any full blooded vampire with her training.

Selene appeared at first to be a normal elf female, though her father was human. For two weeks now Lynwe had watched her, monitored her movements. It was mostly mundane, meetings, going to her parent's new home in the southern district of Eden, making her way back to her own small apartment and working, shopping and the many things a female elf would do. Until Lynwe had seen the men begin appearing in the early morning hours.

There were three of them... two elves and a human. They would come on different nights, never more than one at a time and Selene obviously knew who they were, or at least knew they were coming. It was what took place when they arrived that shocked Lynwe. Selene would allow these men to use her in every way possible. They would fuck her for several hours, never showing her affection, no tender caresses, no kissing, nothing like the cuddling she had so grown to love with Tarifa and Aihola after a night of pleasure. They would use her like a whore and then leave her. Selene would lie in her bed for a time after the man had left, and then rise to take a shower before sleeping for a few more hours until she rose to begin another day. The human male was the most brutal, often times slapping her hard enough to draw blood, or biting her on her shoulders and neck. And Selene would endure it all stoically, never fighting back or crying out.

Lynwe found herself admiring this half elf female. That she was stunningly beautiful was beyond question, with rich auburn red hair, long and flowing past her shoulders. Her breasts were high and firm, standing out proudly. She had long legs and slim hips, with muscled ass cheeks that rivaled even Aihola's in their firmness and curves. She was extremely intelligent as Lynwe had heard her speaking in the meetings she had attended, and the hatred for the Alliance was evident to even the most ignorant person. Her voice always was laced with anger and rage when she spoke of the Alliance and what they had done. Yet there was something else that vexed this beautiful woman, and Lynwe was determined to find out what it was.

As Lynwe watched the male elf leave Selene's apartment she glanced once more at the still form of the half elf Selene before she rose to her full height of nearly six foot and moved to the edge of the building. Without a second's pause she stepped off the edge and plummeted to the ground below.

SPARTA

1ST WEEK OF JUNE

“Excellent!” The female Spartan Centurion called out as she slowly circled her three female students, “Change to Style Nine and again!”

Her name was Lexi and she had been selected by Andreus in secrecy. Her instructions were simple and came by order of the King himself. She was to train the Queens in hand to hand combat with the traditional Spartan weapons that all the Centurions carried. The spears had no official name, but many of the younger Spartan warriors had taken to calling them *Nehtes* in the elfin language to honor the Elf Weapons Master that had been forging the blades of their spears and short swords for the last four hundred years. *Nehtes* meant spear in the language of the elves. The elf Weapons Master and the three he had trained to be his assistants had forged every spear and blade now carried by the Spartans to exacting proportions. Each weapon made from hand and balanced perfectly to the warrior it was given too.

The short swords were not really swords at all, but long bladed fighting knives called *Kopis*. They were razor sharp and in the hands of a trained Spartan, it was the deadliest weapon they carried behind their P190 and the *Nehtes*.

This morning Lexi watched with a trained eye as the three Queens practiced with their *Nehtes*, using elegant sweeping techniques, short stabbing maneuvers and overhead smashes. Lexi had regretted that Andreus

had ordered her to do this at first. Her first thoughts were she was a Spartan warrior, not a nursemaid. Her attitude changed the first morning when she saw the Queens in motion.

They had arrived in the courtyard of the villa dressed in tight shorts and shirts with bare feet. Their long manes were tied tightly into pony tails, and they had looks of intense concentration on their faces. Lexi's disappointment at this task drifted away in the first hour two weeks ago.

Aricia and the she-elf were the better of the three with the *Nehtes*, while Anja was the more finely tuned to the Kopsis. She knew that Dysea and Anja had fought before, and were skilled in an assortment of weapons, but her surprise came with the skills that Aricia was displaying. They were skills she should not have at such an age, and certainly not without training. They moved in a single fluid motion, exactly and precisely in unison in every movement. Their thrusts were powerful and their form was excellent, their sweeps exceptionally fast and accurate. They did this for two hours every morning and had for the last two weeks. It showed in their physical bodies as well as all of them had built and sustained muscle and dropped body fat quickly. They were lean and extremely muscular, but it did not detract from their feminine forms in the least. All of them were covered in a fine sheen of sweat; their faces tightly controlled and locked in concentration.

"Thrust... spin... sweep... rest! Excellent! Excellent!" Lexi spoke as they came to a position of rest, the *Nehtes* vertical on the ground, blade pointed at the sky, "An excellent workout! Tomorrow we will use Style Eight and Style Nine with the Kopsis, so have them prepared and sharp." Lexi bowed her head as the three of them smiled and collapsed their *Nehtes* before moving out of the courtyard. Lexi turned as she saw Andreus and Thr'won walk slowly up to her.

Lexi looked at her Captain and shook her head. "I have never seen anyone grasp the Styles so quickly Captain." She spoke. "They have never had training, yet they move with the confidence and skill of a Spartan in the Second Phase."

"What is your opinion on their level of skill?" Andreus asked his voice soft and not carrying past their ears.

"Queen Dysea is a whirlwind combination of speed and power. Against an experienced opponent such as you or I, Anja would last the longest and would have the most chance of defeating a single fighter. Dysea is the most skilled but she is overconfident at times and takes unnecessary risks. I would not want to be on the receiving end of a *Nehtes* if she were wielding it however." Lexi spoke. "Your sister..." Lexi shook her head slowly, "Given a years time and training your sister could best you Captain, and you are one of the finest I have ever seen wield a *Nehtes*. She fights viciously and without fear. Her strikes are powerful and exact. What she lacks in power she makes up for in speed."

"The Queen Anja?" Andreus asked.

Lexi looked at him. "She is the most dangerous as I said. Her skills are not as refined as Dysea or Aricia's, but she is an excellent warrior, methodical and precise. She reminds me most of the King, a true predator. Perhaps her skills as a surgeon bleed over to her fighting, but one blow from her will either cripple or kill, for she will not miss. Whoever she hits will not get back up that I guarantee. Against experienced opponents, full vampires trained in the arts for instance... they could hold their own if evenly matched. Without more training, numbers will become a problem, more so for Dysea and Aricia than for Anja. She is the one I would fear fighting the most, for she, like our King, has harnessed the feral nature of the wolf and can shape it to her will."

Andreus looked at Thr'won and saw her smile. "Chief Mage?" he asked.

"They are drawing from him." Thr'won answered with a smile. "He is teaching them at night telepathically. Everything he is learning he is passing to them and vice versa. They are mingling their minds with his on a subconscious level and drawing from his skill."

"Can... can they do that?" Andreus asked amazed.

Thr'won nodded. "In my classes with them they have shown this ability. I don't believe their power will increase more, but they have yet to tap all of what they have gained. All of them have now gone beyond what I can teach them as a Tier Six telepath. The exercises I have been giving them are the most advanced ways to calm and control ones thoughts; how to project and send images and messages, skills such as that. I have tried three times to break the psychic shields they have built individually and together. No Tier Six telepath within Sparta has the power or telepathic ability to breach the King and Anja's psychic shields. They are the strongest. Dysea and your sister, it is possible, but it would take hours of painstaking work and it would be extremely

deadly to any who attempted it. If their minds are linked in any way with the King or Anja at the time of an intrusion,” Thr’won shook her head, “Impossible to do and without question lethal to any who try.”

Andreas shook his head. “It is much the same with the ACT training.” He spoke. “Our Phalanx has turned into a sponge of information. We soak it up faster than Lander and his instructors can provide it. I have already been through the ACT training, but even I am learning things I did not catch the first time.”

Thr’won nodded. “They have read through a quarter of the Library of Scrolls in a month.” She spoke. “I’ve never seen anything like it. He reads something, the next day they know everything he read.”

Lexi looked at Andreas. “I should take them to see *Nehtes* Captain.” She spoke. “They need weapons that are forged for them Captain. It will make them much more deadly if they need to fight.”

Andreas nodded. “But be discrete Lexi. Use the back ways to his shop and insure he knows he is to make the weapons himself and no one else. I want perfection for them.”

Lexi nodded, “Understood.”

Andreas turned to Thr’won as Lexi walked away. “Word is spreading quicker than we expected.” He spoke softly. “Somehow... someone is spreading rumors of who he really is. It has not reached the main stream gossip channels, but it will. And sooner than we want it too.”

Thr’won nodded. “I have discussed this with Theron. He is pulling every string he knows to find out who is leaking the information.”

Andreas met her eyes. “He is with the Steward now?”

Thr’won nodded. “He and Dymas are reviewing The Central Hall and the Agoge First Phase facility.” She answered. “He is scheduled to meet Anja for lunch. Dysea has an appointment with the Education Minister and Aricia is going to the market with Helen.”

“Senior Instructor Lander has given our Phalanx the day off to rest.” Andreas spoke. “There are some things I would like to accomplish.”

“Andreas... I have a question first.” Thr’won spoke.

“Of course Chief Mage,” He said turning to face her completely.

“Do you believe Martin is who we all believe him to be?” Thr’won asked.

“You do not Chief Mage?” Andreas asked surprised.

“That was not my question Captain.” She replied firmly. “I asked if you believe.”

Andreas met her steady gaze. “Since that first moment when we first saw him battling in the Wood Elf city I have known. His entire Guard felt it as well. This is the man we will follow into the Gates of Hades and back if he asked it of us. Do I believe Chief Mage?” Andreas smiled. “With everything that I am I believe.”

Thr’won nodded. “Thank you Captain.” She spoke. “I will not keep you from your duties.”

Andreas bowed his head and turned to leave. Thr’won felt the barest of tingling against her mind and she smiled before turning to leave as well.

Anja walked down the corridor of the main hospital in Sparta heading for the front entrance. She wore simple shoes with Khaki pants and a tight fitting button down white shirt. Her Persian red hair had grown longer, and she had it tied in a pony tail, ringed with strips of light blue silk that Aricia had added just before she left.

Almost a month Anja thought.

We’ve been here almost a month, and the longer she stayed, the more she grew to love it here. The villa was beautiful beyond measure, like some vacation resort site she had seen in brochures before the Comet. The people of Sparta were amazing and diverse, openly friendly and inviting, and aside from the initial confrontation with that pig Midlan, they had no trouble. She had spent much of her days here in the hospital, Walter introducing her to the Chief Surgeon. He knew who Martin was, and therefore who Anja was, but he was an older Shifter and he understood that information must be kept quiet for now. He introduced her as a visiting physician from North America who was here to learn as much as she could.

And learn Anja did.

Anja was a doctor first and foremost, and the equipment she had here in this facility surpassed anything she had seen on EDEN, and that was the most advanced medical equipment she had ever seen anywhere in the world. She was like a child let loose in a candy store, learning how to use the advanced equipment, and taking

to it like fish to water. It was as if she already knew how to use it, and the knowledge came to her naturally, stunning the doctors that were already on staff here with her skill, many of them far older than she was in terms of years and experience. The Chief Surgeon she had learned was almost two thousand years old, the youngest physician a mere seven hundred and eighty years old.

Anja had to smile to herself at that. She now spoke of someone seven hundred years old as if it was the most common thing in the world, not to mention that she was now considered to be immortal, if one used that term. The Shifters could die if injured or killed, they didn't grow back body parts and such, but it was not uncommon to see someone who looked seventy or eighty and come to find out they were actually two thousand years old or more. Shifters that were Walter or Theron's age, three thousand or more years old were very rare, and she learned that many of those who reached that age simply walked off into the mountains when they chose the right time and they were never seen from again. Anja had been exposed to many new and unbelievable things in the last year, and for some reason that did not strike her as odd.

And then there was Martin, Dysea and Aricia.

They spent almost all their nights together, half naked and lounging about the villa sharing thoughts and what they had learned in the course of the day. She had lost almost ten pounds since being here, and her body was now packed with muscle even more so than before she became a werewolf. Dysea and Aricia were much the same way, their training toning them all to the point that Anja believed they had almost no body fat left to burn off. Their lovemaking had grown more intense and deeper as they spent more time here, all of them sharing of each other without a second thought. Martin's training had toned his already sculpted body to that of god like perfection, and all of them had spent hours worshiping him, just as vigorously as he worshiped them in return. He left them all whimpering piles of sated female flesh when he made love to them, his stamina and power almost twice what he had before. The wolf blood pounded in all of them now, more fiercely than before, and it brought them closer and closer as the days passed. Their telepathic connection had grown stronger to the point where they had to teach themselves to subconsciously block others so that they did not intrude on them unintended. Thr'won's lessons had greatly increased their control and how they manipulated their telepathy to the point where it was like second nature to them now. They...

"Anja!" The voice called out and she turned her head quickly to see Paul Taggert moving down the corridor towards her in hurried strides. Without thinking Anja lifted her hand a fraction, stopping the Spartan Centurion assigned to protect her from intercepting Paul. The large man in civilian clothes stepped back slowly, but remained alert.

"Paul... how are you?" Anja asked.

"I have something you need to see." He spoke stopping in front of her.

"I'm late for an appointment Paul." Anja spoke. "Can't this wait?"

"In one word... no." Taggert replied. "Please..."

Anja sighed. *Martin?*

I'm running late. I'll be there in twenty minutes! His deep calm voice filled her thoughts in reply.

Anja smiled inwardly. *Doctor Taggert snagged me on my way out the door Marty. He says there is something he wants to show me immediately.*

I'll get there before you then. You'll owe me a kiss.

I'm beginning to think you like my tongue more than anything else. Anja joked with him, hearing his chuckle. *After all the work I have put into my figure.*

Well... it is a very unique tongue in its talents. And it tastes very good too. And your body is a wonderland that never ceases to inspire me.

I'm rather fond of yours as well. Anja told him with a smile. *And what it can do to me, most especially what you did to me with your tongue night.* Anja felt a rush of warmth and desire course through her belly as the memories of what he had done to her the previous night swept over her. She had come harder and longer than ever before last night, his tongue and fingers driving her up to the edge of the abyss and then sending her over in a kaleidoscope of colors and pleasure.

Liked that did you? His thoughts were filled with love and desire for her, as they always were.

I just might have to convince Dysea to share you this evening. Anja spoke.

I don't know... she's a tough sell.

Anja chuckled. *She loves my tongue even more than you Martin. I think I can convince her, though it might take some extra nibbling on my part. Something that doesn't bother me in the least considering how good she tastes.*

Martin's laugh filled her completely. *Thirty minutes then?*

I'll be there.

And don't forget we are cooking for the others tonight. He reminded her.

I won't! Little Wolf has already given me my instructions.

I'll see you soon.

Anja looked at Paul. "Ok Paul you have thirty minutes." She told him. "Lead on."

Aricia walked alongside Helen as they moved through the market slowly, picking out items that Aricia wanted to help her cook the meal for tonight. She was going to prepare a recipe that her mother had perfected and passed on to her when she was younger.

Helen was content to let Aricia pick what she wanted from the choices of fruits and vegetables and spices. The meat was already in the villa soaking in a sauce she had mixed to Aricia's exact proportions. There were many more steaks than Helen had first thought, enough to feed twenty people, but she wasn't aware of anyone coming to visit them this evening.

Helen was convinced that Martin was the descendant of Leonidas that the people of Sparta had been waiting for. Every day that went by only reinforced that perception for her. The first sign were the Spartan Guards that surrounded the villa, making themselves scarce, but always there, drifting in and out of view. He never went anywhere without a Spartan Centurion with him, usually the same one who she knew as Aricia's brother Andreus. They were never openly in uniform, but always within distance to safeguard their charge. This by itself was very unusual for travelers to their city, as she had never seen random Alphas treated in such a way. Helen surmised that this must be the Spartan Royal Guard assigned to protect him. And if that was the case, then it stood to reason that Anja, Dysea and Aricia were his Queens, for they were never without their own protection, a Spartan Royal Guard always shadowing them. Even now, Helen could pick out the Centurion who shadowed Aricia, a giant of a man, dressed in simple clothes, but always within a distance to act if something happened.

The second sign was the training that the Queens had begun receiving two weeks ago; training in weapons that for the most part only Spartan Centurions carried. And the fact that they were getting better by leaps and bounds every day from what she could tell.

There were the almost daily visits by either the Steward of the Line or Dymas, the well known Guardian of the Line of Leonidas. The Chief Mage continued to make appearances on a regular basis, as well as that pudgy Senator Dilios. Each time they left material for Martin and the others to study and read. Something the four of them did with voracity. Helen had wandered back into the kitchen late one evening and found the four of them in the sunken sitting room. They had pushed aside all the furniture and laid out several soft skin rugs on the floor, tossing the large pillows from the couches onto the floor. All of them were in various states of undress, all of them with data pads or hand written scrolls they were studying intently. Helen had returned several nights in a row to witness this same thing. Martin was always in the center of the group, Aricia, Anja and Dysea leaning against him and each other, flesh to flesh, their hands absently stroking an arm or leg or shoulder while they sipped coffee or tea and read from whatever it was they had. There was nothing sexual in nature happening even though all of them were naked in some way; a bare thigh or breast, one of them always sitting between his legs hiding the enormous tool with their bodies that Helen had seen that first morning. They simply desired the touch of each other, and their naked skin touching one another was how they transmitted this to each other.

There were times when Helen would wake to the sounds of rapturous abandon from the main villa, the cries of immense pleasure and love. She had no doubts about what he did to them, or they to each other Helen had learned. Aricia, Anja and Dysea were not shy in the least about their feelings for each other as well as their King. It was not uncommon to see the three females sharing kisses and embraces with each other that only lovers shared. Kisses and embraces that they shared equally with Martin when he was with them. The depth of their love for each other was almost a palpable thing whenever they were together. There were many beautiful

females within Sparta and the times she had seen Martin outside of the villa walking the streets, always with Andreus at his side, never once did she see an errant look of desire to another female, even though many of those were directed to him. It was no different with the three females, as none of them so much as acknowledged other young Alpha males that showed interest in them. They were devoted to one man and he to them.

Helen and Demetrius had been communicating back and forth since that confrontation with Midlan. Whenever the three of them were together within Sparta they always made an appearance at Demetrius's café. They had become regular fixtures there, and it was amazing to see them interact with the men and women who also frequented the café. The laughter and jokes came easily to them, and the times when Martin had joined them were events of boisterous times with people staying much longer than they usually did just to be around them it appeared.

After the second week, Helen had instructed Layna to stop attempting to brush their thoughts. Their psychic connection had grown stronger than even she imagined, and she did not doubt they would be able to detect anyone attempting to peruse even their surface thoughts. The four of them quickly surpassed even Helen and Layna's skill, and they were both Tier Six telepaths, though not restrained by Thr'won's teachings, excellent though they were. Helen and Layna had received their training from someone else that did not place the restrictions on pupils that Thr'won did.

They called themselves The Watchers.

They were a secret society of Spartiate men, women and children that had existed for two thousand years; a society that trained in telepathy and combat, waiting for the day when a King of the line of Leonidas would return to them. No one knew how many Watchers there were, as each individual knew of only a handful of others. They all knew that if the line of Eurypontids knew they existed, their lives would be in grave danger. The Watchers had no solid proof of what they suspected, but none among them had doubts that the line of Eurypontids was still treacherous and still worked with their hated enemies the vampires. Helen had no doubt that those few she knew of like Demetrius, had informed others of what they knew and suspected Martin was, and many of those who came to Demetrius's cafe were there to see for themselves. Helen did not doubt they all felt as she now did.

The shadow passed next to her and she looked up quickly as the broad shouldered man stepped up beside Aricia.

"Daughter?" The voice spoke.

Aricia turned quickly and suddenly was staring into the weathered face of her father. Xenos was a former Spartan Centurion and Senate member. Dishonored by the horrible act of his oldest son, his family was stripped of all they had. Only the fact that his wife was the brother of the Guardian of the Line kept them from being exiled. He was a tall man, with gray just touching his black hair even though he was not far from two thousand years old himself.

Aricia looked at her father, surprise on her face, and as with Anja, her hand came up in an almost imperceptible motion. Helen saw the Spartan Royal Guard stop in his tracks from where he had begun to move towards them.

"Papa." Aricia spoke softly, though her voice carried with it a hopeful tone and her face softened; a tone and look that quickly disappeared when her father spoke next.

"What do you think you are doing?" Her father hissed in a low voice. "Do you wish to embarrass your mother and I further?"

Aricia's azure eyes narrowed slightly. "What do you mean?" She asked.

"You... you have allowed this Alpha who is not of Sparta to claim you! Mate with you! I can smell him all over you, and those harlots he travels with as well." Xenos's face had a look of incredulity spread on it as he looked at her. "I can not believe a daughter of mine would allow herself to participate with... with them!"

"It is nice to see you again Papa." Aricia spoke. "How have you been? How is mother?"

"One month! I have heard the whispers among the people... the degrading looks that I and your mother have to endure when we go out for one month!" Xenos exclaimed. "We can barely scrape by on what the trade business brings in, and now you do this?"

"What exactly have I done Papa?" Aricia asked.

“Do not disrespect me!” Xenos growled. “You know full well what I am talking about! I still have to pay for the incident of your harlot she-elf and her actions!”

“I assume you are referring to Midlan’s thugs and their attempted assault.” Aricia spoke. “They got what they deserved... and they should be glad Dysea did not gut them where they stood. That they attempted to assault a mated female does not bother you. That they would have assaulted me as well? Why doesn’t that bother you Papa?”

“Midlan is the son of a Senator! A Pureblood!” Xenos gasped.

“And that gives him the right to assault us?” Aricia asked looking at her father.

“He was showing you attention Aricia!” Xenos spat. “Something you would do well to return if you wish to establish yourself and your future.”

Aricia laughed harshly. “You must be joking.” She replied. “I have never once desired Midlan’s attentions. And now that I am mated I certainly do not have to endure his unwelcome advances.”

“You are not mated to this rogue Alpha!” Xenos told her hotly. “Not in my eyes and not in the eyes of your mother!”

“I would prefer to hear that from mother.” Aricia told him.

“You will hear it from me!” Her father growled. “You will end this charade with this insolent and tainted Alpha and return to my home. You will beg Midlan for forgiveness, and return the attention he shows you.”

Aricia laughed harshly and shook her head. “I don’t think so.” She said.

“I am not asking you Aricia. I am telling you.” He demanded.

Aricia glared at her father. “I am well past the age of consent father.” She spat back at him. “You have no hold over me. I am free to choose who I mate with and when. I would not let Midlan touch me even if he were the last wolf on this planet. The very thought of that vile actions makes me sick.”

“You will do as I say!” Xenos almost shouted as he gripped her arm.

Aricia pulled away from him with greater strength than he remembered her having, several heads turning to look at them. “I will do no such thing!” Aricia snapped. “Unlike you... I do not care about *your* status. That is all this is about! It’s all it was ever about! You only wished me to mate with that pig Midlan as a perverse way for you to regain your status among our people. You allowed them to banish your son when you know in your heart he could never do something as heinous as what they say. Do not come to me now when I have found love and a life with someone who loves me for me. Do not demand from me!”

“If you do not do as I say, I will denounce you to all. You will no longer be welcome as my daughter! You will no longer be acknowledged as my daughter!” Xenos snapped.

“You do what you will Papa! You always have!”

Little Wolf are you ok? Aricia heard Martin’s soft, concerned voice fill her thoughts as his aura telepathically enveloped her in its embrace.

Xenos saw his daughter smile gently and nod as she took a deep breath. “I am fine my love.” She spoke out loud, turning to look at her father. “I’m speaking with my father at the moment. I will be finished quickly and I will see you for dinner.”

Are you sure?

“I have never been so sure of anything Martin my love. Give Anja a kiss for me and my love as well.” Aricia spoke warmly, smiling at the confusion on her father’s face.

I love you Little Wolf.

“I know... and I love you. All of you, with all that I am.” Aricia answered.

“Who are you talking too?” Xenos demanded, reaching out telepathically to touch his daughter’s mind. His eyes widened when he found a black wall guarding her mind. A black wall more powerful than anything he had ever felt.

Aricia smiled again as she felt her father attempt to probe her thoughts. She shook her head slowly. “That is something you will never be able to do father. I am no longer a child, and I am a far stronger telepath than you now Papa, even stronger than mother. I will do what it is I wish to do. Right now, I wish to finish shopping so that I can finish dinner for the man and the women who share my life and my love. Do what you wish father, denounce me and banish me from your family, whatever makes you feel strong. I no longer care.”

Aricia turned on her heels and looked at Helen. "Shall we continue Helen? There are a few more things I wish to purchase before we return."

Helen nodded with a smile as a swell of pride at what Aricia had just done filtered through her. She watched Aricia walk past her, her head high and in no way diminished. She looked at Xenos, who wore a stunned expression on his face. "You are without a doubt one of the biggest fools I have ever met." Helen told him with a small smile. "Abandoning your children seems to be a habit for you Xenos. A pity."

Helen spun around and followed Aricia.

"It will happen in three weeks time on this same day." The hooded figure spoke from the shadows.

The second two figures stepped part way from the shadows of the alley in the seedier section of nighttime Sparta. Every city had darkness to it, and Sparta was no different, except that the same types of crime did not happen in Sparta. It was just not tolerated. Prostitution was legal here, and there was a fledging black market slave ring that had just been started, mainly very young Shifters who were homeless or runaways.

"Why so long?" The next voice asked.

"An operation of this magnitude takes planning." The first hooded figure replied. "The contract has been accepted on these two human imposters. It will be carried out by the finest assassin on the planet."

"Where?"

"The café where he meets them for lunch before going to his ACT training," The figure replied. "How is not important, only that the Mistress has decreed it done."

"Aricia is mine!" Midlan's voice hissed.

"Quiet you tongue Midlan!" The second hooded figure snapped harshly.

"You can have the female whore shifter." The first figure spoke. "And the female elf as well if you like. Though I doubt you'll get them to submit to you. It appears you don't have the balls for that."

Midlan drew back his hood and stepped forward, "Take care vampire." He growled. "You are in Sparta now. Many things could happen to you while you are here."

Moran tossed back his own hood and stepped up to Midlan, baring his vampire fangs and revealing his dark obsidian vampire eyes. Midlan took a short gasp at the sight. "Do not threaten me young werewolf. I am far old and more powerful than you, and it would be simple to crush you where you stand."

"And I am far older than both of you combined!" The third figure hissed as his cloak and hood remained in place. "This arguing is pointless. Aricia shall be yours Midlan... but only if you do as you are directed."

"I shall." Midlan spoke.

Moran turned to the third figure. "Since we are doing this for you, the Mistress has a request of her own."

The third figure nodded, "Of course."

"It concerns a certain type of nuclear reactor." Moran told them, "And the whereabouts of this type?"

EDEN CITY

It happened quickly.

Almost too quickly, but the seven elves really had no idea who they were attacking.

Tarifa and Aihola were walking hand in hand up the short flight of stairs that would take them into Eden's command center, Dekton just to the front of them, his eyes sweeping the area around them in the front. His wolf senses alerted him first, smelling the dump of adrenalin into the bloodstream, and even as he smelled this he was whirling around, his P190 coming up in a single fluid motion. He had loosed three rounds before Aihola's vampire genes kicked in and she heard the elevated heartbeats closing on her from the side.

Tarifa!

Her one word alarm resounded in Tarifa's mind as loud as any siren, and without thinking, or hesitation Tarifa was dropping to the steps and rolling, her hand filling with the K12 from beneath her casual jacket. When Aihola's matte black Drow throwing knife appeared in her hand, Dekton's three rounds were impacting the

closest elf to his charges. The three bullets struck like a hammer, all within a half inch diameter in the center of his chest. The elf's back blew apart, spraying blood and internal organs all over the steps, and lifting his body into the air before slamming it down again.

Aihola's left hand snapped out even as her right reached for the K12 on her belt. The Drow throwing knife, six inches of razor thin and razor sharp blade had slid from its position on her forearm into her palm with barely a twitch. As Aihola brought it up to throw she saw the first elf hurled backwards by Dekton's first burst. She instantly adjusted her aim and let fly with the blade. Her aim was deadly accurate. The six inch blade pierced the second elf between his eye ball and his nasal cavity with such force his head snapped back as if he'd struck a wall. The sound of his neck snapping was like a thunderclap in the slow motion of time their world had come into. The broken neck was secondary, as Aihola's blade had sliced into his cerebral cortex severing all motor functions of his body instantly. He dropped like a limp noodle. She continued her turn, the K12 coming up as another throwing knife appeared in her palm like magic. The third elf was six feet from Aihola when his chest blossomed into red fountains of blood and gore, each bullet from Tarifa's K12 slamming into him with unerring accuracy, causing his body to do a gruesome dance of death as he was thrown backwards into the fourth elf behind him, causing him to stumble and fall.

The fifth elf was able to lift his weapon and bring it to bear on Aihola before his head exploded like an overripe melon, showering the entire area with a fine red mist of blood and brain matter. This splatter caught both Aihola and Tarifa in the side and on their faces, but did not cause them to pause.

Aihola continued her spinning motion, the K12 coming up. She dismissed the sixth elf and flipped the throwing knife at the seventh elf, which was closer to Tarifa, a club brandished in his hand. As her blade entered his throat with a wet slapping sound, Tarifa's K12 boomed once more and she sent four rounds into the elf's chest and abdomen. Her face was twisted in rage as she pulled the trigger, any of the four rounds lethal wounds. Aihola twisted her head back, her K12 leveling now at the sixth elf, his eyes filled with fear as he backpedaled. Holding her K12 perpendicular to the ground, Aihola loosed three perfect rounds, within a second of each other. The three bullets punched into the elf's throat and face, splattering his brains and gray matter over the now red stained concrete.

Dekton had dropped his P190 the moment he loosed his second burst, the fourth elf far too close to continue shooting. His hand dropped by instinct to his *Nehtes* and he pulled it free, extending the eight foot spear in a quick snap of his wrist. The gleaming point of the blade shone in the sunlight as he stepped in front of the elf just as he brought the handgun up tracking Aihola. Dekton did not pause as the elf pulled the trigger and with a powerful thrust he drove the spear through the elf's sternum. The rupturing of the sternum was signaled by the escaping air and the gasp of blood spittle that flew from the elf's lips. His eyes bugged out of his head as his fingers released the weapon and he stared down at the black spear impaling him. He looked up into the cold eyes of a trained merciless killer as Dekton wrenched his spear out with barely any effort, the elf's lungs following the broad head in small bloody pieces. Dekton didn't pause, didn't think, he simply rammed the *Nehtes* forward again, spearing the elf completely through the abdomen and stepping into the blow. His Spartan matte black helm hid most of his features, with the exception of his eyes and his teeth and they were now extended in full mid change, his eyes blazing with red anger.

"Who!" Dekton screamed.

"Te... Telan."

"Where?"

"Wes... Western District." The dying elf gasped out his last words. Dekton ripped out the spear again, more pieces of the elf coming with the spear head. He spun in an elegant three hundred sixty degree turn, his hand sliding down the spear as he whirled. When he struck the elf at the apex of the full turn the spear head was traveling so fast it sliced through flesh and bone as easily as a hot knife through butter and the elf's head flipped into the air.

Dekton completed the graceful spin the *Nehtes* extended over his right shoulder against his neck and he was facing Tarifa and Aihola. Their eyes were on him, both sets of gorgeous orbs wide in awe, fear and adrenalin rush.

"Inside! Now!" He commanded.

They didn't argue with him as Elf and human soldiers began to pour into the area from the streets and out of the building. Dekton looked back on the steps the bodies of seven attackers down and dead. He saw

dozens of people gazing at him in shock, fear and once more awe. He depressed the button on his *Nehtes*, collapsing the spear and he thrust it back into the sheath on his right thigh. He turned and bounded up the stairs after Aihola and Tarifa. Two elves opened the door as he came forward, and he saw that his two charges were now surrounded by a cadre of elf and human guards. He nodded to himself at their efficiency, telling himself to commend their commander for the quick reaction. He pushed past the circle and knelt in front of Aihola and Tarifa.

“Are you hurt?” He demanded.

“We’re fine!” Aihola snapped angrily, though it was not directed at him.

Tarifa was on one knee, still clutching the K12 in her fist. “I heard the last one say Telan!” She barked.

Dekton nodded. “You know this person?”

“Only too well,” Tarifa replied. “He’s Anlain’s son. The bastard who raped me for almost five months while he and his father held my brothers and plotted against me.”

Aihola saw a flash of killing anger in Dekton’s eyes before it was gone as quickly as it had come. He stood up and grabbed the nearest elf guard, spinning him around.

“Encircle the entire Western District. Shut down all roads in or out and place men at fifty meter intervals around the perimeter. I want a house by house search for this Telan! Broadcast on an open channel so our people will know why we do this. They will probably help us locate the bastard.” Dekton snapped. “Find him before he escapes.”

“And when we find him Spartan?” The elf asked.

“You bring the raping motherfucker to me!” Dekton growled with such ferocity it frightened the elf.

The elf nodded and sprinted off. Dekton took a deep breath as his adrenaline rush began to recede and the pain hit him then. He looked down at the front of his body armor and saw the five point blank bullet strikes that his armor had stopped and the two bullet wounds that had penetrated the edges of his armor, blood beginning to leak out.

Aihola and Tarifa looked at each other when they heard Dekton’s order, surprise in their eyes. He seemed enraged over what Telan had done to Tarifa. They both looked back at the same time to watch him look down and then they saw the blood drops hit the floor.

“Dekton!” Aihola exclaimed as she and Tarifa clamored to their feet. “You’ve been shot!”

“So it would appear!” Dekton spoke. “They are flesh wounds. Nothing more.”

“Sit here!” Tarifa ordered, sweeping her arm across the credenza against the wall, and knocking away the planters. “Get me a med kit!” She screamed.

“They are minor wounds.” Dekton told them again.

Aihola looked at him. “You serve us correct?”

“Yes.”

“Then sit your ass down!” Aihola snapped.

Dekton detected the command in her voice and turned to do as she ordered. He settled onto the credenza and held his arm up as Aihola began to unbuckle the armor he wore. Tarifa slammed the med kit down and opened it, before helping her remove the armor. The saw Dekton flinch as they pulled the front of the armor away. The left side of his abdomen was soaked in blood completely through the fatigue top he wore.

“Flesh wounds my ass!” Tarifa snapped as she took the scissors and began cutting away the front of his uniform.

When Aihola pulled it back, their eyes went wide. Five large bruises were forming on the left side of his chest, above the two bullet holes.

“The bullets are just below the surface.” He told Tarifa calmly. “Use the forceps and pull them out if you would. Or give them to me and I will do it.”

Tarifa looked at Aihola and then took the forceps from the kit. She leaned over in front of him, trying very hard to ignore the ripple of his abdominal muscles and the numerous scars dotting his chest. Gently she pried the forceps inside the first wound and quickly found the bullet which she worked out slowly. She dropped into onto the credenza and then did the same for the second bullet. This one was deeper and caused Dekton to inhale sharply and squeeze her shoulder tightly.

“I’m sorry!” She spoke quickly, as she dug the bullet out finally.

Dekton nodded and let out the breath he had been holding, “Much better.” He said.

It was then that Tarifa noticed his changed eyes and the tips of his fangs extending just below his lips. Her eyes went a little wider. "You're a Genome." She spoke.

Dekton looked at her, blinked quickly and his eyes returned to their normal dark brown color. Tarifa's heart jumped ever so slightly as she looked into those eyes, feeling Aihola's own pulse quicken beside her. She felt her blood begin to warm, and a strange sensation coursed through her. "I will heal in a few minutes. Your father and Vengal will see to your safety." He looked at the nearest elf. "Escort them both to the Command Center Conference Room. They are not to leave your sight until there."

The elf nodded and came up to them.

"Dekton..." Tarifa started to speak.

"The situation is secure and you have duties to perform." Dekton spoke calmly. "I will handle this. You will not be alone. Go."

Aihola took Tarifa's hand and they started down the corridor, both of them looking back at the Spartan as he inspected his wounds.

Aihola? Tarifa reached out to her.

I felt it too my love. Aihola answered as they walked in silence.

What was that? Tarifa asked. *I felt warm all of a sudden. I felt... Aihola I felt aroused.*

Aihola nodded slowly gripping Tarifa's hand tightly. *Yes... I felt just as... just as aroused as you make me Tarifa. It is very... it was very strange.*

Dekton watched them as they walked down the corridor, the sway of their perfect asses and the line of their thighs and legs. He blinked several times trying to shake the visions from his head. They had stood and fought with honor, looking death in the face and not blinking. That fact alone made his blood burn for them, and added to their beauty he had to struggle to keep his aura shielded. It had leaked for a brief moment until he clamped it back down, but they had tasted it and it had affected them, which was more a surprise to him than anything. Aihola was half vampire, and while she may be the most stunning half vampire Dekton had ever seen, she should not have been affected by his aura. Tarifa he understood due to the times with his King, but surely his aura was more powerful than his and would not affect her as it did.

Dekton shook his head and looked at his abdomen as the wounds began to heal, knitting themselves closed and repairing damaged skin. Rape! Dekton abhorred rapists in every shape or form. They were beneath murderers in his opinion and no more deserved to live than a man who slaughtered hundreds. Dekton looked down the corridor once more and saw the fleeting glance of his two charges entering the elevator. He blinked and the Drow warrior was in front of him.

"Dekton... I need to talk with you." Lynwe spoke.

"Lynwe... there was just an attack on Aihola and Tarifa." Dekton told her sliding off the credenza. "Can this not wait?"

"Aihola? Tarifa?" Lynwe gasped. "They..."

"They are fine." Dekton spoke. "I ask again, can this not wait?"

Lynwe shook her head. "You will understand when I show you what I have. And it may tie together."

Dekton sighed and nodded, "Very well." He refastened his body armor and looked at the row of elf and human guards. "This building stays locked down until that pig Telan is caught. There will be no exceptions unless it is a Minister." He yelled.

"Telan?" Lynwe spoke. "He was behind this?"

Dekton nodded. "One of the assassins called out his name before I tore open his guts. And he gave us a location. Telan is in the city hidden somewhere in the Western District."

Lynwe's face mirrored puzzlement. "That could explain a great many things." She said softly.

"What do you mean?"

Lynwe motioned him to follow her. "Come... you will be most interested in what I will show you knowing that Telan is behind this attack on Aihola and Tarifa. And it just might speed your revenge."

"Revenge?" Dekton questioned.

Lynwe smiled. "I may have your type of equipment between my legs Dekton," Lynwe spoke without a trace of embarrassment or shame. "But my mind and heart is still female. And I see the way you look at them."

"You are mistaken." Dekton spoke.

Lynwe smiled gently. "Ok... now come and look at what I have."

They stood in the small room with the video surveillance cameras watching the small screen. There were male grunts coming from the screen, the elf operator blushing badly at what he was seeing.

Dekton turned to look at Lynwe. "Why exactly am I watching Minister Torcrum having sex?" He asked her.

"It's been like this for three weeks Dekton." Lynwe spoke. "And that is not sex! That is rape of a different kind."

Dekton looked at her. "You've been spying on her for three weeks? Under whose order?"

"I was instructed too." Lynwe replied. "Who ordered me too is not important."

"Tarifa and Aihola did this didn't they?" Dekton spoke.

"It doesn't matter... watch!" Lynwe snapped.

Dekton turned back to the screen as now it showed a different man. A human. Lynwe stepped up to the elf. "Advance to time 0241." She said.

The elf manipulated the controls and the camera zoomed ahead. Lynwe pointed to the screen as it stopped once more. "There!" She spoke.

Dekton leaned close to the screen, his eyes going wide. "Is that what I think it is?" He asked. "Can you clear that image up?"

The elf worked the controls again and what came into focus were the fangs of a vampire just before he sank them into Selene's flesh.

"Who is he?" Dekton demanded. "Do you know him?"

"I do!" The cold voice spoke from behind them. They turned and saw Tarifa standing there in the doorway.

"My Queen?" Lynwe asked. "You know this human?"

Tarifa nodded slowly. "Oh yes." She answered. "He took great pleasure in taking from me what I did not offer him when I went to EDEN shortly after Martin returned to earth. That is Senator Richard Graham." Tarifa stepped forward and touched the elf operator. "Contact Admiral Wallace. He is to drop whatever he is doing and join us here. Lynwe bring this video and come with me."

"Fuck!" Wallace swore. "I shot him three times in the chest from less than ten feet!"

"He apparently survived long enough for Marcus to get on the station and change him." Aihola spoke. "The better question is what is he doing here fucking Selene?"

"How did you get this?" Wallace asked looking at Lynwe. "It's... it's disturbingly..."

"Like what happen to her on EDEN." Lynwe spoke softly.

"How did you..."

"I spoke at length with Anisa." Lynwe replied. "I did not go into this with the intent of exposing her as a spy. Aihola and Tarifa asked that I watch over her. It was during this time that I discovered she would allow these men to come in and abuse her sexually. It was the same three until this Graham showed up. The others would beat her at times, one would even bite her, but when I first saw Graham bite her and she flinched so severely I knew something was not right. I brought a camera with me for the next few nights. This footage I got last night."

"His features have changed somewhat." Tarifa spoke.

Wallace nodded. "His cheeks are sunk in a little, he looks paler. Perhaps he didn't think anyone would recognize him."

Lynwe shook her head. "That does not explain how a woman as beautiful as Selene would accept him into her bed."

Aihola and Tarifa both looked at Lynwe out of the corners of their eyes when she said this. "Marcus." Aihola spoke.

"What?"

“If Marcus turned him, then Graham would have similar powers to Marcus.” Aihola spoke. “It is passed down through the gene when they bite someone. Whatever their skills may have been, whoever they turn absorbs a portion of those skills. Marcus was very good at mind control. He would simply stare at you and put commands into your mind. If Graham was turned by Marcus, then it stands to reason he has similar abilities.”

“I watched her for four more hours.” Lynwe spoke. “Everything else she did was normal for the routine she has established.”

“If Graham bit her, then I’m guessing he passed something onto her subconsciously.” Aihola spoke, “An order to report to him perhaps everything that we do.”

“We have to eliminate her influence!” Dekton spoke. All heads turn to him quickly. “If he has infected her with commands like these we can not allow her to attend meetings anymore. She must be cut out of the command structure because she has now become a threat to Aihola and Tarifa.”

Wallace nodded. “I agree.” He spoke. “She’s become a liability.”

Lynwe looked at them. “Listen to you! We’re talking about someone who sat in this very room with us as we started building here. She has been a part of everything we have done so far. And now you advocate just killing her. I won’t accept that! I won’t let you kill her!”

Wallace shook his head. “What alternative do we have?”

Aihola got to her feet and went over to Lynwe. “Selene has affected you so strongly Lynwe. Why?” She asked softly.

“I have discovered someone who is not so unlike I was not long ago.” Lynwe answered, looking down at her. “The rape on EDEN striped her of her dignity and these men are how she is keeping herself sane, by allowing them to do these things to her.”

Wallace sat back in his chair. “I do not pretend to understand what rape does emotionally to a woman. I can’t understand that. It’s a vile crime in any respect as far as I am concerned. Lynwe is right; the help she has given us allows us to be sitting here. If we can do anything... I suggest we try.”

“And if we can’t?” Tarifa asked. “Let me play devil’s advocate, and no one get angry with me for doing this. What do we do if we can not help her and find out what Graham is doing? What then?”

Lynwe took a deep breath. “Then I will eliminate her.” She spoke sadly. “I will take responsibility for her. I will not allow anyone else to touch her!”

Aihola looked at Tarifa. “My love... Tari would know!” She spoke quickly. “He was able to study much more than I at the school they sent us.”

Tarifa leaned forward her sapphire eyes going to Dekton. “Dekton the transmitter we have to maintain communications with Martin. Can it be detected by the Alliance?”

Dekton shook his head. “Doubtful.” He replied. “It is a very powerful low frequency band transmitter. It is something new we have come up with in the last year. This mission was the first we have deployed it on.”

“Can you contact Martin?” Tarifa asked.

Dekton nodded and reached for his belt. “Give me a moment.”

SPARTA

Hali set the mugs of coffee and tea down in front of her King and Tari. Martin, Tari, Julie and her parents were crowded into the small communications room in the basement of their home.

Hali placed her hand on Tari’s shoulder and squeezed. Having their daughter back among them had meant more to Hali and her husband than anything in the world. That first night back, no one had slept as they talked well into the night. It did not go unnoticed how their daughter kept returning to the dark skinned male elf, clutching his hand tightly. They could smell him all over her, and she on him and after the initial shock of discovering he was half vampire, they delved deeper into this elf who had claimed their daughter as his mate. Julie’s parents were not judgmental, priding themselves on seeing things from all sides. It came from her father who was born and raised on the Asian continent, and born a Lion Shifter. They were patient and thoughtful, and for the next ten hours they had questioned Tari about his life and his intentions. It did not take them long to determine that he loved their daughter more than his own life, and the final decision came easy to them when he asked them for their blessing to take Julie as his mate.

Over the next month he had proved that love and devotion in spades, and now even Julie's most skeptical older brother considered Tari an equal.

"Did not want to have to disturb you My King..." Tarifa spoke. "But this is important."

Martin sipped the coffee Hali had given him. "Tarifa... I've told you about that King crap." He barked with an amused tone, surprising Julie's parents. "Little Drow... help me out there."

Aihola smiled. "I have tried to get her to change Martin. She is very stubborn as you know."

"I'm sorry... I forgot." Tarifa replied with her own smile. "Martin."

"Better." Martin answered. "How are things proceeding?"

"Better than we had hoped Martin," Tarifa answered. "Six more settlements have been established and Eden's population has swelled to nearly a million and a half. We are moving slowly to allow everyone to adjust, but so far we have had no major problems, at least not until today."

Martin leaned forward. "Explain."

"There was an attempt on Aihola and myself this morning by some thugs that Telan hired. We were not injured, and we may have found Telan. We are conducting a search now." Tarifa told him. "The more troubling issue is this." Tarifa motioned to the monitor behind her and everyone could see the video of Selene and Graham.

"Graham is in Eden?" Martin asked angrily.

"Continue watching Martin." Aihola spoke calmly.

He didn't need to watch long, the moment he saw Graham prepared to bite Selene he got to his feet shaking in barely controlled rage, "Dekton?"

"Sire?"

"Dekton... you find that blood sucking motherfucker and you gut that raping bastard until he has got no blood left in him!" Martin spoke his voice trembling with anger and hatred, surprising Tarifa with his reaction.

"Martin if we do that we will not know how deeply the Alliance has penetrated." Aihola spoke now.

"And it will not help Selene."

"Help her? He's turned her into a full blooded vampire!" Martin almost yelled. "She is now a threat!"

"No!" Lynwe shouted. "My King... he has not turned her! I watched her for four hours after he left her apartment. She did not turn."

"Tari... we believe he is planting orders into her subconscious." Aihola spoke quickly. "Marcus is the only one who could have turned him. Admiral Wallace left him for dead and we are sure it was Marcus who took control of EDEN."

Tari nodded. "Then he would have inherited Marcus's powers." Tari spoke. "Go on sister."

"We think they intend to use her to gather information on us here Tari. *Nya Istel* and I want to turn that to our advantage and in the process hopefully save Selene as well." Tarifa said.

"Ok... I'm lost here." Martin spoke returning to his chair. "How can you do that?"

Tari looked at him. "Marcus's strongest power was a form of mind control. Only very old vampires have this ability, so we surmised that it was the Priestess herself who turned Marcus. If Marcus did turn Graham, then he would have inherited this skill on a smaller scale, certainly enough to plant suggestions and orders into Selene's subconscious mind."

"So she would spy on us?" Martin spoke.

Tari nodded, "In essence yes."

"He's not exactly someone that Selene strikes me as picking off the street." Martin said, "Especially now. He's even uglier than before."

"Selene is going... she is experiencing a rough time right now." Tarifa replied. "But Lynwe believes she can help her, and turn her against Graham."

"How?" Martin asked.

Tari looked at the screen. "Lynwe, you know what that entails?"

"I do Tari." She answered quickly.

"Someone want to fill me in here?" Martin asked.

Tari turned to him. "Lynwe will have to take Selene's blood." He said. "In her blood will be the imprint of what Graham wanted her to do."

Martin looked at Lynwe and shook his head. “No!” He spoke. “That is against everything you believe Lynwe! Why would you...”

“I have fallen in love with her.” Lynwe spoke quickly. “She is experiencing the exact same emotions that were running through me before Aihola and Tarifa showed me I could be different. I have watched her for three weeks now My King, flogging herself in this way. She is reaching out, but no one is there to help her.”

“And you... you are willing to do this?” Martin asked.

Lynwe nodded. “Yes.”

“What’s involved?”

“He comes every fourth day Tari.” Lynwe spoke, “To reinforce his control on her.”

Tari nodded. “That is good for us. It means he is not as strong as he thinks. She can fight him Lynwe, you will have to teach her, but she can fight his control.”

“How does she find out what he is telling her?” Martin asked.

“She will have to bite Selene within a few minutes of Graham.” Tari spoke. “He’s obviously not taking a lot of blood, only enough to imprint himself on her. Lynwe will have to take enough of Selene’s blood to override his control. Once she does that, she’ll be able to read his imprint.”

“The pig leaves almost immediately after satisfying himself!” Lynwe spat. “I can be to her with five minutes after he leaves her apartment.”

Tari nodded. “That should be enough time if what I read is correct.” He said. “And there is no reason to think it isn’t. Lynwe she needs to know, for you will have to bite her somewhere that Graham will not detect.”

“Martin this could be an intelligence coup for us.” Tarifa spoke.

“And if he discovers what you are doing?” Martin asked.

“Then he will either turn her completely, or kill her.” Lynwe answered. “In which case I will intercede and remove his undead heart, and if need be... if need be I will kill Selene as well.”

“Fuck!” Martin swore leaning back in his chair. He looked back to the screen. “Tarifa? Aihola?”

Aihola nodded slowly, her amber eyes bright. “I believe it’s worth the risk.”

Tarifa nodded, “As do I?”

“Then I will not question your decision.” Martin said. “You have my approval... but the final decision will be yours.”

Tarifa nodded. “Then we will go with the plan we have and keep you apprised.”

“Let’s start weekly communications from now on.” Martin said, “Unless there’s an emergency.”

“Agreed.”

“Good luck my friends.” Martin told them, “Leonidas out.”

EDEN

“You’ve been spying on me?” Selene raged as she glared at Tarifa and Aihola. There were only five of them in the room now, Lynwe sitting next to Selene and Dekton in his usually place behind the two queens.

“Selene you know that we assigned a Drow to every Minister for their own protection.” Tarifa spoke calmly. “They are able to disappear because of their vampire genes and their abilities. Lynwe is the best. It was Lynwe that discovered Graham and what he was doing to you.”

Selene turned and looked at her. “Did it get you off watching me Drow?” Selene snarled viciously.

Lynwe kept her face impassive though she felt the sting of pain sweep through her heart. Watching this woman for the last three weeks, exposed to her beauty and her superior mind during the day at meetings like these, Lynwe had no doubts that what she felt was love. Watching those men take her like they did, demean her, beat her, it was all Lynwe could do to keep from ripping their faces off.

“Regardless of what you may think, it was not like that.” Lynwe spoke. “I wish to help you.”

Selene turned back to Tarifa and Aihola. “Why am I here? I’m a vampire now, and I should be dead. That is the unwritten law isn’t it!”

“You are not a vampire.” Aihola spoke calmly.

“He bit me!” Selene spoke looking at the video once more. “He’s disgusting! He... he doesn’t look anything like the man in the... in the restaurant.”

“He’s using a form of mind control.” Tarifa explained. “Apparently vampires have this ability, or at least very old ones do.” Tarifa shook her head. “I can’t believe we are actually talking about vampires. What is next... werewolves and ghouls?” Tarifa didn’t see the imperceptible look that Aihola and Dekton shared. “We suspect he will try to use you as either a source of information or something else, perhaps an assassin.”

“He... he is the one that...” Selene spoke.

“Yes we know.” Tarifa said softly. “Admiral Wallace informed us of what happen on EDEN Selene.”

“I never asked for any of this!” Selene screamed coming to her feet, holding her arms across her chest. “I have been used by Deval and the Alliance. I had to endure his foul touch for years. I was raped, tortured, and now this! I just want peace!” She went to the wall in the room, tears now pouring from her eyes, and leaned her head up against it.

Lynwe got to her feet and moved up behind her. Lynwe towered over Selene’s petite five foot two frame, and she looked down into the thick auburn red tresses. She felt a myriad of emotions sweeping through her, emotions that she had never felt before. And they were all directed at this half elf female.

When she first came to Eden, Selene had sought out a surgeon to repair her ears. Because she was only half elf, her ears were not as curved or long, but there was no denying she was at least part elf, as they were elegantly rounded and rose to a point at the top. She had all the beauty of an elf, many of the physical attributes and the ability to heal quickly. She was not as strong as a full blooded elf, but more than a normal human. She had her father’s love of reading, and her mother’s love of cooking. And the natural instinct of every elf and that was to live free.

“I will help you Selene.” Lynwe spoke softly.

Selene laughed harshly but didn’t turn, her eyes clouded with tears. “Why would you help me?” She asked.

Lynwe reached up and with her fingers she gently pulled back the shirt Selene wore exposing the bruises from other men, and then the two small puncture wounds on the back of her neck, “Because I have been where you are now.” Lynwe answered softly. “And I was shown that the anger and self hate will eventually destroy you from the inside. I do not wish to see that happen to you.”

Selene looked up into the face of this large Drow female. She made her feel small in comparison, the Drow almost six foot in height, but her amber eyes held something in them that caused Selene’s heart to do a little flip. The Drow exuded strength and power, yet there was something tender about her, something that swept over her and made her feel safe.

“Yes...we want to use you against the Alliance Selene.” Tarifa spoke softly. “The information we could gain is beyond measure. You are right however... you have been used by everyone around you in some way. It is your choice Selene. I will not force this on you, and neither will Aihola.” Selene turned to look at her now. “If you do not feel up to this in any way, then we will simply capture Graham the next time he comes to you, and we’ll figure something else out.”

Dekton stepped forward. “Tarifa you...”

“No!” Tarifa snapped vehemently, her sapphire colored eyes burning in anger as she glared at him. “I don’t care what you say Dekton. Your people may find it acceptable... but I do not! And Martin’s reaction troubled me, his hatred and anger. I will not force this woman to be a whore so that we can gather intelligence! I will not do it!”

Dekton’s eyes narrowed and he stepped back without another word.

“My love?” Aihola spoke softly.

Tarifa looked at her, her eyes softening considerably. *I have been raped Nya Istel. As have you. More times then I care to remember. She is obviously not as strong as you and I and that is not her fault. I... I can not bring myself to tell her we need her to do this.*

Nor can I. Aihola agreed.

“What... what would I have to do?” Selene asked moving back to the table, tearing her eyes from Lynwe’s amber orbs.

Tarifa looked at her. “Selene we were wrong to...”

“No!” Selene said taking a deep breath. She wiped her eyes. “I will not forsake all that we have started here. Tell me what I need to do. The Alliance needs to be stopped and if I can help I will.”

It took twenty minutes, but Tarifa explained to her exactly what would need to happen in detail. Selene returned to her chair when she was done and was silent. She looked up finally. "And Lynwe's bite will allow her to see what it is Graham is planning?" Selene asked.

Aihola nodded slowly. "We lack the gene to actually turn someone with our bite. It is one of the reasons that the Priestess was so enraged when she discovered it. But... if we..."

Lynwe stepped forward. "It will allow me to see what imprint he is leaving on you Selene." Lynwe spoke. "If we know... then we can use it against him."

"Yes." Aihola echoed.

"How... how can you stop him from turning me?" Selene asked. "I don't want to be like them? I don't want to be a vampire."

"Lynwe would have to bite you before Graham sees you again." Aihola spoke. "We have discovered that if... if she takes your blood it will allow the two of you to share a telepathic link of sorts. She will know what Graham is doing... and she will stop him if he attempts this."

Selene looked at Lynwe. "I thought... I thought you... all of you had taken vows never to do that. To take blood."

Lynwe nodded. "We have." She said. "Some of us have done it to survive, to heal injuries."

"Have you?" Selene asked.

Lynwe nodded slowly. "Once. It was... it was not a pleasant experience, and one I do not wish to relate."

"And yet you would do this now?" Selene asked.

"To protect you," Lynwe spoke after a moment. "Yes."

"And you would not be far away?" Selene asked.

"I have already arranged to take the empty apartment on your floor." Lynwe replied. "I will move my belongings there this afternoon if you agree."

Selene gazed into her amber eyes for a long moment, searching them. She took in the soft dark ebony skin of Lynwe's neck and cheeks, and the light pink of her lips. She nodded slowly and turned back to Tarifa, "Very well." She spoke. "I will do this. For all of us."

Tarifa nodded slowly. "We'll set things in motion." She said.

"The other... the other men..." Selene spoke looking at Aihola. "They..." Selene saw Aihola's eyes go to where Lynwe stood and her blue eyes did as well.

"They will never touch you again. That I promise you." Lynwe spoke, her voice chilling in its finality, her amber eyes glowing points of intensity.

"Selene... you should go with Lynwe and get a full medical check up before this begins." Tarifa said. "We need to be able to react to anything that may come up."

Selene nodded and got to her feet. She and Lynwe moved to the door and exited. The moment the door slid shut Tarifa whirled around and glared at Dekton.

"You will never suggest something like that again!" She snapped viciously.

"Tarifa..." Aihola started.

"No!" Tarifa spoke. "The casual disregard that you place on this is beyond me! Selene is a person, not an enemy. And Martin's reaction disturbs me even more. He has changed since he has been in Sparta. His hatred and anger was something I have not seen from him. That he would even entertain the mention of killing her without all the facts is something I can not comprehend! Is this how all Spartans are?"

Dekton stared at her with his dark eyes saying nothing. "You do not know as much as you think you do Tarifa." He spoke finally.

"Then enlighten me oh mighty Spartan!" Tarifa snapped sarcastically.

"Tarifa stop." Aihola said getting to her feet.

"I will not stop!" Tarifa snapped again. "I am tired of his refusal to answer simple questions. I'm tired of his brutal attitude towards others. He knows nothing about the Alliance and what they are capable of. He..." Tarifa turned back to look at him, only to find he was directly in front of her now, his dark eyes gone and in their place gleaming orbs of greenish/gold. Long fangs extended from beneath his lips and Tarifa gasped in surprise, backing up until she could not move against the table.

“I am over seven hundred years old Tarifa of the High Elves,” Dekton spoke softly, but his words carried a hardness in them that neither Tarifa nor Aihola had ever heard. “And I know far more of what the Alliance is capable of than you will ever know young she-elf. We have been fighting their kind for more than three thousand years, our people enduring their whips, their chains, their mindless slaughter and raping of our women.” Tarifa’s sapphire eyes grew wide at this. “We were slaves to them once... just as you were, just as many of your people still are. We hate them with every fiber of our existence. We built a city once... a great city called Sparta... the greatest city in Greece. And when it came time for the Alliance as you now call them to harvest our people for slavery our King refused. He took 300 of our finest warriors and their squires to do battle with others who wanted to be free. His name was Leonidas. Our people fought beside humans that day, and every day after. Always keeping our true identities secret, but always responding to the call of freedom from all peoples.” Dekton stepped closer to her now, his face only inches from her wide eyes.

“We have waited for the descendant of Leonidas to come for almost three thousand years. Martin is that descendant, and what you see coming out in him now is his Spartan blood; the blood that burns with a hatred of vampires that you can not begin to fathom. We have three crimes in Sparta that are considered the most heinous of acts; the rape of a woman is at the top of that list. We are hard... yes... and we are brutal... without a doubt. For only we know the true nature of the enemy we fight, and it is that hardness and brutality that has allowed us to survive for millennia. You think you have seen acts of brutality Tarifa... perhaps when my King returns he will show you what resides in his mind, in his thoughts, in the memories of Leonidas. He will discover them... for his blood burns with the line of Leonidas, and the moment he touches the scared ground of Thermopylae he will know. He thinks a great deal of the two of you, and perhaps he will show you the horrors that we have endured throughout time. I guarantee what you have seen up until now will pale in comparison.

“My suggestion... before you so vehemently told me to be silent... I was going to say take Selene to where Dienekes trains the one hundred. It is remote and unknown and she would be safe there until after we have dealt with Graham.” Dekton took a deep breath and stepped back. “My King asked me to protect you and Aihola. This I will do... and I will do whatever I feel is necessary to keep you safe, no matter how brutal or savage you may think it to be, because he feels as I do... that you are important, and because he asked it of me. But do not stand there in judgment of me or my people and our ways. My twin daughters are older than you by several hundred years and I would not tolerate your insolence from them. I most certainly will not tolerate it from you. You know nothing of my people... of my King’s people, nothing of what we are... what drives us... and until you do I suggest you keep your opinions of them to yourself!”

Dekton stepped back his eyes returning to normal. Tarifa stood there wide eyed, and Aihola stepped up next to her taking her hand. He looked at them for a long moment. “I failed my wolf mate when I tried to protect her.” He said softly, looking at them intently. “And they took her from me. They raped her endlessly for two weeks before they cut her open like an animal. I will not allow them to take the two of you from me. And like my King... I will utterly destroy any who try.”

Dekton moved quickly to the door of the conference room and waited until it slid open before turning back. “Tarifa...?” He waited until she had turned to look at him. “I am not what you call a Genome. And neither is my King. We are something far more wondrous, and perhaps one day you will come to see that, when you stop fearing the unknown.”

Dekton turned and walked out of the room.

Tarifa turned to look at Aihola. “*Nya Istel*... what just happened?” She asked softly. “What did he mean? If he and Martin are not Genomes what are they?”

Aihola took her hands and brought them to her lips kissing her knuckles gently. “I should have told you before... Martin asked me not to. But you need to know now.”

“Martin asked you to not tell me what?” Tarifa spoke. “What do you mean?”

“Martin... Dekton... Danny... Julie... all those we thought were Genomes?” Aihola shook her head. “They aren’t.”

“Then what are they?”

Aihola met her sapphire eyes. “Tarifa they are Werewolves.”

Martin stood on the patio of the villa looking up into the sky, the mug of coffee in his hand. He wore only a loose fitting pair of black pants, the moon casting a white glow across the ground.

...fear that I am becoming too attached sire.

Martin sipped his coffee. *How is that Dekton?*

I... I am beginning to have feelings for them, both of them. There is not one without the other I have come to learn.

And you think that is a bad thing?

I do not wish to lose my edge in protecting them.

I would think that would make you more focused my friend. And you proved it today in the attack against them. Martin said turning to look at Aricia, Anja and Dysea in the sitting room. All of them were naked, the sheets doing little to cover their flawless skin. Dysea's back was up against one of the couches, Aricia sitting between her legs as Dysea brushed out her hair with gentle strokes of the comb. Anja was stretched out on her back with her head resting on Aricia's thigh. She and Aricia held data pads and were reading out items that all three of them were answering.

How do you do it sire? With the Queens?

You make sure they are as prepared as you can make them, and you trust in their skill and what you have taught them. Martin answered. *And you have faith in the gods.*

Sire...

I will not replace you Dekton. They have come to trust you, and the feelings that you have for them will make you stronger. I believe Aihola will tell Tarifa what we are now, after what you told them. She has always been headstrong and impudent according to her mother. That is part of why she is such a strong leader. Aihola as well, perhaps even more so.

Do I fight the feelings Milord? Even with... even knowing that Aihola is half vampire... I still want to crush her in my embrace and possess her. I want to taste her. Taste them both. Does that make me weak?

You are far older than me Dekton. All I can tell you is to follow your heart. We may be Spartans, but we are also men. We fight battles with our heads first, our hearts second. In matters such as your feelings I believe it is better to fight with your heart first and your head second. Martin told him. *It is rare that your heart will lead you astray.*

You and Tarifa...

What Tarifa and I shared was brief and intense... but I believe part of both of us always knew we were not meant for each other. Martin spoke. *The more time I spent with Dysea the more I realized that. Once Anja came into our lives I knew it... and when Aricia... well let's just say it is not possible for me to feel for another the way I feel for my Queens. The four of us were destined to be together, and now that we are... nothing will sever that tie. Not even death.*

You speak more and more like a true Spartan every day sire.

Martin chuckled. *The more time I spend here, the more I grow to love it.*

You will need to go to Thermopylae soon sire. Dekton said.

Yes I know. And to be honest... even knowing what I know happened there... I long to go. Martin replied.

Dienekes reports the training is coming along quite well. Dekton spoke. *They will be ready when you return.*

And the situation with Graham?

I believe the plan is a good one and will succeed. The Drow Lynwe... she is a powerful and skilled warrior, and she has developed feelings for Selene. I do not hesitate to believe that if she detects any danger to Selene she will step in and slaughter Graham in a second. Delton answered.

Graham's appearance in Eden made me wonder and I will talk with Andreus about it further, but is it possible they have spies within Sparta as well?

Dekton paused for a long moment. *As much as it galls me to say, militarily speaking I would have to say yes.*

Which means that they would need help to remain hidden within Sparta? Martin spoke.

If they are Vampires, even ones that are equipped with this masking chip Aihola has, then yes they would need assistance. And that would mean that there are traitors among the citizens of Sparta.

Martin nodded to himself. *I'll speak with Andreus about it. I'm sending some messages via the transmitter in the morning. See to it that they are distributed to the people they are intended for. We'll continue to communicate weekly via the transmitter, but tell no one I can touch your mind from this distance. That is not something that needs to be bandied about. The distance is too great for me to maintain the connection for long without one of the Queens included. Use this telepathic connection only for emergencies or if the communication needs to be compartmentalized.*

Understood sire. How did you...

I sensed your doubt and reached out. Martin answered his question. It's not something I can normally do, but it was clear and strong and I was able to connect to it. Now that we have the address of the link so to speak, it will remain with both of us. I must go now my friend. Be strong.

And you sire.

Martin downed the remaining coffee in his mug in one gulp and headed for the kitchen to get more.

Andreus moved to the front gate of the villa at a slow trot, responding to the call from his fellow Royal Guard. He slowed to a walk as he approached, seeing the four Spartans standing by the gate, the shorter figure in front of them, wrapped in a full cloak and cowl. There were several leather bags on the ground at the figures feet.

“What is going on?” He demanded.

“Captain this woman demands to speak with your sister.” The senior Spartan spoke. “We have told her that they are not to be disturbed, but she refuses to go. She finally demanded to speak with you.”

Andreus stepped closer to the woman, something about her familiar. His eyes narrowed and he stopped in front of her, his nose catching the faint, almost indiscernible smell of sandalwood being masked by the heavy scent of pine that had been applied to the cloak. He cocked his head to the side. “Show yourself mother.” He spoke softly.

The woman reached up slowly and drew back her cowl to reveal the older features he knew so well. She could not hide her scent from her children, even with the masking she attempted. Andreus's mother Dasha had the same azure blue eyes as her daughter and raven black hair. Her skin was tanned and even at almost fourteen hundred years old she was still beautiful, appearing to be only in her mid forties.

“Why have you come here mother?” He asked quickly.

“I wish to see my daughter.” Dasha spoke.

“For what purpose? Father already denounces her to everyone who will listen, just as he denounced our brother.” Andreus spoke with some anger in his voice. “Do you wish to do more still?”

“I have left your father Andreus.” She spoke softly, drawing surprised looks from the four Spartans gathered around them. “I did not agree with your father then and I remained silent. I do not agree with him now. When he decided it was appropriate to barter away our daughter to that pig Midlan in the slim chance he could return the honor of our family through a child, I could not tolerate it anymore. I will not lose anymore of my children due to his sense of pride and honor.”

Andreus stared at his mother for a long moment before turning to the senior Spartan. “Take her bags to the guest villa. Put her in the room that connects to the main house.”

The Spartan nodded, “As you order Captain.” He replied reaching down to pick up the three pieces of luggage.

Andreus turned to the Spartan Royal Guard that remained. “My mother is a Tier Five telepath. Have psychic deadeners placed around her quarters so that she is not detected from outside. Connect them to the main grid on the villa. Put scent masking pads at hundred meter intervals around the guest villa as well. The strongest we have. My father will come here looking for her eventually. And if anyone asks she did not come here. She has never been here.”

“Understood Captain,” The man answered.

Andreus looked at her. “Come... before you are seen.” He took her arm gently and began leading her to the main villa.

Dasha looked at her son, her eyes confused. “Andreus... I know those... I know those Centurions. Two of them are senior to you. How is it that they call you Captain?”

“It is a long story mother. Aricia can relate it to you when you see her.” Andreus said.

“So she is here?” Dasha spoke.

Andreus nodded. “Yes she is here.”

“And the rogue Alpha who has claimed her? He is here as well?”

Andreus stopped and looked at her, his eyes flint hard and unreadable. “He is no rogue as father would have you believe!” Andreus hissed. “And if you refer to him in such a way again mother I will escort you off this property and you will never see us again.”

“Andreus... you...” Dasha spoke worry and pain clearly on her face.

Dasha remained silent as they approached the villa. Her eyes took in the giant psychic deadeners that surrounded the building every twenty meters. They were meant to keep psychic intrusion out, and the number set up and active told her that whoever was inside this villa with her daughter liked their privacy.

Andreus went to the front door and keyed in a seven digit number onto the pad. Dasha heard a loud click and panel slid out further to expose a single button which Andreus pushed. The door slid open within ten seconds and Helen stood there.

“Helen are they awake?” He asked.

Helen nodded wiping her hands on the thick towel she held. “Of course, they are in the sitting room. Martin is in the kitchen with me waiting for the sweet cakes to come out of the oven so he can take them some. Who is this?”

“Helen this is my mother.” Andreus spoke.

Dasha saw the women’s eyes narrow slightly as she bowed her head in greeting. “Good evening to you Lady.” She spoke.

Helen looked at Andreus quickly, “Breakfast?” She asked.

Andreus nodded. “At least for tomorrow.” He replied. “Anything further will have to be decided by Martin and the others.” He smiled. “The stew was superb Helen, thank you.”

Helen smiled. “Don’t thank me, Martin and Dysea made it. They brought it to the workers villa with them and we had wine and bread with everyone there. You should have come.”

“Perhaps next time,” Andreus told her.

Helen nodded. “Go in... they are finished with their studies and are just lounging around now.”

Andreus nodded and gently urged his mother forward down the long corridor. Dasha had never been inside the villa and was amazed at the simple comfort that adorned the interior. She thought it would be filled with lavish furniture at every turn. Andreus saw her look and smiled. “They redecorated when they arrived.” He spoke seeing her question. “The furniture that was here they donated to the orphanage in Athens.”

Dasha heard female laughter and then she saw them as Andreus led her into what appeared to be a sitting room. There was no furniture in the center of the room, just half a dozen soft thick animal rugs. There were two couches on either side of the rugs, end table by each. The center of the large open space on the rugs was filled by at least a dozen pillows of varying size. She saw her daughter sitting on the floor wrapped in a sheet with two other women. One was a she elf with long shimmering platinum blond hair tucked neatly behind her elegantly curved elf ears. The other was a human female with stunning Persian red hair and incredible jade green eyes. She inhaled sharply and the female elf turned and Dasha saw the amazing emerald green eyes focus on her. Aricia had turned her head, her azure blue eyes going wide at the sight of her mother.

“Mother!” Aricia exclaimed as she got to her feet. She glanced at her brother quickly. “Explain yourself brother!” She snapped, surprising Dasha with the tone of command in her daughter’s voice.

“She came to the front gate Aricia.” Andreus replied. “I could not send her away.”

Aricia pulled the sheet tighter around her body securing it by tucking one corner tightly inside the portion that wrapped around her breasts. She moved closer to where her mother stood, “Mother why have you come here?” Aricia asked, “To plead with me to return home? Did father send you? I’m not leaving mother. Tell father he can...”

“I have left your father Aricia.” Dasha spoke tears starting to come to her eyes. “I could not bear to lose another of my children to his pride.” The walls of her control came tumbling down now and Dasha sank to her knees, the tears flowing freely.

Aricia reached her first, Anja second and they took her arms and pulled her back up. Dysea looked at Andreus and smiled. “Thank you Andreus, I think we’ll handle it from here.”

Andreas nodded relief on his face. Kmyla continued to tell him lovingly that he was lost when it came to females, and she would improve that in him or die trying. He didn't know if he was improving his understanding of females, but his mate seemed to think so in their bed.

Aricia and Anja moved Dasha to one of the couches where Dysea poured her a glass of wine. She returned to the couch while Aricia knelt in front of her. Dysea sat on Dasha's opposite side and held it out. Dasha shook her head slowly and Dysea smiled. "I have found that a glass of Spartan wine tends to relax more than intoxicate." She spoke, her voice soothing in its embrace.

Dasha looked at her smiling emerald eyes and then took the glass, sipping from it gratefully. She looked at her daughter kneeling in front of her. "I couldn't take it anymore." She spoke softly. "He was always ranting about you. How you betrayed us when you allowed another Alpha to claim you. Midlan was infuriated... he came to our home tonight threatening to pass the word among the city that you were nothing but a common street woman if your father did not force you to renounce this Alpha and return to him. He offered to your father that he would allow you to beg him for forgiveness and that perhaps he might take you as his mate if you pleased him. I couldn't stand anymore when your father did nothing but agree and say he would see to it. I lost... I lost your brother because I did nothing. I don't want to lose you child."

Aricia reached up and took her hands, small tears rolling down her cheeks. "What you did was very brave mother." She said softly.

"I did not know where to come." Dasha spoke. "I did not want to involve Dymas and..."

"You can stay here." Anja spoke without hesitating. "Andreas has already brought your bags to the guest villa. You can remain here as long as you want."

Dasha looked at her, and then shifted her eyes to Dysea. She felt Aricia squeeze her hands and she looked back to her daughter.

"Mother... this is Anja and Dysea." Aricia spoke softly. "They are my friends and my lovers."

"So it is true?" Dasha asked. "Word has spread that this Alpha had three mates, and you were among them; that you... that you shared more than just his attentions."

Aricia smiled. "Yes we do." She said confidently and without a hint of shame. "And outside of Martin's arms it is the most glorious thing I can describe to you."

Dasha reached out with her mind to try and touch her daughter and her eyes furrowed when she encounter a seamless black wall more powerful than any shield she had ever encountered. Her eyes grew a little wider at this and she looked at a smiling Aricia. "I... I..." She stammered.

"No mother." Aricia said. "We do not invade the minds of others without permission. I am not your little girl anymore, and I will no longer allow that to occur. I have my own life now, with Anja and Dysea and a man who loves all three of us intensely."

"You... you have never been able to block me Aricia." Dasha gasped. "You are too young for your telepathic powers to have advanced to such a degree."

Aricia looked at Dysea and saw her nod. "The deadeners are at full power." She said. "We can show her if you wish Little Wolf."

Aricia nodded. "I want her to see the depth of our love Dysea." She said softly, "Anja?"

Anja nodded. "She is your mother, and she has a right to know regardless of what Theron says."

Aricia looked at her mother. "Lower your shields mother." She told her. "All of them. Our auras are quite overwhelming and I don't want to overload your senses."

"Child... I am a Tier Five telepath." Dasha said. "You can not..."

Aricia, Anja and Dysea lowered their psychic shields at the same time. The affect was instantaneous and predictable. Dasha flinched as if she had been slapped hard, and her hands tightened around Aricia's fingers almost painfully as she was swept up in the flow of their auras. They pulsed with a power Dasha had never tasted before, thousands of colors and sounds sweeping her along the current. The scents of honey, wildflowers and lavender blended with the overpowering scent of mint. Three separate auras mingled as one with a fourth, in a way Dasha had never heard described before. The three auras were vibrant and glowing, all of them laced with that single fourth aura; an aura that beat with the contained power of a dormant volcano waiting to erupt. They intertwined as one, always swirling around each other, always touching, caressing each other.

Dasha looked at her daughter wide eyed now, her hands quivering as Aricia held them. “By... by the gods!” She gasped.

“You see mother.” Aricia spoke softly. “Why would I want to go back when I have this?”

“The... this male...”

Anja smiled gently. “Martin is still shielding.” She spoke.

Dasha looked at her shocked. “Still... still shielding? How... how is that possible?”

Aricia turned her head slightly as she felt the vibration of the door to the kitchen open. She smiled brightly. “This is... this is my mother Martin.” She spoke. “It is safe to come out my love. She won’t hurt you.” Her voice held an amused tone to it.

Dasha looked up as Martin came out of the kitchen and moved around the corner. He carried a small bowl in his hand filled with warm sweetcakes. Dasha’s eyes grew even wider as she saw him. Easily over six feet tall and two hundred pounds, with rippled muscles that appeared sculpted by a god. Shoulder length black hair and pulsing dark brown eyes. She watched as he came over to the couch, and gasped when he leaned close to inhale her scent. His presence was intimidating and reeked of barely controlled power. He leaned back slowly and squatted down next to Aricia in front of her.

“Nauta Melme... lower your shields.” Dysea spoke softly. “Little Wolf’s mother has a right to know who you are.”

Martin set the bowl on the floor and looked at Dasha for a long moment saying nothing. Aricia took his hand in hers and Dasha watched his head turn to look at her. “Please my love.” Aricia spoke. “I want her to see who you are.”

Martin turned back to look at Dasha and allowed his psychic shields to drop completely. Dasha’s hands went to her mouth in astonishment as she felt the wave of his aura course through her. Dasha was well aware of the duties of her brother Dymas, and also the connection that her family had to the Line of King Leonidas. She had wondered why her father and mother would throw a celebration feast for her deceased brother three days after his body was returned to Sparta. Her anger with them had made her not go to the gathering, though she had heard about it through others. His aura pulsed not with the power of a dormant volcano, his aura was a volcano, an erupting volcano, and at the moment he was projecting curious interest in her, and a shameless love for her daughter and the two other women in the room.

“Mother... this is Martin.” Aricia said softly. “He is... he is the direct descendant of King Leonidas. He is... he is the King of Sparta mother.”

Dasha’s eyes filled with tears, unbelieving, yet feeling it right in front of her. She reached out tentatively, her fingers stretching to touch his face. His skin was warm to her touch, and Martin reached up to pull her hand closer, stretching her palm across his cheek. Dasha gasped softly once more, “My... my King.” She choked out the words.

Martin pulled her hand down and kissed the back of her knuckles softly. “I have to thank you.” He spoke, his words gentle and warm.

“Thank... thank me?” Dasha asked confused.

Martin nodded and turned to look at Aricia. “Thank you for giving life to this incredibly beautiful woman who has claimed my heart. Our hearts.”

Aricia blushed deeply as he leaned over and nuzzled her neck. Martin tempered his aura as he did this, allowing just his love and devotion to her to flow while blocking the desire and want that was always there. Aricia eyes closed in joy as he did this and she leaned into him with a contented sigh.

Dasha saw Aricia’s reaction to him; she could smell his mint scent all over her daughter, and her lavender scent pulsing through him, as well as the honey and wildflower scents of the women next to her on the couch. His aura engulfed them as well as her daughter, and she saw the flush of their skin and the smiles of love in their eyes as they looked at him. She had heard Dymas speak many times of the aura of Leonidas, how it could sweep you away and carry you with it to places untold. How its power could make you tremble or weep, yet embrace you with compassion and love. Looking at this young man as Aricia rested her head on his broad shoulder and Dasha realized she found herself in limited company at the moment. The company that knew this young man would be a King.

And much sooner than any of them expected.

Martin smiled and lifted the bowl of sweetcakes as he clamped his shields back in place, followed by Aricia and the other two women. “Would you like a sweetcake?” He asked taking one in his hand and biting into it. “Helen makes the most incredible sweetcakes.”

“I do!” Anja spoke as she reached for the bowl.

“You will not hog them this time *Nauta Melme!*” Dysea exclaimed, dropping from the couch and taking a sweetcake in each hand, as Aricia did the same.

“I didn’t hog them last time.” He spoke leaning over to nuzzle Dysea.

“We had to chase you around the villa to get you to give them up Martin.” Aricia spoke knowingly as she bit into one.

“I...”

Anja leaned over his shoulder and kissed him, silencing his words. She pulled back still chewing the sweetcake in her mouth. “Don’t try to defend your actions simply because we have guests.” She told him.

Dasha couldn’t help but laugh at their antics, all her doubts and fears vanishing in those few minutes. She had done the right thing, leaving Xenos. Now... seeing her daughter so happy, so in love, and seeing that love returned ten fold, Dasha knew she had done the right thing.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

EDEN

The physician came back into the small examining room, the solid door closing behind her. She held the small data pad in her hand and looked at Selene with a gentle smile.

“Minister Torcrum... you are the picture of health.” She spoke with confidence. “All your vitals are well within normal, no remarkable chemical imbalances though I do recommend not drinking as much caffeine. Your red blood cell count is a little low, but not alarmingly so. Surprisingly... your elf genes and not your human genes seem to be the most dominant of the pair. May I ask how you got the bruises and the bite marks?”

Lynwe was standing next to the bed and looked at the doctor. Selene opened her mouth to answer honestly but Lynwe reached out and squeezed her hand. “I am a Drow doctor; there are... sometimes I become overly excited during moments of passion.” Lynwe replied.

The doctor looked at her for a moment and smiled. “Oh... I see. Well I would give her a few days to rest then. You do realize that I will have to put that in her official medical file, as well as yours Lynwe. It might... it might raise some eyebrows later, with the protocols that Anja put in place.”

Lynwe nodded. “Yes... I’m aware of that.” She replied confidently. “I’m not concerned.”

Selene looked at Lynwe in surprise, feeling her clutch her hand, but she looked at the doctor. “Neither am I.” She spoke firmly. “Our... our sex life is our business and I believe Tarifa and Anja will agree.”

The doctor nodded. “I doubt you’ll get any arguments, but I just needed to let you know.” She slid the data pad back into the dark blue lab coat she wore. “You can get dressed. I’ve already processed your discharge. Stay healthy Minister.”

Selene waited until the doctor had left and she sat up completely. “Why did you do that?” She asked.

Lynwe looked at her, meeting her soft blue eyes. “You would have told her the truth, and that is not something that anyone needs to know, ever.”

Selene slipped the hospital gown off her shoulders, exposing her full breasts to Lynwe’s gaze, only to see her turn away quickly, “Lynwe... why are you doing this?” Selene asked as she pulled on her shirt and then stepped onto the cold floor to pull on her pants.

Lynwe turned back as Selene pulled the khaki pants up over her slender but very curvy hips. She looked into her steel blue eyes, swimming with color and questions. “I told you.” She spoke softly. “I have been where you are now Selene. Only I was the one inflicting the pain upon another. Not physical pain, emotional pain, which is even worse. I do not wish to see you experience that.”

“Why?” Selene asked.

Lynwe shook her head. “We should go. You need to go home, eat a decent meal and then rest.” She said. “We can meet with Tarifa and Aihola tomorrow before the normal meetings.” She went to the door as Selene finished pulling on her boots.

It was an unusual day for Selene to say the least. She watched Lynwe in the hover car as the driver cut through the streets with skill. She was easily six feet tall, and perhaps a hundred and forty to a hundred and fifty pounds, but there was not an ounce of fat on her. Though she was incredibly muscular, this in no way detracted from the femininity that washed from her. Her white hair was well past her shoulders, and silky soft as it shimmered in the sunlight. Her dark skin, almost obsidian in color, was smooth and flawless. Her lips were pinkish in color, but full and shiny. It was her amber colored eyes that fascinated Selene the most. They were more reddish amber than orange with flecks of even darker red in the centers, as were all Drow elves. They were deep unreadable eyes, but eyes that caused Selene’s stomach to tighten whenever they fell upon her, even for the briefest of moments.

Lynwe escorted her into her apartment, and without any words immediately went to the small refrigerator, pulling out the meager items within, which consisted of several fresh pieces of pineapple fruit, a smallish venison steak and leftover roasted potatoes. Within minutes her apartment smelled wonderful due to some spices and the smell of steak cooking. The smell alone got Selene’s stomach to growling. Lynwe set down in front of her a steak that was marinated in the juices of the pineapples, and the potatoes reheated and fried with additional spices. It was delicious, and her hunger now claimed all of her attention as Selene began to eat. Lynwe left her alone to quench her hunger, going to the bathroom and running a steaming hot bath, adding a mixture of scents from the collection Selene kept in the small cabinet.

When she had finished eating Lynwe simply took her hand and led her into the bathroom, where she slowly undressed her and had her get into the bath. It took her several minutes to fully settle into the water as she was not used to such a hot tub, but Lynwe was patient and simply waited until she had adjusted to the water temperature. As she leaned back against the edge of the tub Lynwe began washing her long auburn red hair, her powerful fingers massaging her scalp, and stroking her neck and shoulders with gentle caresses combined with applying pressure to her muscles. It was the most relaxing and erotic thing Selene had ever experienced before, and realizing it was a woman doing these things to her made it all the more tantalizing.

When the water became cooler, Lynwe helped her out of the tub, dried her off completely with efficient and non-sexual brushes of the towel and led her into the bedroom. The sheets and quilt were drawn back already and Lynwe ushered her into the bed, pulling the sheets and quilt over her and tucking her in protectively. Lynwe stroked her forehead as she squatted next to the bed, gazing into her sleepy eyes.

“You will sleep as long as you like.” Lynwe spoke softly. “I will wake you early enough to eat breakfast and bathe before we leave for your first meeting in the morning.”

“Lynwe... one... one of the...” Selene started to speak.

Lynwe shook her head and placed a finger to her lips. “You will sleep Selene. You will no longer endure those men, on that you have my word.”

“And... and Graham?”

“We have three days before he comes here again. I will support you regardless if you decide between now and then you can not go through with this.” Lynwe spoke. “Now sleep. Rest is what you need most of all. I’ll worry about the other things.”

The delicious meal and the bath had been like a soothing balm to her and Selene only nodded her head slowly as sleep took her into its embrace.

“Rest my love.” Lynwe whispered softly so that only the wind heard her words.

Tedonis walked up to Selene’s door looking forward to abusing his whore half elf. He looked forward to these nights, being able to fuck a Minister of the new government. She was such a slut too, allowing him to do what he wished to her. Her tight body was amazing if a little on the thin side. The only thing that would have made it better was if she responded to him or made some noise like she was enjoying it, as she usually just laid there in silence. It didn’t matter to him either way as long as he got off the usual three or four times.

He lifted his hand to ring the chime and looked up in surprise when the door slid open. His eyes grew even wider when he realized it was not Selene in the doorway as usual, but a Drow female with murder in her amber colored eyes.

Tedonis opened his mouth to speak but Lynwe didn't give him the chance. Her strong hand clamped around his throat like an iron vise and she stepped into the hallway, slamming him none to kindly against the opposite wall of the corridor while he clutched at her hand in a vain attempt to dislodge her grip.

"What... what the fuck!" He managed to gasp out the words.

Lynwe pinned him to the wall and stepped close to him, looking down at his five foot eight height. "Do not speak!" Lynwe hissed at him, her eyes alive in anger.

"Where's Selene? Put me down! I..." Tedonis's eyes went wide when the High Elf R4 Hybrid knife appeared in Lynwe's other hand.

"You will listen to me carefully." Lynwe growled. "You will not come here again you pathetic little man. You will not see Selene again. As of this moment she is untouchable to you! I know who you are Tedonis, and I know who the other two pigs are that abuse her. I also know you meet with the other two scum sucking cocks every morning. Do you compare notes Tedonis? Do you tell each other what you have done to her, you vile excuse for a male." Lynwe pressed one razor's edge of the double bladed R4 to Tedonis's throat ceasing his struggles. "Hear me well Tedonis. She is mine now, and no one else will have her. If I so much as see you within a half mile of her person I will find you, and you will regret it. Tell your friends Tedonis. Word of this will not be spoken of again. You and they will not attempt to besmirch her reputation in public with your lies and untruths. She is like a blossoming flower to me, and we Drow love our flowers. I have ears everywhere, and if this occurs Tedonis, I will find you and I will serve you your tiny little cock in pieces, layered in the shit from a Grizz beast. And then I will find your friends and do the same to them." Lynwe leaned close to him, her amber eyes glittering in the light. "And do not think our King will care, for I know him far better than you, and he has less use for your kind than I do, and he is far less forgiving. And if you think Tarifa or Aihola will care that I threaten you, I urge you to go to them. I shared their bed for months, and who do you think they will believe? Mark my words little man, and tell your friends, Selene is mine now and no man's touch will ever taint her flesh again while I live."

Lynwe released her grip on his throat and stepped back, watching him drop to the floor of the corridor. "Be gone Tedonis, before I lose what little control I have on my temper, and gut you where you stand. And remember well my words to you this night."

Lynwe watched him scramble to his feet and race for the elevator, banging on the button until the door opened and he stepped into it. Lynwe smiled at him as the door slid closed. Her head snapped around at the sound of clapping, and Lynwe saw that almost a dozen men and women, human and elf stood in the corridor in various states of dress, clapping their hands at what she had just done. Lynwe looked at the nearest human female, an older woman who appeared to be in her sixties, as she stepped up to her. Her nightdress was old and her robe tattered, but she walked right up to Lynwe with no fear.

"That was the best bloody show I've seen in decades dear! All of us adore Selene, and we were becoming worried about her." She exclaimed touching Lynwe's face with a brilliant smile. "If you and Selene need anything, anything at all, you come to me."

Lynwe fidgeted in embarrassment. "I... I have taken the vacant apartment on this floor." She said softly. "Perhaps... perhaps I could meet everyone at a later time."

The older woman smiled. "It is late, though I have to say, getting woken up for this was the best time I've had in years. Go... go back to her Lynwe of the Drow. I am Naomi and we can speak more another time."

Lynwe nodded, unaccustomed to the almost casual acceptance she now garnered from everyone. Her eyes focused on the woman. "How... how do you know my name?"

The old woman smiled gently. "There are few who do not know the name of one of our new King's Generals." Naomi said.

Lynwe let out a small laugh. "General?" She gasped. "I am no General."

"No? Perhaps you should read the Eden Courier child. That information has been public knowledge for weeks now. Two Drow hold the rank of General in Eden's military, and only one is in this building at this moment protecting what she loves." Naomi said.

Lynwe's eyes were wide as she stepped back into the door of Selene's apartment. She looked at her once more. "Thank you."

The old woman smiled and moved back into her apartment as Selene's door closed. Lynwe moved quickly to the door into the bedroom and saw that Selene had not moved from the bed. She nodded and closed the door, moving into the living room and settling onto the couch once more.

Lynwe didn't see Selene's eyes open after she had left, and she didn't see the small smile that split Selene's face before sleep claimed her again.

"Why *Nya Istel*?" Tarifa asked as Aihola placed the tea in front of her. They had left the Command Center and returned to their home, Tarifa still in stunned shock over what Dekton and Aihola had told her. "Why would he not tell me?"

Aihola sat down next to her on the couch. "In his defense my love, he did not fully grasp who and what he was until just before the attacks on Mountain City."

"Yet he told you." Tarifa spoke looking at her.

She shook her head. "He discovered I was half vampire Tarifa." Aihola spoke softly remembering that day vividly. "I was at his mercy, kneeling before him. He was in wolf form my love, half my height at his shoulders. He could have shredded me with his teeth in seconds and I would have been helpless to stop him. I remembered that much from the vampire schools. He is a Pureblood Spartan, the direct descendant of the Spartan King Leonidas. Every vampire, no matter their age is taught he is the most powerful and the most feared. No vampire less than a thousand years of age could hope to stand against him alone. Who was I?"

"You knew?" Tarifa asked.

"I suspected. The moment the Holy One mentioned where the DNA for the Elf High King came from I suspected. I noticed little things after that, but it wasn't until I kneeled before him, at his mercy that I knew who he truly was."

"But... the stories as children... Werewolves were evil... monsters... blood thirsty creatures." Tarifa spoke.

Aihola looked at her. "Was he a blood thirsty monster when you were in his arms my love?" Aihola asked. "I think not. The stories and myths of our childhood are wrong Tarifa, they have always been wrong."

"This... this is so much to take in *Nya Istel*." Tarifa spoke, "So unbelievable."

"Do you love me Tarifa?" Aihola asked.

Tarifa met her gaze. "What kind of question is that *Nya Istel*? Of course I love you... with all that I am."

"I fed on your blood my love. It healed wounds that would have killed a normal elf, but I still live and breathe because of your blood." Aihola told her. "You saw it yourself, yet you didn't question it. You have known for months what I was, yet you didn't question it. Why is this so hard to believe?"

"I don't know." Tarifa said softly.

"Do you still love him?" Aihola asked.

Tarifa looked at her. "Aihola... please. The moment you came into my life I think Martin and I both knew what we shared was not destined to be. I had you... and Dysea filled his days. When Anja came into their circle, they both loved her. That was so obvious a child could see it. I have never needed more than you Aihola. Our times with Lynwe were very pleasurable, but she knew coming between us was impossible. And now I think she has found what she has always sought in Selene."

Aihola nodded. "Time will tell... but on that I think you are correct." She leaned back onto the couch pulling Tarifa into her arms. Tarifa laid her head on Aihola's breasts and smiled as her arms pulled her tight.

"Dekton is just such an insufferable ass." Tarifa snapped. "He teaches us about our telepathic link, guides us in its use, but he won't share anything of himself with us. He blindly follows Martin's orders to protect us... and that bothers me."

"Why?" Aihola asked softly as she stroked Tarifa's raven colored mane of hair.

"*Nya Istel*... I feel like such a fool for saying that to him today." Tarifa spoke. "He is twice our age... he has daughters! He has been fighting these... these vampires longer than we have even existed. He was sent here to protect Martin, and then he is left here to protect us. He must hate us for that."

Aihola nodded slowly, "Perhaps." She said softly. "I was able to discover some writings on the Spartans, who they are, who they were. Admiral Wallace gave them to me, for he is a Spartan as well."

Tarifa looked at her. "I would like to read them." She said quickly. "If nothing else, to try and better understand what Dekton does. How he thinks."

"They are on the table in the sitting room." She spoke. "But I have a question for you."

"What?"

"Do you feel these things, anger and confusion at Martin; at Dekton... do you feel this because you are developing feelings for him?" Aihola asked, "For Dekton?"

Tarifa did not answer right away, knowing that Aihola and she were connected in a way that made lying to each other near impossible. As she stared into Aihola's amber eyes she saw her smile gently.

"You do as well?" She gasped.

Aihola smiled and nodded her head. "We are connected you and I my love. In a way no one can take from us. I feel your emotions, you feel mine. You know what I say is true. You find him just as delicious as I do. He is the finest specimen of a man I have ever seen, outside of our King. To be honest... he is the first man I have looked at in such a way in more years than I can remember. Tell me... what does he smell like?"

Tarifa smiled wistfully. "Like warm leather." She replied. "Today... at that moment it was very pungent too."

"Will you share that with me the next time?" Aihola asked.

"*Nya Istel* I will share anything with you." She spoke rising up from Aihola's chest just enough to lean forward and kiss her softly. She nuzzled her nose. "You know that."

"We are children to him when it comes to telepathy." Aihola spoke.

"What we felt today from him," Tarifa spoke. "He is using his superior telepathic skill to block his emotions from us. What he feels about us."

Aihola nodded. "That is what I suspect as well." She said. "Though I hardly think we did anything today but make him question whatever he may have felt for us. You angered him, and I'm half of what he despises the most."

Tarifa met her eyes for a long moment. "*Nya Istel*... when you... when you took my blood. What did it taste like?"

Aihola looked at her, her brow furrowing slightly. "Why?"

"I felt the most incredible pleasure surge through me." Tarifa said. "It was like a fire racing through my veins, but it was blissful feeling not painful. If... if not for the moment... I would have..."

"I tasted the sweetest nectar that has ever passed my lips, excluding your passion." Aihola replied stopping her words as she felt a slow burning ignite within her center. She shook her head. "It was not like I remembered it... the other times it tasted foul, like burnt copper and dead flesh. Your blood though, it was warm and sweet beyond measure."

"Would you bite me again?" Tarifa asked.

Aihola looked at her wide eyed, "Tarifa why?"

"Don't be angry Mistress." Tarifa said slipping into her slave mode to Aihola. "It was very pleasurable, and I would let you do it again if you wished. If it was... if it was pleasurable for you as well."

Aihola smiled seductively. "I think you need to reaffirm your place slave." She spoke, her fingers entwining in Tarifa's black mane. She pulled her head up and covered Tarifa's lips with her own, kissing her hard, plunging her tongue into between Tarifa's lips, demanding and dominating. Tarifa moaned against the kiss and felt her body ignite with familiar sensations.

After a moment Aihola pulled her head back. "Strip for me slave." She ordered.

Tarifa smiled brightly and got slowly to her feet, her movements seductive. Her hands danced across her chest as she unbuttoned the shirt, slowly drawing the folds apart exposing her firm breasts and now rock hard nipples. She had long since stopped wearing undergarments, for her Mistress found them cumbersome and wore none herself. She turned away slightly and bent over alluringly as she slid the pants over her hips slowly, exposing first the perfect cheeks of her ass and then her satiny thighs. The lips of her labia were by now full and pouty with arousal and excitement, the gap between her thighs moist with juices.

Aihola stood up and pulled Tarifa to her fiercely, her strong hands grasping those beautiful cheeks as she once more kissed Tarifa, plundering and taking what she so wanted. She pulled away after a moment, her lips just brushing Tarifa's ear.

"Undress me slave." She gasped softly.

Tarifa needed no further encouragement and set about her task quickly and efficiently, practically tearing off Aihola's shirt, her lips descending to one of her dark nipples while her hands yanked at her tight pants. Aihola gasped in pleasure, holding Tarifa's head while she felt her push her pants to her ankles and grip her dark caramel colored ass in her hands. Tarifa's lips and tongue trailed across her eraser hard nipple, to lick sensuously the deep cleft between her breasts and up her throat and neck. Aihola felt her knees buckle slightly. It had been some time since they had been as aroused as they were, the duties of their offices having consumed most of their days and even some of their nights. They were content to simply fall into each others arms and let sleep claim them as tired as they had been the last few weeks. Now however, Aihola could feel the need burning through both of them like a tidal wave. Perhaps it was their brush with death, perhaps it was the shared knowledge that they both found Dekton to be extremely desirable, or perhaps it was Tarifa asking about the pleasure they had received when Aihola suckled her blood. Whatever the reasons may have been Aihola was not going to waste this time with her lover now for anything. It had been too long for them and she was barely able to contain herself as it was. Tarifa she could feel quivering in her hands in desire and need.

"Queelas ussta ssinsrigger, usstan srrig'luin dos! Inbau pholor l' couch!" Aihola gasped. **(Quickly my love I need you. Get on the couch!)**

Tarifa reacted instantly, the fire in her burning just as intently. She moved quickly to the couch and stretched out on her back, her bald pussy glistening in the light of their sitting room. In their bed, Aihola was her Mistress and was always on top. At the moment, her need burning so brightly, Aihola wouldn't have cared if Tarifa had thrown her to the floor and been the dominant one. In a flash she was on top of Tarifa, her engorged and dripping sex descending over Tarifa's expectant lips. Aihola's head dipped to the beautiful bald and pierced slit of her lover and without any warning she engulfed Tarifa's clit within her lips as she lowered her own pulsing pussy on her lover's lapping tongue.

Tarifa's eyes flew wide when Aihola's warm mouth encased her clit and she began to mercilessly flick her tongue back and forth over the unhooded and ever ready bud. The piercing pressed against the most sensitive area of her clit, and as was usually the case when Aihola took her, Tarifa came quickly and came hard. Her hands clasped Aihola's ass cheeks, her nose driving against her puckered anus as she pulled her down tighter, driving her tongue into Aihola's tight tunnel as far as she possibly could. She felt Aihola shiver, her thighs clenched and then Aihola's sweet juices were pouring into her mouth. She felt Aihola's lips leave her clit in the middle of her orgasm, and she hunched her hips up to have her reclaim what she had left. Her eyes flew open when she felt two pin pricks of pain along the side of her bursting clit and then a fire raced through her belly. An all consuming fire of pleasure as every nerve ending exploded at once, sending her immediately into a soul robbing orgasm unlike anything she had yet experienced. Her thighs clenched together like a vise, securing Aihola's head within their embrace as her entire body arched off the couch.

Aihola had extended her vampire teeth and in a moment of passion she had never felt, she bit down gently on the side of Tarifa's spasming pussy. Her teeth sank in a quarter inch and Tarifa's incredibly sweet blood rushed into her mouth. The moment the blood touched her tongue, Aihola's body went rigid and her body spasmed. She felt Tarifa's gorgeous body lift off the couch and the fire ripped through her veins as well, spreading across her belly to her limbs, every sensation tripled in its intensity. As Tarifa screamed out her pleasure into Aihola's pussy, her tongue lapped at Aihola's clit and she erupted like a volcano once more, spewing her sweet fluids down Tarifa's throat with a force neither of them had expected. The convulsion she experienced in this orgasm caused Aihola to drink deeply of Tarifa's blood, almost gulping the warm delicious nectar down, sending electric jolts of supremely agonizing pleasure ripping through both of them. Their minds mingled telepathically and became one as never before and they swam in the kaleidoscope of colors and forbidden pleasure.

It seemed like forever before Tarifa stopped drinking Aihola's juices like a parched desert flower, her lips placing soft fluttering kisses over the dark beautiful pussy nestled on her face. The thin white strip of Aihola's hair above her clit was drenched in her juices and salvia as Tarifa continued to use her tongue to clean every drop she could find. Aihola withdrew her vampire teeth, extending her tongue lovingly and softly licking

the two small puncture wounds until they sealed. Her soft pink lips descended to expertly lap up Tarifa's sweet nectar from the insides of her thighs and her bald pussy. Her eyes opened wide as she regained her senses and realized what she had just done. She sprang from the top of Tarifa's body and spun around, laying her still heated flesh on top of her lover. Tarifa's cheeks were saturated with her juices, her sapphire eyes bright and wide, and the smile of wondrous satisfaction evident on her face.

"*Ussta ssinssrigg evagna uns'aa, Usstan noamuth usstan!*" Aihola gasped, her hands taking Tarifa's face. **(My love forgive me, I lost myself)**

Tarifa's sapphire eyes looked at her with brilliance, her lips breaking into a wide smile, "Oh Mistress... that... that was divine." Tarifa spoke in a husky voice.

"*Ussta Ssinssrigg*, I did not intend to bite you. I don't know what came over me?" Aihola pleaded, worry on her face.

Tarifa lifted her head and kissed her deeply, her hands coming up to wrap around Aihola's back and pull her tightly to her own flesh. Aihola responded to the kiss, never one to deny herself the taste of Tarifa's sweet soft lips. The kiss went on for half a minute before they finally parted, out of breath and their lips moist.

"Tarifa I..." Aihola started.

Tarifa placed a finger to her lips. "Please don't tell me you will never do that again." She spoke quickly, but with a seductive playfulness. "I will be very angry Mistress."

"I could have... I could have hurt you my love!" Aihola spoke.

"You did not take enough blood to hurt me *Nya Istel*. Only enough to give me the most exquisite pleasure I have ever felt in all my life. Did you not feel it?" Tarifa asked.

Aihola reached up to caress her cheek. "It felt like my very essence was pouring into you." She said softly. "It was wondrous."

"Again Mistress... I beg you." Tarifa pleaded.

Aihola snuggled her face into Tarifa's throat with a contented smile, hearing her coo in delight. "You need rest slave, or you will not be able to return the pleasure to me." Aihola rolled to her side, pulling Tarifa's body tightly to her own. "You must sleep first, then we will discuss this new pleasure we have discovered."

"Promise?" Tarifa asked like a small child as she pressed her head to Aihola's breasts.

"I wish to explore it more as well my love, so yes, I promise you." Aihola told her closing her eyes as she held Tarifa's head tightly to her chest. "I promise you."

SPARTA

NEXT MORNING

Martin stepped up next to Andreus on the main patio and handed him the mug of coffee. "She is your mother Andreus." Martin spoke. "You should talk to her."

"I will sire." Andreus replied. "It takes a lot to forget what has happened however. She knows what she did is wrong, but it is hard for me to forgive."

"It is better to give forgiveness than hold on to anger my friend." Martin spoke. "Do not wait long, she loves you. She also loves your father and she was torn between those loves. Your father is a good man as well, do not discount that. I've read the transcripts from the hearing. What the Senate did to him was wrong, he should not have been punished, and nor should your family have to bear that shame."

"Sire we don't believe Acropolis did as they say he did." Andreus spoke. "Aricia, myself, our brothers and sisters, none of us believe it."

"He confessed Andreus." Martin spoke.

Andreus nodded. "Yes... but personally I think he was given a choice and he took the path of shame."

"Why?"

Andreus shrugged. "We will never know."

"Where does he live?" Martin asked. "I understand he remains in the area."

Andreus nodded and looked toward the southern mountains. "He has a small home on the edge of the southern mountain range. He goes to Athens if he needs supplies. He is not welcome in Sparta, but we have gone to visit him on holidays and such. He is still our blood."

Martin nodded. "Yes he is. What you do is admirable Andreus."

"Thank you sire." Andreus said.

Martin nodded. "I will speak no more of it then. I spoke with Dekton last night. There was an attempt on Tarifa and Aihola. He stopped it, with a little help from them, but there is reason to believe that there are vampire agents within Sparta itself."

"Are you sure Milord?" This got Andreus's attention immediately and he perked up.

Martin nodded, "Reasonably sure. Yuri is no fool. She will not openly break the agreement we have, but that does not mean she will remain stagnant. There are mercenaries she could hire to kill anyone of us. And she is smart enough to make sure no ties lead directly back to her. She knows I won't launch our missiles without overwhelming proof she or the Alliance were involved." Martin leaned against the railing and sipped his coffee. "I may be many things, most of them true, but I will not butcher thousands of innocents unless I am sure she is involved."

Andreus looked at him. "Would you do it then sire?"

Martin nodded his head slowly, "To protect Eden, to protect Sparta and our people?" Martin met his gaze. "I would not hesitate."

"I can make discrete inquiries sire. I know many of our Internal Security Centurions. We went through our Agoge together." Andreus spoke.

Martin nodded. "Tell no one. Let's keep this between us."

"You do not wish to inform Theron sire?" Andreus said.

Martin shook his head slowly. "I have learned over the years Andreus that trust is hard won and never given freely. I do not trust easily, I never have. There are six I trust completely here in Sparta Andreus, six that I would trust my life to. They are my Queens, Danny, Dymas and you."

"You... you honor me sire." Andreus spoke.

Martin chuckled softly. "Be careful my friend... my trust usually brings trouble with it."

Andreus smiled. "It is trouble I look forward to sire." He downed his coffee in two gulps, and looked back to Martin. "Sire, may I ask why you don't hold Theron among those you trust?"

"Oh I trust him." Martin answered. "Just not on the same level as you and the others. Walter... Dymas... he raised me for the better half of my life, and he is like a father to me. Danny and you have fought beside me, bled with me, and as you know, that bond is stronger than most. Anja, Dysea, Aricia, they know me sometimes better than I know myself. And they love me completely, as I love them. Those things are different levels of trust, none of which Theron has achieved, at least not to me. That doesn't mean I don't trust him, I'm just wary around him. He is after all a politician."

Andreus laughed and nodded his head. "I see that politicians do not elicit much trust from anyone, not just Spartans."

Martin grinned. "Ah... I suppose so."

Andreus nodded. "I will go and talk to those at Internal Security that I know. I will report to you whatever they may have."

Martin nodded. "I'll see you this afternoon." He spoke. He watched Andreus move off around the outer patio area and then walked back into the eat-in kitchen when Dasha sat next to her daughter; Anja and Dysea perched on a single chair together. "I must leave your lovely ladies to your own devices for I must allow Dilios to bore me further with the intricacies of Spartan politics."

Dasha watched as he leaned his head over between Anja and Dysea and nuzzled both their necks. Their eyes closed in adoration and he shared a soft lingering kiss with both of them before moving to where Aricia sat next to her. He did the same, lowering his head to her neck and nuzzling her skin before kissing her softly and with great feeling. Dasha sat there still in shock at who this young man was. She was a strong enough telepath to sense how his aura radiated only for the three women in this room. It was clear and focused with no fuzzy edges. And the way her daughter and the other two women radiated their auras back to him was amazing. The power the four of them wielded was incredible.

Dasha looked up and found him staring at her. She got to her feet slowly and bowed her head to him. "I thank you for..."

Martin shook his head. “No Milady.” He said with a gentle smile. “You have nothing to thank me for. You are welcome to remain here as long as you like. Perhaps we’ll get things straightened out and then your husband will join us as well.”

Dasha smiled but shook her head. “I... I doubt that sire. He has become very bitter.”

“We’ll see. For now... enjoy your time with us. I believe they would much rather it is your company than mine anyway.” Martin spoke.

Anja lifted the apple and threw it at him with a gentle toss. “Get out of here!” She snapped with a playful smile.

Dasha watched him leave the room and she turned back to her daughter. “And where did you say this young King has been hiding all these years?” She asked.

Anja and Dysea burst out laughing and Aricia pulled on her mother’s hand. “Mother... you are terrible!”

EDEN

NEXT DAY

Selene entered her apartment feeling refreshed and invigorated even after a full day of meetings and decisions. Lynwe had escorted her to the Command building and left her in the care of two senior Dragon Guards. They went with her everywhere, always out of sight so as not to give Selene the impression she was being watched, but always within reach to respond to something. Selene did not see Lynwe the entire day, and she found that saddened her. She had made her eat a delicious breakfast that she had prepared, and then waited while Selene showered and got dressed. There was not much discussion between them when the hover car picked her up, and Lynwe only gave her a smile and a goodbye before disappearing into the crowds of humans and elves who now worked in the Command Center. It was home to the offices of all the Elders and Admiral Wallace. They were close to the bunkered command and control room five levels down, yet still able to interact with the hundreds of people who came and went each day.

Selene made sure her door was locked before moving down the short hallway into the main living room of her apartment. She came to an abrupt stop at what she saw. Potted red tulips and roses now adorned her tables, as well as new curtains that allowed the sun to stream into her windows, but would block all sight from the outside at night. The apartment smelled of the aroma of flowers and she moved into the kitchen to see that it was immaculately cleaned, the counters wiped down and every dish put away. She opened her refrigerator to find it fully stocked with fruits and meats and vegetables, as well as plenty of water and two bottles of wine. Her cupboards were also full now, stocked with canned goods and an assortment of healthy snacks, and the occasional non healthy candy bar.

As Selene moved back into the main room she realized that all of her pictures that had been occupying several boxes in her closets were now dusted and ready for hanging on her walls. The linen on her bed had been changed and the bathroom spotless, with a rack now sitting by the edge with an assortment of new water scents and oils for her body and skin.

Selene moved for her door and waited anxiously while it unlocked and opened. As she stepped into the hallway she saw Naomi the older woman who lived next door, just entering her apartment.

“Excuse me!” Selene spoke quickly as she moved closer.

Naomi turned and saw her, her face lighting up with a smile. “Hello Selene!” She said cheerfully. “How are you feeling today?”

“I’m sorry... I don’t...”

“We met only briefly, but I’m Naomi Silver.” The older woman spoke.

“I’m curious... has anyone been inside my apartment today?” Selene asked.

“Of course dear... Lynwe paid me to help her clean and restock your cupboards.” Naomi spoke. “You need to eat more Selene, even if you are a half elf.”

“She... she cleaned my apartment?” Selene asked stunned.

Naomi smiled. “That she did. She bought all of the supplies too. I believe it took all of her monthly pay. I tried to tell her not to pay me, but she was adamant.” Naomi smiled. “She cares for you deeply child. Don’t let her slip away.”

“Where... do you know where she is?”

Naomi smiled. “She finished moving into the apartment at the end of the hall about an hour ago.”

“Thank you.” Selene said before heading down the hall to the last apartment on the end. As she reached the entrance the door slid aside and beeped.

<Bio-signature recognized. Good evening Elder Torcrum.> The voice of the computer spoke softly.

Selene stopped looking at the small panel. This was obviously new, as her apartment did not have such security measures. “You recognize me?” She asked the panel.

<Your bio-signature has been programmed into the database Elder Torcrum.>

“Along with who else?” Selene asked on a whim.

<General Lynwe.> The mechanical voice replied. <No other individuals have been authorized at this time.>

Selene walked slowly past the doorway into the apartment, hearing the door slide shut and lock behind her, “Lynwe?” She called out softly

Lynwe’s apartment was still in disarray, boxes and bags all around, but the furniture appeared comfortable and plush with two couches and an armchair, as well as a low metal and glass coffee table.

What caught Selene’s eyes almost immediately were the numerous weapons and equipment laid out on the large table on top of soft white towels. There were two K12 pistols, one with a silencer the other without. There was a cut down version of the normal HK74 that had become the standard weapon for Eden forces. There were an assortment of thin razor like blades and two R4 Hybrid knives. As she stepped up to the table she heard the sounds of the shower running and looked over to the door that led into the bedroom. This apartment was laid out in a similar fashion as hers only slightly larger due to the fact it was a corner apartment. Selene walked softly to the bedroom and poked her head in. The door to the bathroom was open and like her apartment, the shower was directly in front of the door. Selene’s eyes grew wide when she saw Lynwe in the shower, leaning against the wall with her shoulder facing at an angle away from the door. Her physical proportions were even more impressive without clothes on. Her skin was not as dark as Selene first thought; more of a light chocolate color, her breasts were enormous firm mounds, topped by dark half dollar sized areolas with erect nipples that were easily a quarter inch in size. She had long svelte legs that were muscular and feminine at the same time. Her ass was perfectly round and exceptionally firm.

Selene’s steel blue eyes grew wide when she realized that Lynwe was masturbating, her hand working furiously between her dark thighs. She felt a wave of heat pass over her watching this powerful Drow pleasuring herself, and Selene became suddenly very damp between her own legs. Lynwe groaned loudly and turned slightly, Selene barely able to contain the gasp that threatened to escape her lips at what she saw. Lynwe was stroking what was the largest and most impressive male organ Selene had ever seen. It was easily over twelve inches in length, and extremely thick. The head was bulbous and throbbing with passion as long streams of come erupted from the head, splashing against the wall of the shower.

Selene stepped back quickly into the living room, her hand going to her chest as she felt her blood begin to pound in her head. Lynwe was one of the Drow tortured and experimented on by the Alliance scientists. By men and women like her. Selene rushed for the door, seeing it open as she approached and she exited Lynwe’s apartment quickly. Her whole body was flush in desire, just seeing Lynwe causing her own needs to come forth. She entered her apartment and took deep breaths. Was Lynwe thinking of her as she stroked that monster? How could she have feelings for her when she was once a member of the very group of men and women that had experimented on her? While Selene had never participated in such things, she knew they were happening and did nothing to stop them.

She cares deeply for you child. Don’t let her slip away. The old woman Naomi’s words came back to her.

How could she care for her? Selene questioned. The Alliance turned her into... Selene stopped thinking like that as she moved to the sink in her kitchen and drew a glass of water. Lynwe had watched her for three weeks, knew her every move, her most private moments. Lynwe had told her she wanted to help her; that she knew what she was going through. How could she know that unless she had been raped as well? Yet she was so powerful, so strong, who could have raped her? Selene thought for a brief moment that Lynwe may want to kill her, but that thought quickly fled her mind as she remembered what she had heard Lynwe say in the hallway last night, the commotion waking her out of a sound sleep.

She is like a blossoming flower to me. And we Drow love our flowers.

No man's touch will ever taint her flesh again.

She is mine now.

Selene shook her head slowly. This female Drow warrior had the largest male equipment she had ever seen, yet in all her life no one, man or women, had ever treated her with the kindness that Lynwe had shown her the last two days. And not once in all that time had she detected anything in those amber eyes except caring and concern. Was it possible for her to feel what she was feeling for her? She was still a woman, and a Drow; half vampire, with strength and skills far superior to any man. How could she be causing these feelings sweeping through her?

“Selene?” Lynwe’s voice came from behind her and she whirled around to see her standing there, in black pants that hugged her legs and hips wonderfully, a loose white blouse that was still damp from the shower and straining against her breasts. Her white hair was still wet and clinging to her face and the shirt. In her hand she held the K12, her amber eyes flitting about the apartment alertly.

“Lyn... Lynwe.” Selene spoke.

“Are you alright?” Lynwe asked moving closer to her, amber eyes checking every corner, every shadow. “The computer said you had come into my apartment.”

“Yes... yes I’m fine.” Selene replied looking at her. “I was coming to... I was coming to thank you for what you have done here. You were in the shower... so I left right away.”

Lynwe began to relax then and she tucked the K12 into the lining of her pants at the small of her back. “You have not been well recently and I took it upon myself to do some needed chores. I purchased some supplies for you as well. You need to eat more, to keep your strength up.”

“Lynwe you did not have to do that.” Selene spoke.

“No... I wanted too. It is alright.” Lynwe replied quickly. “The items I chose are easy to cook, and will provide you much needed nutrition. You really need to...”

“Take better care of myself?” Selene asked.

“You... you are a beautiful woman Selene.” Lynwe said looking away shyly. “I... I only wish to see you healthy and happy.”

“I understand... I understand I will no longer have those men visiting me at night.” Selene spoke.

Lynwe looked at her surprised. “How did you...”

“Naomi told me.” Selene replied stepping closer to Lynwe, her presence warm and inviting and not in the least bit frightening. Though Selene doubted the Lynwe before her was like this when she was angry.

Lynwe nodded. “They will no longer trouble you.” Lynwe spoke confidently. “No longer abuse you. You have my word on that.”

“Graham will.” Selene said.

Lynwe looked at her. “No.” She said. “You need only tell Tarifa and Aihola you can not go through with this plan, and you will be taken somewhere safe until we have dealt with his vile vampire deeds! You do not have to do this my... Selene.”

Selene caught the interruption of Lynwe’s words, knowing she was going to say the same thing as she had last night.

My love.

It was those two words that made Selene’s decision easy. She stepped up to Lynwe, smelling the fresh honey scented soap on her skin, and took her hand. “Stay and have dinner with me.” She said softly.

The look in Lynwe’s eyes made Selene’s heart dance. “I would like that.” Lynwe said instantly. “I can cook a Drow dish for you. Aihola’s brother Tari taught it to me while we were children.”

Selene smiled at Lynwe’s excitement and she felt a rush of warmth course through her again. “I’d like that very much.”

Dekton unlocked the door to his quarters and watched it slid open, his hand gripping the *Nehtes* out of sight behind his thigh. His fingers relaxed when he saw it was Tarifa, and he breathed in her rich peach scent. His dark eyes moved back and forth but he did not see Aihola and he turned them back to Tarifa, reaching out with his sense of smell. Her cherry blossom scent was nearby in the next room. No more than ten meters away.

Tarifa suppressed the gasp as she looked at Dekton. He was shirtless, his upper body sculpted muscle. He was not as heavily ripped as she remembered Martin to be, but he was not as muscular. His chest was dotted with half a dozen scars that appeared to be from bladed weapons, the veins in both arms thick and visible. Tarifa had to admit, he looked delicious, just as *Nya Istel* had said.

“Milady,” He spoke, his voice jarring her from her inspection of his body. “Is there something I can do for you?”

“We need to talk.” Tarifa spoke finally meeting his eyes.

“We need to talk in regards to what Milady?” Dekton asked calmly.

“What happen between us yesterday?” Tarifa replied.

“It is forgotten.” Dekton replied. “What is there to discuss?”

“What is there to discuss?” Tarifa spoke stunned. “You have not spoken to Aihola or I all day! You won’t lower your telepathic shields either, and we have been knocking all day. You’ve ignored us at every opportunity. That’s what there is to discuss.” Tarifa pushed past him and walked into his apartment. Dekton watched her then turned back to the corridor.

“Are you going to push your way into my quarters as well?” He spoke to the air.

He heard a shuffling of feet and then Aihola appeared in front of him, a small smile of embarrassment on her face. “I tried to tell her this wasn’t a good idea.” Aihola spoke. “As you can see... I was unsuccessful.”

Dekton stepped aside and motioned with his arm. “Yes... I’m sure you tried quite hard.” He said.

Aihola looked impish as she moved past him into her quarters. Dekton looked up and down the corridor, but since they had the entire top floor, and the elevator was secured with only the three of them having keys, he wasn’t concerned. He took a deep breath and walked into his quarters.

Aihola and Tarifa stood side by side staring at the main room of Dekton’s quarters. It was immaculate, not a single item out of place. The walls were decorated with a combination of holo images and ancient weapons. There were several pictures of two very attractive young women, the resemblance to Dekton uncanny. There was a soft music playing in the background, the lights dimmed low. The room smelled heavily of Dekton’s warm leather scent and it made Tarifa light headed for a moment. They had expected a bare and Spartan like quarters, and this room provided more of an insight to the man than anything they had talked of with him in the last month.

Dekton smiled as he set the *Nehtes* on the rack by his door. “Would you care for some tea since you are here?” He asked.

Tarifa looked at him. “Where... when did you do all this?” She asked softly.

“My Captain sent some items that I had I requested from my home in Sparta on the regular transport that we have been exchanging for the last three weeks.” Dekton answered as he walked to the counter. “My daughters sent more than I requested.”

They watched him pour three mugs of tea and carry them around the counter. He motioned for them to sit on the comfortable couch and he placed the tea in front of them on the table. “It is a sweet blend of three teas that my daughter Nessia makes.”

Tarifa and Aihola took the mugs and each of them sipped the hot tea, feeling the warm liquid spread through their bodies. It was lightly sweetened and they could detect the flavors of strawberries, orange and apples. “This is delicious!” Tarifa said as she took another sip allowing the tea to chase away the butterflies in her stomach. Aihola was drinking the tea deeply, her eyes closed in delight at the flavor and texture of the tea.

Dekton nodded. “I believe the King and Queen Dysea have developed a liking to it as well.” He spoke softly as he moved to the chair opposite them.

“Dekton... I want... I want to apologize to you for what I said.” Tarifa spoke softly. “I didn’t mean to imply that you were...”

Dekton smiled. “Yes you did.” He spoke cutting her off as he leaned forward in his chair. “You meant exactly what you said.”

Tarifa’s sapphire eyes flared for a brief moment in anger. “You have been protecting us for a month now. Always with us except in our bed chamber, always within reach, and yet we know nothing about you!”

“Why should you?” Dekton told her.

“I think... I think we have a right to know about you.” Tarifa said.

“Why?” Dekton asked.

Aihola looked at him. "You are with us every waking moment of the day." She replied. "You... you saved our lives not two days ago. And you were seriously wounded doing it."

Dekton chuckled. "The wounds I suffered were minor compared to some I have received. They were inconveniences and nothing more. And both of you responded within seconds of detecting the danger to yourselves and you performed quite well." He said. "I merely aided you."

"With the exception of when you taught us about our telepathic link and gave us that little bit of instruction you have been nothing but a big fucking tree stump!" Tarifa snapped. "You haven't said one word to us all day, even through dinner, and you have blocked all attempts by us to communicate with you telepathically."

Dekton nodded. "This is true." He answered. "Why does this matter? You are both Queens, both experienced in combat and politics. Why would you need my council?"

"Why are you being so evasive to us Dekton?" Tarifa asked even as she knew she would dread the answer. "Did my words hurt that much?" Tarifa asked.

Dekton met her eyes, his pulse racing at having the both of them so close. He had not felt like this in many years towards any female. Not since the death of his beloved mate, and it was unfamiliar to him, especially since it was directed to both of them. Aihola and Tarifa had become synonymous with each other. There was not one without the other. They had become so close, as lovers and friends that nothing could come between them. When one spoke or gave instructions it was if they were both speaking. "Your words did not hurt so much as with the vitriol that they were spoken with." He answered honestly. "You pride yourself on being fair and thoughtful, yet your first reaction before you even let me speak was to denounce me. Denounce my King, who you know far better than I. Both of you seem to think that you as elves have the market on Alliance atrocities committed against you. Even now Tarifa, as intelligent as beautiful as you are part of you still does not believe that vampires exist. You do not believe this even though the woman you love has taken your blood twice now."

Aihola and Tarifa looked at him stunned. "It was only..." Aihola began speaking.

Dekton smiled and shook his head. "Did you think I would not smell her blood within you Little Drow. It was only a matter of time before you rediscovered the swell of pleasure that courses through both of you when you taste her blood. I knew that from the moment I saw the reaction on both your faces the day Tarifa saved your life."

"How do... how do you know that?" Aihola demanded. "We only... we only just discovered what..."

"Her blood is sweet isn't it, deliciously warm and sweet?" Dekton asked her, his dark gaze boring into Aihola's, "So unlike the times in the past when you have had to resort to such action to save your life. Then it was foul and disgusting. Am I right?"

"How do you know that Dekton?" Tarifa snapped now.

"You forget that you are telepathic now. I have taught you how to channel your minds between each other, to keep others from reading your thoughts, but there are always surface thoughts, images... feelings. Those are easily picked up even by the untrained telepath." Dekton got to his feet as he finished his mug of tea and went to the counter to pour himself another mug. "My people... Martin's people... you call us Werewolves... but we prefer the term Shifter. All of us are telepathic. There are levels of skill that one can acquire, the two of you would be considered Tier One telepaths as you have just discovered this skill. I am considered a Tier Four telepath, as most Centurions are. I am easily able to detect your surface thoughts, and I have been shielding them from others all day because you do not know how. Graham would certainly be able to pick them up, and if there are other telepaths within Eden, they would as well."

"Why didn't... why didn't you tell us this before?" Tarifa asked.

Dekton returned to the chair. "It was not an issue before." He replied. "Now it is."

"Why?" Aihola asked.

Dekton smiled, "Because now that you have discovered this new pleasure... you will explore it more. The more you do, the stronger the link between the two of you will become." He told them. "I suggest however that you wait a few days before trying it again. As much as Tarifa likes to think she was fine after it happened, it will take at least two days before her body replaces completely what you took Aihola."

Aihola's hand went to her mouth in horror. "No!" She gasped.

“You have no need to worry Aihola.” Dekton spoke to her quickly. “You will never take enough from her to do her harm Little Drow. Once... once your passion peaks... it will be instinct for you to stop. And you should not be horrified about this. You are half vampire Milady, and what you experience is natural for vampires when they discover the one they wish to spend eternity with. It is not something you should be ashamed of. You should revel in that fact, for it is the ultimate sign of commitment to vampires.”

“How... how do you know all this?” Tarifa asked him, her sapphire eyes a mixture of awe and suspicion.

Dekton smiled. “Now you are wondering if I am a vampire in disguise yes?” He asked.

“Stop doing that!” Tarifa snapped. “Stop touching my thoughts!”

“Then start shielding them better.” Dekton retorted quickly. “You must practice what I taught you every night. No matter what else...” He smiled gently. “No matter what else happens between you.”

“That does not answer her question!” Aihola spoke.

“No it doesn’t.” He answered. “How I know what I do is my business. It...”

“No way,” Tarifa leaned forward. “You will not do that to us again! You will not shut us out! You have become a fixture in our lives, and we know nothing about you! Nothing! You owe us something besides riddles and half answers to our questions.” She snapped. “You are worse than the Holy One when it comes to that.”

Dekton chuckled. “Being compared to the Guardian of the Line is a great compliment Milady. Thank you.”

“And stop calling me that!” Tarifa exclaimed. “You know more about me... about Aihola... our thoughts and desires. You know more about us than even my mother. I want you to start using my name. All of the time.”

Aihola nodded, “As do I.”

Dekton looked at them across the table and nodded his head slowly, “Very well.” He spoke.

“We want to know how it is that you have all this knowledge about vampires.” Tarifa spoke. “The way you have spoken in the past, one would think you despise them. The way Martin reacted... his hatred was almost alive.”

“I do.” Dekton replied evenly. “And so does my... our King. Any Spartan feels this way.”

Tarifa shook her head. “That doesn’t make any sense.” She said. “You just told Aihola... you just told us to continue... to not be afraid to explore this new experience we have shared. It’s a contradiction.”

“Is it?” Dekton spoke, holding up his hand before she could spit out another word. “As I told you... my people have been at war with the vampires for the better part of three millennia. There are scrolls that indicate the war between our kinds has gone on much longer than that. Is it not a wise tactical decision to learn as much about your enemy as you can?”

Aihola nodded. “Yes... but what you know, it doesn’t seem to have relevance in military terms. The way you speak... it’s almost as if you have personal knowledge.”

“Regardless of the ideas you have formed of my people... that we are exceptionally brutal... that we are cruel... that we are immovable...” He started to say.

“Dekton that isn’t...” Aihola began to interrupt him.

“Yes it is.” Dekton spoke with a smile. “It is exactly what you both think of my people.” He said. “And it is all true. We are brutal and cruel, but it is because we have to be. As I told you we were slaves to the vampires at one point. Even before King Leonidas. The earliest verifiable records we have are from around 950 B.C., but there are scrolls that suggest our history goes much further back. Shifters...” He motioned with his hand to them. “Or you may use Werewolves if you prefer, we built Sparta. Our methods were brutal and cruel, for we alone knew the threat we faced. Sparta was the most powerful city state in that time; because we trained our warrior’s to fight vampires which are considerably harder to kill than normal humans. When we detected vampire influence in the area around Sparta, usually in another city state such as Athens, we used our superior training to attempt to annex that state. We succeeded most of the time, there were times we did not. Every two hundred years the vampires came to cull our people, taking men, women and even children as slaves. It was something we endured, accepted... until the time King Leonidas was born. It was he that put an end to these culling. We slaughtered the vampire scum that came to take our people, leaving only one alive so that he would return from wherever they came from and tell his masters that our people would no longer bow to them.”

Dekton leaned back deeply in his chair now, the tea in his hand all but forgotten. Tarifa and Aihola were enraptured with this story and their tea was cold on the table now.

“Well... Leonidas’s proclamation did not go over well with Xerxes, the son of the Vampire High Lord. He had dominion over most of the lower African and Asian continents. He amassed a huge army, enslaving millions, all with the purpose to crush our rebellion. I will give you some data pads that you can study more intently if that is your wish, but to make a long story short, Sparta was always ruled by two Kings. Up until the time of Leonidas the two Kings had always worked together. It wasn’t discovered until later, after the death of Leonidas that the second King had betrayed his own people, and that there were certain politicians within Sparta herself that conspired against its people to gain riches beyond measure. Riches promised to them by Xerxes. The vilest of these traitors was killed by Leonidas’s own wife and Queen before the eyes of the Spartan Senate. The night before he had raped her viciously, and that is why Spartans view rape as we do.

“This politician... Theron was his name... he conspired against Leonidas with the help of the Ephors, our Holy Priests, and they denied Leonidas the permission to take the entire Spartan army to Thermopylae and face Xerxes. The rest of the story you already know I believe. The 300 Spartans and their squires, with the help of human soldiers who did not want to be enslaved did battle with the whole of Xerxes army. In the three to five days of the battle, they butchered thousands of Xerxes’s army. Dymas... you know him as the Holy One... he fought with Leonidas that day, as did Theron, the Steward of the Throne that you both met briefly. Since that day, Spartans have been involved in every major conflict that this planet has had. Most of them were begun by vampires or their minions, and we have stood next to humans to fight them. Sometimes on the open battlefield, sometimes in the shadows, but we have always stood for freedom.”

“You said you are over seven hundred years old...” Tarifa began to speak.

“I am seven hundred and nineteen years old.” Dekton told her.

“Ok... but that still does not account for the knowledge that you have.” Tarifa spoke, “The details of... of vampire mating rites? We are not fools Dekton, and if what you said about Spartan history is true, I doubt it was something your people studied.”

“No you are not.” Dekton said. “In fact you are two of the most intelligent women I have ever known.”

“Then please start treating us like it.” Aihola snapped now.

“There are only two ways I could know what I do about Vampires.” Dekton spoke softly. “I would know these things if I was a vampire, or I had personal knowledge of these things.”

“Well... I think it’s safe to say you aren’t a vampire and...” Tarifa stopped and looked at Aihola, her eyes wide. They both turned to look at him.

“My... my mate was a human female that was captured and turned into a Dhampire, a hybrid vampire.” Dekton spoke. “I was only thirty-six, and it was my first major battle as a full Spartan. I discovered her grievously wounded on a battlefield in England. She had been drafted into their service to provide medical services to the wounded and as a pleasure slave. She had all the skills of a vampire, but was able to move in the sunlight and protect them while they slept. When my Spartan phalanx hit them, we butchered everyone regardless of sex. She tried to run when the attack began but was brought down by a *Nehtes* through the chest, my *Nehtes*. When I approached her sometime later to recover my weapon I found she was still alive, fighting death as hard as I had ever seen anyone fight death. My Captain at the time came up next to me and saw her as well. Even in her struggle to stay alive, her eye burned with defiance. Eyes much like yours Tarifa. We saw the slave markings on her skin, knew that she had not chosen the life she was living. I decided to save her, I told her to bite me and take whatever blood she needed to heal her wounds. She refused me, told me it was a vile thing. Exactly the same thing you did Aihola, when Tarifa offered you her blood.”

“What... what did you do?” Tarifa asked softly.

Dekton got to his feet, and they both could see telling the story was having an effect on him. “I told her she no longer had to be a slave, and that we would allow her to live any life she wished.” He finished his tea and turned back to look at them. “She took my blood that day. It healed her wounds, and she returned to Sparta with us. She was nursed back to health, and willingly gave us any information she could about the vampires she had served for sixty years. Two years later I claimed her as my mate. She was beautiful beyond measure, flowing black hair like yours Tarifa, and silky soft skin like yours Aihola. She was my angel. And we shared blood many times once we discovered what the two of you have only recently found. The people of Sparta accepted her after a few more years, they welcomed her, and she became fast friends with hundreds of people. She was

very well liked and even became a teacher in one of our schools. She gave me beautiful twin daughters, Nessia and Narcissa. Four hundred years after she became my wife she was captured during a vampire raid into the mountains around Sparta. I went after her in a rage and was captured myself. They forced me to watch while they raped and brutalized her for three days and then they butchered her in front of me. It was not quick or painless either. There are times when I can still hear her screams in my dreams. I was near dead before my daughters led a unit of Spartans to my location and saved me.”

Dekton returned to his chair and looked at them across the table. “Now you understand why I am what I am. I see my wife in both of you... the fire in your eyes... in your beauty. It has been two hundred and eighty-four years since she died... and in all that time I have never felt for another woman what I felt for her, until... until I met the two of you. You are separate individuals, but your love for each other bonds you into one person. I can not feel for one of you and not feel the same for the other. So now you know...” He got back to his feet. “I was not able to protect her... but I will utterly destroy any threat I perceived to the two of you. And I will do it with all the cruelty and brutality at my command, without even a second’s thought of hesitation.” Dekton took a deep breath then. “I believe that is all I wish to share right now. I’m sure you can find your way out. I will see you in the morning for breakfast and I will instruct you in more advanced techniques to guard your thoughts.”

Tarifa and Aihola watched him as he turned and walked to the door of his bedroom, and then watched it close behind him. Of all they had hoped to garner from him, what he had just told them was not even something that had crossed their minds. Essentially he had just professed his love to them, and it stuck them right down to their toes.

Dekton would find them in the morning stretched out on his couch, wrapped in each others arms, covered in the blanket he used when he slept on his couch. He gazed at them for several moments, taking in their beauty as they slept peacefully.

Perhaps his King had been right.

“I have established myself in the apartment on Selene’s floor.” Lynwe spoke as they sat around the table later the next day. The meetings for the morning were over, and now just the five of them remained in the Command Center, having moved to the much smaller office that Tarifa had taken over. Aihola’s office is on the other side of the building for security reasons, but they were almost never apart it seemed.

Lynwe and Selene occupied the two chairs across from the desk where Tarifa sat. Aihola was seated in the chair next to the edge of the desk and Dekton stood in the corner of the room.

“And the surveillance devices are in place?” Aihola asked.

Lynwe nodded. “They are fully in place and working. I finished installing the TAP cameras this morning and routed all the feeds to the video display in the main security grid. You will be able to view everything that might take place my Queen.”

Selene fidgeted in her chair at this information, a movement that did not go unnoticed by the others. Tarifa looked at her. “Selene... we do not have to go through with this.” She spoke.

Selene met her gaze. “And if I don’t, we miss out on perhaps more intelligence than we could gather by any other means.” She said.

“We are not willing to throw you away for that.” Aihola told her. “You are now second only to Tarifa and I in the influence you wield Selene. Your experience and insight is not something we wish to part with.”

Selene nodded. “Neither am I.” She said half jokingly.

Tarifa and Aihola both noticed that she had improved the last two days. She had gained weight; if only a few pounds and her steel blue eyes were brighter and more alert than they had been for the last few weeks.

“Dekton has told us you will need to make a decision before tonight. He will need a full day to teach you and Lynwe how to communicate and control the telepathic link once it is established, enough that Graham does not detect it anyway.” Tarifa said.

Selene looked at Dekton. “You can do this?” She asked him.

Dekton nodded, “Easily.” He answered. “Understand though that once the telepathic link is established, it will always be there. I can teach you how to block it, how to shield your thoughts, but once you have done this, the link will forever be a part of who you are. Only one of the more skilled telepaths among my people

would be able to teach you to fully close the link to the point where it is nothing but background thoughts. I suggest however we attempt to get what we can from Graham in no more than four attempts.”

“Why only four?” Lynwe asked.

“After you take her blood four times Lynwe, the link will be permanent. And nothing that even our senior telepaths do will close it forever.” Dekton replied. “My people are born telepathic, so it is something that comes naturally to us. We are trained from a very young age to be able to block all that we don’t find relevant. Our King and those with him have been using it since they were small children, though now Martin and his Queens have surpassed even our most skilled Tier Six telepaths in their skills. The two of you will not have that luxury.”

Tarifa looked at him, “How do you know that Dekton?” She asked.

“My Captain keeps me informed of events in Sparta in his weekly transmissions as you know.” Dekton replied looking at her. “He has reported that the telepathic skill of Martin and the Queens has reached a point that is not even measurable by our standards. I received his latest report only this morning and you may view it if you wish.”

Tarifa hid her surprise at this. He had never let them view one of his transmissions before and now he was offering it to them.

She and Aihola had remained in his quarters after he had gone into his bedroom. The warmth of his room, not to mention the smell of him put them more at ease than they had ever been. When they lay on the couch and wrapped themselves in the blanket, even Aihola could smell his warm leather scent, and it had quickly lulled them to sleep. When they had awoken this morning he had tea and a hearty breakfast waiting for them, not even mentioning the fact they had slept in his quarters after he had asked them to leave. Over breakfast he had instructed them in more advanced techniques on how to block and shield their thoughts from others, and how to detect subtle probes of even their surface thoughts. They had left his quarters three hours after waking to shower and get ready for the new day, but the one thing that they noticed was that he had left the connection to them open. They both wanted to desperately explore his mind and thoughts, but they restrained themselves. They also noticed during the morning that having their connection open with him filled them both with soothing warmth and what they could only describe as love. The two times they had closed the link to him to discuss this, that feeling vanished, and both of them felt empty.

“Was there anything that might help us in this endeavor?” Tarifa asked, wanting to show trust after what he had shared with them last night.

Dekton shook his head. “It was mostly of the progress the King and Queens are making and of the possibility that there might be spies in Sparta as well as here. Perhaps this evening you and Aihola should view it so you are aware of what is going on in the larger picture.”

Tarifa and Aihola both nodded before she turned back to Selene. “I’m sorry Selene.” Tarifa spoke.

Selene shook her head. “No... I already made my decision last night.” She spoke firmly. “I will not let Graham control me, and turn me against what I am helping to build.”

Lynwe had cooked her a marvelous dinner the previous night, oblivious to the fact that Selene had seen her in the shower. Selene had watched Lynwe intently all evening, noting how she always attempted to avoid touching her. Half way through the evening Selene realized it was because Lynwe did not want her to sense that she was attracted to her immensely. She could see it in her amber eyes, and how she looked away embarrassed when Selene caught her staring at her. They had talked for a long time, about what they had hoped for in the future, deliberately avoiding both their pasts. Reliving horrors and events from their pasts would do them no good going into the future, and they both knew that. Lynwe had left her with a simple squeeze of her hand, and Selene had gone to bed wondering what it would be like to fall asleep in Lynwe’s arms, their bodies entwined.

“Have you determined where Lynwe can bite you that will not be detected by Graham?” Dekton asked casually. “If her bite is not hidden well, his vampire senses will pick up the puncture marks.”

“Knowledge of that is not something you need.” Lynwe spoke quickly her voice possessive. “It is something for Selene and I alone.”

Dekton nodded, not put off by her nature in the least, “As you wish.”

Aihola nodded. “We have twenty minutes before the Appropriations meeting, and Tarifa and I have not had lunch.” She spoke. “Lynwe... we trust you to do what you must and then notify Dekton.”

Lynwe nodded. “I will.” She replied getting to her feet.

Selene stood as well. "I'm going to my office and go over the figures for the expansion of the six new settlements." She said. "We will need to determine what is needed and if we are even able to do it yet." She turned to Lynwe. "Lynwe I could use your assistance."

Lynwe nodded, "Of course."

Tarifa, Aihola and Dekton watched as they left the office, and Aihola smiled. "She truly loves her." She spoke softly.

Tarifa nodded. "I'm very happy about that. Hopefully Selene can return the feelings."

Dekton remained silent, but knew that from Selene's smell alone that she very much could and wanted to return the feelings. He looked at his two charges. "Since you saw fit to extend this meeting longer than necessary, I had lunch sent up from the café across the street. Queens you may be, but you still need to eat."

Tarifa and Aihola looked at him with smiles. "I think perhaps you should take your own advice." Aihola spoke. "That is why we added food for you to the order you made." They all turned as the elf aide pushed the cart into the room with three plates of food on it.

Dekton looked at them and couldn't help the grin that crossed his face.

Selene turned to Lynwe as the door to her office closed and locked. She looked up into the amber eyes of the much taller Drow female. "So where did you determine to bite me Lynwe. There is not a whole lot that the pig Graham doesn't slobber all over."

"There is one place." Lynwe said shyly. "He... both times I viewed the tapes he avoided close scrutiny of one part of your body altogether."

"And where is that?"

Lynwe met her eyes, embarrassment evident on her face. "It is the only other place on your body where you have hair."

Selene didn't flinch at this to her credit, and it was only another sign to her of just how badly she wanted this Drow warrior to have her. She was also very right. Her naturally dark auburn hair, even the small patch above her center would hide any bite mark that Lynwe made.

"I'm... I'm sorry Selene." Lynwe spoke softly. "The only other place would be the back of your neck, under your hair, but he had grabbed you by the hair several times, and pulled it up far enough to see any teeth marks. I would need a good deal of flesh in order to penetrate far enough to get enough of your blood."

Selene nodded. "I know." She spoke in reply, stepping up to her. She reached up to touch her face. "In the last two days you have shown me more kindness than anyone I have ever known. I... I do not wish to lose that." She saw the bright happiness in Lynwe's amber eyes and she took a deep breath. "Ok... let's do this."

Lynwe looked surprised. "Here?" She asked.

Selene's steel blue eyes were clear and focused. "Yes. I want to get this over with so I can enjoy tonight."

"Tonight?" Lynwe asked. "I don't understand."

Selene took her hands. "I heard what you told that man Lynwe." She said softly. "And yesterday... when I came into your apartment... I didn't... I didn't mean to invade on your privacy please believe me. I saw you... I saw you in the shower."

Lynwe's body tensed and Selene thought she was going to pull away from her. "Then... then you saw..."

Selene nodded slowly. "Please don't be angry with me Lynwe. I... I was only coming to thank you for all you had done. I..."

"You do not care?" Lynwe asked disbelief in her voice. "You do not care that I am..."

Selene looked at her. "Would I be standing here if I did?" She asked. "I thought perhaps... I thought perhaps you wanted revenge on me for what those monsters did to you, and that is why you were helping me."

Lynwe shook her head quickly. "No. I told you I was filled with hatred and anger for the Alliance because of what they did to me. Aihola and Tarifa showed me that I could feel again, they showed me that I could let the hate go and try to build a new life. When... when I saw you... I knew that you were who I wanted that life to begin with."

"I... I will do whatever you want from me." Selene said softly in a submissive voice.

“No Selene.” Lynwe answered. “I may be Drow... but someone once told me that we were now the future, and we could not cling to old traditions and laws.” She reached up and placed her palm on Selene’s cheek. “I don’t want a submissive lover Selene. I want a... I want a partner who I can love and who will love me in return.”

“I... I don’t know if I can love again Lynwe.” Selene said.

“You can...” Lynwe told her, stepping closer and towering over her. “Let me show you that you can love again.” Lynwe took her face in her hands and lowered her pink lips to Selene’s. She pressed them to her full soft ruby lips and kissed her deeply, probing tentatively with the tip of her tongue. Selene tensed in her embrace, her hands going to her arms and squeezing tightly. Yet as Lynwe continue to tease her lips and teeth, Selene began to relax and ever so slowly she began to feel the unique and new sensations coursing through her. She leaned in closer to Lynwe, pressing herself against Lynwe’s firm breasts and her lips parted to allow Lynwe’s tongue entry. The moment Lynwe’s tongue slipped between her lips, Selene felt her walls come crumbling down.

Lynwe’s heart leaped in joy as Selene’s lips parted, and instead of plunging her tongue into Selene’s mouth to take what she wanted so badly, Lynwe used what Tarifa had taught her in their nights together, and that was the slow sensual seduction kiss. She teased Selene’s tongue with her own, dancing the tip across the insides of her luscious mouth, exploring and tasting. She felt Selene lean into her, and deepened her kiss, her hands dropping slowly down her shoulders to caress the curve of Selene’s spine. When Selene groaned softly within their kiss, Lynwe dropped her hands lower, gripping her firm ass cheeks and pulling her tighter, now using her tongue to take what she so desired. And Selene responded, wrapping her arms around Lynwe’s waist and clutching the taller woman’s own ass, crushing herself against Lynwe’s hard body with all her strength.

It was another long moment before Lynwe finally pulled away, the taste of Selene’s lips on her own sending shivers through her body. She gazed into Selene’s beautiful face, watching as her steel blue eyes opened slowly and looked at her.

“Lyn... Lynwe... that... that was... wow,” Selene managed to gasp out. Her whole body was alive with new feelings and electricity and she gazed into Lynwe’s beautiful amber eyes wantonly.

“Take... take your panties off Selene.” Lynwe spoke softly.

Selene did this much quicker than she realized, pushing the white thong panties past her knees in seconds, kicking them to the side with the toe of her foot. She wore a soft blue summer dress, and she felt the cool air fan her exposed pussy, feeling the energy racing through her. She returned her gaze to Lynwe.

“Lynwe... I...”

“Do not worry Selene. It will only hurt for a second.” Lynwe told her.

“What... what about after?”

“After?” Lynwe smiled. “After... you will rest until your next meeting. Then I intend to take you back to my apartment and make you mine completely.”

“Not... not here?” Selene questioned as Lynwe gently backed her up to the desk, her firm ass pressing against the cold slab of wood and steel. Lynwe lifted her until she sat on the desk.

“No... *Titta Lote*, I intend to have you on soft sheets and completely naked so that I can explore every portion of your flesh, and no one will hear you call my name in passion.” Lynwe spoke. **(Tiny Flower)**

Selene smiled in spite of herself and she wiggled her butt on the desk. “I like the sound of that.” She said softly.

Lynwe smiled and dropped to her knees in front of Selene. Slowly, she pushed the dress up, exposing her taut thighs and the smell of her arousal hit Lynwe, making her eyes moist in happiness. Selene desired her, wanted her, the moistness of her engorged labia testament to that. Lynwe pushed Selene back onto the desk with one hand, making her relax on her back trying to make her as comfortable as possible. The thin strip of auburn red hair above her juicy center was indeed thick enough to hide her bite, the hair soft and curly. Lynwe lowered her lips to Selene’s abdomen, spreading fluttering kisses across her skin, causing her belly to tighten. She had never been so close to another woman’s pussy, never having the courage to go that far with Aihola or Tarifa. Now though she wanted it more than anything and the musky aroma of sweet strawberries filled her head and senses. She brushed her lips across the soft pubic hair Selene had and took a deep breath as she extended her vampire fangs and bit deeply into the flesh just above Selene’s pussy.

Two things happened almost immediately.

Selene cried out softly in a mixture of pain and agonizing pleasure, reaching down to clutch Selene's hand on her chest. Her already aroused clit was hit with an enormous wave of pleasure unlike anything she had ever experienced as Lynwe's lower lip covered it and her warm tongue brushed against her erect bud. Selene's body arched off the desk as a thunderous orgasm smashed through her, causing her eyes to explode open and white stars to fill her vision.

Lynwe bit down into her flesh, her eyes closed. The instant Selene's blood touched her tongue; Lynwe's eyes burst open as the sweetest tasting strawberry nectar poured into her mouth. A rush of images flashed through her mind, Selene's time in the Alliance, flashes of Marcus and several strange men, her in bed with an older man, the rape on EDEN, all of these flash and spun through her head as she drank. Selene's blood rushed into her belly, sending searing jolts of pleasure ripping through every nerve ending of her body. She lost herself for a split second and her tongue and bottom lip came into contact with Selene's hard throbbing clit. The moment that happened, Selene's body arched off the desk and an even sweeter tasting liquid erupted from her spasming pussy, flooding Lynwe's throat. This caused Lynwe's rock hard cock to twitch madly within her fatigue pants and Lynwe nearly cried out at the blistering power of the orgasm that rocketed from her, her come soaking the front of her fatigue pants. With deliberate intent, Lynwe latched her lips tightly to Selene's pussy as she drank down Selene's essence in two forms.

Lynwe vowed to herself to drink more of her new lover as often as possible. Her blood was beyond delicious, like the finest wine that could exist. As Selene shivered in the final throes of her own orgasm, Lynwe regained enough presence of mind to quickly withdraw her fangs from Selene's flesh, lovingly lapping at the two puncture wounds until they sealed over and were healed. She did not however pull her lips from Selene's still moist pussy, lavishing her pussy lips with long strokes of her tongue as Selene shuddered in the aftermath of her orgasm. Selene's juices were even sweeter on her tongue than her blood and Lynwe was determined to get every drop. Realizing what she was doing, Lynwe knew she had finally cast aside her old self and had been reborn. Slowly she released her lips from their place on Selene's sweet pussy and lifted her face. She placed fluttering kisses along Selene's abdomen until she reached her bellybutton, and then she pulled her up quickly into a sitting position, seeing her disheveled but completely satisfied face break into a slow gentle smile.

"Oh... Lynwe." She gasped. "Can... can we do that again?" She asked.

Lynwe smiled and stood up, covering Selene's lips with her own and rejoicing when Selene did not hesitate and kissed her back with vigor. When they parted both of them were out of breath and their chests were heaving in effort.

Lynwe stroked her cheek. "It... it appears that we were both unprepared for what would happen." Lynwe spoke softly, glancing down at the front of her fatigue pants. Selene followed her eyes and her eyes grew wider.

"You mean..."

Lynwe chuckled. "That has never happened to me before." She said with a small amount of embarrassment.

"Take me now Lynwe, please!" Selene pleaded drawing her closer.

Lynwe fought down the resurgence of passion, feeling her cock thicken once more and took Selene's face in her hands. "Nothing would please me more *Titta Lote*." She spoke gently. "But I think I took too much of your blood, and you need to regain your strength. You... you must rest and eat."

Selene lowered her head to Lynwe's chest, wrapping her arms around her waist. "Stay with me." She said softly.

Lynwe smiled as she pulled her close, "That I will do Selene; that I will do."

SPARTA

"That was not the smartest of moves Milord." Theron spoke as they walked through the corridor of the Senate building.

Martin looked at him with a smile. "Which one is that? I make a lot of those."

"Allowing Aricia's mother to remain at the villa," Theron replied. "If what she says is true, and Midlan demanded that of her husband, then he will undoubtedly show up at the villa, demanding you surrender Aricia."

Martin nodded, "Probably. That won't happen. So?"

"The rumors from the city are growing. Rumors that you are not who we have said you are." Theron spoke. "It's not wise to flame them with your actions."

"I've never been very good at lying to people." Martin said.

"Milord... once we reveal your true identity, the Senate will not allow Aricia to hold the position of Queen. You must know this." Theron spoke. "Her family is dishonored. Even those that support me will not allow it, no matter who you are. The King is not above the law."

"Then we'll change the law." Martin spoke.

Theron stopped quickly and looked at him. "That is not something that you can do." He said. "Our laws have been in place for thousands of years! You can't simply dismiss them at your whim, especially not over some child!"

Martin looked at him, his dark eyes warning. "Aricia and her family should not have to bear the shame for something her brother did." He snapped, "If he did it at all."

Theron looked at him wide eyed. "Sire... the evidence was irrefutable, and Atropos confessed. He made the statement in his own hand."

"Yes I'm aware of that." Martin spoke. "I also am aware the confession is not in the records with the rest of the proceedings of the hearing. Why is that?"

Theron shrugged. "It should be sire; everything was entered into the records and archived as we do with everything."

Martin nodded. "It wasn't." He said again.

Theron chuckled. "You speak like it was a conspiracy sire. That perhaps Atropos was forced to sign a confession in regards to his actions." Martin's head turned towards him. "That is not possible. He was courageous to act as he did."

"I read something from the scrolls just recently." Martin told him. "From King Agesilaus of the Eurypontid line no less. It was he who led Sparta through much of their expansion isn't he?"

"He was an exception to the rule sire." Theron spoke.

"Was he?" Martin said. "One of his quotes as described by a squire who wrote his history goes like this. **'Courage has no value if justice is not in evidence too; but if everyone were to be just, then no one would need courage.'**" Martin looked at Theron. "Interesting quote don't you think?"

"Milord... you will be King soon. You must not have anything that the members of the Eurypontid line can use against you and your claim to the throne." Theron spoke.

"So you keep telling me." Martin said.

"You have to do things carefully in this regard sire." Theron told him. "If you wish to keep Aricia as a concubine, so be it. But you must choose a female of honorable Pureblood status to sit with you as Queen beside Anja and Dysea. That is the only way to solidify your hold on the throne."

"We'll see." Martin said softly.

"Sire... this is not..."

Martin stopped and his gaze was fixed on the strange device in the corner of the Senate hall as they entered. It extended from floor to ceiling, and gave off a soft light blue glow. There was a gap between the two pieces of what appeared to be metal that stretched from the ceiling and the floor. This gap was bathed in the soft blue light. The exterior was smooth and unbroken, strange symbols engraved into the shiny metal.

"What is that?" Martin asked. "I've never seen that before."

Theron moved to a panel near the object and pressed a button. Four solid steel panels descended from the ceiling sealing the strange object behind it, cutting off the light that emanated from it. "That is your test sire." He spoke.

"Excuse me?"

"When the time comes for you to take the throne, you will have to be branded as King with your own Shi Viska. This is identical to the Centurion's brander at Thermopylae. You are not ready yet." Theron answered.

"That's some pretty advanced looking machinery." Martin spoke. "Who built that?"

"It was not built Milord." Theron answered. "It was placed here twenty-three centuries ago by the ghosts of dead Kings."

Martin looked at him, “Ghosts? Theron... I’m no fool.”

“I speak the truth!” Theron snapped. “It was not here one day, the next it was here! Four members of the Line of Leonidas have been tested, mostly distant blood relatives.”

“And what happened?” Martin asked.

“They failed.” Theron spoke matter of factly. “They were among the descendants that Dymas protected.”

“So where are they?” Martin asked as Theron took his arm gently and led him away from the now hidden device.

“They did not survive the test.” Theron spoke.

Theron did not speak again and Martin turned to look back at the sections of wall that now covered the strange device. He had never seen anything like it, and now he didn’t know if he wanted too.

EDEN

Tarifa lay on the couch in their apartment, her head resting on Aihola’s thigh. She sat against the arm of the couch, her opposite leg pulled up to her chest. They were both reading data pads Dekton had given them on Spartan history. Alone in their quarters neither of them wore much in the way of clothing. They were wearing identical white robes that stretched to the floor in length, the fabric thick enough not to be transparent, but not leaving much else to the imagination. Neither of them wore undergarments. Aihola’s left hand held the data pad, a mug of Dekton’s tea perched on the arm of the couch, while her right hand casually stroked the skin of Tarifa’s shoulder and down between her full breasts. It was the caress of a lover with no sexual overtones to it, who was confident in the completeness of her feelings and the feelings of her partner.

“He did not lie to us *Nya Istel*.” Tarifa spoke, letting the data pad she read rest on top of her stomach. “They were a brutal people.”

“What are you reading?” Aihola asked.

“The musings of an ancient Greek Historian...” Tarifa looked at the pad, “A Hecataeus. He lived in the time of Martin’s ancestor... this King Leonidas. He states several times that the Spartans were well known for their cruelty and even brutality, but in one passage he states that it was as if the Spartans knew something everyone else did not, as they fought with a fierceness never before seen.” Tarifa turned her head a little to the side. “That would explain why they did what they did. If they were all Werewolves and they knew they were fighting vampires, of course they would fight harder.”

Aihola glanced at her quickly. “I have been reading about Leonidas my love.” She spoke. “It is fascinating.”

Tarifa rolled over onto her stomach and looked at Aihola. “Tell me.”

“There are two histories really, and if you hold them together, one is the Spartan’s own account of events, the other is the account of other historians, and the more well known in the history of the world.” Aihola spoke.

“Tell me something.” Tarifa asked.

“This is of the Spartan account when describing Leonidas.” Aihola spoke, “A Spartan of perfect physique and perfect mind. A brilliant tactician who would give the enemy only one option and that was death. Hatred flowed through his veins for our ancient enemy, as palpable as the rising sun. A King loved by his men, and who loved them in return. Never shirking duty or combat, always standing with his men in the thick of battle.” Aihola looked at her. “It goes on to say that he was one of the first to fall in that last attack at this Battle of Thermopylae. The remaining Spartans and their squires fought for three hours defending his corpse such was the love they had for their King.”

“They died... they died to protect his body?” Tarifa asked in awe.

Aihola nodded. “That was the devotion he received from his men.” She spoke softly. “Dekton says it was Leonidas who refused the vampires when they came to take their people. It was he who started the rebellion that continues to this day.”

“I have seen this devotion to Martin from Danny and the others.” Tarifa spoke softly. “His dry humor usually subdued it... but you could see in their eyes their love for him. What does he look like... as a wolf *Nya Istel*?”

Aihola met her gaze. “His... his fur is as black as the night, yet even though I didn’t touch it, I could see the softness of it in the sunlight. He stood half as tall as me at the shoulders. Three times the size of the largest wild wolf I have ever seen. And his eyes, yellow gold orbs that could seize your heart with their glare.”

“What do you think Dekton looks like?” She asked.

Aihola grinned, “With or without clothes?” She asked.

Tarifa laughed. “He is not as muscular as Martin, but his body is like... like it was cut from granite.”

“Cut from granite and chiseled to perfection.” Aihola added. “My love... he said that... he said that we are as one. That there is not you without me, or me without you.”

Tarifa nodded. “Yes.”

“Do you desire him as strongly as I do Tarifa?” Aihola asked her.

“Does his presence make your whole body tingle?” Tarifa asked. “Does his voice make your knees weak? Does the gaze of his eyes send electric jolts of pleasure through you?” Tarifa nodded. “If that is what you mean, then yes. I desire him just as badly as you.”

“What do we do?” Aihola asked. “I have... I have never desired a man so completely my love.”

“I thought after Martin that I would feel the same but... Dekton is different.” Tarifa spoke. “It is a different sensation altogether than what I felt for Martin.”

“Do you... do you think he is as large as Lynwe?” Aihola asked, her voice sounding hopeful.

“I don’t think anyone could be as large as Lynwe.” Tarifa said with a smile. “I don’t know how large he could be... but I know when I look into his eyes and I see him wanting to possess me, to take me, it is a feeling I wish to be lost in. It is no different than how he looks at you *Nya Istel*.”

Aihola nodded slowly. “Yes... and I find that affect thrilling to say the least, just as you do. Do you think he... do you think he wants us as badly as we want him?”

Tarifa smiled in agreement. “You’ll get no disagreement from me on the affect he has on us.” She replied looking at her. “And I hope with all my heart as you do, that he wants us as badly as we desire him.”

“We should...” Aihola started.

Tarifa! Little Drow! Dekton’s thoughts and voice filled their minds.

Tarifa and Aihola both sat up straight. He had sworn to them he would never block them from his surface thoughts again. His mind was his own, and all they need do is knock on his shields and he would answer, no matter what he was doing. They agreed to do the same, but now his voice cut through the shields he had helped them erect, and while it did not sound frightened or hurried, it did sound urgent.

Dekton what is it? Tarifa asked.

Your heart races Dekton! What is wrong? Aihola echoed.

Arm yourselves with some clothing and join me outside if you would. He told them. *I have something to show you.*

We can come down right now. Tarifa said rising slowly from the couch.

While I’m sure that many others would enjoy the show, I would prefer not to have either of you flashing the Guard Force, and allowing others to see what I wish to claim for my own. Dekton replied softly but confidently.

Tarifa and Aihola looked at each other in their apartment, and Aihola squeezed her hand as a smile spread across her face.

You presume much Spartan. Tarifa tried to sound Queen like and knew she failed miserably when Aihola made a bored face at her and rolled her eyes.

I am an Alpha wolf Tarifa, like my King... and no one has ever accused me of being shy when I want something. I am on the hunt... for the two of you. And I won’t be denied. Dekton answered.

What is so important Dekton? Aihola asked.

We have found Telan.

Lynwe's heart was pounding, the blood pulsing through her veins unlike any other time in her life, and the cause of that was withering beneath her. Selene had practically ran out of the Command Center after her last meeting with Dekton to help her and Lynwe establish and begin to learn to control the telepathic link that was now open between them. It was an incredible experience to say the least as they could speak to one another within their minds now, feel what the other was feeling and to Selene it was the ultimate sign of trust and love. She had grabbed Lynwe's hand as they climbed into the hover car, squeezing it the entire way to her apartment. Even then, Lynwe could sense the desire and need wafting from Selene's blood. They had made it into her apartment and Selene was in her arms before the door was even closed.

That was two hours ago, and now Lynwe was stroking deeply into Selene's velvet warmth, her teeth clenched, holding back the desire to simply pound herself into Selene's tight body. As Aihola and Tarifa had taught her, she was using long slow strokes of her throbbing cock to drive Selene mad with pleasure. Already she had erupted in four orgasms, the second more powerful than the first and the last more powerful than the previous. Lynwe had already filled her twice with her own passion, exploding deep in Selene's belly and womb, her come filling her so completely that it leaked from around her thick shaft, coating their lower bodies with their combined juices. And Selene had clutched at her powerful shoulders and howled in delight each and every time, lavishing her face and lips with kisses and small nibbles on her skin. Lynwe was rapidly building to another orgasm, more powerful than any others. Selene's pussy was the tightest embrace she had ever experienced, and her petite five foot two frame fit perfectly against her body. Her huge breasts were crushed against Selene's back as Lynwe moved only her hips to thrust all fourteen inches of her thick ebony Drow cock as deeply into Selene as she could. She was gentle and caring now, her hands stroking Selene's flesh, pinching her super hard nipples, and her fingers dancing across Selene's rock hard clit.

Selene was in a world she had never been in before. A world of pleasure that she never in her wildest dreams imagined could exist. All the times with Deval's vile hands on her, the rape on EDEN, all of that was washed away the first time Lynwe exploded into her belly filling her with scorching hot come. At that moment Selene became Lynwe's, just as she predicted. The pleasure hadn't stopped even after Selene had come harder than ever before. Lynwe's huge cock, almost obsidian in color and larger than anything Selene had ever seen remained hard as iron buried within her belly. She had expected the Drow to dominate her, take her quickly and powerfully, claiming her as her property. Instead Lynwe had fucked her senseless with long slow strokes that utterly filled her in a way nothing ever had. Each downward plunge and Lynwe banged against her womb, each backward movement leaving her feeling empty and abandoned. She could feel every delicious pulse of Lynwe's huge Drow cock inside her, stretching her tight pussy as the veins pressed against the walls of her dripping center. Selene hadn't stopped coming since Lynwe had stolen her soul with the first plunge and she felt her heated balls press against her ass cheeks. Lynwe's strong hands were everywhere, caressing her flesh, pinching her burning hot nipples, her long powerful fingers lightly pinching her unhooded and painfully erect clit sending molten lava through her veins at the pleasure. Selene swore to herself that she was going to kiss whoever taught Lynwe how to make love with such skill.

She turned her face sideways against the sheets, her eyes heavy with passion, her tongue running across her lips to moisten them as Lynwe plunged deep once more. Selene reached back with her hands and grabbed her powerful hips, holding her in place, relishing the feel of such a huge cock filling her belly with this agonizing pleasure.

"Your... your lips!" Selene gasped. "Kiss... kiss me Lynwe! I beg you!" Selene shuddered as a miniature orgasm flooded through her, causing her skin to heat even further.

This time Lynwe did not pause. While remaining buried completely in her lover, Lynwe lifted Selene's left leg and slowly began to turn her. Selene's mouth opened in a silent gasp as the pleasure of this movement caused stars to erupt in her vision. Lynwe had learned the pleasures of kissing from Tarifa and Aihola, and Selene's lips tasted of sweet strawberries. Once she had her turned completely, Lynwe leaned back drawing Selene up with her until their breasts crushed against each other and Selene's arms wrapped around her shoulders and she cried out as she sank even deeper on Lynwe's dominating shaft. She wrapped her legs around Lynwe's waist as she settled back onto the bed and brought her lips to Selene's.

Their kiss was a rapturous tango of love and feeling, Lynwe's tongue plunging between Selene's lips plundering and taking once more. Selene grunted with unabashed delight each time Lynwe thrust upward with her hips spearing her completely. She could feel Lynwe's huge balls pressed tightly to her ass cheeks,

overflowing and begging for release. Selene wanted her to fill her with her essence; she wanted to feel Lynwe's come blasting even more deeply into her body than ever before. She clenched her stomach muscles, and squeezed her pussy around Lynwe's shaft as hard as she could.

Lynwe's lips tore away from hers, her head flying back as the pleasure surged from her like a tidal wave. Her cock grew impossibly huge, her balls tightening in preparation of her release.

Selene's steel blue eyes watched with half lidded pleasure, Lynwe's beautiful face contorted in bliss. She looked at the line of her beautiful neck, leading down to her shoulders, the curve of her elfin ears, the vein pulsing along the side of her neck in exertion. Selene felt a warm sensation sweep her as she watched that vein under Lynwe's delicious skin. The warmth spread, growing hotter and hotter, spreading away from her belly, and quickly reaching every one of her limbs sending enchanting jolts of pleasure throughout her body. Selene felt a splash of warm liquid in her mouth, a sharp pain in her gums and two long fangs appeared from beneath her lips. Her steel blue eyes quickly changed to cobalt blue outlined in a thin black ring. These eyes watched the vein in Lynwe's neck with hunger. Her cobalt blue eyes grew wide as she lowered her lips to Lynwe's delectable neck and with barely any hesitation she sank her fangs into the pulsing vein.

Lynwe's amber eyes flew open at the flash of pain in her neck and then the most impossible surge of pleasure roared through her, pounding in her veins and behind her eyes. She screamed as her huge cock swelled almost painfully and she erupted into Selene's milking pussy as her lover fed on her warm blood.

Selene's cobalt blue eyes were open equally as wide as she drank Lynwe's mouth-watering coconut tasting blood, the pleasure ripping through her like a runaway freight train as she too came, her come squirting out around Lynwe's erupting shaft, soaking both of them as well as the bed sheets. She felt Lynwe's arms crush her close and Selene reciprocated, her cobalt blue eyes closing in bliss as she fed.

Tarifa and Aihola had quickly changed into gray fatigues and the Spartan body armor that Dekton had provided to them the day before. The armor conformed to their figures like gloves, protecting them fully, but leaving no doubt of their feminine appeal. They had seen Dekton's dark eyes gaze upon them with approval and hunger as they exited the building, and the hunger they saw made both of them gasp as he hit them with his full radiating aura. His desire for them was like a living thing, swarming around them, turning the air thick with want and passion. He pulled it back in quickly so as not to overwhelm them, and when they looked at him again, he saw in their eyes the same desire for him that he bore for them.

They stepped up to him quickly, their hands reaching out to take his arms as they looked up into his eyes.

"Dekton?" Aihola spoke softly.

He looked down quickly. "Forgive me... I should not have done that."

Tarifa let her hand slip into his as she stepped close to him, Aihola doing the same. "I think Aihola and I would very much like to explore this Dekton. If... if that is what you wish." She spoke softly.

Dekton looked at her for a long moment and then his eyes turned to Aihola. He saw the same want in her amber eyes that he saw in Tarifa's. "I believe I would like that very much." He spoke finally a small smile breaking across his face for a brief moment before that mask came back down. "Shall we go visit Telan?" He asked.

They rode in silence to the Western District, all of them admiring all that had been accomplished in so short a time, and fighting the new feelings sweeping through them. Eden was continuing to build, spreading out further and further, the mountains surrounding the city on all sides in the distance. Dekton was surprised at how much it reminded him of Sparta.

The Hopper took only minutes to reach the row of new one story apartments, and Tarifa and Aihola could see the four Hoppers already parked outside, a dozen of Eden's troops guarding the perimeter. Their driver pulled up to the row of apartments and Dekton opened the door first, getting out slowly, his eyes sweeping the area even though he knew it was securely locked down. He finally motioned Aihola and Tarifa out, and they exited the Hopper and followed Dekton to the apartment currently being guarded by three soldiers.

"These buildings are new, built within the last two months." Tarifa commented, looking at Dekton. "How is it he came here?"

“This apartment is owned by a single mother.” Dekton spoke. “She and her two children are next door. Telan was holding her children hostage, forcing her to be his courier and message taker. She is the one who arranged for the attack on you and Aihola.”

“Her... her children?” Aihola asked quickly.

“They are fine.” Dekton told them as they reached the door. “It appears someone besides us was also looking for Telan. They found him first.”

Tarifa and Aihola looked at him as they entered the apartment. They smell of piss and shit hit them first, and they turned their heads as their eyes adjusted to the dim light in the room and they saw Telan. His naked body was stretched out on the floor; his eyes open wide in death, his throat slit open. The slice reached from one side of his neck to the other, a large pool of blood on the floor beneath him.

Tarifa and Aihola had both seen death before many times, but it appeared as if Telan had taken a long time to die. His left arm and right leg were twisted at odd angles, the bones surely shattered, small bulges under his pants and shirt indicating they had burst through his skin. Aihola moved close to the body, squatting next to him, her amber eyes inspecting the scene, while Tarifa looked carefully around the room. Dekton merely watched them with approval. His King had been right about them; they were extremely intelligent and moved with a single purpose as if their minds were merged into a single entity. Tarifa was using her acute elf vision, enhanced by the wolf DNA in her body, to search the darkness, while Aihola used her elf and vampire senses to inspect the area around Telan’s body.

“No human did this.” Aihola spoke softly. “The strength it would take to shatter his bones like this only an elf, vampire or Werewolf possesses.”

“There does not appear to be any signs of forced entry.” Tarifa spoke turning to Dekton. “Who found the body?”

“The woman he had been using.” Dekton replied. “Her children were unharmed, locked into a closet.”

“Locked inside?” Tarifa asked. “That is odd... why would an assassin do that?”

“They wouldn’t...” Aihola spoke, rising back to her feet, “Unless they did not wish to harm the children.”

“An honorable assassin?” Tarifa asked looking at her. “Who would...?” Tarifa stopped and both she and Aihola suddenly became tense. She turned to Dekton. “Has anyone been in this apartment since the woman discovered the body?”

Dekton shook his head, sensing their apprehension. “All the exits have been covered from the moment we arrived.”

Nya Istel? Tarifa reached out with her mind, including both Aihola and Dekton.

A Drow did this. Aihola replied with hesitation. It smacks of our training. Incapacitate your opponent and then slit their throat.

Dekton let fly with all of his wolf senses, Could it be one of the Drow that follow you Little One? He asked.

No. Tari and Lynwe trained them well. They would not have done this without orders from me. Aihola answered.

They both sensed Dekton become a little tenser and they turned to look at him. What is it?

A strange scent, so faint I did not detect it before. It is not a scent I recognize, and it is not something... there! Dekton didn’t move a muscle as he felt the slightest brush of a breeze flash over his face. We are being watched from the landing above us. Aihola... your vampire hearing is far keener in enclosed spaces than mine. Reach out.

Aihola closed her eyes and did so, reaching out. She could detect Tarifa’s familiar heartbeat, like the purring of a cat, in tune exactly with Aihola’s own heart. Dekton’s heart beat with a slow steady rumble of a perfectly synchronized engine. There... a faint but steady heartbeat above them as he said. Not fearful... not anxious... but calm and cool.

Above us. Aihola told them, Pressed into the shadows. It is an elf heart, but it beats with a smooth rhythm. Whoever is there is not fearful, but curious.

Then perhaps it is time to make them fearful. They obviously do not know who it is they are watching. Dekton told them. “I will check the perimeter.” He spoke out loud now turning and exiting the apartment.

Tarifa moved up next to Aihola. “What do you think *Nya Istel*?” Tarifa asked in a normal voice. “Who would want to kill Telan more than you or I?”

She watched them tucked into the shadows as she was. She was beyond beautiful as the rumors had said. And the High Elf Queen called her My Light. That too had been truthful. They shared a relationship with each other. The large human male had entered with them, something about him strange in a way she had never seen from a human. He looked fearsome, but he was only a human, and she could easily dispose of him if need be. The two Queens she was not so sure of. They were alert and light footed by their stances, and they seemed to be searching the room for something. They could not see her she was sure, but what could they be looking for.

The rumors that had reached their home said this Drow Queen was stronger than normal, with extremely advanced fighting skills. She had heard of the attack against them and how the two of them had dispatched five would be assassins that the pig she had killed sent against them. That bespoke of exceptional fighting skills, fighting skills that a High Elf Queen should not have. And the rumor that they were lovers was confirmed for her when they took hands in a way that normal friends do not.

The Elders would be...

Perhaps you should learn more about your targets before attempting to spy on them. The male voice hissed at her from inside her mind.

Her head snapped around and her amber eyes went wide when she saw the glittering green eyes spattered with gold staring back at her from no more than three feet away. She saw the flash of long razor sharp white fangs and despite all her training and control, the Drow screamed.

Tarifa and Aihola wondered had wondered what Dekton looked like as a wolf, and the answer to that question came when they heard the scream of surprise and the low menacing growl just before the railing above them splintered and the large dark brown wolf came barreling over the edge, riding the body of the figure down the eight feet to the floor below.

Dekton landed nimbly, his paws touching lightly as he twisted his tail to balance himself, and he snapped around, his two hundred pounds of wolf muscle and sinew responding instantly. Dekton felt alive, as it had been some time since he had changed, and now everything was more alive to him. In a split second the scents of both Tarifa and Aihola seared into his mind, and his eyes fell upon them. They looked at him in surprise and shock, but he saw no fear, and that pleased him far more than he would ever tell them.

The Drow landed harder than him, the air rushing from her lungs as she crashed into the small table beside Telan’s body, the table shattering under her weight. She was a Drow Assassin however and trained to react instantly to anything. Her amber eyes snapped open immediately and she began to rise even as her body screamed in protest. She froze when she heard the low growl coming from next to her left ear. Slowly she turned her head and looked once more into the gold spattered green eyes of the brown wolf only inches from her neck. His muzzle displayed rows of teeth that would shred her instantly should she move another muscle, the rumbling of his breathing even and sure.

“I would not move if I were you.” Aihola’s voice spoke softly. She appeared to one side of the large wolf. “I have never seen him in this form before, and I don’t know if I can control him.”

Tarifa was entranced by Dekton’s wolf form. The armor he had worn in human form had stretched or shrank to fit his thickly muscled wolf body, but since he did not wear his helm, the thick hair on the back of his neck was free and with awestruck slowness, Tarifa lowered her hand to his neck, feeling the rich lush softness of his brown wolf hair. She felt a powerful tingle sweep through her for only a second and knew it was Dekton showering her with his desire. Her hand found Aihola’s in the tangle of his thick fur, their fingers entwining and they both could feel Dekton’s chest rumble in approval at their touch on him.

The Drow warrior moved her hand slightly but froze once more when the massive wolf growled savagely, and the barrel of the K12 centered on her nose, clutched in the hand Tarifa did not have gripping Dekton’s fur. The blade of the small knife pressed against her throat in the hand Aihola did not have on Dekton’s fur.

“That would be the most unintelligent thing you have ever done.” Aihola’s voice spoke in a firm deadly tone. “Even if you were to dodge my blade and Tarifa’s weapon, do you believe for a second that our love would allow you to take another breath without tearing your face from your body?”

The Drow looked at Aihola and the way she held one hand on the massive wolf beside her. That wolf had not taken those eyes from her, and they looked as they would rather eat her than talk with her.

“I... I am not your enemy.” The Drow spoke softly.

Aihola reached out and pushed back fully the hood she wore, exposing the short shimmering white hair of the Drow. “Are you so sure?”

Tarifa leaned forward, her K12 never moving more than a millimeter from where it was pointed at her nose. The Drow could smell the gunpowder from the barrel it was so close to her flesh. “Who are you?” Tarifa asked, her sapphire colored eyes blazing, now fully changed into sapphire ringed in black, the tips of her fangs fully exposed from beneath her lips. “And know that if you speak lies to us, Dekton here will peel the flesh from your bones with his teeth, and enjoy doing it.”

I would do no such thing! Dekton’s voice filled her thoughts.

Play along here Dekton. Tarifa answered.

“I... I was sent by the Drow Elders!” The young female spoke quickly, “To... to kill this insolent pig for... for attempting to kill you... my Queen.” She spoke the last part looking directly at Aihola.

“There are no more Drow Elders!” Aihola spat viciously. “They were butchered with all that remained of our people by the Alliance over a hundred years ago! The only remaining Drow are those who serve now, here in Eden!” Aihola dug the blade deeper against her throat and Dekton growled once more, placing his huge paw on the Drow’s chest as if making for her throat. “Try again assassin!”

“No!” The Drow gasped. “Two... two Elders survived the attack! They gathered several hundred of our people and went into hiding! We have... we have lived there since the attack that destroyed our people! Waiting.”

“Waiting for what?” Tarifa asked.

“Waiting for the return of our Queen,” The young female spoke, looking from Tarifa to Aihola.

There was a flash of soft white/blue light as Dekton shifted easily back to human form, watching the Drow’s eyes go wide in horror. “She speaks the truth.” He spoke. “There is no scent of a lie in her pores.”

Even back in human form, neither Aihola nor Tarifa made to remove their hands from Dekton’s neck and shoulder as he was squatting between them.

“By... by the gods!” The Drow gasped her eyes on Dekton. “What... what are you?”

Dekton smiled, his eyes now back to normal, “Something from your nightmares young Drow.” He spoke.

The elf soldier burst into the apartment, his finger pressed tightly to his ear. “Captain Dekton! We’re getting a report from Lynwe’s emergency beacon. It has been triggered.”

Dekton came to his feet quickly, “Little One?” He spoke looking at Aihola.

Aihola nodded. “You and Tarifa go! Quickly Dekton, I will be fine.”

“*Nya Istel* are you sure?” Tarifa asked.

Aihola nodded. “Leave a detachment here to clean this up.” She spoke. “Go my love! Lynwe would not have triggered her beacon without cause!”

Dekton nodded and looked at the elf. “Stay with her. Shoot first... ask questions later.” He spoke before taking Tarifa’s hand and running out of the building.

Selene looked up as the door to her apartment opened. Tears clouded her eyes, blood staining her lips, as she cradled Lynwe in her arms. Blood pooled lazily around them, both of them still very naked. Lynwe’s utility belt lay in the blood surrounding them, the twin puncture marks on her throat still pulsing blood out, oozing across her skin. Selene’s cobalt blue eyes saw Dekton enter first, his P190 leading his large body around the corner.

“Dekton!” Selene screamed. “Help me! Please help me!”

Dekton's eyes took in the scene immediately and went wide. Tarifa was next in the door, her K12 out and sweeping, but she stopped when she saw Dekton throw his P190 across the floor and go sliding across the blood slick tile to Lynwe's body.

"Selene!" He gasped.

"I... I don't know... I don't know what happen!" She cried out hugging Lynwe's body tightly. "I can't wake her up! And she won't stop bleeding! Help me! I can't lose her!"

Tarifa's eyes were wide in alarm and they grew even wider when she saw Selene's eyes, the blood on her lips and the tips of the vampire fangs extending from her lips. She brought the K12 up quickly.

"Dekton get back!" Tarifa screamed.

"No!" Dekton yelled. "Help me here!" He looked at her, "Quickly Tarifa!"

Tarifa didn't question him and moved to his side. "What... what is going on?"

Dekton looked at her, "I will explain later! I have... I have seen this before... in ... in my daughters." He turned away from her and looked at Lynwe, ignoring the fact that she was completely naked, her entire body exposed for his eyes to see. Her cock was limp and rested against her thigh. Even her dark skin was pale with blood loss. He pressed his fingers to her neck, searching for a pulse. "She's still alive." He said.

"She won't wake up!" Selene screamed. "Lynwe wake up please!"

Dekton reached out and took her hand. "Selene!" He yelled. Her head snapped around to look at him. "Take a deep breath Selene and listen to me! Remember what I told you this afternoon? Do you remember?"

Selene nodded quickly. "Yes... yes!"

"I meant every word Selene!" Dekton told her. "Trust me now! Only your salvia will seal the wound. You must lick the wound child."

Selene didn't hesitate and lowered her head to Lynwe's neck. Tarifa made to yank her off. "Dekton no!" She screamed. "She'll kill her!"

His arm stopped her. "I told you I would explain to you and I will! Trust me Tarifa!" He spoke.

Tarifa looked at him, eyes wide. "She... she is a vampire!"

Dekton nodded. "But she is not our enemy!" He spoke in reply. "And it was you and Aihola who made me see this. Gather some clothes for them both. Quickly."

Tarifa glanced at him once more before rising to her feet and going to the bedroom. Dekton turned back just as Selene lifted her head, her lips stained with fresh blood, but the puncture wounds on Lynwe's neck now sealed. He nodded. "Good." He spoke looking at Selene. "She will live Selene." His voice was soft and firm. "You will not lose her this night child. Take deep breaths, you must calm yourself."

Selene looked at him, gripping his arm tightly and forced herself to take lung filling breaths, exhaling loudly. She felt her fangs retract into her gums and Dekton saw her eyes return to normal.

"Good." Dekton spoke. "Good. We will take her to the clinic. She will be fine. I will carry her, and you will stay right next to Tarifa. Ok."

Selene looked up as Tarifa came back in with loose clothing and knelt next to her. "Put this on Selene." She said. She looked at Dekton as he spread the blanket over Lynwe's naked flesh. "We will protect you Selene." She finished, helping her to dress.

Tarifa and Aihola looked through the glass into the small room of the clinic. Lynwe was sleeping peacefully, the IV of blood dripping directly into her arm. Selene sat next to her in the chair, her red hair spread across Lynwe's sheet covered abdomen, her head resting on the side of the bed. They felt the tremor against their shields, the same tremor they felt whenever Dekton was close to them. They turned as he came up to them, his armor and uniform still covered in dried blood.

"Dekton... what is going on?" Tarifa asked him as they turned.

"Lynwe bit her this afternoon." Dekton explained. "They came to see me almost immediately afterwards. That is why she did not go to her final meetings."

"They were with you?" Aihola asked. "That is why you wouldn't answer us?"

Dekton nodded. "Once Lynwe took her blood, many of Selene's memories became hers. Among these memories were several times with some Alliance Minister named Deval. Do you know him?"

Tarifa and Aihola both nodded. "He is a senior Minister, second only in power to the Vampire Priestess." Aihola spoke.

"Well apparently he is also a vampire." Dekton spoke. "A Pureblood, which means he is the product of a union of two vampires."

"How... how can that be?" Tarifa asked. "I thought... I thought vampires were undead."

Dekton nodded. "The turned ones are. The Purebloods are something different. Warm blooded, able to have children, they can survive for longer periods without feeding."

"This Deval turned her?" Tarifa asked. "How could she not know?"

"The same way my daughters did not know of their vampire heritage until my wife and I told them. Then they took mates and discovered it in much the same way as Selene has. The difference is they knew what could happen and were prepared for it. Selene was not." He took a deep breath. "Purebloods have the ability to make their genes dormant for extended periods of time. The infected person will not even know they are a vampire until the moment it happens. Moments of extreme pleasure or stress will trigger the change, and the very first instinct they will have is to feed."

"But Selene... she has been under stress before." Tarifa spoke, "The rape on EDEN? Why didn't that force the change?"

"The drugs Graham used on her suppressed the change." Dekton answered. "The times with Deval only reinforced his control on her. When Graham bit her... it triggered the first stages of the change. When she and Lynwe were... when she and Lynwe were making love... the pleasure she was experiencing triggered the complete change. I told her this might happen and to be careful."

"But if she is a full vampire... how..." Aihola started.

"When you are turned by a Pureblood the strain grows weaker with each person turned." Dekton explained. "Based on what my wife told me... the first individual and perhaps even the second depending on the power of the vampire, the first one or two turned by a Pureblood will remain essentially human and while their tolerance for the sun will depend on the age of the person who bit them, the older a vampire is the more they become resistant to the sun, they would be able to call upon their vampire skills basically at will. It is really no different than Shifters, or Werewolves. Purebloods are the most powerful; it is why your relationship with the king granted you skills not normal to an elf Tarifa. It is why Anja and Dysea are as powerful as they now are, even in wolf form. The virus strains in the King's blood are that of Leonidas... one of the very first Purebloods, therefore far more powerful."

"So Selene is one of the first people this Deval has turned?" Tarifa asked.

Dekton nodded. "Yes... but he was stupid to leave her memories intact." He said. "Normally a Pureblood will erase the memories of how they turned a person. In Selene's case, Deval either didn't erase those memories because he thought he would always have her, or he was ignorant or just plain forgot. Her memories of him are very vivid, and based on what her morals and values are; she still retains her hatred of him."

"Lynwe discovered all this just by tasting her blood?" Tarifa asked.

"It is not the same as you and Aihola." Dekton spoke. "The more you explore that ability, the greater your connection will become. It is why... it is why you can not be one without the other now." He looked at them. "Selene was bitten by a Pureblood, making her blood more powerful, which then makes the connection almost instantaneous."

"Lynwe!" Aihola spoke. "Will she..."

Dekton nodded slowly. "Yes." He answered softly. "Once she wakes up, she will be a full fledged vampire, much the same as Selene. And like Selene, she will retain all the memories of what happened. She knew this when she left me this afternoon. She didn't care as long as Selene was hers and she was Selene's."

"Dekton how could you... why didn't you tell us this immediately?" Tarifa gasped.

"You and Aihola had already left when we finished." He replied. "When I tried to probe you and let you know, both of you were... you were otherwise engaged." He said with a sheepish grin.

Tarifa and Aihola blushed. "You... you knew that?" Aihola spoke.

"And felt it." He said with a small smile. "I taught you how to block yourselves from others, including me, but I underestimated the depth of your love for each other, and... and your feelings for me."

"What?" They gasped together.

“Our telepathic link will always be stronger because I was the one who initiated the connection between the two of you and myself.” Dekton told them. “You are able to block most of your thoughts from me, but in the grips of... the intensity of the passion you share for each other makes your shields weaker, and then it bleeds over to me.”

“So you felt... you felt our passion through our connection?” Aihola asked.

Dekton looked embarrassed and his eyes dropped to the floor. “Yes. By the time I was focused enough to attempt to contact you and explain to you what had happened, I was notified of Telan.”

“Dekton...” Tarifa began.

He looked at them. “My blood has not burned like this in over two centuries.” He said softly. “And it burns for both of you equally. We will need to decide how to deal with this before it gets much stronger.”

Tarifa and Aihola felt a flash of that desire for them before he clamped his psychic shields down firmly and took a deep breath. They did the same thing quickly, knowing this was not the place to discuss it.

“I placed the Drow who killed Telan in a holding cell for the moment.” Aihola spoke. “She would not reveal a whole lot of information, but I believe that is due to her reaction at seeing you in your wolf form. I will speak with her tomorrow at length.”

“The better question now is how do we deal with this?” Tarifa asked. “Do we continue with the plan? Graham is supposed to visit Selene tomorrow night.”

“I believe we leave that up to Lynwe and Selene.” Dekton replied. “Lynwe will be fine by the morning, and Selene needs to be with her.”

Tarifa looked at him. “You did not react in the way I would have expected you to react when you realized what Selene was.”

Dekton met her eyes. “No. Like my King I believe my time with the two of you is tempering my natural hatred for the vampires. That I desire you as much as I do Little Drow is the biggest sign of that.” He looked at them. “The hatred is still there, and it burns deep, but I’m beginning to see that not all those infected by those vile creatures are happy about it. That gives me hope.”

Aihola looked at him. “Hope for what?”

Dekton met her eyes. “Hope for the future!”

Lynwe’s eyes fluttered open slowly, lifting her arm to block the bright lights of the clinic room. The memories of the previous night came rushing back to her and she sat up quickly.

“Selene!” Her raspy voice called out.

Lynwe winced at the tug of pain in her arm and she turned to see the IV of blood connected to her. She reached forward to yank it out.

“No!” Selene’s voice echoed. She moved forward from the door quickly, carrying the small mug of tea. She had changed into a plain gray jumpsuit, her hair tied back. She set the tea on the small table and reached for Lynwe’s arm. “Leave it be.”

Lynwe reached for her head and pulled her down for a blistering kiss that Selene surrendered to without hesitation. Neither of them heard Tarifa and Aihola come into the room, Dekton right behind them. They watched as they parted from the kiss and Selene stroked her cheek.

“I... I almost killed you.” She spoke softly, small tears rolling down her cheeks.

“No... you...” Lynwe began but Dekton stepped up to the bed.

“Yes she did Lynwe.” He spoke firmly. “I told you both you would need to be mindful of your actions until the change in Selene took place fully. You ignored my warnings, and she bit you in your jugular. If not for the natural properties of her salvia, closing the wounds as much as they did, you would be dead. I told you to be careful. Selene was so panicked she forgot to coat the bite with her tongue and you continued to bleed until I arrived. A few more minutes and we would not have been able to revive you.”

Selene’s head dropped to Lynwe’s chest as she wept gently, Lynwe’s arm going around her protectively. “I’m so sorry.” Selene spoke her words muffled but clear enough.

“I... I don’t feel any different.” Lynwe said softly.

“And you won’t, until you call on those strengths.” Dekton spoke. “Your strength will be doubled, your stamina increased, most of your senses will be beyond what you are used too. You both have the blood of a

Pureblood vampire in you, and we don't know exactly how old this Deval is, so you will need to be careful over the next few weeks in discovering your new abilities."

Lynwe looked at Aihola and Tarifa. "Forgive... forgive me." She said. "I... I did not want to lose her."

Aihola took her hand. "What is done is done." She spoke. "Next time however, do let us know what is going through that crazy head of yours. When Tarifa first saw you she almost went into shock."

Tarifa came up next to Aihola and placed her hand on Lynwe's shoulder. "You must trust us Lynwe, both of you."

"This alters our plans doesn't it?" Lynwe said, feeling Selene's head come up as well.

"That depends on the two of you from what Dekton tells us." Aihola spoke.

Lynwe and Selene looked at him. "What do you mean?"

"I think the question of how you feel for one another is apparent." Dekton spoke, looking at them. "The question remains... are your feelings for each other deep enough to go through with the original plan without one or both of you becoming enraged and ripping Graham to pieces."

"This is not an easy decision Lynwe." Aihola said, "For either of you. We will keep this secret from all who need not know... but Martin will need to know. What you need to decide now is do you go through with the plan or not. We will support you in any decision you make. There is a transport waiting right now to take you to Dienekes's location where you can explore what you have... including your skills."

"And if we go... we lose any chance of getting the information Graham may or may not have in his putrid head." Selene spoke.

"We are not willing to make you do this Selene." Tarifa said. "The decision is yours and Lynwe's now."

"The... the King will be enraged." Lynwe said softly.

"We can handle Martin, and given what he knows and thinks of you and Tari and the Drow already, I doubt this will change his mind in the least." Aihola spoke.

Lynwe looked at Dekton, her eyes searching. He smiled at her. "You forget Lynwe... you have seen my thoughts and you know my mate was part vampire. That did not make me love her any less. I will tell the King."

"I'm tired of being used." Selene spoke her voice strong and determined. "I have Lynwe now, and nothing that vile excuse for a man does to me will matter as long as I have her."

Tarifa looked at Lynwe. "Will you be able to hold your rage at what you might see Lynwe?"

"If Selene can endure his disgusting touch for the good of us all, then I will stay my hand until the time is right." She spoke. "But when we determine what it is he is doing, his sick life is mine to end."

The finality in her words was very evident and everyone nodded without hesitation.

"We have much to do." Dekton spoke. "And I need to give you more instruction to better telepathically shield what you know and what has happened here."

Aihola nodded. "And we have a Drow to question my love." She spoke.

Lynwe looked at her. "A Drow? What has happened?"

"We found Telan last night." Tarifa spoke. "Regretfully someone took the pleasure of killing him away from us. But we did discover that there are other Drow that survived the Alliance purge. And that came from the Drow assassin that ended Telan's life."

Lynwe's amber eyes grew wide, "More... more of our people?" She gasped.

Aihola smiled. "If what she said is true... many more. I will keep you informed, but you and Selene have to concentrate on your task first."

Tarifa leaned over and kissed Lynwe softly on the lips in the manner of a deep abiding friendship, and then Aihola did the same, squeezing her hand as well. "We will meet tomorrow morning and determine what information we have gained. I promise you."

Dekton pulled over the chair as the two of them turned and left the room. "Let's begin with what I have already taught you." He spoke.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

EDEN

Vengal sat in his office on the main Eden airfield. He had long grown accustomed to the constant roar of the Raptors taking off and landing, and it filled him with pride at each surge of power the Raptor's represented. Tareif's office and command headquarters was on the far side of Eden so one attack did not kill them both. He had grown quite fond of the High Elf War Master, and over the last weeks he and Tareif had become fast friends, as had their wives. This was a non-training day for his troops, and the airfield was unusually quiet today. He looked out the window of his office while sipping the tea and plugged in the data pad to the desk monitor. He looked forward to these communications from Anuk each week, and he generally liked to listen to them alone at first. There were two this week, one from Anuk and the other from an unknown source Dekton did not know. He plugged in the one from the unknown source first and clicked on the monitor.

The face of the older ebony skinned woman came onto the screen and he sat forward in his chair. The background was similar to where Anuk usually sent her weekly messages from, but he had never seen this woman. Usually it was just Anuk, and sometimes Daniel would appear for a few moments to greet him in the message.

"Good day General, my name is Malaika, and I am Daniel's mother." Vengal's eyes grew very interested and he set his coffee aside. "First I would like to tell you there is nothing wrong with Anuk, and her message to you should have come with this one if I am correct. I... I wanted to introduce myself, my family... to you. My husband is a Spartan and messages like this bore him to no end." Vengal smiled at this news. "I wanted to thank you for the gift of your daughter to my son Vengal. There are many elves here in Sparta, but Anuk's beauty is second only to our three Queen's as far as I am concerned, but then again we would be biased would we not? She is a strong willed young woman, and she loves my son with all the fierceness of a pureblood wolf." Vengal thought he could detect the pride in the woman's voice.

"I understand you know what we are, and what Anuk now is due to Daniel's actions. That her blood burns for him so... well... it is an honor to all of my family. If you would allow me Vengal, I understand Anuk's birthing day is coming soon, the day you and your woman welcomed her into this world. It would be my honor if you and your mate would join us here in Sparta to celebrate this day... Anuk's family is now our family, and I would hope you feel the same. The circumstances of your daughter coming into my son's life are not spoken of here. Spartans consider what happen to Anuk to be the vilest of crimes one can commit. I know you probably wished to give her hand away in a large celebration and that was denied you and your mate. I hope my son's actions gave back a small portion of what was taken from not only Anuk but from you and your wife. Daniel worships the ground she walks upon Vengal. My husband is not easily impressed Vengal, and when we are alone together, there are times when he can not stop talking about your daughter. She has been going through much of the training that our own Spartan women receive and also that of Spartan Centurions, and she has impressed many very old and cranky people with her skills. She has grown more beautiful with each passing day, and many of our friends and family have commented on the love that is so evident in her eyes for my son. I will not keep your attention for long, but please accept my invitation to this special day for your daughter. It would be a surprise for her, as I have not told her I am contacting you. Allow me... my family to give you the day you had always hoped for Anuk. Dekton can relay your response back to me or our King at your convenience. Thank you and I hope to see you soon."

Vengal reached for the pad as a swell of pride coursed through him. What Daniel had done by saving Anuk's life and then taking her as his mate had been quite enough in Vengal's eyes and the eyes of his wife. They had never seen their daughter so animated and happy in their lives, and now to receive this message from Daniel Simpson's mother. These Spartans truly were amazing.

As Vengal prepared to respond to the message he looked up at the chime on his door. "Enter!" He barked rather gruffly, annoyed at the disturbance. That quickly went away when the door slid open to reveal Aihola and another Drow elf that he did not recognize, as well as three Dragoons elves handpicked by Dekton that escorted Aihola or Tarifa when they split apart to do separate things.

"Queen Aihola." Vengal spoke getting to his feet.

Aihola stepped into the office and held up her hand quickly. "Please Vengal... do not get up. I believe you and Tari have grown far too close for such formality to extend to his younger sister. He thinks very highly of you."

Vengal smiled and moved around the desk, “And I of him. Please... come in.” He spoke moving some data pads from the chairs in his office so that they could sit down.

“We will remain out here Milady.” The Dragoon spoke to Aihola.

“Thank you Covar, we shouldn’t be too long.” Aihola replied. She touched the panel and the door slid closed. Aihola turned back to Vengal and stepped up to him to embrace him, which he returned. She was right that he and Tari had developed a friendship since their mission with Daniel to save Tareif’s sons, and they had maintained it over the weeks. He had received three transmissions from Tari explaining the training he was undergoing, and how some of the tactics might be well suited for the armies of Eden.

“What brings you here Aihola?” Vengal asked. “Would you like some tea?”

“That would be wonderful.” Aihola spoke. “I’m sure by now you have heard of Telan’s death.”

Vengal moved to the small counter and nodded as he poured two mugs of tea. “I won’t be crying over his demise.” Vengal spoke. “I only wish I could shake the hand of the one who killed him.”

Aihola laughed lightly and swept her hand to the second Drow that Vengal did not recognize.

“General... allow me to introduce Nayeca, Telan’s killer.”

Vengal looked at the female and his eyes went wide. He finished pouring the tea and moved over to them, handing one to Aihola as he looked at the Drow assassin. He held out his hand. “I’m proud to meet you Nayeca. That was an excellent piece of work with Telan, simply excellent!”

The Drow looked at him stunned by his informal speech with Aihola, and his complete acceptance of who she was. She took his hand slowly. “I... thank you... I think.” Nayeca replied.

Aihola chuckled. “Nayeca has only been among us for two days now, and she is still trying to grow accustomed to the acceptance our people receive from everyone.”

Vengal nodded. “It is an acceptance long overdue in my opinion.” Vengal spoke handing her the tea. “Please sit down. What brings you out here from the center of our city?”

Aihola took the chair directly across from Vengal and Nayeca took the second one after a nod from Aihola. “We have a dilemma, and Tarifa suggested I bring it to you.”

Vengal perched on the side of his desk and looked at her. “Please... go on.”

“Nayeca has told me of the city she comes from.” Aihola’s voice was excited as she spoke, “A city of Drow; thousands of them.”

Vengal’s face and eyes showed his surprise. “This is true?” He asked looking at Nayeca.

Nayeca nodded slowly after looking at Aihola. “Not all of our people were butchered by the Alliance.” She said. “Several hundred were able to escape and find a place of refuge. Since that time our city has grown to over six thousand.”

Vengal looked at Aihola and smiled. “I’m sure that makes your heart sing Aihola.” He said. “I know Tari will be overjoyed as well.”

“It does.” She told him with a smile. “That is actually why we are here.”

“What can I do for you?” Vengal asked. “You are Tari’s sister and the Drow Queen. I am at your service.”

“Tarifa suggested that I come to you to develop a plan to bring the Drow here.” Aihola told him. “The distance is great and we would have to cross Alliance territory undetected with six thousand people. What I need to know is if it can be done.”

“Why not just send all of our transports?” Vengal spoke. “Surely they can be in and out before the Alliance even knows we were there.”

Aihola shook her head. “No one knows of this city.” Aihola told him. “It is well hidden in the mountains of what used to be Manitoba in the country of Canada. In order to reach it, we would have to cross Alliance territory, and we don’t want to reveal the location unless we might need to return to it in the future. Nayeca says it is massive and easily defensible and it would make an ideal position to fall back too if we ever needed too.”

Vengal looked at her. “May I ask why she did not suggest you talk with her father? Tareif is a brilliant military mind.”

Aihola nodded. “Yes he is, but you are more experienced with small unit operations than he is. Tareif is used to commanding much larger size forces than the one we would need to go into this area with. Your Wood Elf Rangers have been to this area before have they not?”

Vengal nodded after a moment. “On hunting parties when our stores for food were low, yes. It is wild and untamed.”

“We would need to keep one of you here in Eden, and Tareif is the logical one due to his experience with control of larger forces. I will be going with you, as will Nayeca and Dekton. He is already putting together a force of Dragoons to guard Tarifa while we are away. It was Tarifa who believes you would be better suited to this mission, as do I.”

“What does the King say Aihola?” Vengal asked her. “A military mission of this sort; one that crosses Alliance territory will need to be approved by him. It is how the three of you decided to establish things if I’m not mistaken.”

Aihola nodded. “Martin has already approved the mission. Tarifa told him she wanted you to plan and lead the operation and he didn’t hesitate. You will be going to Sparta to celebrate Anuk’s birthday soon will you not?”

Vengal looked at her surprised. “You know of that? I only received the invitation an hour ago from Daniel Simpson’s mother.”

“Danny’s mother mentioned it to Martin.” Aihola told him with a smile. “You forget Vengal, Tarifa and I are telepathic now, and if need be Martin can reach us even from Sparta.”

Vengal’s eyes went wide, “Truly? He has grown that powerful?”

Aihola nodded. “It really is amazing.” She spoke softly. “Even with the training Dekton gives us, I feel... I feel both Tarifa and I are still children in that regard.”

“Well if your skill with that improves as well as the rest of your skills, I have no worries you will be an expert in no time.” Vengal told her. He sat back in his chair and looked at Nayeca. “I will need Nayeca’s help.” He spoke.

“I will provide you as much information as I am able.” Nayeca spoke quickly. “I’ve been away from our city for several months but nothing should have changed drastically.”

Vengal looked at Aihola. “How many do we take?” He asked.

“To escort and provide security to that many men, women and children?” Aihola asked. “That is why I have come to you.”

“Anuk’s celebration is next week.” He spoke thoughtfully, his eyes looking out the window briefly. “I... we will put a plan together and bring it to Sparta with us to have Martin review it. His experience with small unit operations is far superior to mine, and I would like his input.”

Aihola nodded and got to her feet. “Then with your permission, I will leave Nayeca in your capable hands. I have already made arrangements for her to have quarters here on the airfield, as she does not prefer the confines of the city center.” She told him.

Nayeca stood as well and looked at her. “My... My Queen... you will not have me guarded?”

Aihola looked at her. “Do I need to?” She asked with a smile. “Nayeca... you are exceptionally skilled child, but you have quite a way to go before being able to pose a challenge to me or Tarifa individually. I also wish you to see that Eden is not what you are used to, and you will find acceptance here, without question; as will all of our people.”

Nayeca bowed her head slowly as Aihola turned and left the office. She turned back to Vengal. “I... I did not picture her as arrogant.” She spoke softly.

“You think what she just told you is arrogance?” Vengal asked with a smile.

“Isn’t it?”

“She escaped from an Alliance prison and lived on the run as an Assassin and mercenary for the better part of two years Nayeca.” Vengal told her as he got to his feet and went to the counter to freshen his mug of tea. He motioned her over and added more to her mug as well. “She survived on her skill and wits alone. You know what the Alliance did to her and those they held captive for so long?”

Nayeca nodded. “We heard stories of this when we went to trade among the other towns and villages in the mountains of Manitoba. They... they turned them into these... these creatures that drink blood.”

Vengal shook his head. “That is not entirely true. You have no doubt discovered that these creatures, these vampires now exist?”

“I’ve heard her speaking of them with the High Elf Queen.” Nayeca spoke. “And that... that strange man that is always with them. He watches me like I am prey! He is... he is a...”

“A *Ngauro*.” Vengal said with a smile. “Yes I know, as is our King.” He saw her eyes go wide.

“The intricacies of how this came to be are beyond me, and after what I have seen and experienced it does not matter to me. You know who I am yes?” Vengal asked.

“There are few who do not know who you are General.” Nayeca spoke. “Even my people speak your name with respect and honor because of what you have accomplished and your fighting skill.”

“Well... I will tell you something now.” Vengal said as he moved back to the chair and sat down. He watched as she joined him, intent on his words. “The High King could erase me from existence in less time it took for you to blink. His skills are far beyond what I have obtained in all my years, beyond Tareif’s skills and beyond even those of Dekton, the man who guards your Queen. The Alliance tried to breed vampires in their infernal laboratories, and instead what they got were Aihola, her brother and the others of your race. They are half elf half vampire, with all their strengths and none of their weaknesses. Aihola doesn’t drink blood, and her bite can not turn you. All of them find the prospect of tasting blood repulsive. I watched her refuse to do this, even though she was mortally wounded and it would have saved her life. It wasn’t until the King told her who she was that she took the blood of the one person she loves more than life itself.”

“You speak of the High Elf Queen Tarifa?” Nayeca asked.

Vengal nodded. “Your people’s customs and traditions made you what you were as a people, and you should remember them and honor many of those customs. However Aihola and Tari knew that for the Drow to survive, to prosper, many of your customs had to be rethought. When she found love in the arms of another woman... her decision was made.”

Nayeca nodded. “Would it surprise you to know that that custom is not one we follow anymore?” She said. “We too have changed.”

Vengal shook his head. “It wouldn’t surprise me in the least. I always respected your people and what they accomplished.” He smiled. “As I was saying... your Queen and Tarifa have fought and trained by the King’s side for nearly a year. She does not boast when she speaks. Her vampire genes combined with her own skills and those she has learned from Martin our King make both her and Tarifa exceptionally deadly individually and infinitely more so when together.” Vengal smiled. “There is not an elf or human in the confines of this city that could defeat either Aihola or Tarifa in single combat. That is not a boast... that is a fact.” He spoke. “And for those fool enough to attack them in numbers, well... they have someone trained to kill twenty times himself before he falls protecting them. And you yourself have heard the results of the attack against them recently?”

Nayeca nodded. “I... I thought it only to be rumors and such started by others.”

Vengal smiled as he got to his feet. “It is no rumor that much I assure you. There is not an arrogant bone in her body, or in Tarifa. They will deny it, but I would not hesitate to say they are the two deadliest fighters within our ranks. She is correct to say that against either her or Tarifa, you are but a child, even for all your skill. Do not take it as arrogance, or even as a criticism. She is a Drow just as you, and she knows what you are capable of. Take it as the compliment it was meant to be. Come with me child. The Command Center’s security system caught all of it on video. You have a right to know what your Queen is capable of. Would you like to see her in action?”

Nayeca felt a smile split her face, “Very much so.” She said.

Vengal went to the door and held out his arm for her to follow him. “Right this way.” He spoke.

SPARTA

Martin stood along the wall of the landing bay bent over at the waist as he unloaded the last of his breakfast onto the pavement. He clutched the flight helmet in his hand, his skin prickly and two shades whiter than normal. Endith and Tina were walking over towards him with huge smiles plastered across their faces, Dysea and Aricia walking next to them with equally large smiles. They stopped a few feet away and Tina propped her helmet on her hip.

“I thought you were a big bad Navy SEAL Skipper.” She drawled. “Can’t you take a few loop da loops?”

Martin looked at her as he stood up straighter and wiped his mouth. “Loop da loops I can handle. The full nelson twist at ten Gs was a little much!”

Aricia stepped up to him and rubbed his stomach. “Do I need to tell Anja to prescribe a lighter breakfast my love?” She asked with a huge grin, barely able to contain her laughter.

Martin looked at her with a scowl. “C’mere... let me lay a lip locker on you!” He spoke reaching out to grab her.

“No!” Aricia screamed scooting out of reach of his arms, but her laughter filling the landing bay.

Martin turned to Endith and Tina. “You learned to fly that in six weeks?” He asked stunned.

Endith’s smile was brilliant. “*That* is a X1A-SPAT, a Spartan Attack Transport.” She announced proudly. “And once I read the manual it was a simple matter of adjusting the control modulations for the two different configurations, and then taking it out.”

Martin shook his head. “Could you say that in English please?”

Dysea laughed this time. “She means she altered the positions of the controls for the two different types of aircraft.”

Martin looked at Dysea. “Ok... sure. How do you know that?” He said shaking his head.

“I asked *Nauta Melme*,” Dysea answered with a smile, “While you were throwing up.”

“Ha Ha very funny,” He spoke. He turned to look at Endith and Tina. “You named the damn thing?”

“Of course we named it!” Tina barked with a smile. “Ben says you should always name what you’re flying. He would be very unhappy if we didn’t.”

“That’s the smaller of the two ships.” Endith explained excitedly. “There are nineteen of them, and three more of the larger ones that we arrived on. This baby can carry three times the troops of the Raptor, is faster, has a tighter turning radius and has six kinetic energy cannons linked to the pilot’s helmet in the nose.”

“Kinetic energy who,” Martin asked.

Tina stepped up to him, her eyes looking around before turning back to him. “Skipper this thing is powered by a Cold Fusion Reactor Core.”

“What is this Cold Fusion Core?” Aricia asked, suddenly very interested.

Tina looked at her. “It was an alternate power source that the US government was experimenting with in 2068.” She answered. “To the best of my knowledge it hadn’t even gotten off the blueprint paper when the comet came. I’m a better EO than a pilot Skipper, and I pride myself on knowing the latest technology... but this thing’s power source is well beyond what we were capable of back then, not to mention today. When we asked the other pilots and engineers, the only thing they could tell us was that the ships just appeared one day, and someone knew how to fly them.”

Theron’s words a few days ago came back to Martin when Tina said that. “You’re sure that is what they said?” He asked.

Endith nodded. “We asked them at least three different times. We received the same answer every time.” She replied.

“One more thing Skipper... these babies are atmospheric ready.” Tina said.

Martin looked at her. “Meaning they can fly in space too?”

Tina nodded, “Inertia Dampers, navigational shields and thrusters. They’ll fly just as well if not better than the Raptors in space, and a whole hell of a lot faster.”

“How much faster?” Martin asked.

Tina shrugged. “If I had to guess... based on the design and specs and the fusion core power source... a trip to the moon would take no more than an hour.”

Martin’s eyes widened. “One hour?” he gasped. “Is that even possible?”

Endith nodded. “It’s not only possible, but likely.”

“I’ve never seen of some of the stuff on these SPATs Skipper. They make our Raptors almost like toys in comparison.” Tina spoke. “The only reason we haven’t come to you sooner is the fact that none of the Spartan pilots do either. They learn almost as fast as Endith though, and even the transport pilots are cutting time in the SPATs. They think she is a god for learning in two weeks what it took them two years. You give us another three weeks, and we’ll be able to light up the sky with these puppies.”

“I’m more interested in finding out where they came from.” Martin spoke softly. “Ships with this kind of technology don’t just appear out of thin air.”

“Well someone obviously built them.” Tina said with a smile. “And I for one would like to meet them and see what other toys they got? Ben is going to love them.”

“Could it be a different clan of humans somehow *Nauta Melme*?” Dysea asked looking at him. “A clan we haven’t seen yet?”

Martin shook his head. “It’s certainly possible. Aihola and Tarifa only just discovered that there is an entire city of Drow that survived the purge. But where would they hide this type of equipment. And why leave it with the Spartans?” Martin looked at Aricia. “Little Wolf have you heard of anything strange happening?”

Aricia shook her head. “I would not have heard of anything personally, but until you came into my life I was not privy to such information. I never heard Andreus speak of such things though, and he would always share things with me.”

He turned back to Tina and Endith. “Keep this information under your hats.” He told them. “I don’t want stories of strange things moving about the city. And tell the other pilots that is an order.”

Tina nodded. “No problem.” She replied with a grin. “All Endith has to do is smile at them and they fall over each other. They all want to get into her pants.”

Endith’s face turned red as she blushed, the color of her cheeks nearly matching her hair. “Stop it Tina.” She said embarrassed. “I only have eyes for you and Benjamin, you know that.”

Tina smiled, wrapping her arm around Endith’s waist. “I know that lover... but they don’t!” She laughed. “It’s hysterical to see sometimes.”

Martin laughed and shook his head. “I’m going to have a meeting of everyone from Eden in two days. Bring whatever you need to the villa at that time. You are the third person that has seen something odd while we’ve been here, and I’m beginning to think it ain’t coincidence anymore.”

Tina nodded. “Will do Skipper.”

Martin tossed her the helmet. “Next time... can we avoid the full nelson?” He asked.

“What... and miss seeing you blowing chunks? No frigging way!” Tina spoke as she laughed and took Endith’s hand.

Dysea and Aricia moved closer to him. “What are you thinking *Nauta Melme*?” Dysea asked.

Martin shrugged. “That’s just it. I don’t know what to think.”

“Are these things... are they dangerous?” Aricia asked.

Martin shook his head. “So far... with the exception of what I saw... it’s been related to medicine and these aircraft. The way Theron spoke I’m guessing the thing in the Senate Building is some sort of power source.”

“In the Senate building,” Aricia asked, reaching out and probing his mind, quickly finding what he was talking about. Her face crinkled in confusion. “I have been in the Senate Building several times and I have never seen this.”

Dysea saw too what Martin was referring to and shook her head. “I have never seen anything like it either.”

“Me neither... and after what we had on EDEN I thought I’d seen it all. We supposedly had the most advanced equipment anywhere in the world.” Martin looked at them. “Theron told me this thing... he told me it was my final test to become King. He also told me four others from the line of Leonidas have tried to activate it, and they all failed and were killed.”

“You are joking?” Aricia stated in disbelief. “I have never heard of a descendant of the line of Leonidas in Sparta except you my love, certainly none that were killed.”

“So Dymas has never been back to Sparta?” Martin asked.

“No... he has been back, but he never brought anyone with him.” Aricia answered.

“Strange don’t you think?” Martin said.

“Very strange yes,” Dysea spoke.

Martin took their hands and led them toward the exit where Andreus had just come through. “We’ll figure it out.” He spoke confidently. “*Melda Min* you have another tour with the Minister of Education, and Little Wolf and I are going into the market to grab some new clothes since my Queens do not approve of my wardrobe.”

“What wardrobe?” Dysea teased him as they headed for the door. “If you aren’t wearing a uniform, you are naked.”

“And you don’t like it when I’m naked?” Martin asked leaning over to kiss her.

Dysea smiled and pushed him away gently. “I love it when you are naked... we all do. But we do occasionally have people over to our home *Nauta Melme*. You can’t run around naked all the time.”

“Spoil sport.” He spoke.

“Little Wolf,” Dysea said. “Will you do something with him? Get him something that makes him look presentable.”

Aricia laughed. “Don’t worry. I know exactly what you and I like on him, and Anja has already sent me images of what she thinks he would look good in.” Aricia took his arm as they reached the door. “I will make certain he is properly clothed.”

“Our contacts were correct.” The man spoke to the older figure as they sat at the small table of the outdoor café. “He is here with her, across the street at the clothing store.”

Autolycus turned slowly and let his eyes settle on Martin’s tall frame as Aricia placed a shirt in front of him, holding it out across his broad shoulders and measuring it. He watched Martin make a face and then Aricia broke into laughter as she turned to another rack of clothes.

Autolycus was nearly two thousand years old and had been a member of the Spartan Senate for the last fifteen hundred years. He had been instrumental in shaping much of what Sparta now was, and he was very close to finally achieving what he sought most, and that was the abolishing of the law allowing only someone of the line of Leonidas to be King. Once he had that law changed, then he could push to have the Eurypontid line restored and his ascension to the Kingship of Sparta would be relatively simple. Many considered him to be pompous and arrogant, though he considered himself to be forward thinking. Having the people of Sparta waiting for a King that might never come was in his opinion foolish. The Alliance and their vampire hordes grew stronger and pressed in all around Sparta, while his people grew stagnant.

Autolycus knew that his son Midlan abused the power that his status gave him, often reverting to coercion and violence to get his way, and while Autolycus used these tactics as well, he was not open about it. While he tolerated it from his son, Autolycus had no intention of allowing Midlan to continue his antics once he was King. His obsession with Aricia was only the latest of his annoying temperaments, and Autolycus was becoming more and more frustrated with his son.

This was the young Shifter from North America that had been seen within the halls of the Senate building with Theron. There were many rumors floating through the city in regards to this young man. Autolycus himself had seen him several times, studying intently the scrolls in the ancient library, as well as coming from the Chief Mage’s School.

“What information have you been able to obtain?” Autolycus asked as he watched them.

“The old Royal villa where he is staying is heavily guarded. The Centurions are not in regular uniforms, and they are staying right on the estate. The three females go no where without a Centurion in civilian clothes with them, to include Aricia.” The man answered.

“What about the other two females?” Autolycus asked.

“The flame haired one is called Anja. She spends much of her days at the main hospital.” The man replied. “The she-elf is less predictable in her time spent, but she has been studying our educational systems for the most part.”

“And she is the one who assaulted my son’s companions?” Autolycus asked.

The man nodded. “They attempted to grab her at Midlan’s orders, and she defended herself.”

“Indeed...” Autolycus spoke. “She tossed one fully trained Spartan across a table, pinned another to the table with a knife hidden on her thigh, and then placed another knife to my son’s throat.”

“That is what the accounts say yes.”

“What about the villa?” Autolycus asked.

The man shook his head. “There are psychic dampeners ringing the perimeter; Class Nine dampeners, at least twenty of them, possibly more.”

Autolycus looked at him now. “Class Nine?” He asked. “Are you certain?”

The man nodded. “My contacts are positive. Is this important?”

“Class Nine Psychic Dampeners are only used to contain or block the most powerful Tier Six telepaths.” Autolycus spoke. “Twenty of them would render any type of psychic intrusion impossible. It would also block any attempt to scan the villa. That is very odd.” He spoke turning back to look at Martin and Aricia. “What else?”

“The villa’s workers will not be of any use.” The man spoke. “All of them are completely loyal to the line of Leonidas. Two of my contacts believe that the workers are part of The Watchers.”

“Ah yes... the mythical group of men and women who wait for the coming of the descendant of Leonidas.” Autolycus spoke, “Something that will never happen if I have my way, regardless if he exists or not. We do not need a war mongering fool in power again. We need to make peace with the vampires, not war.”

Autolycus watched Martin carefully, reaching out with his own psychic ability. He was one of the twenty-two Tier Six telepaths in Sparta, having been trained by the Chief Mage before Thr’won took that duty. Her appointment had not pleased him in the least, as no elf had ever risen to such a position before her. No non-Pureblood had ever held such a position before, and it had angered many of the older men and women. He kept his probe mingled in with the surface thoughts of the hundreds of people who were shopping in the stores and on the streets as he reached out to touch Martin’s mind.

He let the tendril of his mind wrap around dozens of others as he drew closer to Martin and Aricia, always hiding in the background of their surface thoughts. He closed his eyes as he detected no one higher than a Tier Two telepath with the exception of the two Spartans that stood nearby in civilian clothes. He easily avoided their Tier Four skills, while altering the perception of his own tendril of telepathic power. He moved closer to Martin and Aricia, shaking his head at how easy it was. This foreigner was nothing to be worried about, as he only had...

Autolycus detected the shimmer just under Martin’s surface thoughts and he reached for it slowly, winding his way through the mass of his outer thoughts, laughing with the three women, an older woman cooking for him, all very normal and basic surface thoughts.

Autolycus’s eyes sprang open. “What’s this?” He spoke softly. He worked the tendril of his power closer and then he felt it. It was a subconscious psychic shield, erected around Martin’s mind and using the surface thoughts as cover. It was the same for Aricia, her surface thoughts also providing expert camouflage for the subconscious barrier. Only a skilled telepath like himself would have detected it at all. He gently probed the subconscious barrier, skirting around the edges of the shield mingled among the upper thoughts of the hundreds of other tendrils. The barrier was black and quite seamless, and it was the most powerful subconscious barrier he had ever seen in all his years. He mixed in with the other tendrils of thoughts and simply observed the barrier. It was like staring at an endless black void, totally empty of everything. He realized now they surface thoughts they were radiating were a very advanced form of camouflage, to mask the barrier around their minds. There was something very intimidating about this black wall, and he pulled his thoughts back further to avoid detection.

“This foreign Alpha is not who they claim he is.” Autolycus spoke finally.

The man looked at him. “Sir, are you sure?”

Autolycus nodded. “Oh yes... very sure.”

“None of the reports we have indicate anything special about him sir.” The man spoke. “May I ask what leads you to believe this?”

“He has a psychic barrier protecting his mind, as does Aricia.” Autolycus spoke softly. “A subconscious telepathic shield that as far as I can tell appears impervious to intrusion.”

“This is significant?” The man asked.

“Very.” Autolycus replied. “It means he is far more powerful than the aura he projects outward suggests, as is Aricia. And if I miss my guess the other two females he is mated with are also projecting limited auras so as not to draw attention to them.” Autolycus shook his head. “No... this is no mere foreign Alpha... he is much more, regardless of what your reports and contacts say.”

“What are your instructions?” The man asked.

“I will need to make some inquiries before I have instructions for you.” Autolycus spoke. “I will be able to reach you as normal?”

“Of course, sir. I have a dedicated frequency.”

Autolycus got to his feet, "Very well. I will contact you in three days. Until that time... continue to monitor what they do."

"As you wish sir."

Autolycus nodded and moved away from the table quickly.

EDEN

"He was planting directives to spy on the new Elder Council, as well as to map out certain portions of the command center here." Lynwe spoke. She sat next to Selene, at the conference table, Selene's hand clasped tightly within her own. Tarifa, Admiral Wallace, Dekton and Aihola completed the six people in the room.

"So he knows who she is?" Tarifa asked.

Selene nodded. "It would appear Marcus had an intense hatred for me that I was not aware of." She replied. She looked calm and composed, even though two nights ago Graham had come to her apartment and grunted and groaned for three hours while he raped her, before finally biting her and leaving within minutes. Selene had never thought he would stop rutting like a pig and leave her, and it took everything she had to keep from vomiting all over him. Within minutes of Graham leaving her apartment Lynwe had been there, embracing her within her arms and soothing her. She also had bitten Selene, taking just enough blood to counteract the influence of Graham. Then she proceeded to make Selene come long and hard to expel Graham's foul essence from her body. Then it was a long hot bath and nine solid hours of sleep within Lynwe's protective embrace before rising. She had eaten two steaks then to regain her lost strength, and then Lynwe had made love to her for four breathtaking hours, making her scream out in pleasure the entire time. She had taken Lynwe's blood during their last time, careful not to bite her thick jugular vein and only take enough blood to make them both feel the burning pleasure as it swept through them. And then it was back to bed for another long stretch.

Now they sat in the conference room, and Selene felt better than she had in decades, and while she knew much of it was due to her now very active vampire genes, the rest was due to Lynwe's love and care for her.

"Marcus suspected I was still alive, and once I gave Martin the information which allowed him to target the two sites for the suitcase nuclear weapons, then Marcus knew I was alive. Graham was sent here specifically to find me by the Vampire Priestess. He thought it was an added bonus when he discovered I was the Chief Secretary of Eden."

Tarifa sat back in her chair. "Was he able to learn anything from you Selene?" She asked, "From your blood?"

Selene shook her head quickly. "I don't think so." She replied. "Nothing more than was not public knowledge already. I've already directed my office to make adjustments where necessary and complete changes if needed. Thankfully you have left me out of the military aspects of whatever it is you are doing."

"Selene... I... we are sorry about that." Aihola spoke.

"By the gods don't be!" She exclaimed looking at Aihola. "If I had been privy to that he would know whatever we are doing. I could not live with that on my shoulders."

"Everything went as planned then Lynwe?" Tarifa asked.

"The amount of time for Selene to recover will depend on how much blood that pig takes. The more he takes... the more I need to take to counteract his influence. Now that... now that I am a full vampire..."

Selene choked up at that, drawing Lynwe's attention to her. "I am so very sorry for that Lynwe." She said softly, tears forming in her eyes.

Lynwe brought Selene's hand up in hers and planted a soft kiss on her knuckles. "We talked of this already my love." She said in reply, her words warm and full of emotion. "It was meant to be... and I do not regret it in any way."

Selene took a deep breath and nodded looking at this Drow woman who had stolen her heart and repaired her soul. "You're right." She said.

Lynwe turned back to Tarifa. "She can make a report the next day, but she will be drained and will need rest and food to replace what she loses each time. I will make the report if that is agreeable to you my Queen?"

"Of course Lynwe," Tarifa answered without hesitation. "Whatever time she needs to recover her strength fully will not be an issue, I swear it to you."

“Deval appears to be older than we first thought because Lynwe’s and my tolerance for the sunlight is considerably more than we guessed it would be.” Selene spoke again, having regained her composure. It did not go unnoticed that she held tightly to Lynwe’s hand. “Though I would prefer to wait until this thing with Graham is complete before we fully test it, we are both confident that we can withstand the direct sun for at least several hours.”

Aihola looked at Dekton. “How long will this vile arrangement need to go on Dekton?” She asked.

“I have spoken with the King and he is sending one of the Chief Mage’s Tier Six telepathic apprentices to Eden. He should be here tomorrow. The young man volunteered, as he has studied vampire physiology for a number of years. He will assist Lynwe and Selene in building their telepathic connection enough that Selene can tap into Graham’s thoughts directly while he is... less aware.”

“You mean while he is raping her?” Wallace spoke, the anger in his voice evident.

“I think we all are very aware of the Spartan view of rape.” Tarifa spoke quickly, saving Dekton from snapping at Wallace. “Dekton despises it just as much as you Admiral.”

Wallace sighed. “I know. I just feel this is my fault to begin with. I allowed it to happen on EDEN” He spoke.

Selene leaned forward in her chair. “You did not allow this to happen!” She spoke, her voice firm and confident. “Admiral... you kept your word to me and rescued my family. I initially may have blamed you, but I have come to realize that you were just as duped by Graham and Marcus and Deval as I was. You must not do this. Lynwe and I have decided to do this for the good of Eden and all her people. I have found the strength and the love to do this Admiral... you must let the guilt go now.”

“Dekton?” Aihola said.

“Chief Mage Thr’won feels that with the proper skills and limited training Selene could attempt to tap into Graham’s thoughts within three weeks. If her first attempt is successful, then on the next attempt she can retrieve all she can while Lynwe waits outside her apartment. With Lynwe helping her own abilities, allowing her to draw on her considerable will, they should be able to get what we need from him.” Dekton replied.

Selene nodded. “Four more times.” She said looking at Lynwe. “I can do this my love.”

“Then we will do it together.” Lynwe answered.

“Then what do we do with Graham?” Wallace asked.

Tarifa’s voice was filled with barely concealed rage. “Then Lynwe can do with him...”

“...what she wishes.” Aihola finished.

“There is something else we need to consider.” Dekton spoke. They all turned to him. “Lynwe and Selene are now fully vampires. While the pure blood genes in their systems will allow them to go much longer periods without feeding on real blood... they will need to do this. They can still eat normal food and take nourishment from that... but they will need blood to fully sustain them.” He explained.

“How often?” Tarifa asked.

“My mate once told me that a pure blooded vampire could go nearly two months before needing to feed.” Dekton said. “I do not know how long it would be for Lynwe and Selene because the genes have been diluted. The King has already said he would donate his own blood for this, but unfortunately the blood of a Pureblood wolf will not suffice for these purposes. Therefore I can not donate either, or I would be first in line. Queen Anja is already working on cloning normal blood for your use, but it will be several weeks before she is able to complete this.”

“I will.” Tarifa spoke without hesitation.

“As will I,” Aihola echoed right after her.

Dekton shook his head. *I thought of that.* He told them within their mind link. *I would recommend you donate quickly.*

Why Dekton? Tarifa asked.

Once I claim both of you, my blood will cancel out any nutrients they might gather from yours.

Tarifa and Aihola looked at him. *That’s quite a large presumption on your part Spartan.* Aihola spoke.

What makes you think we will allow you to claim us? Tarifa asked sternly.

Dekton’s face changed quickly and he blinked. *Forgive... forgive me.* He stammered. *Perhaps... perhaps I was mistaken. I will... I will speak no more of it.*

Tarifa and Aihola were surprised when that part of Dekton's mind snapped shut like a steel trap, and suddenly the warmth and feelings he had been projecting and allowing to caress them for the last two days was gone. This caused both of them to flinch almost imperceptibly, for both of them had come to relish those sensations. When he had first touched them with his aura and they felt his desire for them it had been wonderful to say the least. They basked in the feelings he projected to them, letting it swarm around them. Last night they had decided to play with Dekton a little. They wanted to tease him and make him desire them even more. It appeared they had gone too far.

"I will ask my family." Selene spoke softly, causing them to turn back to her. "They have a right to know what I have become. What we have become." She said squeezing Lynwe's hand. "They won't turn us away."

Dekton was silent, not knowing what to say. He had thought that Tarifa and Aihola had wanted him as much as he wanted them. He could smell the desire for him on both of them the other night yet now their reaction to his words was not what he had expected and it appeared he had misjudged what they wanted.

"Will keeping a pint or two of blood in their apartments be enough?" Aihola asked. She looked at Dekton when he didn't answer, "Dekton?"

Dekton shook his head quickly and looked at her. "That should be sufficient for the moment." He answered finally. Aihola looked at Tarifa with a puzzled expression on her face and then she shrugged imperceptibly.

"We will meet two days after each encounter like this." Tarifa said. "Then Selene will have enough time to recover and gathered the thoughts she and Lynwe have into something they can present to us. I want this to be very clear. We will not sacrifice Selene for anything. We have already instructed Lynwe that should Graham attempt anything out of the ordinary she has our permission to end his miserable existence or capture him."

Aihola looked across the table at Lynwe, whose face was an emotionless mask, void of any expression. "Lynwe... you have not spoken much. Can you endure this my friend?"

Lynwe looked up and met her eyes. "If Selene can endure then I will endure." She replied evenly. "I will not allow any harm to come to her. She has become... Selene and Eden have become my reasons for living."

Selene squeezed her hand tightly and smiled. "They are my reasons now as well."

Tarifa nodded. "Good." She spoke looking at Aihola. Their eyes darted to where Dekton had slid back further against the wall.

Nya Istel... did we overdo it? He has closed that part of himself to us. She asked within their private link.

It makes me feel empty Tarifa. Aihola said. *I do not wish to play games with him any longer my love. I think that was a bad decision on our part, to tease him. We thought to be playful and he has taken it to mean something else.*

I do not want us to be second to a woman that is long dead Aihola. Tarifa spoke. *You can still feel the love he holds for her.*

Yes... but I also feel the love that flows through him for us.

Tonight Nya Istel, Tarifa spoke. *I don't want to wait any longer. Do you?*

No. I want to feel him inside me, inside you. I want to feel his arms around us. It burns within me just as strongly as you do.

Tarifa nodded, *For me as well. Tonight Nya Istel, tonight we will claim what we both so want.*

Tarifa looked at everyone at the table. "We should allow everyone to come in now and begin our normal routine. These meetings we should have in either my office or Aihola's before our normal day begins so as not to arouse suspicion. We have quite a bit to cover today, and we need to get started."

They all nodded in agreement.

NEW MIAMI

Moran sat in his small office looking at the monitor and watching the face of the man on the screen. The moon reflected brightly off the white powder on the ground behind him, all around him snow covered

mountains in the background. This was one of his most trusted Lieutenants, like him a Genome that had been turned into a vampire.

“This facility has been stripped completely bare Colonel.” The man spoke. “But it has been done recently, within the last decade or so.”

“Any signs of the reactor we need?” Moran asked.

The man smiled, the skin on his face still tanned. The hood of his parka was pushed back revealing the form fitting white ski mask. “It was here Colonel, a Russian Class Five Nuke Reactor, just like you said. Whoever cleaned out this place, they took it with them.”

“They aren’t exactly in the most hospitable of terrain Marks.” Moran spoke. “Any signs of where they went?”

“The top of the reactor shaft was cranked open Colonel. They took it out by air, which narrows the field down to our own people, unless someone else has a transport big enough to lift out a three thousand ton reactor.” Lieutenant Marks reported.

“Damn!” Moran spoke. “We have two bases in that area, both of them commanded by slobbering fools who fancy themselves old vampires.”

“They *are* old Robert.” Yuri’s voice came from behind him.

Moran turned to watch her walk into his office. She wore a long flowing gown, almost transparent in nature, which wrapped around her lithe figure. Her raven colored hair cascaded past her shoulders elegantly. Moran fought down the surge of sexual energy that Yuri always elicited from him when she was nearby.

“Yuri I didn’t mean to...” Moran started to speak.

“Yes you did Robert.” She spoke with a smile, as she placed her hand on his shoulder. Her fingers danced across his neck as she stepped up next to him and looked at the monitor. “The governors of those two bases are over fifteen hundred years old each.”

Moran nodded. “And they consistently come up short in their tribute and their respect for you.” He spoke. “The reactor does exist, and one of them has it.”

“So it would appear.” Yuri said, handing him the glass with the rich red blood in it. “Lieutenant Marks you said it was removed by air?”

“Yes Mistress.” The man answered.

“Then I suggest you begin your search on Prefect Blacke’s base.” Yuri spoke. “You operate with my authority now Lieutenant, and that of my Military Commander. Find out if he has the reactor and if he doesn’t, dispose of him and his cronies and move to Prefect Unignia’s base of operations.”

Marks nodded. “I will need more men to complete that task Mistress.”

Yuri nodded while meeting Moran’s dark eyes. “I’m sure Colonel Moran will see to it Lieutenant. Please advise us when you have new information.”

Marks nodded, “As you order, Marks out.”

Yuri waited for the screen to go black before turning to watch Moran rise to his feet and meet her black eyes. She watched his brown eyes looked her up and down hungrily and she felt a surge of sexual energy course through her. She struck a small pose for him, dipping her head slightly, pushing her full breasts out to strain against the top of the gown.

“Do I meet your approval?” She asked softly.

Moran stepped up to her quickly, backing her up against the wall near his desk and wrapping his arms around her waist. “You always meet with my approval.” He growled lowering his lips to her neck and sucking on her warm soft skin.

Yuri smiled. “And that means I do not have to worry about you wandering on me one night in the future?” She spoke.

Moran pulled his head back and looked at her. “Wandering?”

Yuri traced her index finger along his jaw, “Seeing some luscious young female elf that catches your eye and stirs your blood.”

“Is that what you think I would do?” He asked.

Yuri dropped her gaze quickly. “No... I’m sorry for speaking of it.”

“Yuri... I’ve wanted you since the first day I saw you in that cell; and only you.” Moran told her honestly. “There isn’t a female alive that could stir my blood like you do.”

“My father will not be pleased I have chosen you.” She spoke.

Moran looked at her. “Why?”

“You are not a Pureblood.” She replied. “He would rather see me take a Pureblood Vampire male. He has one already picked out in fact.”

Moran smiled. “Does he now?” He spoke as his hands dropped from her hips to stroke the outsides of her thighs. “Do his fingers make you burn like mine?” He asked.

Yuri grinned, feeling the heat ignite in her belly at his caress. “No.” She whispered.

Moran found the slit of her dress in the front and he pushed it aside, his hand delving between her satiny thighs as his lips went to her bare shoulder. Yuri gasped when he took the thin white panties in his strong hand and ripped them away in one pull. His fingers returned to her center, caressing and stroking the thin line of her black pubic hair. She felt him go to his knees in front of her, and her stomach clenched when she felt his warmth breath on her skin, her hands and fingering entwining in his dark brown hair. “I understand Pureblood male vampires don’t do this.” He spoke looking up at her.

Yuri smiled, her eyes closed as his lips caressed her belly, sending tiny jolts of pleasure through her skin. This was very new to her, as he had never done this. “Don’t... don’t do what?” She asked in a husky voice. “Don’t tease me Robert, I want you inside me.”

“They don’t do this.” Moran spoke softly before lowering his lips to her pussy and engulfing her semi erect clit in his warm mouth. Yuri’s eyes flew open and her body arched forward as she was rocked with an orgasm of incredible power.

“Ahhhhhhh!” She exclaimed as he sucked her clit hard, his tongue flicking madly across the now throbbing bud as her thighs quivered. He gripped her legs and lifted her spasming body up, draping her legs over his shoulders as he continued to suck her clit, his tongue delving deeply into her pussy as her cum soaked his lips and lower jaw. Yuri’s upper body jerked and her arms gripped the wall for support as another orgasm ripped through her before the first had even subsided. Her asscheeks clenched in his strong hands as he fed. Not on her blood this time, but on the sweet tasting juices of her delicious pussy as they erupted from her with a force she had never experienced in almost three thousand years. No man had ever feasted on her this way in all that time, and her body was screaming out the pleasure of it. Her hips bucked several more times, splashing his face with her juices, and she could feel his tongue lapping away at her pussy like a cat. She gripped his head, knowing that she had to be pulling his thick hair hard, as she rode his tongue with fervor, never wanting the incredible sensations to stop. Her chest heaved the nipples on her large breasts painfully hard and standing out, pressing against the fabric of the dress she wore.

Moran drank her pussy like he drank her blood, with as much gusto as he could. The fluid pouring from her pussy was almost as sweet as her blood tasted, and her grip on his head told him this was not something she had experienced often. He felt her hips buck weakly a few more times before she slumped against the wall completely spent. He held her easily in his hands, propping her against the wall as he drained the sweet come from her, getting every drop that lingered. He planted a soft lingering kiss on her still erect clit, feeling her quiver as he kissed it tenderly, before he kissed his way back up her abdomen and slowly lowered her legs until they were around his waist and he was looking at her beautiful face. Her eyes were closed in the aftermath of the successive orgasms, and she was biting her lower lip.

“They don’t do that.” Moran spoke softly, watching her eyes fly open at his voice.

Yuri’s normally black orbs had changed to vampire cobalt blue now, her fangs extending as she looked at him, “That... that was utterly amazing!” She gasped.

“Three thousand years and no one has ever done that before?” Moran asked.

Yuri shook her head quickly. “I... I never allowed it.” She spoke. “I... I always thought oral sex to be disgusting.”

Moran lowered his head and nibbled her throat. “I hope that doesn’t mean I have to stop.” He spoke.

“Gods no!” Yuri exclaimed. “I no longer consider it disgusting!”

Moran chuckled and drew back his head to look at her, his eyes now also the cobalt blue of a vampire. “You will never have to worry about me wandering Yuri.” He told her. “I have tasted your blood, and now your sweet pussy. I don’t need anything else, especially not another woman, unless we are using her for food. And I don’t particularly care what your father will say. Do you?”

Yuri shook her head. “I have tasted your blood Robert.” She said. “I don’t desire to taste anyone else’s.”

“Then that is settled.” He spoke, leaning over to kiss her hard, plunging his tongue between her lips to take what he wanted.

Yuri’s body was singing out at what he had just done to her, and she groaned against his dominant and possessive kiss, pressing her body tightly to him allowing him to plunder her own tongue. She had never been one to allow this type of submissiveness in herself, yet with Moran it enhanced her pleasure greatly, and she very much wanted it to continue. He treated her like the Princess she was, sating every desire she had in bed, but knowing his place when out of it. And she had already witnessed his possessive nature when it came to her, attested to the fact that two much younger vampire troopers now lay in the morgue, their throats ripped wide open from his hands after he had overheard them discussing what they would like to do with the High Priestess.

“We have... we have a Ministerial Dinner to attend, and... and you have left me with no panties Robert.” Yuri told him with a smile.

“Yes... I know.” He answered with a smile of his own. “I prefer you not cover yourself tonight.”

“Whatever for?”

Moran leaned over and let his lips graze hers. “I might just happen to drop my fork during dinner. I’ll have to look for it under the table.” He said softly.

Yuri looked at him wide eyed. “You wouldn’t dare.” She gasped but with a seductive twinkle in her eyes.

Moran grinned. “Are you so sure?”

Yuri reached up and stroked his cheek slowly, gazing into his vampire eyes. “I came here to get a progress report on Graham before we went to the dinner.” She spoke softly. “It seems I have discovered something and someone far more invigorating. You are so different than other men I have known.”

Moran nodded, “Maybe because I don’t just want to fuck you Yuri. I want to possess you for myself.”

Yuri smiled. “I like when you speak those words to me.” She told him.

“Get used to hearing them now that I have tasted your blood and your passion.” He spoke. He lowered her completely to the floor, straightening her dress for her, even though her panties were a shredded mess on the floor. He pulled the chair over to where she was standing noticing that her legs were still quivering ever so slightly in the aftermath of what she had just experienced. When she sat down he handed her the glass of blood as he went to the corner of his desk and sat down on the edge. “I heard from that prick this morning.” He spoke.

Yuri lifted the crystal glass of blood to her ruby red lips, her hands still shaking with the receding passion she had just experienced. She took a long sip of the delicious blood and met his eyes. “And what did the good Senator have to say?”

“He’s made his second contact with Selene Torcrum.” Moran spoke. “He’s not much of a field operative, but at least he can write a decent report.”

“Has he curbed his more vile tendencies with women while he is in Eden? If he doesn’t they’ll discover him.” Yuri spoke.

Moran nodded as he moved to the small wet bar and poured a glass of fresh blood. “I told him if he didn’t I’d gut him myself and watched the rats eat his entrails.” He spoke. “He’s changed his appearance as well, so he’s not easily recognized. He implanted his instructions to Selene on this last attempt. He’ll see her three more times to reinforce the commands to the point where all we have to do is trigger them.”

Yuri nodded. “Excellent. Not only will we gain valuable information, we can use her to kill Tarifa and Aihola. And once Graham is gone, nothing will tie her actions to us, and Leonidas can’t launch his missiles.”

“Then can I kill Graham?” Moran asked.

Yuri chuckled. “Yes Robert. Then you may kill him. He will have outlived his usefulness then.”

“Good.” Moran spat.

“I must ask you something Robert.” She spoke.

Moran detected the change in her tone of voice and he met her eyes. “What?”

“I... I told you my father would not approve that you and I have shared blood.” Yuri spoke. “I do not wish to tell him.”

“Why?” Moran asked.

“He will have you butchered and there is nothing I can do to stop him. He is far more powerful than I. There... there is however another way that we can always be together, and that is what I wish, for us to always be together, more than anything.”

“I’m listening.” Moran spoke.

“As Princess... I am entitled to have one male concubine who I have turned that is bound to me.” Yuri spoke looking at him. “I may have to wed a Pureblood, but I can still choose who shares my bed.”

“And you want to know if I will do this?” Moran asked.

“You... you are not the type of man to take second place to anyone Robert.” Yuri told him. “And I would prefer you know the truth of everything.”

“You’ll still have to sleep with this man your father has chosen for you though right?” Moran spoke.

Yuri nodded slowly. “Yes... but only enough to make a child.” She answered. “And I have enough power to determine who gives me that child, though that is not something my father or anyone else knows.” She looked at him. “The man he has chosen for me is a pompous child half my age. He is the son of one of my father’s strongest supporters, a decadent fool who has any number of whores that share his bed. I don’t expect that will change even if I am his wife. We will be together in name only really. I will endure his touch upon me once or twice before I declare myself with child. That child will be yours.”

Moran looked at her. “And your father will not find this out?”

Yuri smiled. “My father wishes a Pureblood grandchild, and that is what I will give him, a Pureblood child of my blood and yours. Xerxes has more bastard children then he can keep track of, and my father wishes a heir once he is finally gone. I will give him that heir, and that child will be of our union, not someone who I vomit even thinking about.”

Moran shifted on the desk, settling completely on the edge his feet not touching the floor. “May I ask why your father desires a heir so much?”

“Xerxes refuses to take a bride of Pureblood.” Yuri explained. “He enjoys his liaisons with hundreds of women far too much. None of the Pureblood females are twisted enough for him. And my younger sister is a traitor to her own kind, and will never have a child.”

Moran’s eyes went wide, “Sister?” He spoke. “You have a sister?”

Yuri nodded. “She is a Pureblood Princess like me, but she is the product of my father’s affections with his royal concubine, not my mother.”

“I take it from the tone of your voice that you and she do not like each other?” Moran spoke.

Yuri looked at him. “We despise each other.” Yuri answered. “Isabella betrayed my father and with her mother’s support she is now a part of the rebellion against us. My father butchered her mother for this, cutting her open in front of Isabella’s eyes. It was wonderful to see.”

“So your sister... this Isabella... she is in Sparta?” Moran asked.

Yuri got to her feet, the breeze from the open window fanning her bare pussy. “No.” She replied. “There are some things that I should probably inform you of before events begin to overtake us.”

“This ought to be good.” Moran said with a grin.

Yuri looked at him. “My father controls an empire Robert, a large empire, vast beyond your imagination.”

“I don’t know... I have a pretty good imagination.” Moran replied with a grin.

Yuri chuckled. “Yes you do.” She replied. “However... outside of our bed... does your imagination extend to beyond the realms of this planet?”

Moran’s eyes narrowed. “Excuse me?”

“My father’s empire consists of three thousand seven hundred and eighty-six planets in three hundred and four different planetary systems Robert.” Yuri told him. “He has been trying to make Earth one of those planets, as well as this planetary system. Leonidas and his kind have prevented that for more than four millennia.”

Moran laughed loudly, shaking his head as he did. Yuri did not take offense, as she had expected this reaction. He looked at her, and saw the seriousness of her face, and the smile slowly drifted away. “You... you are serious?” He said.

Yuri nodded. “I’m very serious.” She replied. “This is not something that I would joke with you on Robert. My feelings for you have only grown since I turned you almost five hundred years ago, and now that we have shared blood and professed our love for each other, I want you to know all that I do.”

Moran got to his feet his eyes never leaving her face. “Shit... you aren’t kidding!” He said trying to make sense of what she was telling him, and unable to comprehend the enormity of it.

“No... I’m not.” She said. “Vampires did not originate on this planet and neither did Werewolves. They were our slaves as you know, for many thousands of years prior to Leonidas. Earth was a farm of sorts for us to collect slaves. We have many such planets, though that number has dropped over the last few millennia due to Leonidas’s actions. He was not only a King of Sparta in earth history, but he was the son of a King to nine hundred other races and species that served us. His actions started the rebellion that continues to this day, in hundreds of systems on hundreds of planets. The war is a stalemate for the most part; we take a system and the rebellion takes one back from us. That is why Xerxes was first assigned here. We knew the leaders of the rebellion sent their child here to earth to be safe. We did not know that the leaders of the rebellion chose 10000 fetuses, including Leonidas and implanted them into Spartan women over the next decade. Even though we managed to kill Leonidas’s parents, they were able to spirit him here to earth. Those 10,000 children became the foundation for the rebellion that would take place here on earth. When we discovered this, Xerxes came here to destroy Leonidas. Xerxes underestimated the power Leonidas had over those within Sparta and the training the human Spartans themselves had begun. As Leonidas and the others grew and trained, the legend of the Spartans grew; their fearlessness in battle, their superior training, their laconic bravery and their undying loyalty to Leonidas. And as they grew, they took wives and mates and made more of their kind.

“Xerxes underestimated him and Leonidas almost succeeded in killing him that last day. Instead his death served to spur the remaining Werewolves and even the humans to greater deeds and feats, until finally Xerxes was defeated. Father was incensed with this outcome and he striped Xerxes of the title of High Guard Commander and gave it to me. We knew Leonidas fathered at least two children, one who was a boy when he died, and the other was conceived on the night he left for Thermopylae. We have been searching this planet for centuries trying to find those two sons and their descendants. The first born we killed many years later, but the second son we never found alive. We found remains a hundred and fifty years later that appeared to be this son, and it was evident that he had fathered many children, so that began our vigil for the descendant that would one day rise up and begin anew what Leonidas started all across the universe the day he was killed.”

Moran got off the desk and walked to the window, shaking his head. “Man.” Moran spoke. “This is some wild shit.”

“You don’t believe me Robert?” Yuri asked.

He turned to look at her and shook his head. “No... it’s not that. After what I have seen and experienced in the last five hundred years with you, I believe it. You have to admit it’s very hard to absorb right now.”

Yuri nodded. “I don’t doubt that.” She said.

“And the elves, what about them,” He asked. “Do they exist off... off of earth?”

Yuri nodded. “In much larger numbers than you would believe. Dymas... Walter somehow had the genetic code of elves imprinted on him so that he was able to create them with little difficulty. At first we thought it was a boon for us, more elves that we could make slaves and not have to worry about them knowing the history of their people outside of earth.” She shook her head. “That became a mute point when he gave them the desire to be free. If Martin is this descendant and he escapes earth, not only will he spur the rebellion on, but Dysea will become Queen to more than three trillion elves across the universe, Anja will become Queen to even more of her people, and Aricia will be Queen of all Werewolves and Shifters. Now you begin to see why we must stop him here.”

Moran looked at her. “So that is why Xerxes said it would be months before he got here. He’s not even on earth?”

Yuri nodded. “He is in an adjoining system putting down a revolt.” She answered. “Earth is closest for him to bring his forces when he is finished to rest and recuperate. And take another load of slaves off world.”

“And vampires are much more in number than here on earth?” Moran asked.

Yuri smiled and nodded. “Oh yes. Our last census put our total population at thirty-nine trillion.” She told him.

“And your father is the boss?”

Yuri nodded again. “He is the High Overlord, yes.”

“So where is he?”

“Our home planet is called Usu’Ozeib 7.” Yuri replied. “It is roughly thirteen months from here traveling on our fastest ship.”

“And how fast is that?”

“I am not skilled in engineering or physics, but I believe it is roughly seven times the speed of light.” Yuri answered.

“And it takes thirteen months to get there!” Moran asked in disbelief.

“I told you our empire was vast Robert.” Yuri spoke. “The rebellion has claimed about two thousand planets in roughly a hundred and thirty systems. Their home planet is called Apo Prime and it resides roughly the same distance from earth, so now you understand why earth is considered so strategic.”

“And what is their population?” Moran asked.

“I do not know for sure... as we have never been able to get clear data on them. Our estimates put their overall population at twenty-two to twenty-five trillion.” Yuri answered. “Our military forces are nearly equal in size and capabilities, so you see why we have been in a stalemate for so long. Once Leonidas’s actions became known, the rebellion began training their men and women to the exact specifications that the Spartans used. We have the larger fleet; they have the better ground forces and in many instances the more cunning and innovative leaders. They have also been able to secret away advances in technology within Spartan culture, much of it revolving around those damn Shi Viskas they all wear, and more advanced medical technologies that you would normally find here on earth. I do not know what else they have been able to bequeath to the Spartans, but it has allowed them to withstand us through the centuries here on earth until things are as they are now.”

Moran stepped up to her and looked dead into her dark eyes. “Yuri please tell me you aren’t busting my balls.” He said.

Yuri laughed and put her hands on his chest. “I will do much to your balls in the future Robert, including bathing them with my tongue after what you did to me earlier, but no, I am not lying to you in any way. I can show you many things now... but first... I meant what I said earlier Robert.” She said looking at him. “About you and I. Before we go any further I need to know if you can tolerate that arrangement I spoke of. If you will stand by me for all eternity, so that our children can one day rule my father’s empire, and we in their stead until they come of age. Can you do that?”

Moran’s arms slid around her slim waist, pulling her tightly to him. “You are sure I am what you desire? Out of all the suitors you could have?”

Yuri smiled and melted into his arms. “Oh yes.” She spoke softly, “Quite sure.”

“Then I will endure.” He spoke. “If it ultimately keeps you safe, and keeps us together, then yes.”

Yuri smiled and wrapped her arms around his waist. “Then let me show you the wonders that exist off this world my husband.” Yuri spoke softly. “Put your forehead to mine and close your eyes.”

Moran hesitated for only a moment before doing this and Yuri smiled when his skin touched hers. “See what I have seen Robert. All I have experienced. And finally know what I know.” She whispered as she closed her eyes and initiated the telepathic link that would bind them together for all time.

EDEN

“So how do I look?” Aihola asked as she did a quick spin in front of Tarifa. The soft white robe clung to her shapely figure, and reached to the floor. Aihola was naked underneath, the robe tied just under her firm breasts.

They had gone shopping after leaving the Command building, picking out matching the matching robes for their planned seduction of Dekton. As the day wore on, and they spent more time without the feel of Dekton’s aura embracing them, they began to need him more. Both of them were filled with guilt, having been together for so long, they had forgotten what it was like to lure a man into their bed. That he desired them was without question, as they both could feel that aura pounding against his psychic shields, even as strong as he was. That they both would feel so empty without his presence swarming around their minds had surprised them both and it became the largest indicator to them that he was meant for them.

Tarifa looked at her lover with hungry eyes, “You looked delicious.” She spoke in a husky voice.

Aihola stepped up to Tarifa and pulled her body tightly against her own flesh. Their breasts touched and even with the thin fabric between them, they could feel the blood pounding in their veins. And for the first time since they had become lovers, it pounded for someone other than each other.

“Are... are you as nervous as I am?” She asked.

Tarifa nodded before she kissed her softly. “We need him *Nya Istel*. We need him badly.” She said.

Aihola nodded. “Yes we do. Are you ready?”

Tarifa nodded and they both reached out with their minds.

DEKTON! Tarifa exclaimed in what was paramount to a shout for telepathic connection. *Come quickly, something is wrong with Nya Istel! Hurry!*

He must have been taking a shower for when he appeared in their doorway twenty seconds later; his *Nehtes* gripped in his fist, the skin of his upper body was dripping in water. He had hastily thrown on a pair of loose pants and was barefoot. His long brown hair, down past his shoulders was plastered to his skin, his dark blue eyes wide. He came up short when he saw them standing just inside the door, the robes doing little to cover them, their eyes almost glowing in the dim light of their main apartment.

“What... what is wrong?” He asked confused.

“Nothing,” Tarifa spoke.

“Everything is fine.” Aihola echoed her.

Dekton’s eyes moved back and forth between them, his senses alive for danger. He caught the scent of peach and cherry blossoms strongly and his eyes finally saw what they were wearing. The robes did nothing to their bodies from his eyes. The fabric was designed to entice and attract, not cover. Their nipples were erect and pressing against the fabric of the two robes, the fronts barely folded over their breasts, the deep valley between their breasts exposed for his eyes to devour. His eyes went lower and he saw they wore nothing at all, the flaps of the robes open below the waist, Aihola’s thin line of shimmering white hair clearly visible to his hungry gaze, Tarifa’s bare skin between her thighs clearly visible.

Dekton felt his aura begin to pulse madly behind his psychic shields and he fought to suppress it, push it down as he looked at them. “What... what are you doing?” He asked.

“You haven’t been answering us...” Tarifa said.

“This is the only way we could think of to get you to come to us.” Aihola spoke.

“Come to you!” Dekton demanded, his anger rising. “Are you... are you playing with me?”

“Dekton...” Aihola spoke stepping closer to him, her amber eyes now holding worry in them. “We... we only thought to tease you, as we... as we tease each other.”

“We did not intend for you to be put off.” Tarifa spoke now. “That was not what we wanted to do.”

“I will not allow you to manipulate my feelings.” Dekton spoke harshly. “I have made known what I desired, and I had thought you both desired the same. I could smell it all over you. Then you told me today to not presume, that you had no intention of letting me claim you? Do you take me for a boy?”

“NO!” Aihola replied quickly. “Dekton... Tarifa and I do this to each other. It... it heightens the experience for us. To tease each other like how we teased you today.”

Dekton glared at them. “I am an Alpha wolf!” He spoke sharply. “I do not need such... teasing.” He allowed his shields to come down entirely, and Tarifa and Aihola gasped at the power of the desire he had for them. It was alive and it swarmed around them in that instant, making them lightheaded and very wet between their legs. “Perhaps... perhaps when you have grown up you will see that your beauty and intelligence alone is enough to entice any male... and you need not resort to such... teasing.”

They stepped close together as he slammed his shields back down in place, severing the feel of his aura sweeping over them. They both let out small gasps, and stood there in shocked silence.

“I will leave you now!” He snapped, turning to walk out the open door.

“Dekton?” Aihola gasped softly.

He stopped and they could see him take a deep breath, his head lowering slowly to his chest. “There is... there is something you should know.” He spoke, his words soft. He turned to look at them... their eyes moist and both of them shivering. Dekton slammed his hand on the panel of their door and dropped his shields completely. “I am teasing.” He said before stepping forward and scooping both of them into his arms, and lifting them off the floor.

Aihola recovered first, and her amber eyes narrowed as his arm lifted her. “Why you...” The rest of her sentence was muffled as his warm lips came down on her and he kissed her as he walked forward into their home. Aihola’s body ignited as his tongue sought hers and quickly began dancing across her teeth and the

insides of her lips. Her hands tried to push him away, but as the fire in her body spread quickly, her arms wrapped around his broad shoulders and she returned his kiss.

Dekton pulled away quickly, leaving her gasping for air and he looked at Tarifa, her sapphire eyes wide and her lips parted in surprise. He claimed her lips then too, kissing her just as thoroughly, feeling her body become hot and willing.

They didn't know he had carried them into the bedroom until he dropped Aihola and her onto the bed. They scrambled up quickly pulling at his loose pants, the vibrant power of his aura combining with their own need and inescapable desire for him. They yanked his pants down, revealing Dekton in his entire splendor. He was already hard, his impressive cock standing at attention, so thick and pulsing with a life of its own. Amber and sapphire eyes hungrily gazed upon him, the rippled abdomen and powerful thighs. Both of them felt their blood racing like it never had before except for each other. Soft lips descended to either side of the jutting shaft, and they could feel the heat wafting from the length, the bulbous head standing out proudly at the end of the thick ten inch shaft. Two small pairs of hands reached up to stroke the throbbing cock and they heard Dekton hiss between clenched teeth.

"No!" He gasped, pulling them up from what they so wanted. They looked up at him, towering over them like some sort of granite god, their faces flushed with want and passion. His hands quickly grasped their robes and they were shredded on the floor in seconds. His eyes had changed to wolf greenish/gold and he slowly dropped to his knees in front of them. "Tonight I will show you how a Spartan loves his mates."

Dekton's kiss pushed Aihola back on the bed, his steel hard body stretching out on top of her, his tongue plunging into her mouth. When his burning skin touched hers, Aihola arched off the bed against him, her hands wrapping around his powerful back. Aihola had never given herself willingly to a man, and when his lips descended to her neck and suckled her soft dark skin, all her doubts and fears fled her mind. Tarifa lay next to her on the bed, her hands stroking the powerful muscles of Dekton's shoulders and arms as he showered Aihola with soft kisses and licks of his tongue. His aura had enveloped them within its embrace, magnifying their own yearning and need for him. As his kisses descended lower, Tarifa's lips took their place on her neck and shoulders.

Dekton took his time exploring Aihola's supple dark flesh. The contrast of their skin was an incredible arousal for him, almost an aphrodisiac, and he lapped at her every curve and contour. He felt her fingers entwine in his hair when his lips found their way to her thighs, and he gently placed her legs on his shoulders. Her cherry blossom scent, combined with Tarifa's peach scent next to her was driving him mad with lust and need. He dropped his nose to the soft line of white hair and inhaled deeply, burning Aihola's scent into his mind. Aihola's clit was standing unhooded and fully erect, as if begging him to take it between his lips. Something Dekton did without hesitation.

Aihola's eyes flew open wide and she gasped loudly as the orgasm came upon her in a massive wave, ripping through her more quickly and stronger than she had been prepared for. She heard Tarifa gasp loudly next to her, and turned her head as her belly quivered in delicious jolts of pleasure. Dekton's tongue was lapping away at her center like a starving child, her come pouring into his mouth. She heard Tarifa whimper again and then she bit down gently on her shoulder, lost in her own orgasm. Aihola glanced down to see Dekton's hand between Tarifa's thighs, his fingers obviously working her madly to make her come so quickly. Tarifa claimed her soft lips and their tongues came together in a carnal dance of ecstasy and pleasure that Aihola knew was only just beginning.

Dekton did more than claim them that night. He possessed them both, just as completely as they possessed each other.

His lips never ceased dancing across their supple flesh, always touching and tasting. He lavished their breasts with licks and nibbles, his hands just as busy as his tongue. He did not take them one at a time; he took them as he knew they would always be. He took them together. Their times with Lynwe drifted into distant memories, Tarifa's times with Martin locked away in a box as this Spartan warrior drove them to heights of pleasure that neither had ever experienced, even with each other. Dekton had unlocked all he was to them, leaving no barriers in place, and they swam within the confines of his mind, even as they melded together in the flesh.

Aihola felt him inside her first, plunging deep into her, stretching her tight walls with his length and thickness. Even as he stroked into her tight body with powerful even thrusts, his lips claimed Tarifa's moist

pussy, her thighs quivering in delight as he flicked her piercing gently with his tongue, nipping on it, pulling it gently with his teeth, each time causing unbelievable ripples of pleasure to wash over her. He contorted them into positions they never thought of, just so his lips never ceased to touch their flesh in some way. His hands were everywhere, delving into their dripping pussies, or stroking their skin igniting small fires throughout their bodies. Even as Aihola screamed out in one of the most powerful orgasms of her life, her come erupting from her spasming pussy, Dekton remained as hard as iron. She clutched at him in pleasure and joy, feeling him deep inside her, reaching parts of her that Lynwe never could simply because of the depth of feeling he made love to her with. Even as his body went rigid, his cock swelling within her and his come blasting deep into her womb he remained ready for more. Aihola relaxed on the bed totally spent for the moment, and she relished in the sensations of his lips spreading kisses all over her chest and shoulders as he withdrew from inside her.

Tarifa barely felt him shift on the bed, so engrossed in the orgasm his lips had given her. And then he was inside her, spearing her completely in one heart stopping plunge. Aihola kissed her as she cried out her pleasure, her legs wrapping around his waist and locking her ankles at the small of his back. His hand dropped between Aihola's slick thighs slipping his fingers into her even as he stroked deeply into Tarifa, adorning her neck and shoulders with butterfly kisses.

It continued like this for three hours, Dekton taking both of them more times than they could remember. The moment came when their minds were one and it happened completely by instinct. Dekton was pounding into Aihola, one arm holding Tarifa pressed against their slick bodies, his finger delving between her ass cheeks, teasing her puckered asshole, his lips holding her left nipple in his mouth while his thumb tickled her clit.

Dekton bit down into Tarifa's luscious breast, his wolf fangs spearing her deeply, her blood splashing into his mouth as his saliva mingled with her blood and the virus raced through her system like a burning wave of heat. Pleasure surged through both of them and Tarifa jerked, causing his thumb to sink into her slick pussy and his index finger to slip deeply into her ass. As she screamed in rapture, her own fangs extended, longer now that Dekton's blood was coursing through her carrying the virus throughout her body. In that moment Tarifa bit down into the soft flesh of Aihola's shoulder causing her lover's blood to splash across her lips. The virus racing through her system now quickly spread to Aihola, her amber eyes growing wider as the wave of wanton pleasure surged through her. Aihola completed their bonding as without thought, she bit into Dekton's neck, his warm blood splashing across her tongue as she fed.

There was a flash of intense hot white pleasure that burst through all of them and it ended in wanton bliss as they all erupted together as one, their bodies melding together in a mass of flesh even as their minds embraced and became forever united in a way that nothing would ever separate.

And then they knew the love their King and his Queens knew.

Tarifa's sapphire eyes opened lazily as she felt the sunlight pouring into the room through the window bathing her in warmth. The first thing she saw was Aihola's shimmering white hair splayed across the pillow next to her, her soft pink lips slightly parted. The memories of the previous night came flooding back to her and she felt the sheet slid away from her body as she sat up half way, her black hair brushing against Aihola's sleeping face as she looked around. She felt wonderfully sore, every muscle stretched and aching, but it was a beautiful ache, and one she wouldn't have traded for anything. The scents in the room were so much sharper and pungent than anything she remembered, her eyes focused and seeing small details that she had never seen before. She could hear the sounds of Hoppers and people walking and talking on the streets below their apartment, the sun and breeze across her skin touching her in ways that she had never experienced. Aihola's cherry blossom scent was the most vivid, as close as she was, and Tarifa could detect the wonderful smell of warm leather saturating both of them.

Tarifa sighed as she realized last night was not a dream, and she snuggled close to Aihola, nuzzling her cheek.

"Wake up *Nya Istel*." She said softly.

Aihola groaned with a small smile. "I don't want to my love." She said softly, her amber eyes opening slowly. "I was having a wonderful dream of you, Dekton and myself. It was..."

“It was no dream Aihola.” Tarifa said with a smile. Tarifa saw Aihola’s eyes open wider and she stretched like a cat, albeit a much shapelier cat. Aihola also groaned with the same ache as Tarifa. Tarifa watched her, taking in the pulsing blue light that seemed to outline her figure, her hearing so acute she could detect Aihola’s always steady heartbeat, her pulse never more than 68 beats per second unless she was brimming with heated passion.

Tarifa looked down to her breast and saw the extremely faint twin puncture holes just outside the line of her nipple. They were nearly hidden and one would only notice them if you looked carefully.

“Yes.” Dekton’s voice filled her ears, both she and Aihola looking up quickly.

He walked into the bedroom wearing the same loose black pants as when he first appeared in their apartment last night, only this time he carried a tray heaping with food and juice. They watched him step onto the bed, their eyes wandering over his powerful form with desire. He squatted between them on the bed and set the tray down as he sat lotus style next to the tray.

Dekton looked at Tarifa with those dark blue eyes of his and allowed his aura to sweep over both her and Aihola, surrounding them, wrapping them within its embrace. “You are wondering if you have become like me? The answer is yes.” He told her. “The virus will have already altered you enough to detect many of the major changes, your sight, hearing and smell being the most prominent.” He answered her unasked question. “The rest I will help you to discover as time passes.”

Tarifa’s hand went to her bare breast, exposed for his hungry eyes to see, and she traced the two small puncture wounds. Aihola sat up now as well, the sheet falling away from her. After what they had shared, it seemed ridiculous to hide from each other.

“Dekton... I...” Aihola stared at him.

His blue eyes fell on her now and he nodded. “Yes you did. We will need to explore what this has done to our telepathic connection. The sharing of blood usually increases the sensitivity of such connections ten fold.”

Aihola moved up onto her knees and reached out to his shoulder, touching the two puncture marks on the lower portion of his neck. “I’m... I’m sorry Dekton.” She said softly.

Dekton smiled, his hand reaching up and stroking her cheek. “Do not be sorry Little Drow.” He said in a voice kinder than any they had heard from him yet. “I am not.”

Tarifa gasped now, as her eyes saw the marks she had left in Aihola’s shoulder. “*Nya Istel*... I...”

Dekton chuckled. “Yes... we have all tasted each other’s blood.” He spoke. “It is done, and I for one am not shy about wanting to do it again. Between the three of us there can be no secrets now. Little Drow... you relish the taste of Tarifa’s blood do you not?”

Aihola looked at her quickly, and then brought her eyes back to him. She nodded slowly. “It... it is... sweet like...”

“Like peaches.” Dekton answered, “Tarifa... what does Aihola’s blood taste like?”

“It was... it was warm and... and so very sweet.” Tarifa replied remembering the taste and the surge of pleasure it caused within her.

“And my blood Little Drow?” He asked.

“It was like... it was very warm and very spicy.” She answered more confidently this time. “It... it actually tasted very good.”

“There is nothing wrong with what we have shared.” Dekton spoke gently. “The two of you have already been doing it, and you merely added me into the mix. It is something I did willingly, and would do so again given the opportunity and your permission. So can we dispense with the shock and surprise at this act? It is rather pointless now don’t you both think?” He smiled as he picked up the glasses and held out the juice to them. “It is the juice of a Papaya fruit and it will replenish the proteins in your blood more quickly.”

“Dekton we don’t...” Aihola started as she took the glass.

“You and Tarifa think I wish to replace my lost mate?” He spoke softly as his hands used the small knife to cut up the fruit on the tray. “I loved my mate... with everything that I was. I have not felt that way for anyone since, until I met the two of you. You remind me of her yes, but make no mistake; my feelings for both of you are because of who *you* are. Not because of whom my mate was.”

“It was silly of us to think that wasn’t it?” Tarifa asked.

Dekton smiled. "Not as much as you might think." He answered. He lifted the juice to his lips and drank down half the glass before looking at them. "We will need to be discrete about what we share, at least for the immediate future."

"Why?" Tarifa asked. "I don't... I don't want to keep what we feel for you a secret Dekton."

"Nor do I." Aihola echoed quickly.

"I do not wish to either, however for safeties sake... for the two of you we must." He told them, their words meaning more to him than they could ever imagine. He had never thought he would find another mate that he could love as completely as he did his first, and then fate gave him two that loved him just as strongly as they loved each other. And he firmly believed that fate made them the two most beautiful elfin females he had ever set his eyes upon. "The two of you are synonymous with each other; I am an after thought, your bodyguard, nothing more. That gives me a certain amount of leverage when it comes to protecting you. I wish to keep that until we have succeeded in the goals we all have."

Tarifa was the more politically astute of them, and she nodded her head. "I... I see your point." She spoke. "But... here... this is our home and you have become a very large part of it, of our lives."

Aihola nodded. "We will smash the walls down if we have to." She said. "In our home we share everything... including our bed. And that includes you now. We want it to include you Dekton. Promise us that."

Dekton smiled brightly and he nodded. "That is a promise I will gladly keep." He spoke. He held out the pieces of fruit he had cut. "Your first meeting is in ninety minutes." He told them. "As much as I would like to take both of you again right now, you need your strength. Finish the juice and eat the fruit. I will make you a more filling breakfast while you shower and dress."

Tarifa and Aihola moved with one mind, each taking a position on either side of him. He kissed them both fiercely, transmitting his love and devotion to them via their telepathic link and his lips. He slapped them both on their perfect asses after a long moment and smiled at them. "I have been awake for several hours already. I do not wish to have to explain another delay to the Elders. Go on now!"

Dekton watched them climb from the bed with seductive movements of their bodies, feeling his aura pulse with desire and lust, and there was no doubt he felt theirs. He looked at the fruit he was eating and then glanced up to see Aihola's firm perfect ass disappear around the corner of the room. He looked at the fruit once more before tossing it aside.

"Damn the Elders!" He hissed as he scrambled from the bed and moved quickly around the corner, following them into the bathroom.

No one heard Tarifa and Aihola's excited yelps of surprise and desire.

SPARTA

TWO DAYS LATER

"...No way any of this stuff was made on this planet." Paul Taggert exclaimed.

Paul joined everyone else who had come to Sparta with Martin as they lounged around the sitting area of the villa. All of them were dressed casually; no uniforms in evidence, and Andreus and his mother were also included in the group. Martin sat on the floor with his back to the couch, sitting between Dysea's long legs as she sat on the couch. Anja leaned against her side, while Aricia sat with Martin on the floor, leaning against his side. Dan occupied a space on the floor, Anuk sitting casually between his legs, while Tari occupied one of the couches, Julie sitting on the back of the couch, her legs on either side of Tari's shoulders.

Martin looked at Paul. "How can you be so sure?" He asked.

Paul looked at him. "I've run tests on everything that we have seen." He answered. "From the medical equipment that Anja and I have witnessed to the aircraft that Endith and Tina are flying. In short, the medical equipment that they have should not exist, and the metal on the SPATs is an alloy not found on this planet."

"You're... you're joking right?" Danny asked.

Paul shook his head. "Not in least. I've examined over a thousand men, women and children since we've been here." He told them. "I found nothing wrong with any of them, quite the opposite in fact."

“That is a bad thing?” Aricia asked him.

Paul shook his head, “Not at all.” He answered. “It’s just not normal.”

“I have seen it too Little Wolf.” Anja told her, her hand dropping to Aricia’s shoulder. “There is none of the usual diseases that infect others. No cancers. No colds. There are the normal injuries we all have endured, cuts, scrapes, broken bones, but these all heal within hours, not days and weeks. The medicines here are... they are wondrous... but they do not exist outside of Sparta.”

“*Melyanna*... you know how to use these medicines though.” Dysea spoke looking at her. “If they do not exist outside of Sparta how is that possible?”

Anja looked at Martin. “I don’t know.” She answered softly. “It’s almost as if they... it’s almost like I have always known what they were. What they are used for.”

“When we first came here,” Martin spoke now. “I felt like I had been here before. When I smelled the dirt in the landing bay, I reached past the smell of the engines and fuel and found the scents of pines. Almost as if I knew they were there.”

“You are a Pureblood sire.” Andreus said from his chair, “Born from two Pureblood Shifters, as are Aricia and I. It is not uncommon for the children of Purebloods to retain some portion of their parent’s memories when they are born.”

“The smells as well?” Martin asked.

“Our sense of smell is our most powerful asset, you know this. We can track across miles of terrain by just our smell.” Andreus replied looking at him. “If such a smell was so imprinted on your parents, then yes.”

“Andreus pine trees haven’t grown where the landing pad is for centuries.” Dasha spoke now. “There are not many alive who can remember the last time such trees surrounded our city in so great a number that they would leave that much of an imprint.”

Andreus shrugged. “Perhaps... but it would explain why he smelled the pines in the dirt.”

“Well no one on this planet built those SPATs.” Tina spoke up now. They all turned to look at her. Endith sat next to her, her hand resting on Tina’s thigh. “Endith and I have been flying those things for over a month. It was the easiest ship I’ve ever learned to fly. It was almost as if the SPAT knew what it wanted us to do.”

“As if it was reading our thoughts,” Endith said.

Tina nodded as she leaned forward. “I used a secure channel to transmit the specs back to Ben in Eden Skipper.” She spoke looking at Martin. “He has never seen anything like this aircraft, and you know Ben was part of the experimental wing at Area 51 before he joined EDEN Base.”

Martin nodded, “Yeah.”

“He told me we had nothing like this even in pre-concept art.” Tina spoke, “And certainly not with a Cold Fusion Reactor. Ben has a PhD in Astro Physics and Mechanical Engineering. He also studied Quantum Theory with the President’s Scientific Advisor. He’s the finest pilot I have ever seen next to Endith, and I’ve seen all the fighter jocks Skipper. He says that with a Cold Fusion Reactor and the right Quantum Inductors, these SPATs are theoretically faster than light capable.”

“What?” Martin gasped, his face mirroring the looks of everyone in the room.

“Tina... even I know that... that is not possible.” Anuk said from between Daniel’s legs on the floor.

Tina sat back and shrugged. “I’m just telling you what he said, and he’s far smarter than anyone I have ever known.”

“Faster than light speed?” Paul said. “That’s interesting... and certainly plausible. And it would account for the metal alloy we can not identify on the outer skin of these SPATs; an additional layer of armor to protect against the stress of that type of travel perhaps.”

“Wait you agree with him?” Martin asked.

Paul shrugged his shoulders as well. “I am no where near as well versed in those fields as Ben.” He replied. “The few times we interacted on EDEN were in regards to deployment of biological weapons. You seem to forget Martin, he is... he was the most decorated pilot anywhere in the world, and he authored half a dozen books that were used in the academies. He chose to stay a pilot, and he jumped at the chance to be assigned to EDEN under your command. I know he turned down a very lucrative offer to leave the military and take a position at Lockheed Aeronautics as head of their Space Deployment Department to remain under your command. The man is exceptional.”

There were chuckles as everyone saw Tina and Endith look at each other and smile knowingly. "He's damn good in bed too." Tina spoke.

Endith nodded quickly. "Oh yes." She added.

"I never knew that." Martin said softly.

"Well... it's not something that we throw out there you know." Tina said. "Endith and I want to keep him for ourselves!"

Martin looked at her with a lopsided grin. "That isn't what I meant." He said.

Tina chuckled again. "I know... but you left yourself wide open for that one."

"Ok... let's say all these things are true." Danny spoke now, "How do we account for them here in Sparta and no where else?"

"Sparta has the largest concentration of Shifters on the planet." The new voice spoke from near the door.

They all turned to watch Walter/Dymas walk slowly into the room. Martin started to get up but Walter waved him down. "I was surprised when I wasn't invited to this." He said.

"Walter I..." Martin began.

"Do not apologize." Walter stopped him. "I would have done the same thing. But you forget that I am one of the oldest Spartans within the city limits, and unlike many of the others, I have lived outside of Sparta for the better part of my life. I have asked these same questions over the years."

"And?" Julie asked.

Walter walked up and stood next to Andreus and Kenny. "I've always wondered how I had the knowledge to create the elves, the Genomes. Like with you Anja it came naturally, as if the knowledge was already there somehow. The technology... well that is something that has always been here. The times that I did return... I never thought to question how I knew to use it. I just did. Listening to all of you now however, it brings back the questions that I have always had."

"Like what?" Martin asked.

Walter looked at him, "How and what." He answered. "How did we come to be, Shifters or Werewolves if you choose that term. How were we created? How have so many of us lived for so long? What is our purpose?" He looked at Martin. "I believe King Leonidas knew... and buried in your mind Martin I believe you know as well."

"Me?" Martin gasped.

Walter nodded. "Was not the motto of NASA to explore the unknown, to reach into the stars?" He spoke. "There are many things we can not explain even here on our own planet. The finest minds in the world could not come to an agreement on how the comet came to be on such a course that it passed between the moon and Earth. I have been trying for centuries to determine how it was that the moon essentially stopped rotating while hundreds of years past on earth. What were only a few hours for you on the moon was almost five hundred years here."

"So you think some alien race just dropped these toys off to us Spartans for shits and giggles?" Dan asked with a great deal of humor in his voice.

Anuk punched him in the thigh. "Daniel... you will behave!" She berated him, but with a smile on her face.

Dan grinned and nuzzled the back of her neck, his arms wrapping around her upper body. "Does that mean you'll punish me later tonight?" He asked softly, though his words carried to everyone.

Anuk's cerulean blue eyes glittered in the light of the room, "Perhaps." She told him.

Walter chuckled with everyone else. "We as Spartans have always been able to adapt more quickly to outside events. Martin... your team's ability to adjust to changing events is what made you so unique. The powers that be back then knew this. They knew that if their plan went awry at any point, you and the others would adjust immediately, and more times than not you would succeed where others could not."

"Humans adjust quickly Walter." Anja spoke.

"Yes they do... but not with the same speed and seamless transition as Spartans." Walter spoke. "We are another species... we all know this. The elves are another species, albeit one I created... and the vampires are another species." Walter looked at him. "Who is to say that there are not more species out there among the stars?"

“Do not fear the unknown.” Martin spoke softly though everyone could hear him. “Fear is a constant... we must learn to harness that fear, and become stronger for it.”

Walter looked at him, his heart racing. He had heard those words before spoken with a different voice, “Where did you learn that Martin?” He asked.

Martin looked at him. “I don’t know.” He smiled. “I think I dreamed it a while ago.”

“It is an interesting statement.” Walter spoke, “And very true.”

“Why doesn’t the Alliance have any of these cool toys?” Dan asked.

“Who says they don’t?” Tari spoke for the first time. “There were many places we were not allowed to go. Things we weren’t allowed to see. Only the most senior of the Ministers were allowed access to them. Who is to say that they aren’t doing what the Spartans have done here. Not allowing this technology to escape the confines of the city unless it was absolutely necessary.”

“What are you saying Tari?” Julie asked, taking his arm in her hands.

Tari looked at Martin. “I am a Drow elf and I’m also half vampire.” He spoke, “Holy One could you have combined such DNA to make me?”

“Tari you were born like you are.” Walter replied, “As were Aihola and the others in your unit.”

“Then how do you explain the vampires in the Dysea’s capital. They moved around freely during the day, even in direct sunlight.” Tari spoke, “As did Marcus.”

Walter nodded. “The older the vampire the more resilient they become to the effects of the sun.” He said. “We know Yuri turned Marcus... and that would account for his ability to move about during the day.”

“Do you think she bit all of those that Martin fought?” Tari asked. “I know they have breeding farms, places where vampires are born and raised. I have never seen one, but they do exist.”

Walter shook his head. “Tari... the level of technology needed to splice genes at the molecular level in the way you suggest does not exist. Even we could not do that, and I believe that may be the reason my genomes began to snap and go insane. We can combine DNA and mold genetic material, but to actually create DNA as you suggest... that isn’t...” Walter looked at him, his eyes growing larger.

Tari nodded. “It isn’t possible. Just as the technology we have seen here so far should not be possible.” He said. “But it is here. We see it every day, so it does exist.”

“And if it is here... and we can operate it but not build it...” Anuk spoke.

Aricia nodded. “That means someone else built it and brought it here.” She finished Anuk’s statement.

EDEN

ONE WEEK LATER

“Anlain is behind most of it.” Thimina spoke. “The movement is very small... numbering no more than a few hundred in all the cities outside of Eden’s embrace, but it is growing.”

“And the vampires we have discovered?” Aihola asked from her seat next to Tarifa.

This meeting had been called hurriedly, only twelve of the full Elder Council present. The rest would receive a full briefing when they returned from wherever they currently were. Thimina sat in her normal chair, Treblar to her right. On the far side of the table Anotan sat beside Selene and Dysea’s mother, Normya who had recently been appointed to the Elder Council. Vengal and Tareif sat in two chairs usually occupied by other ministers, while Dekton stood in his usual place behind Aihola and Tarifa. Wallace and Anari also sat in chairs at the table, while Lynwe stood slightly behind Selene.

The young man who sat against the wall had become their shadow from the moment he had arrived in Eden. He was dressed in casual clothes and black boots. His hair was shoulder length and his skin deeply tanned. His dark eyes swept the room intelligently. This was the Tier Six telepath that Thr’won had sent from Sparta, and true to her and Martin’s word, he was rapidly teaching them all he could in such a short time. He was nearly eleven hundred years old but did not appear a day over thirty-five. He had been working diligently with Lynwe and Selene, and even in a week he was quite impressed with how far they had come.

“They are lending assistance when they believe it does not reveal what they are.” Tareif replied.

“How many are we talking?” Tarifa asked.

“We have positively identified sixty-seven so far.” Tareif answered. “Spread out over four of our remaining High Elf cities.”

“That is a manageable number.” Selene spoke now.

“They’re vampires Selene.” Anotan said looking at her. “You and Lynwe among all of us know how dangerous they are.”

No one caught noticed Anari’s eyes settle on Lynwe where she stood. Anari had to admit, she looked just as beautiful as she always did, if not more so now. And she was very possessive of Selene, who seemed to bask in that attention, and surprisingly she returned it. This was the first time Anari had seen Lynwe in the several months since she had gone to the moon. She suspected Lynwe knew of Hetyon and had remained away for that purpose, but seeing her now, she looked calmer and more in control than Anari had ever seen her.

Selene nodded. “Yes we do. And I do not disagree with you Anotan, not in the least. They are dangerous, very much so, but I would rather deal with under seventy of them, then the hundreds that must have infiltrated the human settlements by now. It is much easier to get away with killing a human for a vampire. They do not have the natural resistance to a vampire’s bit that elves do. It is much harder to kill an elf that is fighting back than it is a human. And our elf strength is nearly the equal of a full vampire, and it would cause problems they do not need.”

Anotan nodded slowly. “Then how do they survive within our cities. There are no humans for them to hunt and feed off of.” He asked.

“Elves like Anlain.” Tarifa answered coldly, “Those willing to sell their own people out for the taste of power.” She looked at Aihola. “You were right *Nya Istel*. I should have had him arrested and killed that first day.”

“He is telling everyone you had Telan killed without a trial Tarifa.” Treblar spoke. “And that the manner of his death was not pleasant. The details surrounding his demise are not known to us. Perhaps you should tell us what happened, at least then we can combat what he is saying.”

“Telan was a threat to both Tarifa and Aihola.” Dekton spoke stepping forward. “After the attack against them on the steps of this building I ordered our people to begin searching the Western District for him. One of the assassins revealed he was here in Eden before he died. When they discovered Telan, I terminated him, with our King’s blessing.”

Dekton what are you doing? Aihola reached out to him.

They do not need to know about your city yet Little Drow. He answered. *The longer we keep that secret, the better off we are.*

Aihola had come to love it when he called her that. He never used the term in public, only when they were alone with Tarifa, and the way he said it made shivers course through her.

You don’t trust the man and women in this room? She asked finally.

I trust no one but the King when it comes to the lives of you and Tarifa. Dekton answered without hesitation.

He is right Nya Istel. Tarifa spoke. *Nayeca is a boon for Vengal so he reports to me. And not just with the information of where this city is. To reveal who she truly is would put your people at risk. I’m not willing to do that.*

Aihola nodded her head. “You all know how Martin... how our King feels about the crimes Telan committed against Tarifa and her father. You can tell our people they should be more worried about the crimes Telan was guilty of than the manner of his death.”

“I agree.” Normya spoke for the first time. “And I know Dysea feels the same way.”

“I for one have no intention of disagreeing with the High King.” Thimina spoke. “It is he who has brought us all together, as we had hoped for so many years. If he chose Dekton as the instrument of Telan’s punishment so be it. Who are we to argue that, especially considering the crimes he was guilty of? We need to focus more on what he has tasked us with doing.”

Selene nodded. “He has stated that he will not interfere with what we do as long as it is done for the good of our people. All of our people.” She spoke. “We have come so far in such a short period of time. Now is not when we should allow one man to begin fracturing what we have built. There are ways to render Anlain impotent with his words and deeds. We fight his lies with the truth.”

Treblar nodded quickly. It was his duty to do this as Eden's Information Minister. "I will draft a short statement in regards to Telan's death. Dekton... with your permission and approval of Aihola and Tarifa, I will reference you as acting by order of the High King, which you were."

Dekton nodded, "As you wish."

"Now... what do we do about Graham and his cronies here in Eden?" Anotan spoke.

All of them present knew of Graham and what had happen with Selene and Lynwe. All of them except Anari, and she leaned forward to listen intently.

"With what Peder has been able to teach us in a short time, I was able to do a gentle probe of Graham while he was rutting." Selene spoke. "With our continued lessons I am quite sure that I can penetrate what minimal physic shields he does have and learn what I can. I do know that not only did they intend to use me to gather as much intelligence as they could, but I was also supposed to be their instrument in the deaths of Aihola and Tarifa."

"How?" Tarifa asked.

"One of Graham's implanted commands was to kill the two of you at all costs." Lynwe explained. "We surmise that they would have waited until an appropriate time and then triggered that command within Selene. She would have acted as executioner without thinking."

Tarifa sat back in her chair. "And then they could claim they had no knowledge of this, as everyone would know Selene was the killer. Someone within Eden's own command structure." She said. "Martin would not attack because of this. His hands would be tied."

Selene nodded. "They made two mistakes. The first was not realizing that when Graham first bit me, he triggered the dormant vampire genes within me that Deval left. And because Deval was a Pureblood, he would never know the difference." Selene looked at Lynwe and smiled. "The second mistake was not realizing that Lynwe had come into my life."

"Milady, if I may?" The Spartan spoke.

Tarifa nodded. "Please Peder, go ahead."

The young looking man stood up and moved to the table. "Allow me first to introduce myself to those of you who don't know me. My name is Peder and I am a Spartan sent here by our King to work with Selene and Lynwe. My people... my King's people are telepaths. We can communicate through connections we are able to establish with someone else's mind. I can not however read minds, so please everyone relax. Your thoughts are your own."

Tarifa smiled at the chuckles from around the table. Dekton had introduced Peder immediately to her and Aihola when he arrived and they found him to be intelligent and witty, and seemingly overjoyed to be out of Sparta and working in another country. He was not an Alpha wolf, and he had immediately sensed Dekton's aura on both her and Aihola, as well as their own auras burning brightly for him, and he had treated them almost like the plague after that. When they had questioned Dekton that night about his reaction to them, he explained to them the hierarchy of wolf society and how it was inappropriate for Peder to be anything but respectful with the chosen mate or mates of another wolf, but especially an Alpha like Dekton.

"My abilities allow me to communicate with those who are also telepathic, like Selene and Lynwe. Unlike my people, most individuals are not born with this ability, and it takes many centuries for it to manifest itself. We have found that elves are far more capable of establishing telepathic connections than humans. We rate ourselves on a Tier status, six being the highest. There are currently twenty-two Tier Six telepaths in Sparta, and four who do not have a ranking of sorts. I am one of the twenty-two."

"Wait... you said there are four who don't have a ranking?" Thimina spoke. "What are they then?"

Peder smiled. "The four I speak of are our King and his three Queens." He replied. "And they are not ranked on our scale because their telepathic abilities are unable to be charted, which in layman's terms means their power exceeds our ability to rank them. I was chosen to assist Selene and Lynwe due to my abilities and the fact I have studied vampire for several centuries."

"And just how old are you?" Tareif asked.

"One thousand one hundred and thirty-two years old War Master and still going strong," Peder replied, smiling at the murmurs that swept the room. "Essentially what has happened is this," He began. "The man we know as Minister Deval is a Pureblood vampire, and during his times with Selene, while unbeknownst to her, he very slowly over a period of time turned her into a vampire herself. It was done in such a way that the genes he

passed to her remained dormant until Graham bit her, just as she has explained.” He walked around the table slowly. “I am one of the few in Sparta who have actually studied the vampires and their history. Only the very old vampires have this skill, and this fact alone implies this Deval is far older than we first suspected. We have dossiers on many of the Pureblood and senior vampires within the Alliance, gathered over many centuries. Most of them remain hidden or out of sight, but many work within the upper structures of the Alliance close to the Priestess.

“I dare say if not for the vampire witch’s sadistic side, Lynwe would not be here among us now, and we would not know of this plot. The fact that Lynwe was already half vampire negated the main effects of Selene’s bite to her during their moment of passion, and essentially all she did was transfer the Pureblood genes to Lynwe from her. If this had been someone else, they would have been killed almost immediately, or at the very least be a mindless vampire soldier by now. Instead... because Lynwe already possessed many of the vampire genes, all Selene’s bite did was complete the change fully within her, and basically give them a very powerful telepathic connection between each other. This works in our favor for two reasons. Due to their relationship, Lynwe is able to take Selene’s blood almost immediately after Graham leaves her. This allows her to counteract any commands he may have implanted because of the Pureblood genes within her, enforcing Selene’s natural resistance to such commands. The Pureblood genes will always overpower a lesser vampire like Graham. The second reason, as Selene has hinted at, due to the amount of blood they have already shared they are linked telepathically quite strongly. Due to the elf genes within them, the physic connection is made even stronger. Selene was strong willed to begin with, and when added with Lynwe’s considerable will, and a few more classes in controlling their new skills, we can crack Graham’s mind open like vault and get whatever information may be in there. He is a new vampire, and does not fully comprehend what it is he is doing.”

“He won’t know this?” Thimina asked.

Peder shrugged. “Whether he knows it or not will not matter. The moment we have everything his mind can provide, he will be eliminated. I have studied the imprint he has left on Selene, and he has done nothing in Eden except act decadently. His only directive has been to not kill or bite anyone within Eden. If he needs to feed he is leaving Eden and finding prey outside the limits of the city which consists of mainly wild animals.”

“Tarifa... would it not be better to try and turn him in such a way that it will help us?” Vengal asked from his chair.

Tarifa shook her head. “We thought of that already and there would be no way for us to control him, or even be sure he could complete such a command.” She replied. “And we don’t want the Alliance doing the same thing we are.”

Vengal nodded. “Yes... I see your point on that.”

“By the way General; when will you be leaving for Sparta?” Aihola asked with a smile.

Vengal couldn’t hide his smile. “The transport leaves tonight. We should be there by morning if what Daniel tells me is correct.”

“You bastard Vengal,” Thimina spoke. “I so wanted to go with you. I am dying to see this city of Sparta.”

“Then enjoy yourself Elder Thimina.” Aihola said with a smile. “With the King’s recommendation you are now the emissary of Eden to Sparta.”

Thimina looked stunned at this news and she looked at Aihola and Tarifa with wide eyes. “Oh you honor me my Queens.” She spoke.

“You will only be gone a few days this trip, but once Martin is established; you will return and live in Sparta.” Tarifa told her.

“What about the rest of us?” Tareif bellowed in his customary booming voice.

“In time my friends.” Tarifa spoke with a laugh at her father’s words. “Martin has assured me all of us will spend time in Sparta. Aihola and I want the surveillance on the elf vampires in the mentioned cities pulled back to a distance for a time. Not removed completely, but done from a far. With Anlain making waves such as he is, it might make all of them nervous and more attentive to their surroundings. Better that they don’t detect our people, even by accident.”

Tareif nodded. “I’ll send word to Cantel.” He spoke.

“All of us have had a long day, and I suggest we get some rest before returning for tomorrow’s final draft of Eden’s constitution.” Tarifa said. “Thank you all for coming and we will keep everyone informed of what is happening.”

Anari waited by the door to the conference room and watched as Selene walked out whispering with Aihola. Several others filed out before Lynwe approached with Tarifa, both of them whispering to one another.

“Lynwe?” Anari asked, stepping forward.

Lynwe and Tarifa stopped and Lynwe met Anari’s amber eyes. “Anari,” She spoke. “How are you?”

Tarifa squeezed Lynwe’s hand and leaned up to kiss her gently on the cheek. “We will talk later Lynwe.” She said softly.

“Thank you Tarifa.” Lynwe answered.

Anari waited until Tarifa had continued past them before returning her eyes to Lynwe. She smiled. “You are looking well Lynwe.” She spoke.

“As are you,” Lynwe told her. “I understand you are doing great things with Admiral Wallace in training the new soldiers.”

Anari smiled. “I have found something I love.”

“And someone.” Lynwe said.

“Lynwe... I was going to tell you. I...” Anari started.

Lynwe gently placed a finger to her lips and stepped closer, her eyes bright. “It is I who should be apologizing to you Anari.” She said. “How I treated you was... it was inexcusable. I allowed my hatred and anger to cloud everything I did. I took that out on you. I would hope one day you can forgive me.”

“You are not the same Lynwe.” Anari said. “I no longer sense those same emotions flowing through you.”

“Oh they are there,” Lynwe said with a smile. “But I have learned not to allow them to rule who I am anymore. Tarifa and Aihola showed me I could love and not be weak. I am so happy that you found someone who loves you as I should have.”

“Lynwe?” The soft voice spoke from the side. They both turned to see Selene standing there, her hands clasped in front of her. “I was... I was waiting for you my love.”

Lynwe smiled and held out her hand to Selene, who took it quickly, moving to stand next to her in an almost possessive manner Anari noticed. “Selene this is Anari.” Lynwe spoke.

Selene’s steel blue eyes filled with recognition and her face relaxed almost immediately. She held out her hand to Anari. “Lynwe has spoken very fondly of you Anari. I am very happy to meet you.”

Anari smiled and took her hand, bowing her head slightly. “It makes my heart sing to see that Lynwe has found what makes her happy.”

Selene looked at Lynwe and squeezed her hand. “She did not know whether to approach you.” She told Anari. “I have been telling her to talk with you, but there are times when she is as stubborn as a mule.”

Lynwe nodded slowly. “I will not deny that.” She said with a smile.

“Will you join us for dinner?” Selene asked. “Lynwe makes an incredible venison stew and it has been cooking all day. We have wine and bread at our home, and we would love to meet...”

“Hetyon,” Anari spoke her eyes bright. “Her name is Hetyon.”

“Please Anari.” Lynwe asked her. “Whatever may have happened in our past, your friendship means more to me than you know. You were always there for me, even when I shunned you. Allow me to try and make it up to you.”

Anari smiled. “I think I would like that.” She said. “Should we bring anything?”

Selene shook her head. “We have everything. Shall we say seven?”

Anari nodded. “We will be there.”

“I look forward to it.” Selene told her.

Anari nodded with a smile and left them in the conference room. Lynwe looked at Selene and leaned over to kiss her softly.

“Thank you.” She spoke softly.

Selene slipped her arms around Lynwe’s waist and pressed her head to her chest. “No matter what we have become Lynwe, I won’t allow it to change who we are in our hearts. You and she were friends, and we can start by rebuilding what you may have lost, and then moving from there. And we will do it together.”

Lynwe smiled and wrapped her arms tightly around this petite half elf and now complete vampire female. No matter what else happened, as long as she had Selene that was all that mattered to her.

SPARTA

Dysea's eyes opened slowly, the dim light from the hall casting a soft glow on their bed. She remained still and let her wolf eyes adjust, noting that her head was resting on Anja's firm abdomen. She could feel Aricia's silky soft raven hair splayed across the back of her neck and shoulder and she lifted her head slowly seeing Aricia's face tucked comfortably within the crook of Anja's neck and shoulder, her free arm resting gently over the top of Anja's large breasts. Dysea smiled and turned, searching for Martin. She had originally fallen asleep within his embrace, her head on his powerful chest. As her eyes scanned the bed, she realized he was not with them. Slowly she extracted herself from the bed, smiling once more as Aricia and Anja shifted and melted against one another when her weight was gone.

Dysea grabbed the robe and reached out with a light psychic probe to find him. Dysea padded softly from the bedroom, closing the door behind her and headed down the corridor. She found him in the sitting room, the rugs and pillows still strewn about. He was naked as he always was when it was just them within their home and Dysea just stood there watching him as he sipped the tea and reviewed the data pads scattered about around him.

The six weeks of training with the Spartans had sculpted his body even more than it was when she first saw him. Her life had changed so much in the last year and Dysea relished the events leading her here with him. Martin had swept her off her feet literally, and she had never looked back. More than Anja and even Aricia, Dysea was enchanted with her wolf form, and she and Martin had gone running on many nights through the mountains that surrounded the villa. They didn't fear discovery or predators, for Martin's size when in wolf form was massive and intimidating. Aricia had learned from birth how to be a wolf, while Dysea had been forced to learn as an adult, but she had taken to it almost naturally. She knew the tricks now. You propelled your body with the back legs, braking and turning with the front and movements of her tail. Her legs had become more muscular and powerful, and Martin had spent many hours exploring just her legs, much to her delight. She learned that you always had to be alert to the type of terrain you were on whether it be soft dirt, mud, rock or sand, for each surface called for different pressure and tension of her body. There were times when she kept her muscles tight as coiled springs and sometimes she relaxed like old rubber. The biggest lesson Martin had taught her was you always remained *aware*. Aware of her surroundings, the beat of her heart, the pumping of her blood and the rumble of her lungs combined with the rhythm of her four powerful legs. She had developed into almost as fine a hunter as Martin, always able to detect the scent of small game around her, to her right, left and even behind her. She knew what game scattered at their approach and what game tried to hide. Dysea was always *aware* now.

She was aware of the effect Martin had on her, the power of his aura over her, and hers on him. She was the first he had turned and Helen had said that gave them a special bond that Anja did not have. While Dysea knew he loved them all equally, there was a place inside him that she would always have to herself, and while she loved Anja and Aricia just as deeply as she did Martin, the knowledge that she held that small part of Martin all to herself always made her feel special. And Martin always made her feel special.

Dysea knew he was aware of her just standing there. His sense of smell was beyond anything she had seen. Martin could pick her scent or that of Anja and Aricia out of a crowd of thousands, and track it across a continent if needed. Helen had also told her that an Alpha wolf would always recognize the scent of his mate, no matter if she had altered her appearance and even gone so far as to mask her unique scent. He would find her. This knowledge thrilled Dysea, knowing that Martin could find her no matter where she was or what she was doing. The love she felt for Martin and Anja and Aricia had gone far beyond that of simple physical pleasure. They craved each other's presence within their bond, within their minds. Just the sensation of their auras was enough to fill them with peace and pleasure, the physical aspect of their love only adding to the depth of what they shared.

Dysea moved slowly up to him, her fingers reaching out and caressing his broad powerful shoulders as she settled to the floor next to him. She nuzzled her nose against his skin, breathing deeply of his mint like scent, allowing it to fill her.

“What are you doing *Nauta Melme*?” She asked softly. “You should be sleeping my love.”

Martin smiled and nodded his head. “I was thinking about all the things everyone was saying tonight.” He told her, turning to look into her emerald green eyes.

Martin could not get over Dysea’s natural beauty. No matter the time of day or what her condition, she looked simply gorgeous all of the time. Perhaps it was the elf part of her, as Walter had made them to be irresistible to men, but there was something about Dysea that called to him just a tad more intensely than Anja and Aricia. Martin didn’t really care, for he loved all of them with all that he was, but whenever Dysea turned those smoldering eyes on him, his skin would tingle as it did now.

“What awakened you *Melda Min*?” He asked.

Dysea smiled, “The rumbling of Anja’s stomach.” She answered softly. “She did not eat this evening. I will have to scold her in the morning.”

Martin chuckled and set aside the data pad he was reading. He pulled Dysea into his lap, her platinum hair reaching almost to her buttocks now. She situated herself on top of him, the light robe falling from her shoulders. Dysea simply pulled it completely off as she preferred to be completely nude whenever Martin held her. She reached down and picked up one of the pads he had been reading, perusing the contents quickly. She looked at him oddly, questions in her beautiful eyes.

“*Nauta Melme* what is...?” She started to ask.

“Let’s just say I don’t believe everything is as it’s supposed to be.” He told her softly.

“Where did you get these my love?” Dysea asked him. “I was under the impression this information was... how you say... compartmentalized by the Spartan Senate. These are the personal files of every Senator and Council Member, and scrolls on vampires and their history. *Nauta Melme* even I know they are held utterly secret except by those on the Senate. Theron would never have given them to you.”

“Theron didn’t give them to me.” Martin told her.

“Then who?” She persisted.

“*Melda Min* do you trust me?” He asked softly.

“*Nauta Melme* I think you know the answer to that question.” Dysea answered. “Why do you ask it of me?”

“Have I ever lied to you?”

“Never,” Dysea replied instantly.

“I have not spoken with anyone about this except Andreus.” Martin said softly. “Lock what I say to you deep within your mind *Melda Min*.”

“You are frightening me *Nauta Melme*.” She said.

“I’ve felt it since I came here.” He told her, “A tendril of power. It has tried to touch me half a dozen times since I arrived.”

“A threat?”

Martin shook his head. “I don’t believe so. It... it has been telling me that everything is not as it seems. It is like a whisper in my dreams, faint and barely detectable, but it is there.”

Dysea took his rough face in her hands, her thumbs stroking the outline of his neatly trimmed goatee. “You have grown far more powerful in your time here than I think anyone realizes my love. I have felt it, Anja and Aricia as well. Your mind was vast to us before, but now it is like... it is like all the stars in the universe. It is such a wonder to lose ourselves within your thoughts.”

“Do not discount the power you and they have gained *Melda Min*.” He said. “You hide it well... but you have grown far stronger telepathically than even Anja, and she is beyond Thr’won now. They may not be able to sense it in you... but I can.”

“Helen... Helen has told me that because... because I was the first you turned there would always be a unique connection between us.” Dysea spoke softly. “I love Anja and Aricia with all that I am, just as I love you, but I wanted to keep that part of us to myself.”

Martin smiled and nuzzled her neck. “Do you think because you are an elf, my feelings for you would be different in any way?”

“Perhaps,” She answered shyly.

Martin pulled her closer to him, grabbing her ass cheeks and holding her tight as he stared into her emerald eyes. “Look into my thoughts *Melda Min*.” He said softly, “Second door to the left.” He added with a chuckle.

Dysea laughed gently and placed her forehead to his, closing her eyes. It was such an easy thing for her to enter his mind, he never closed it to the three of them, and it always filled Dysea with joy when she could swim within his thoughts. She waited as he formed the door in his mind and she went to it.

Open it Melda Min. His voice told her.

Dysea did not hesitate and pushed open the door. She gasped as it opened to reveal a wild and lush green forest with towering trees and a glass like lake far off in the background. Snow capped mountains rose in the distance, a breeze blowing through the tall grass and flowers. She projected an image of herself on the hilltop and gasped once more when she could feel the breeze on her skin and the smell of wildflowers in the air.

This is where I come. Martin’s voice spoke to her from the dazzling blue sky above, and then an image of him was next to her reaching for her hand. *This is where I come when I want to center myself and be at peace. I come here because it reminds me of you. I have always come here.*

Nauta Melme it is beautiful. It... Dysea’s image turned to look at him surprised. *Always?*

Martin nodded. *This place has always been here Dysea, in my mind. It is pure and alive, like you. I knew the moment that Tarifa and I found you that you would be with me forever. The love we share, the four of us... it is unique. It flows through all of us with equal power and intensity. Aricia and Anja have an added connection, more in common if you will. It is why they gravitate to one another. They have become an inseparable pair in our lives, loving each other as well as you and I. You and I have that for now.*

Nauta Melme what do you mean for now? I don’t want to lose that ever.

We won’t Melda Min. He told her quickly. *There is another that will join us soon. She is like you and I in more ways than I can begin to explain. As Anja and Aricia gravitate to each other, you and she will gravitate to each other.*

But what about you Nauta Melme, She asked him. *Who will...?*

All of you, He answered with a smile. *You and she more so than Aricia and Anja, but we are all parts of a whole. If they think we are powerful now... when she joins us Melda Min, it will truly be wondrous.*

Who is she? Is she here?

Martin looked up and suddenly the blue sky had become billions and billions of stars in the night sky. Dysea looked up her eyes wide in awe. *She’s out there somewhere. And we’ll know when we meet her.*

Dysea looked at him. *That... that is why you did not react as I thought you would when everyone was speaking tonight. What have you seen Nauta Melme? Tell me. I beg you.*

Martin’s image smiled at her. *They are only fleeting images really; planets, stars, two suns, three moons; all of them out there. And five chairs, all very ornately carved, made of white marble and trimmed in red.*

The night sky disappeared again to return to the dazzling cloudless blue sky above her. Dysea looked around before turning her eyes on him once more. *There is something out there isn’t there. You believe it to be true; I can see it in your eyes Nauta Melme.*

It is out there. I don’t know what it is, but it is there, and soon we’ll know all of it.

Dysea was quiet for a moment, allowing the breeze to caress her skin. *It is truly amazing here Nauta Melme.*

It is always open to you Melda Min. Only you will have the key here, and if you ever need to you come here, I want you to come here. And I will be here as well.

Dysea’s eyes sprang open and she pressed her lips to his and kissed him hungrily, her tongue joining his in a delightful waltz of their feelings for each other. They pulled apart after a long moment and she stared into his dark eyes.

“You are so good to me.” She spoke softly. “How is it that I can be so blessed?”

Martin grinned. “I’m just lucky I guess.” He said before nibbling her shoulder. “The three most beautiful women in the world and they are mine.”

“And this other?” Dysea asked.

“If her beauty is anything like yours *Melda Min*... I will die a happy man.” He told her.

Dysea kissed him softly. "You will not die *Nauta Melme*." She spoke in a whisper. "Not for many hundreds of years. And I will be able to enjoy your touch on me always." Dysea took his face in her hands once more. "You said... you said this tendril of power you have felt. It warns you of something, some danger?"

"I don't know if it is a warning or a sign of danger." He replied. "All I know for sure is it keeps telling me something is not right."

"Then we will be more cautious." Dysea spoke.

Martin chuckled looking at her. "You have an uncanny way of cutting through all the bullshit and getting right to the point you know that?"

Dysea stared into his eyes and hit him with her aura as hard as she could. His reaction was instantaneous as she knew it would be, his whole body tensed, and his aura burst forth wrapping around her in a heartbeat. Dysea gasped and immediately felt her belly clench in undisguised desire and need. Her grip on his face tightened and she looked at him, her emerald green eyes now blazing with wanton lust. Martin watched them change, becoming smaller and outlined in black and now the yellowish gold of his eyes. He smiled as he looked into those eyes, now so different with the myriad of colors in them, but oh so much more beautiful.

"Take me *Nauta Melme*!" Dysea gasped, grinding her hips down upon his lap and feeling his huge cock spring alive and thicken. "I don't care how, just take me and possess me with every ounce of your power!"

Martin growled lustily, his cock now standing at full mast, and Dysea groaned as it brushed against her pierced clit. It was so hot, nearly burning her with its touch. She felt his aura wrap around her tightly, focusing only on her now, and her blood began to pound in her veins as she released all her restraints and returned the sensations back upon him with her own aura. She was a female yes, but she was also an Alpha female, and she wanted her mate at this moment more than anything else in the universe. Her juices were already pouring from her center, her labia fully engorged and opened like a butterfly. He claimed her lips and she whimpered against his kiss as she dropped her hands between their bodies and grasped his molten shaft in her small hands. Her groan of need become more pronounced as he was hotter and thicker than she could remember and she lifted her hips slightly, directing the flared head of his cock to her opening. Her thighs quivered in anticipation, her nipples hard beyond memory, as his hands gripped her hips tightly.

She broke their kiss and bit his bottom lip with her fangs, nibbling just a bit harder than normal. "Don't... don't tease me *Nauta Melme*." She gasped. "Take me damn you!"

Dysea screamed when she felt his hands grip her skin even harder and he pulled her down on top of him. Her head flew back as every wonderfully thick delicious inch of his pulsing cock drove into her belly in one powerful time stopping plunge.

Martin rolled over smoothly and suddenly she was under him, and then he did possess her. He slid his arms under her back, her tan and tattooed flesh pressed tightly to his burning skin. Her breasts were crushed against his iron like chest, her nipples sizzling against his flesh. His hands curled around her shoulders and he didn't pause or hesitate. He drove into her hard, smashing her pierced clit with his steel hard lower abdomen, causing the flames of desire to rip through her. She spread her legs wide, curling her thighs along his driving hips, her hands dropping to his powerful ass and she licked his neck and throat like a female wolf in heat. Each downward smash of his hips drove his massive cock into her belly, tidal waves of pleasures spreading outward from her pussy, reaching places she'd never felt them reach before. He was not holding back, and Dysea was lost in a kaleidoscope of luscious pleasure, every nerve ending in her body singing out its joy. His powerful body molded hers, shaped it to his whim, and he possessed her in every way. His pile driving cock rammed home again and Dysea felt the scream erupt from within her lungs as everything tore free. Her body shuddered violently within his embrace, as her orgasm spilled over the top of the dam. Her sweet come flooded from her with such force, it squirted around his thick plunging cock, and bathing their lower bodies in her essence and stealing her breathe away with its intensity.

And he did not stop, even as Dysea felt her belly clench once more in another impending orgasm. Her eyes opened wide as he continue to drive into her, his lips and tongue dancing across her shoulders and neck, nibbling and biting and kissing her skin. Dysea would be deliciously sore in the morning, but that did not stop her from urging him on, biting his skin, her fingers gripping his powerful ass and driving her hips upwards on every incredible downward stroke of his dominating cock. He filled her, stretched her to the point where she thought she would split apart, but her body eagerly gobbled up every inch he gave her, and demanded more. She could feel the length of his shaft as it moved within her pussy, reaching places he had never touched before. His

cock throbbed with power, making her his in every way. She gasped when he drove into her with such power their bodies inched across the soft rug. His muscles clenched tightly, his volcano hot balls pulsing with life pressed against her upturned ass. His arms pulled her closer, his lips going to her neck as he ground his hips against her, the base of his massive cock rubbing hard against her pierced clit and forcing the waves of agonizing pleasure to surge throughout her burning body. His cock swelled even larger within her, his balls drawing tight against her asscheeks and Dysea howled her delight as he erupted into her with the force of a raging hurricane, triggering the most massive orgasm she had ever experienced.

Her entire body went rigid within his arms as every muscle screamed out wanting to rip from her skin. She crushed him to her with strength she did not know she had as her come flooded from her like a bursting dam. His scorching hot come blasted directly into her accepting womb four times... five... six times... seven glorious times, each powerful surge causing her to shake in her own orgasm.

Her ears were ringing, the blood pounding in her head, racing unchecked through her veins as she clutched at him, unable to do anything but lovingly accept his warm seed into her. Their auras swarmed around each other, thick with passion and desire, and Dysea finally and completely felt like she was totally one with him.

Martin lifted his head from her neck, his face shiny with sweat and his chest heaving, but he remained as hard as steel within her. He claimed her lips and kissed her passionately, her toes curling in happiness as she felt her pleasure receptors begin to fire once more.

Then they felt it, two more auras combining with theirs, both of them hot and heavy with passion and desire.

“Wow!” Anja’s husky voice spoke from next to them. “Can I get some of that?”

Martin and Dysea looked at her, Anja’s eyes changed and her body burning with need.

“Dysea... you must share him when he is like this!” Aricia’s voice spoke from the other side, equally husky and laced with desire and lust.

Martin’s senses were in full lust mode now, smelling the sweet aromas of the three of them so close, feeling their auras enveloping him. A low growl escaped his throat as his yellow/gold eyes settled on Aricia’s azure blue ones. She returned his lustful gaze as Anja settled onto the rug next to Dysea, extending her four inch tongue out and licking her shoulder longingly. Martin slowly withdrew from Dysea’s dripping pussy, his twelve inch cock slick with their combined come and still hard as a rock and he watched as Aricia turned slowly away from him, stretching out on the floor, offering herself to him. His hungry eyes followed the line of her calves and thighs, the perfect curves to her beautiful ass. He moved over the top of her back slowly, his tongue tracing a long line up the center of her spine, eliciting powerful shivers of pleasure from Aricia as his overwhelming aura embraced her. Lost as she was in the lustful feelings, she didn’t remember him shifting position and lining up his cock with her dripping slit from behind.

Anja watched Aricia’s beautiful face contort in exquisite pleasure and she screamed out her joy as Martin speared her from behind in one powerful downward plunge until his balls pressed against her ass and he filled her completely. She turned her jade green and black eyes to Dysea, and saw her staring at her, a look of intense desire in her emerald and gold eyes.

“You... you really got him worked up Dysea.” Anja spoke with a smile. “You must give us your secret.”

Anja yelped softly as Dysea sprang at her, rolling over and pressing her body against Anja’s, new fire burning in her blood and her eyes. “Perhaps I should show you Melyanna.” She gasped.

Anja screamed in rhythm with Aricia as Dysea’s head descended to her overheated center and her tongue plunged into Anja’s honey tasting pussy, preparing Anja for what awaited her. As Anja’s fingers entwined within her silky soft platinum blond hair and she cried out in pleasure, Dysea felt the tendril of Martin’s mind touch her.

Remember our place Melda Min, for it is ours alone.

Dysea felt his aura embrace her once more even as he possessed Aricia in much the same manner as he had her only moments ago. She could feel Aricia’s mind awash with staggering pleasure as he hammered into her, his wonderful cock filling her younger lover beyond anything she had ever imagined, yet everything she had come to expect from Martin. Dysea smiled as she delved deeper into Anja’s sweet essence with her tongue, her hands reaching up to pinch the nipples of her flame haired lover.

Tonight she would be an Alpha female and claim what she wanted.

Anja's eyes flew open in that instant as Dysea quickly brought one hand down to Anja's firm tight ass and buried her index finger completely into her puckered asshole even as her soft lips encased her raging hard clit within their warmth. Anja's body convulsed once and then she too joined in Aricia's howls of pleasure.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

SPARTA

Theron looked up from the data pad he held, his eyes surveying the full Senate of Sparta from where he sat in the Steward's chair.

"The motion to expand Sparta's northern border is passed by a count of 138 for and 22 against." He spoke. "Sparta's Corp of Engineers will begin construction of the wall extensions at the beginning of next week." He saw the murmurs and nods of approval from the majority of the Senate. Only those whose constituents would lose some of their business traffic during the two year construction had voted against the measure even though they knew it was best for Sparta. Theron set aside the last data pad on his desk, signaling the end to a long day of bill passage and debate. He got to his feet, seeing Dymas and Panos sitting in the gallery, waiting for him and the meeting they had after the day long Senate gatherings. "Very well... that concludes our administrative business for the day. Does anyone have any new business to bring forward?"

"I have something." Autolycus spoke up from his seat.

Theron nodded. "As Steward of the Throne I recognize the esteemed Senator Autolycus. You have the floor sir."

Heads turned as he walked down to stand in front of the gallery of men and women. He let his eyes play across the ninety-seven men and fifty-three women. "My new business is not entirely business related." He began slowly, before settling his eyes on Theron. "It is more related to the notion of wanting information from the Steward."

Theron looked at him puzzled. "Go on."

"Perhaps the Steward could advise this esteemed gathering as to why Spartan funds are being used to house a foreign Alpha male and his mates in the Royal villa. Perhaps the Steward could explain why Spartan Centurions are being used to guard these people, including the daughter of Xenos, who as we all know is dishonored among Spartans due to the actions of her brother." Autolycus spoke evenly and clearly, seeing the looks of surprise on many faces, and the looks of shock on others. "Why is it that this foreign Alpha is receiving Spartan training with Centurions who only just passed their own Agoges? Why has he received several guided and unguided tours of our government facilities? Why is the Spartan Chief Mage working so closely with him and those females he calls mates? And why is the she-elf he calls a mate being allowed to walk around after brutally attacking my son and two of his companions?" Autolycus's eyes bore directly at Theron. "Perhaps the Steward could explain all this to the members of this Senate."

Theron sat back in his chair slowly staring at Autolycus. "May I ask where you have gotten this information Autolycus?"

Autolycus shrugged, "Here and there." He replied casually. "Where I got my information has no bearing on the questions I just asked. The Guardian of the Line himself has been back in Sparta for a time period unprecedented in our history."

"Dymas is allowed to return home whenever he wishes!" Panos exploded from the gallery. "He need not explain his reasons to you!" Dymas reached up and took his father's arm to urge him to return to his seat.

"Yes he is." Autolycus spoke. "However this time he returned with the body of his brother." He spoke bringing murmurs from the men and women gathered. "Androcles was lost to us nearly fifty years ago, and apparently he has passed to the next life. His death was not made public knowledge Panos. Why is that?"

"I wasn't aware there was a law saying I had to announce the death of my son!" Panos snapped.

"He was a Spartan Centurion." Autolycus replied, "In service to Sparta. Yet he returns home dead. I would think that deserves an explanation."

"The circumstances around my son's death are none of your concern!" Panos roared. "And you dishonor him by inquiring about them!"

“Do I?” Autolycus spoke. “Then there is truth to the rumor that this foreign Alpha is the one who killed him I take it.”

Theron got to his feet quickly. “Where did you acquire that information?” He asked the question far too quickly and was not able to catch his words.

Autolycus looked at him. “I assume from your reaction that this rumor is true then.” He spoke calmly.

“What does it matter how my brother died?” Dymas asked. “He has passed onto the next life with honor, and that is all that need to be made public.”

Autolycus looked at Dymas. “The death of any Centurion is cause enough for questions.” He spoke. “This foreign born Alpha arriving with the body of your brother and his entourage elicits more questions. The way he and his arrogant mates have been treated allows for even more. Why is it the flame haired one is allowed to work in our main hospital, and even to direct our senior staff? Why is it that the she-elf, the same one who perpetrated an unwarranted attack against my son and his companions, is allowed unlimited access to our educational institutions and records? And why is it that the dishonored daughter of a former member of this Senate, a daughter who has been denounced publicly by her father, why is she living as if she has not a care in the world?”

“I turned him many years ago.” Dymas/Walter spoke quickly. “He has been raised on the North American continent, as well as the two females you speak of; Anja and Dysea.”

“Is he responsible for the death of Androcles?” Autolycus asked.

“Yes.” Theron replied.

“Then why is he not in chains awaiting trial and execution.” Autolycus demanded.

“The circumstances of Androcles’s death are well recorded by Dymas and others.” Theron answered. “Martin acted in self defense of his own person and innocents. Anything more is not your concern.”

“I beg to differ.” Autolycus spoke. “This Alpha is responsible for the death of a Spartan Centurion. That alone demands an investigation. That he is brought back to Sparta and treated as if he is royalty leads many to believe we are not being told everything. The reasons Dymas turned him to begin with.”

Theron looked at Autolycus. “You seem to have a problem with our actions so far Autolycus. Why is that?”

“I merely wish to understand why a foreign Alpha responsible for the death of a Spartan Centurion is allowed to walk freely within our city, without even an investigation. Why he is allowed to take training with our soldiers, and why the she-elf he calls mate has not been brought up on charges regarding her attack on my son and his companions.” He answered. “These are all legitimate questions Theron.”

“Dysea defended herself and her companions!” Dymas exclaimed, “From an unwarranted assault by your son’s companions at his direction. And there are many witnesses to this event.”

“That is not how my son or his companions describe it.” Autolycus spoke. “Midlan tells me he was only trying to make conversation with Aricia, and that in turn she was being verbally disrespectful to him.”

“Since when has turning away the advances of an Alpha male become a crime in this city? And being your son does not afford Midlan the luxury of demanding respect where none is given in return.” Panos spoke.

“He is a Pureblood.” Autolycus spoke. “Surely that fact affords him the respect due him from others.”

“Being Pureblood does not automatically grant respect Autolycus, as much as you would like to think so. It has never been that way, though many of our younger Alphas seem to think that, including your son it seems. Even dishonored as she may be, she is still a Spartan female and it is only she who will decide who it is she takes as a mate. It appears she already made that decision.” Dymas answered.

“There is no *may be* to it.” Autolycus spoke. “She is dishonored, as is her entire family. Their status is only just above that of servants and house people.”

“You seem to forget Autolycus; this is not the Sparta of old.” Dymas spoke. “We no longer look down upon the men and women who tend our homes and gardens. Our laws were changed many hundreds of years before you ever came to this Senate, the laws that made those men and women full citizens of Sparta. And it has made us stronger because of it.”

“That is debatable.” Autolycus replied casually. “And it is not something I would have supported.”

Dymas smiled. “And that is why you will never be Chief of this Senate.”

“Mind your place Dymas!” Autolycus spoke. “You are not a member of this Senate.”

“But he is the Guardian of the Line!” A female Senator spoke up loudly. “And therefore he can speak to you however he wishes! Or have you forgotten the status the Guardian wields with this Senate Autolycus?”

Autolycus turned and looked at the women, his eyes burning in anger. “Forgive me. I would like to return to what we were discussing earlier.”

“There is nothing you can do about Aricia. Her decision has already been made.” Dymas spoke.

“Yes... a decision she made while in North America.” Autolycus spoke, “Where no other Alpha could vie for her attentions, or barter with her father for her betrothal. That is very convenient don’t you think?”

“Aricia is past the age of consent and does not need her father’s approval to take a mate.” Theron spoke.

“And if I told you I have documentation from her father promising her hand to my son the year before she came of age?” Autolycus spoke.

“It is well known that your son has sniffed after Aricia for many years. She has rebuffed all his attentions, with no rebuttal by her father that this Senate is aware of. If you have this documentation then I suggest you produce it, or your words mean nothing.” Dilios spoke now rising from his seat in the first row.

“Do you now accuse me of lying?” Autolycus asked calmly.

“I accuse you of nothing!” Dilios spat. “You bring business in front of this Senate that has no place here. The matters of family do not extend to within these walls.”

“The matters of contract do.” Autolycus spoke.

“If such a contract between you and Xenos exists then produce it.” Dilios demanded now. “If there is such a document then the Senate Advisory Committee will review it and decide if it is legitimate or not. And they will decide what actions to take, if any.”

Autolycus nodded. “Very well, I will have the document delivered to the Advisory Committee first thing in the morning.” He spoke. “That still does not address my other concerns in regard to this rogue Alpha. I formally request that an official investigation be initiated into the circumstances surrounding the death of Centurion Androcles. Additionally I would like a formal investigation into the assault by this she-elf on my son and his companions, to include interviews with all present and telepathic supervision by someone of my staff.”

“That is outrageous!” Dilios spouted. “For what purpose is telepathic supervision required?”

“As I stated earlier, this rogue Alpha and his mates have been studying with Chief Mage Thr’won, who as we all know is notorious for her stern decisions on who studies beneath her.” Autolycus spoke. “Furthermore... I also request that she not be involved in any part of the investigation.”

“She is the Chief Mage of Sparta?” Theron spoke in shock.

“Yes she is, an appointment I did not approve of I might add.” He answered.

“Do you now call into question the honor and integrity of the Chief Mage of Sparta?” Dilios asked stunned.

“It is customary for those involved in this type of investigation to be excluded from duties and other commitments until the investigation is complete.” Autolycus spoke. “I merely want to follow custom and procedure.”

Dilios looked at Theron his eyes wide. “Theron... do something!”

“Autolycus is within his rights.” Theron spoke. “As Steward of the Throne I have to allow these investigations to go forward.”

“Of course you do.” Autolycus said with a smile. He moved closer to Theron. “I want them expelled from the villa until the investigation is completed. Aricia is to be ordered to return to her parent’s home. The she-elf and the rogue Alpha I want detained to prevent any attempt they might make to flee Sparta and possible justice.”

Theron looked at him and shook his head. “That I will not allow.” He spoke evenly.

“You can not...”

“Until such time as an investigation is completed and their findings brought before this Senate, nothing will change!” Theron spoke firmly. “We in Sparta do not convict before the evidence is fully in! That has always been the law!”

“I suggest we begin to review our laws.” Autolycus spoke, “To include the One Line Ascension law.”

Theron looked at him. “Is that what this is all about?” He asked.

“Not at all,” Autolycus responded. “However you have presided over this Senate as Steward for nearly three millennia. We have waited for a descendant of Leonidas to appear for almost all that time, and it has not

happened. Perhaps it is time to review the One Ascension Law and reinstall the second Spartan Line of Kingship.”

“You speak of changing a law that was put in place with good reason!” Panos spoke loudly. “The Eurypontid line was responsible for great treachery in our history!”

“And also great bravery!” Autolycus spoke heatedly.

“The treachery of the Eurypontid line is well documented Autolycus.” Theron spoke. “And that is why the One Ascension Law was instituted.”

“We wait for a descendant that will never come!” Autolycus snapped. “And I for one am tired of waiting. I will draw up the necessary paperwork to have the One Ascension Law brought before this Senate to debate.”

Theron nodded. “That is your right.”

“And I want this rogue Alpha and the she-elf confined!”

Theron shook his head. “I forbid it.” He spoke.

“You do not have that authority.” Autolycus spoke.

Theron looked at him. “I have the authority to call a vote on that action.” He spoke firmly. “A vote you will not win. Do you wish to test that?”

Autolycus remained silent as he glared at Theron. “So be it.” He spoke finally. “I look forward to the results of the investigations, and I am confident they will prove me correct.”

“We shall see.” Theron spoke. “We shall see.”

“Why are you allowing these investigations to proceed?” Dymas asked Theron after the Senate hall had emptied and they had moved to his office.

“I have no choice.” Theron spoke. “Autolycus is a senior member of the Senate and I can not just dismiss him.”

“No... but you don’t have to allow these investigations to take place.” Dymas told him. “They will ultimately expose who Martin is, and then his life will be in danger.”

“And if I don’t let them proceed, the suspicion Autolycus has planted among the others that we are indeed hiding something will grow. Theron said.

“Martin is not going to be happy about this.” Panos spoke.

“He will endure.” Theron said.

“And if Autolycus produces such a document in regards to Aricia?” Panos said. “What then? She is Martin’s mate... and he will never allow it. And I would be suspicious of any such document presented now.”

Theron rose from his desk. “As I’m sure many on the Advisory Committee will agree. However if Autolycus has such a document, then Martin will abide by the law!” He told them heatedly. “Whatever relationship he has with her will be dissolved and she will become Midlan’s mate. And it would behoove him to honor that custom in accordance with our laws. He will be King and he is not above the law.”

“You do not know Martin very well Theron if you think he will allow that to happen.” Dymas said. “I have known him far longer than you my friend, and he will leave Sparta without a moment’s hesitation. And all those with him will go as well.”

“Nonsense!” Theron spoke. “He is the King. And how would he leave, I would not allow him to have a transport.”

Dymas shook his head. “You underestimate him Theron. Just as so many others have throughout the years. Do you honestly believe you can keep him here if he does not want to be here?”

“He will have no choice!” Theron snapped. “There are thousands of unmated females within Sparta, just as beautiful as Aricia! As King he will have his pick of mates! I will not see him bring down the Agiad line over something as petty as a squabble over a female!”

“We’re not talking about any female!” Dymas barked. “This is the female he has chosen as his mate!”

“Then he will have to find another!” Theron yelled. Dymas looked at him his eyes wide in shock and surprise.

“Let him take the test now.” Dilios suggested.

Theron shook his head as Dymas settled back into his chair. “He is not ready.” Theron spoke.

“That he is the descendant of Leonidas is irrefutable!” Panos spoke. “The strength of his aura alone says that. His telepathic powers do nothing but reinforce that fact. He is strong enough to take the test!”

“If he takes the test while these investigations are going on, Autolycus will only move to discredit them, or have him killed.” Theron spoke. “We’re trying to prevent that until he is ready.”

“With the influence Autolycus has among the other Senators, how do we know the investigations will be unbiased?” Dilios asked. “He is not above bribery and other acts to get what he wants. And he made very clear what he wants today. He wants to abolish the One Line Ascension Law and be installed as King.”

“I will insure the investigations are conducted properly.” Theron told them. “They will only reveal the truth, and by the time they are finished, they will only help our cause.”

“Are you so sure?” Panos asked.

Theron nodded and returned to his chair. “Yes. I have not been Steward of the Throne for this long only to see Martin throw it away over petty differences with Midlan and Autolycus. I need time to think and plan. It has been a long day and I want to have a clear head, so please everyone just relax and we will get through this. I will meet with all of you in the morning after the documents have been presented.” They watched him stand up and move to the door of his office. “Have faith my friends. Things will fall into place accordingly.” He spoke just before walking into the corridor and leaving them alone.

Dymas looked at his father and Dilios. “He is wrong.” He said softly.

Dilios leaned forward. “Dymas... will he leave Sparta?”

“Dilios... he has built a city in North America.” Dymas said slowly, measuring his words carefully.

“The elves consider him their High King. He may be the descendant of Leonidas... but unlike Leonidas he will follow his heart first and he will not care for the consequences. You have not seen the unit he now commands Dilios. This Spartan Phalanx that everyone dismisses out of hand. He has forged them into a single cohesive mind. The Spartans who barely passed their own Agoges have now become the foundation for what he will build if he is allowed. Added to them are Andreus and the others of his Royal Guard and the men and women who came to Sparta with him. Who do you think they will follow? They know who he is Dilios, eighty-six men and women who would willingly throw themselves into a burning building for him.” Dymas got to his feet and moved to the window. “If Autolycus or Midlan attempt to take Aricia from him they will die, without question, without thought. And if they kidnap her away from him... or attempt to arrest Dysea...” He turned to look at them, shaking his head. “Of all of them I believe it is Dysea who he treasures most of all, for it was she who he turned first, and she has been at his side longer. He loves them all equally, but she is the true power behind him. If they attempt to arrest her or harm her, harm any of them, in any way, Sparta will see retribution on a scale not seen in the annals of our history. And I will be beside him, as will well over five million elves and humans in North America.”

“As will I,” Panos said quickly. “And hundreds more that he and the Queens have touched since they have been here in Sparta.”

Dilios looked at them for a long moment. “He must go to Thermopylae.” He said finally. “He must be baptized at the shrine of Leonidas and then he must return here and take the test. It is the only way to stop this madness before it goes any further.”

“Theron has said he is not ready.” Panos spoke.

“What choice do we have? Dymas... will he do what you say?” Dilios asked.

Dymas nodded slowly. “I watched him march across the African continent to kill the man who betrayed him and his team. And then he led them out of there carrying their wounded. Oh yes... were any harm to come to any of his Queens, Sparta *would* burn, make no mistake about that.”

“Then it must be done.” Dilios said. “I have no doubts that he is the Descended. None! They were washed away the moment I felt his aura in the landing bay. Autolycus is doing this in an effort to revoke the One Ascension Law. You both heard some of his passions this very day. He would reverse decisions that are hundreds of year’s old, decisions that have made Sparta what she is today. He cares only to be King, and regardless of what Theron says, the best way to combat him is to confront him head on. Martin must go to Thermopylae.”

“Then I will tell him.” Dymas spoke, nodding his head. “I will go to him tonight and speak with him.”

“What of Theron?” Panos asked. “Do we tell him?”

“No!” Dilios said quickly. “He would forbid it. And...”

“And what Dilios,” Dymas demanded seeing the look on Dilios’s face. “What are you not telling us?”

“He has not been the same since Martin returned to Sparta. He has been reclusive and there have been many times when I have tried to reach him and his House Boy does not know where he is.” Dilios told them. “I fear... I fear he does not want to lose the power he has wielded all these years. And he knows if Martin takes the test, he will become King and Theron... he does not want that.”

Dymas’s eyes were wide in disbelief. “Do you... do you have any proof of this Dilios?”

Dilios shook his head. “Only what my instincts tell me.” He said.

“Events are beginning to cascade on us.” Dymas spoke. “Dilios is right, Martin must go to Thermopylae. I will speak with him tonight. Dilios you must inform Thr’won of our plans, and tell her to guard her actions carefully for I have no doubt Autolycus will have her watched for anything he can use against her.” He turned to his father. “Father you...”

“I will do what must be done son.” Panos answered cutting him off. “And so will you. You know what you need to do Dymas. Martin needs to go and see the Oracle before he goes to Thermopylae.”

“Father you...”

“I speak the truth Dymas... and regardless of what you may think of the Oracle, she has never been wrong. And she has always been a friend to us, even if the Ephors weren’t.” Panos spoke. “Autolycus must not be allowed to take the throne.”

Dymas looked at his father for a long time before slowly nodding his head. “Very well, I will tell him. But I can not guarantee he will listen.”

Panos smiled. “The descendants of Leonidas not listen to you? I find that impossible to even believe.”

The three men chuckled together, relieving some of the tension that had built. Dymas finally nodded. “We have our tasks, and now we must conduct them. We will meet back at my father’s house tomorrow evening.”

Vengal looked at the towering mountains in the distance and could not help but be in awe. He stood on the patio of the villa nestled above the city of Sparta, the glass of Spartan wine in his hands. The morning had been just as he imagined it. He and his wife had not been able to sleep the last three hours of the flight, and were content to simply gaze at the land below them as it passed by. When he had stepped foot off the SPAT and seen his daughter and the way her face had lit up, everything else had fallen by the wayside.

Anuk looked very different. Her hair had grown longer, and her skin was somewhat darker than before, though her pale skin would never fully be tanned. She looked as if she had lost all of the baby fat he had grown accustomed to on his daughter, and now she was lean and muscular, and as far as he was concerned far more beautiful. Holding her in his arms and feeling the firmness of her body and the beating of her heart had nearly brought him to tears. She was shaking with joy at seeing him and her mother, and could barely talk. She had looked so tiny standing next to Daniel Simpson, but the love that they held for one another was obvious. They were almost never apart, always touching each other in some fashion. This was customary in Spartan culture he discovered, between an Alpha male and the mate he claimed under the moon as Daniel had his daughter.

Meeting Daniel’s family and the warmth and love with which he and his wife were accepted moved him right down to his core. Daniel’s father was just as massive as his son, and Vengal learned quickly that he had a soft spot for Anuk, as he could not stop praising what she had accomplished since being in Sparta. They had come to the villa where Martin and his Queens were living, and after at least two hours of small talk and laughter, Vengal finally had the time to pull away and absorb it all. His wife and Anuk were inside still sitting with Anja, Dysea and Aricia, as well as Daniel’s mother and one of his sisters. They could not be pried apart it seemed, and he was able to take his wine and come out here to the patio to gaze at the mountains and the wondrous picture of Sparta below the villa.

“Impressive isn’t it?” Martin’s voice spoke from the side, causing him to turn.

Vengal nodded and noticed that his King carried a similar glass of wine. “It is my King.” He spoke.

“Vengal... to those I consider my friends and family, I am just Martin.” He spoke with a smile. “Danny is and always has been my brother, if not by blood, then by combat. We’ve never considered ourselves otherwise. That makes Anuk, your wife and yourself members of my family as well. Please... my name is Martin.”

Vengal smiled and nodded. "You honor me... Martin." He spoke.

Martin shook his head. "It is you who honor me." He told him. "We've laid out your plan in the foyer; let's take a look at it."

Vengal nodded and followed him around the side of the villa to another section of patio that had a cover draped over it alive with vines that had grapes bursting from the stems. The table had been set up directly under the center of this wood and concrete cover and Vengal noticed Daniel, his father and the young Spartan called Andreus standing around it.

Melancton looked up as they approached. "My son tells me you designed this operation Vengal." He spoke.

Vengal nodded. "I've spent a week putting it together. It wasn't easy I assure you."

"No doubt, but it is a masterful plan." Melancton spoke with no small amount of respect. "And one I would very much like to be a part of, with your permission sire." He added looking to Martin.

"Me and Tari too Skipper." Danny spoke.

Martin looked at them. "May I ask why?"

"I have spoken with Kim So and Lander sire. Specifically about this half Drow half vampire elf that accompanied you here. Tari I believe his name is." Melancton spoke.

Martin nodded. "Yes."

"Kim So tells me he has never seen a man more devoted to the one he loves than this Tari is to Kim So's daughter. And Lander tells me he is one of the most skilled operators he has ever seen." Melancton spoke. "Daniel and Anuk have spoken of this Drow Queen Aihola often, and this is his sister?"

Martin nodded. "Yes. All of the Drow elves in Eden were subject to the Alliance and their experiments, some of them quite hideous in nature."

Melancton nodded. "This Tari has a tail sire." He spoke. "And from what Lander tells me, he uses it as a third arm. That is quite amazing to me."

Martin smiled. "That's not quite common knowledge Melancton." He spoke. "Let's keep that between us ok?"

"It would be a great honor to fight beside this Tari and his sister." Melancton spoke. "The Guardian of the Line made them to be most like Spartans did he not?"

"That's what he has told me." Martin said.

"Daniel has fought beside him before, and that accounts for his desire to go on this mission." Melancton said. "Myself... I wish to see these Drow in action, and perhaps learn from them, and pass on what I can. Two others besides me have expressed an extreme interest in accompanying Vengal back to North America and assisting him, under his command of course."

Martin looked at the holo chart for a long moment, taking in the labels of forces and locations, as well as logistics and terrain. Vengal had added it all to the plot board. He looked at Vengal. "General?"

"The Spartan Dienekes has assigned ten of the men and women he has been training to be our advanced scouts Martin." Vengal replied. "To have three additional Spartans on this mission would, I believe, increase our chances of success greatly. It would also allow Dekton to maintain his primary mission of protecting Aihola. The insertion calls for us to move fast for three straight days. Having Daniel and the other Spartans is not an asset I would refuse."

Martin nodded, "Approved." He said without preamble. "Dan... make sure you load up enough body armor to outfit the entire team Vengal has assigned. I assume Anuk will go with you?"

Dan chuckled, "Like I have much choice in that." He said.

Melancton laughed loudly and pounded his son on the back. "You are beginning to discover the wiles of beautiful women son." He spoke. "No matter how you protest, one caress from them in the right spot and all of us become boys."

Dan nodded his head. "Nice to know I ain't the only one it happens too."

"Make sure Anja loads her out with medical supplies from Sparta." Martin said. "She can use it all right?"

Dan nodded. "She's been working with Anja for the last three weeks at the hospital."

Martin nodded. "Aihola has already informed me that Vengal has command even though she is going along. I don't want anything to happen to her gentlemen. At any point if the mission looks like a bust... get her out of there. Is that clear?"

Vengal nodded. "That was already my plan sire." He said, "Though only Dekton and I are aware of it right now."

"My advice is to keep it that way." Martin said. "I've noticed she's just as stubborn as Tarifa. And now that Dekton has taken them both as mates... they'll be even worse." Martin stepped up to the plot board. "Ok... give me a quick rundown, and then let's get back to Anuk's party."

"This asshole Autolycus and his son are beginning to try my patience Walter." Martin exclaimed as he poured two mugs of coffee from the pot in the kitchen. He carried them to the table and set one down in front of Walter, before taking the seat at the head of the table.

"You know our history Marty." Walter told him. "This is the only way he can maneuver and push forth his agenda. He's trying to make you and the others look bad, and in the process it seems to the Senate that we have been lying and withholding information from them."

"Which you have," Martin said sitting in the chair.

Walter nodded. "Well that is neither here nor there." He spoke calmly. "The fact remains that Autolycus wants the throne, and he has chosen to get it through you."

"Does he know who I really am?" Martin asked.

Walter shook his head. "Unlikely. If he did, he would have revealed it to the Senate today in the chambers." He answered, looking at Martin, "In which case he could very well force you to undergo the test immediately."

"Or try and have me killed." Martin spoke.

Walter nodded. "I would not put that past him, yes."

"Walter has any other descendant of Leonidas been here to Sparta and taken this test?" Martin asked.

Walter shook his head again. "Not to my knowledge, and I would know this if it happened." He answered. "Why?"

Martin shrugged, "Just curious." He sipped his coffee. "So who is this Oracle you tell me I need to go see?"

Walter looked at him. "She is a prophet of sorts." Walter answered. "She is the Oracle that appeared to Leonidas after he sought permission from the Ephors to go to war with the Persians. It was her meeting with him that convinced the King he needed to follow his own course of action."

"Wait... this is the same Oracle that told him he needed to honor the Carneia, and that one of the line of Heracles needed to die in order to save Sparta." Martin said.

Walter nodded. "She knew the Ephors were corrupt and traitorous... but she could not warn Leonidas until after he came to the Ephors. It was then that she told him Sparta would fall unless a King of the line of Heracles died to preserve her."

"That she was playing both sides of the coin doesn't inspire a whole lot of confidence." Martin said. "She is the one who sent my ancestor to his death."

Walter nodded. "A fact she has lived with all of her life. Nearly four thousand years of it." He told him.

"Yet you're telling me I need to go see her and listen to what she has to say?" Martin asked. "Jesus... how old is she?"

Walter nodded, "Older than I that much I do know. You need to hear what she tells you no matter what it is." He spoke softly. "Whether you listen to what she says is for you to decide. I will arrange it for tomorrow evening."

Martin nodded. "Have you ever spoken with her?"

Dymas/Walter shook his head. "I am not one of the chosen that she uses to pass on her messages. There is a small group of Spartans that call themselves the Watchers. They are fanatically loyal to Leonidas's blood line and anyone who has it. Many of the messages she has passed onto the Senate and others have come through them. They are not trusted by many of the members of the Senate due to their fanatical devotion, but the Senate does regard the Oracle quite highly."

“Ok... if you think I need to do this.” He spoke, “Now what about Autolyucus?”

“I fear he will convince Xenos to sign some document he has had drawn up in the last few hours.” Walter replied. “And knowing Xenos... he will sign it. I’ve looked into the circumstances regarding the actions of Atropos. The evidence against him, all of it was circumstantial.”

Martin nodded. “I looked into it as well. His supposed confession was not in the records I saw.”

Dymas looked at him. “That is odd. Perhaps I will have to look deeper into this. The events surrounding Atropos aside, Xenos didn’t appear to back his son at all during the events. I have no doubts that Autolyucus will have the dates and times forged. He has many on his payroll who have *other* skills. Xenos it seems is only interested in restoring the honor he was stripped of, and he cares not who he injures in the process. Dilios has told me he can delay the Advisory Committee for two days, possibly three.”

“Do you trust him?” Martin asked.

Walter looked at him. “He is the first born son of one who fell at Thermopylae with King Leonidas. His loyalty is beyond reproach Martin, regardless of his outer jovial appearance.”

“I did not question his loyalty.” Martin spoke. “I asked if you trust him.”

“I trust him with the same regard that I trust you.” Dymas replied.

Martin nodded. “That’s good enough for me then. I will...”

“Send me away my love.” Aricia’s voice came from behind them.

Martin turned as Walter looked up to see Aricia standing with Anja and Dysea in the doorway leading into the dining room. “Why on earth would I do that Little Wolf?” He asked looking at her.

“What do you think the outcome of Autolyucus’s so called investigation will be?” Aricia spoke moving forward to sit in front of him on the table as he pushed the chair back. Anja and Dysea settled on the single chair on Martin’s other side, their shoulders touching. “Autolyucus owns many votes on the Senate. Dilios may be able to delay the outcome, but he won’t be able to stop it. They will undoubtedly side in Autolyucus’s favor, and order me to leave you and return to my father. Then Midlan will bring his arrogant pompous ass to collect me. I desire no man’s touch on me if it is not yours my love. I will kill that bastard before I allow him to have me.”

“He has to get you first Little Wolf. Something I guarantee he won’t do while I live.” Martin said.

“Nor us.” Dysea spoke in agreement.

“You know I am correct in this my love.” Aricia said.

“She’s right, as much as it galls me to admit Marty.” Walter said.

“*Nauta Melme*... Little Wolf can return with Daniel and Vengal back to Eden.” Dysea spoke again. “You and I are who he is truly attempting to come after. Aricia is merely a ploy to get to us. If she is no longer in Sparta... then he will not have the option of using her against you.”

“I’ll go with her Martin.” Anja said now. “Anuk is turning out to be an excellent field medic, but there are a lot of unknowns that Aihola and the others could face, and they have six thousand men, women and children to escort back to Eden. It wouldn’t hurt to have two extra sets of hands... as well as teeth.” She finished that with a smile.

“That would neutralize the issue.” Walter spoke. “At least until you became King. Then it becomes a different issue altogether.”

“How so?”

“It was wrong to do... but having Aricia and her family bear the shame of her brother’s actions...” He held up his hands before Aricia could speak. “Curb your tongue child... I do not believe your brother guilty of such a crime. However that is something we can deal with at a later date. Much about that incident rings fabricated and I intend to look into it, but we need to deal with the immediate problem right now.”

“Theron...” Martin said.

“Dilios believes Theron will do everything to remain in power as long as he can.” Walter spoke. “Dilios believes, and my father agrees, that Theron has grown accustomed to the power he wields as Steward. He is more concerned with keeping his status than seeing you ascend to the throne.”

“What do you believe?” Martin asked him.

Walter met his eyes. “I think there is more going on than all of us realize.” He replied.

Martin got to his feet slowly and moved around the table deep in thought. He stopped at the doorway into the living room where not hours before there were laughing and celebrating men and women. “Andreas... what are your thoughts?” He asked as if speaking to the air.

Andreas stepped from the shadows with a sheepish grin on his face, his mother next to him. "Forgive me sire." He spoke. "I did not... I did not wish it to appear as if I was eavesdropping."

"This concerns you and Dasha as well." Martin spoke. "I want the opinion of you and your mother."

Andreas looked at his mother and nodded to her. They had spoken many times since she had come to stay with them in the villa, and now he realized that his mother loved her children without regret or regard.

Dasha looked at Martin.

"Send Aricia back with Daniel sire." She said without hesitation. "I will go with her if that meets with your approval. I will not see my child subjected to what her father intends. It seems everyone but he knows that Autolycus will never return the honor of our family, no matter what he does. I may still love him, but that does not mean I have to endure him, or what he intends for Aricia. I have many skills that this elf Queen Tarifa may find useful while Aricia goes on this mission."

Martin looked at Andreas, "You?"

"Lexi has trained them intensely for the last month sire." Andreas spoke confidently. "She reports to me every day on their progress. I do not fear for Queen Anja or my sister were they to go on this mission. She says Aricia will one day best me with the *Nehtes*, and whoever is struck by a blow from Queen Anja will never get up. Both of their personal guards have also volunteered to accompany them."

Martin looked around at all of them shaking his head. "You guys have given this some thought huh?" He said with a smile.

Anja got up from her chair and moved to him, putting her hands on his arm. "I think we saw it coming because we are women Martin. We love you with all that we are, and none of us is willing to give that up. Walter is right." She said softly. "Andreas is right. If we eliminate a potential thorn in this Autolycus's side, then it ultimately helps you. That is what matters to us most of all. Aricia and I can look after ourselves quite well... and it would not look good if Dysea suddenly up and left. She is nearly your equal in skill Martin, even though Andreas and Lexi seem to think I am. Once everything is the way it is suppose to be here, well by that time... Aricia and I will desire the two of you so badly we'll swim across the ocean to be back with you both."

"I don't like the idea of sending you away." He spoke. "It leaves a bad taste in my mouth, like I am abandoning you."

Aricia got off the table and moved over to stand in front of him, wrapping her arms around his waist. "I think I speak for all of us when I say we know that is something you would never do." She spoke softly.

Anja and Dysea stepped up to them and joined her embrace of Martin, his arms going around all of them. "Then I will not give him the chance to act." Martin spoke. "I want you to gather your things and leave tonight. Andreas inform Vengal and the others quietly. Have Tina select the two pilots they trust the most to fly a SPAT back. I want Endith and her to remain here because I have a feeling I'll need them."

Andreas nodded and moved quickly to depart. Aricia looked up at him. Martin gazed into her azure blue eyes and leaned over to kiss her deeply. After a moment they parted and he turned to kiss Anja just as deeply. Dysea smiled and took both Aricia and Anja's hands. "Come Little Wolf, I will help you and *Melyanna* prepare your things."

Walter stepped up next to Martin as the ladies headed for the bedroom. "This is the best way Martin. You know that."

"That doesn't mean I have to like it." He replied.

Walter smiled and looked at him, once more stunned by the striking similarity between Martin and the King he knew so long ago. "There are many things that make you and Leonidas so similar Martin my boy, one of them being the fact that you hated having to do things that were right, but that you regarded as cowardly. Do you worry for Dysea?" He asked finally.

Martin chuckled. "I worry for the fool that attempts to lay his hands on her." He said. "Anja is right... regardless of what Andreas and Lexi think, Dysea is exceedingly more lethal than Aricia or her."

"You love them all equally my boy; that much is obvious, but Dysea will always be closer to you because you turned her first. She has more of you inside her and that, when everything is said and done, that will matter most." Walter spoke. "I need to go and prepare for your meeting and the events that will be coming. Stay sharp my King."

Martin met his eyes. "I intend to." He said.

Dysea stood next to Martin as they watched the SPAT lift off and rocket into the stars. They both wore the Spartan armor, their *Nehtes* secured to their thighs. The Spartan Weapons Master Nehtes, the elf the weapons were named after, had forged all of their weapons right down to the millimeter of specification. Dysea's *Nehtes* was four inches shorter than normal, due to her height and weight, but when she wielded the weapon it was an extension of her body. Standing next to Martin, he realized that Anja had been right. Dysea was a warrior, she would always be a warrior, and her love of him and his of her insured that fact for all time. Martin's *Nehtes* was the standard size, but weighted perfectly for his combination of speed and power, and it was also ornately carved with Spartan symbols of Kingship, the letters of Ancient Greek spelling out the words *Molon Labe* along the side.

"We will see them again soon *Nauta Melme*." Dysea said softly, taking his hand in hers.

Martin nodded. "I know." He replied. "Part of me is glad that they will not be here for what we may need to do."

"What do you think we will need to do?" Dysea asked looking at him.

Martin turned and gazed into her emerald eyes. "I have a feeling that you and I are going to have to put a serious hurting on some people. And it will not be pretty for them in the least."

Dysea smiled; a thing of beauty to Martin, a savage grin to anyone else who saw her. She wrapped her arms around his waist. "You say the most wonderful things to me *Nauta Melme*." She told him with adoring eyes. "It always gets my blood pumping."

Martin laughed and they turned as Andreus walked up. "Sire we are ready." He spoke.

Dysea looked at him. "*Nauta Melme*... we are not returning to the villa?"

Martin shook his head. "Not just yet." He replied as he watched the cloaked figure take shape from the shadows and stand next to Andreus. "Helen, how are you?"

The figure looked up and pulled back the hood to reveal Helen's older face. "I have come as you asked sir." She spoke. "Though I don't understand why?"

"I think you do Helen." Martin answered softly. "You have known who I am since that first night. Did you think I wouldn't notice you and the others whispering among yourselves when we were at Demetrius's tavern, or the fact that they always deferred to you?"

"I... sire I..." Helen looked fearful for a moment.

Martin stepped up to her quickly. "You have no need to fear me Helen; we have cooked in your kitchen side by side. Made some pretty good meals too haven't we?"

Helen looked at him and couldn't help but smile. "We... we have waited a very long time for you my King." She said softly, reaching up to touch his face. "And you have honored me with your trust all this time, knowing who I was. How long have you known?"

"Part of me has known since the first time I saw you." He replied. "You... you looked familiar to me somehow."

Dysea looked at her oddly, confused. "*Nauta Melme*... what... what do you mean? Who is this?"

Martin smiled gently. "This is the Oracle that so many have spoken of *Melda Min*." He answered. "The Oracle that Walter wants me to see."

Dysea looked at Helen with wide emerald eyes. "Helen?"

Helen smiled even as she detected Andreus's stunned expression as well. "My Queen... it has been a distinct honor to serve you and Queens Anja and Aricia these last few weeks, and I hope you will allow me to do so in the future."

"So how old are you?" Martin asked softly.

Helen looked at him. "I am four thousand six hundred and seventy-two years old my King." She answered, hearing Andreus gasp from the side. "I will answer many of your questions sire, and leave you with more still, but you will have much of the knowledge you have craved for so very long. After that... you must go to Thermopylae for the answer to what you must do. We can not speak here, for even though we are alone, there could be eyes everywhere. I know a place that is safe."

Martin nodded and in a white/blue flash he had transformed into the massive black wolf Dysea so loved. He heard both Helen and Andreus gasp at the sight of the black as night monster he had become in an instant. Andreus had not yet seen his King in wolf form, as Martin and Dysea never went for their runs until very late.

The body armor he had worn in human form conformed to his body even as a wolf, the crimson cape now melded with the black armor on his back. Helen and Andreus were awestruck and still, until the white/blue flash of Dysea shifting into wolf form as well moved them out of their trance like state. She stood next to him, easily half his size, with her platinum blond fur just sticking out of the black armor she wore. She stepped up to him and nuzzled under his thick neck with her platinum blond muzzle, his head lowering and licking her muzzle.

Then let us go. Martin's mind told her.

Two more flashes and then there was a large dark brown wolf and a smaller gray wolf with them.

Follow me closely sire, for we will cross vampire territory. It is not far, but a finger of the land they inhabit extends to where we must cross. Helen's voice carried into their minds.

With a flick of her gray tail she was gone, Martin and Dysea following, Andreus bringing up the rear.

(Background Music; "Unforgiven" Acoustic, Metallica)

"This is where I come to clear my mind and be at peace." Helen spoke softly, leading them into the large cave.

They had run for a solid hour, a silent loping run that allowed their wolf senses to remain at high alert, but allowed them to cover the distance quickly. She had led them to this cave, taking up the torch just inside the entrance and then leading them even further down into the bowels of the mountain.

The room they entered looked incredibly modern in its appearance, with steel and granite walls, a divider that separated the large canopy bed from the rest of the area. A small stove was built directly into the rock wall, and it was here that Helen went, turning on large globes of light as she moved. They all saw the racks and rows of books and scrolls and data pads lining another wall of the room, a fireplace that suddenly burst into flames at their presence, the logs cackling as they caught fire and began to spread warmth throughout the room. Helen busied herself with making the tea as Martin, Dysea and Andreus moved about the room in wonderment at all the holo images. Most of the photos were of Sparta and the landscape around it. Andreus stopped in front of one picture and picked it up. His eyes scanned the image as he turned to Martin.

"Sire... look." He spoke moving over next to him.

Martin took the imager and his eyes grew a little wider. "This is... this is the area where the landing bay is now." He spoke. "But all I see are pine trees."

Helen smiled and turned from the stove carrying the tray with tea mugs as well as sugar and cream.

"Please... all of you sit down. This will take some time. You as well Andreus, you are the King's Captain and you must know everything I will tell him in order to better protect him."

They settled onto the comfortable couches as Helen poured all of them tea. When that was finished, she made a mug for herself and then sat back in the single chair, pulling her legs underneath her. She moved pretty well for someone over four thousand years old.

"Where to begin..." Helen spoke softly.

"What... what are we?" Martin asked.

Helen looked at him. "Our people are called Lycavorians." She started. "Hence the abbreviation that is so common among this planet's human species; Lycans, or werewolves. Our species originated on a planet much like earth in a system over seventy-thousand light years from here. We were a simple people, peaceful and friendly, until the vampires came. They had devoted much of their technological advances to machines of war, and while we were an equally advanced race ourselves, we had nothing more than a few small ships, deciding that we wanted nothing to do with war and death. Nine thousand years ago the Vampires attacked our world and slaughtered our people by the millions, destroying our cities and butchering us like cattle. They took millions of us captive while they scorched our world into oblivion. When they were done, barely a quarter of our population of five hundred billion survived. Most were slaves, while some lucky others were able to escape the onslaught in ships.

"We had never seen them before that period in our history, and to this day we have never discovered what possessed them to attack us in such a way. Our King and his mate were spared death as a means to maintain some control over us. We worshiped our King and Queen, and it was he who told us to not resist them.

To hold in our fury until the time was right. The day our world was destroyed has stood for nine thousand years as the blackest day in our history.”

“Nine thousand years?” Martin spoke stunned. “You said you were only four thousand odd years old.”

Helen nodded. “I am. When one Oracle passes from this life, his or her spirit finds its way to the one they have chosen to carry on in that stead. I was chosen by my predecessor to succeed him when I was only a hundred and seven years old. It was my decision to come here to earth, as I felt it would be the perfect place to remain hidden from the vampires who had declared the Oracles of our people treasonous. We were to be killed on the spot. To my knowledge I am the only one that still lives.

“I took on the role of the Oracle for the Ephors, the Ancient Greek prophets in roughly 1100 B.C. It seemed innocent enough at the time, and it provided me protection because earth had not yet been colonized. After four planets and almost five hundred years of running, I finally chose earth and the Spartan people because they most reminded me of our own. Six hundred years after I arrived... that all changed.”

“In what way?” Dysea asked.

“The Lycavorian King decided he had had enough of slavery for his people. Eleven hundred years of torture and humiliation and death and finally he knew we had learned enough to throw off the yoke of slavery. The vampires had hundreds of species as slaves, but Lycavorians were generally considered the strongest and most cunning due to our heritage and ability to adapt. We were the most brutalized and given the most dangerous duties. Many of our people willingly began to serve the vampires, and when this became known the King decided he’d had enough. Our greatest allies came in the form of a species we had never seen before. They too were stronger and more cunning than most others, but unlike us... they still had a home world. It was a vampire occupied world, but much of our weapons and support came from them.” Helen looked at Dysea with a gentle smile. “It is the home world of the elves.”

Dysea’s emerald green eyes grew wide at this and her breathing increased, “Elves?” She gasped. “You mean that... the Holy One did not create us?”

“Oh no... Dymas created those elves here on earth, but only after he was given the DNA and genetic knowledge to do so encoded into his own DNA. His intentions were completely innocent and without malice, as he only wanted a superior species to help the humans pull themselves back from the dark times into which they had fallen after the passing of the comet. He was doing what King Leonidas had asked him by doing what he could to protect the humans of this world.” Helen sipped her tea slowly, Dysea waiting patiently. “The elves recognized what our King could represent to hundreds of other species that were enslaved by the vampires. The ruling Council of elves that remained alive and in hiding declared our King as their leader as well, since the elfin King and Queen and their entire bloodline had been butchered. Dysea my child... you thought yourself Queen of only those elves here on earth, when in fact you are now Queen to over six trillion elves across the universe. As Anja is Queen to nearly equal that amount of her own people.”

“*Melyanna* has her own people?” Dysea asked stunned.

“She does... the Hadarians. They are the healers of our rebellion, the doctors and nurses who care for our wounded and sick. Her people are born with a special metaphysic radiation that emanates from their bodies, allowing them to heal many wounds with a simple touch. Anja has not discovered it yet, but it runs deeply within her, deeper than even her mother who was generally considered the strongest of her people. It is standard practice for the vampires to wipe out entire bloodlines of ruling families so that no one will ever come forward to rally the people. They failed in respect to Anja’s parents...” Helen looked at Martin. “And they failed in respect to you my King.”

“How?” Martin asked. He had sat and listened so far, absorbing all Helen was telling them, and not reacting as he thought he would. It was as if everything she was telling them he already knew somehow.

“Six hundred years after I arrived on earth, the Lycavorian King decided it was time to gather the leaders of the rebellion and start planning. He was betrayed by someone close to him, and the vampires discovered the meeting after it had taken place. He was immediately branded treasonous and was ordered executed, along with his entire bloodline. What the vampires did not know was that his Queen was with child, and it was this child that Anja’s people removed from her womb, along with ten thousand other fetuses among our people. They were brought here to earth, to me and implanted into the wombs of Spartan women that I chose.” Helen stopped speaking and got to her feet, moving closer to the fire, the telling of the events obviously having an effect on here.

“Leonidas,” Martin spoke softly.

Helen nodded and turned back to him. “Yes, King Leonidas. His parents and all those in his bloodline were butchered after that and he was all that remained. The Vampires knew of what we had done, but they didn’t know where Leonidas had gone. As Leonidas grew and the reputation of the Spartans became more and more famous I knew that it would only bring the vampires to earth that much quicker. When word reached my ears that Xerxes had come to Persia, I had to go to Leonidas and tell him what he was, what many of his people were. He had already determined most of it himself, though he did not know of the rebellion off earth that he now was King of until I told him. When Xerxes finally arrived and set himself up to invade Greece, I knew I had no more time. I cautioned the Ephors against fighting the Persians. I even told them that they must honor their ritual holiday and their gods. Anything to stop Leonidas from going to battle with the Persians for I knew it would bring the entire Vampire might down on this world.” Helen moved back to the couch and looked at Martin. “But your ancestor was so much as you are now Martin. He was a Spartan yes, but he was filled with compassion for the old and the young and those who valued freedom above all else. He was raised in a brutal lifestyle that unwittingly prepared him for the future. He came to the Ephors two weeks before he left for Thermopylae and based on what I told the Ephors, they refused to honor his request to take the Spartan army to meet Xerxes. So he did the one thing I did not expect, he conferred with the woman who held his heart, his Queen, and he chose the 300.” Helen sat back, her eyes moist. “I condemned that man to death by my words, and he was the best hope for the rebellion. Had I told the Ephors to grant Leonidas his wish, we could have crushed Xerxes then and there with the entire Spartan army behind him. It would have spurred other city states at that time to fight with us as well. That single night has haunted me for three millennia Martin, and I thought I could never atone for that mistake.” Helen looked at Martin, her dark intelligent eyes boring into him.

“Our people are all telepathic my King, this you know. However... what we have taught our children here on earth is only half of what we are capable of. I did not want to pass that on to the Spartans here, for it would invoke too much suspicion. The Spartans were already well known for their fighting prowess, much of that due to the Lycavorian genes in most of them that allowed them to shift and heal their wounds, as well as their added strength and endurance. Leonidas had a seven year old son when he died, who ruled when he came of age. At least until the vampires killed him. What no one else knew... was that Queen Gorgo was with child when Leonidas departed for Thermopylae. A child conceived on the last night she was together with her husband before he left. When Gorgo came to me with this information, it was I who relayed to her what I now tell you. She accepted this news as laconically as any Spartan female would, as Leonidas had already shared with her most of what I had told him. It seems he kept very little from Gorgo... much as you keep nothing from Dysea, Anja and Aricia. Gorgo had free rein within Leonidas’s mind, as they do with you. It was I, who convinced her to leave earth, and that is why no history of Gorgo exists after 480 B.C.; everyone thought she had simply disappeared or took her own life in grief over her husband’s death.

“Leonidas’s actions at Thermopylae spurred the rebellion off planet into action. The other leaders deemed that if the son of their former King, a King now himself, felt it necessary to die for freedom, then that is what they too would do. Leonidas did not know it until the end, but he was King to far more than just the Spartans, and when he died that day he knew his actions would span the universe and the rebellion against the vampires would begin in earnest. His actions that day also kept the vampires from claiming this planet, as now the Lycavorians among the Spartans knew they existed, as up until then they were not aware vampires even existed and now they would fight them until their dying breath. The rebellion also had Gorgo among them, and she carried one of only two heirs to the throne.”

“After Thermopylae, Xerxes’s father, the Vampire High Lord began a systematic program meant to find Gorgo and the child in her womb, while at the same time attempting to kill Leonidas’s older son Pleistarchus at every turn. Gorgo was able to be a mother to her child for only a few months before he was placed in suspended animation and spirited away to a place that only a few of the rebellion’s leaders knew of for his own safety.” Helen continued her story. “Leonidas’s first born son remained here on earth and grew into adulthood, becoming King of Sparta and fathering six children before the vampires claimed his life. Throughout history Dymas has been brought the descendants of Pleistarchus, guarding them to the best of his ability. Most were found and eventually killed by the vampires, some died of natural causes.”

“That does not account for the equipment that has found its way here to Sparta?” Martin asked, now leaning forward and listening with rapt attention. “The medical advances, the SPATs, the Shi Viskas.”

“Please don’t rush me,” Helen spoke. “It is very rude behavior for a King.”

Martin looked properly chastised and caught Dysea grinning at him from the corner of his eye. “I apologize.”

Helen smiled. “The rebellion knew they would have to provide certain advantages if they were going to keep the descendants of Leonidas alive. The weapons, and medical advances, as well as the aircraft are gifts from them. They have actually incorporated the Spartan training regime developed here on earth into their own training programs. It is why we have lasted for so long off planet. Only our intense training and will has kept us from being overwhelmed. The vampires have a larger space fleet than the rebellion, but our ground forces, many of which have been trained in the Spartan fashion, are far superior. Of all the planets we have captured, we have never had to surrender one. I have not spoken to anyone within the rebellion in over two thousand years, so I do not know what has come about outside the realms of this planet, but I do know we were at the very least holding our own.”

Martin got to his feet and began pacing the room. Helen watched him for a moment before speaking again. “You don’t believe me?” She asked.

Martin looked at her. “That’s the problem. I do believe you.” He spoke. “And that is what frightens me. Everything you have told me makes sense... how I don’t know... but it is like someone just turned on a light bulb in the dark room I have been in for many years.” He looked at her. “Does anyone else know this?”

Helen shook her head. “No. Dymas may suspect something, he is far more intelligent than he lets on, but no one knows the all the facts I have told you.”

“So I am a descendant of Pleistarchus then?” Martin asked.

Helen shook her head. “No.” She replied.

“No?” Martin spoke confused. “How can I be a descendant of Leonidas then?”

“As I told you his unborn son was placed in suspended animation to protect him.” Helen said.

“Yes.”

“Gorgo remained with the ship that carried his chamber. Wherever it went she went. She would not leave the side of her son no matter who talked to her.” Helen said. “She had lost one son to the vampires, and she would not lose another.”

“Ok... now you have lost me.” Martin spoke returning to his spot next to Dysea.

Helen smiled gently once more. “The last in Pleistarchus’s bloodline was killed almost a thousand years ago.” She spoke. “Roughly six hundred and fifty years after that, the ship carrying the second son of Leonidas was attacked. It was a chance encounter as the ship was constantly moving; never staying in one place for very long, and the vampires did not know what they were attacking. The chamber with the second son was placed on a smaller transport with two of those that remained with Gorgo at all times, a man and a woman. They were her guards and those of her infant son. She was taken on a different transport before the ship itself was destroyed. The transport with her infant son went to the nearest habitable planet because it was damaged, while the transport with Gorgo escaped back into rebel territory.”

Martin’s eyes grew wide. “How do you know that if you haven’t spoken with anyone from the rebels in two thousand years?”

“The nearest planet was earth.” Helen said smiling at Martin’s expression. “The man and woman who remained with the infant’s chamber came here to Sparta.” Helen spoke, “To see me. I arranged for the chamber to be hidden.”

“So Leonidas’s second son returned to earth then? He must have had children if I’m one of his descendants?” Martin spoke questions running through his head. “Did the vampires kill him as well?”

“He had no children. Gorgo had not even named him before he went into the chamber. She was still grieving over the loss of Leonidas and couldn’t bring herself to name the boy.” Helen spoke her dark eyes bright and holding a twinkle in them.

“Now I’m really lost.” Martin said. “If Pleistarchus’s line was ended a thousand years ago, and the second son never had any children, how am I a descendant of Leonidas?”

Martin looked at Dysea when he heard her gasp and her hands went to her mouth in shock. Her face was frozen in an expression of amazement, her emerald green eyes focused on him. “*Melda Min?* What is wrong?” He asked reaching for her. As he reached for Dysea, his eyes went to Andreus who wore a similar expression on his face, and was also staring at him.

“Andreas... what,” Martin asked. “What’s going on?” He turned back to Helen who wore that same small smile on her face.

“That ship returned here to earth in 1906.” Helen spoke. “I arranged for the chamber to be hidden as I said. One hundred and thirty years later that same chamber was breached by the earthquake of 2036, the one that destroyed the country of Albania.”

“So?” Martin asked. “That doesn’t answer my question.”

“The year 2036 is the same year the man and woman who had delivered the chamber to me, presented the second son of Leonidas to Dymas, as was his station as Guardian of the Line.” Helen told him.

Martin came to his feet as what Helen was saying finally hit him. The color drained from his face and tightness gripped his stomach, his hands beginning shaking. He felt flush and heat began to race through his body. “No.” He said softly. “That... that can’t be... that can’t be true.”

Helen stood up and looked up into his face. “But it is true Martin. Have you never questioned why your telepathic powers are so much more powerful than others... even more than my own? Have you never questioned why you see the images of planets in your thoughts; how your Queens can be so powerful? Our people have the ability to imprint on our children things that we see that elicit heightened emotions and passion. The images of Thermopylae that your father saw, the battles... the death... the planets your mother saw before you were born... these are the images your parents have imprinted on you Martin Leonidas.”

“Now... now this is getting up into the realm of unbelievable.” Martin said softly.

“Yet you know it to be true. You can feel it inside you, in your heart. The blood of your father and mothers burns within you like a kiln Martin, you can not deny it. The moment you allow your shields to come down, every Lycavorian will know who you are. That is why you must go to Thermopylae, to the place where your father died, where his tomb now resides. You have felt its pull on you for three decades and you have not known why. Now you do.”

“Helen... you...”

“You are the youngest son of King Leonidas! I myself am the one who named you!” She spoke firmly. “You are the King of Sparta!” Helen moved quickly to the wall lined with bookcases. She pulled two thick dust covered books down at a ninety degree angle and they all watched as the center bookcase slid aside to reveal a very sophisticated computer system. Helen’s hands went to the console and began pressing buttons, small yellow and green lights blinking on the panel. She turned back to look at Martin as her finger stabbed down on the panel. “And now the rebellion knows that the infant that would be their King, and who they thought lost so long ago, is very much alive.”

“What did you just do?” Andreas demanded coming to his feet.

“I just sent a sub space message that will reach the home planet of the rebellion within the next three hours. The message was already formatted and I was prepared to send it five hundred and twenty years ago. It would have energized the rebellion with hope and new awareness. The passing of the comet changed all that... as we thought you had perished. When you arrived in Sparta six weeks ago I had no doubts about who you were, and I recalled the message from the databanks. I just sent that message with some additional information.” Helen replied. “Now you must go to Thermopylae, for someone awaits you there that will bestow upon you the gift that is yours by birthright and only yours.”

“Who are you talking about?” Martin asked.

“I will let you discover that for yourself King Martin Leonidas.” Helen spoke her voice filled with emotion and pride.

“Helen...”

“Everything you have experienced in your life, every battle you have fought and won. Every friend you have had to bury, all of it has brought you to this point in your life.” Helen said. “The moment you returned to earth after the comet passed, you set in motion a tide of events that can no longer be changed. Dymas had hoped to give the elves a King by using your DNA. That King was killed as you know, but everything happens for a reason. Fate knew you were still alive... and now every elf on this planet, as well as every Spartan will follow you through perditions door. All you need do is ask them. The rebellion will surge with the news that you live, and now perhaps we may finally be able to throw the yoke of the vampires from around our necks. You know what I say is true my King, and now you must take the place that was meant for you so long ago.”

Martin stood there in silence. He blinked several times... took deep breaths to calm his racing pulse and the pounding of his heart in his ears. He was standing here being told he was the son of a man that lived over three thousand years ago; a King that died for the freedom of his people and others. The same thing Martin had been fighting for his entire life. He had accepted completely what he was, that was something he had done a long time ago. Now... to discover this... it was just so overwhelming that he felt as if he was drowning. He turned to look at Dysea as she took his hand in hers and stepped close to him, pressing her warm body against his side, giving him strength and support.

"I... I have always found older men much more attractive." Dysea spoke softly, her emerald green eyes blazing with love, lust, and awe. "And it appears you are much older than we first thought *Nauta Melme*, and that simply makes my hormones giddy."

Martin laughed then... the laugh of relief and acceptance. He pulled Dysea into his embrace and buried his face in her hair, inhaling deeply of her wildflower scent. Dysea squeezed him back as hard as she could; loving the feel of his powerful arms wrapped around her.

"I understand you have sent Aricia and Anja back to Eden." Helen spoke, breaking into their tender moment.

Martin looked at her, not releasing his grip on Dysea. "Yes."

"Events are coming to a head my King." She spoke softly. "You have enemies all around you and you must beware. Thermopylae will cement you on your path and provide you with the one thing that will show the others who you truly are, for only the son of Leonidas could wield it. Go now... before someone attempts to dissuade you once more."

"Does Dymas... did Dymas know?"

Helen shook her head. "No."

Martin looked at Andreus, "Andreus?"

"My... my King," Andreus answered, his chest swelling out as he stood a little taller.

"Have my Phalanx standing by on the western edge of the city in one hour." Martin spoke the order, his eyes never leaving Helen's face. "Inform Tina and Endith they will be flying us."

"As you order my King," Andreus replied moving for the entrance into the cave.

Martin looked at Helen. "What... what will you do?" He asked.

"I will continue to do what I was meant to do my King. Serve you and your Queens, if you'll allow me." She replied. "You have made hundreds of friends since you have been here sire, and even now they do not know who you truly are. I believe it is time that I now let them know."

Martin nodded slowly, "These investigations that Autolykus has started? They will..."

"They will mean nothing in a matter of hours." Helen answered. "Though I must warn you... there is a traitor close to you my King. Very close."

"Do you know who this is?" Dysea asked that question.

Helen shook her head. "I do not... but you do sire." She spoke.

"Me?" Martin asked.

Helen nodded. "You will come to realize this in due time, and then you will take appropriate actions. For now... you know what you must do, and so do I."

Martin stepped up to her. "Thank... thank you." He spoke.

"No my King, thank you... for not dying," Helen spoke. "And I look forward to future times when we can stand side by side in our kitchen once more and make some delicious meals."

Martin smiled brightly. "And so do I."

"Go now. Thermopylae and your future await you."

Martin nodded and turned back to Dysea, taking her hand as they headed for the exit. Helen watched until they were gone and then nodded her head. "I have set things in motion now." She whispered to herself. "Let us see finally if he is his father's son."

Anja and Aricia sat on the bench inside the SPAT, speaking in low whispers with each other. They did not expect the blur of images that came sweeping through their minds without warning. There were only two people on the planet that could access their thoughts so easily and so quickly, and they both groaned loudly at the intrusion by Dysea. She was blocking Martin as she flashed the entire conversation with Helen into their thoughts, the enormity of what had taken place dropping them both to the deck of the SPAT. Their security Spartans sprang to their feet in alarm, befuddled at what could be causing them harm within the confines of the aircraft.

Anuk dropped to her knees beside Anja, reaching for her, “Anja my Queen! What is it?” She gasped. “What is wrong?”

“Dysea...” Aricia gasped loudly her knuckles turning white as she gripped Anja’s hand.

“What is happening?” Melancton bellowed.

“Something is assaulting them telepathically!” Danny spoke moving next to Anja.

“Impossible!” Anuk snapped looking at Daniel. “Only the King or Queen Dysea has the power to smash through their shields at this distance.”

“They don’t... they don’t appear in pain.” Vengal spoke, gripping Aricia’s shoulders as he knelt next to her, supporting her so that she did not topple forward. Her mother had dropped to the deck in front of her and was taking her face within her hands, reaching out with her mind.

“Daughter!” She spoke softly probing gently with her mind. Dasha knew that Aricia far surpassed her in skill, and she did not want to get hit with a telepathic attack from someone as powerful as Aricia who thought the intrusion into her thoughts an attack. “I am here Aricia.”

“Mother!” Aricia gasped. “It... it is Martin!”

“What is it Aricia?” Dasha exclaimed. “Has something happened to the King? We are here child. You must tell us.” She turned to Melancton, “Spartan... the pilot! Have the pilot turn this craft around now!” She ordered, falling into the role she once held as the wife of a Senate member.

Melancton for his part did not hesitate and began getting to his feet. “Yes Milady.” He answered.

“No!” Anja’s voice spoke loudly. Her voice froze them all in their tracks and they watched as her face and Aricia’s became less strained and they began to breathe deeply. Anja pulled Aricia’s hand closer to her, tucking it into her chest as they moved closer together. “Little Wolf?”

“I... I saw it too Anja.” Aricia replied, touching her forehead to Anja’s.

“Aricia!” Dasha spoke. “You... you said something has happened to the King.” She spoke. “What is it child?”

Aricia looked up at her, a smile spreading across her face. “Oh yes mother.” She spoke softly. “Something has happened.”

“What?” Danny barked. “Tell us! Is he hurt? In danger? Aricia... talk to us!”

“Something wonderful has happened.” Anja said softly as she looked at all of them now, her hand gripping Aricia’s even tighter and they smiled at each other with love and tenderness.

“What is it?” Vengal snapped. “Is he alright?”

Anja nodded. “He... he has discovered who he truly is.” She said softly.

“He has discovered who he is?” Melancton spoke confused. “We already know who he is. He already knows who he is.”

Aricia shook her head. “No. We never knew who he truly is. The... the Oracle has just told him and he is on his way to Thermopylae as we speak.”

Dasha’s eyes grew wide. “The Oracle contacted him?” This new information caused Melancton’s eyes and those of the other Spartans to also go wide. No one had heard from or seen the Oracle in centuries.

Dasha touched Aricia’s face. “Aricia... you and Anja are making no sense. He is the descendant of Leonidas. He is our King. What has the Oracle told him that we did not already know?”

Aricia shook her head with a smile. “Not a descendant mother.” She said softly. “He is... mother... Martin... Martin is the son of King Leonidas and Queen Gorgo.”

This statement caused all activity in the SPAT to cease as every Spartan turned towards her.

“Daughter... Aricia that... that is not possible,” Dasha said softly. “King Leonidas had only one son. We all know that.”

Anja shook her head. “No.” She said with a smile as she felt the familiar sensations wash over her. The sensations she had felt all of her life; the sensations that were always at their most powerful whenever she was near Martin. Now Anja knew why. “She... she was pregnant when Leonidas died. No one but the Oracle knew.”

Dasha sat back on her heels at this information. “Those... how... are you sure that is what the Oracle told him?”

“Spartans come to me!” Aricia barked out the command.

Once more there was no hesitation on the part of Daniel, Anuk, Melancton and the other Spartans on the SPAT. All of them lowered their mental shields and she and Anja reached out with their minds, passing to the others what Dysea had shown them.

Vengal watched as their faces began to slowly show shock and then utter and profound amazement. Anuk’s cerulean blue eyes were wide in wonderment as she gripped Daniel’s arm.

“By... by all that is holy,” Melancton spoke softly, his eyes wide. “We must go back!”

“No!” Anja spoke quickly. “We must continue with our mission. If we return it will only make things more difficult for him. He would expect us to continue our mission, and to complete it.”

“She’s right.” Danny said looking at his father. “He’s never failed in a mission. Never! And I don’t intend to let him fail now. He has Dysea with him, and Andreus, and the remainder of our Phalanx. He is not alone! We must let him do things his way. Finding the Drow and returning with them to Eden are even more important now!”

Vengal was lost as they talked, not understanding what they were saying. “I do not understand what is going on.” He spoke. “Do I order us to turn back?”

“No!” Aricia echoed Anja’s words from a moment ago. “We will complete what the son of Leonidas has directed us to. What my King and my love have ordered of us. I swear this as his Queen and his mate.”

“As do I,” Anja spoke. “We will not fail Spartans. I swear this to you, in my King’s name, as his Queen and his mate.”

“As do we all swear,” The remaining Spartans echoed together after a moment.

APO PRIME

NEW LYCAVORIAN HOME WORLD

COMMAND AND POLITICAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE UNITED LYCAVORIAN UNION

PRIMARY LYCAVORIAN MILITARY SHIPYARDS

LYCAVORIAN FLEET TRAINING FACILITIES

POPULATION NINE HUNDRED BILLION

CAPITAL CITY: TUYA

The purplish green planet was massive and easily four times the size of earth. There were six continents, each the size of Europe and North America combined. Two thousand cities ranging in size from a few hundred thousand to hundreds of million dotted the surface, lights that were sparkling on the night side of the planet from these cities. Mountains, lush green forests, several continent spanning deserts, all of the different terrains known to exist, to include the massive deep blue oceans that spanned thousands of kilometers across.

Miles above the intricate network of metal scaffolding and space born docking yards spanned hundreds of kilometers above the planet, ships ranging in size from a few hundred meters long to three enormous behemoths nearly four thousand meters long were trapped within the layers of beams and cross sections it seemed. Hundreds of man sized workers jetted back and forth encased in special space suits, the flashes of work torches and plasma cutters dotting the surfaces of the ships. Small two or three person crafts zipped between the dozens of work bays, either applying the metal hulls to the exposed frames of the ships, or striping it away. Attached to the dozens of pylons extending outward by themselves were the individual command pods for each bay, directing and monitoring the work going on in their bay.

Further out away from the planet, and extending as far as the eye could see were massive platforms, each half a kilometer across. These were Apo Prime’s last line of defense; massive space born defense platforms equipped with the latest in anti-missile and anti-ship defenses, and the most sophisticated detection

grid known to exist. Each platform had a crew of one hundred men and women who monitored the advanced sensor network all around the planet and the surrounding system. Twice the vampire fleets had come to Apo Prime, and twice they had been dealt devastating losses by the defense platforms and the Home Guard Fleets that constantly patrolled the system. Eighty-five divisions of combat tested veteran troops were stationed on Apo Prime, nearly three million troops and their equipment, to include Hover Tanks and long range ground Plasma Artillery.

Never again would the Lycavorian people be caught unprepared. They had lost one home world due to the Vampire's surprise attack, and they had sworn it would never happen again. That is why every man, woman and child on Apo Prime, from Lycavorian, to elf to other species who called Apo Prime their home. All of them were armed to the teeth, and the vampires would never take their planet from them again. The cities were gleaming points of interest and beauty, a combination of advanced and modern glass and steel, to the older portions of simple granite and marble. Lush green parks filled the cities, flowing rivers of crystal clear water teeming with aquatic life. Hover cars and buses darted about the cities by the thousands, sweeping people back and forth to shopping and jobs. Huge Entertainment districts provided every form of visual and physical pleasure, from operas and concerts, to excellent restaurants and even small café like shops that catered to the smaller companies and people. You could grow wealthy here on Apo Prime, or anywhere in the Lycavorian Union, but as former slaves much of this wealth was rapidly and willingly redistributed to help others and keep their government and military strong. There were powerful trade agreements between the nearly two thousand member worlds of the Lycavorian Union, all of them adding whatever they could to the defense of the Union and their ongoing war with the Vampire Empire.

The Lycavorian union had its own currency called the Riyal, and it was an exceptionally strong currency, rivaling even that of the Vampire currency the Ducat. There were corporations within the union that dealt with strictly military aspects, always attempting to build stronger and more powerful ships and weapons, while there were also corporations that dealt with improving life for the Union's citizens in the form of agriculture advancements and medical advances. Three thousand years in existence, and the Lycavorian Union was a child compared to the Vampire Empire and several of their allies across the universe, but they were a powerful child.

Tuya was the capital of Apo Prime and the center of all financial and political decisions made throughout the Union. A city of almost four hundred million people, and spread across two hundred square kilometers of mountain range and green plains. It was also home to the Command and Control Center of the Lycavorian Space Fleet and Lycavorian Ground Defense Forces or LGDF. The unassuming building was ten stories high and compared to the towering structures in the nearby city, completely out of date and useless. Of course... that is the impression the building gave from a distance. Until one was in front of the twelve foot high steel and concrete wall, and saw the heavily armed Lycavorian Spartan Troops alertly walking the perimeter of the building and the grounds, their wolf senses wide open and very attuned to the area around them. It had been three thousand years since they adopted the name Spartan to honor their dead King Leonidas, and even now they walked proudly. Normally a quiet and pristine location, with tall trees and even a walk through garden of flowers dotting the area, normally events passed without incident most days.

Today was not one of those days.

"Can you clean it up?" The voice rang out among the forty odd men and women of all species that were jammed into the communications hub. Large monitors dotted the walls all around them, some focused on training across Apo Prime, others turned to Fleet communication channels, or ground forces frequencies. All those were forgotten thirty-three minutes ago when the lone unmanned console had suddenly burst to life.

Reserved for communications from Lycavorian Oracles, the console had sat dormant for almost two thousand years since the last communication of an Oracle. None had been heard from since, and all were believed to have been killed by the vampires. There was a new push to reopen the school of Oracles to rebuild the once venerable institution, but that as yet had not come to fruition. The console had sat dormant until thirty-three minutes ago when it had abruptly come to life and scared the woman sitting next to it so badly, she had spilled her hot tea all over herself.

"It's a two thousand year old channel sir!" A voice carried back to the lone man standing looking over the center.

“Which means we have two thousand years of advancement to help, so clean up the damn transmission,” The elf officer barked. He was a tall elf, with short dirty blond hair, his elf ears very prominent. He wore a long scar down the side of his face that cut underneath the patch he wore over his left eye, and ended just above his lip. “And get me the transmission codes for Lycavorian Oracles dating back to the Black Day! Move people! Move!”

The single massive monitor in the room was filled with the fuzzy white image of a woman, her voice broken and cutting out. The men and women wore dark gray uniforms with crimson strips on the pants and sleeves. All of them had gold rings around the cuffs of their uniforms signifying rank, while many had small pins on their shoulder boards.

The heavy security doors into the CIC slid aside to reveal the equally tall Lycavorian officer. He wore Admiral/Lieutenant strips on his cuffs, four thick gold rings trimmed in crimson. His dark hair was just starting to go gray, indicating his nearly four thousand years of life, and his body was thickly built with powerful muscles and deeply tanned skin. He was not a man used to an office, and he never spared a moment when he could get out and train side by side with the troops in the field. He was almost never seen in his office in the Command Headquarters and the elf was surprised when he walked in.

“Afusan, I came as soon as I heard.” The man spoke as he walked up to the elf.

“We’re trying to clear it up now Admiral.” Afusan spoke. “Whoever she is, she is using a two thousand year old channel.”

The man looked at him wide eyed, “Two thousand year old channel?”

The elf nodded. “That’s what I said.” He spoke looking at the man he had worked with for the last two centuries. They had become close friends, as they both hated being in this building and away from regular troops. “Tell me Riall, when was the last communication we had from an Oracle?”

“You know that answer the same as me old friend.” The Lycavorian replied. “They all went underground after the rebellion began, many of them have been killed over the years. I personally do not know of any that have survived.”

The male technician stepped up and handed Afusan a data pad. “We just got this from the archives Colonel.” He said. The elf Colonel perused the pad quickly and looked at the man.

“This is confirmed?” Afusan asked.

“Yes sir!”

Afusan handed the pad to Riall. “One survived...” He spoke. “And she is attempting to contact us now.” He spoke looking at Riall as his eyes grew wide reading the pad.

Afusan stepped forward a small bit. “We have her name people!” She shouted. “We are receiving a transmission from Oracle Dustha! Her transmission code should be coming through now. Clear up the image and roll the transmission from the beginning.”

Afusan looked at Riall and smiled. “This ought to be good.” He said. “Two thousand years and she is just now contacting us.”

Riall looked at him, his face pale. “Afusan... she... she is listed as a Category Nine.”

“Category Nine?” Afusan’s face changed immediately and he stepped back up next to Riall, taking the pad his blue eyes wide as he read. “By the gods!” He muttered looking up. He spun back around. “LOCK US DOWN NOW!” He screamed.

The room went completely red and an alert siren began to blare as extra thick security walls began dropping in place all around the CIC. They were designed to withstand even the heaviest of planetary bombardments should a fleet of vampire ships ever be able to breach the weapons platforms and Home Guard Fleets. The technicians began chattering excitedly on their com sets, ordering the lock down of other military installations across the planet.

“Suspend all off world communication!” Riall ordered. “No unnecessary traffic is to be allowed unless it is between fleet forces. Issue a training alert to all civilian agencies to inform them we are conducting another drill!”

Afusan turned to a junior officer. “I want everything we have on Oracle Dustha! She is listed as a Category Nine. Get me everything!”

The officer’s eyes were wide. “Sir... Colonel a Category Nine request requires the... it requires the Prime Minister’s code.”

“Then get the Prime Minister on the COM!” Afusan nearly yelled.

“Colonel... we’re filtering out the last of the interference!” A voice rang out.

“Play it!” Afusan snapped turning to the large monitor.

Helen’s face appeared on the screen now, clear except for some small background clutter. The room became silent as she began to speak.

“I pray... this transmission reaches... leaders... of the rebellion. The las... I knew head... quarters was... Apo Prime...”

“Boast power to the audio converters!” A tech yelled out.

“Boasting to three hundred percent!”

“...am Oracle Dustha. I am issuing a Gamma Omega, code word Second Son. I say again... a Gamma Omega, code word Second son. My code is seven four eight six nine three point one.” They watched Helen take a deep breath. “I do not know if this will reach you, or if the rebellion even still exists. This transmission will most likely burn out my power cells so I will not be able to receive a reply even if one is sent. I have a Gamma Omega, code word Second Son plus three. I can only hope that this is received...”

Riall turned to another officer. “Get me all security transmission codes and their translations now!”

The officer ran off as Helen continued. “...undoubtedly have my location on record, and I am requesting assistance. Be advised that there is significant activity here, and events are rapidly moving forward. I can not predict the outcome... only that awareness is upon us and the fruit does not fall far from the tree.” She said with a smile. “You should receive the confirming burst within twelve hours and I urge all haste. We have many friends, but far more enemies. If the rebellion receives this, I beg you to come with all possible haste. Please hurry.”

Afusan looked at Riall as the message began to repeat itself. “What is a Gamma Omega?” he asked. “I’ve never heard that code.”

Riall shook his head. “I have no idea.” He turned as the officer ran back up with a data pad.

“Admiral... the Prime Minister has cancelled her remaining appointments for the day and is on her way here with all haste.” The young man spoke. “She sent an encrypted burst to this pad and ordered that only you or Colonel Afusan were to open it.”

Riall took the pad and entered in his personal code on the small keypad. His dark eyes grew wide and if it was possible he turned even paler in the red light of the CIC. “By... by all that we hold holy.” He whispered.

“Riall... what is it?” Afusan asked.

Riall looked at him slowly, holding out the data pad to him. “Bring a copy of the transmission and come with me my friend.” He spoke quickly. He turned to the young officer. “You will send a priority transmission to General Vistr of the Ninth Spartan Expeditionary Division and have him mobilize. He is to move to the military spaceport in his sector with his entire command and await instructions.”

“Yes sir.” The officer replied.

“Once he has issued those orders, he is to meet us here in one hour. I want no excuses from him; tell him I am one hundred percent serious.” Riall spoke. “Then advise Admiral Ceneu to bring his corpse down from that hole he calls an office and meet me in the secure conference room.”

Afusan looked at the pad still, his eyes wide. Slowly he brought his face back up to Riall as the man turned back to him. “Riall...”

“Bring a copy of the transmission Colonel. Quickly my friend. And your finest aide. We have a meeting to attend right now.” Riall spoke.

I have a Gamma Omega, code word Second Son plus three. I can only hope that this is received. You undoubtedly have my location on record, and I am requesting assistance. Be advised that there is significant activity here, and events are rapidly moving forward. I can not predict the outcome... only that awareness is upon us and the fruit does not fall far from the tree.” She said with a smile. “You should receive the confirming burst within twelve hours and I urge all haste. We have many friends, but far more enemies. If the rebellion receives this, I beg you to come with all possible haste. Please hurry.”

The monitor in the room went dark and Riall turned to the three new men sitting at the table in the room. “This was received forty-nine minutes ago.” He spoke evenly. “It was sent three hours and nineteen minutes before that on a very old military channel used only by the Lycavorian Oracles.”

“Oracles?” The Lycavorian General Vistr spoke leaning forward in his chair. He was short for a male of his species, but very wide at the shoulders and his hair was completely white in color. His hazel eyes however were very alert and full of mischief. “I... I didn’t think there were any Oracles left alive.”

“Riall... this transmission is authentic?” The well dressed and groomed woman asked. Her dirty blond hair was long and pulled into a tight pony tail, her features elegantly curved.

“Afusan confirmed it four times Deia.” Riall replied.

The slim woman got to her feet, her womanly curves very obvious, but the scent of her Alpha husband all over her. She had been Prime Minister of the Lycavorian Union for seven hundred years now, elected for a life term. She held the respect of every species in the Union and was known as a skilled politician and negotiator, but one that was not to be trifled with.

The other male in the room also leaned forward. He was not Lycavorian, his skin scaly in nature and gray in color. He was known as an Algolian... a reptilian species that was one of the four founding members of the Union with the Lycavorians, the Elves and the Hadarians. The Lycavorian and Algolian people, along with the elves tended to be the primary fighters both on the ground and in space, while the Hadarian people were the healers. Admiral Ceneu was the man who commanded the Spartan Home Guard Fleet.

“Forgive me for my ignorance...” Ceneu spoke his voice naturally raspy. “I have never heard of this Gamma Omega code. Is this some sort of special message?”

“Yes.” Deia answered looking at Afusan. “What do we know of this Dustha?”

“She was one of five Oracles that survived the purge.” Afusan spoke now from his chair. “She was very young when her predecessor passed on. She was on earth when King Resumar decided to send the 10,000 fetuses there, before he and his bloodline were killed. This was done at her recommendation.”

Deia nodded. “Yes I remember that. She seemed certain the Spartans were perfect for our people. And she was right.”

“She is the Oracle that served King Leonidas, and the one who contacted us to come to earth and retrieve Queen Gorgo. Once Queen Gorgo left earth with unborn son of Leonidas in her womb she would have no cause to contact us. It is very possible she believed the rebellion dead. She was helping The Guardian of the Line to conduct his duties, that much we do know, but the last recorded contact with her was two thousand one hundred and six years ago, I’m guessing that is why she is unsure if the rebellion still exists. If not for the information given to us by Isabella, we would not know that four of the remaining Oracles were caught and killed by the High Lord’s secret police.” Afusan finished.

“Isabella knew nothing of this Dustha?” Deia asked.

Afusan shook his head. “I’ve gone over every page of her testimony when she came over to us. She knew of only the four that were killed. We only assumed her lost because we did not hear from her. We continued to send advancements to Sparta on earth to assist with protecting the line, but as I said, we never heard from her again. And the Guardian of the Line did not know his true heritage and would not have known to contact us.”

“And her message originated from Sparta correct?” Deia asked.

Riall nodded. “She is apparently still there, and the High Lord is still oblivious to her existence it seems.”

“If I remember correctly she was a very cautious young woman.” Deia spoke as she moved around the room. “She would not risk her transmission being intercepted if what she is telling us is not true.”

Riall nodded. “I agree.”

“What is she telling us?” Ceneu asked once more.

“Riall... would you explain.” Deia asked.

“You all know that Leonidas’s second son was placed in suspended animation when he was six months old.” Riall spoke. “His chamber was placed on a heavy cruiser and was constantly moved. The Vampires had nothing solid to go on in their attempt to find him, and they were too busy now trying to murder Leonidas’s first born and any of his children.”

Ceneu nodded. "This ship was attacked randomly and destroyed. Only Queen Gorgo made it off the ship alive. The child King was lost with the two who guarded him. Queen Gorgo was despondent for two hundred years." He spoke.

"That is what we all thought as well." Riall spoke softly. "Until today."

"What do you mean?" Vistr asked.

"Gamma Omega is an old Lycavorian code phrase." Riall told them. "It was developed during our years as slaves to the vampires to indicate that the children of the King had safely transmitted from one location to the other. When Gorgo gave birth to Leonidas's first son, the phrase was brought back into use by Dustha to make her reports."

"I'm not following." Ceneu spoke.

"Gamma Omega means the safe passage of the King's son was completed. Second son... Second son refers to the child we thought lost so long ago. Dustha is telling us that the youngest son of Leonidas is alive, and he has been on earth all of this time! This report from her indicates that he is aware of who and what he is, and the reference to the fruit not falling far from the tree indicates he is far too much like his father." Riall explained with a small smile. "Hope is rekindled my friends."

Vistr had come to his feet now. "The... the youngest of Leonidas lives?" He gasped.

Riall nodded. "If we are to believe the message, then Dustha would undoubtedly send him to the King's tomb at this place called Thermopylae. Within King Leonidas's tomb are neuroboosters that will activate the moment one of his bloodline enters. If the DNA source code is correct, the son will be branded with the King's Shi Viska, and a small portion of his own memories will be transmitted to the Oracle's console in the CIC."

Deia looked at them. "My friends this is monumental day in our history." She spoke moving back to her chair. "We thought all was lost when first Leonidas was killed, and then the infant son was lost. Yet we endured and have prospered, because it is what they would have demanded of us. To be able to tell our people that the infant son we so coveted, that he has returned from the dead..."

"What does this plus three mean?" Ceneu asked.

Riall shook his head. "We don't know for sure. Dustha obviously thought it important enough to include in her message. Once we receive the second transmission from the automatic arrays within Leonidas's tomb we will know more."

Deia nodded. "Riall has already placed your division on standby General Vistr." She spoke. "You will begin moving your troops to Admiral Ceneu's transport ships immediately. The moment we receive the second transmission I want to be underway. I am authorizing the closest ships to the earth sector to begin scans and intense sensor sweeps to attempt to determine what we will be facing. Dustha said they were surrounded by enemies, and I want to be prepared for any eventuality." She looked at Riall. "How soon can we be in earth's sector?"

Riall met her eyes. "Normally it would take us six months." He answered. "I doubt Dustha is aware of the recent advances in our engine technology. Both we and the Vampire Empire have kept that very secret from everyone with the exception of our allies."

Deia looked at him. "You said normally."

Riall nodded. "I did. If we receive this transmission then I believe we need to use our Jump Gates."

Ceneu looked at him, "The Jump Gates?" He asked.

Riall nodded. "It would shave five months off our journey Ceneu."

Deia looked at the men. "I did not think the Jump Gates were ready for full deployment." She spoke. "The elves were still working out some minor power fluctuations to the Gate cores if I'm not mistaken."

Riall nodded. "They were. The Chief of the Science Division assures me they have corrected this. I inquired of him on my way here. We can use the Jump Gates to put us within a month of earth's sector, and then use our Light Speed Drives to have us there in two weeks with calculated jumps."

"That many consecutive jumps would burn out every ship's LSD." Ceneu spoke.

"We can pack spar cores and drive units on each ship." Afusan spoke. "Once we reach Earth Sector, our engineers can replace the drives."

"We've never attempted that before Riall." Ceneu said.

"Do you not think this is important enough to try old friend?" Riall asked.

Ceneu nodded after only a moment. "Indeed I do. I will have the finest elf engineers transferred to my ships and have additional LSD cores sent up from our stores."

"What do you mean?" Deia asked.

Ceneu looked at her. "We have never attempted to replace LSD cores without the means of a shipyard. It is dangerous work, and we would be without the safety measures a shipyard would provide."

"Is it that dangerous?" Deia spoke.

"It would be less so if the elves will provide their First Engineering Corp." Ceneu spoke. "They are the best and brightest of the lot, and with them, it can be done."

Deia nodded. "I will contact the Elf Minister and personally request them. He will cut their orders before I even finish my request; that much I do know." She looked at Riall. "You must tell your mate Riall. We can not keep this from her."

"I did not intend too." He replied. "I suggest we also inform Isabella and her people."

"Why?" Vistr asked quickly, the distrust evident in his voice.

Deia smiled at him. "General... you have said yourself her vampire troops fight with a skill second only to our Spartans. They have been with us for the better part of a thousand years now. As Isabella has shown us, not all the vampires are conquering monsters."

Vistr took a deep breath and nodded. "You are right." He spoke. "My apologies, old instincts die hard Prime Minister."

Deia nodded. "This I know old friend, and I do not require an apology and Isabella would not require one either. Isabella and her people have proven themselves to be our friends and allies many times over since they first came to us. And we all know what the union of our King and a Vampire Princess could mean to our efforts. You have all read the Ancient Vampire Scrolls, just as I have." She saw the men nod. "Riall I would very much like to be there when you tell Gorgo, but it is I that must inform Isabella."

"She will be without words." Riall said softly.

Deia looked at him carefully. *Do you doubt your mate's love for you Riall?* She asked, forming the private telepathic connection with her most senior military officer.

Riall looked at her. *No. I have always known Leonidas will always hold a place within her heart that I will never have. I knew that when I accepted the love I have for her. She loves me, of that I have no doubt. And she loves our children just as intensely. Perhaps this will return to her some of the past love she has lost.*

Deia nodded. *I have spoken with Gorgo many times Riall. You are correct that Leonidas will always have a small piece of her. But do not doubt for a moment that you hold the rest of her heart in your hands; you and your children.*

Riall took a deep breath. "I suggest we reconvene here in two hours to await the second transmission."

Deia nodded. "Agreed. What we have discussed will not leave this room with the exception of those we have spoken of so far. Anyone else will need approval from me or Admiral Riall. All security precautions are to be implemented. Is that clear?" The men nodded as she got to her feet. "Then let us move quickly gentlemen."

APO PRIME HISTORICAL UNIVERSITY

ENROLLMENT: 375,000

The lecture hall was massive, with nearly four thousand seats layered carefully upward so that the lecturer could be seen by all with the assistance of the monitors on the sides of the room. The woman was of medium height, with long black hair that fell to her buttocks. Under the simple dark blue jumpsuit her womanly curves were very visible, and her dark brown eyes were bright and alert. Many male students, some of them Alpha males, had spent the nights fantasizing about this particular Professor. Her skin was deeply tanned, and even though she was well over three thousand years old, to the males who had yet to reach mating age, she was the perfect woman. Extremely intelligent and witty, with a body that many men would fight over. It was no secret who this female's mate and husband was. His scent permeated her being, and his aura swirled around her like a blanket, a blanket she wore with love and pride. The history of the woman herself was well known and taught in a different class at this University, and she was looked upon almost reverently by people in many circles, of every species within the Union. She had helped to barter several trade agreements with new members

to the Union and was widely considered one of the most politically adept women within the government. She and the Prime Minister were close friends, often times seen shopping together in one of the Entertainment Districts of Tuya.

Gorgo looked across the four hundred and nineteen students now seated in front of her. The beauty she had as a Spartan maiden remained, though there were small lines now under her eyes that gave knowledge of what this woman had endured over time. The death of her husband and King had struck her harder than she realized, the realization that she carried a son he would never see making it worse. To lose the man she had loved so dearly, as well as the only two connections she had to him had nearly destroyed her. The loss of her infant son had sent her into a tail spin of depression for nearly four decades, and it was only the friendship of the Prime Minister and the undying love of the man who had saved her life that same day that kept Gorgo from losing her mind completely.

She had spent four decades of wallowing in self pity, striking out at those who cared for her the most, even as she clung to them to keep her sane. It had been a particularly vicious attack on this man, verbally and physically that finally shocked her out of her harmful life. She had nearly lost him that day, and the words her first and most powerful love Leonidas had spoken to her before he died had come rushing back to her that day at Riall's bedside.

Marry a good man and have good children.

Gorgo had not left Riall's side for six months after that day. Two years later, she had found herself deeply in love with the man. Though she had never told him openly, she loved him dearly and when he claimed her as his only mate, Gorgo's life had begun again. As years passed and they had six children together, their love grew and deepened to the point that they were never apart for very long, and even the mere touching of their minds could grant each of them happiness and peace. Gorgo would always love Leonidas and hold that piece of him in her heart, but she loved Riall in almost the same fashion, just with a different part of her heart.

Gorgo lowered the data pad she held and looked at the students. "Very well... who now can tell me why Apo Prime was chosen as the home world of the union?"

Several dozen hands shot up and Gorgo smiled, pointing to a young woman in the fiftieth row. She was a Lamias; a humanoid race with bat like ears and yellow eyes. The Lamias are extremely well adapted to both water and ground and make excellent amphibious warriors. They also are known to possess a precognition form of telepathy that has suited their ranking officers quite well as it allows them to practically see things before they happen.

"Yes Texm go ahead." Gorgo spoke.

"It is the largest planet in this system as well as the surrounding four systems, and it is a strategic location to most members of the Union. We can easily reinforce any ally from here with either ground or fleet forces." The young woman spoke.

Gorgo nodded, "Excellent Texm... a complete textbook answer and very accurate." She said with a smile. "Now does anyone know the real reason?" Several more hands shot up and Gorgo pointed to the elf female, "Lahuhr."

"It most reminded the Prime Minister of your home world Milady. Just as it most reminded the elfin Chief Delegate of our home world." The female elf replied.

Gorgo nodded. "Thank you Lahuhr." She said. "While any answer given would be correct for your exam... that is the one I would most like to see. Our species and many of us here, we were not born as warriors. We were naturally peaceful and friendly people. Events brought upon us by others forced us to pick up the mantle of war. And while we may be better at it than the fools who forced it upon us," The students all laughed at her comments. "We all still yearn for the quiet and peaceful life. We..."

Four hundred heads turned to see all four doors into the auditorium open and heavily armed Spartan troops move in to take up positions along the wall and near where Gorgo stood. For her part Gorgo was just as surprised and she turned to see Riall march quickly through the door closest to her.

"Husband... I'm in the middle of a class!" Gorgo complained as Riall came up to her.

The students watched as the famed Lycavorian Admiral, winner of countless battles against the vampires walked up to his wife and nuzzled her throat while hitting her with a small portion of his aura. Not enough to overwhelm her, but enough to cause her eyes to close in contentment and love as she nuzzled him back.

Gorgo drew back and looked at him with her dark eyes bright and full of love for him, eyes that Riall always lost himself too and eyes that would sway any man. He had learned long ago what Leonidas had loved so about this woman. It wasn't her heart stopping beauty, or her prowess in their bed, no it was her eyes that had caused Leonidas to love her, and now Riall loved her just as intently.

"I'm... I'm flattered husband..." Gorgo spoke softly, her skin slightly flushed. "But I am in the middle of a class. Could this not wait until tonight at our home?"

They both could hear the chuckles of many of the students. Riall grinned. "No it couldn't. I have something for you." He spoke. "And this class is over with."

"What?" Gorgo protested. "Riall you can't just send my class home. We aren't finished with the day's studies."

Riall turned towards the students. "By order of the Prime Minister... your class here is finished for the day. You are excused, and you have one minute to clear the room!"

The four hundred students needed no further encouragement and with all the skill of university students they piled for the doors in coordinated bunch. Gorgo looked at her husband as he watched them filed out, shaking his head in amusement at the speed with which they moved. The room was empty in less than a minute and he turned back to his wife.

"Riall what is the meaning of this!" Gorgo demanded.

"Something has come up that needs your attention." Riall spoke. Gorgo immediately detected the seriousness in his voice and her face paled.

"Our children," She gasped putting her hands on his chest. "Riall please tell me our children are unhurt."

"*Our* children are fine." He spoke softly, Gorgo's eyes narrowing at the inflection in his voice again, but he could see the tension leave her body and he wrapped his arms around her.

"Riall what is going on?" She asked again, putting her head to his chest, while her eyes took in the heavy Spartan security force. "Why are there so many Spartans here?" She pulled back and looked at him, "Your brother! He isn't..."

Riall shook his head. "No. We... we received a message today." He told her, pulling out the data pad. "Deia wanted to be here as well, but she is doing some other things that are just as important for this."

"Deia? What is this about Riall?" Gorgo asked. "You are beginning to frighten me."

Riall tapped the data pad lightly, the unfamiliar voice filling Gorgo's ears.

"I am Oracle Dustha. I am issuing a Gamma Omega, code word Second Son. I say again... a Gamma Omega, code word Second son. My code is seven four eight six nine three point one. I do not know if this will reach you, or if the rebellion even still exists. These transmissions will most likely burn out my power cells so I will not be able to receive a reply even if one is sent. I have a Gamma Omega, code word Second Son plus three. I can only hope that this is received. You undoubtedly have my location on record, and I am requesting assistance. Be advised that there is significant activity here, and events are rapidly moving forward. I can not predict the outcome... only that awareness is upon us and the fruit does not fall far from the tree." She said with a smile. "You should receive the confirming burst within twelve hours and I urge all haste. We have many friends, but far more enemies. If the rebellion receives this, I beg you to come with all possible haste. Please hurry."

Gorgo's eyes were wide now, as she gripped the pad in her hand tightly. Her heart hammered so hard within her chest she thought her ribs were going to break. Her breathes came in painful gasps, her hands shaking almost uncontrollably.

"Dustha," Gorgo finally spoke, looking at Riall. "She's alive!"

Riall nodded. "It would appear so." He spoke softly. "She refers to a second son in the message. We had to reference very old military codes, but we discovered what this second son reference means."

Gorgo shook her head. "It is not familiar to me." She said. "Why would I know?"

"You do not know what the term is my wife... but you do however know what the term is in regards to." Riall said with a smile.

"I do?" Gorgo asked.

Riall nodded. "It is in reference to your son." He spoke the words.

Gorgo looked at him. "Riall our sons are both officers of our embassy on the Hadarian home world. This message could not be in..."

“No my love,” Riall spoke reaching up to touch her cheek gently. He smiled at her. “This is not a son of my blood. This message is in regards to the second of the sons you bore for King Leonidas.”

Gorgo pushed back from him then, her dark eyes wide and unbelieving. She shook her head slowly, her hand in front of her mouth. She staggered slightly and Riall reached out to steady her. She hadn’t spoken that name in over two hundred years as she had once more found happiness. All the loss and blood she had pushed to the furthest portions of her mind, locking it away in a box and forever discarding the key. Gorgo shook her head, tears clouding her eyes. “It’s not... it’s not possible Riall. I... I saw his transport... you barely got me off the ship in time. He... his chamber was in another portion of the ship.”

Riall slipped his arms around her before the shock took away her ability to stand on her own two feet. “He lives Gorgo. Your son lives.”

“Where?” Gorgo asked incredulously. “How?”

Riall smiled. “Sparta.”

Gorgo couldn’t believe her ears. “Sparta!” She gasped.

“The fruit does not fall far from the tree Dustha said.” Riall spoke. “Her transmission was clear and we are expecting the confirming burst within the next few hours. Deia wanted you there to view it with us.”

“Riall... I...”

“I will send for Jora.” Riall said quickly. “You have a special bond with our oldest, and the two of you have always reached for each other in times of trouble.”

“Do... do not leave me Riall.” Gorgo spoke in almost a whisper.

He shook his head. “That will never take place my love; never.”

SPARTA

PASS OF THERMOPYLAE

(Background music: *Now we are Free, Gladiator ST*)

Endith brought the SPAT down slowly over the open field below. Hundreds of years of sedimentation had pushed back the coast of the sea several kilometers, and now there was no fourteen meter wide pass as when the battle had occurred. The moon cast an eerie glow upon the land below, the pitted and shattered concrete of the highway that had once passed through here. Martin stood on the lowered ramp, his dark eyes gazing out into the night at the monument that stood only a few hundred meters away.

A monument to the father he never knew.

“You should have told me you knew who the Oracle was!” Dymas spoke to him from the side as the SPAT began to lower to the ground. They clung to the two hand holds above the opening ramp, the rear of the SPAT filled with the members of Martin’s Phalanx. All of them knew something of importance had happened and all of them were alert and restless.

“That would have changed nothing.” Martin spoke, his eyes never leaving the ground below him as it got closer and closer.

“What did she tell you?” Walter/Dymas asked softly. “Did she suggest a path to you?”

Martin nodded slowly. “She did?”

“May I inquire as to what that is?” Walter asked him. “Everyone on this trip has spoken less to me than each other. What is going on Martin?”

Martin looked at him finally as the SPAT’s landing struts touched the ground beneath them. “You... you were and always will be like a father to me Walter.” He said. “Never doubt that.”

“Martin... what is...” Walter watched him step off into the darkness as the SPAT’s engines began to throttle down.

There was no hesitation as first Dysea and then Andreus followed him, and then the others of the Phalanx, spreading out into protective flanking positions. Walter followed, jogging to catch up to Dysea who walked in the middle of the line of Spartans. Martin preceded her by several meters, the darkness flowing around him, embracing him.

“Dysea... what is going on?” He asked softly. “He’s... he is different.”

Dysea nodded. "Yes he is Holy One." She replied looking at him. "The Oracle... she told us many wondrous things."

"What?" Walter asked.

Dysea smiled gently at him, her white teeth flashing in the glow of the moon. "All will become known very soon Holy One." She said softly. "As *Nauta Melme* always trusted you, trust in him now."

They watched as Martin finally stopped, and their eyes came up to gaze upon what it was he was staring at. The monument was easily thirty meters across, carved from white marble and granite which reflected the light from the moon. Two solitary statues book marked either end of the monument, a single section in the center was built outward and supporting the large spear wielding and shield holding bronze statue.

Martin let his eyes linger on the monument, tears beginning to form in his dark eyes as he closed them and allowed the images to flow through his consciousness. The pass had been only some fourteen meters wide, and Martin could see the towering black rock cliffs as clearly as if he was standing next to them right now; the ocean crashing into the cliffs, spraying water over the edge of the Phocian Wall. He could see the encampments, the fires burning in the night, Spartans and their squires sitting next to the fires with their allies, battered and bloody, but never broken. The bodies of their honored dead, the blood that covered the dirt all around like a lake.

Martin walked slowly up to the monument, just below the towering statue, his eyes reaching up to gaze at the bronze figure of that man that was his father. The Spartans had gathered around him now, all of them dropping to one knee as they watched him. Martin reached up and allowed his hand to touch the cool marble face, his finger tracing the engraved inscription *Molon Labe* on the otherwise smooth surface.

"Father..." Martin spoke as he slowly dropped to one knee.

There was a momentary flash of white light that seemed to extend from the tip of the spear on the monument. It startled the Spartans around it, their eyes going wide at what they saw.

"I had always hoped it would be you." The deep voice spoke.

Martin turned slowly and got to his feet as Dysea and Walter and the other Spartans dropped to one knee in awe. The image of the figure was outlined in white, dressed in full Spartan armor, pristine in shape and color, shimmering within the image. Martin could hear the whispers among the Spartans. They were speaking his father's name.

Martin was looking into a mirror, almost every feature identical to what he saw every morning reflecting back at him. The dark eyes, tanned skin and long black hair. It sent tingles of recognition down his spine throughout his entire body.

"Father," Martin spoke hearing the gasps from the Spartans as well as Walter.

"I do not have much time my youngest son. I have contained my thoughts within this monument for three thousand years, knowing deep in my heart it would be you who triggered the devices hidden within with your touch." The image of Leonidas spoke with a laconic grin. "Do you hide from your own father boy?"

Martin lowered all his mental and psychic shields without a moment's hesitation bathing the Spartans of his Phalanx in the full power and command of his aura. Many of them could not even look up at what they now saw and felt. The image of Leonidas turned to look over them and he nodded approvingly. "You follow my son Spartans!" he called out. "I expect you to act like Spartans in deed and in words. And not let my son stray from the path!" The dark eyes moved to where Walter knelt, his face frozen in stunned shock. "It has been a long time old friend."

Walter struggled to his feet, tears streaming down his face. "My... my King? Is... is it really you?"

The image of Leonidas smiled. "It is I Dymas."

"How... how is this possible?"

"It appears the Oracle has granted me a power I do not understand. I have waited here all this time for my descendant to come and take up my mantle. Never did I dream it would be my unborn son." The image turned to Martin. "Your mother thought I did not know, but I did. I knew the morning of our last night. Even then I could feel your aura stirring within her womb. I can feel her... even across the distance. She is happy once more, and that fills me with joy. Tell her son, when you see her. Tell her goodbye for me."

"I... I will father." Martin spoke.

"My time is short... and the Oracles that have passed before me say I need to hurry." The image spoke. "You have known for your entire life what you were my son, you denied it at times, but you knew. You are the

King of Sparta now... and not just of Sparta, but of hundreds of billions of lives across the universe. They have waited, just as the Spartans have. It is time for you to take up your birthright Martin Leonidas, time for you to become who you were born to be.” The image of Leonidas saw Dysea move up next to Martin and take his arm, her emerald eyes streaked with tears. He looked back to Martin. “One of your three mates I take it?”

Martin nodded slowly. “Dysea...”

Dysea bowed her head deeply. “It... it is an honor beyond words to stand in your presence sire.”

The image of Leonidas laughed heartily. “Ah... you have chosen well my son! She and your other mates will tame your reckless nature, just as your mother tamed mine.” His eyes fell upon her and smiled. “You are special to him child... that is why you stand with him. He loves you all... but you have a place within him the others will not. Four mates... even I could not have aspired to such a thing.”

“Four?” Martin and Dysea said together.

Leonidas smiled. “You will know. You will know. War awaits you my son; death, blood and suffering. You must be strong through it all, for so many will now look to you for direction.” The image of Leonidas spoke. “Within this monument is your birthright. All you need do is take it; for good or for ill, it is yours now.” The image turned Dymas. “My old friend... you have honored my last orders to you without question and without fail. You will live long Dymas my Captain, have more children and I ask of you that when my son needs your council, you will never refuse him.”

Dymas’s tear stained eyes smiled brightly as he nodded his head. “I would gladly do this for you my King.” He spoke.

The image of Leonidas shook his head. “I am no longer your King old friend. Your King stands in front of you now. I am merely a memory.”

“You will never be that to me my Lord, never to me.” He said softly.

“Fear is a constant my son, we must learn to embrace it, for it makes us stronger.” Leonidas spoke. “Know all that I know Martin Leonidas. Do not mourn that we had no time together son, this time granted to us now will always be precious to me. I can tell you what I could not tell your mother and brother that day I left. I can tell you I love you son. Free our people; free all people from under the vampire’s heel. Fight with your head, but lead... lead with your heart.”

“I will father.” Martin spoke softly. “I swear this to you.”

The image of Leonidas nodded. “You will have many strong children my son, and I will await you on the field of honor, for you have already earned it.”

Martin lifted his hand, reaching out to touch the image just before it faded into nothing. He felt the powerful surge of heat through his body, and it was as if his awareness expanded ten fold. Everything came into focus with more clarity than he had ever known. And he knew what path he must take. All of them heard the rumbling as the entire front section of the marble slab holding the bronze statue of Leonidas slid out and to the side, revealing the small chamber within. Glowing inside the small chamber was a device similar to what Martin had seen in the Senate Building; only this one was bathed in a silver/white light. Martin slowly made his way up to the monument and looked at the device, Dysea still clinging to his arm tightly, Walter standing on the other side of him.

My gift to you my son, Leonidas’s voice echoed in Martin’s head. Wear it and use it with Spartan pride.

Martin looked at Dysea and saw her watching him with those gorgeous emerald green orbs. She smiled and squeezed his arm. “It is your destiny *Nauta Melme*.” She said softly. “Seize it now.”

Martin extended his hand and with a deep breath he placed it into the center of the cylinder like device, his hand interrupting the path of silver/white light. He watched as the light changed slightly, glowing more brightly. He felt a tingle begin in his finger tips, and extend throughout his hand. His brow furrowed as the tingling sensation began to climb up past his wrist, through his forearm and to his elbow. His eyes opened wide as power unlike anything he had ever felt smashed its way through all of his mental and psychic shields, the tingling growing to a hot sensation from his elbow down. He braced his other hand on the monument and tried to pull his left hand from the device. His hand wouldn’t move and the heat throughout his arm grew. He looked down and saw the Shi Viska bridle being branded into his very skin, the leather straps going across his palm, circling around the back of his hand. The small laser like device was precise in its movements, no blood escaping from his skin. The laser extended up his arm, slicing through the body armor like paper, carving into

his flesh. As the laser past, the leather and metal bridle followed. Martin grit his teeth tightly, fear gripping him tightly.

Fear is a constant my son. Embrace it; wrap yourself within it, for it only makes us stronger. His father's voice filled his head.

Martin stopped resisting then, relaxing his entire body, accepting the unknown and all that it entailed. He reached out with his mind, touching Dysea, feeling her love and devotion to him. He felt Walter's pride and honor, the beating hearts of those Spartans around him. They were awed and confused, but none of them shirked from the unknown that was happening. Andreus stood slightly behind him, proud and strong. He could feel Anja and Aricia, reaching out to them, embracing them within his aura, and his mind, feeling the love and support they sent back to him, their auras combining with Dysea's to empower him and swarm around him. It felt the unknown presence, a female, strong, proud and arrogant, stronger than Anja and Aricia, an equal to Dysea in skill and power. She was different somehow, some taste of her aura was altered and he could not place it. Then... he felt his mother, so very far away, but walking proudly in the bright corridor with a single purpose, the tall Alpha wolf next to her. His mind swarmed with images, thoughts and not all of them were his own. He felt himself reach across the stars, seeing the amazing images of stars and suns and planets. Then he was there with her, and she was so beautiful, his mother, still alive and still calling out to him.

Martin's eyes opened wide, no longer dark brown in color, or even the yellow/gold of his wolf self. His eyes were glowing silver and casting off that same light against the wall of the monument.

"All of it!" He screamed. "All of it! I accept it for everything that it is!"

There was a brilliant flash and fingers of lightning reached out from Martin, touching first Dysea, then Walter and then each of his Spartan royal guard. The fingers of white lightning connected them, through their Shi Viskas, and where Dysea did not have one, one began to form on her arm just as it did on Martin's. The fingers of white lightning reached into the night sky, spreading across time and space. They reached another continent where Aricia and Anja were greeting Tarifa and Aihola. Aricia, Anja, Dekton, Daniel, all those connected to Martin were touched by the lightning, engulfed in it, swarmed by it, causing others to jump back with expressions of horror and fear, unable to do anything.

The white lightning reached out even further, finding the last one it needed to touch this night. And the Shi Viska was branded to the pale, flawless skin in another galaxy.

Martin accepted it, embraced it, and the silver glow grew brighter, almost blinding in nature. "I... I will fight with my head! I... I will lead with my heart!" Martin spoke loudly. "I claim what is mine by birthright!"

The flash was so intense that it could be seen for miles, lighting up the mountains and forest all around the. Martin pulled his hand from the device and called forth his Shi Viska. Silver/white encased his arm and glimmering silver armor encased his arm up to the elbow. The Shi Viska burst into existence, the silver shield slightly larger than normal, and its pure silver surface glittering in the moonlight. Martin's eyes scanned the Shi Viska, taking in the near perfect dimensions, and how it almost reared against his arm with a life of his own, the shape of the ornately carved letter V the only disturbance to the flawless surface of the shield. He turned quickly to see Dysea gazing at the Shi Viska perched on her own arm with unadulterated awe. The full surface of her shield was smaller but just as lethal when fully extended, the V clearly visible. His head followed around to where Andreus and the others were now standing, calling forth their own Shi Viskas, the yellow/gold of a Spartan Centurion now replaced with the silver of a Spartan Royal Guard.

The top of the monument glowed brightly and a beam of pure silver light lanced through the night sky reaching into the stars. It pulsed with immense power, radiating with energy as it pierced the cloudless night blasting into the unknown.

Then the silver beam was gone, and the moon was their only light, shimmering off the surfaces of the Shi Viskas. Martin turned to where Walter stood, examining his own Shi Viska. Walter's eyes met his in the moon light and he could feel the power, the clarity radiating from Martin in waves.

Martin met his gaze and lowered his arm, his Shi Viska vanishing into nothing. He smiled as he took Dysea's hand within his.

"Now it truly begins." He spoke softly. He looked into the stars and smiled as he sent the message forth with the last remnant of charged power within him.

APO PRIME

Gorgo staggered slightly as she felt the incredible burst of power surge through her. Riall gripped her arm tightly as their oldest daughter held her opposite arm, looks of concern on both their faces.

“Gorgo, my love,” He snapped. “What is wrong?”

“Mother... are you alright?” Jora asked, worry on her face. She was the image of her mother with long dark hair and a very shapely figure.

Gorgo gripped their hands as the warmth washed over her, filling her being with joy and peace.

I have missed you mother. The deep voice resounded within her mind, causing her to gasp in surprise. *I long to feel your arms around me mother, like I was once more your son, before events took us away from each other.* Gorgo couldn't help the tears that burst from her eyes as the love washed over her.

“My... my son,” The words escaped her lips.

I will see you soon mother. We have so much to talk about.

“Wait!” Gorgo called out. “I... I don't know your name. Please...”

I am Martin Leonidas. And I am your son.

Gorgo felt the surge pass through her, leaving only a lingering sensation of a son's love for a mother. She gasped once more, wrapping around that sensation as she turned to Riall. “My... my husband!”

“I'm here Gorgo!” Riall spoke urgently. “I am here!”

“His name Riall,” Gorgo gasped as she gripped his powerful shoulders. “His name... his name is Martin Leonidas.”

Riall's eyes went wide. “He... he has touched you!”

Gorgo nodded as the smile spread across her face. “Oh yes.”

“We must hurry.” Riall spoke. “Whatever doubts we may have had are gone. Our King has announced himself quite spectacularly to the entire universe to have reached this far and touched his mother.”

His daughter looked at him. “Papa... what are you talking about?”

Riall smiled. “Something incredible has happened today Jora. The Lycavorian King has been reborn!”

NEW MIAMI

Yuri leaned back against Moran's naked flesh as they watched the silver beam of light pierce the sky and launch into the stars. Moran felt her tense for a short moment in his arms as she watched, and then relaxed as the light disappeared.

“Yuri is that what I think it was?” Moran asked.

Yuri nodded slowly, pressing back against him further. “I'm afraid so my husband.” She spoke softly.

“What exactly does that mean?”

“That means Martin is now fully aware of what and who he is. And it also means that events here on earth just became considerably more complicated.” Yuri answered.

“I'm guessing that isn't a good thing.” He said.

Yuri closed her eyes as she relaxed in his embrace. “That depends on your point of view.” She answered him.

“And what point of view do we have?” He asked.

Yuri smiled. “I will tell you in the morning. Let us just enjoy this night like this.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

EDEN

“The King has approved the plan.” Vengal spoke from his chair, “And I suggest we set it in motion as soon as possible.”

The Command Center conference room table was full, but not with the Elder Council. Tarifa and Aihola sat in their customary chairs, Dekton standing just behind them. Anja and Aricia sat close to each other, Danny and his father beside Aricia. Anuk sat beside Danny, as she was never far from his side. Selene and Lynwe sat across from them, most of the others choosing to stand.

Tarifa looked at him. “Has something happened that we need to know about?” She asked her eyes going from Vengal to where Anja and Aricia sat, “Anja?”

The Spartan Centurion behind Anja stepped forward to the table. “You will refer to her as...” He began to speak.

“No Xesicot.” Anja spoke quickly placing her hand on the Spartan’s arm. “With friends such as these, there will be no formal titles. Tarifa is just as much a Queen as I am Xesicot, if not more so and after all that we have been through, it is silly to stand on such formality.”

The Spartan Centurion looked at her and nodded, “As you wish Milady.” He spoke. He looked quickly back to Tarifa, “My apologies Lady Tarifa.”

Tarifa nodded her head. “These are trying times Spartan... no apologies are needed among those in this room.” She looked back to Anja. “I assume that something has happened based on what we saw last night.”

They had all witnessed the white lightning reach from the heavens, touching Anja, Aricia and almost all those who had come from Sparta with them, to include Dekton. They had watched as they sank to their knees, the strands of lightning dancing across the skin of their arms, connecting all of them in some manner. After several long moments it had simply vanished, leaving their friends weak, but their faces animated and charged with energy. Dekton had not spoken of it, but once they had returned to their apartment, he had possessed Tarifa and Aihola with a seemingly unquenchable desire that had not ended until the early morning hours, and both of them were still very pleasantly sore and not fully recovered from what he had made them feel.

Anja nodded. “Yes it does.” She spoke. “However... that is a story too long to relate at the moment. And I’m sure Martin would want to tell both of you himself.”

“He’s returning to Eden?” Aihola asked quickly.

“Not right away.” Anja answered. “But he will be back soon. Regardless of his love for Sparta... he considers all of you here his family, as do Dysea, Aricia and I.”

“He’d better!” Danny blurted. “I saved his sorry ass more times than not.” Anuk lashed out and slapped him in the arm.

“Ow!” Danny yelled.

“Daniel you will behave!” Anuk snapped, but with a smile.

Danny leaned over quickly and nuzzled Anuk’s cheek, causing her eyes to close as his aura pulsed through her, sending small shivers of delight through her. “You’re going to punish me then right?” He spoke softly, his voice hopeful.

Anuk’s eyes opened wide at this and she shoved him away gently, “Daniel... not here!” She gasped. This brought laughter from those in the room, Melancton smiling proudly at the effect his son had on his mate, and the last of whatever tension remained was dispelled.

“Little Wolf and I are not here to do anything other than assist Aihola with this mission to bring her people here.” Anja spoke again with a lingering smile at Danny’s actions, knowing what Martin’s aura did to her when he wrapped it around her.

“But you are both High Queens to the elves.” Aihola said. “With you in the city... it is only...”

“Martin left the two of you in charge of Eden.” Anja told her. “We are not here to change that, nor do we wish too. The main reason we are here is due to some issues we have in Sparta. Aricia and I needed to leave the city to allow Martin and Dysea more freedom to do what they must. Regardless of what everyone seems to think, Dysea is the much more accomplished warrior than I, and exceedingly more dangerous than either myself or Aricia. At this moment, Martin needs her at his side.”

“I needed to leave Anja... not you.” Aricia said.

Anja took Aricia’s hand in hers. “Where you go Little Wolf, I will always go.” She said with a loving smile. “It’s as simple as that.”

Aricia smiled back at her with azure blue eyes. She and Anja had grown so close over the last few weeks. They had far more in common than even they had first thought, and as they discovered this, it brought them closer and closer, in and out of the bed they shared with Martin and Dysea. They loved Martin and Dysea with everything that they were, but they loved each other just as intensely and more often than not they found themselves entangled within each other's arms, pressed close to Martin, who normally slept with Dysea in his arms.

"Is this issue something we need to be made aware of?" Tarifa asked diplomatically, "A problem of some sort?"

Aricia leaned forward. "There is a wolf in Sparta who feels rather strongly that I am his property, to do with as he wishes. Martin and I thought it best if perhaps I took a trip for a time, until he has time to look into the matter."

"Is it that dog Midlan my Queen?" Dekton asked the distaste in his voice very evident.

Aricia smiled and nodded, looking at him. "Yes, you know of him Dekton?"

"He still clings to the notion he is a superior Alpha and others are beneath him, much like his father I assume?" Dekton continued. "I know him, and there is no sorrier excuse for an Alpha male than him."

"That he does." Aricia replied. "And I whole heartedly agree with you."

"The King should just kill him and be done with it." Dekton spoke matter of factly.

"There is a possibility, however slim, that he may take it upon himself to come here Tarifa, after Aricia." Anja warned her. "It is not for certain, but once Martin reveals to Sparta who he is, events there will progress rapidly. Midlan wants Aricia under his finger for some reason that we have not yet determined."

Tarifa looked at Aihola and shrugged, turning back to Anja and Aricia. "Let the fool come." She spoke. "The tolerance for the type of man he seems to be... well here in Eden the tolerance is perhaps less than it is in Sparta, based on what Dekton has told me." She said turning to look at Dekton.

Dekton smiled at her. "With his attitude he would last perhaps an hour before someone in Eden gave him a good stomping."

"I would like to see that." Aricia spoke looking at Anja "If our love or Dysea don't kill him first."

Anja chuckled. "Yes... there is that to consider." She said. "And Dysea has less patience for his type than Martin." She turned to look at Lynwe and Selene who had sat silently until then.

Lynwe and Selene were both still somewhat in awe of how easily they were accepted, even though they were both now completely vampire in nature. It meant more to them than anyone knew that nothing had changed in regards to their treatment, and that no matter where they turned they had men and women willing to reach out to them. Anari and Hetyon had come for dinner that first night, and almost every night thereafter. There was a connection between the four women, and they enjoyed each other's company, most of the time talking late into the night. Selene's family had accepted them without question, and they adored Lynwe for the love and caring that she showed their daughter.

"Lynwe, I have brought a supply of nourishment for you and Selene." Anja spoke to them. "It was easy enough once I had the information from Dekton and Peder. I also took the liberty of perusing the archives in Sparta in regards to the topic."

"It is blood Anja, there is no shame in admitting that." Selene spoke. "Lynwe and I are beyond that now, especially with the support and love we have received from so many."

Anja looked at her. "No... it is food. As far as Martin and everyone in this room are concerned you are no different than any other citizen of Eden that requires a different diet. It is not all that you require either, so you should not think of yourselves as any different. I think I can say no one in this room does. And I know for a fact that Martin considers you both to be his friends and vital pieces of Eden and its future."

"He considers us his friends?" Lynwe asked surprised.

Aricia leaned forward now. "Martin is far more accepting of people who are honest and upfront with him." She answered. "As you and Selene and every one of Aihola's people were and are. He... he does not make friends easily as Daniel can no doubt attest too, but when he does, he will do all he can to help those he considers friends."

Dan nodded from his chair, "That he will." He said.

"How long will the blood last?" Lynwe asked seeing the nods of agreement from everyone at Aricia's words.

“The supply I brought you should last for six months, if your intake does not change. Thankfully the pure vampire blood in your veins makes it so you only need to feed on the blood once or twice a month. I would recommend at least twice so that you do not deplete your bodies too much, at least until you can test and discover the limits of what you are capable of. Normal food and liquid will suffice for everything else.” Anja spoke. “It is easily made... and when you begin to get low, simply go to the clinic and request more. I’ve already signed the order, and it will never be questioned.”

“Thank you so very much Anja.” Selene spoke softly.

Anja nodded with a smile at the beautiful woman, “Always.”

Aihola leaned forward in her chair. “Vengal... have you pulled the members we will be taking on the mission?”

Vengal nodded. “They have quietly been re-assigned to Eden. All of them are here, and they are bunked at the secure end of the airfield. They have already drawn weapons and uniforms from our stores. Dienekes contacted me last night and informed me that the drop of he and his scouts was without problems. They have prepared the landing zone and will be standing by for us in the morning.”

“I’ll have my entire division on low alert in case something happens and we need to get you out quickly.” Tareif spoke. “We will maintain normal duties so as not to arouse suspicion if anyone is watching.”

“Vengal will command the overall mission.” Tarifa spoke again. “Only three outside of this room know what we are doing. Nayeca went in with Dienekes and his scouts, and she will join with Aihola and Dekton once you are all on the ground.”

“There has been very little contact or sightings of Alliance forces in the area we must cross.” Vengal spoke cautiously. “Baring something unforeseen we should make it to the Drow city within three days, if not sooner.”

“Is that normal?” Melancton asked, “The lack of activity in this area?”

“It has been since the King threatened the vampire witch about crossing into our territory. Since that time, the activity has dropped off significantly.” Vengal spoke. “A few patrols... nothing unusual.”

“In my experience, the vampires can be very innovative when the need suits them.” Melancton spoke evenly. “We should proceed with all caution. May I suggest since we will be in an area that is abundant with wild wolves, that you let Daniel, Anuk and I range out in front of the scouts even further. We can move in wolf form, and even if seen, unless they are up close to us, we will appear as any other wolves in the area.”

Vengal looked at him. “I did not even think that we could use your... your abilities in this fashion.” He said wide eyed.

Melancton smiled. “Many rarely do.” He said.

“It is an excellent idea.” Dekton spoke. “The chances for being spotted are less, and we can then use Dienekes and his scouts to roam on the flanks as opposed to in front of us. This will not expose our main force to any Drow scouts that may operate in the area.”

Aihola nodded. “I agree... but Nayeca should be with them.” She said. “I don’t want some trigger happy Drow scout to shoot Daniel, Anuk or his father by accident. If they see her traveling with them, it will give them pause long enough that she can communicate with them.”

“Melancton would this pose any sort of problem?” Vengal asked.

“If she is as skilled as what Queen Aihola has said, I doubt it.” Melancton spoke. “We can range out much further in advance of the main force, but always stay within range of her elfin eyes, which in some instances are even more acute than our wolf eyes.”

Vengal nodded. “I’ll inform Dienekes the moment we land.” He spoke. “I suggest we all get some rest, for we will have a long night ahead of us. Everyone will gather at the airfield at 0230 for boarding. Our drop time is 0415 as long as the weather holds.”

Tarifa nodded. “Excellent. I advise everyone to use the alternate entrances to the building when you are leaving, to avoid unfriendly eyes that may be about. What Aihola and I have to discuss with Lynwe and Selene needs to remain with us.” Tarifa looked at Anja and Aricia as they began getting to their feet with the others. “Anja... would you and Aricia remain?” She asked.

They looked at one another and then settled back into their chairs. Soon all that remained in the room were the four Queens, their guards and Lynwe and Selene. Tarifa looked at Anja. “Aihola and I would like it if you and Aricia would forgo this mission and remain here.” She said.

Anja smiled. "Tarifa... please don't feel you need to protect us. Dysea may be the most skilled of the three of us but Little Wolf and I are quite capable of handling ourselves."

Aihola smiled. "That is not why we ask this of you." She said. "Dekton and Peder have told us that just one of you is telepathically more skilled than even the most powerful telepaths in Sparta."

Anja nodded slowly her jade eyes holding questions. Anja glanced at Aricia, unsure of how much she wanted to reveal, "That... that may be true." She said finally. "Why do you ask?"

"If only one of you is that powerful, two of you assisting Peder might be able to help us accomplish something that we have been discussing with Selene and Lynwe." Aihola spoke. "And with both Dekton and I going on this mission, and knowing Tarifa's wild nature..." Tarifa looked at her aghast.

"*Nya Istel* I am not wild or reckless!" Tarifa exclaimed, causing smiles among them.

"That is debatable." Dekton spoke softly from behind her, but with affection in his voice.

"What is it you have in mind?" Aricia asked becoming interested in what the two elf Queens had been discussing.

"We had dismissed this idea as too dangerous before." Tarifa spoke. "Now... with the two of you here... it might very well be possible."

"Go on." Anja said.

"We want to use Graham in much the same way the vampire witch has attempted to use him against us." Aihola said, "With some minor adjustments of course." She finished with a smile.

Anja looked at Aricia then back to Aihola and Tarifa, now very interested. "Go on please."

SPARTA

"The foreign Alpha is not at the villa!" Autolycus barked to the full Senate, standing before them smugly. "Can the Steward shed any light on this?"

"What exactly do you accuse me of Autolycus?" Theron spoke calmly from his chair.

"The she-elf is also gone and my people tell me a Spartan transport left landing bay nine late last evening with Aricia and the flame haired one on board! Does this not prove everything I have been saying? The Steward has been deceiving us!"

"I have done no such thing!" Theron bellowed.

"The morning I am to start investigations, the center of those investigations conveniently disappears! I present a document signed by Aricia's father stating she is betrothed to my son, and dating before she came to the age of consent, and she has suddenly vanished from Sparta!" Autolycus looked at Theron. "Do you think me a fool?"

"You have been following them?" Theron asked. "Under what authority do you conduct yourself this way?"

"The authority granted to me by this Senate!" Autolycus snapped back. "The rogue Alpha you brought to Sparta killed a Centurion; his she-elf whore attacked my son..." He swung his arm to point at Midlan in the gallery. "He has kidnapped the female wolf intended to be my son's mate!"

"What did you promise Xenos to sign such a heinous document?" Dilios spoke now.

"I promised him nothing." Autolycus spoke with a smile, looking at Dilios. "He agreed to such an arrangement before Aricia reached the Age of Consent and signed the document."

"Aricia is five years past the Age of Consent!" Dilios said. "You wait until she chooses a mate that will not treat her as some sort of trophy, before you produce this document? That fact alone does not bode well with the Advisory Committee. Do you take us for fools Autolycus?"

"The document is genuine!" Autolycus snapped.

"The document may be genuine," Dilios said just as forcibly. "The intent is what is in question now."

"Facts do not lie." Autolycus said with a smile.

"No they do not." Dilios replied. "I will conduct the investigation into your contract personally, and trust me when I say I will leave no stone unturned."

"That is your right." Autolycus spoke. "Until that time I demand that Aricia be remanded to my custody."

“That is acceptable to the Advisory Committee,” Another Senator spoke quickly standing up.

Dilios sighed heavily, knowing the man was one of the Senators deeply in Autolyucus’s pocket and he just happen to be the Chairman of the Committee. “That is not necessary, nor is it appropriate!”

“I do not place as much trust in this rogue Alpha as you do Dilios.” Autolyucus spoke. “Therefore I want Aricia where I can watch her.”

“That will be voted on!” Dilios spoke. “And it will be discussed, but I will not support that action based on your son’s history. And I will do everything within my power to make sure it does not happen.”

“You have no authority to do this!” Theron snapped loudly. “I am the Steward of the Throne!”

“Not for much longer Theron!” Autolyucus snapped right back. “I believe I have enough votes to overturn the one Ascension Law. I will call for a vote today, and you will lose!” He spoke. “I will abolish that law and a wolf from the Eurypontid line will once more sit on the throne of Sparta!”

“Not while I live.” The voice spoke from the side of the room.

The heads of everyone in the Senate chamber turned when they felt the massive aura of power sweep into the room, bringing forth gasps from many of the men and women present, many of them reacting physically by grabbing the arms of their chairs until their knuckles were white. Martin walked slowly into the Senate chamber, radiating his full unshielded aura, and it was lashing the men and women in the room without regard for their standing. He clutched his extended *Nehtes* in his hand, using it as a walking stick, the heavy studded end cracking on the floor. Dysea walked beside him, her own *Nehtes* fully extended, her platinum hair billowing around her head and shoulders. They saw nearly a dozen of Martin’s Phalanx enter the chamber hall behind him, spreading out carefully, and their eyes searching for danger to their king.

Martin stepped right up to Autolyucus and stood only half a meter from a very stunned Autolyucus, “Hi there.” Martin said with a smile. “It was an absolutely superb sunrise don’t you think?”

“Who is... who is this man that he thinks he can just enter a meeting of this Senate?” Autolyucus spoke turning his head to Theron, his voice no where near as confident as before.

“Have your wolf senses become so dull Autolyucus, that you do not recognize him?” The female voice spoke now. All heads turned once more as Helen glided into the Chamber, dressed in the flowing white gown of an Oracle. Everyone knew who she was instantly, and many of those present dropped to one knee in reverence to the Oracle of their people. “Have all of you grown so complacent that you do not recognize the aura of this man?” Her voice held contempt, and none of the hundred and sixty men and women could meet her eyes with the exception of Dilios and those others that had greeted Martin in the landing bay.

Theron stepped forward. “I told you to wait!” He barked at Martin. “You were not ready!”

Martin’s eyes narrowed as he looked at Theron. “I have waited long enough to claim what is mine.” He spoke in a low menacing voice.

His left arm came up and there was a silver flash of light, the shiny silver armor encasing his arm up to the elbow, his Shi Viska erupting into existence followed by the gasps of awe. This was not the yellow/gold of a normal Shi Viska they all saw; this was the silver of Spartan royalty, and no one could deny seeing that. Martin extended his arm out and he launched the Shi Viska at the wall in the corner of the chamber, the powerful shield leaping from his arm in a heartbeat, slicing through the air and smashing into the portion of the wall that held the alien device; the Lycavorian technology that Martin now knew it to be. The wall shattered under the impact, breaking into half a dozen sections as it fell away to reveal the ceiling high transmission array.

Martin caught his Shi Viska with barely a thought as it returned to his arm, Autolyucus’s eyes wide as he stared at him, his eyes darting to the Shi Viska. Martin smiled once more. “You got to love the silver color.” He said with a sarcastic grin. “It goes great with my eyes don’t you think.” Dysea could be heard chuckling in the background.

Midlan’s eyes darkened and he bounced to his feet. “You can not speak to my father in this way! I...” His voice was cut off as he felt the cold tip of the *Nehtes* spearhead touch his neck. He turned his head slowly and saw Dysea looking at him, her hand holding the *Nehtes* as rigid as any male Spartan he had ever seen.

“Be careful little man.” She hissed at him, her emerald eyes holding a dark and menacing glare in them. “You tread in waters that will swallow you whole now. Sit back down before an accident befalls you.”

Autolyucus turned back and glared at Martin with rage and anger. “If your elf whore does not lower her weapon, I will have these Spartans shoot her dead.”

Martin snapped his forehead forward with impossible speed, ramming it viciously into Autolycus's nose, the crunch of bone and the spurt of blood audible and visible to everyone in the chamber. Autolycus dropped like a stone from the blow, reaching for his face.

"Call my Queen by any name other than your majesty Autolycus and I will rip your tongue from your throat with only my teeth." Martin growled; his eyes changed now to the yellow gold of his wolf persona.

"As a Spartan Senator I order you to shoot him!" Autolycus yelled, looking at Andreus holding his hand over his bloody face.

Andreus and the other members of Martin's Spartan Royal Guard simply chuckled as they kept their eyes on the men and women in the room. "You must be joking." Andreus said. "Why would I want to shoot my King you fool?"

"This imposter is no King!" Autolycus screamed.

"The Eurypontid Line will never sit on the throne of my father!" Martin spoke as he looked at Autolycus. "You may be a Senator in this chamber, but the One Ascension Law will never be changed. Not while I rule as King, and certainly not while any child of my blood sits on this throne."

"Who do you think you are to claim the throne of Sparta?" Autolycus roared once more as he scrambled to his feet. "You are a rogue Alpha! You have no claim here!"

Martin smiled. "Don't I?" He spoke turning his head slightly seeing Helen step towards him.

Helen moved forward now. "Queen Gorgo was with child the day King Leonidas fell at Thermopylae." She said softly, all heads turning to her. "I was the only one who knew this, and it was I who sent Gorgo away. She was hidden away with her unborn son for her own protection against the vampires. In time the child was born, a male child... before you stands that child. It is time for our people to know who and what we are." Helen spoke. Her eyes went to Martin and she nodded.

Martin moved to the ceiling to floor transmission array and gazed at it for a moment. He reached out with his right hand, interrupting the steady pulsing blue light, his palm facing up. As with the monument at Thermopylae, the fingers of light danced across Martin's hand, as if scanning him. The bottom section of the device suddenly opened and a small circular tube extended, eliciting gasps from the men and women who watched, many of them stepping back as if in fear. On the flat portion of the top of the tube were four small spikes, each perhaps three centimeters in length. Martin turned his hand over palm down and slammed it down on the tube hard enough for the four spikes to break the skin of his palm and draw blood.

Martin felt the wave of images and stars flood his mind, drawing him along on a river of colors, a conduit of some sort, racing past at unbelievable speeds. Moons, star clusters, planets of every imaginable size and color, a myriad of colorful clouds back dropping the masses of stars all around him. The tunnel winding around in different directions until it ended and he was gazing upon the massive purple/green planet, huge ships and platforms dotting the space above it, moving like thousands of small insects, the huge blue green oceans filling his vision and the towering mountain ranges.

She was here.

APO PRIME

The room was crowded now with an assortment of men and women of all different species, almost all those within the Lycavorian Union represented in some fashion here now. The table was filled with twenty of the Unions top diplomats, among them Lycavorians and elves, as well as several Hadarians and Algolians. There were several other reptilian species, two species with bright yellow skin, several more with odd appendages extending from their heads and other portions of their bodies, and one young woman who sat on the right side of the Prime Minister. Her raven black hair, almost blue in some lights cascaded past her shoulders and fell elegantly to the middle of her back. It framed alabaster like skin, almost translucent in color, full dark pink lips, and hazel/green eyes that swept the room carefully and with great intelligence. Each of her ears had several piercings in them, glittering diamond studs and small gold rings.

Deia had called them all here, to the secure conference room within the CIC. The technicians in the outer room were scrambling about, moving to pass orders on to units that were in the process of moving to Admiral Ceneu's ships in orbit.

“Units from General Vistr’s Ninth Spartan Expeditionary Division have begun moving to Ceneu’s orbiting transports.” Riall spoke from where he stood in front of his chair. Gorgo sat to his left, Deia to Riall’s right.

“How long has it been?” The Elfin High Minister asked leaning forward. Normally stoic and rarely showing emotion, Alocgeid appeared ready to burst open.

Deia wanted to maintain some semblance of decorum, even though she herself was filled with joy and questions. “It has only been seven hours and nineteen minutes Alocgeid.” Deia answered quickly. “We can...” Deia stopped when she realized she had just stated the exact time that had passed, and the look on her face caused everyone in the room to break out into soft laughter.

The Hadarian Ambassador couldn’t help the grin that split her face and she leaned forward at the table. “Many of us are most excited Deia. I believe all of us never thought this day would come.”

Deia nodded. “Yes well... I should be able to...”

An alarm siren began blaring in the outer room and all their heads turned. The intercom was open and they could hear everything happening.

“We have an incoming long range transmission!” A voice called out. “Point of origin is...”

Riall stabbed the console on the table when the officer stopped talking. “What is the point of origin?” He snapped.

“Admiral the transmission’s signature indicates it’s a Mark Two neurobooster! It’s a telepathic holo message, sir. I... I didn’t think there were any telepaths left alive with that sort of power!” The tech’s voice echoed in the room causing many to look at one another in surprise.

“What is the point of origin damn it?” Riall asked again, his heart slamming into his chest.

“Admiral... sorry sir... point of origin is...” The tech officer turned to look into the clear glass room.

“The point of origin is the city of Sparta.”

The deep voice had spoken from the side of the room. All heads that weren’t looking in that direction whipped around to see the holographic image of the tall, thickly muscled young man. The few men and women who had been standing closest to the hologram when it first appeared had stepped back quickly. “Whoa!! This is so cool!” Martin’s telepathic projection turned to look at the gathered men and women, his eyes wide, “Hi there.” He spoke.

Gorgo was the only one who had been sitting at the table that came to her feet, her hands covering her mouth, fresh tears beginning to pour from her eyes as she looked at the image of the man she had loved so very long ago. Even the holographic nature of the image could not hide the tanned skin, the neatly trimmed goatee, and the black shoulder length hair tied into a pony tail in the back. The dark eyes were bright and clear.

“I... I activated this thing here on earth and poof... here I am.” Martin spoke quickly. “Pretty cool huh?”

Many could not hide their smiles at Martin’s jovial nature and words. Deia slowly got to her feet. “I... I am... I am Prime...”

“Prime Minister Deia, yes I know.” Martin replied his eyes sweeping the room. “My grandfather thought very highly of you I understand.”

Deia’s face showed her shock at this pronouncement. “You... you are...”

“Where is my mother?” Martin demanded quickly, his image moving several feet around the room.

“Where is my...”

Gorgo stepped forward quickly. “I... I am here... I am here Martin.” She choked out the words.

There was no mistaking the emotion that swept over Martin’s ruggedly handsome face even in the holoprojection and they all watched as Gorgo moved closer to the image of her lost infant son. A warm smile passed over Martin’s features as he gazed at her, stepping closer still, gazing down into her face. “You... you are even more beautiful than I imagined mother.” His voice was soft, like the chimes on the wind, and Gorgo shuddered in joy as the sounds passed through her. She so wanted to reach out and embrace him and seeing this Jora stepped up to her mother, taking her shoulders so that she had something solid to grasp. Her own eyes were wide in wonderment, and she saw Martin’s dark eyes turn to her. Jora felt the sweeping presence pass through both of them, and she felt the love and warmth then. Her mother had never spoken of the past to her children, and they had never pushed her on the topic because of the pain it seemed to cause her. Their father had once told them their mother had endured more pain and agony than anyone he had ever known. Gorgo had told Jora

everything as they made their way here, and now Jora was looking at the image of a brother she never knew she had until only hours before.

“I... I am... Jora.” She spoke haltingly. “I am...”

“My sister...” Martin said with a smile. “Yes... I know.” Martin’s eyes went back to Gorgo, still with that twinkle of love in them. “I have spoken with father...” He saw her head come up instantly at that, her tear filled eyes wide. “He wanted me to finally tell you what he did not that day he left. He wanted me to tell you goodbye. He is happy you have found love again mother, never doubt that, as your happiness is what made him part of who he was.” Gorgo hugged her daughter tightly, unable to hold back the tidal wave of tears.

Martin’s head turned and fell on Riall. “You are my mother’s mate?” He spoke, the softness in his voice lessening as he spoke. His image turned to face Riall, their height was equal, though it was obvious even in the projection that Martin was more muscular and infinitely more well built.

Riall nodded his head, drawing himself up taller. “I am.” He stated proudly. “My name is...”

“I know your name Admiral Riall.” Martin spoke evenly. “I know everything about you, and I know how deeply my mother loves you. I only needed to touch her briefly to feel that. She is coming with you?”

Riall paused for a moment, “Sire... I had not planned on that... no.”

“No one will keep me from my son!” Gorgo spoke quickly turning to her mate. “Riall... you can’t...”

“I have spent over twenty four hundred years in suspended animation on a ship Riall.” Martin spoke calmly. “A ship you were on with my mother. I spent another 130 years buried in the side of some mountain, and the next thirty one years not knowing who I was because Dymas was doing his job as Guardian of the Line. Then the comet came and really fucked things up. Now I have discovered who and what I am Riall. I have discovered that I actually have a mother, a mother that hasn’t held me since I was three months old. Do you have any idea how much I want to hold my mother Riall? Is your mother still alive Admiral?”

“She... she is sire.” Riall answered tentatively.

“Then you... will... bring... my... mother... to... me!” Martin screamed out within the image. The faces of the men and women in the room went wide, several of those at the table leaning back, while some of those standing moved to get further away from the image of their new King. It appeared he had quite a temper. They watched Martin take several deep breaths afterwards. “Is that in anyway unclear Admiral?”

Riall looked at Gorgo, seeing her eyes beaming in pride as she gazed at Martin’s image. He smiled after a moment. “It would be my honor Milord.” Riall answered. “I could not pry her away now with a *Nehtes*, even if I wanted too.”

“You are my mother’s mate Riall, so do not refer to me in such formal words.” Martin spoke returning his gaze to Riall. “How long will this connection hold?” Martin asked looking around suddenly unsure.

“It... the neurobooster will keep the connection stable as long as you have sufficient strength to generate the image sire.” Riall answered quickly. “There has... there has not been a telepath with the power to do what you are doing in over a thousand years Milord.”

“I can feel it draining me already so I will be brief.” Martin spoke calmly once more. “How long will it take you to get here?”

Deia stepped forward. “We are loading troops and equipment now sire.” She answered quickly. “We can be ready to depart in six hours.”

“And the journey here?” He asked.

“We have developed new technology my King.” Ceneu spoke getting to his feet. “I am Admiral...”

“Admiral Ceneu...” Martin spoke before he could finish, his voice filled with awe. “It seems this device I have activated also works in reverse, I... I know who all of you are.” Martin looked around amazed. “Man I need to get one of these for my home.”

Ceneu couldn’t help but smile at his words. “With any luck we can be to earth within three weeks Milord.” He said.

Martin nodded in the image. “I have initiated the sequence here in Sparta that will shed light on who we are to every citizen within the limits of my city. This will no doubt cause the Vampire Priestess Yuri to accelerate her plans for this planet.” Martin saw the young woman next to Deia flinch slightly and his eyes fell upon her. Her beauty was dazzling, easily the equal to Dysea who Martin considered the most physically beautiful of his Queens. Though he loved Anja and Aricia just as intensely, each of the women he loved had one

special thing that made them so uniquely different and with Dysea is was her deliciously tasty elf ears. Her ears were ripe with her flavor and scent, and one of the most sensitive spots on her body.

Anja's petite body was a feast of curves and muscles that he relished exploring. She was fearless in their bed, often times being the one to initiate their lovemaking. She also had the most stamina of his three queens due to her healing powers, though Aricia would challenge her for that as she gained years and experience.

And then there was Aricia; who though she was the youngest of his Queens, Aricia was also Lycavorian and it was she who understood him on a level no one ever would, not even Dysea and Anja. Aricia had the curious nature of the young, and like Anja was fearless in their bed as well as out of it, and as she grew older, she became more confident in whom she was, and the feelings she was able to elicit from him. As she grew older, Martin knew her beauty would only increase, at least as far as he was concerned, and she tasted absolutely divine, her scent and taste like that of rich coco and her body was a firm wonderland he would never tire of discovering again and again.

Looking at this strange woman now, Martin felt his heart in Sparta jump several notches. "You... know of Yuri?" He asked softly.

"I know her." The young woman snapped with unintended hostility.

"Yes... I see that." Martin's face changed slightly and his eyes turned to Deia. "Prime Minister... why is there a Vampire Princess, the sister to the bitch I am fighting now, on our home world?" Martin asked coolly, no emotion in his voice.

Deia stepped forward quickly. "Sire... Isabella... Isabella and those with her have joined our Union." Deia answered. "She has been with us for near a thousand years sire. Fighting at our side; all of her people as well. Many have become respected citizens of the Union."

Martin looked at her, "Truly?" He said. "And how many is that?"

"Near upon ten million my King." Deia asked.

"She is a Pureblood vampire; the daughter to the Vampire High Lord, and Xerxes' sister!" Martin spoke calmly, his voice neutral, and displaying no emotion. "In my experience they do not garner a whole lot of trust."

Isabella came to her feet, her features enraged. Isabella looked at the telepathic holo image of the young looking Lycavorian King with murder in her hazel eyes. Standing five foot seven and a hundred and fifteen pounds, the matte black leather jumpsuit she wore conformed to her body like a second skin. Her breasts were full and firm, straining against the leather jumpsuit, the zipper holding them back lowered down enough to expose a very seductive amount of cleavage. She had a slim waist and long muscular legs for her height, the jumpsuit also encasing a very shapely and divinely perfect ass. There was a small tattoo circling the base of her ring finger on her left hand, and the edges of a black flame like tattoo poking above the jumpsuit's high collar.

Isabella was seventeen hundred years old and did not appear a day over thirty. She had been born on the vampire home world, the daughter of a Pureblood concubine and the Vampire High Lord. She had gone to the same schools and received the same education as her sister Yuri, becoming a brilliant Astrophysicist and Quantum Physics student. She had gone to all the same combat training classes as Yuri, excelling in all of them to the point that she drew more praise than her older sister. She had played the role of Pureblood Vampire Princess so well, the arrogance and superior attitude, acting as if she knew far more than the person next to her. Her attitude had got her into trouble more than once at formal functions, and she was saved only by the actions of her mother.

She was six hundred and eighty years old when her father took her on her first combat mission with her brother Xerxes. She had looked on horrified at the slaughter that had ensued. The troops her father and Xerxes led butchered innocent women and children like insects in the street, all while they gorged themselves on the blood of their victims. This had been a small rebel outpost and it was also the first time Isabella had seen members of the resistance. She had heard many things about them, especially the Lycavorians and the elves. The brutal acts they had committed against vampire soldiers and civilians. What she saw that day did not in any way reflect all the reports and news reports about their enemies. Isabella had watched in awe as one Lycavorian woman, who was at least three thousand years old, dispatched four vampire shock troopers before they were able to cut her down. She had been an attractive middle aged woman, and even as Isabella stood there in horror, five vampire shock troopers raped her injured bodily brutally before they slit her throat and fed on her blood. Yet even in the middle of the worst of the rape, the woman hadn't screamed out in fear or pleaded for her life. She had fought them every moment they raped her.

Isabella had seen two elf men swinging gleaming blood stained swords as they cut their way to a group of children to give them an escape avenue. Thirty vampire shock troops fell before the elves went down, and the remaining vampire troops had mutilated their bodies before turning on the children. Isabella had not seen fear in the eyes of their victims, she had seen defiance. She watched as even the women and small children went down fighting for their lives, taking as many of her father's soldiers with her as they could before they died. That one excursion had changed her, and suddenly made her regret she was a vampire. Before that day she had never thought of where the blood came from that was stored in the elaborate and decorative bottles all over their home only that it was there for her to take whenever she desired.

She had watched her father's troops bleeding out half dead women and children, draining every ounce of their blood, laughing as they died, even torturing them when they could. She had lost what little food she had in her stomach during the siege, while Xerxes laughed at her and called her names.

When she returned to her home world she endeavored to learn all she could of these people that fought death to the very last second. In secret she had read the ancient forbidden Vampire scrolls, learning of the history of the rebellion, and predictions for the future of the High Coven. She did this until she discovered her mother one night, helping to spirit away two child slaves that had been recently captured and brought to the palace. After that, it was easy for her, discovering a purpose in her life. She witnessed hundreds more events, seeing her father's cruel and utterly brutal side. She saw Xerxes and Yuri laugh and join with him in slaughtering thousands, and it only spurred her on to help more and more slaves escape the clutches of the vampires.

The final straw is when her father arranged for her to marry a sadistic and decrepit old Pureblood vampire. Isabella had seen him many times in the past at events within the palace, and he always had gazed upon her with cruel lust in his eyes. No matter what she did, she could not convince her father to at least find someone closer to her age and more attractive. Her father had laughed at her, saying it was her station to do as he told her. She was forced to marry that vile creature of a man, and he had brutally taken her that same night, causing her more pain than she thought possible as he savagely raped her again and again. He had striped her of her dignity that night, and if not for her mother coming the next morning and attending to her, helping her to bath and giving her blood to heal, Isabella would have allowed herself to die. That night Isabella made her decision. She hardened herself mentally and physically, enduring her husband's disgusting tendencies, being the ever so submissive wife of a Pureblood. And while she did this she plotted her escape with her mother.

It had taken two years to plan their escape, and on that night in the middle of their flight to freedom, Isabella's mother had been betrayed and captured. She had watched her mother dragged down like a dog in the street, raped and sodomized by the man who was her father before he cut her open and left her to die in the mud and garbage. Isabella had hated her father with a rage bordering on blood lust every since that night, and that hate had extended to men in general over the years. She had taken other lovers, but never for more than a single night and only for physical pleasure. It had taken her another year to find her way to Apo Prime to join the rebellion. She had not been trusted at first, many wanting to kill her outright, but as time past and she brought more vampires over to their cause, distrust became trust, and trust turned to friendship. Isabella was regarded as one of the most lethal combatants in their mixture of forces, no one ever having defeated her in single combat. She fought like she was possessed; rarely leaving any enemy that faced her alive to talk. She was also considered one of the most beautiful females in Tuya, though no one dared approach her. Many still considered her far too arrogant and pompous to suit them, and she did nothing to dissuade this opinion of her.

"What do you know of vampires?" Isabella hissed at him. "You know nothing of me... of who I am. I would gladly take my father's head if given the opportunity!" She continued the rant. "And my pig brother as well! Something your father was unable to do, you fool!"

"Isabella!" Deia barked, glaring at her in astonishment. "How dare you!"

"He stands there across the galaxy and accuses me? After all I have done for the rebellion he accuses me of not being trustworthy! Who does this pup think he is?" Isabella snapped.

"He is the King of the Lycavorian Union!" Alocgeid bellowed coming to his feet. "And you will show the respect and honor due him!"

Gorgo looked at her from where she stood. "Technically he is far older than the arrogant vampire Princess who now loses her temper over a simple statement of observation that my son makes. There was no

malice in his words; no hatred or anger, and yet you respond as if he has attacked you in some way.” She spoke slowly.

Isabella whirled on her now, “You know nothing for all your years teaching in that university!” She spat out.

Gorgo looked at Isabella, her dark eyes boring into her. “I know that I am looking at a spoiled vampire Princess who seems to think that everyone owes her something because she took up arms against her tyrant father.”

“You speak of things you have no knowledge of!” Isabella barked again.

“That is enough!” Deia snapped, putting her hand on Isabella’s shoulder, “Both of you. In the presence of our King you bring shame on us all.”

“He is not my King.” Isabella hissed softly as she slumped into her chair.

Martin’s eyes darkened somewhat and the smile that crossed his face was not pleasant by any definition. “Yes... well I see the Vampire Princess has a sharp tongue. I wonder... does she fight as well as she talks?”

Isabella glared at him. “I fight well enough to defeat you, which I could do on my worst day.” Isabella snapped at him.

Martin chuckled as he looked at her. “A contest I’m sure I will enjoy Bella.” He replied, his voice controlled and confident. “As for your brother Xerxes, that is a situation I will rectify very soon Princess.”

Riall stepped forward. “Sire... what do you mean?”

“Before my father’s telepathic message to me faded into the afterlife, he was able to impart on me something before he left, and that was the knowledge that Xerxes is apparently in the next system over from this one. He will be coming here soon, sooner than he first expected once he finds out what I am about to do I’m sure.” Martin replied to Riall before he turned back to Isabella. “I have developed friends and allies here on earth; they have been touched by your kind in some rather horrible ways, some have even now become vampires. I know them... and I trust them. Contrary to what you seem to think Bella...”

“Do not call me that!” Isabella snapped at his image.

Martin’s face hardened, “Contrary to what you seem to believe Vampire witch!” He snarled at her. “I am not as inflexible as my father once was!” His image stepped up to Isabella, and even though it was a telepathic holo image, Isabella felt his presence flood through her, powerful and dominating... and something else that she never thought she would feel. “Do not test the limits of my patience, for I don’t know you and I will send your arrogant vampire ass back to your father without as much as a second thought, regardless of what you have done! And then where will you be Princess?” He growled cruelly, shocking even his mother at the malice in his voice. The little color there was in Isabella’s face drained at this, and it caused her aide to step forward protectively. “I have a particular dislike for arrogance, as my elf mate Dysea can attest too...” These words caused Alocgeid’s eyes to widen. “If you plan on accompanying Admiral Riall and my mother, I suggest you lose that arrogance before you arrive, for if Dysea doesn’t *BITCH* slap you for it, I will bury you next to your brother and sister and not lose a wink of sleep!” Martin turned away from her wide eyes and looked back to Riall. “I want military equipment for five million elves and humans brought with you Admiral. Can that be arranged before you depart?” Martin asked.

Riall nodded. “Easily sire. We have ten times that number in storage facilities across the planet waiting to be used.”

“Prime Minister... as much as I would like to meet you as soon as possible, I want you to remain on Apo Prime for security purposes. Both of us can not be away from the capital at the same time. Better that you stay there and remain in command if anything should happen to me or my Queens.”

Deia nodded, “As you wish sire.”

“I have enemies all around me here, and not just vampire enemies.” Martin spoke looking once more at Isabella. “I am also dealing with a political problem that was in place before our people ever came here to earth. The death of my father altered the laws, and now I have someone that is willing to do anything to change it back and challenge me for the rule of Sparta. The day our people came here, the years we spent helping Sparta to become what she now is, I am not willing to give that up. Sparta is now *my* city, as it was once my father’s and I will not allow anyone to bring it down.”

“My lord...” Vistr spoke now. “Spartan law and practices have reached even here to Apo Prime. We follow many of the laws that Spartans do. Can we not assist in some way?”

Martin shook his head. “This is something I need to take care of myself.” He answered. “But I do appreciate the offer. Besides... even if you could assist, you wouldn’t be able to get here for three weeks, and I intend to have this settled long before that.”

“Do you have any orders for our forces sire?” Riall asked. “I have ordered a cease to all ongoing operations and I am redeploying them to staging areas throughout our territory. They will rest and re-supply while they are standing by.”

“Defensive posture only Riall, unless they are already engaged. I’m not fool enough to think I know more than you and the others in that room Riall, so until I have learned all I can, operations will remain under you.” Martin replied shaking his head. “I’m hoping to take down Yuri at the very least and with luck that bald fucker Xerxes as well.”

“Sire... you need to go into hiding until we arrive.” Deia spoke urgently, “If Xerxes is coming... that will put two of the High Lord’s children on Earth. You can not stand against that alone.”

“Go into hiding?” Martin spoke with a smile. “You don’t understand my friends, earth is now a member of the Lycavorian Union, and I have no intention of surrendering it to the vampires. Please send the Elfin and Hadarian ambassadors in your stead Prime Minster. They will need to brief their Queens on current events.”

“Queens?” Deia asked surprised. “Forgive me sire... how... how many mates have you claimed?”

Martin chuckled. “I think it was more the other way around really, they claimed me and if I’m correct you will have that information as soon as I end this transmission. They will be part of my memories. I have three with me now. The fourth I have not met yet.”

“Four?” Deia asked somewhat stunned. While it was not uncommon for an Alpha to take two or even three mates, four was practically unheard of.

Martin nodded slowly, looking somewhat embarrassed. “Apparently... whether I wish it or not... my father’s message told me there will be four.” His head looked around within the image, and then his eyes fell back on his mother. “I must go mother, I’m losing the connection.” He spoke gently. He moved to stand in front of Gorgo quickly. His holo image reached up and tried to touch her face. “I will see you in three weeks mother.”

Gorgo smiled and nodded her tear stained face, “And I you my son.”

Martin’s image faded from view quickly and the conference room fell quiet. Riall was the first to speak. “Well... that went well.” He spoke just before voices began to burst out with excited questions and statements, a swell of new found drive and dedication sweeping everyone in the room.

Isabella remained quiet, pondering what had just happen. She had felt the power of his aura sweep through her, and that should not have been possible. Vampires were immune to the auras of wolves, and she had been approached by many strong Alpha wolves in her years on Apo Prime, Alpha wolves looking to mate with her, yet their auras had not even scratched the telepathic shields she wielded. This... this Lycavorian King had swept aside her telepathic shields as if they weren’t even there... and Isabella was considered one of the stronger telepaths in Tuya. He had not entered her mind, only allowing his aura to sweep over her, and she *had* felt it quite strongly, as clearly as she stood here now. And it wasn’t malice or hate or rage that she had felt.

She had felt interest and questions.

SPARTA

The effect of Martin touching the transmission array in Sparta was instantaneous as the top portion of the array extended up even further, punching a hole through the concrete and glass ceiling, rising from the top of the building . Once it locked into place it sent out laser beams to selected portions of the city center, criss crossing in many locations, and even passing right through solid buildings. Men and women began to stop on the streets and view this, as each laser came to rest on a building, and a small window opened in that exact spot. Extending from those small windows were antennae like dishes, and once they all locked into place, silver beams of light shot out from each antennae, all of them coming to meet over the exact center of the city of Sparta.

“The man who stands here now is the youngest son of King Leonidas. Not just any descendant fellow Spartans, but the very blood of the King we all revered. You can all feel it.” Helen spoke softly. “Now bear witness to it.”

The single point above Sparta where all the silver lasers intersected glowed briefly, and then burst in a kaleidoscope of particles, that drifted down lazily over the city. Even within the protected walls of the Senate Chamber, the affect was easy to see. The eyes of men and women and even children grew wide in wonderment as every portion of their history, dating back to the Black Day, was telepathically transmitted to every Lycavorian within the walls of Sparta. No one was left out, and even the five thousand or so elves that had been turned were included, as well as the humans that had been turned and that called Sparta home. And all of them came to know the story of Martin and the King so many of them would now follow.

“Lies,” Autolycus shouted, even as he shook his head to clear the images that were flashing through his mind. “It is nothing but lies!”

“Shut up you fool!” Walter’s voice carried into the room now as he walked into the Senate chamber with Panos and half a dozen Spartan men that like him had lived in the time of Leonidas. “The treachery of the Eurypontid line knows no bounds! That has been proven beyond measure. Before us stands the son of Leonidas... you can deny it all you want but the strength of his aura is enough to convince all of Sparta.”

Panos smiled next to his son. “And word already spreads across Sparta and even in this chamber. You can not change what is happening Autolycus, it spreads like a raging wildfire throughout the city to young and old alike. Our people are learning of our history, the history of our true people, and it is amazing to say the least. When combined with our Spartan history, no one will listen to your lies anymore.”

They all turned watching as Martin held his hand in the transmission array for a few seconds longer, his eyes tightly shut, as if he was concentrating intently. They sprang open after a moment and he pulled his hand free, the transmission array immediately shutting down, and the bluish glow no longer visible. The device had served its purpose, releasing the telepathic surge that would touch every citizen of Sparta, and allowing him to contact his mother once more, as well as those of his kind on a far away planet.

Theron moved forward quickly. “What have you done? You have ruined everything!” He screamed. “You...”

“Be silent!” Martin shouted, his voice deafening in the chamber, his aura exploding forth and causing everyone but Dysea and Helen to cringe. Dysea basked in the power and warmth of his aura, having no fears about the man she loved so fiercely. This day she knew that nothing of this earth or beyond would ever pry her from this man. Helen did not cringe due to the pride she felt at seeing the unborn son of the man she had sent to his death. He had gone willingly to die, knowing his death would save his people, and now his blood, the son he had never seen, that son would willingly save Sparta and their true people or die in the attempt.

Theron stopped dead in his tracks his eyes wide, as Martin began to speak. “I am the son of King Leonidas!” Martin roared, hefting his Nehtes in his hand. “All of you know what that means according to Spartan law. You wish to test me?” Martin nodded. “Very well... bring your DNA tests, your telepathic tests... I welcome them. I will give you one day, this day. And when that day is finished, and all of your tests only serve to confirm who I am, then know this...” Martin moved up to where Autolycus stood. Midlan had moved next to his father and they both stood there defiantly, staring back at him. “The Eurypontid line will never ascend to the throne of Sparta. Your so called investigations will never bear fruit, for tomorrow they will no longer exist.”

“You can not dismiss them!” Autolycus spoke.

“I can and I will. The circumstances surrounding Androcles’s death are none of your concern, nor will they ever be.” Martin spoke. “You will not dishonor his name or his service to Sparta in some petty attempt to strengthen your position. That is my first order as King. As for your second investigation, if you wish to continue that one, that is your right. However I will then order your son confined for attacking not one... but two Queens of Sparta... and when he is found guilty... I will kill him myself.” Martin smiled when Autolycus’s eyes went wide.

Martin looked at Midlan then. “Aricia is in Eden. I encourage you to go there and attempt to persuade her to come back here. I’ll even give you a transport to take your carcass there.”

“Even if you are King...” Autolycus spoke. “You can not break the law! Aricia is dishonored here in Sparta, and she is my son’s mate. She can never be Queen, no matter what you do!”

“We’ll see about that won’t we?” Martin said with a smile that was not in any way pleasant. “She is *my* mate... and *my* Queen.”

“You can not break the law!” Autolycus snapped.

Martin smiled like a wolf baring its teeth. "I don't intend too Senator Autolycus." He replied, still grinning. "She resides now in a city outside of your reach and out of Sparta's jurisdiction, and there she will remain until I have discovered the treachery you employed to have her family dishonored. Feel free to go there and try to force her to return. I will be the least of your problems then, for I doubt very much the nearly two million elves and humans who live in Eden will approve of your actions. Arranged marriages are no longer practiced in Eden Autolycus, and certainly not arranged marriages that are not even legitimate. As far as the elves and humans in Eden are concerned, Aricia is my wife and mate, and one of their Queens. I truly do not think the nearly nine million elves that reside in North America will take it kindly if you kidnap one of their Queens. In fact... Tarifa and Aihola would be down right pissed off. And trust me when I tell you, having the *two* of them pissed at you is a sure death sentence."

Dysea laughed again. "They would string you up by your entrails and listen to you howl." She spoke. "What are you talking about?" Autolycus demanded. "You speak in riddles!"

Martin smirked. "Oh... you mean your highly trained spies did not tell you?" He spoke sarcastically. "Your vaunted Tier Six telepaths did not read my thoughts?" Autolycus heard Dysea laugh at that, and she moved over to stand next to her mate, her husband and her King. Martin looked at Autolycus. "Go ahead Mister Tier Six Senator telepathic master sir... read my thoughts."

"You dare mock me!" Autolycus spat.

"Dare..." Martin stepped close to him. "Oh yes... I do dare, you shit sorry excuse for a Spartan. Heed what I tell you now... do you think I did not feel you rummaging around up here when Aricia and I were shopping." Martin touched the side of his temple. "It was actually Aricia who mentioned it first... your skills are so pathetic I didn't even bother to take notice. If you are feeling brave... do so now... come on I know you want too." Martin nudged Autolycus. "Reach out and read our thoughts... if you are lucky, Dysea will detect it first and you will spend the rest of your days thinking you are a nine year old elf child with pink ribbons in your hair and sucking a lollypop. If I detect it first, I will simply rip out every memory you have in those thick empty skulls you and your son both share and leave you as a vegetable on the street somewhere babbling like the fools you both are.

"I am not only the King of Sparta... but I am also the Elf High King Autolycus." Martin said. "Something you didn't know until just now I'll wager, judging by the look on your stupid face." Martin stepped closer. "The One Ascension Law will never change asshole. A direct descendant of Leonidas will forever sit on the throne of Sparta. You are welcome to try and change it though... I will enjoy making you look like a bigger fool than you already do. And make no mistake... I will discover what you did to get Aricia's family dishonored, and she will sit beside me... beside us as a Queen, for that is her destiny. And when I do discover this... pray you can run faster than me."

Martin turned to look at the Senators, "Dilios?"

Dilios moved forward quickly, "Sire?"

"If you and Dymas would arrange for whatever tests the good Senators of Sparta wish me to take." Martin said. "I will turn no one away. I am King, and the sooner we get that fact determined, the sooner we can move on to more important matters."

Dilios nodded. "As you order my Lord." He replied.

Martin looked at Helen. "I had a long night, and I'm going to return to the villa with my Queen." He spoke evenly, "One day ladies and gentlemen. Make good use of it."

Martin took Dysea's hand and turned briskly, ignoring Theron's glaring look and heading out of the Senate chamber, leaving over a hundred and fifty stunned and befuddled men and women to decide their next course of action.

APO PRIME

Lycavorian *LEONIDAS*-Class Attack Cruiser *LEONIDAS I*

"We had to scramble, but the last of the equipment is now aboard." Vistr spoke as he settled into the chair in the officer's lounge.

Deia nodded, "Less than six hours General. That is a fine piece of work."

“Don’t thank me,” Vistr spoke. “Once my officers knew why we were leaving, they basically told me to get my ass out of their way.” He said with a smile.

“Morale is high I take it?” Deia spoke sipping the tea.

“High?” Riall spoke now. “Does floating off the deck constitute high? I don’t believe I’ve ever seen Admiral Ceneu’s crews more hyped up.”

“And the King’s order?” Deia asked.

“I’ve already issued the stand down order. All ships will be returning to their specified marshalling areas within twelve hours to await further orders.” Riall answered.

“Riall... please do not take his words to you as...” Deia began.

Riall held up his hand stopping her. “He was right. Gorgo is my mate... but she is also his mother, a mother he did not even know he had until just recently. I can no more keep them apart then I can part the oceans. It was wrong of me to suggest it.”

Deia held up the data pad. “I’ve been... I’ve been reviewing the information the King sent to us via his memories...” She said. “I must say it makes for some very interesting reading, and I’m only a quarter of the way through it.” Deia looked at where Isabella sat, studying her. “Perhaps you would like a copy Isabella?”

“For what purpose,” She asked softly, much of her earlier anger now gone.

“To better understand him,” Deia replied.

“I understand him just fine.” She spat contemptuously. “He hates my kind. What more is there to understand?”

Deia smiled, setting the pad down on the table and sliding it across in front of where she sat.

“Actually... two of those he holds in high regard and calls friend are half vampire elves. He mentioned them remember? One is the Queen of the Drow elves, and co-administrator of this city he has built called Eden. Her brother, another half vampire, is a member of his Spartan Royal Guard. There is a half elf that has been turned completely by a pureblood vampire named Deval and she holds a very high position within this city’s administration, third in line of succession if I’m not mistaken.” Deia looked at Isabella’s surprised face. “Step outside your own hatred and rage for a moment Isabella and see that there are many who are experiencing or have experienced the exact same thing as you.”

Riall and Vistr had remained silent through the exchange, but now Riall leaned forward. “Your skill is unequalled Isabella... no one questions that. And I for one would not hesitate to ask for you and your soldiers to accompany me on any mission I lead. Yet you carry yourself with an arrogance that is unbecoming and standoffish to everyone around you, and it demeans your position as a Princess of your people.”

“I’m not here to make friends.” Isabella snapped. “And I am no longer a Princess.”

Riall shook his head, “Regardless of how you view yourself Isabella, among the Lycavorian people and millions more, you *are* a Princess, and you give hope to others that one day this war will be over. Your attitude however, that is why you will never have more than you do now.” He spoke. “And all you have now is misery and pain.”

“You don’t know that!” Isabella said.

Riall smiled and touched his nose. “You forget what we are Isabella and as much as you think otherwise, you do have your own distinct smell, as well as your own aura. My suggestion would be to make changes in your life before you allow your hate to destroy you from within.” Riall stood up. “Prime Minister I will escort you to the shuttle if you like. Gorgo is waiting for us so that she can say goodbye to you.”

Deia tapped the pad in front of Isabella. “Trust me.” She said softly. “And good luck.” She patted Isabella’s shoulder as she moved around her and took Riall’s arm.

SPARTA

Dysea gently ran her index finger over Martin’s sleeping face, tracing his lips and the line of his goatee, her emerald eyes simmering with fierce love and devotion. The past few hours had raced by for all of them, and had taken quite a toll on her *Nauta Melme*. They had returned to the villa, and Martin had led her to the shower, and under the soothing hot water he had made love to her in the gentlest and most passionate way she had yet experienced in their nearly one year together. Her body still tingled at the memory of his hands and lips upon

her flesh, the delirious pleasures his huge cock had caused to ripple through her and the way they had driven her to heights of pleasure she had not reached until this night. She ached deliciously, as she always did whenever he made love to her. It was an ache she had come to long for and savor. He had truly possessed her soul this night, and whatever else happened in their lives, and however long that life together lasted; Dysea would never forget this one night.

His face was peaceful now, more peaceful than she had ever seen it, and she was more than content now to simply stretch her naked body against his warm skin and allow her thoughts to swim within his mind as she stroked his skin with her fingers.

Dysea? Anja's voice broke into her thoughts

Melyanna, Dysea spoke brightly.

Thank you for that Dysea. It was utterly wonderful. Anja said.

Dysea smiled and rested her head on Martin's broad chest, snuggling as close as she could to his powerful frame. She had opened a telepathic link with Anja and Aricia in Eden when Martin had begun making love to her so that they could share in the pleasure she was experiencing. Martin had sensed this and augmented her link and as they felt the pleasure wash over them, and it passed easily to their two missing lovers. They had cried out together in release, four lovers separated by two oceans and two continents.

I will always share with you and Little Wolf, Melyanna. Dysea replied. *You know that.*

And that is why we love you so. Anja told her.

She is sleeping in your arms Melyanna?

Thousands of miles away Anja glanced down at Aricia's naked body wrapped in her embrace with an adoring smile.

I think our connection and my tongue was too much for her. Anja said with a soft chuckle. *And everything with Midlan has taken more of a toll mentally on her than she was allowing us to see.*

Well... you do have the most delightful tongue Melyanna. Dysea told her with a smile. *And it does so many wonderful things. I'm not surprised she could not hold back any longer.*

You miss my tongue, you little elf vixen. Anja spoke, her arms pulling Aricia closer to her.

I will always miss your tongue if it is not nearby. Dysea answered. *What do you miss about me?*

We miss your taste. Anja answered immediately, *And your ears.*

It makes me very happy to see that you and Little Wolf have become so close Melyanna. Dysea said.

You don't... you don't think that makes us love you any less do you Dysea? Anja asked a sudden sense of worry in her words.

No Melyanna, not at all. Never think that. We can love each other equally, but gravitate to one that is more like us in many ways, such as you and Aricia. Dysea spoke.

Like you and Martin. Anja said.

He loves us all Melyanna. With all that he is.

Oh I know that, and I've never doubted it, Anja answered. *He does however have a special place for you Dysea. You are the first he turned, who he made his. That doesn't mean he loves Little Wolf or I any less passionately, or that he will treat us any differently.*

I think perhaps we underestimate Little Wolf's pull on him. Dysea spoke. *She is of his people, a Lycavorian and while he does love us all equally, it is Little Wolf I think that he could not live without.*

What do you mean? Anja asked.

He has a special place for all of us in his heart Melyanna, and we will all have many strong children by him, you can feel that.

Yes. Anja said in reply, her voice filled with love and longing.

Yet only Aricia can give him what he does not even know he desires most deeply of all. Dysea said.

A pureblood son. Anja finished her statement softly.

Yes. He has shown me parts of his mind that he has not shared with others, and I will share them with you willingly once we are together again. Each of us have secured a portion of his soul, and even the one we have yet to meet will come to share that as well. Nauta Melme is different though. He has seen many beautiful women in his life Melyanna, and he will see many more, but I have touched the part of him that desires no one but us. It burns only for us. We... you, Little Wolf, myself and the one we are to meet, it's as if we were fated to be with him. Something preordained.

I have felt that too. Anja spoke softly.

The next time we share him as one Melyanna I will show you that part of him. Dysea spoke. It is wondrous to look at and feel.

I will look forward to that Dysea. Anja said. Until then... He'll never wish to make you mad at him and Little Wolf and I can use that to get our way with him. Anja told her with humor in her words.

Dysea chuckled against Martin's body. You are so devious Melyanna.

I know... it's great isn't it?

I saw her today Melyanna, in Nauta Melme's mind. She is... she is breathtaking.

Yes she is. Anja agreed quickly, remembering the image of the stunning raven haired vampire princess. She is filled... she is filled with much hate and anger Dysea. She will not... she will not give her heart easily, perhaps not at all.

I know... but I must try. Dysea replied.

Little Wolf and I will be there to help you Dysea, you know that. And with Martin, perhaps we can show her that we do not care that she is a vampire, and she too can know love as we do.

I look forward to that challenge. Dysea said. How does it feel to know you are Queen to trillions of beings?

Probably the same as you and Little Wolf feel, Anja replied. "Overwhelmed... awed. When I look back and think of how I was raised... that everything we now know to be true... that I was raised to think it was nothing but myths and stories.

You and Little Wolf must get out as often as you can and run Melyanna. Dysea spoke. She can teach you things you never could imagine. And running will clear your mind like nothing ever will. It is so joyous being in our wolf forms and experiencing the ground and the elements so close.

I know... and we are going to start tomorrow evening. Anja replied. What do you think of the plan by Tarifa and Aihola?

I believe it is a sound plan. Dysea replied. And it could very well work.

I think so as well. Anja said. We are going to get more details before we bring it to Martin. That pig Graham does not visit Selene for another two days and we are meeting with Tarifa, Lynwe and Selene tomorrow.

Aihola and the others got off safely then?

They should be landing at their drop zone in just under an hour. Anja said wearily.

You are tired Melyanna. Dysea spoke.

I know... but I so enjoy these times talking with you Dysea.

I think you just miss me worshiping your body. Dysea stated with a playful surge of her aura through their link.

Well... you do such a wonderful job of it. Anja answered just as playfully.

After what we have experienced the last twenty-four hours... all of us should get a good night's sleep. Dysea said.

You are right. Anja spoke. I will contact you and Martin tomorrow once Little Wolf and I know more.

We love you Melyanna.

We love you Dysea.

Dysea sighed herself as they closed their link. She shifted slightly, feeling Martin's arms pull her closer and she smiled in contentment as her eyes closed and she drifted into a peaceful sleep, feeling Anja drifting off as well in Aricia's arms.

NEW MIAMI

Moran walked quickly down the corridor of Yuri's villa, the data pad in his hand. He had just come from a meeting of the Ministers, having received the report from Marks on his way out. He hated having to deal with the politicians of the Alliance. Most of them with the exception of Deval and two others were human and interested only in how much power and wealth they could acquire. Yuri did not come out in public often, preferring to stay in the shadows and work mostly with the genetics division on improving their soldiers. He

was her face and voice in the meetings, and had been for some time, yet now it was even more pronounced since they had sworn themselves to each other.

He was still somewhat stunned at what she had told him and what she had shown him, the thousands of planets and species that were either slaves or allies to the Vampires. Massive space ships that could obliterate earth from orbit. She had shown him images of their home world, and he had been amazed at the advanced technology, wondering why they didn't use more of it here on earth. She had explained to him that to us more than they did would only draw the attention of the rebellion and make them investigate. Up until last night they had assumed the rebellion did not even know that Martin Leonidas existed. When Yuri had seen the silver burst of light reach for the stars and tense in his embrace, Moran knew it had to be some sort of transmission. The rebellion knew they were here now Yuri had told him that morning, at the very least that Leonidas was alive, and they would no doubt arrive within the next year in force.

They had shared a brief breakfast before he left, knowing that she would be going to the vampire breeding farms to conduct her own inspections and see how quickly they could advance the process. She had touched him telepathically when she returned, and he had done everything within his power to hurry the meetings along.

Moran had entered her villa on the beach, feeling her on the patio as the sun began to move lower in the sky. As old as she was, Yuri only had to avoid the direct sunlight at the apex of the sun's apogee during the day, and then only for an hour or so. This also afforded Moran the same ability, because it was she who had turned him. He passed the large bar in the living room and snatched the crystal glass of blood she always left for him, recently poured and smelling delicious. He moved to the doors and saw her standing near the shaded railing overlooking the beach, a data pad in her hand. He wrapped the shadows around him and moved up slowly behind her, leaning over her shorter frame and lightly biting her exposed shoulder.

Yuri smiled contently and leaned back against him as she lowered the pad. "I didn't think they would ever let you leave." She said.

Moran chuckled. "I never did like politicians... even before I was a vampire." He spoke. "I have less patience for them now."

Yuri chuckled. "Yes... I'm sorry I send you to those meetings, but at least they won't do to you what they used to do to me. It gave me such headaches."

"I have some good news." He spoke, "Some very good news."

Yuri turned and looked at him. "Well that will balance out the news I have. Tell me."

"Lieutenant Marks has found the Class Five reactor." Moran told her, seeing her dark eyes light up.

"Truly?" Yuri asked.

Moran nodded with a smile. "Prefect Uniglina had it. Seems he didn't want to give it up either. The poor fellow has passed from this life I'm not sorry to report. Marks gave his men a choice. Fight with him and be rewarded, or fight against him and die. Most chose to live."

"Have them killed anyway." Yuri said quickly. "I wouldn't trust them now."

Moran grinned. "I already did." He said.

Yuri chuckled and licked his neck and throat, "Another reason why I made the right decision bonding with you." She told him. "You make my body sing, and you read my thoughts too."

"I've already sent a heavy transport to Marks' position." Moran spoke. "Two vampire pilots are waiting to fly a Raptor to EDEN with the core."

"Send a section from the special engineering unit on the island." Yuri told him. "They will have the expertise to install the core and upgrade the weapons."

"Upgrade the weapons systems?" Moran said. "EDEN's already got some pretty decent firepower. Why upgrade them now?"

Yuri drew back slightly and held up the data pad. "Our contact in Sparta sent a burst transmission very early this morning. It wasn't good."

"I'm listening."

"Martin is not just a descendant of Leonidas Robert." Yuri spoke. "He is the youngest son of Leonidas."

"Son?" Moran gasped. "How is that even possible?"

"Apparently a Lycavorian Oracle survived our purge." Yuri said. "Gorgo left earth at her direction and gave birth to this son. The man we had chased for decades thinking he was the second son; that apparently was

not the case. Our contact says Martin is the son of Leonidas, and it was he who activated the transmission last night. He has finally discovered who he is. The transmission he sent was via a Mark II neurobooster, which means he has probably already spoken with the resistance.”

Moran looked at her, “And?”

Yuri kissed him before turning and walking further back into the living room. “I also spoke with my father this morning after you left. One of the reasons he has left me in charge for so long is that I do not mince words when I report to him. I told him what has happened here, and he in turn told me a large rebel force has left Apo Prime and will be here within three weeks.”

Moran’s eyes went wide. “Three weeks!” He gasped. “You said it would take thirteen months!”

Yuri nodded. “Yes... well it seems both the Vampire Coven and the Lycavorian Union have developed new engine designs and technology since I have been away. The rebels are using an untested device called a Jump Gate. It will allow them to move great distances much quicker.”

“What’s... what’s a Jump Gate?”

Yuri shook her head. “My father did not go into details as he was heading to a meeting, but it essentially is a non-naturally formed wormhole technology that allows ships to pass through it and cover dozens of light years.” She looked at Moran. “We have at most three weeks before this rebel fleet reaches here.”

“What... what kind of firepower are we talking here Yuri?” Moran asked.

“Reports from my father indicate at least a full Fleet Group, which would include at least a hundred and sixty warships of varying size.” Yuri replied. “That doesn’t include transports for ground forces and our spies on Apo Prime say at least one division of very elite Spartan Shock Troopers left the planet in the hours before this fleet left.”

“We... we are supposed to fight that?” Moran asked, pacing the carpet now. Yuri was silent as she watched him. “Ok... ok... we get Marcus to upgrade the weapons on Eden... we don’t have anything that can match them in the sky I’m guessing... so we need to get them on the surface and in close with our forces so they won’t fire on their own men. We can set up anti-air points, and choke centers... I’ll have engineers lay out mine fields all over the fucking place! They want this planet... they’ll pay for it in blood!” He looked back at Yuri and saw her standing there looking at him. “What?”

Yuri smiled. “My father has ordered Xerxes to leave his ground troops where he is and make all haste here to earth. He has his own fleet, and will no doubt bring as many troops as he can cram onto his warships. He will be here in eleven days.”

Moran watched as she walked up to him slowly. “Why are you looking at me like that?”

“You did not react as I expected.” She spoke softly. “I thought... I thought perhaps you would suggest we abandon earth, that you... that you would panic... and... and leave me.”

“I am panicked.” He replied quickly. “That doesn’t mean I’m going to just haul ass and leave you and all that we have built here. Jesus Yuri we’ve been through this! I’m not leaving you until I’m dead!”

Yuri pressed close against him, feeling the warmth of his body spread throughout her as she placed her head against his chest. “Our contact in Sparta has told me the assassination attempt will take place some time today.” Yuri said. “Anja and Aricia have returned to Eden it seems due to some problems within the Spartan Senate. The assassination will target Martin and the she-elf Queen.”

“And there’s no way they can tie this back to us right?” Moran asked.

Yuri shook her head. “This assassin has been in my employ for well over a thousand years. He will not fail.”

“Is he a vampire?” Moran asked.

Yuri shook her head once more. “No... he is a Lycavorian.” She replied, a small hint of satisfaction in her voice. “A man that has hated the line of Leonidas since that infernal man lived.”

“The other two are in Eden?” Moran spoke softly.

Yuri looked at him. “Yes why?”

“There were some unconfirmed reports from our people in the High Elf Cities that are not within Eden.” Moran spoke. “Anlain’s son Telan is dead. He was killed in a particularly brutal way according to these reports. A Spartan transport came in the other day loaded with more people than normal. The two Queens must have come in with them.”

“Why is this significant?” Yuri asked.

“Simpson was with them.” Moran answered.

“Martin’s second in command?” Yuri inquired.

Moran nodded. “Why send Simpson back?” Moran asked himself softly. “Next to Hunter... Leonidas and the elf whore Dysea,” He corrected himself. “Simpson is perhaps the most lethal of the men and women with him.”

“What are you thinking?”

“There was a report yesterday evening of unidentified aircraft sounds along our northern border.” Moran explained to her. “We didn’t have anything flying in that area, and very early this morning, there were reports of at least four Raptors taking off from Eden and heading north.”

“A mission perhaps?” Yuri asked.

Moran shrugged. “There’s nothing up in that area.” He replied. “It’s wild... all the way up into what used to be Canada, and Martin would have to know it violates the agreement he made with you.”

“Perhaps not so wild as we first thought.” Yuri spoke. “And his agreement was that *we* stay out of the area he has claimed... not the other way around. And it is not something I would put past him.”

“Me either.” Moran spoke. “But what would they be looking for?”

“I suggest we find out.” Yuri spoke, “Order Graham to take the highest ranking member of the Elder Council that he can and drain them dry. Find out everything they know.”

“Is that wise Yuri?” Moran asked. “If they find the body of a Minister, they’ll know something is up.”

Yuri nodded. “Perhaps,” She answered moving to the bar inside with Moran following. “What can they array against us?” She asked as she began pouring a glass of blood.

Moran settled into the comfortable chair. “My estimates are not confirmed.” He spoke.

Yuri nodded. “Your best guess is probably more accurate than most of the intelligence reports we get.” She told him.

“Everyone within Eden except for the very young and very old are expected to help defend it.” Moran said. “Not including those civilians, they could field eight, possibly nine full strength divisions. All with full armor and air support capability, for a total of just over three hundred thousand fighters.”

Yuri looked at him. “We can field over a million Robert.” She spoke, “Against just three hundred thousand?”

Moran nodded. “Yes we can... but they won’t be anywhere near as well trained.” He answered. “And every elf and human will fight to the death; and they will continue to fight until we kill them period. It’s like they are mentally conditioned to eliminate at least five of the enemy before they die, and their main training regime has been put in place by Wallace... a Spartan, and the instructors are dozens of the Drow half vampires Marcus allowed to escape. Not a real good mixture in our favor.”

“What about our cloned vampire troops?” Yuri spoke.

“They can still be killed Yuri.” Moran answered. “And no doubt Wallace has been training them to kill vampires in the most efficient way they can. We can win as long as we play our cards right, unless Leonidas convinces the Spartans to enter the war.”

“He will be dead by the end of the day.” Yuri spoke. “The assassin I speak of has never failed.”

“There is a first time for everything Yuri. I knew him when he was just a Navy SEAL... and just about every government in the world that wasn’t democratic wanted him dead. All of them had prices on his head. None of them ever came close to getting him. I don’t doubt the skill of this assassin you speak of...” Moran shook his head. “I just don’t think we should put all our eggs into one basket.”

Yuri moved to the couch in the room and patted the seat next to her. Moran didn’t hesitate and got up to move next to her. “The Spartans can field one, perhaps two divisions of troops; I know that for a fact.” She said.

Moran nodded. “Yes but those one or two divisions will be the equal to any four elf and human divisions.” She shook his head. “I’m not being defeatist here... we can win... in either instance we can win... I’m just saying it’s not going to be as easy as your father or brother might think.”

Yuri sipped the glass of blood and looked at him over the rim. “I tend to agree with you Robert.” She said softly, “As much as it turns my stomach. We have fought these elves for far longer than Xerxes and my father, and I don’t believe we should underestimate them.”

“I’ll pull my people together and start making plans.” He spoke. “And I’ll send a burst transmission to our border garrison in the north to get out and do some looking around.”

Yuri nodded and got to her feet slowly. “I will prepare a more detailed report for my father, and then contact Xerxes to see what his disposition is.” She spoke. “But that can wait until tomorrow can’t it?”

Moran got to his feet with a smile. “It can wait another hour.” He spoke, pulling her into his grasp and yanking the loose dress she wore from her shoulders, his lips dropping to her cool skin. “At least until I give you a taste of what I’m going to do to you tonight.” He spoke huskily.

NORTHERN NORTH DAKOTA TEN MILES SOUTH OF CANADIAN BORDER

Nayeca knelt motionless among the tall grass on the ridge, the sun dipping below the horizon slowly, casting hundreds of shadows among the trees. She shifted under the added weight of the Spartan body armor, feeling it chaff her skin lightly, but it provided her with protection she had never had before, and still allowed her maximum freedom of movement. Her shimmering white hair was pulled back into a tight pony tail, her left hand clutching the HK74 they had provided her. All of her own weapons had been returned to her in a show of trust Nayeca had never expected, but one she appreciated more than anyone knew.

Nayeca had spoken at length with both General Vengal, and her Queen over the last few days, and she found Vengal had been right that first day she had spent with him. Queen Aihola was anything but arrogant. Nayeca had witnessed the video transmission of the attack against her and the High Elf Queen Tarifa, and Nayeca had been stunned at the speed that Aihola had displayed, as well as Tarifa. She had never questioned her skill after that, and after all the hours they had talked, Nayeca found her to be inquisitive and humorous and extremely intelligent. And she also learned how deeply the love she felt for the High Elf Queen ran, and now it seemed that man/wolf had joined those feelings.

Nayeca had been more terrified that first night seeing him than she had ever been in her life. Seeing those gold flecked green eyes staring at her above those massive jaws of razor sharp teeth and black claws, Nayeca had almost had an attack right then. So much had happened since that night, and Nayeca let her amber eyes drift to where her right hand rested on the powerful shoulders of the rust colored wolf next to her.

Anuk’s armor covered most of her exposed body, but her head, muzzle and part of her shoulders were bare. Her rust colored fur was soft, silky and long. Her cerulean blue eyes looked out from above the tapered muzzle filled with flesh shredding teeth, her wolf ears pointed straight up searching for any sound. Nayeca had discovered what Vengal proposed right after the main group had parachuted into the landing zone. She had accepted eagerly, relishing the chance to learn more about these *Ngauro* that she had read about as a child in horror stories. They had been traveling together now for a full day, stopping to rest twice in hidden alcoves of rocks or trees. They were four kilometers in front of the main force led by her Queen, and had been sprinting forward to almost eight kilometers in advance at times to keep their path safe. She had learned that the two huge black men were father and son, and the beautiful flame haired Wood Elf was Vengal’s daughter and the mate of the younger black male.

Anuk had remained with her throughout most of the previous night and day, allowing Daniel and Melancton to range ahead. They were able to remain in telepathic contact with her, and she could inform Nayeca of anything that they saw. All of them remained in wolf form unless they were resting to reduce the chance they might be detected moving in human form. Wolves would hardly be considered something to report, and Nayeca could move among the shadows of the timber better than anyone they had ever seen. Looking at the back of Anuk’s head and the exposed portions of her wolf body that the armor did not cover Nayeca could only shake her head in awe. The two Spartan Queens had established a telepathic link between Nayeca and Anuk, determining it would be too much of a stress on her mind to make several different links. She and Anuk could converse with their thoughts, though the first few times it has caused Nayeca small headaches. Now... they were nothing more than dull throbs that she could easily ignore. She spoke normally unless the need arose for her to use the connection as it was easier for Anuk to answer her telepathically than it was for Nayeca.

“Are they returning?” Nayeca asked in a low whisper, her voice carrying no more than the two feet to where Anuk stood beside her, resting on her haunches.

They’ve stopped on the far ridge across the valley. Anuk replied. *There is some activity. Daniel said to remain here until they call.*

“Anuk... may I ask you a question?” Nayeca spoke.

Certainly.

“You are a Wood Elf. How is it... how did you become... how did you...” Nayeca was at a loss to finish the question, and Anuk’s muzzle turned so that she could look at her.

How did I become a Ngauro? Anuk’s voice held humor in it.

Nayeca nodded sheepishly. “Forgive me.” She spoke softly.

It is alright Nayeca. Anuk replied. *I was a prisoner of slavers for almost a year. I thought my life was over to be honest. I thought I would never see my father or mother again. I had lost all hope when they took me to the Las Vegas slave auctions. And then Daniel rescued me.*

“And he turned you into a Ngauro?”

Anuk’s wolf’s head nodded slightly. *It was not something that happened over night. The men who captured me were... they had the same skin color as Daniel and his father. By that time I was terrified of dark skinned humans. I was cruel and vicious to him at first; I actually scratched his face pretty badly immediately after he saved my life. We got separated from the others of our party and I was wounded. He cared for me... treated me like I was a priceless artifact. He was so gentle and caring. We were together for three days and three nights during this period, and I believe I fell in love with him by the end of the second day. On the third day before the King found us we were attacked by some hideous creatures. I was wounded badly, almost near death. Daniel changed me then, to save my life. I have not looked back since.*

“And you are his... his woman?” Nayeca asked.

I’m his mate... yes. And I thank the gods every day for that fact. Anuk answered.

“He is... he is very lucky.” Nayeca spoke softly. “You... you are very beautiful.”

Anuk had not mastered all the nuances of expressions in her wolf form, and she could not show the surprise she felt at this Drow’s words, or the fact that Nayeca’s words did not disgust her as they would have only a few short months ago. She had spent hours reveling in the depths of Daniel’s mind, seeing his experiences and his life. He hid nothing from her... not even his past relationships. It sent loving warmth through Anuk to know that having her as his mate meant more to him than anything else, and those relationships had dwindled to fading memories within his mind when he had found her. And while she had never said anything to him about it, the images and sounds and smells of Julie and Queen Anja together with him had excited her to the point where she had practically thrown herself upon him in passion and lust, surprising both him and herself.

As... as are you Nayeca. Your mate is very lucky as well. Anuk finally spoke.

Nayeca looked at her wide eyed. “I have no mate.” She said with an almost sad smile. “The Drow must be careful to control our population within the city. Only much older Drow warriors are allowed to mate and have children. The younger ones... like me... we must restrained our urges for men. There aren’t many men to go around, and most of the attractive ones are already spoken for. The rest... well every race has their arrogant fools. We... younger warriors like myself, we contain our passions with each other when we find someone... another female who is suitable and that we are attracted too. The males who are not selected... they are allowed to pick younger females from the population... so that they may stimulate their fertility for the time when they are chosen. It is not a choice that we like... but our laws say we must accept it.”

That... that seems rather harsh, Anuk said.

Nayeca nodded. “But it is necessary.” She said. “We have lasted this long because of it.”

Anuk nodded her wolf head slowly. *We have had to endure much pain under the thumb of the Alliance. With luck and the gods that will soon change. And I doubt Aihola will allow that practice to continue.*

“That is my hope as well. Have you... have you seen the High King Anuk?” Nayeca asked. “He must... he must be very impressive to have three mates so devoted to him.”

He is. Anuk answered honestly. *He is larger than Daniel in wolf form, larger than any wolf I have ever seen. His fur is as black as the darkest night. He is... he is god like.* Anuk said, not able to think of any other word to describe Martin. *He inspires all around him to be better than they think is possible. He cares deeply for those he considers friends and family. And he has great compassion for the weak and those who are unable to protect themselves. He has little patience for slavers and scum, and he would kill them in the blink of an eye. I am honored to call him family.*

“He is... he is family to you?” Nayeca asked surprised.

He and Daniel have fought together all of their lives. They are like brothers... and when Daniel took me as his mate... I became family in Martin's eyes. Anuk replied with just a little bit of pride in her voice. *He and my father are especially close, as my father was the first among our people that Martin allowed to know what we truly were.*

"I would like to meet him one day." Nayeca said.

Anuk smiled and in wolf form, her teeth came into sight, gleaming white and razor sharp. *I would be proud to introduce you Nayeca. We...*

Anuk! Melancton's voice echoed in her mind. *Move up to us Little One, quickly and quietly.*

On our way, Anuk replied immediately. *We must move to their location Nayeca, quickly and without sound.*

Nayeca nodded. "Let us go then." She replied now fully back to the business of being a Drow warrior.

Anuk watched her lead off quickly, blending into the shadows like a phantom, and the last thought she had before stepping off to follow her was that the fatigues Nayeca wore hugged an extremely delicious looking ass. That single thought surprised Anuk, and sent shivers of delight through her at the same time.

"They are definitely vampires." Dan spoke softly.

All of them were back in human form, and resting within the cover of a massive tree trunk that was hollow. Nayeca had draped two dark olive drab liners over each end of the tree trunk to hide the flashes of silver light that appeared for several seconds when they altered their forms. It was still an amazing thing to watch for Nayeca. They all squatted now, even though the size of the fallen trunk afforded them the opportunity to stand.

"How many?" His father asked.

"I counted at least twelve." Dan replied. "Four clicks east of here. They were settling in for the night, but if I had to guess... it's a patrol and they are moving this way."

"They could not have found out about the mission." Anuk stated. "Only my father and the Queens knew all the plans."

Melancton nodded. "They must have heard the aircraft." He stated. "These Raptors of yours are quite amazing son, but they make tremendous noise, even from high up."

Dan nodded. "No arguments here, but why send a patrol out if they only heard the Raptors? We jumped from nineteen thousand feet father, and in my experience you don't send a patrol out Willy nilly unless you suspect something was out there."

Melancton nodded, "Agreed. Which means someone must have reported our Raptors leaving Eden, and that means there are spies within Eden that are watching the airfields and training bases."

"We will cross into Manitoba tomorrow if we keep our current pace." Nayeca said. "Ten kilometers after that we will begin to enter the area my people patrol. We must not lead these men there."

"I don't intend to." Danny said looking at her. "Dekton, Aihola and Vengal will have settled in for the night by now. "We're only five kilometers ahead of them. We should head back and see what they want to do. We can be back to their camp within the hour."

Melancton nodded, "A sound plan. Once they make a decision we can remain with the main force tonight and then move out early in the morning."

Dan looked at Nayeca. "We haven't made this long of a sprint with you yet Nayeca. Do you think you can keep up?"

Nayeca looked at him. His question was not asked with arrogance or superiority of any sort. It was a simple question and he asked it that way. She nodded. "I am well rested." She replied. "As long as you do not outdistance me... I can keep up."

"I have her scent marked Daniel." Anuk spoke. "My father and Aihola need to know about this."

Danny looked at her and leaned over to nuzzle her. This was a loving nuzzle with nothing sexual in nature coming from his aura. Anuk smiled and closed her eyes to nuzzle him back, not seeing Nayeca's gaze on her. It was something that did not escape Melancton's gaze however.

"Then let's get moving." Danny spoke.

“And you are sure they were Alliance?” Aihola asked from her spot on the ground between Dekton’s legs. His back was against the large tree stump, Aihola sitting comfortably, a ration bar in her hand as she leaned back against him. Aihola’s long white hair was made up like Nayeca’s and the other Drow among the group, pulled into a long pony tail and hidden with soft black terry cloth strips. No Drow would ever cut their hair and over the years they had come up with many ways to hide the brilliant white color.

The fifty Eden soldiers had set up for the evening, security already in place all around the small fireless camp. They were situated in groups of two and three for better response, and the perimeter guards would be changed out every two hours to maintained alertness.

Danny nodded. “I counted twelve. It looked like a long range patrol of some sort. They were settling in for the night.”

“And if they continue on their current heading, they would cross our path just as we moved across the border.” Vengal spoke from beside Melancton.

Daniel nodded, “Looks that way.”

“Months of not being in this area and suddenly they appear?” Vengal spoke shaking his head. “I don’t like it.”

“I fear someone is watching the airfield in Eden.” Melancton spoke now. “They must have seen our Raptors take off and reported to their masters. That message was passed up the chain of command and someone decided to take a look.”

Dekton nodded as he handed Aihola the canteen with water. “We have known there were other spies within Eden Little Drow.” He spoke softly and affectionately. “Perhaps one has been detailed to watch the airfield for just this occasion.”

“I will not turn back now!” Aihola spoke. “We are so close! My people deserve the chance at a normal life that Eden offers them.” Nayeca detected the inflection in her voice and felt a wave of pride sweep through her.

Dekton nuzzled the back of her neck projecting warmth and affection to her with his aura, calming her emotions which were beginning to rise. “No one is suggesting we turn back Little Drow.” He spoke softly.

Aihola took a deep breath feeling his aura pulse through her and she squeezed his thigh in thanks. “I’m sorry.” She spoke. She turned to Vengal. “General?”

“Eliminate them.” He spoke firmly and without hesitation. “It may tip off someone that there are enemies in the area, but by the time they discover this patrol is missing we will be well over the border.” Nayeca smiled in the darkness, liking this Wood Elf General even more. She had to admit, the more time she spent around these men and women, the more her hopes for the future increased.

“We’ll have to devise another route back.” Dekton spoke quickly. “We can’t bring six thousand men, women and children back through this same area.”

Nya Istel? Tarifa’s voice filled Aihola’s mind. *I have Anja and Aricia with me here.*

Aihola relaxed even more as she felt her love’s presence fill her thoughts. She felt Dekton relax as well against her back. It seemed Tarifa’s presence had much the same effect on him.

Aihola knew that Daniel, Anuk and Melancton could hear Tarifa as well within their minds, but she spoke verbally so that the others were not left out.

“Daniel has seen an Alliance vampire patrol my love.” She spoke as if to the air. “Their numbers are small... but they will intersect with our path tomorrow if we allow them to live.”

And your party has not been detected? Tarifa asked.

“No... our main force is still eight kilometers away and they have stopped for the night.” Aihola replied. “If we take out the patrol, we will not be able to come back this way however.”

Maintaining secrecy is too important Aihola. Anja’s voice spoke now. *Kill the patrol.*

“Our path back will need to be changed my Queen.” Aihola spoke softly.

We will find you another way back. Aricia’s voice spoke now.

Aricia is right Nya Istel. Tarifa continued. *There were other routes we looked at; we will just have to choose the best secondary one.*

Reaching your people is too important Aihola. Anja spoke again. Martin has agreed. I will send Aricia to whatever route we choose so that we can maintain an active telepathic link between our groups. I will remain here with Tarifa and coordinate from Eden.

“And our plan with Graham?” Aihola asked.

Only one of us need take care of that. Aricia answered. And Anja is the more powerful of the two of us. Little Wolf is right. Anja spoke once more.

I will pull Tarifa’s father aside and we will find a safe route for you Aihola. You have my word. Aricia said.

Aihola nodded. “Then I will trust in that.” She answered confidently.

We will contact you when we have the route chosen and mapped. Tarifa told her. *Be safe Nya Istel. I would be most unhappy if anything were to happen to you or Dekton, especially after what we have discovered together.*

Dekton chuckled softly as Aihola looked at him and squeeze his hand. *I have no intention of allowing anything to happen to us Tarifa.* He told her, sending love and warmth through their link back to her. *Just be prepared for when we return, for I intend us to remain in bed for at least two days.*

They both felt Tarifa smile and flush with warmth back in Eden. *That is something I will hold you both too.* She answered.

“Watch yourself my love.” Aihola spoke softly. “If there are spies watching the airfield, they could be anywhere in Eden.”

I will. We will touch you as soon as we have a plan devised. Tarifa replied before severing their link.

Aihola looked at Daniel then. “Can the four of you dispatch this patrol?” She asked.

Danny looked at his father with an evil grin. “Not a problem.” He replied.

“Then rest for a few hours before you depart. Strike them just before dawn, for that is when we will begin moving again.” Vengal spoke.

Dan nodded, “Works for me.”

SPARTA

Martin and Dysea stood among the hundreds of men, women and children on the streets of Sparta as they crowded around eagerly, wanting to touch the son of Leonidas and one of his Queens. Many were far too young to remember King Leonidas, and all they had was what was taught to them in school but no citizen of Sparta did *not* know the history of their city and its most beloved King. That standing before them was his youngest son, as DNA tests had confirmed, it was a moment in history all of them wanted to grasp at. The neurobooster had unleashed the knowledge of what they were and where they came from, and that was the talk of the city until Martin and Dysea had gone to Demetrius’s café for their morning coffee. Within moments of arriving, word had reached hundreds that their King and one of his Queens were out in the streets among the people. The older first generation Spartan men and women relished in the feelings this caused, as many of them could remember their parents bringing them forth to witness Leonidas and Gorgo walking among the streets and shops of Sparta so long ago. They would stand for hours as Leonidas and Gorgo chatted with every citizen that spoke to them, sometimes even buying from the vendors in the streets. This was something they did often, and after speaking with Dysea that morning, it was something Martin decided he would continue in honor of his father.

Walter and his father stood just outside the thong of men and women, watching as young children rushed by them in their haste to reach the King. Martin had begun to wrestle with several young children as Dysea looked on, and this was bringing laughter from the children and the adults.

“It is frightening how much like his father he is.” Panos spoke.

Walter nodded slowly. “Yet he is very different.” He replied, “In many ways. And some of the older Spartans will have trouble adjusting.”

Panos shook his head. “Not as many as you might think son.” Panos told him. “There are many who think as I do. We know change is needed, we know that we can not stay in our valley for all time. Discovering who and what we truly are is going to change many things. Do you know how many planets are out there

Dymas? Your mother and I were up half the night just replaying in our heads what he revealed to us. I'm quite sure many others were doing the same thing."

Walter nodded. "We were." He replied shaking his head. "All these years we have father and none of us ever suspected something like this."

"How soon before our people arrive?" Panos asked.

"Martin spoke with me this morning. He said three weeks before a Lycavorian fleet arrives." Walter replied.

"Spartans have always had the ability to adapt extremely well son, you know this." Panos spoke. "We will adapt and accept this change once more, for we have found our true history."

"But the war rages even off this planet." Walter said. "We... we have fought for so long. We have buried so many, including Leonidas. It taxes one's ability to keep going on."

Panos nodded. "That it does." He replied. "What do you see when you look at him son?" He asked.

Walter looked at his father. "I see our future." He replied without hesitation. "I see the man that has finally bestowed upon us the one thing all of us have craved. The answer to the one question we have all asked at some point in our lives."

Panos nodded. "Who are we?"

Walter nodded in agreement of his father's words. "Who are we?"

"That is a question I believe everyone asks at some point in their lives." Panos said with a smile. "And lucky for us we have that answer now. And now we go forward."

The wind shifted slightly and Walter's nose twitched at the almond smell that filtered out from the other scents. It was strong and close by. His head turned to look at the mass of people around Martin and Dysea. Panos saw this movement in his son and his eyes narrowed.

"Dymas... what is it?"

The hair on the back of Walter's neck was standing up on end, his eyes fliriting back and forth. "I've... I've smelled that before." He spoke softly. "Do you smell it?"

Panos sniffed the air. The multitude of scents was enormous, but nothing that stood out to him. "I smell nothing unusual." He said. "I think perhaps you worry too much son."

Walter looked around quickly once more, scanning the crowd until he found Andreus, standing a few meters from Martin, his own eyes sweeping the crowd intently. His mind was flashing back through the years, trying to determine where he had smelled the almond scent before. It was not natural to Sparta as far as he knew, and he tried to remember if there were any other cafés along this stretch of street that served this type of coffee.

"Dymas... what is it?" His father asked.

"Something... something is not right." Walter said. "I've smelled that before."

"Smelled what?" Panos asked.

Walter kept flashing back through his memories... months... years... decades. He knew he smelled it before, very powerful and intense. His senses were alive and firing alarms at every corner and he reached out to Andreus.

Andreus! Move them! Get them out of here now! He flashed to the Captain of Martin's Royal Guard. He saw Andreus's eyes grow wide and focus on him.

What is wrong Guardian?

Get them out of the square now Andreus! Something... There! Walter found the memory... the flash and smell of the powerful scent. His eyes lifted once more, wide and filled with horror. Andreus! A bomb! There is a bomb in the square! Get them out now!

The word bomb sent Andreus into flight mode and he began plowing through the crowd of men and women, knocking over a young couple as he reached for Martin's arm.

His fingers closed around his King's bicep just as the brilliant flash lit up the entire area. It happened in slow motion for him, the intense smell of almonds, the blinding flash and then the massive concussive force that spread outward from the small table only meters away. He watched as bodies were lifted into the air and shredded in an instant, the looks of astonishment frozen on the faces of men and women as their lives were ended in the blink of an eye. The last thing Andreus saw was his King turn toward the explosion just as the huge wave reached them, his eyes going wide.

Andreas felt the concussive force of the blast tear his hand loose from his King's arm and then mercifully, blackness washed over him silencing the deafening sounds of screeching metal and rupturing glass mixed with the dying screams of men, women and children.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

LYCAVORIAN ATTACK CRUISER *LEONIDAS I*

It wasn't supposed to be like this, flashed through Isabella's mind as she lay on her bed. She was naked, her porcelain like skin flawless in every way. There were no scars on her body, no sagging lines of age. She kept herself in superb physical condition with daily four hour workouts, starting with mild calisthenics and then progressing to some very intricate and excruciating difficult hand to hand combat moves. She usually trained with a senior vampire soldier that accompanied her along with her small staff no matter where they went. There were five soldiers in this group and the standing rule among them and Isabella, if you were able to connect with a blow to the Princess; she was yours for the evening. The vampire soldiers with her were excellent specimens of masculinity, strong and powerfully built with incredible stamina. They knew what their Princess liked, and were not afraid to press her in her bed. They would slap her supple skin, bite her neck and shoulders, sometimes painfully hard, but never breaking the skin. That was taboo with Isabella. One vampire soldier had done this in a moment of passion nearly four decades ago and had begun to feed on her blood in the hopes that she would take him as her husband.

Isabella had snapped his neck without as much as a blink of her hazel/green eyes. The men now knew not to push her that far. She would allow them to have her, be forceful with her, and she would perhaps even enjoy it, but taking her blood was out of the question.

Now the youngest of her vampire soldiers was rutting atop her quite enthusiastically, driving his hard cock into her warm pussy. He had gotten lucky this day, catching Isabella a glancing blow on her side. Her mind had not fully been involved in the fight as was normally the case. She was methodic in her precision, never caught off guard, and yet today she had been distracted. Strange feelings were sifting through her body and her mind, and they had been since that night the Lycavorian Shi Viska had been branded to her arm. She had kept the Shi Viska bridle hidden by wearing long elbow length gloves that were not unusual for her to wear. It was well known that she kept physical contact with her person well restricted, though hardly anyone knew why. Isabella was mildly telepathic, never really delving into that portion of her skills as Yuri and her father had. She had very strong mental shields the Lycavorian Mage had once told her; more powerful than most telepaths among her people, but aside from that her skills were minimal. Yet now Isabella felt different somehow. She felt powerful in mind as well as body, and she reached out tentatively into the soldier's mind, probing aimlessly with the few skills she had learned in school and finding nothing but the base need to pound the his beautiful arrogant Princess into sexual submission and make her scream his name.

Isabella bit back the laughter she wanted to release at this. This soldier was fucking her as hard as he could, his average sized cock pounding into her with relish, and Isabella was completely dry, and far from ever calling any man's name in her bed. Normally this type of fucking at least made her wet enough to mildly enjoy the events, but now she felt nothing, only the dry mildly painful humping he was laying on her. This by itself was surprising enough, as Isabella had always prided herself on her control in bed, and being able to at least make it seem like she was enjoying it. Tonight however, she felt none of that, and only wished for the soldier to stop and get off her and let her alone. His breathing was coming in short gasps now and Isabella knew he was close. She closed her eyes, trying to concentrate, reaching around and stroking his back with her right hand, while the left remained under the pillow her head rested on. The image of the Lycavorian King flashed into her mind and Isabella's eyes opened wide as she felt a surge of pleasure course through her and she became wet almost instantly. The vampire soldier felt this, and grunted like an animal one last time before erupting inside her pussy deeply.

Isabella's eyes were closed as the images of Martin flashed through her thoughts, and the breathtaking platinum haired female elf. She could see them fucking, the female elf clutching his powerful back as he drove into her. Isabella saw everything, the thin line of platinum hair above her pussy, the beautiful slit dripping juices

in copious amounts, and the glittering emerald piercing that was very prominent on her erect and extremely stimulated clit. Isabella gasped at the size of his cock, clearly seeing the twelve thick inches coated with the female elf's juices as he stroked into her deeply, and she accepted him again and again, urging him on. He was showering her face and neck with kisses and nibbles, his hands everywhere on her deliciously tight body. Isabella's body became flush with heat, and she could feel a tightening deep in her belly that she had never experienced before. Without thinking she dropped her hand between her thighs, pushing the soldier away from her, the sloppy sound as he left her pussy lost in the moment. Isabella grasped the small ruby piercing in her own clit and began to massage it against her pelvic bone.

"Princess?" The vampire soldier spoke, surprised at this action by her.

Isabella's eyes sprang open, now changed to vampire cobalt blue in her passion laced dreams. She hissed at him exposing her long sharp fangs, his eyes going wide. "Get out!" She screamed.

The soldier practically leaped from the bed, gathering his uniform quickly and running out of her bed chamber in terror. Princess Isabella's anger was well known and no one wanted to be around her when she exploded.

Isabella closed her eyes quickly, trying in vain to recapture those images in her mind once more. She rubbed her pierced clit madly, thinking of Martin and the female elf once more, yet the images did not return and finally Isabella cried out in frustration, slamming her hand down on the satin sheets, her chest heaving. A small pool of sweat had formed between her large firm breasts and now a single drop rolled down her abdomen. Isabella ran her hand over the diamond studs piercing her nipples, another attempt to capture pleasure that had been so long denied her.

Isabella sat up quickly, her breasts not sagging in the least, her diamond studded nipples jutting out proudly in the aftermath of what had just swept through her. It was unlike anything she had ever felt, so hot and pure and powerful. She pulled the satin sheets between her legs, stuffing them tightly against her burning bald pussy lips. Isabella dragged her left hand from under the satin sheets and drew it in front of her, staring at the bridle of the Shi Viska branded on her arm. She reached up with the fingers of her right hand and stroked the smooth leather that crossed the center of her palm and ran down the top of her hand and the top of her arm. She ran her finger down the remarkably unbreakable piece of aluminum thin metal that stretched down almost to her elbow, meeting the second piece of smooth leather that circled her arm just below her elbow. She lifted her arm and studied it in the light on the bed chamber.

Isabella had become a student of Lycavorian history when she joined the rebellion. She had wanted to know what drove these men and women to fight until their dying breath. What possessed them to feats of courage that the vampires considered insanity? During those studies she discovered that no vampire had ever worn the bridle of a Shi Viska. Many had attempted this, but all of them had been electrocuted until they were nothing more than smoking shells. How was it that this did not happen to her? She wore the bridle of a Shi Viska, and not just a simple Centurion bridle she was sure. This bridle was much more graceful and had intricate carvings cut into the leather, along with elegant letters that Isabella knew were the symbol of the Lycavorian Royal House. She had seen them enough times in the palace on Apo Prime.

Isabella felt a painful tingling in her temples that was increasing quickly. She cried out, her hands going to her head squeezing her temples as pain unlike anything she had ever felt lanced through her temples. The veins on her neck bulged obscenely, her eyes changing once more to cobalt blue, wide in agony, her brain feeling like it was going to explode.

Then as quickly as it had hit her, it was gone.

Isabella looked up stunned. It was gone completely. No lingering pain, no throbbing of an old wound. Her eyes returned to their normal hazel/green and she took deep breaths to calm her racing heart and pulse. Slowly she pulled herself from the bed and moved to where she had drawn the steaming hot tub in the bathroom before the soldier had arrived. The water was still hot enough to make her wince as she lowered her body into the water. She grew accustomed to the heat quickly and settled back against the tub wall, closing her eyes as the heat of the water chased away everything that had been occupying her mind these last days.

There was screaming and bodies everywhere, blood washing the pavement in rivers and puddles. She didn't recognize this place and the images were flashing through her mind quickly. She saw a group of men and women, all bloody and kneeling in a small circle around three figures. As the image moved closer Isabella's eyes grew wide when she recognized the bloody and burned body of Martin. He was covered in dozens of

lacerations, blood staining every exposed portion of his body, the body armor he wore shredded into bits. Next to him lay the blond elf, her platinum hair soaked with blood, the long slice on the side of her head deep enough to see the bone of her skull. Her body as well was lacerated in many locations, not so severely as Martin, but enough that she was bleeding badly from at least four wounds. The small child was between them, crying out in terror, only a small cut on her arm.

Isabella came out of the water with a start, splashing across the room as she moved to her closet and whatever clothes she could grab.

Something terrible had happened to Martin, and a deep gnawing fear gripped her insides with an icy presence that Isabella had never felt before. She had to tell someone, and she could think of only one person strong enough to take this news.

She had received it before.

Riall groused heavily at the insistent pounding on the door of their quarters, and the ravaging sound of the door chime. He had quickly thrown on a pair of shorts over his naked and sweaty body, his passions very high, and his anger growing. Gorgo had been incredibly aroused this evening, in a way he had not seen in many years. Their sex life was very active and extremely pleasurable to both of them, Gorgo always complimenting him on his size and skill, and Riall at a loss for her talent in their bed. She never ceased to “rock his world” as their youngest daughter referred to it, and it had surprised him when he returned to their quarters two hours before and Gorgo nearly assaulted him. She was happier then he had ever seen her, and her very being pulsed only for him, and this fact alone made Riall feel like a young stallion again. They had been making love for nearly two hours straight, both of them feeling young and invigorated like never before.

Now as Gorgo giggled and pulled the sheet over her own sweaty and naked form, Riall stormed from their bed chamber, incensed at the interruption. He slammed his foot into the low table near the door and cursed loudly, hearing Gorgo laugh at his antics, her aura calling to him like a magnet, her sensuality oozing from her in waves.

Riall slammed his hand on the side panel near the door and lifted his head as it slid open. “What is the meaning of this...?” Riall began to shout. His eyes went wide when he saw who stood there. “Princess!” he gasped.

“I need... I need to see Gorgo!” Isabella gasped quietly.

Riall looked at her carefully, seeing her damp skin and disheveled appearance. “Princess what is wrong?” He asked.

“Please Admiral.” Isabella spoke, her voice soft and almost desperate. A voice Riall had never heard from her before.

Riall stepped aside. “Please... come in.”

Isabella moved past him quickly, Riall glancing both ways down the corridor looking for the two vampire soldiers that always accompanied her even on the ship. They were nowhere in sight and he pressed the panel closing the door. He turned to her, seeing her standing there, her arms crossed over her ample chest as if she was cold.

“May I inquire as to why your two guards are not with you?” He asked casually.

“Please Riall... I need to speak with...” Isabella started, surprising him for she never used his actual name before.

“Hush my husband.” Gorgo’s voice came from the door into their bedroom. She came out of the room, tying the folds of the light robe around her naked body.

Isabella saw this and her eyes flew wide, glancing to see Riall dressed only in shorts and a fine sheen of sweat. She turned back to Gorgo, her nose now detecting the heavy scent of recent sex. “Please... forgive me!” She gasped. “I have come at a terrible time! I will...”

“No!” Gorgo spoke moving up next to her. “Something is wrong; we can smell it on you.” Gorgo put her hands on Isabella’s arm, surprised that Isabella didn’t draw away from the contact as she normally did with anyone. “You came here for a reason child... I will not turn you away.”

“You look cold.” Riall spoke quickly. “I will brew some tea.” He moved into the kitchen portion of their quarters. This was the flagship of the Lycavorian fleet, and while not as large as the dreadnoughts, it was much

more heavily shielded and exceptionally faster than most ships of its class. The *LEONIDAS I* could stand toe to toe with a Vampire High Coven Battle cruiser and come out on top. His quarters on this ship were larger and more comfortable due to his station, but no officer, even the Admiral/Lieutenant of the Fleet would ask for something plusher. The quarters were typically Spartan like in their décor, but that was mainly due to the fact that Gorgo almost never traveled with him and he had no need of such decorations.

Gorgo ushered Isabella to the couch as Riall moved into the small kitchen area. “What has brought you out so late Isabella?” Gorgo asked, “And without your guards?”

“I... I have seen images of... images of your son.” Isabella spoke haltingly.

“Martin?” Gorgo asked surprised. “How... how is that possible?”

Isabella shook her head. “They were more like dreams than anything.” She explained quickly. “He and the she-elf... they were injured in some way.”

“Injured?” Gorgo gasped loudly, drawing Riall’s attention from the kitchen. “How... what do you mean?”

“I do not know.” Isabella spoke. “I don’t know if it was past... or present... or even the future. They were like dreams as I said.”

“I don’t understand.” Gorgo spoke softly. “I have sensed nothing from him. I can... I can feel his presence now, since he touched me ... albeit very weakly due to the distance... but I have felt nothing remiss.”

Isabella shook her head. “I don’t know.” She said looking at Gorgo. “He touched... he touched me as well yesterday. On this very ship before we departed. He brushed aside the mental shields the Lycavorian Mage taught me to use as if they weren’t even there!”

Gorgo looked at Isabella intently. She had never seen the vampire Princess in such a state of confusion. She had always been decisive and in control, yet now she appeared as nothing more than a frightened child. “His telepathic abilities are more powerful than any of us thought could be possible.” Gorgo told her. “To initiate a Mark II neurobooster transmission and sustain the connection as long as he did... it is almost unheard of.”

Riall brought three mugs of tea from the kitchen area then. “Even as powerful as he is Isabella, he would need to touch you in some manner for you to see images of him as you have said.” He spoke sitting down across from the two women.

Isabella looked at him for a long moment before letting her hazel/green eyes turn back to Gorgo. She reached for the sleeve of the shirt she wore and unbuttoned the cuff. “He has touched me, whether he was aware of it or not I don’t know.” She spoke softly, removing the black glove that covered her left hand and she pulled up the sleeve exposing the Shi Viska bridle for them to see. Their reaction was predictable as Isabella expected and they stared at the silver and leather bridle in stunned shock. “The question remains how this came to be.” She spoke, some of her confidence returning.

“Do... do you know what you bear on your arm?” Riall asked her. “No... no vampire in our history... in *your* history has ever... has ever been branded with a Shi Viska.”

“None that survived,” Isabella spoke softly. “That I do know.”

Gorgo reached out and touched the bridle, letting her fingers caress the smooth leather and metal. “Isabella... you... you have been chosen.” She said.

“I don’t want to be chosen for anything!” She spoke quickly. “How do I take it off?” She asked looking at Riall.

He returned her gaze as if she was mad. “Take it off?” He asked. “You can not take it off. It has been branded to you Isabella. There is no removing it.”

“The Lycavorian Scrolls... even the Ancient Vampire books speak of this.” Gorgo said looking at her, “Of a vampire Princess who will sit as one of four Queens and decide the fate of the universe.”

“I have no wish to be a Queen!” Isabella snapped, “And certainly not a Queen to your son!” She spoke quickly, almost too quickly. “I... I consider many of your kind to be... if not friends... then associates. That does not mean I would take one into my bed! I can’t even fathom that! I don’t care for him in the least, and after what I have seen of him, I don’t even like him!”

“Don’t you?” Gorgo spoke in reply.

“No I don’t!” Isabella snapped her full confidence and demeanor now returning. “I want this removed!”

“There is no way to remove a Shi Viska once it is branded to its user.” Riall spoke evenly. “And many have tried.”

Isabella closed her eyes tightly, ready to explode in anger. Gorgo smelled this and took her gloved hand quickly. “Be at peace Isabella. Sit... and drink the tea. We will figure something out, I promise you.”

“Gorgo... there is...” Riall started.

Gorgo shot him a stern look and he shut up quickly. She turned her gaze back to Isabella. “We are not and have never been your enemies Princess of the Vampire High Coven. Let us show you that even further, by helping you in any way we can. Please... sit down.”

Isabella stared at her beautiful face and took a deep breath before settling back onto the couch next to her. “Forgive me.” She spoke softly.

Gorgo reached up and put her hand on Isabella’s shoulder. “There is nothing to forgive.” She said in reply. “Tell us how it started, and leave nothing out. Whatever you tell us will remain in this room until our deaths, on that I give you my word.”

Riall nodded as well sensing an opening that his people had wanted for centuries; an opening into the mind of the Vampire Princess and what drove her. “I give you my word as well.” He spoke.

NORTH DAKOTA TEN MILES SOUTH OF CANADIAN BORDER

The senior vampire soldier, a Captain with decades of experience fighting the elves, felt the slight breeze against his skin as he was relieving himself against the tree thirty meters from their small camp. Daylight was just beginning to spread its fingers across the sky, and he turned his head slightly to the right to glance over his shoulder, thinking perhaps a bat or bird had swooped down next to him. His eyes widened when he saw the red haired female elf standing next to him not two meters away.

Anuk glanced down at the cock he held in his hands and shook her head. “Pitiful.” She spoke softly, her voice a whisper on the wind.

The captain opened his mouth to yell a warning but nothing came out. He felt a searing pain in his throat and his eyes angled down to see the wicked looking blade protruding from his neck, stained liberally with his dark blood. Nayeca ripped the Drow fighting knife from his throat slicing sideways with her incredible elf strength, the vampire’s head lulling to that side as he fell to the dew covered grass.

Nayeca went back into a combat squat and moved to where Anuk now knelt three meters past the dead vampire. She knelt next to her, purposefully brushing against Anuk’s shoulder, and vaguely noticing that she did not pull away.

“I take it from your reaction that you were not impressed with his... equipment.” Nayeca asked softly, her voice only to Anuk.

Anuk grinned in the dim early morning light, “Hardly worth batting an eye over.” She replied in a similar whisper. “Not that it will do him anymore good now.”

“Then I assume your Daniel is larger?” Nayeca asked the question, not knowing what to expect in reply. She and Anuk had grown closer over the last 36 hours, that she was sure of, but how close she didn’t know, and certainly not as close as Nayeca wanted to be.

Their laws in the Drow city were very strict, and Nayeca though young, was one of the most skilled assassins within their ranks. It was the reason she decided to come on this mission against Telan, even though it wasn’t sanctioned by the Matron Mother. Those skills afforded her some measure of who she could choose as a lover, but it did not protect her from the younger males who had not been chosen. This Wood Elf Anuk was more beautiful than any female Nayeca had ever seen with her stunning cerulean colored blue eyes and long rust colored red hair. Her features were flawless, and Nayeca barely noticed the three long but very faint scars that crossed her face diagonally. She did however notice the extremely enticing figure that the fatigues and body armor attempted to hide, but failed. In Nayeca’s opinion, there was no possible way to hide the divine shape of Anuk’s perfect ass behind any clothing.

Nayeca saw Anuk’s smile grow a little larger as she looked at her. *Oh yes, considerably larger and very tasty too.* Anuk answered with her thoughts. *Ready?*

Nayeca hefted her bloody knife. "Oh yes." She whispered.

They would take the six men on the east side of the camp; that number now down to five, while Daniel and his father would eliminate the other six. They moved like ghosts in the early morning dimness, making no sound as they moved closer to their targets. Their remaining targets were still sleeping in the small group when they descended upon them like vengeful angels.

Anuk drove the blade of her Shakur into the skull of one vampire so deeply the blade exploded out the back and stuck in the loose dirt. With barely a pause she was moving to the next vampire. Nayeca knelt between two vampires, ramming her knife down much like Anuk had done, then driving the knife edge of her opposite hand against the exposed throat of the vampire on her other side. The calloused knife edge of her hand crushed the vampire's throat with a single blow, and as his eyes opened in sudden pain and terror, Nayeca drove her knee savagely into his skull, fracturing bone and killing him instantly. She turned as the two vampires they had yet to assassinate stirred awake at the soft sound of bones breaking. She watched in delighted pleasure as Anuk took two steps toward the closest vampire and savagely kicked him in the head, stunning him. She dropped to the earth quickly and quietly, her long legs twisting in the air and locking around the vampire's head. As his arms and hands came up to grasp her powerful thighs Anuk twisted her body on the ground, her powerful legs and ass muscles snapping the vampire's neck with a muffled crack. Nayeca was behind the last vampire as he sat up quickly. He died just as quickly as Nayeca grabbed his long hair and the square jaw and viciously yanked his head to the side. His neck snapped with an audible crack and he went limp as a noodle instantly.

Nayeca looked at Anuk as she kicked aside the body easily. Yes... she would make an incredible lover Nayeca thought, deciding in that instant that she wanted this flamed haired elf as her lover, and wanted her badly. Yet Nayeca also knew her dominant nature might not sit well with Anuk, or the hulking Spartan that was her mate. And truth be told, Nayeca did not cringe at having them both as lovers, for the Spartan was very handsome, and obviously knew how to please a woman if one such as Anuk treasured him as she did. She would need to proceed slowly in this endeavor for Nayeca found she wanted them both more than anything she had wanted before, and especially Anuk. If the pleasures Anuk and Daniel gave to her were even half of what she imagined, the waiting would be worth it a hundred fold.

Anuk scrambled quietly to her feet and moved close to Nayeca, her thigh brushing up against Nayeca's arm. *Quickly Nayeca!* She told her within her thoughts.

Nayeca nodded, the brief moment of imagination overridden by her combat instincts now. She pulled her knife from the vampire's head and they turned to watch two monstrous shadows fall upon the other six vampires.

Danny completed his twenty meter leap, shifting back to human form in a flash of silver and landed on the sleeping vampire with all two hundred and sixty pounds of his muscled weight. The vampire's chest caved in under the tremendous blow and he died without even knowing what killed him. This maneuver only served to awaken the other five, though it hardly mattered or affected the outcome. Danny reached out and snatched the closest vampire in his large hands and twisted savagely, the only difference being that Danny's immense strength ripped the vampire's head completely around, his death frozen eyes staring at his shoulder blades when Danny dropped him to the cool earth. In almost the same motion Danny's hand filled with silenced K12 and he pressed the muzzled of the weapon against the next vampire's head and pulled the trigger four times in quick succession. The vampire's brains and bits of bone splattered the ground under him, half his head missing when he fell back.

Melancton was less fancy than his son, and much more to the point. He drove the spearhead of his *Nehtes* into the chest of the first vampire, slicing through lungs and undead heart; ripping the *Nehtes* back out and causing wounds no vampire could heal. He spun the fully extended *Nehtes* in a graceful arc, the spearhead impacting against the neck of the second vampire with such force the bladed portion simply sliced through flesh and vertebrae. The head was still in the air when Melancton lashed out with his hand; seizing the throat of the last vampire scout, lifting him physically from the ground and slamming him back down with battering force. His neck snapping was an audible sound, as were the bones of his throat being crushed in the single maneuver.

They had dispatched twelve vampire scouts in under thirteen seconds, and they turned to face each other.

"Daniel... Anuk... shift and move ahead quickly. Nayeca and I will dispose of the bodies." Melancton ordered.

They didn't pause and two silver flashes of light later and the large brown wolf and smaller rust colored wolf were bounding north through the trees. Melancton moved to kneel next to Nayeca as he sent a telepathic message back to Dekton and Aihola to inform them of their success. He nodded as they confirmed his message and he looked at the much smaller Drow assassin.

"Your skills are impressive young Drow." Melancton spoke softly.

"And yours Melancton." Nayeca replied as she began stripping one of the bodies.

"Nayeca?" He spoke, causing her to look up at him amid the death and blood. "The relationship you seek young Drow warrior reeks from your pores." Melancton spoke moving next to her. "My son and Anuk do not have the years I do, and they do not have the experience I do in such a scent."

Nayeca looked around quickly, suddenly very embarrassed and very concerned. There was no way she could defeat this man, even with all her skills. He would crush her like a bug. "I... I..." Nayeca stammered.

"Rest easy Nayeca of the Drow," Melancton told her gently. "You have no fears with me. My own mate has such a lover." Nayeca looked at him wide eyed and Melancton smiled. "Do you think yourself and your people the only ones who practice such things? We do not frown on this as many humans do. She took her for the times I was away from our home and city. She would never take another male, so for the times I was gone she found a young female who felt as she did. They developed a very deep relationship, and my mate never kept this secret from me. I approved of this in fact, and there have been times when we shared each other as well. I only tell you this for two reasons... your desire for Anuk wafts from you, and no doubt she has picked up on it somewhat. She is a very intelligent young woman, and she learns like a sponge. Just know that you will never be able to take her away from my son, as their bond goes deeper than just love."

"That... that was never my intent Melancton." Nayeca spoke honestly.

Melancton nodded. "I know... for your desire for my son, while not as strong as it is for Anuk, it is there. The second thing I will tell you is be honest with them Nayeca. You come from a proud people, and you should not be afraid to express your inner feelings."

Nayeca took a breath. "It is that pride that sometimes gets in the way of how we do things Melancton." She said. "I can not change that I am Drow, nor can I change the dominant nature of who I am."

"I do not ask you too." Melancton spoke. "They... they desire you as you are, not as whom you think they might desire and do not think they have not looked upon you in this manner. You can not smell their desire, but it is there. It is a difficult situation, as Spartans are just as dominant as Drow, but it is not something that can not be worked through if you are serious about it. My son has been in this type of relationship before, however Anuk was not raised in such a way and may not know... she may not know or understand what it is she feels for you. Patience is always a virtue."

"Patience is something I know very well Melancton." She spoke, nodding her head. "My people have changed in many ways, but we are still sometimes very backwards in other ways."

"Perhaps... but Aihola will change that don't you think?"

"Yes... I believe she will." Nayeca spoke.

"Do not trouble yourself that the desire will not be returned." Melancton spoke with a smile. "For I think it will, and if you think my son will allow another male to have you when it is not what you want, especially after you have expressed an interest in Anuk or him, you do not know him as I have come too. Even with all the centuries we were apart, he is still a Spartan, and he will protect viciously what he considers to be his."

"He... he would fight for me?" Nayeca asked shocked.

"And Anuk I believe." He replied nodding. "We may be Spartans, and our history is sometimes brutal and cruel, but we do know what it is to feel emotions. And with the King who he is, I believe even many of our own laws in that regard will begin to be reshaped."

Nayeca was silent for a long moment before meeting his eyes. "I... I thank you for your words." She said softly. "They mean a great deal to me."

Melancton nodded. "I may be old and ugly... but never fear speaking to me Nayeca. I have always respected your species in general and the Drow elves specifically. You have a sense of honor within you that is second only to my people, and that is why I came on this mission."

"I will remember what you have told me this day Melancton." Nayeca said.

"Good... now let us get rid of these vile stinking creatures and catch up to Daniel and Anuk before they get into more trouble." He said as he grabbed two of the dead bodies.

Nayeca nodded and reached down to haul the dead vampire to her shoulder. "Let's do that." She said with a smile.

EDEN

"What about if we came in from the west, over this mountain range," Aricia asked as she looked at the holo chart of the terrain in what used to be known as Canada. The holo chart was centered on the area within ten miles of the border. "It provides us with adequate cover and the area is not as populated. We land with our transports and Raptors on the western tip of this Whitewater Lake. They would have to traverse some mountainous terrain to reach this location, but I can't imagine it's something they are not used too. And it eliminates the need to pass through Alliance territory on the return trip. We simply take off and egress the way we came in."

Tareif stood next to her, with Ben and Leland also present and they all looked at the area she had pointed out. It was a long, narrow valley that ran along the lake, but Tareif had to admit, it was a sound plan.

"The reason we didn't go with this before," Ben spoke now. "Is because it will require we make more than one trip over a very great distance with all of our aircraft. We can't get all of our ships into this small area all at once."

Aricia looked at him. "I am aware of this, but what choice do we have now?" She asked. "If there are spies within Eden, and we must assume there are, I would prefer those flights take place over at best neutral territory in Canada, and then directly down into the area we control as opposed to one massive flight over any part of Alliance territory. Once they discover we have taken out the patrol, they will no doubt move men and equipment into that area, correct?"

Leland and Tareif nodded. "I would." Tareif spoke. "If for nothing else then to expand the sector of the patrol that was lost. I would almost certainly assume that something was going on. Once we lift off from here with all of our aircraft they'll know we are coming. Better to proceed safely for the majority of the trip then to risk losing aircraft flying over Alliance territory twice, including once fully loaded with civilians."

"Can our pilots do this Ben?" Leland asked.

Ben nodded. "I'm not worried about that... Cathy and I have been drilling the new pilots ruthlessly. They could set the transports down on an oil platform if we asked them too. I'll be flying cover with the Raptors and she'll handle the transports, if that is alright with you. She is two months pregnant you know."

Leland looked at him beaming with the pride of an expectant father. "Yes... but if I tried to keep her out of this mission she would tell me where to go, how to get there and what to do when I got there, in much more colorful terms than I am accustomed too."

All of them chuckled at that and Ben looked at Aricia. "The Skipper is rubbing off on you Aricia." He told her with a great deal of respect. Ben was one of the few who did not bother with formalities at any time, and calling Aricia her majesty or any of that other crap had never crossed his mind. Aricia smiled as she would have had it no other way regardless. "It's a tactically sound Op. It makes us stretch our legs more than I wanted too, but hell... we have to learn that at some point."

"Then we are agreed?" Aricia asked. They all nodded in affirmation. "War Master... you will prep your soldiers to load out within the first flight of transports, as many as you can fit. They will secure the landing zone and direct the Drow as they arrive."

"I'll have them travel light so we can take more." He said. "This is no reason to skimp, so they'll load out with one ration pack and all the ammo they can stagger with."

Aricia nodded. "Leland... I would like you to be among the first to set down. Once you have your unit on the ground, proceed southeast to the other side of the lake and set up a..." Aricia's brow furrowed as she searched for the word she wanted to use.

"Blocking position?" Leland offered.

Aricia smiled brightly. "Yes! That is the word I was looking for!" She exclaimed, "A blocking position. I will remain with the main force at the landing zone, and once all the Drow have been evacuated, you and I will be the last ones to pull out."

“I’m not comfortable with that.” Tareif said. “You are a High Queen of Elves, *and* a Queen of Sparta. You are taking a very large risk being on the ground for so long, even though we don’t expect or anticipate trouble.”

“I... I may be Queen... but I do not wish to be coddled in any way. We have four days to put finishing touches on this plan; I want to be part of all of it and not looked at as someone who is indispensable.” Aricia stated. “And I’m quite sure Martin would agree with me.”

“Have you been able to contact the King?” Leland asked. “Telepathically I mean?”

Aricia shook her head. “He and Dysea have very powerful psychic shields in place right now. They are most likely doing some very violent things and do not want Anja or I distracted.”

“You can’t penetrate them?” Tareif asked surprised. “Isn’t that unusual?”

Anja shook her head at the question from Tarifa. They sat in the conference room going over the last of their plans for the next night with Graham.

“Martin has mental and psychic shields that have layers upon layers. The nearest thing I can describe it as is a minefield with lots of things that go bang, things that would shred the minds of anyone who tried to breach those shields.” Anja replied. “The only reason he would shut Aricia and I out like this, was if he was involved in introducing some rather bad things upon the bad guys, to keep from distracting us, especially with Graham.”

“You can not touch Dysea either?” Tarifa asked.

Anja shook her head. “No... but that is not surprising. Dysea and Aricia are nearly as powerful as I am telepathically, and with Martin supporting her, or any of us for that matter, breaching the types of shields they have in place would be next to impossible. His telepathic abilities far exceed our own. We agreed to do this if we were apart and needed to be in combat, and we’ve refined it so that it is almost subconscious in nature now. We can feel them... but that is all.”

Tarifa shook her head with a smile. “I have to say... the last year has been quite the eye opening experience for all of us, has it not?”

Anja, Lynwe and Selene had to smile and agree on that point. Lynwe leaned forward, one of her hands holding Selene’s as it almost always was. “I can honestly say that I can think of no one who I would rather be going through this with than those of you here.” She said. “What all of you have shown me in the last year, I never would have thought myself capable of.” Lynwe met Tarifa’s eyes when she said that and Tarifa smiled back at her with friendship and warmth.

“It was always inside you Lynwe. It just needed to be helped outward.” She said.

Selene nodded. “I have to agree.” She said. “I would never been able to handle this without Lynwe and all of you. I...”

The door to the conference center opened and the elf security chief rushed in, his finger pressed to his ear. “Yes! Yes I will tell her, now lock down the damn building!” He barked into his implant. “Or Dekton will have our asses when he returns!”

Tarifa looked at him, her sapphire eyes narrowing as she came to her feet quickly. “What is it?”

“Milady... Minister Thimina did not appear for her normal meeting this morning.” The elf spoke his words carefully measured everyone noticed. “A detail was sent to her apartment,” The elf stopped, his face pale.

“What is it?” Tarifa barked moving around the end of the table towards him.

“She is dead Milady.” The elf reported. “It appears... it appears all the blood has been drained from her body. The Drow soldier assigned to protect her is still missing and we are conducting a search.”

Anja and the others came to their feet. “Take us there! Now!” She snapped.

Thimina’s apartment was ordinary in every way, not lavishly decorated or furnished. She lived alone and had no lovers as far as anyone knew. Her body was sprawled half on her bed and half off, dried blood between her firm ass cheeks and on her thighs. Two small puncture holes were visible on the back of her left shoulder as well as at the bottom of neck where the jugular vein was thickest. Her body was ghostly white in

color and looked shriveled beyond anything normal. Anja knelt next to her head, which was face down on the bed, her hips and legs on the floor propped against the bed as if she had been praying.

Anja stood back up and turned to Tarifa, who stood to the side of the bed next to Lynwe. "She's been dead at least six hours." She spoke softly. "And it wasn't quick."

"Thimina was not a weak woman." Tarifa said. "And I have never seen a body like this, drained of all its blood."

Anja nodded her head. "Oh she fought." She replied. "There's skin under her fingernails, and bruises on her arms and back. That indicates she fought really hard. She was beaten pretty badly however, and then raped. And this is the work of a vampire, of that I'm sure."

"Graham?" Selene asked softly, turning from the pictures she was looking at on the dresser.

"That would be my best guess." Anja answered.

Tarifa crossed her arms over her chest and shuddered. "It was him." She said softly, suddenly feeling very dirty.

Lynwe sensed this and stepped over to her quickly. She squeezed her shoulders from the side, her arm pulling her close. "Be strong Tarifa." She said softly. "He... he will not go unpunished."

Tarifa looked at her and smiled, leaning up against her lightly. "Thank you Lynwe." She said.

Selene stepped over to Thimina's body, looking at it carefully. "Why kill Thimina?" She asked. "What purpose would this serve? He has to know it would alert us to the presence of a vampire within Eden, therefore we would assume there was more than one."

"Perhaps he didn't care." Anja said gingerly lowering Thimina's body to the floor and covering her with a sheet from the bed. "Maybe he got tired of feeding on animals." She looked at Tarifa. "Did she know anything of value?"

Tarifa looked at her, sapphire eyes blazing in anger. "She was my friend!" She snapped angrily. "Not some mindless object that has been discarded!"

"I'm not being calloused Tarifa, but we have to know if she knew anything of great importance." Anja said calmly. "We need to safeguard many others, and I don't believe Thimina would want us to be careless. She was one of the most security conscious Ministers in Eden, you know that."

"Anja is right." Selene spoke softly. "Graham bled her dry, which means he will have all of the memories contained within her blood. I know she was serving temporarily on the Defense Council, which would mean she is aware of troop movements and such."

"Was the Defense Council aware of Aihola's mission?" Anja asked quickly.

Tarifa shook her head. "No. That information was limited to only seven people outside of *Nya Istel* and me." She answered. "Thimina... wait... she took part in several meetings where we discussed vampire agents outside of Eden." She said looking at Anja her eyes wide. "Our surveillance of them will be compromised! I will have my father pull it immediately."

"No." Anja said. "That actually works to our favor." She spoke. "If they know they are being watched, it makes it easier for us to watch them from a distance. They will not do anything foolish enough to garner a reaction. Is there anything else?"

Tarifa shook her head slowly. "I will have to check our records, but I don't believe she was working on, or had knowledge of anything that could hurt Eden as a whole."

"I believe this may be an attempt by Yuri to gather intelligence." Anja said. "Or at the very least make us begin to doubt who our friends are. If this gets out, we'll have elves and humans questioning each other about what they are. That is something we don't need."

"The vampire witch," Tarifa exclaimed. "Why would she risk retaliation from us? She must know that *Nya Istel* and I can strike her easily with the missiles Martin left us control of. Is she that stupid?" Tarifa asked.

Anja shook her head slowly. "She must have discovered who Martin truly is." She said softly. "This is an attempt by her to discover if we have anything planned. Or perhaps learn our strengths and weaknesses. If she knows that Martin has discovered who he is, then she may not feel she has anything to lose anymore."

"But this attempt... having Graham kill Thimina... it is in direct violation of what Martin demanded of her isn't it? She must know we will respond in some way." Lynwe asked.

Anja nodded looking at her, "Which means she either doesn't care about what he told her, or she doesn't believe him." She replied, "At least not anymore."

“She can’t be that ignorant.” Selene said. “Can she?”

“I wouldn’t put anything past her.” Anja spoke. “And I wouldn’t call it ignorant. I call it arrogance. Even if we mustered every Spartan soldier and combined them with what we have here in Eden, she can still muster more troops against us.”

“Our troops here in Eden are not the only troops we can muster my Queen.” Tarifa spoke looking at Anja. “There are elves across the planet that will stand with us. Even now they are readying themselves to answer our King’s call when it comes.”

“How many elves will help us Tarifa?” Anja asked.

“Thousands,” Tarifa answered confidently. “*Nya Istel* and I have not just been working on building Eden and securing North America. We have been communicating with other elf clans across the globe.”

“And they will fight?” Anja asked.

“Oh yes, they will fight.” Tarifa answered with a hard glint in her eyes. “Many if not all of them have reason to hate the Alliance for one thing or the other.”

Anja stepped up to her. “Begin contacting them.” Anja said quickly. “All of them. We have to coordinate this exactly.”

“What about Graham?” Tarifa asked.

Anja looked at Lynwe. “Lynwe and I will handle Graham. Tarifa take Selene with you, and begin contacting these other elf clans. Martin will contact us as soon as he is able, and we need to tell him we are ready.”

Tarifa nodded and took Selene’s hand, moving quickly from Thimina’s apartment. Lynwe stepped up to Anja. “What do you have in mind for Graham?” She asked.

Anja looked at Lynwe, her jade green eyes shrinking and becoming outlined in black, her wolf eyes, and her teeth lengthened into fangs in a vicious snarl, “Something extremely painful and not at all pleasant.” Anja said.

Lynwe smiled just as viciously as her High Queen, letting her own transformation grip her, fangs lengthening from her gums and her eyes taking on an evil glare. “Then let us go.”

EIGHT MILES INSIDE CANADIAN BORDER

Nayeca’s head was yanked back savagely and she cried out in pain as she was wrenched from her feet and slammed none too kindly to the ground. The wind escaped her lungs in a rush and she saw stars from the impact. She sensed more than saw the four figures swarm around her in a rush as her weapons were stripped from her, and she realized it was a standard Drow patrol size.

“You should not have come back bitch!” The male voice growled.

Nayeca recognized that voice and she blinked rapidly several times to clear her head. She looked up from her back to gaze into the unforgiving face of the male Drow, the assault rifle leveled at her chest.

“Katain...” Nayeca gasped.

“Yes... you remember me bitch! That is good. Now you will know who it is that kills you.” The male Drow hissed at her.

Nayeca laughed, “You? You couldn’t find your cock with both of your hands and your mother helping you!” Nayeca snapped at him.

The Drow’s amber eyes grew savage and he lashed out with a brutal punch to Nayeca’s face, rocking her head back so that it bounced off the ground. She tasted blood as her teeth cut through her bottom lip and the pain seemed to energize her.

“Is that all you have!” Nayeca laughed again through the pain as she wiped her mouth with the sleeve of her armor, and struggled to get to her feet. “I’ve been hit harder by a child you sorry excuse for a male Drow!”

His hand snapped forward again, this time slamming into her cheek and knocking her back to the earth, more stars filling her vision. A few more seconds, Nayeca thought. She counted again, making sure there were only three other Drow warriors, all of their attention focused on her. Sloppy work she thought to herself.

“I will enjoy killing you bitch!” Katain barked at her.

“Yes... that would be like you.” Nayeca spoke, shaking her head gently. He hit harder than she remembered. “Beat me and then kill me, all for refusing to submit to you.”

“You know the law!” Katin snapped. “You broke that law, and you scarred me! You were banished for your actions and told never to return upon pain of death. Now I will enjoy inflicting that pain back upon you before I gut you and leave you to die!”

“You are a fool Katin!” Nayeca snapped right back at him. “You were always a fool! Only a fool would leave themselves undefended!”

“What foolishness do you speak?” Katin spoke. “It is you who are the fool! We have been watching you for the last two kilometers. You are alone, and now you are unarmed.” The Drow gazed at her, lust filling his eyes now. “And perhaps I will take what you refused to give to me before I kill you.”

Nayeca’s eyes went wide. “You wouldn’t dare!” She stammered. “You don’t have the balls!”

Katin smiled cruelly and handed his rifle to one of the other Drow next to him. The soldier looked up as he took the weapon. “This is not right Katin.” The soldier spoke.

“She has been banished and purged from the ranks of warriors!” Katin growled. “She no longer exists! I will do what I wish!”

Nayeca laughed out loud and they looked at her as if she was crazy, “Too late Katin.” Nayeca exclaimed. “You should have killed me when you had the chance.

The three silver flashes of light blinded them momentarily, and Katin whirled around away from Nayeca. His eyes went wide when he saw the two massive black men fall upon his Drow patrol with speed and power that he had never witnessed in his life. The younger of the two swept the legs out from one Drow while driving his forearm into the chest of another. The blow lifted the Drow completely in the air, his feet flipping over his head as he slammed to the ground with a crunch of bone and flesh. The older man simply stepped up behind his fellow Drow and drove his large fist between the shoulder blades. The Drow’s eyes rolled up into his head as the shock from the blow caused his heart to stop for a millisecond, and he dropped like a limp noodle to the earth.

Katin whirled back around, pulling his small handgun and bringing it to bear on Nayeca. The pale hand clamped on his wrist with an iron like grip and stopped its motion immediately. Katin’s eyes went wide when he realized he could no longer move his hand and his head snapped up to look into cerulean blue eyes outlined in black, half inch long fangs, and the most beautiful face he had ever seen.

“That would be the single most stupid thing you have ever done.” Anuk’s voice spoke to him, dripping with anger and barely controlled rage.

Anuk stepped in close to the Drow, twisting Katin’s wrist savagely with her enhanced elf and wolf strength. He screamed as the bones in his wrist snapped like dry timber. Anuk twisted underneath his outstretched arm as she kept it in a vice like grasp, Katin’s body moved, naturally trying to ease the pressure on his joint and moving with Anuk’s body movement. Her leg kicked out and smashed into his knee joint, the kneecap popping loudly and Katin began to fall to the earth. As he fell Anuk applied more pressure to his shoulder and drove him face first into the dirt, dropping on his back with all hundred and twenty-seven pounds of her tight muscled body. She heard the air leave Katin’s chest in a rush, much like how he had surprised Nayeca, and then she twisted his arm up until his shoulder dislocated and he screamed in agony.

Anuk leaned over close to his ear. “I hate pigs like you.” She hissed into his ear before sending a driving punch into the side of his temple with her knuckle and knocking him out instantly.

Nayeca had watched all this with a look of adoration on her face. In her eyes, watching Anuk manhandle Katin in such a way, it was the most beautiful thing she had ever witnessed. And Anuk wasn’t even breathing heavy. She watched as Anuk turned to her and began reaching for the small bag on her side where she kept her medical supplies.

“Nayeca,” She gasped, moving quickly to her side and kneeling next to her. Anuk reached out and took Nayeca’s face in her hands as gently as any newborn child, turning her head slightly to look at her cut lip. “Stay still.” She spoke pulling the small spray bottle from her bag.

Nayeca saw Daniel move next to her and squat beside Anuk. “Is she alright?” He asked concern in his voice.

Nayeca glanced at Melancton as he secured the Drow soldiers with plastic wire and she saw him smile gently. “I... I am fine.” Nayeca spoke. “It is just a small cut.”

“Sit still.” Anuk demanded. “It’s a small cut yes, but there is a bruise forming on your cheek, and it is beginning to swell.” Nayeca looked at her with love in her amber eyes.

“Listen to her Nayeca.” Daniel spoke with a smile. “It’s not wise to argue with her. I always lose.” He glanced at where Katin lay. “You put a hurting on him babe.” He spoke.

Anuk didn’t even glance at Katin’s inert form. “He’s lucky I didn’t cut his cock off at what he intended to do.” Anuk spat.

Daniel moved closer and nuzzled Anuk’s ear and neck, washing his aura over her mildly. Nayeca watched Anuk’s eyes close briefly in bliss and she leaned into his nuzzle. “You are so beautiful when you are angry.” Daniel whispered.

Anuk smiled and pushed him away gently, “Contact Aihola.” She told him, opening her eyes. “Tell her what has happened here.”

“Already on it,” Dan replied, grabbing Katin none to gently by his white hair and dragging him over to where his comrades were on the ground, watching them with hate filled eyes.

Anuk turned to back to Nayeca. “Let’s get you fixed up.” She said with a gentle smile.

Nayeca had watched all this and Melancton’s words came back to her. He was right, she would never come between them, they were destined to be together, Daniel and Anuk, but that was never her intent to begin with. It had been so long since she had felt hands on her in a gentle caress instead of forceful action. She had taken a Drow lover many years ago, and together they had always avoided the times when the younger males, the ones who hadn’t been chosen by older females to mate, had come in search of female companionship. They had not wanted to share each other. Her partner, her lover, her best friend had been killed three years ago by human slavers, and Nayeca had gone into a self imposed shell of depression. She had felt lost and wanted nothing to do with the Drow laws then, and when Katin had come calling that night Nayeca had refused his attention. When he tried to force her, she cut him deeply in his abdomen and was banished for her actions.

The more time she spent with Anuk and Daniel, the more she felt draw to them in a way she hadn’t experienced since her lover had died. She wanted them; she wanted Anuk in a way she had never wanted her dead lover. And she wanted Daniel to have her as well, almost as badly. She wanted to fall asleep in their arms and never feel lonely again, to begin a new life. Anuk and Daniel were who she wanted that life to begin with.

Katin’s eyes opened slowly, the fog of pain causing him to grimace as consciousness returned to him. His shoulder was sore, but he could move his arm, which surprised him as he had felt it pop out of joint before he passed out. The majority of the pain was coming from his wrist and he turned his head to see his three fellow Drow warriors squatting with another Drow female, looks of astonishment on their face. They were not bound in any way and they had their weapons slung over their backs. He could see several other elves milling about, Wood elves as well as several High elves. He slowly inched his head around, seeing several more Drow he did not recognize. Nayeca sat on the ground with the red haired female elf with strange eyes and fangs. Beside her sat the two huge black men and another man he did not recognize. His eyes caught a glint of metal on the ground near him and he saw his small automatic pistol half covered in the leaves and dirt where it had fallen.

Katin reached out with his good hand slowly, reaching for the handgun. He froze when he felt the cold metal of the gun barrel press against his temple.

“Anuk fixed you good... but she didn’t pound enough common sense into you it seems.” The male voice spoke. “One more twitch from your arm friend and you will be dead.”

Katin froze and his eyes detected the long slender object come from the other direction across his chest. It was black in color and shiny like some sort of skin, but it also looked like some sort of long flexible tube. It was tapered on the end, thickening to about five inches in diameter, and it went right to where his handgun rested and slid easily around the handgrip, lifting the weapon into the air.

“Turn around Drow warrior.” The voice spoke softly.

Katin slowly turned his head until he was looking into the dark skinned face of a fellow Drow with amber eyes. His white hair was tied into a tight ponytail and draped over the shoulder of the strange black armor he wore, a black balaclava pulled down and wrapped around his neck and throat.

Tari looked at his fellow Drow and shook his head. What he had learned in the past six weeks among the Spartans surpassed everything the vampires had ever taught him. He was leaner yet more muscular now, as he

had added twenty pounds of pure muscle to his arms and shoulders and his body overall. That Martin and the others had accepted him so effortlessly into his Spartan Phalanx had meant more to Tari than he could ever repay, and he had not looked back in any way since arriving in Sparta. He and Julie had fallen deeper and deeper in love as every day passed, and he had finally accepted who and what he was.

Tari had come to love the city of Sparta in its old style and ancient beauty combined with the modern technology. Julie's parents had even gone so far as to secure a home for them only two doors away, and before leaving to come on this mission, he and Julie had been deciding best on how to decorate their new home.

Katain watched with undisguised astonishment as Tari held the K12 to his temple while he lowered Katain's handgun in front of him with what Katain now saw was a very long and very dexterous tail. Tari reached up with his left hand without even looking and while his tail held the automatic securely he ejected the magazine from the weapon, and then cycled the chamber, the brass flying into the grass somewhere. Tari held the magazine in his hand and Katain watched as the tail flicked out and flung the handgun deep into the timber around them.

Tari saw Katain looking at his tail and he smiled. "A gift from the Alliance torture masters." He said proudly, curling his tail around in front of him, waving it back and forth slightly. "I've gotten rather good at manipulating it don't you think? Perhaps I should just kill you and save my sister the trouble." Tari spoke with a smile, his vampire fangs now extended.

Katain felt himself shudder when he saw those fangs. He and all the Drow knew of the vampires that now held power in the Alliance. Though Katain had never seen one personally, they were aware of their existence and how they no longer resided in just their childhood stories. They had discovered one of their kinds in a nearby town some years back, and all of them were aware of the tortures that they had inflicted on the Drow prisoners they had held for so long.

"Who... who are you?" Katain asked through suddenly dry lips.

"Don't frighten him to death Tari." The female voice said softly. Katain watched the exceptionally beautiful dark skinned female step over to them and squat next to the Drow warrior. She leaned over to Tari and Katain watched as she nuzzled his elfin ear, Tari's tail curling around her calf and thigh several times quite possessively, the tip coming to rest pressed against her fatigue covered pussy. This was something that did not seem to bother her in the least. Her long black hair was tucked inside the collar of the body armor she wore, but the armor did nothing to hide that she was indeed very female.

"I wouldn't think of it Jules." Tari answered with a smile, "At least not before Aihola tells me too."

Katain saw movement to the left and he watched the Drow female with her back to him get up from her squatting position next to his patrol. He watched as they bowed their heads reverently towards her.

"Stand him up!" The female snapped as she turned around.

Katain gasped when Aihola turned her amber eyes on him, the medallion of the Drow Queen dangling from her neck and well exposed in the open for all to see. He felt Tari grab his arm and he winced as the Drow lifted him to his feet, where he gasped in pain from his shattered wrist and sore knee. He could see at least two dozen elves nearby, a mixture of many clans. His eyes fell back to Aihola who stepped in front of him, the look on her face not pleasant in any way. The towering human stood just behind her, almost protectively, his dark blue eyes gazing at him in such a way that it made Katain shudder.

"So what do I do with you?" Aihola spoke looking at him.

"You... you bear the... the medallion of the Queen." Katain gasped.

"Yes... it belonged to my mother." Aihola spoke. "That's incredibly observant of you, considering you were about to conduct a crime heinous in nature not thirty minutes ago."

Katain looked to where Nayeca stepped up behind Aihola, the red haired Wood Elf at her side. "She... she refused me, injured me!" He spoke urgently. "She was banished from our city and told not to return unless she wished to die."

"And this in some way gives you the right to rape her?" Aihola asked.

"Our laws state she must submit to her superiors." Katain spoke, trying to keep his voice controlled, for he did not know what awaited him. "It is how we have kept our population under control."

Aihola nodded. "Yes... I got some of that information from your three comrades." She said. "A law I will abolish within an hour of returning to claim my throne."

“You... your throne,” Katin asked. “We... we have no Queen. The Matron Mother has told us that our Queen died in the hands of the Alliance slavers.”

Aihola nodded. “She did... but not before she gave birth to my brother and I.” She told him seeing his eyes grow wide as she motioned to Tari next to him. “I am Aihola of the Family Anatyla, and I am Queen of the Drow as ordered and confirmed by the Elf High King. He has instructed me to take up my mother’s mantle and restore our people to what they once were and this I will do.”

“We have... we have heard that the High King has come again.” Katin spoke bowing his head. “Forgive... forgive me my Queen.”

“Forgive you?” Aihola spoke. “You were about to commit the one sin I find vilest of all, and you were about to commit it on a fellow Drow. How do you think that makes me feel; to know that my people have sunk so low? If I had not stayed his hand, my mate would have sliced you open from neck to groin and left you to rot.”

Katin looked up and saw that she was referring to the large man behind her who wore the body armor and strange looking battle helm that covered his entire face except for his eyes and his mouth. That Dekton was a Spartan Centurion was something that Katin did not yet know, but something that would cause him a week’s worth of sleepless nights in the future when he did discover it. “I... I beg you to consider the circumstances my Queen. I was...”

“Shut up!” Aihola snapped silencing his words, “Nayeca?”

Nayeca stepped forward quickly, “Milady?”

“What is your opinion of Commander Katin here?” Aihola asked turning to look at her.

Nayeca looked at Katin. “He is arrogant and thinks with his cock far too often Milady.” Nayeca replied. “But... but he is an extremely competent warrior who has defended our people with honor in the past.” She said honestly.

Aihola turned back to Katin. “And this from the woman you tried to rape.” She said. “In Eden Katin... in Eden you would be tried and shot for your actions!”

“I... I beg your forgiveness!” Katin said quickly.

“I don’t give forgiveness easily Katin. I will let the Drow Quorum decide what your punishment will be.” Aihola said.

Nayeca stepped forward even more. “Milady... the Quorum will... they will order Katin put to death.” She spoke quickly. “I... I do not want that on my conscious my Queen. And for our plan to work we will need every able warrior we can field. Anuk dealt him far more pain and misery for his actions than death will provide. Let him work off his shame by serving his people.”

Aihola looked at her, then her eyes turned to Dekton, “Dekton?” She asked.

Dekton nodded. “I believe that to be a fair punishment.” He spoke firmly, “But I will be keeping my eye on him.”

Aihola nodded. “So be it.” She spoke turning back to Katin. “Your life has been spared because of the woman you were about to rape Katin. I would advise you remember that. Now you and your patrol will lead us the rest of the way into your city. We have wasted enough time as it is with your foolishness, and I do not want to be in these mountains tonight.”

Katin bowed painfully, his knee almost giving out at the relief he felt. “As... as you order Milady.” He spoke, his gaze moving to Nayeca one last time, his emotions hidden before two of his patrol comrades moved over next to him to help him walk.

Aihola turned to Nayeca fully. “Is what he says true Nayeca?”

Nayeca lowered her head slowly and nodded. “Almost... almost four years ago, I... I had just discovered my... my lover had been killed by slavers when Katin came that night. I was wallowing in anguish and he kept pushing me. I lost my tempter with his actions my Queen.”

“Why... why did you come to Eden then? And what have you been doing all these years?” Aihola asked.

“Much the same as you my Queen, surviving on my wits and my skill,” Nayeca replied. “I should have told you... for that I am sorry. I do not regret my actions that night however.”

“Nor should you,” Aihola told her. “But you are correct that you should have told me. Is there anything else I need to know before we arrive at this city, something that we need to be prepared for?”

Nayeca shook her head. “Unless something has changed my Queen, I know of nothing that comes to mind right away. I have been gone four years though.”

Aihola nodded. “Then I suppose we’ll just have to wait and see.” She said.

EDEN

The door to the apartment shattered open under the force of three strips of C9 Plastic explosive set in the grooves of the frame. The metal door smashed across the living room with enough momentum to send it smashing out of the window on the far side of the living room and plunging nearly twenty meters to the alley below, taking a six foot section of wall with it.

Graham’s half naked body paused in the doorway of the bedroom before he sprinted across the destroyed living room heading for the shattered window and the gaping hole left in the wall. There was a soft metallic sound like an antenna extending and from the smoke whistled the Spartan *Nehtes* with bullet like speed. It was fully extended, and just as Graham leaped for the hole in the wall, the *Nehtes* struck him in the upper chest area near his shoulder. The *Nehtes* had been thrown with enough force to physically lift him off his feet and continue on in its flight, embedding deeply into the concrete wall behind Graham. He grunted loudly as he was smashed against the wall, the *Nehtes* now buried a good eighteen inches deep. His right arm hung loosely, the *Nehtes* severing the nerve endings in his shoulder, and he gripped the shaft of the spear with his left, attempting to pull it out to no avail.

“Hello Richard.” The female voice spoke from the cloud of smoke that still obscured the spot where his door had once been.

Graham’s head turned, the voice sounding vaguely familiar. His eyes widened as Anja stepped from the smoke and dust, Lynwe following just behind and to her right, “You!” Graham screamed.

Anja smiled as she stopped in front of him, “You remember me?” Anja said. “That’s nice.”

Graham smiled. “I remember you got a tight pussy.” He spat at her, “And that you suck cock like a vacuum cleaner!”

Anja chuckled softly. “Unlike you Richard... I have grown in the last year.” She said calmly. “You on the other hand have only sunk about as low as you can go. But don’t worry... I’m going to save you.”

Graham laughed at her. “I have been saved!” He snapped. “I’m stronger than you bitch! You think this toy of yours will keep me pinned here? I’ll rip it out and then fuck you until you beg me for death. If you’re lucky, I might turn you into a vampire like me and keep you around for some easy pussy.”

Anja smiled once more. “For all your supposed intelligence and political victories Richard, you have to be one of the dumbest motherfucking men I have ever had the displeasure of knowing.” She told him. “Why did you kill Thimina?”

Graham’s cobalt blue eyes narrowed and he glared at her. “I needed information.” He answered. “Her blood was sweet and it gave me that information.”

“You must take me for a fool Richard.” Anja said. “Her blood told you nothing that you wanted to know. It only caused us to act more quickly in regards to you.” Anja reached up and took hold of the shaft of the *Nehtes*. “Does this hurt? Let me help you with that.” Anja ripped the *Nehtes* from the wall with barely any effort, Graham screaming out in pain as bits of his flesh and blood came with the spearhead. Anja spun the *Nehtes* gracefully in the air and just as Graham looked up she drove it into his opposite shoulder with devastating force. Graham roared again in pain as he was rammed back into the wall, this time the *Nehtes* embedded in his opposite shoulder, shattering his collarbone and once more severing all the muscles and nerves into his arm. Spittle flew from his mouth as he screamed; his cobalt eyes small points of rage and hatred yet filled with confusion.

Anja stepped closer to him as his blood began to pool on the floor. “You never were very intelligent Richard.” She spoke with a smile. “You have not had the luxury of the Vampire Witch’s cute little schools. If you had... you would know that a vampire can not defeat a Pureblood wolf in single combat.” Anja’s eyes changed then, morphing into the black outlined jade eyes of her wolf persona. Her fangs extended nearly three quarters of an inch from her gums, only a fraction smaller than Aricia’s teeth due to her pure wolf parents. Graham’s eyes grew larger when he saw this. “I was turned by the strongest of the Purebloods in Sparta

Richard. I am one of Martin's mates, and he is the son of Leonidas, a name even your new vampire persona should know much about. And I am much more than just a Pureblood Richard, as I'm about to show you." Anja's right hand snapped out, her hand grabbing his jaw within an iron like grip and shoving his head back against the wall. She stepped even closer, her grin savage in nature. "Now let's see what you have in this empty skull you call a brain. Little Wolf?"

I am ready my love. Aricia answered her immediately. *Let us see what secrets this butcher has.*

Anja smiled and brought her other hand up quickly, slamming it into Graham's forehead, the bridle of the Shi Viska very obvious. She closed her eyes as her skin came in contact with Graham and she reached out to his mind.

Graham's eyes flew open and his mouth opened in a soundless scream as Anja, with Aricia providing her support and additional power, simply smashed the minimal barriers Graham had in place in his mind. Anja ignored the tendrils of his mind that danced with brutality and perversion; she had no interest in them. Her probe went beyond the faces of the hundreds of women that he had abused in his life, their voices crying out to her for justice. The few defenses he attempted to put up Anja simply slapped aside like a giant. She felt powerful and strong, feeling Aricia's love for her providing an anchor of sorts. She found the memories of Thimina quickly, saw the perverted things he had done to her, the pain he had inflicted upon her. Anja saw everything as if she was there, Graham humping a beaten Thimina like a dog, her screams of pain as he fucked her ass muffled by his hand holding her face to the pillow.

Then she saw him bite her and the look of surprise and almost pleasure on Thimina's face as she felt his teeth sink into the flesh of her neck. She felt Thimina shudder in an unwanted orgasm as Graham fed on her blood, drinking deeply. She watched as Thimina's face changed again, from blissful pleasure to one of utter terror as she felt her life draining from her. She tried to fight, but his heavy body on top of her already weakened form was too much. He held her head securely with his vampire strength, his cock still firmly seated in her ass as he drank from her neck like a fountain. Anja watched as the light began to fade from her eyes, seeing everything she had done in her life, everything she had been a part of. Then Anja watched as her skin began to lose color and her skin shriveled. It had taken her nearly two minutes to die, and the entire time Graham was humping her ass frantically, uncaring in the least. He released into her bowels at the moment her heart stopped beating, every ounce of blood drained from her body and he grunted like a pig.

Anja brushed that away, appalled at the actions, and searching deeper into his mind. She found the tendril on which Graham had transmitted a message back to New Miami, passing everything to the enemy that he had learned from Thimina's blood memories. Anja detected the faint presence of the dormant tendril, and expanded her mind to encompass this tendril of thought as well. She felt power coming from it, far more power than he should have had. She felt Selene's presence as well and probed deeper. Anja felt Selene's memories deep in his mind, hidden carefully away by someone with far more power than Graham.

It was Pureblood power, leftover from Selene's blood that Graham had taken. And it had unwittingly left a trail and a door wide open for Anja to take. And this door Anja plunged into with a supporting surge of love and power from Aricia.

Hello Minister Deval! Anja's mind screamed out.

NEW MIAMI

Deval was seated next to Yuri in the small meeting room. Moran sat on her other side; half a dozen other ministers sitting around the table listening to Moran speak.

Deval jerked viciously next to Yuri, drawing her attention with wide eyes, "Deval?" She questioned with some irritation.

"For... forgive me." He spoke quickly. "I felt... I felt something that..."

Deval's eyes went wide and his body convulsed in agonizing pain, the chair flying out from underneath him. He sprawled on the floor as the others came out of their chairs, eyes wide. Moran snatched Yuri away from Deval's spasming body protectively.

"What the fuck?" He barked out.

Yuri's eyes were on Deval intently and she recognized what was happening immediately as she had seen her father do it on enough occasions. She watched Moran move around her and reach down to grab Deval.

"No Robert!" She screamed reaching for him. Moran looked at her his eyes wide, never having heard that tone in her voice. "Don't touch him! It's a telepathic attack!" Yuri reached for him, and pulled him back by his arm. "If you touch him it will spread to you!"

"A telepathic attack," Moran snapped, "From where?"

Yuri shook her head as Deval convulsed yet again, screaming as if his skin was being peeled from his body. They saw blood vessels in his eyes burst, blood beginning to leak out of his eye sockets. His neck muscles were straining in exertion, his skin sweaty, like he was burning up. His arms and legs were twitching madly, his fists clenching and unclenching in what appeared to be utter agony.

"Kill him quickly Robert!" Yuri screamed, looking at him with wide eyes. "Before they learn what we are doing!"

Moran began to claw his sidearm out of its holster as Deval screamed again, his teeth slamming down on his tongue, biting through the thick muscle, fresh blood splashing over his lips and jaw. Moran stepped up to him, leveled the automatic and pumped three shots into Deval's head, spreading bone, brain matter and blood across the floor. Deval's body slumped and became still.

Moran turned to look at a wide eyed Yuri, his automatic smoking at the end of the barrel. "What the fuck just happened?" He asked.

EDEN

Anja's eyes opened quickly and she shook her head. She released her grip on Graham's jaw and stepped back taking deep breaths, staggering ever so slightly. Lynwe grasped her shoulders quickly.

"Anja are you alright?" She asked softly. Lynwe's eyes widened when she felt the heat Anja was radiating even through the uniform she wore.

Anja nodded squeezing her hands tightly, pressing up against her. She heard Lynwe gasp and Anja's thigh brushed against Lynwe's thickening cock hidden under the fatigues. Anja's eyes flew open wide and she stepped away from her.

"Lynwe," She gasped. "What..."

"I'm sorry!" Lynwe spoke quickly, stepping back. "The... the heat from your body surged through me suddenly. It was... it was..."

Anja shook her head quickly. "It was thrilling." She said softly looking at her. "I... I didn't..."

Lynwe took a deep breath and shook her head. "It is alright." She said. "I have accepted what the Alliance made me, accepted all of it. I am still trying to learn how to control those decidedly male urges that come with the change they forced on me."

Anja stepped back to her and took her hands once more. "Forgive me..." She said. "I did not mean to..."

Lynwe smiled gently. "You should have seen Selene's reaction." She spoke with a soft chuckle. "I am used to it."

Anja squeezed her hands again. "Now I know why Selene doesn't let you get very far away." Anja said with a smile.

Lynwe nodded. "I have to admit... it is a very warm and wonderful feeling to know she loves me so."

Anja smiled once more. "Thank you Lynwe." Anja leaned forward on her tip toes and kissed her softly on the lips, surprising Lynwe with the action.

"You are welcome." Lynwe spoke unsure of what she had done.

Anja concentrated and turned her attention to sorting through what memories she had ripped from Deval before they had killed him. She looked up at Graham when he hissed at her, recovering from her deep mind probe. He was glaring at her with undisguised hatred and anger.

Anja reacted immediately, her face twisting in rage and she grabbed the *Nehtes*, turning it violently. Graham's expression changed immediately and he howled in as pain lanced through his side.

“That first hole was for me!” Anja screamed, twisting the *Nehtes* viciously once more. “And that was for what you did to Tarifa you fucking pig!” Anja ripped the *Nehtes* free from Graham’s flesh, ignoring the blood that splashed on her face. She collapsed the *Nehtes* and looked at him as he slumped to the floor.

“Lynwe, I’m sure as the one who loves Selene and as a Drow you can find some suitable way to make this scum’s death as excruciatingly painful as possible?”

Lynwe’s amber eyes practically glowed. “Oh yes! I have some things in mind.” She spoke, her voice like ice chips flying through the room in their coldness.

“Take him.” Anja ordered. “When you are finished with him, burn his remains.” She looked at Lynwe. “Then go and get Selene and meet Tarifa and I in the command center in two hours.”

“Where... where will you be?” Lynwe asked concerned now for some reason.

“There is... there is something I must do.” Anja spoke reaching out with her mind. *Little Wolf where are you?*

What is wrong my love? Aricia’s voice replied immediately.

Something has happened to Martin and Dysea! Anja spoke urgently. Meet me in the command center. We must establish a direct communication with Sparta. Hurry!

I’m on my way! Aricia exclaimed.

“What do you mean you don’t know?” Anja screamed at the monitor. “What has happened Hali?”

Julie’s mother looked harried on the monitor. “Someone... someone planted a bomb in the café that you and the other Queens frequented with the King.” Hali explained trying to keep her voice calm.

Aricia’s eyes went wide. “They... they were there?” She gasped.

Hali nodded slowly. “It... it was large enough to collapsed part of Demetrius’s café building. Rescue... rescue personnel have been responding to the scene for the last two hours. They have to dig many free of the rubble.”

“Martin? Dysea?” Anja asked, gripping Aricia’s hand tightly in hers.

“We... we do not know.” Hali replied taking a deep breath. “The number of dead is already over one hundred and fifty. Hundreds had turned out to see them; they were playing with children and talking with ordinary people!” Hali’s tears came now. “Thirty... thirty of the dead are children my Queen!”

Tarifa stood at the back of the room, her eyes wide and fear gripping her stomach. The command center was shielded against telepathic and psychic intrusion, and here Tarifa had no worries about her feelings leaking out to Aihola and Dekton as they would if she was not outside. She had her mental shields up at full power just to play it safe and keep them from being distracted. The door to the command center opened and she saw her father rush in with Leland and several others, including Lynwe and Selene and Admiral Wallace. She grabbed his arm and shook her head quickly, motioning all of them to be silent.

“Hali!” Anja spoke firmly. “They are not dead! Aricia and I can still feel them! What else do we know?” She asked, using every bit of her will power to maintain her composure.

The Spartan woman returned and Hali took a deep breath wiping the tears away. “The King’s Captain was blown clear of the area. He is severely wounded, but he is alive. The people were crowding together all around them. I heard some of the older Spartans talking; they said his father and mother would take these walks often in old Sparta. He was honoring his father by doing this.” Hali’s eyes widened. “My Queen... he is...”

Anja nodded. “Yes... we discovered this at the same time he did. He is the second son of King Leonidas, and the Lycavorian King, leader of the rebellion. It will be three weeks before they arrive here on earth and we must get this situation taken care of before they come.” Anja spoke, her voice wavering just a bit. She felt Aricia’s arms slip around her waist, and she reciprocated this, providing them both comfort and strength. They did not see the shocked looks coming from the men and women gathered behind them. “What about Walter... Dilios? Was anyone that we can trust not at the sight of the explosion?”

Hali shook her head. “We don’t know my Queen. The Guardian and his father Panos were at the sight; they were slightly injured and are taking part in the recovery. Should I send for the Steward?” Hali asked.

Aricia’s head came up quickly. “NO!” She snapped, surprising even Anja with the force of her words. “You are not to let the Steward know you have spoken with us! Send for the Guardian or his father immediately, no one else!”

Hali do not question the order for she like many others had known Aricia's brother and did not believe for an instant that he was capable of such an attack on a younger female. Therefore she ignored the decree that Aricia and her family were dishonored. "I will send my eldest." She spoke quickly. "What else would you have me do my Queens?"

"Whoever conducted this attack will undoubtedly still be in Sparta to confirm that Martin and Dysea were killed." Aricia spoke again. "Contact the senior Agoge instructor Lander and advise him he is to seal off every exit out of Sparta, even if it entails encircling the entire city. He is a good friend of the Guardian's father and will not hesitate. No one is to be allowed to leave or enter the city."

Hali nodded. "I will do this myself." She spoke.

Anja looked at Aricia. "Little Wolf... what do you know?"

Aricia met her eyes. "Martin... our love, he did not trust many members of the Senate." She said quickly. "The day we were shopping in the market he told me if anything were to happen to him that we must contact Dymas or his father. He made me promise to keep this to myself, only because I... because I was considered dishonored and no one would think he would give me any information." Aricia smiled to herself. "They obviously did not know or understand the depth of our love."

Anja smiled knowingly. "So he used you as a storage vault of sorts, for information that he deemed necessary and he wanted to keep from others?"

Aricia nodded. "He knew that because of my dishonored state... any intrusion would target either you or Dysea first... after him. They would consider me an afterthought because of my age and status."

"Then that makes them fools." Anja said.

Aricia smiled brightly. "That is what he said as well."

Anja looked at Hali on the monitor. "Hali... when you have done these things, report back to us. We will keep this channel open and encrypted for your use only."

Hali nodded. "I will return shortly my Queens."

Aricia squeezed Anja in her embrace. "They... they live my love." She said softly. "Beyond that we can feel nothing because of the shields they have in place, but they do live."

Anja nodded and returned the embrace. "I know; I feel them too." She said in barely a whisper.

"Anja?" Tarifa's voice carried to them and they turned, seeing the throng of people behind them. "Perhaps now would be a good time to reveal to us what is going on in Sparta." She moved closer to them, almost like she was afraid of them now. "And what exactly do you mean when you say Martin is the son of Leonidas, and these Lyca..."

"Lycavorian," Aricia spoke with a small smile helping her to finish the sentence.

"Lycavorian," Tarifa said. "Who are these Lycavorians, and what do you mean they are coming here to earth?"

Anja smiled gently. "I suppose now would be as good a time as any." She said softly. "I assume you... you all know the history of King Leonidas of Sparta?"

Tarifa nodded. "Yes... once we realized Martin was the Elf High King, that part of human history became paramount to *our* history. He is descended from this King Leonidas is he not?"

Anja nodded, "In a manner of speaking yes." She said.

"Perhaps you should explain that." Tareif said moving up next to Tarifa.

"Martin is the son of King Leonidas." Anja said. "He was still within his mother's womb when Leonidas died, and no one knew about his existence. At least no one here on earth." Anja saw the looks of astonishment on their faces and she motioned to the table.

"You are... you are saying Martin... Martin is over three thousand years old?" Tarifa gasped in astonishment.

"We should probably sit down for this." Anja said motioning to the conference table. "This bombing in Sparta has accelerated events somewhat."

"Martin wanted to tell you himself when he returned." Aricia said now. "Now... now it seems you will need to know everything. This attack... this attack will set in motion many things that were not planned for several weeks or months. And we must act before the Vampire witch or her brother can steal away the advantage."

"She has a brother?" Tareif asked stunned.

Anja nodded. "Yes... and unfortunately, it appears he may already be on his way here. That isn't a good thing either."

SPARTA

The front of the café was no longer visible, buried as it was beneath the five stories above it that had come smashing down from the force of the explosion. Half of the building was laid open for all to see, pieces of jagged concrete and steel dangling above the hundreds of rescue workers and men and women who were scrambling over the huge piles beneath their feet looking for any signs of survivors. Glass windows and storefronts had been shattered for twelve blocks in every direction, the buildings to the sides and behind the café severely damaged by the concussive force of the blast. Sparta's response and rescue teams were the finest in any remaining city on the planet, and the few small fires that had started because of the blast were quickly extinguished when the first crews arrived.

Spartan Centurions had secured a perimeter around the café, hundreds of men, women and children behind the portable barricades, watching the scene. Many of the women and even some of the older men were openly weeping at the loss of life. Broken and bleeding bodies were still being carried from the rubble, the death total now over two hundred, forty-six of which were children. Most of the Spartan Senate had rushed to the scene once word that Martin and Dysea had been buried beneath the rubble reached their ears. Rows upon rows of dead bodies lined the Spartan street, all of them covered in sheets that were stained in blood. The King's Phalanx had reached the sight before even the rescue workers, and all of them had refused to leave as they dug in the twisted mass, many with just their bare hands, pulling victims from the rubble, searching and praying for the two to not have been crushed beneath the tons of stone and steel.

Smaller sized tractors and heavy lift ramps had been brought in and were busy gingerly lifting the slabs of concrete that could not be moved by hand, rescue workers risking life and limb to peer under these sometimes two ton beasts to insure they were pulling apart bodies of survivors.

Walter stood with the senior Rescue Chief next to the large water truck. He had blood staining the side of his face and dried lines of blood coming from his ears. His clothes were dusty and splashed with the blood of over thirty men and women that he and his father had pulled out of the mass wreckage in the first twenty minutes. He had refused the attentions of a medic, and if not for Hali's oldest son urging Panos to come to his mother's house, his father would not have left the site. Walter last saw his father being spirited away by Hali's Centurion son as a medic was washing the cuts off on his face and neck.

"Three and a half hours." The Chief spoke, "Three and a half hours and no sign of the King and Queen. Are you sure of where they were standing Dymas?"

Walter nodded quickly. "Yes." He replied.

"But the King's Captain was blown clear." The Chief said.

"All of the surrounding buildings and even the pond has been searched thoroughly." Walter replied. "They have to be buried under the rubble."

Walter and the Chief turned when the Spartan instructor Lander walked up to them briskly. "I have locked down the city as Queen Aricia ordered." He spoke to Walter. "All streets in and out are being guarded by Centurions with instructions that no one is to be allowed to enter or leave."

Walter looked at him. "Aricia gave those orders?" He asked.

Lander nodded. "She did. Queen Anja was speaking with your father when I left Hali's home." He replied. "Aricia told me I was to report to you."

"Why would she order you to lock down the city?" Walter asked.

"It is something the King told her to do some time ago." Lander said. "She told me that King Leonidas felt he could trust no one but you and your father. He trusted none of the Senators enough to issue these orders. If anything were to happen to him, the city was to be locked down immediately. He knew no one would bother to suspect Aricia was carrying his orders due to her status of being dishonored here in Sparta."

"Yet you follow her orders without question." Walter spoke looking at him.

"King Leonidas chose her as a mate and Queen for a reason." Lander snapped. "As far as I am concerned, this dishonored bunk means nothing to me! If there is any truth to what is said then the blame lies

with her brother and not her. And even after knowing what has happened here, they are maintaining their strength.”

Walter nodded, glancing towards the crowd for a moment, sweeping across the men and women who had gathered to watch the recovery and to see if the King and Queen they had waited so long for had survived. His eyes stopped and they narrowed when he saw Autolycus and his son standing among the people, attempting to blend in and not be seen. Lander stood in front of him, blocking most of his body.

“Lander... continue to talk to me like you are reporting.” Walter spoke so that only he could hear him.

The millennia’s old Spartan detected the tenseness in Dymas’s voice and did not question the order. He nodded his head as if he was reporting to Dymas, while he watched Dymas’s eyes go back to the crowd.

Walter shifted his eyes back to where Autolycus stood and he saw the hooded figure move up directly behind him. The figure leaned forward and whispered something to Autolycus who then shook his head almost imperceptibly.

“Lander... I’m going to point at the rubble, and I want you to turn the opposite way until you are facing where my hand is. As you turn, at six o’clock Autolycus is standing with Midlan. There is a hooded figure behind him...”

Lander turned as if shifting his weight and scouring the area quickly and then turned completely around. “I see him.” Lander answered as he faced the rubble.

“Track him.” Dymas ordered. “I want to know who he is. He’s masking his natural scent with some sort of scent blocker. Do not be seen Lander. Report back to me or my father when you discover this.”

Lander nodded, “Understood.”

“He’s leaving.” Walter spoke. “Go.”

Lander nodded and turned to go in the opposite direction while tracking the hooded figure out of the corner of his eye.

Walter turned back to the pile of rubble and saw three of Martin’s Phalanx jump across some wreckage at the words from a rescue worker.

“HERE!” The Spartan screamed. “Get the lift! The King is here!”

The words threw the workers and Spartans into a frenzy, as dozens of them descended on the area the rescue worker was leaning into. Walter moved like he had never moved before, and pushed his way past several Spartans to see the rescue worker leaning far over into a hole, his entire upper body down within the concrete rubble, one of his partners holding his legs tightly. Walter felt his heart finally release the iron grip of fear it had held on him for three hours when he heard the voice.

“The child!” Dysea’s voice echoed from within the rubble. “Take the child first!”

Walter watched as the rescue worker reached lower, several more Spartans digging around the entrance to clear away more debris. Two more rescue workers moved to help his partner hold him in place. Walter heard the crying of the small child, and then arms were reaching down for the blond haired child. She was wailing out her fear, her hair and face streaked with tears and dust as she was pulled from the hole. Walter heard the scream of a woman behind them, and one Spartan carried the wailing child over the rocks and steel to put her in the arms of her mother.

Walter turned back just as Dysea’s platinum blond hair poked out of the hole, the side of her face stained with red blood, her body armor lacerated in several places, blood leaking from those wounds as well. There was a nasty and deep slice along the side of her head that still leaked blood. Her hair was dusty and plastered with dirt, making it almost black in some places. She pushed away several hands reaching for her, scrambling up on the edge of the hole, her face bruised and bloody. Walter moved closer seeing the look on Dysea’s face as one of anguish and pain.

“Dysea?” He spoke, moving beside her.

Dysea looked at him, her emerald eyes wide in panic. “Holy One... *Nauta Melme*... he kept the... he kept us from being crushed with his body. He is hurt badly... and he’s lost so much blood.”

“Be strong child.” Walter spoke, slipping his arm around her shoulders.

“I can’t... we can’t lose him Holy One.” Dysea sobbed.

They watched as the rescue worker braced himself while he lowered a nylon strap. He lifted his head quickly, and looked up at the edge of the hole he was nearly three quarters of the way in. “Inform the hospital we are bringing the King in!” He screamed. “He has multiple lacerations and some of them are very deep! He’s

lost a lot of blood! Have six units standing by! He has second degree burns on his face and arms! Hold on!” The man worked furiously, finally looping the strap around Martin’s upper body. “Now! PULL!” He yelled.

There was no hesitation and those holding his legs did just that. Martin’s battered body appeared from the hole, his body armor lacerated in at least a dozen locations, some of them still leaking blood. The left side of his face was red and burned, blistering in some spots. Even with three men pulling on the strap, Martin’s two hundred and twenty pounds was dead weight and they struggled with getting him over the edge of the hole. The first rescue worker finally gave one powerful heave and fell back, his King’s bloody body cradled in his arms.

“MOVE!” He screamed. “NOW MOVE!”

Walter helped Dysea to her feet and held her out of the way as an open backed hover car was brought directly up to the pile of rubble. Six Spartans gently hoisted the body of their King and moved as fast as they could across the scattered pile of debris, Dysea and Walter following. They placed him gingerly on the stretcher and lifted him into the back of the car.

Dysea looked at the three armed Spartans who climbed into the back of the car with the rescue crew member who was pulling items from his medical kit bag as fast as his hands could move, “Medon?” She spoke.

The fifth most senior Spartan in the Royal Phalanx turned to his Queen, “My Queen?”

“Do not stop for anything Medon.” Dysea spoke firmly. “If they do not get out of the way run them over, but stop for nothing. You will shoot first and ask questions later Spartan.”

Medon nodded his head, eyes wide with alertness and anger that this had happened. “It will be done Milady. On my own life it will be done.” He spoke.

“I will follow directly behind you! Now go!”

The Spartan turned to the driver. “Go! Go! Go!”

Dysea turned back to Walter as the hover car sped away and she hugged him tightly. As if on cue a half a dozen Spartans surrounded them, their weapons out and facing away from one of their Queens, their eyes searching for new threats.

“He made... he made me shift to heal my wounds.” Dysea spoke softly against Walter’s chest. “He couldn’t because he was holding some of the debris, keeping it from coming down on us.” Dysea pulled back and looked at him. “What happened Holy One?”

“It was a bomb.” Walter told her. “It was an explosive that had not been used in three decades leading up to the comet and I’ve seen none of it since. All of our equipment was based on a different explosive, less detectable and more powerful. This was C-4; I smelled it at the last moment before it was triggered.”

“This... this is the work of that Vampire witch!” Dysea hissed stepping back from him a little. “I will find her... and when I do I will make her wish she never came here to this planet. I will...”

“I don’t think this was Yuri’s doing.” Walter said softly.

Dysea looked at him, her emerald eyes narrowing to slits. “Explain what you mean.” She told him.

Walter took a deep breath. “She may have sanctioned this attack... but I believe our own people carried out this attack. People that do not want to see a son of Leonidas sit on the throne of Sparta.”

“Who?” Dysea demanded.

“That is what I’m in the process of finding out right now child.” Walter spoke reaching up to touch her injured head. “Go to the hospital and be with him. Contact Anja and Aricia... let them know his condition. And you must make sure they do not react as I know they will want too. They will want to destroy every Alliance base on North America and launch the missiles Martin gave to Eden. They can not do this just yet.”

“Holy One you...”

“Dysea do you trust me?” Walter asked.

“You... you are all we trust Holy One.” Dysea replied. “The person we have always trusted above all others.”

“Then trust me now and do as I ask. You are a Queen in every sense and definition of the word, and until Martin recovers, Sparta will look to you for their resolve. Many eyes will be on your actions right now... and you must show them the decisive decision making and the strong will that Martin so loves about you. You heard King Leonidas’s words to his son child... fight with your head... but lead with your heart. This is what you must do now.”

“Nauta Melme... he is...” Dysea started.

Walter shook his head. "Martin has survived far worse Dysea. Do not doubt the will to live that resides in his soul. Go to him... stay with him... others will look to you as I said. Leave finding who did this to me, for I will discover them."

Dysea stared into his eyes for a long moment, seeing hardness and drive in his eyes that Dysea had not seen in the over a hundred years she had known him. She nodded slowly and extended on her toes to lightly kiss his cheek. A hover car came to a halt near them and Walter nodded. "Go... and when he wakes up... you must keep him from doing something terrible at the loss of life."

"I will try." She said. "But I will guarantee nothing, for I want blood just as he will want blood for this act."

Walter nodded. "I will find out who did this Dysea. I promise you."

Dysea turned and moved to the hover car, the Spartans closing around her like a shield as she walked. Walter turned to Kenny and Cody who walked up to him covered in blood and dust. Looking at them Walter had to smile. They were his creations... the genomes that Martin and Daniel and Julie had turned without question. Had they not been turned, Walter knew they would have been dead a long time ago. They had come here to Sparta, and in much the same way as his King had discovered his past, Kenny and Cody and the remaining Genomes had discovered their future. This is where they belonged, and they had embraced the entire culture and history of Sparta like it was their very own. Walter had gotten word that both of them, well known for their gift with the ladies, had several young Spartan females chasing both of them.

"Kenneth I want you to gather the King's Phalanx and secure the villa. Sweep every portion of it and then lock it down. No one but Helen and her staff are to be allowed on or off the grounds. Is that clear?" Walter spoke.

Kenny nodded; his face and demeanor all business now. "Should we check the Oracle's people out?" He asked.

Walter shook his head. "If any of them had something to do with this Helen will have already discovered that and will be interrogating them by now." He answered. "Cody, take six men and go to the hospital where Andreus is. Inform the doctors there he is to be moved to the villa with all possible haste. They can treat him there, as his wounds are not life threatening. We must circle our wagons, as the saying goes, and protect all who we know."

"What are you going to do doc?" Kenny asked.

"I have someone I need to see outside of the city. I will return in a few hours, tell no one where I have gone." Walter said. "If you need to contact me, establish a telepathic link and I will respond." Walter reached out opened one of the pouches on Kenny's utility belt. He removed the small package, no bigger than an eraser head and tore open the plastic, popping the small capsule into his mouth and swallowing. "So you can track me if something happens. We must move quickly my friends. Once it is known that Martin and Dysea survived, things could become quite busy around here."

"Good." Cody said. "I was getting bored anyway."

Walter smiled. "I will see you both soon. Now go."

CHAPTER THIRTY

CANADA

The streets were rapidly filling with men and women and even children as Aihola and the others walked slowly down the cracked and worn pavement. The small town of Kelwood had not fared well since the Great Fire, many of its buildings destroyed and still blackened. The signs however were subtle, and Aihola could tell that much of the outer appearance was prefabricated and made to look that way. Dekton walked next to her, Aihola holding tightly to his hand, seeing so many of her people causing her heart to race with happiness. The hundreds that were lining the streets were whispering among themselves, all of them seeing the Queen's medallion that Aihola wore around her neck.

Dienekes reports that they have secured the area with snipers. General Vengal has moved into position unseen with his force as well. Dekton passed to her through their telepathic link.

Dekton... do you...do you think they will attempt something?

Your safety is my primary concern Little Drow. As it is Vengal's. He insisted that we keep some of our force hidden in an overwatch position. Based on the reaction to Nayeca by the other Drow it seemed very prudent. Dekton replied affectionately. And Tarifa and I love you too much to lose you to something as stupid as a suicide attack or worse.

Aihola looked at him, his dark blue eyes smiling at her and causing little shivers to course through her. She squeezed his hand tightly. *When we found you Dekton, Tarifa and I... we became complete. Something I will thank Martin for in spades when he returns.*

Keeping you and Tarifa and all those he considers friend safe is what matters most to him. Dekton replied. As for me... when the two of you came in to my life, my daughters could feel my happiness even in Sparta. We will have a long life my love, and many children.

Now that is something I will look forward too Dekton. She answered her amber eyes twinkling. I will especially enjoy the parts where we have to make those children.

Dekton grinned. *As will I.*

His eyes caught the parting of several layers of men and women in front of him and the two older elf females moved slowly forward, the Drow all around them bowing their heads and parting to the sides.

Little Drow... He said motioning with his head.

Aihola turned and saw the two females moving towards her. She took a deep breath and came to a stop in the middle of the road; her hand gripping Dekton's even more. They were obviously the Drow Elders from the way the people reacted to them in reverence, and they were much older than most of the Drow around them. Aihola felt her heart speed up even more as they approached her, their eyes focused on the medallion she wore. They stopped in front of Aihola, looking her up and down as if appraising a side of beef, before their eyes settled on the medallion she wore.

"It is true." One of the Elders spoke in a whisper, awe clearly in her voice. "You... you have come; the daughter of... the daughter of Queen Anatyla." She spoke. "We... we had known she was captured by the Alliance... that she fought bitterly until the end. Word escaped with the Holy One all those years ago that... that she had given birth to two children while a prisoner of the Alliance."

Aihola looked at the Elder with stunned surprise in her eyes. "How... how do you know that?" She asked, feeling Tari come up next to her.

The Drow Elder allowed a warm smile to caress her face as she stared at Aihola. "I was one who she helped to escape in her last days." She spoke softly. "I... I saw the two of you enter this world, and it is here that you have finally come after so many years." She bowed her head. "I am Hwia my Queen and this is Aelulip. We were chosen as Elders to hold our people together."

"And it appears you have done a wonderful job." Aihola spoke, her eyes searching the hundreds of faces that lined the area all around them. "I... we never imagined that so many of our people had survived the purge. If not for Nayeca we would have never..."

"Nayeca?" Hwia said, her face darkening.

Aihola nodded and motioned behind her to where Nayeca stood next to Daniel and Anuk. "She came to Eden and revealed to us that this city of Drow existed."

Hwia glanced over to the side. "I must thank you for returning her to face punishment my Queen. She has much to answer for. Seize her!" She barked.

Two Drow females, warriors by the looks of their uniforms and weapons broke from the ranks of men and women, moving purposefully toward Nayeca. Anuk felt more than saw Nayeca's eyes go wide as she stepped back. Anuk reacted in an instant, her *Nehtes* appearing in her hand and extending to its full length. She stepped in front of Nayeca quickly; the spearhead of her *Nehtes* pressed to the chest of one of the female Drow women as they both stopped almost immediately.

"Not a good idea." Anuk snarled at the larger Drow female.

The second warrior grasped the shaft of the *Nehtes* and attempted to twist it away from her comrade. Her eyes grew wide when the *Nehtes* didn't budge an inch in Anuk's grasp. She applied greater pressure and Anuk twisted her wrist and forearm quickly. The flat portion of the *Nehtes* slapped hard into the face of the second Drow female and sent her sprawling and then returned to poke into the chest of the first Drow, all in a split second.

Hwia's eyes opened wide as P190s came up into the ready position in the blink of an eye. Drow warriors scattered throughout the crowd brought weapons up as well, leveling them at the thirty-five Eden soldiers. "Hold!" She cried, her head turning from side to side. Her eyes returned to where Aihola stood, her K12 leveled squarely at Hwia's head. Dekton had stepped closer to her, his P190 leveled at the second Elder, "My... my Queen?"

"Nayeca brought us here Hwia." Aihola spoke sternly. "She is under the protection of me and the Elf High King."

"My... my Queen, she violated our laws!" Hwia spoke quickly, "Laws that we have had in place for over a century; laws that protect our people and have allowed us to grow."

Aihola nodded. "Yes... laws that force young women to submit to relations they may not desire." She spoke. "I call that slavery, and I won't begin to relate to you how the High King views such practices."

"It is not slavery!" Aelulip spoke up now. "The strongest of our people make stronger children! We have needed this for decades to build our population."

Aihola looked at her. "You have done this since you came here?" She asked stunned.

"Our women outnumber the men three to one my Queen." Hwia spoke. "It has always been like this. The strongest females choose the strongest males and they come together and have children."

"And there is no love?"

"We do not have the luxury of love my Queen." Hwia spoke. "Nayeca violated our laws when she refused the attentions of a male warrior not chosen by an older female. She injured him severely, and now he can no longer have children."

Aihola's aim with her K12 never wavered. "It is much kinder than I would have done." She spoke sternly.

"She must be punished!" Aelulip demanded. "Her actions robbed us of a possible breeder and the children he could have fathered."

"And what is the punishment for her actions?" Aihola asked.

"She was banished from our city upon pain of death if she returned." Aelulip spoke. "She will be put to death of course."

"I will not be punished for not allowing a male to rape me!" Nayeca barked, her P190 up and ready to use.

Anuk's grip tightened on her *Nehtes* and she moved closer to Nayeca. "They'll have to go through me first." She growled. She smiled when she felt Danny step up next to her on one side and Melancton took up station on Nayeca's opposite side.

"She has fought beside us Queen Aihola." Melancton spoke sternly. "We would be remiss in our honor as Spartans to allow this to happen. They will have to come through me and my son as well."

Aihola looked quickly at Dekton. *I will not allow anything to happen to her my love.* She sent to him.

Dekton nodded. *I never doubted that Little Drow. Perhaps she should remain outside this city then.*

Aihola turned back to Hwia. "Nayeca will remain outside the city." She said.

"That is not good enough!" Aelulip snapped.

Aihola's eyes burned. "It had better be." She spoke in a menacing voice. "I will allow no harm to come to her, and any who attempt to do so will answer to me."

"The Queen of the Drow would not act like this!" Aelulip told her heatedly. "She would understand the laws."

"If we are all that remains of our people then I would be committing a more grievous sin by allowing her to die for not submitting to unwanted advances." Aihola spoke calmly. "She is under the protection of the Spartans of the Royal Guard now."

"Who... who are these Spartans you speak of?" Hwia asked.

"The Elf High King is also King of the Spartans. It is a city across the oceans, and it has been in existence far longer than even the elves. The Spartans have three crimes that they hold more heinous than all others, and rape is one of them." Aihola told her. "My mate is a Spartan." She said motioning to Dekton. Aihola heard gasps from many that had gathered to witness what was happening.

"Mate?" Hwia asked stunned. "You have... you have taken a husband?"

Aihola nodded. "Yes I have. And Tarifa, Queen of the High Elves shares our love and our bed."

“The... the oldest of our laws demands the Queen of the Drow take the strongest male Drow as her mate.” Aelulip spoke. “Not some... not some foreigner who does not follow our laws! Nor would the Queen of the Drow take a female into her bed, let alone the Queen of our hated enemies.”

“Times have changed.” Aihola spoke firmly. “I choose who I share my bed and my life with, not some archaic law.” Aihola saw the looks of stunned shock on both their faces. “I have already chosen, and there will be no discussion on that. The High Elves are not our enemies! I came here to lead my people out of the darkness and move them to a city that will allow them to be free and make their own decisions; a city where they are accepted without question or regard for what has occurred in the past; a city of elves and humans working side by side. You see for yourself I have Wood elves, High elves and humans in my group. We fight side by side... live side by side... against our common enemy. And that enemy is the Alliance.”

Aihola noticed the looks and murmurs coming from many of the men and women who were witnessing this.

Little Drow I believe there is more going on here than we know. Dekton told her.

I sense it as well. Aihola replied her amber eyes gazing around slowly. *I get the feeling many of these people are not aware of what has transpired outside the reach of this city.*

I smell questions. Dekton spoke, *Indecision on the part of many of them. The heartbeats of many of the warriors have increased as well.*

Aihola lowered her K12. “My people will remain outside the city.” She spoke quickly. “Emotions are running high, and we need to talk of many things. My brother and I will accompany you, along with my mate Dekton.”

Aelulip began to reply but Hwia held up her hand quickly. “The Queen is right.” She said.

“And you will turn Nayeca over to us?” Aelulip barked.

Aihola shook her head. “No. She will remain with my friends outside the city until after we have talked.” She said.

“That is not acceptable!” Aelulip snapped. “She is...”

Hwia nodded. “Very well,” She spoke overriding her younger counterpart.

Aihola turned to Daniel. “Set up a small camp outside the city limits Daniel.” She spoke. “Make sure our people *remain* in place.”

Danny nodded and swept his arm in front of Nayeca and Anuk, ushering them back. “No problem.”

This may not be a good idea Little Drow. Dekton told her.

Perhaps... but it is something we need to do. Aihola told him. *Don't you trust me?*

You and Tari I trust with my life. He answered. *Your people however have yet to instill a great deal of trust in me.*

Then perhaps we should find out why. Aihola said with a smile.

Dekton shook his head. *And you call Tarifa reckless?*

Aihola turned back to Hwia. “Please... lead on.”

SPARTA

“Dysea... how... how is he?” Aricia’s voice was full of worry, even through the monitor she looked at. She could see her gripping Anja’s hand tightly, and through the video connection Dysea could detect the tenseness of her body. Looking at them sitting together thousands of miles away and not able to be here with her and Martin was pulling at them hard. Dysea also noticed for the first time how breathtakingly beautiful Aricia truly was. She lowered her psychic shields and sent waves of love and reassurance through the connection they shared, seeing them visibly relax at the table where they sat.

“He is stable Little Wolf.” Dysea spoke with a gentle smile. “He was holding up a thousand pound block of concrete with his back to keep it from crushing a young girl and I beneath him. He lost a great deal of blood from many cuts, but he is resting now. The doctors say he is already healing extraordinarily fast, and they say he will be awake and moving by mid day tomorrow.”

“He is pig headed Dysea, you must make him do what the doctors tell him.” Anja said.

“I will *Melyanna*.” She answered with a smile. “If he does not I will tell him that you will return to Sparta to personally supervise his recovery.” Her eyes turned to Aricia. “Little Wolf that was an excellent tactical move, having Lander lock down the city.”

Aricia smiled. “I was only doing what Martin asked of me.” She replied.

“That you thought of it at all knowing he had been injured and we might have possibly been buried alive is incredible.” Dysea spoke. She turned as Hali brought her the mug of hot tea and squeezed her shoulder.

“How many?” Aricia asked soberly.

Dysea sipped her tea first, allowing the liquid to chase away the chill in her body. She lifted her head to the screen, “Two hundred sixty-nine dead.” She answered. “Another three hundred and eighty wounded, some not expected to make it through the night. Of the dead... fifty six were children younger than twelve.” Dysea couldn’t help the tears that came now, her entire system crashing after the last few hours of adrenalin rush.

“They... they came to see... they came to see us.”

“Dysea you...” Anja started.

“No!” Aricia snapped surprising everyone with the tone of her voice. Dysea’s head came up and she stared at the monitor. “Martin would not expect this from us! We are Queens of Sparta! He would expect us to act like it!”

“Little Wolf... she...” Anja began to say.

“She feels responsible!” Aricia said. “I know! We all feel responsible in some fashion Anja my love, even you and I and we were not even there! Our beloved... our King... he loves us so deeply for a multitude of reasons, but the most important escapes us now.”

“What do you mean?” Anja asked.

“He knows... he knows we are strong individually, and even stronger when we are together in our actions! He is a Lycavorian, the son of King Leonidas... and he would not expect us to weep. He would expect us to act! When we are... when we are alone... and he is holding us in his arms... then we can weep and mourn. I know... I know I am still very young, and I have much to learn... but I... I know this is what he would want us to be.”

Anja stared at her for a long moment, her jade green eyes wide. Dysea took a deep breath where she sat staring too at the youngest of the Queens the man they all loved had chosen.

“She is so very right.” Dysea said softly, the strength returning to her voice now. “The youngest of us all and it is she that speaks with the true voice of a Queen.”

Aricia looked at her from within the monitor. “Dysea I did not mean to...”

Dysea smiled lovingly. “You are correct though Little Wolf.” She spoke. “And that is why you are *Nauta Melme*’s favorite and most cherished.”

Aricia’s eyes went wide. “Me?” She gasped unbelievably. “I... I don’t think that is the case... I merely state what we all know in our hearts to be true. Martin is injured... and he would expect his Spartan Queens to rule in his stead.”

“And so we shall.” Dysea said. She took another long sip of tea and took a deep breath. She had been Queen to thousands for so long, and now she was Queen to trillions more, as were they all, and now she needed to start acting like it once more. “The Senate will undoubtedly move quickly if Autolykus has his way. He will attempt something to wrench power from him, I feel it, and that I will not allow.”

“We can trust no one except The Guardian and his father.” Aricia said softly, returning to her chair within the monitor. “Is he there?”

“He has left Sparta.” Dysea said. “He told Kenny and Cody that he had someone to see. We can track him, but currently he is outside the city limits, and I don’t know what he is doing.”

“Dysea... you don’t think...” Anja said.

“No!” Dysea spoke quickly. “He and his father were nearly killed by the same explosion, and by all reports they saved dozens of lives right after. It has been his single goal in life, to protect Martin, to protect what he is. He forsakes his wife and children to do this.” Dysea shook her head. “Whatever he is doing, I am sure it is only in Martin’s benefit. I saw his face *Melyanna*... I saw his face when Martin’s father appeared to us; the love and devotion to a dead King that only he serves now. He is one of only a handful that we can trust at the moment.”

“I was able to probe this Deval asshole pretty deeply.” Anja spoke softly. “It was not pleasant and I was not able to get a lot out of him before they killed him, but I was able to discover three things. They have found a reactor they can use to activate the defenses on EDEN, and they are very suspicious of the mission Aihola is leading. They don’t know exactly what is going on, but they suspect something.”

“We must move quickly.” Aricia spoke confidently. “Dysea you said that Martin believes the vampire witch’s brother is already on his way here?”

Dysea nodded. “It is a feeling he has.” She replied.

“And it will be three weeks before the Lycavorian people can get here?” Aricia said.

“That is what he told me.” Dysea spoke. “This talk of space ships and numbers is beyond me, but I believe he knows what is going on. Ever since he was touched by his father it is almost as if he has a heightened sense of things. I caught him wandering with his mind, seeing things, images that were as beautiful as they were amazing. His aura... it is clearer, stronger and so much more pure. When he first touched me after Thermopylae it was as if this huge warm blanket engulfed me in a cocoon. I have never felt anything so welcoming and filled with love.” Dysea looked at them in the monitor. “*Melyanna*... do you believe Aihola’s mission is threatened?”

Anja shook her head quickly. “I don’t think they know exactly what is going on.” She replied. “That doesn’t mean they won’t find out. Tarifa is passing on to Aihola what has happened right now. Aihola is meeting with the Drow Elders. They weren’t... they weren’t particularly happy to see her it seems.”

“Graham?” Dysea asked.

Anja chuckled cruelly. “Lynwe disposed of him.” She said. “From what I understand it wasn’t at all pleasant and had to do with peeling his skin off and then letting him roast in the sun a little at a time. She was unable to get any additional information from him. I’ll let Tarifa know to have them stay even more alert and I’ll have Ben do some high altitude recons over the northern part of Alliance territory.”

“The pilots and members of Tareif’s division are standing by on a one hour notice.” Aricia said. “We can be airborne in ninety minutes should the need arise.”

“We?” Dysea asked.

“I will be going with them.” Aricia said matter of factly.

Dysea smiled at her through the monitor. “Our Little Wolf isn’t so little anymore is she *Melyanna*?”

Anja smiled and Dysea saw her squeeze Aricia’s hand while Aricia’s face blushed red even under her deep tan. “No she isn’t.” Anja said. “She still tastes wonderful though.”

Dysea smiled. “And I look forward to the day when I will taste her again myself.”

Aricia was blushing madly now and she smiled. “Stop it both of you.” She said shyly. “Or I will make you both pay dearly.”

Dysea smiled seductively looking at the monitor. “Is that a promise Little Wolf?” She asked.

“I am going to remain here in Eden with Tarifa, Lynwe and Selene to coordinate.” Anja spoke with a smile. “Tarifa and Selene have begun contacting dozens of other elf tribes and clans across the globe, urging them to make their way here to Eden. Lynwe and I... Lynwe and I have begun acting on intelligence in regards to vampire agents within Eden. I’ve instructed Admiral Wallace to begin putting together plans to retake EDEN if Martin wants to go that way.”

“Tarifa’s father and I have been refining the operation to fly north.” Aricia spoke. “We will continue to do so until Aihola calls for extraction.”

Dysea looked at Anja in the monitor. “What is wrong *Melyanna*?” She asked.

Anja looked at her platinum blond lover in the transmission. “I... I experienced an odd sensation when I withdrew from Deval’s mind as they killed him. It affected me strangely and when Lynwe touched me right after it touched her as well.”

“What was it?” Dysea asked seeing Aricia look at Anja.

Anja shook her head. “I don’t know.” She looked at Dysea in the transmission and then at Aricia. She would never keep anything from these women, especially Aricia. “It... it was hot... like a fever... and when Lynwe touched me to steady me afterwards it passed to her.”

“You aren’t sick my love.” Aricia said.

Anja nodded. “I know... that’s why it was very strange. I will talk to her about it more, and perhaps discuss it with Peder. He is our resident vampire expert.”

“You said you were able to glean three things from Deval *Melyanna*.” Dysea spoke. “What else did you discover?”

Anja looked at her. “Whoever this traitor is in Sparta, he or she is very high up Dysea. They killed him before I could get a clearer picture, and I don’t think Deval knew the identity, but he did know this person was important. And he also knew of an assassin in Sparta, Yuri’s personal henchman so to speak.”

Dysea nodded. “I figured as much. Whoever placed the bomb must have been watching us for several weeks.” She said. “Why is this important?”

“Whoever they are Dysea, they are Lycavorian.” Anja spoke.

Dysea looked at her for a long moment. “I will contact the Holy One.”

Atropos rubbed his large hand over his face as he sat up in bed. His home was situated in the mountains that surrounded Sparta, and only a handful of people knew how to reach it. He had built it in secret as a hunting cabin for himself and his brothers and father. When he had been exiled for his supposed crime this is where he had come. He did not stray far from this home unless he needed supplies, and then he made the four hour trip to Athens to purchase what he needed. He had forged a life for himself working in Athens as an enforcer of sorts for the largest criminal organization. The money had afforded him the opportunity to outfit the cabin in a comfortable fashion, but it still remained very Spartan like. Andreus stayed in touch with him weekly, passing information and news to him whenever he could. He had not heard from his brother in nearly two months now, but he was not concerned as there had been stretches where Andreus had not come calling for months at a time.

Atropos was nearly two thousand years old, his skin weathered and deeply tanned, but he remained in superb physical condition from his constant training regime. He rose every morning at this time and shifted into wolf form, running through the mountains for miles, before coming back to his home to work his small garden and immerse himself in the thousands of books and scrolls Andreus and others had brought him. He had not been a very good student in his youth, preferring the brutal life of a Spartan warrior over schooling, and his education had been sorely lacking.

When she had come into his life, everything had changed.

Atropos turned his head and looked at her bare shoulder, the sheet barely covering her lithe tanned body. Her long brown hair splayed across his pillows like satin, her figure causing his groin to stir even this early in the morning. A thousand years of life separated them, but this female wolf had been the only female to ever stir his blood. And she was the reason for his dishonor and exile.

The first moment they had laid eyes upon each other they had known. She had not even reached the age of consent yet, and her exuberance and bubbly personality had entranced him from the first day. He fought his feelings for so long, burying them deep. She was considered too young to be taken by an Alpha as a mate, and the younger males were lining up at her door to petition her father for her hand a decade before she came of age. It was only Atropos, who held her heart and her eye however, and when he could contain his love and emotions for her no longer, they had broken the one Spartan Law that was treasured above all others. No female wolf would be taken as a mate before she reached the age of consent, as it was deemed too emotionally taxing for them to make those types of decisions on their own. It was a ridiculous law they both knew, and it only served to push them closer together.

Their third time together they had been discovered by her father and Atropos was given a choice; to confess to attempting to rape her and being exiled and dishonored, or being put to death and her alongside him for fornicating in such a manner before she reached the age of consent.

The decision was easy for Atropos, as he valued her life far more than his own. He endured the exile and the banishment with a stoic nature, never saying anything to refute the charges against him. When it became clear her father intended to dishonor his entire family, Atropos rebelled for only a few days, until his father demanded he accept the offer given to him. It was a horrible day in his life, being abandoned by his own father, and it hardened Atropos to all others around him. He kept watch over her from a distance for five years, until the day she was betrothed to another Alpha. It was then that Atropos lost almost all hope for their future, whatever it may be. He had returned to this very cabin, and on the day he was going to take his own life she came to him, so young and beautiful and mated. She swore her love to him for all time, and begged him not to leave her.

That had been five hundred years ago, and now she came to him at least once a month and they spent several days renewing their love. Her mate was always busy with his other female toys and hardly ever showed her affection. She endured his pawing of her at times, but all of that was washed away when she fell into his arms. It was she who had insisted he become educated and schooled, and many times they would lie around his home naked and reading to each other from some ancient novel or scroll. She had bore him two children, sons that he had never seen because of her position, and she kept them far out of her mate's reach. They were now part of the new Spartan Royal Guard, under his brother's command. The descendant of Leonidas had returned, and not just any descendant, but the unborn son of Leonidas. They had been close enough to Sparta to be overwhelmed by the telepathic message that had covered the city, and like many of Sparta's citizens they were still in awe of what and who their people really were. They had spent last night gazing at the stars for hours until the chill had chased them inside and into bed.

Atropos leaned over her bare shoulder and nibbled her skin gently, causing her to push back against him with a smile. "Go!" She whispered out with half closed eyes. "I will be here when you return Old Man."

Atropos grinned at her pet name for him and slid out from under the covers, tucking them back in around her. He watched as she rolled over, embracing his pillow and pulling it close to her chest and face with a look of contentment.

Atropos padded into the small bathroom and turned on the dim light, going to the sink and splashing water over his craggy face. His home always smelled of her strongly while she was here, and it lasted for days even after she had gone. The sweet smell of Lilacs filled his nostrils and he breathed deeply, her essence filling him as it always did. Then he detected it. It was faint... like musky cedar wood... and it set off alarms all through his head. He turned quickly, turning off the light and moving silently to the bed.

He placed his hand over her soft lips firmly, her eyes flying open. *Lilika stay in here.* He whispered to her within their telepathic link.

Atropos! Is it...

I don't know. It is a scent I have not smelled in many years. Remain here my love. Protect yourself if need be. He took the small pistol from the table next to the bed and pressed it into her hand. *Do not move unless you have too. Whoever this is, they are old enough to detect even the slightest shit in the wind. Let me lead them away.*

Atropos be careful!

He nodded and his fingers found the shaft of his Nehtes by the bed. He moved slowly across the room to the door and tried to catch the scent and localize the position of whoever was in his home. It was oddly familiar to him, like he had smelled it before, but he could not place it. Atropos swept his hand across the door panel and it slid open soundlessly.

The rest of the home was dark, only the half moon providing any light, and that only in small slivers coming through the two windows. His hand gripped his Nehtes tightly, ready to extend it and attack as he stepped into the main room lightly on the balls of his feet.

"Do you always greet family in such a way Atropos?" The deep male voice echoed from the darkness.

Atropos's head snapped around towards the kitchen and he saw the shadowy figure in the doorway. By then he knew it was too late. He heard the soft whistle at the last second before the extended Nehtes shaft slammed down on his wrist with a loud crack. Atropos grunted in pain, his fingers going numb as he dropped his own Nehtes, hearing it roll across the floor. The powerful hand grasped his arm and Atropos felt himself sailing through the air. He landed with a loud grunt and the shattering of his small coffee table beneath him, the breath leaving his chest in a rush. He made to scramble back to his feet but froze when he felt the tips of two Nehtes press against the flesh of his chest. His mind flashed quickly, stunned that two attackers could get inside his home and he would not detect them until after they had attacked.

Atropos winced as the lights came on and he was staring at the stern eyes of two Spartan in full combat armor, the only portion of their faces exposed from under their helms were their dark unfriendly eyes. They held their Nehtes against his chest from both sides, and Atropos quickly decided he would not be able to get them both before one ran him through.

"Meet two of the Royal Guard nephew." The voice spoke again. "Forgive their rather forceful introduction, but someone just tried to murder their King and Queen and they are not in a very good mood. Neither am I for that matter."

Atropos saw the tall figure come into view and his eyes widen. "Uncle Dymas!" He exclaimed.

Walter moved around the side of the couch and looked down at him. "You remember me Atropos." He spoke. "That makes me very happy."

"Andreus told me you had returned." Atropos spoke. "What... why are you here? Why have you broken into my home?"

"The better question nephew is why you are still here?" Walter spoke settling onto the couch.

"Let him go!" The female voice barked from behind them.

Atropos noticed that only his uncle turned his head to the sound, and not at all in a surprised fashion. Lilika stood in the doorway the small handgun leveled at the two hulking Spartan Royal Guards, one of Atropos's shirts thrown loosely on her naked body.

"Lilika no!" Atropos yelled.

Walter's eyes widened slightly when he called her name and then understanding washed over him. He turned back to Atropos. "So this is why you haven't left Sparta." He said. "And no doubt this is the source of your dishonor."

"She has nothing to do with this!" Atropos yelled. "I am the one at fault. I forced her to come here!"

Walter got slowly to his feet. "The third mate of Midlan." He said softly. "I should have put it together a long time ago."

"I said let him go!" Lilika barked again, her voice wavering nervously. "I will kill you if you hurt him! I swear it!"

Walter smiled gently. "Yes... I'm sure you would." He said. "Lower your weapon young lady. Do you honestly think I came here with only two men? I have much more respect for my nephew's skills than that."

Lilika froze as the barrel of the K12 pressed gently to her temple from the side. Dysea stepped from the shadows of the room, her hand holding the K12 rock steady. She held out her hand. "I would prefer you did not shoot my guards in the back, so please give me the weapon." She said softly.

Lilika's eyes went just as wide as Atropos's and they both gasped at the same time. "My... my Queen!" Atropos spoke stunned.

Dysea's emerald eyes turned to him as she reached forward and took the small weapon from Lilika's hands. One of the Royal Guard removed his Nehtes from Atropos's chest and stepped back to where Dysea handed him the small sidearm. "Let him up." Dysea said returning her K12 to the holster on her hip.

Dysea looked at Walter and saw him nod. She had contacted him immediately after speaking with Anja and Aricia. He told her where he was and what he was doing, and she had come directly to meet him. It had not taken them very long to traverse the distance to Atropos's home, but it had taken some time to get inside the house once they had fallen asleep. She watched as Atropos got slowly to his feet before she took three steps toward him and hit him with the single punch that connected with his jaw and sent him reeling back against the wall, smashing several pictures and flower pots from the force of the blow. She heard Lilika cry out in alarm and move to help him, but Walter grabbed her arms and held her in place as Dysea stepped up to the stunned Atropos and grabbed his throat. Her anger gave her strength, and when combined with her natural elf strength and the pure wolf genes coursing through her veins it was enough to shove him back violently against the wall, his bottom lip bloody.

"My mate... my King is at this moment in a hospital bed!" Dysea growled, her eyes now changed and her fangs extended fearsomely. "Your brother lies seriously wounded at our villa, and over two hundred and fifty of our people are dead! More than that wounded! I want answers and I will not leave this place until I have them. If I have to carve them out of your flesh I will do so!"

Atropos glared at her, seeing her rage and smelling the blood pounding through her veins. In all his years he had never smelled a more powerful Alpha female, with the exception of his sister. The only difference was that this she-elf had discovered her inner power and was not afraid to use it.

"I... I would never plot against my King!" Atropos hissed. "We were just as... we were just as overjoyed as everyone when we heard and felt who he really was."

"How do I know that?" Dysea snarled at him. "You obviously have no qualms about breaking laws or rules, as the wife of a married man is sharing your bed!"

"I am no wife of Midlan!" Lilika screamed. "I suffer his touch only so that I may be with the man who is my true mate! Let him go! If you wish to fight, I will fight you!"

Walter chuckled. "Your time with my nephew has certainly granted you some of his more dull witted responses." He spoke. "You could no more hope to defeat the Queen than anyone in Sparta. We have come here for answers to questions that we have. Something is wrong with our city, and the answers to discover what that is begin with you two."

Dysea looked at Atropos her emerald wolf eyes bright. "Look me in the eye and tell me what has happened is not of your doing. You are the brother of one who I love in Aricia, a Queen of Sparta... and you are the brother to my mate's Royal Captain. Tell me you had no knowledge of this attack Atropos. Tell me that."

"On my life and that of my sons, I had nothing to do with any attack against my King." Atropos spoke calmly. "And were I to find who was I would gut them where they stood."

Walter looked confused and his eyes went back and forth between Atropos and Lilika. "Atropos you have no children." He said finally. "What are you..." His eyes went wide and he turned to Lilika. "Your... your two sons are not Midlan's?"

Lilika drew herself up straight. "I would no more bear that bastard a child than I would take a snake into my bed." She announced. "My sons are the product of our love." She stepped past the Spartan and moved next to Atropos. "The love we have shared for over five hundred years."

Dysea stepped back from Atropos, lowering her hands to her side. "The time has come for the truth to come out." She spoke. "And it begins with you."

Atropos looked at Lilika as she took his hand. "I no longer wish to hide my love for you." She said softly. "I don't care about some silly law. I want our sons to know who their father is. I want to walk the streets at your side Atropos. It... it is time for truth now."

Atropos lifted her hands to his bloody lips and kissed them gently. "Go and make tea." He spoke to her. He turned to Dysea. "The Queen of Sparta has come for a visit and we must be gracious." He pushed off the wall and stood straight and tall, Lilika's eyes filling with love as the proud and strong man she had fallen in love with all those years ago returned in the blink of an eye. "My Queen... uncle..." He motioned to the table near the kitchen area. "We will need to sit for this."

CANADA

"What do you think they are talking about?" Anuk asked her eyes focused on Aihola, Nayeca, Vengal and Dekton.

They had set up the small camp in the nearest treeline bordering Kelwood. Security teams of two were posted and the others were making small fires to cook. Danny sat with his back against a thick tree, Anuk sitting between his legs as they finished the last of the ration pack they had shared. Melancton had eaten and amazingly had gone right to sleep a few meters away.

Dan glanced over to where they were sitting.

"Whatever it is, it doesn't look good." He answered holding out the canteen for her.

Anuk broke the snack bar she held in half and took the canteen as she handed him half of the bar. "I was thinking that too." She said.

"I get the feeling that Aihola isn't real happy with the way these Drow are reacting to us being here." Dan said as he bit into the snack bar. "They were ready to kill Nayeca on the spot."

Anuk let her cerulean blue eyes settle on Nayeca, taking in the way she filled out her uniform and body armor. Anuk could smell the desire for her coming from Nayeca's pores; she could hear Nayeca's heart begin to race whenever she came close to her. Anuk had been sought after by many men in her young life, but Daniel was now the only man who would ever hold her heart let alone her body. Anuk had never been the object of another woman's desire, and while she had never thought about such things, knowing that Nayeca wanted her caused small shivers to course through her. She felt Danny lean back against the tree and she shifted her body, leaning back against his hard chest and abdomen. Thinking back on her life these last months Anuk could only shake her head. Her father had kept her shielded for much of her life, but that had all changed when the slavers took her. She couldn't believe what had happened in the few short months since Daniel had come into her life and she thanked the Gods everyday for him.

Daniel was the largest man Anuk had ever seen, and she still marveled at how she was able to accept him entirely within her body. When he made love to her, Daniel made her body sing out its delight and exquisite pleasure, and it wasn't only his huge manhood that did it. His hands could turn her to jelly all by themselves, and he never hesitated to explore her body with his lips and tongue. He was the kindest and most compassionate man she had ever met, and he was a werewolf; her werewolf. She was his only mate, and by his own words the only woman that burned within his blood. They were a couple set forth by the standards within Sparta, and by Lycavorian law. What Daniel had done to further show his love for her was marry her in a traditional elfin marriage ceremony when her parents had come to Sparta. It had been a private ceremony, only her parents and Daniel's family present, but it had meant more to Anuk than he would ever know.

Anuk didn't know what to make of what Nayeca made her feel, or the obvious signs that Nayeca was emitting to her unknowingly. Anuk turned between his legs tossing her own long legs over his to the side and she looked at Daniel's handsome face, his dark eyes always making her shudder with adoration and love. They had sworn never to keep anything from each other, and that had only served to make their relationship stronger.

"Daniel?" She asked softly so that only he could hear her. "How... how did you feel when you knew Julie and Anja were together without you?"

Danny stopped chewing his snack bar and looked at her, detecting the seriousness of her question. He swallowed quickly and took a swig of water. "Honestly?" He asked. Anuk nodded as she too took a pull from the canteen. "It didn't bother me." He answered. "I knew they cared as much for each other as they did for me. Why?"

Anuk shrugged. "I was just curious." She said shyly.

Danny smiled and lowered his head, nuzzling her neck and the sensitive outer edge of her elf ear. "It's me Anuk." He said softly.

Anuk closed her eyes and basked in the feelings his aura made wash over her, and she eagerly returned it with her own aura. She was becoming better and better at projecting her love and feelings towards him with her aura and it showed as she felt Danny's arms pull her closer to him.

Anuk looked at him. "I know you have smelled the desire coming from Nayeca." She said softly.

"You mean the desire for you." Dan said with a smile. "That's kind of hard to miss for a wolf as experienced as myself." He said in a mockingly arrogant tone.

Anuk chuckled and punched him gently in his chest. "You can't do arrogance Beloved." Anuk said with a smile. "It doesn't roll off your tongue convincingly enough."

Dan echoed her chuckle. "It was worth a shot." He said with a grin. "Why are you asking me this baby?"

"I've never... I've never had a woman desire me." Anuk said softly. "It is strange."

"If it makes you feel uncomfortable Anuk, just tell her." Dan said.

Anuk shook her head. "It's not that." She said. "After all I've been through... and then finding you... I did not think anything could illicit a response from me."

"And she does?" Dan asked.

Anuk looked at him quickly. "Not if it will make you angry!" She said.

Dan smiled and kissed her softly. "I am comfortable enough with myself Anuk. I can not feel for someone else what I feel for you, and I think you feel the same right?"

Anuk kissed him hard, her hands coming up to touch his face. "You know that to be true Beloved." She said. "I am yours Daniel... for eternity."

"My mother has a female lover." Dan spoke seeing the look of surprise on Anuk's face. He smiled. "Yeah... that's what I said when my brother first told me."

"Kaleena?" Anuk asked speaking of the dark haired young woman who was a regular fixture at their house, and always close by Daniel's mother.

Dan nodded. "My father knows and you see how she is treated. Kaleena is one of our family members as far as everyone is concerned." He said. "My brother suspects that my father and they may have spent time together, but that is none of our business." He brushed some of her rust colored red hair from her face and traced her soft lips. "How you deal with Nayeca is entirely up to you baby." He said. "I will support you in anything, you know that."

Anuk smiled and leaned her head against his chest. "I am probably reading too much into it." She said closing her eyes. "I'm sure it is nothing."

“We have fourth watch, so get some sleep.” He told her with a smile while he pulled her even tighter.

“Do you think they will attempt something tonight?” Vengal asked Aihola in a low whisper.

Aihola looked at him and shook her head. “I honestly don’t know.” She replied. “Hwia seemed to be the more reasonable of the two Elders, but this Aelulip... she is filled with more hate than I have seen. Even more than Lynwe first was.”

Vengal looked at Dekton. “You have remained unusually silent my friend.” He spoke.

Dekton met his eyes. “Unfortunately... I am in no better a position of knowledge than Aihola.” He said. “Their scents tell me they will attack us tonight, at least some of them, but then again I have no proof. This Aelulip is not happy in the least that I have taken Aihola as my mate. And it infuriates her more when we refer to Tarifa in any way.”

“Is she a vampire?” Vengal asked.

Dekton shook his head. “No, of that I am certain. But some of them harbor quite a hatred for anything that does not subscribe to what they believe.”

“Or have been told.” Aihola said.

Dekton looked at her. “You believe that this Aelulip is preaching hate Little Drow?” He asked.

Aihola nodded. “I could see it in her eyes.” She said. “She wants my mother’s medallion as well. It is the symbol of the Queen... the sign of leadership of my people. I believe there is a deep division of the Drow, those that side with Hwia and those that side with Aelulip. Who is stronger I can not say. I do know that Aelulip wants this medallion.” Aihola said caressing the ruby studded medallion. “With it she can claim leadership of the Drow.”

“But you are the Queen’s daughter.” Vengal spoke. “Everyone would know she took it from you, the rightful leader.”

Aihola nodded. “Perhaps... but something tells me she doesn’t care, and nor do those that follow her.” She looked at Nayeca who had sat quietly so far. “Nayeca can you shed any light on this?”

Nayeca looked at her. “Things were not this bad when I was exiled my Queen.” Nayeca spoke. “Aelulip had a small following of traditional Drow, those that believed they could not deviate far from old Drow law. Yet they were few in number, nothing more. She has gained much power since then.” Nayeca took a deep breath. “Hwia has always been the wiser of the two, but her strength is waning, that much is obvious.”

“We should pull back much further.” Vengal spoke, “The next closest city. It would provide us a better defensive position.”

Dekton nodded. “I agree.” He said. “Unless they strike with overwhelming force, they will do nothing more than get their soldiers killed. That does not bode well for us. We can’t order our people to not defend themselves. And the Spartans among us would immediately go on automatic and neutralize any threat in the area. It is bred into us my love.”

Aihola nodded. “I know.” She said softly. “We’ll come back to that.” She said. “I’m more concerned about this information Tarifa has sent us.”

“Dienekes has already sent two teams of snipers back along our path. They will set up in different positions covering the most likely avenues into this valley.” Vengal spoke. “I sent a team of five southeast as well. I can not spare more, it will leave you entirely too under strength here.”

“They have decided upon a new extraction route and I approved it.” Aihola spoke. “It means more trips with our Raptors and transports, but it will keep us out of Alliance territory on the return trip to Eden.”

“I recommend a Bravo Light camp.” Dekton spoke.

Aihola looked at him. “Do you really think they will attack Dekton?” She asked.

“If what you say about this Aelulip and her wanting the medallion, then yes. Anuk’s actions only served to infuriate them further.” Dekton answered. “I believe they will come, and I believe you, Anuk and Nayeca will be the targets of that raid. And anyone else that gets in their way they will have no qualms about killing.”

My love? Aihola reached out within her connection to Tarifa, who she knew had been listening quietly from their home in Eden.

I want to see your people join us almost as much as you Nya Istel. Tarifa answered. *But is it worth risking your life and the lives of everyone there?*

We have come so far though. Aihola said.

And we will go further. Tarifa told her. *Dekton speaks the truth Nya Istel. A Bravo Light camp allows you to be extra cautious and still remain in the area to pursue talks. However... if the Alliance gains more credible information of your location there in Canada you will need to leave immediately.*

Martin? Aihola asked.

Dysea says he is recovering quickly. Tarifa answered. *I have come to realize he is a very hard man to kill.*

Aihola saw Dekton smile and nod his head. *That he is. He spoke within their connection.*

Keep us updated my love. Aihola told her. *And I will do as you ask me.*

I will contact you the moment new information comes in. Tarifa said. *I truly do not want to lose either of you so please be careful. I do not wish to, but I will descend on that city with every division we have here if I need to. And I will raze it to the ground to get you both back.*

Aihola smiled at the forceful and commanding tone of Tarifa's words and she looked at Dekton seeing his smile as well. *And that is why we love you so much.* She replied. *We will be extra cautious.*

Thank you Nya Istel, Tarifa said. *I will leave you to finish your plans.*

Aihola looked at Vengal. "We'll make a Bravo Light camp." She said. "Pass the word silently but quickly. Full darkness is almost upon us, and they will undoubtedly wait until the early morning hours when they think we will be less alert."

"And the Rules of Engagement my Queen, what are they?" Vengal asked.

Aihola looked at him, her amber eyes flint hard and unforgiving. "If they wish to attack us then they will suffer for it. Our people are weapons free General. Pass that word as well."

Vengal nodded slowly. "Perhaps we are over reacting, but I will let everyone know." He got up and faded into the slowly darkening forest like a ghost.

"Nayeca... make your way back to Daniel and Anuk. Stay close to them." Aihola spoke.

"My Queen, why did you not just turn me over to them?" Nayeca asked softly. "It might not have come to this if you had."

Aihola nodded, "Perhaps." She said. "I don't particularly care for being bullied around however, and turning you over to them would have been flat out wrong."

"I did... I did break our laws." Nayeca said.

"Refusing to be raped is not breaking any law that I know of." Aihola snapped. "Not that any civilized people follow."

Nayeca nodded slowly and turned to move to where Daniel and Anuk had set their small fire. Dekton moved closer to Aihola, wrapping his arms around her shoulders and pulling her into his embrace. He leaked his aura out enough to engulf her and she melted into his arms with a blissful sigh, feeling him course through her veins.

"You have acted as a Queen would Little Drow. Never doubt that." He told her softly.

"I guess the excitement of seeing more of my people overcame the knowledge that they might not have changed a whole lot." Aihola said.

"Then you will change those that wish to be changed." Dekton said.

"And those that don't want to change?" Aihola asked looking up into his beautiful dark blue eyes, "What about them my love Dekton?"

"They will either conform to the majority, or they will die by the blade and gun." Dekton told her. "Your people are formidable warriors Little Drow, but even they can not stand alone against the vampires, and the same slaughter that claimed your mother will claim those that do not wish to change and move forward."

Aihola nodded, wrapping her arms around the only man she had ever truly loved in her life. "That is what I'm afraid of."

Dekton nuzzled her hair, his rough cheek scraping against her sensitive elf ear and he pulled her even closer. "Save those you can Little Drow." He said softly. "They will be the ones worth saving, for they will want to be saved."

"And what about the rest of them," Aihola asked closing her eyes.

"As I believe our King would say, they can go right straight to hell." Dekton told her.

SPARTA

“...came to me once he discovered that Lilika and I had been meeting secretly for over a year.” Atropos spoke his hands wrapped around the mug of now cold tea. The sun was up and shining brightly into the small house. Lilika sat next to him, her shoulder touching his bare arm. Dysea had listened intently, but also taking the time to see how she looked at him as he spoke. The love in her hazel eyes for Atropos was very evident, regardless of their extreme difference in age. Dysea knew it was severely looked down upon for a wolf as old as Atropos to even think of courting a female over a thousand years younger than him. It was one of the things she had first learned when coming to Sparta, and she had yet to see it until this morning. The feeling and adoration floated between the two of them as easily as any younger couple she had seen since being in Sparta. Atropos’s aura wrapped around Lilika with ease, enveloping her protectively, possessively, and Lilika basked in that feeling Dysea saw.

“It was Autolyclus who suggested to my father that he say Atropos attempted to rape me.” Lilika spoke now. “They knew I would never tell anyone he had raped me. They knew I loved him, and they sent me away to Athens until after they had plotted and schemed and got their way. When I returned to Sparta I found out I was to be Midlan’s mate, that my father had promised my hand to him. I was livid and refused to go through with it. Autolyclus told me he would have the charge upgraded to rape if I did not do as I was told. Atropos would be put to death and his family stripped of everything. I could not bear to watch as they killed the man I loved, so I agreed.”

“Then how did Autolyclus have your family dishonored?” Dysea asked.

“It happened over a period of several years. He was very ingenious about it.” Atropos replied. “Rumors here... stories there. Finally the Senate voted on it and took everything from my parents. My brothers were allowed to remain as Centurions though they did not want to. I told them I would beat them within an inch of their lives if they left the service of Sparta. They dishonored me... I accepted that. But attacking my family later was not in the agreement I made.”

“Agreement?” Walter said leaning forward, “Agreement with whom?”

Atropos looked at him surprised. “You don’t know?” He asked shocked. “I thought that was one of the reasons you were here.”

“This is the first we have heard of any agreement.” Walter spoke. “The facts in regards to your case are very general and all circumstantial. And the King did not find the confession you signed with the records.”

“The King?” Atropos spoke looking at his uncle. “Why would the King of Sparta have any interest?”

“He has claimed Aricia as his mate, and she has claimed him as well.” Dysea replied. “He claimed her under the Centennial of the Moon as he claimed me and Anja that same night. Not to mention that the three of us are... we are very close.”

Atropos looked at Dysea his eyes wide as he understood her meaning and the fact she was not shy about it in the least. “He knew she was dishonored, and still he did this?” Atropos asked not believing what he was hearing.

Dysea smiled. “*Nauta Melme* is not one to follow rules he does not like or that he feels are unjust.” She replied. “He no more cares that Little Wolf is supposedly dishonored than he cares that the sky is blue. He allows his heart to lead him in matters of love, and not some ridiculous laws.”

“Little Wolf?” Atropos asked.

Dysea nodded with a smile. “That is what we call her. It is our way of showing her our love and affection.”

Walter lifted his hand. “Tell us of this agreement?” He asked again.

Atropos looked at him and nodded. “Autolyclus told me I would not face death and that my family would not bear the shame of what they said I did if I simply disappeared. He lied to me, and when I confronted him about it they told me I had to accept it or I would be put to death for rape. Even my own father demanded I accept the punishment. I have hated him ever since. What was I to do?”

“Is Autolyclus working with the vampires?” Dysea asked pointedly.

Atropos met her gaze. “They both are.” He answered. “I discovered this many years later, but no one would believe me if I came forward. I would be arrested and silenced within hours of entering Sparta.”

“Then that means your...” Walter looked at him.

Atropos nodded his head. “My father has been working with the vampires as well. He is so possessed with getting his honor back that he would side with the devil himself, regardless of the cost to others.”

Dysea looked at Walter and they both turned to him. “We believe you.” Dysea spoke.

“Atropos... you say both of them are.” Walter spoke. “Are you speaking of Midlan?”

“Midlan?” Atropos snorted. “He’s a lap dog to his father! Lilika never even spoke to him unless she needed too. And every time he touched her I wanted to skin him for it!”

Lilika shook her head, her hands taking Atropos’s arm. “Midlan fancies himself superior, when in fact he is as dumb as a post.” She spoke.

“Then who are you speaking of?” Walter asked.

Atropos looked at him. “I would have thought you knew Uncle. You knew the man he impersonates as Aristodermos.”

“What do you mean?” Walter asked a sinking feeling in his gut. “Aristodermos reclaimed his honor at Plataea, even though in my opinion he should have never been dishonored to begin with. The man could barely see. He only changed his name to Theron many years later to rid himself of the stigma. Are you saying Theron...”

“Theron murdered the real Aristodermos three months after Plataea Uncle, and with the vampires help he assumed his identity.” Atropos spoke softly.

“Preposterous!” Walter exclaimed. “I have known the man for millennia! What you say is simply not true.”

“I watched him for two years once I was banished.” Atropos spoke. “It was he who stood beside Autolycus and demanded I agree to their terms! I watched him... and I saw him enter the vampire castle near Athens four times in those two years alone!”

“How could this be?” Walter asked not believing him.

“It is the vampire witch’s doing.” Atropos spoke, getting to his feet and moving to the low sofa. He reached down and shoved it aside, revealing a locked panel in the floor. He quickly dropped to one knee and dialed in a combination on the floor safe and yanked it open. He reached down up to his elbows into the safe and came back up a moment later with three very dusty and ancient looking books. He marched back to the table and dropped them in front of his uncle. “I stole these from the vampire castle centuries ago. They never knew I was there as I had planned the mission meticulously. They are entries into a journal of the vampire witch, and copies of reports she sent to her father.” He sat back down. “I never knew where she was sending them, but now we all do. When Xerxes was defeated, his father put her in charge, we now know that. They have always had abilities we can not explain, but now that we know who and what we are, it all seems rather plain. His face was surgically altered by the vampires to look exactly like Aristodermos and the witch used her own telepathic skills to imprint all of the memories of Aristodermos into this man so that he could act the part.”

“You can’t alter a scent Atropos.” Walter spoke. “Theron’s scent hasn’t changed in all the years I have known him.”

“Aristodermos’s scent glands were surgically removed and placed inside this man.” Atropos said. “It’s all in those reports Uncle. I did not know what they meant at the time, but I do now. The vampires have had a spy inside Sparta at the highest level for over two thousand years, and we were none the wiser.”

“But... but then who is he?” Walter asked. “If he is not Aristodermos... then who is he?”

“His name is Ephialtes.” The deep voice spoke from the door.

Dysea and the others spun around instantly and saw Martin and Andreus standing in the doorway of Atropos’s home. Lilika and Atropos immediately fell to one knee while Dysea nearly jumped from her chair and was in Martin’s arms in five steps. She nearly wept when he enveloped her with his aura, his arms pulling her tightly to him, burying his face in her platinum hair and nuzzling her throat.

Dysea pulled back quickly and looked up into his face. “*Nauta Melme*... you should...”

Martin smiled and pulled her back to him in a blistering kiss that had jolts of pleasure shooting through her in seconds. She melded into his embrace, pressing her body tightly against him and returned every ounce of the passion in the kiss. All the long hours of worry for him while he lay in the hospital, wondering what was going to happen to them if he died. Martin pulled away slowly, letting his tongue dance across her sweet lips a moment longer before her looked into her emerald eyes.

“I am fine *Melda Min*.” He told her. “A little sore... but the Chief Surgeon gave me a clean bill of health, as he did Andreus.”

Dysea looked at him and saw Andreus smile. “It helps when I have an elf mate who is one of the finest healers in Sparta.” He said. “She told me if I died on her so soon after claiming her under the Centennial of the Moon she would beat my ass. I believe her.”

Dysea couldn't help but laugh and she reached out to hug Andreus quickly, surprising him somewhat, but she quickly returned to Martin's embrace. Walter stepped up to him and put his hand on his shoulder, squeezing the thick muscle there.

“It is good to see you up and about.” He spoke genuine warmth in his voice. “Does anyone know you are here?”

Martin shook his head. “I left from the rear of the hospital and made my way by back alley to the villa. Andreus and I then cut through the mountains and made our way here. Everyone is still acting as if I am in the hospital room.”

“We came here to...” Walter started.

Martin nodded. “I know why you came here.” He said firmly, moving around Dysea and stepping over to where Atropos and Lilika remained on one knee, their heads bowed. “So you are Aricia's brother Atropos.”

“Yes... yes Milord.” Atropos answered visibly shaken by the force of Martin's aura. It pulsed with raw, unadulterated power.

“Tell me Atropos...” Martin spoke. “Is she worth everything you have put your family through? All the pain and whispered rumors, all the vile comments and dishonor your family has had to endure. Is she worth it?”

“Sire you...” Andreus stepped forward willing to defend his older brother but he stopped when Martin's hand came up.

Atropos looked oddly at Martin. “I do not... I do not understand your question Milord.”

Martin backhanded Atropos viciously, sending the older Spartan sailing across the floor his body flipping over. Lilika cried out in horror and went to get up and run to him. Dysea's hands stopped her as she felt what her beloved was doing. “No!” She spoke holding Lilika.

Atropos glared up at Martin as he stepped up to him. “Do not insult my intelligence Atropos!” Martin growled. “I asked you a question and I want an answer!”

“Milord I...” Atropos began to reply but Martin reached down and grabbed his shirt yanking him to his feet and body tossing him across the living room, flipping over the couch and slamming him into the far wall cracking his head. Lilika screamed again, struggling in Dysea's grip.

Atropos rolled over and began to climb to his feet but froze when he heard the *Nehtes* extend and the spearhead press to his throat. He looked up into the face of his King seeing the calmest killing eyes he had ever witnessed in his long life.

“Do you know how many laws you have broken?” Martin snapped. “Do you know how many people you have hurt? This is the woman you are said to have tried raping, and here you are now, banging a married woman! The same woman that is responsible for every bad thing that has happened to your family in the last millennia! Answer me damn it!”

“Yes I know what I have done! I will not beg for forgiveness! I will not regret the love I have for her!” Atropos yelled, feeling the *Nehtes* pressed harder against his flesh.

“Then answer my fucking question or I will spill your blood in front of her!” Martin exclaimed. “Was she worth it?”

“Yes!” Atropos screamed. “Yes she is worth it! And she is worth far more than what I have suffered! I would do it again and not change a thing! Our love has given me two strong sons that will carry on my name when you execute me!” Lilika cried out at this. “I will accept whatever fate you deem for me; all I ask is that you allow my sons to carry my name!”

Martin pulled the *Nehtes* away from his throat instantly, collapsing it in the blink of an eye. “Good... but you are in no position to ask me for anything.” Martin said. “I'm glad she was worth it, for now you will stand before me in judgment. You will dig your Spartan armor out of whatever closet you have buried it in and you will report to the Senate Hall in two hours Atropos. You and Lilika will stand next to each other with your two sons and you will face judgment; my judgment as King.”

Atropos took a deep breath and nodded his head slowly. "I vowed I would never come forward until the Spartan King was among us once more." He spoke. "I will do as you order sire, on whatever honor I may still have as a Spartan."

"Good... because I intend to deal with that fucking traitor Ephialtes and all my other problems in one shot." Martin spoke. "My city will no longer be divided!"

"Martin... Theron... he can't be Ephialtes. That man was killed ten years after Thermopylae by Athenades of Trachis." Walter spoke. "I was one of six who witnessed his remains before we gave out the reward."

Martin looked at him. "The remains you saw were not Ephialtes." He said. "The Oracle visited me last night in my thoughts. We had a rather revealing discussion Helen and I. She helped me to see many things, some that I had already figured out, and some that came as a complete surprise to me. As we speak she is mobilizing the Watchers and gathering all the information I need."

"Information you need for what *Nauta Melme*?" Dysea asked softly, stepping up to him and touching his arm.

Martin turned to look at her, his eyes changed to the yellow gold of his wolf half. "The information I need to purge our city and make it safe once more *Melda Min*." He turned to Walter again. "My father asked you not so long ago if you would provide me council if I ever needed it. Do you remember?"

Walter nodded. "A request I will honor until I breathe my last." He answered.

"Then I ask that you become the Senior Polemarch of the Spartan Army." Martin told him seeing the look in Walter's eyes.

In days of old the Senior Spartan Polemarch was second only to the King in command on the field of battle. It was the Senior Polemarch who would assume command if the King fell during battle and his authority to make tactical decisions was second only to that of the King.

"Martin... there are... there are many young officers who are better qualified than me for such a position of honor." Walter said softly.

"You have served as Guardian of the Line since the death of my father." Martin said. "You are a Spartan above all else, and I can think of no one with your experience to fill that position. Sparta is more your city than mine in many ways, and I ask that you help me take her back."

Walter stared at the son of the King he had sworn to serve all those years ago. He remembered the look in Leonidas's eyes on that battlefield of blood and death when he had asked him to watch over his bloodline and insure that it did not die; to insure that humans on earth would not perish at the hands of the vampire hordes. He took a deep breath and nodded his head, the swell of Spartan pride almost visible in his eyes. "So be it." He said softly. "I accept."

Martin nodded with a smile. "Good... I didn't want to have to make it an order."

"I have one request Milord." Walter spoke.

Martin nodded. "Name it."

"If what you... if what you say is true... I want the pleasure of butchering that traitorous bastard myself." Walter spoke... feeling younger than he had in years. "I have three hundred messages to send to him!"

Martin grinned. "Consider it done." He spoke. He turned back to Atropos. "Two hours! Do not be late... and if you decide to not show up... know that there will be no place on this planet where you will be safe."

"I will be there." Atropos spoke, Lilika holding to his arm tightly.

Martin nodded and grasped Dysea's hand. "I will see you then."

"...doctor is still not letting anyone in to see him." Dilios spoke to the Senate members. "He says the King's injuries are quite severe and he needs to rest if he is to survive. Spartan Royal Guards blanket the entire floor and if there is not a good reason for being there they will react accordingly."

"So he is near death?" Theron asked from his Steward's chair.

Dilios nodded. "It would appear so." He answered solemnly appearing almost defeated in his actions.

Autolycus came to his feet. "We must hold a vote now on the One Ascension Law!" He exclaimed.

Dilios whirled around and glared at him. "The King is not dead!" He barked.

“You said yourself the doctors say he might not survive.” Autolycus spoke calmly. “Sparta can not go any longer without a King! The Alliance grows increasingly stronger every year, while our population grows normally! As King I will barter a solid agreement with the vampires that we retain our rights as a sovereign city state.”

“You wish to make peace with them!” Arete shouted coming to her feet. “After all they have done!”

“Yes! Peace is preferable to war and death!” Autolycus replied.

Dilios turned to look at Theron. “Do something!” He spoke.

“What would you have me do?” Theron answered. “Autolycus is within his rights to call a vote.”

“This is outrageous!” Another Senator snapped coming to his feet. “King Leonidas would never make peace with the vampires!”

“Leonidas is dead!” Autolycus screamed. “He has been dead for thousands of years! When will all of you see that? It was he who brought this upon us in the first place by facing Xerxes at Thermopylae. If he had accepted what Xerxes offered him, all of us would be wealthy and powerful beyond our imaginations!”

“You speak treason!” Dilios yelled.

“Treason?” Autolycus spoke. “We have been a divided city for millennia! I will bring us back together!”

“By forging an alliance with the vampires and bartering away our freedoms. You saw what all of us saw! They control thousands upon thousands of planets across the universe. Our people... our true people fight them even now!” Dilios demanded.

Autolycus waved his hand. “And if the Lycavorian King had not revolted we would not be in this position. We would never have come here to this planet and built Sparta to what it was.”

“No we would still be slaves to the vampires!” Arete spoke.

“Better slaves than dead!” Autolycus snapped. His eyes saw the nodding of heads among the Senators. Many of them had not spoken just yet, only those most loyal to the bloodline of Leonidas had protested what he was saying. He felt his heart skip a beat as he realized he could pull this off and claim what he had wanted for centuries. “I like the vampires no more than those of you in this room, but what alternative to we have? I wish to see my son,” He motioned to where Midlan sat in the gallery, Aricia’s father next to him. “I wish to see my son have more children. I wish to see peace for our people. Fully half of our resources are expended in training and weapons of war. We have battled the vampires for centuries, continually losing men and women who would still be with us if things were different.”

“They died for Sparta!” Dilios yelled. “In service to those they loved and honored. Protecting what we have!”

“And look where it has gotten us!” Autolycus roared. “Our population has increased by only twenty-two percent in two thousand years! We have allowed elves to join our culture; even humans have been brought into the fold now and this has only weakened our people!”

“That is a lie!” Arete screamed.

“Is it?” Autolycus said. “We were strong once, when all we had in our ranks were our own people; Spartans of pureblood. Now we are nothing but mongrels, no better than dogs really.” He walked down to the floor of the Hall and looked at the men and women. “I can provide us with leadership that will see our people grow once more.”

“You think the vampires will allow that?” Dilios spoke. “You are a fool!”

“I have the assurance of the Vampire Prefect,” Autolycus answered quickly, “And a document signed by the Vampire Princess herself.” This news sent a wave of murmurs through the men and women. “All she demands is that we stop fighting them at every turn, and bow to the will of her father the High Lord.”

“You would make us slaves to the vampires once more!” Dilios yelled, “How can you even bring this forward to this Senate?”

“Now is the time!” Autolycus spoke. “The vampire princess is going to move against the rebellious elf clans in North America with her new genetically engineered vampire soldiers. These soldiers are stronger and tougher than anything we have faced in the past. When she defeats the elves with her new vampire soldiers, we will be all that is left. Do you wish to die or see your grandchildren grow to adulthood?”

“I wish my grandchildren to be free, and not have to submit to vampire rule and slavery.” Dilios snapped.

“Your people would not be slaves.” The voice spoke from the side and all their heads turned to see the tall lean man enter the Hall with two others. That they were vampires was obvious, the wolves could smell them easily.

Dilios glared at Autolycus. “You bring our enemy to this Hall!” He screamed. “You commit treason before the eyes of this very Senate body.”

“I offered the Prefect protection to come here and tell all of you himself what I am trying to tell you.” Autolycus spoke.

The vampire prefect stepped forward, his skin pale in the light. His black hair was slicked back, his obsidian eyes evil. “I speak with the voice of Princess Yuri and Prince Xerxes of the Vampire High Coven.” He spoke calmly. “I come here under the banner of truce. Prince Xerxes is only five days away from earth with ships and soldiers. Your people will be outnumbered five or six to one when combined with the Princess’s new troops. Prince Xerxes offers you a truce. Submit to the will of his father, and turn over the descendant of Leonidas, and he gives you his word Sparta will be spared, and in fact rewarded.”

“And we are supposed to believe you!” Dilios snarled. “After all that your people have done and continue to do?”

“The rebellion that goes on off this planet is none of your concern.” The Prefect spoke calmly. “You have an opportunity to become a model for others across the universe. Work with us and you will not be destroyed.”

“As your slaves, as so many of our people still are!” Arete snapped.

“Many of your kind have come to see what we represent and work with the High Coven willingly.” The Prefect spoke.

“Then they are traitors!” Another Senator popped.

“They know they can’t fight us.” The Prefect told them. “And they cherish their lives more than death.”

“We have fought you!” Dilios barked. “Our people have fought you across the stars!”

The Prefect nodded. “Yes and where has that got you? The rebellion has no interest in this planet or those of you here. If they did why have they left you alone and on your own for so many millennia?” He stepped closer to Dilios. “Even now... they have no ships coming to your aide. They have left you and the descendant of Leonidas to fight and die for yourselves. He is supposedly their King, yet they send nothing to help him. It does not have to be that way.”

Dilios smiled. “You’re right. It doesn’t have to be that way. And it won’t be that way.”

The vampire Prefect glanced at Autolycus at this new tact from Dilios, confusion on his face. “All you need do to save your people is to elect Autolycus as your King, and the peace agreement we have started with him will be made into law.” He looked at the men and women. “The only other part of that peace agreement is that you give us the descendant of Leonidas so that we can insure his death, or punish him for crimes against the High Coven.”

“Oh I have only just begun to commit crimes against the Vampire High Coven.” The deep voice bellowed from the doorway.

Over a hundred heads turned to see Martin enter the chamber, lowering all of his psychic shields and allowing his aura to batter the men and women in the room. He walked slowly into the chamber, Dysea beside him looking proud and strong. Andreus and fully three dozen Spartan Royal Guards swept into the Senate Chamber, their weapons out and ready to use, their faces stern and unreadable.

Martin stopped in front of Autolycus and smiled. “Top of the morning to you scum bag!” He spoke loudly with a large smile. “We seem to keep bumping into each other this way. Fancy that.”

“Dilios... Dilios said you... he said you were on your death bed.” Autolycus spoke clearly surprised to see Martin.

Martin nodded. “Yeah... well unlike many others in this chamber, Dilios is loyal to Sparta. He told you what I asked him to tell you.”

Autolycus snapped his head around to glare at Dilios, his pudgy face breaking into a wide smile. “You lied to this Senate?” He demanded.

Martin shook his head. “He did what his King asked him too.” He said. He glared at Autolycus. “I told you not so long ago I would not allow a member of the Eurypontid line to sit on the throne of Sparta ever again. Did you think I was kidding?”

“You can not stop a vote of the Senate!” Autolyclus snapped. “I have enough votes to overturn the One Ascension Law! I will be King!”

Martin nodded. “I’m sure you do.” He said with a smile. “But that would only work if you were still a Senator.”

Autolyclus looked at him oddly. “I am third most senior Senator here!” He snapped. “And you will treat me with the respect due my station, even if you are King.”

Martin nodded. “Fair enough,” Martin snapped out with the vicious and lightning like strike of the heel of his palm. The blow slammed into Autolyclus’s chest like a hammer, sending him reeling back to smash into the low wall that surrounded the Senate seats. He flipped over backwards, his head smashing against a chair before he thudded to the floor. “That’s for being a lying fucking politician!” Martin screamed.

Autolyclus scrambled to his feet, his dark eyes now changed and his fangs extended. A small trickle of blood leaked from his forehead. “I do not lie!” He screamed. “And you will pay for your insolence.”

“You don’t lie?” Martin asked calmly. “You have been lying to these men and women for years, and working with the vampires for an equal amount of time to undermine everything that Sparta was founded on.”

“You know nothing of what you speak!” Autolyclus snapped.

“Don’t I?” Martin said, “Atropos!”

Everyone turned to see Atropos enter the chamber, his head held high, and dressed in the full armor of a Spartan, his *Nehtes* strapped to his thigh. Under his arm he carried the books and scrolls he had stolen from the Vampire castle wrapped in a plain cloth. He dwarfed the small female wolf that stood beside him proudly, holding the helmet of a full Spartan in her hands. Lilika’s face was brilliant in the light of the chamber and she turned her head to the side as the two handsome young Spartan Centurions rose from their seats in the gallery. They had been called to this session of the Senate by Dilios, but did not know why. They watched their mother’s beaming face turn to them and smile.

“Mother what are you doing?” The oldest asked her, getting to his feet.

“What I should have done many years ago.” She whispered to them. “I will no longer keep secrets from you. And this is one secret you both need to know.”

“Why are you with... mother why are you walking with Atropos?” The younger son asked. “He is dishonored among the Spartans. He should not even be here.”

Lilika set the helmet down and took their hands, squeezing them tightly. “This is something we must do together.” She said to them.

“What do you mean?”

Lilika picked up the helmet and moved quickly back to Atropos’s side, causing Midlan to come to his feet, anger in his eyes. “Why is my mate here?” He demanded. “And why is she walking beside this dog?”

Andreas stepped up to him and hit him squarely on the jaw with a punch fueled by decades of anger and hate and injustice. “My brother is more a man than you will ever be!” He yelled at Midlan as he curled up on the floor.

Xenos pounced to his feet and grabbed his son’s arm. “What are you doing?” He hissed.

Andreas yanked his arm away from his father’s grasp, “What you should have done centuries ago traitor!” He snapped at his father.

Atropos and Lilika stepped up behind Martin and stopped, looking at their King’s back. Autolyclus’s face now showed his concern. “Why is this man here?” He demanded. “And why is he wearing the crimson of a Spartan? He was banished from Sparta for his vile actions. And why does he stand next to my son’s mate? Lilika... you will take your place beside your mate immediately.”

Lilika drew herself up to her full height of five foot two. “I *am* standing beside my mate.” She spoke clearly and loudly enough for everyone in the chamber to hear. “I am standing beside my mate *and* the father of my two sons!”

Men and women alike began to shout questions and demand answers, all the while Lilika simply turned to look at Atropos and smile in adoration. Her two sons also came to their feet in shock and something else they couldn’t explain. Their mother had always hated Midlan, and that hate transferred easily to her sons. He had never been a father to them, never around when they needed a father. It had always been their mother. It was she who had trained them in secret, preparing them for their Agoge. They had always questioned how she knew what to train them, or where she had acquired such skill, and she had always given them the same answer. It

was a gift from their real father, and she had always looked to the mountains when she said that. They had assumed she was thanking the gods, now it seemed she had been thanking someone entirely different.

Martin's *Nehtes* appeared in his hand and extended in a split second. He slammed the weighted end onto the floor of the chamber, the sharp retort echoing like thunder within the chamber.

"There will be silence!" He shouted, his voice bellowing in the confines of the room. The response was instantaneous and the chamber fell silent. Martin smiled. "That's better!"

"What trickery is this?" Autolycus demanded now. "How dare you bring this dishonored dog before this Senate with these lies? Lilika is my son's mate, those are his sons! What manner of blasphemy do you attempt now?"

"How does the truth grab you?" Martin said before turning and looking at Atropos.

"Lilika you will take your place at Midlan's side!" Autolycus yelled.

Lilika looked at him and with as much force as she could muster she took a deep breath and spit at Autolycus. The spittle landed on his left cheek as gasps of horror sounded in the chamber. Autolycus's eyes went wide as he felt the spittle roll down his skin and he glared at her.

"You bitch!" He screamed, drawing back his hand to strike her.

Lilika stood there defiantly, not attempting to defend herself in the least, glaring at him. Her two sons moved to protect their mother, but were far slower in their reaction time than Atropos. With a growl of an Alpha wolf defending his mate he dropped the vampire books and his *Nehtes* appeared in his hand fully extended. With barely a flick of his powerful wrist the spearhead met Autolycus's forearm in mid swing and sliced through the flesh and bone as if it was butter. His arm from the forearm down plopped wetly on the floor of the Senate chamber. As Autolycus staggered back, howling in pain Atropos stepped into him, shoving him back away from Lilika with the blunt end of his spear.

"If you or your son or any of your minions ever touch my mate again I will slaughter every member of your pathetic blood line you fucking pig!" Atropos screamed at him.

"Seize him!" A senator yelled pointing at Atropos. "Arrest him!"

Andreas and the rest of the Royal Guard remained in their places, smiles on their faces. "Arrest him yourself." Andreas spoke calmly.

Midlan sprang to his feet. "Stop this!" He yelled. "She is my mate! I demand..." His words were cut off when Dysea's fingers jabbed into his throat. He gagged; his eyes wide as his hands reached for his neck. Her blow had been sharp enough to paralyze his vocal cords almost instantly, but not strong enough to crush his larynx.

"Sit down!" Dysea barked shoving him back into his seat, her hand filling with her own *Nehtes*. She drove the spear down into the floor with enough force to pierce Midlan's entire foot. His eyes bugged out in agony, but he was unable to scream, and it came out in a muffled wheezing whimper. Dysea wrenched her *Nehtes* out of his foot with barely any effort, blood splashing wetly on the floor. "And shut the fuck up!"

Martin chuckled at her actions and turned to look at Autolycus. He saw Dilios approach carefully, as he was not aware of what was going on either. "Milord..." He spoke in a soft voice. "What... what is going on Milord?"

"We should ask the dear Senator Autolycus what is going on." Martin spoke, his eyes never leaving the man's face. "Atropos... step back." Atropos didn't hesitate and stepped back quickly to stand beside Lilika. He felt her hand slip into his and he squeezed her soft skin. "I had hoped that it would not come to this." Martin spoke. "I can see that we'll have to do things the hard way."

"You have allowed... you have allowed this to happen." Autolycus gasped out, tucking his severed arm against his side to staunch the flow of blood. His wolf healing system was already working to seal off the veins and limit the blood loss. "You... you may be... King... but you... you are not above the law!"

"So I've been told." Martin spoke calmly. "However... at this moment I am going to uphold the law."

"No one will... no one will believe anything Atropos says!" Autolycus hissed. "He holds no honor in this chamber... or in Sparta! Nothing you will do can change that! He broke our laws! He... he attempted to force himself upon my son's mate! He..."

"Shut up!" Martin snapped. "The only Spartan law Atropos is guilty of is mating with a female who had not yet reached the age of consent! That is the only law this man has broken! And I will punish him for that as King!"

“You lie!” Autolycus snarled.

“Do I?” Martin spoke. He reached down and picked up one of the vampire books Atropos had carried. The cloth surrounding them fell away and the Vampire Prefect stepped forward quickly when he saw the books. “Where did you get those?” He demanded. “Those are...”

Andreas stepped in front of him, his *Nehtes* pressing to the man’s chest as half a dozen Royal Guards surrounded him and the two soldiers with him.

“You stand there and be silent bloodsucker!” Dysea hissed. “We will deal with you in due time!”

Martin held up the book for Autolycus and everyone to see. “I’m sure you all recognize a vampire scroll when you see one.” He spoke. “These three scroll books were taken from the very vampire castle that sits not six miles on the other side of the mountains to the north, very much outside of Spartan territory; the very same vampire castle that has stood there for centuries, watching and waiting for Sparta to fall. At this moment, ten thousand Spartan Centurions are about to bring it crashing down!” Martin smiled when he saw the stunned looks of shock at the men and women in the chamber, and the look on the Prefect’s face. “Your little stronghold will be rubble in a few hours.” Martin told him.

“This will not go unpunished!” The Prefect shouted. “You will...”

Andreas reached out and slapped the man, staggering him back and silencing his words. “Do not speak vampire scum!” Andreas said.

“These scrolls are the journal entries and communications between the Vampire bitch Yuri and her father. They detail the plan that was put in place and executed in order to dishonor Atropos. This was done as a means of control so that Autolycus would eventually have an easier time succeeding to the throne of Sparta.” Martin spoke holding the book out to Dilios. “See for yourselves what your fellow Senator has been doing for the last two thousand years or so.” He grabbed the other two books and tossed them at two different Senators who caught them and immediately began opening them and reading.

Martin turned to Autolycus. “You have been betraying your own people and Sparta for your own personal gain Autolycus. Atropos did not rape Lilika. He did not even attempt to rape her. It was a very consensual act. You banished an innocent man... stripped him of his honor and that of his family, all so you could one day rule Sparta. Your actions have caused countless problems, and they have even made good men become bad men; men that now must bear the consequences of the actions you had them conduct.”

Xenos felt the presence of the two Royal Guards on either side of him and he looked up into their stern and unforgiving faces. He turned to look at Andreas but found only hate and anger. Atropos didn’t even bother to look at his father.

“It’s actually a very good thing,” Martin continued speaking. “And I’ll tell you why. Even though you exiled him, Atropos had one thing that kept him from leaving. And she is standing next to him. The two Spartans that are her sons... they aren’t Midlan’s children you fool, they are of Atropos’s blood! He is their father... a fact that perhaps one day they will come to honor no thanks to you.” Martin watched him get to his feet slowly, gripping the railing of the small wall. “Even though he was banished... even though everything he honored was taken from him, he still acted as a Spartan. He loved this city and the woman he stands next to, and he did not desert them. And he discovered your treachery a long time ago, waiting for the right time to bring it into the open. The proof is right there! How are you going to refute that?”

Autolycus remained silent, shaking in rage. Theron stepped forward. “Milord... perhaps we need time to absorb everything you have put forth to us. Perhaps...”

Martin turned quickly and threw his *Nehtes* with every ounce of strength he had in his shoulder and arm. The *Nehtes* crossed the several meters in the blink of an eye and pierced Theron just below his shoulder blade, blood erupting from the wound in a splatter. The *Nehtes* was thrown with enough force to cause him to stagger back quickly, the spearhead becoming imbedded into the wall of the chamber behind where he had been standing. Martin heard the cries of horror at this and he turned to walk over to Theron slowly. His face was twisted in pain, his right hand attempting to dislodge the *Nehtes* from his flesh with little success. His eyes turned to look at Martin when he stopped in front of him.

“Mi... Milord?” He questioned... his face a mask of pain. “What...”

“Did you think I wouldn’t find out who you really were?” Martin growled in a low voice. “Did you actually think I would not recognize the man who betrayed my father and the men who died at Thermopylae?”

This caused every head in the chamber to turn towards him. Dilios stepped up to him his eyes wide. “Sire... what... Theron has served Sparta as the Steward of the Throne since...”

“For far too long,” Martin said calmly his eyes never leaving Theron’s. “How did it make you feel watching Xerxes and his men slaughter my father? You must have felt something, so tell me. Why would you betray him like that?”

“I did not...” Theron began to speak.

Martin’s hand reached up and grabbed the *Nehtes*, twisting it violently causing Theron to cry out in agony. “If you lie to me I will smash every bone in your body and crucify you on the trees surrounding my father tomb so you can see what your betrayal wrought.”

“Money...” Theron gasped, “Money and power!”

“And you got neither!” Martin screamed. “Xerxes betrayed you just as you betrayed my father!”

“I... I have worked... I have worked to better Sparta since then sire.” Theron gasped. “I have...”

“I have someone who wants to say hello to you traitor.” Martin said with a cruel smile, “Someone who has held a grudge against you for three thousand years... Ephialtes.”

Dilios’s head snapped around to look at Theron, “Ephialtes?” He gasped. “How... how can that be?”

Martin never took his eyes from Theron. “Thank the vampires for that. Ephialtes here killed the real Aristodermos, and then they altered his appearance and the vampire princess used her telepathic talents to imprint Aristodermos’s memories into his mind so that he could assume completely the role of Aristodermos.”

Dilios’s eyes narrowed and he glared at Theron. “Is... is this true?” He shouted.

Theron laughed softly. “It almost worked.” He said. “I almost ruled Sparta.”

Walter stepped from the door to Theron’s left, a savage smile on his face, the glint of recognition in his eyes. “I... I didn’t want to believe.” He said softly. “Yet even now... even now you hold no remorse for your actions.”

“Leonidas was a war mongering fool!” Ephialtes/Theron said. “The vampires could have made us rich beyond measure! We... we would have been the most powerful city state in the world. An international power! All we had to do was submit to their will.”

Walter looked at Martin, “Sire?”

Martin reached up and yanked his *Nehtes* from Theron’s shoulder without pause, blood splattering his face in several drops. Theron collapsed to the floor in a heap, defeat pouring from him in waves. “Take him.” Martin said.

Walter motioned to two of the Royal Guards who had come through the door with him, and the two men reached down and hauled Theron to his feet heedless of his gasps of pain. Walter glared at him. “I am going to revisit upon you ten fold the pain my King suffered before he fell.” Walter spoke in a low voice.

“I... I will tell you nothing.” Theron spoke.

Walter laughed. “I’m not going to interrogate you fool.” He spoke, seeing Theron’s face show his surprise. “I’m going to kill you Ephialtes, and I’m going to take my time doing it.”

“No! You can’t!” Theron screamed. “That... that is not...”

Martin turned back to Autolycus as Theron’s voice disappeared behind the door they carried him through. He collapsed his *Nehtes* and smiled at Autolycus. “Now what do we do with you?” Martin asked. “Do you think your vote for changing the One Ascension Law will pass now?”

Autolycus didn’t have to look around to feel the burning stares of dozens of men and women who only moments ago supported him in his actions. He stared at Martin as he walked over to Atropos and stood in front of him, looking at the older Spartan. Martin turned to Dilios.

“Dilios?”

“Milord,” Dilios replied moving over to his side.

“What is the punishment for an Alpha that takes a female *with her permission*, before she reaches the age of consent?” Martin asked.

“Twenty lashes sire and a reduction in rank to the lowest level.” Dilios spoke hesitantly. “There... there have been very few instances where this has taken place, and the punishment has not changed from the time of your father.”

“My King?” The older Senator rose from his chair as Martin turned to face him.

Dilios leaned close to Martin. "That is Lachides sire. He has been a staunch supporter of Autolycus for centuries, but he is also wise and loyal to Sparta without question in my opinion." He whispered.

How many that supported him can we trust Dilios? Martin asked him within a telepathic link he established instantly. *And hold nothing back.*

All but a handful are loyal to Sparta sire. They only supported Autolycus because in their opinion he gave them the best hope for the future. At least until your presence became known that is. Once your true identity became known, his supporters began to waver. That is why he wanted a vote today. Dilios answered.

Martin nodded and turned fully to Lachides. "You have the floor of this sacred chamber Lachides." He spoke.

Lachides stepped to the floor of the chamber and moved to stand in front of Martin, his long white hair billowing in the slight breeze. "May I address the chamber my King?"

Martin nodded his head and stepped to the side. "Please."

Lachides turned to face the men and women, even those in the gallery watching the events, holding their breaths at what he would say. "What we have learned here this day scars the honor of us all." He spoke, his words strong and loud. "An injustice has been done that has destroyed lives and forced a father to never know his sons; an injustice that can not be just swept away with a wave of one's hand or a vote of this Senate." He turned to look at Atropos and then to where Lilika's sons stood. "My heart breaks at what we have become." He spoke once more his head drooping as he looked at the floor for a long moment. "I will make two motions at this time!" He spoke again, his voice rising as he lifted his head. "Atropos... son of Xenos... will be returned to full status as a Spartan Centurion. His record will be wiped clean of the disgraceful and dishonest charge of attempted rape. His family will no longer bear this false burden! All former property of the family of Xenos will be returned or reparations will be made in full. The union of Midlan and Lilika will be dissolved as of this moment and she will be free to pursue any male within Sparta. All in favor say aye?"

The response was unanimous and a resounding "aye" echoed through the chamber.

Lachides turned to Autolycus, his eyes speaking volumes about his feelings. "Autolycus will be stripped of his title and lands! His son Midlan will be stripped of his title and lands! All documentation concerning the status of the daughter of Xenos will be dismissed capriciously as of this moment. Her name shall be submitted and entered into record as mate to our King and the third Queen of Sparta without further delay. There will be no change to the One Ascension Law, and I will introduce a bill at a later time barring any member of the Eurypontid line from ever holding a position of power within Sparta. The only bloodline to sit on the throne of Sparta from this day forward will be the bloodline of Leonidas. I will also enter into record a full and formal apology to Centurion Atropos that will be signed by every member of this Senate for the dishonor we brought upon him in our ignorance. All in favor say aye."

The response was an even faster and more forceful and unanimous "aye".

Lachides turned to Atropos. "What was done to you Centurion Atropos can never be forgiven, but I would be remiss if I did not attempt to tell you how very sorry I am. I only hope that in the years to come our actions will slowly earn your trust once more."

Atropos was unable to speak at the moment, and he was squeezing Lilika's hand tightly. He nodded his head slowly in response to Lachides's words. He watched Lachides turn back to Martin. "My King I will leave the Centurions punishment to you, and I tell you in advance I will support fully whatever punishment you deem necessary."

"I second that!" Dilios exclaimed.

"I third it!" Arete spoke from her spot. "And the motion is passed."

Martin nodded to Lachides and turned to face Atropos. "You have broken Spartan law Centurion Atropos. You did this willingly?"

Atropos nodded quickly, his chest swelling with pride. "I did Milord."

Martin nodded. "You must be punished for this crime Atropos." He told him.

"I will accept whatever you deem appropriate sire." Atropos said with a smile as he looked at Lilika. "No punishment that exists can dull what my heart is feeling at this moment."

"Dilios it will be entered into Spartan record that Centurion Atropos knowingly and willingly broke Spartan law by mating with a female wolf before she reached the Age of Consent." Martin spoke. "The punishment of twenty lashes will be waived as I believe Atropos has already carried enough pain for a crime he

did not commit. He will however, be reduced in rank three positions and confined to Sparta for a period of 30 days. In that 30 day period he is ordered to enter the union between himself and Lilika officially into record. And he is also ordered to spend that time with the two sons his mate has bore him, if that is their wish as well.” Martin looked to where the two young Spartans stood in shock. The older of the two smiled and bowed his head in respect.

“It is our wish sire.” He spoke, his voice barely containing the excitement. Martin saw Atropos’s body tense and then release in relief at the words of his son.

Dilios nodded with a smile. “I will make it so sire.”

Martin nodded. “Good. After that 30 day period is complete... due to his actions in this case he will be promoted three ranks and returned to full duty.”

“Understood sire, and it will be done.” Dilios spoke.

“Then this matter is settled except for you.” Martin said turning to Autolykus. He stepped in front of the man who now looked very frightened. He watched as Midlan and Xenos were prodded over next to him by the Spartan Royal Guard, Midlan limping badly from his bloody foot. “I can not begin to express to you my distaste and hatred for traitors.” Martin spoke. He turned to Andreus and Atropos. “Do the sons of Xenos wish to say anything in their father’s defense?”

Andreus stepped up next to Martin. “As Captain of the Royal Guard I speak for all my siblings and my mother when I say we disown him as our father!” Andreus spoke firmly. “As he dismissed our brother and my mother’s son... we now dismiss him as our father. You may do with him as you wish Milord.” Xenos stared at his sons, his eyes full of anger, hate and loss. Andreus stepped up close to him. “I hope it was worth it father.” He growled.

“Remove them!” Martin barked.

Half a dozen Royal Guards came forward and gripped the men none to kindly, leading them away quickly. Martin watched this and shook his head as Dysea stepped up to him, taking his arm.

“That was rather anti-climatic *Nauta Melme*.” She said softly.

Martin nodded. “In with a bang and out with a whimper.” He said, his eyes moving to the vampire Prefect and his two men. They had remained under heavy guard, standing to witness everything that had just taken place. “Now what do I do with you three?”

“We are under diplomatic protection promised us by Autolykus!” The Prefect spoke quickly.

“Diplomatic Protection,” Martin said barely able to contain his laugh. “There is no such protection in the confines of my city. Not for vampires.”

“I came here in peace.” The Prefect spoke.

“You came here to make demands!” Martin snapped angrily, “Just as that fool Persian messenger came to Sparta three thousand years ago! Do not believe you will make the same demands as he did. He died for his actions. Lock them up!” He spoke turning to Andreus. “The Senate and I have business to discuss, and it can not wait. We will deal with his sorry ass in the morning.”

Andreus prodded the Prefect with his P190. “Let’s go vampire scum. I have just the right accommodations picked out for you.”

Martin turned to Dilios as Andreus led the vampires out of the chamber. “Dilios clear the gallery. What we have to discuss is not to be made public knowledge just yet.”

Dilios nodded, “As you order sire.”

Martin turned to Dysea. “*Melda Min*?” He said.

Dysea reached up on her tip toes and kissed him. “I will return to the villa *Nauta Melme*.” She said. “Preparations need to be made to honor those that were killed in the bombing. Helen and I will handle that.”

“I will be along in a few hours.” Martin said. “Be careful *Melda Min*. That assassin is still out there somewhere.”

Dysea nodded. “And you *Nauta Melme*. Will you contact Anja and Little Wolf?”

Martin grinned and leaned closer to her. “They... they are otherwise engaged at the moment. I did not want to intrude.”

Dysea grinned. “Touch them with your aura *Nauta Melme*. That will be enough, trust me.”

Martin smiled and kissed her once more, “When I’m done here.” He said.

EDEN

Aricia's sweat soaked body arched off the bed once more as the third orgasm in less than an hour ripped through her lithe form, her juices flooding from her to drench Anja's long glorious tongue. Her long black hair was plastered to the sides of her face, her skin glimmering in the dim light of their bedroom. Aricia's thighs quivered as Anja held her hips tightly; lapping up her lover's come like a starved kitten as she ground her own naked body onto the thoroughly drenched sheets, awash in her own powerful orgasm. Their combined auras were like a heavy heated blanket covering them, enveloping them both within the passion.

It had started as soon as they reached their home, Aricia feeling Anja's desire even from across the city, and it only served to increase Aricia's desire for her. They reached their home at the same time, and Anja was pulling at Aricia's clothes before the door was even completely shut. The sight of Aricia's tight body sent Anja into full lust mode, and they had dropped to the floor in the living room in a torrid sixty nine, their hands and tongues working in concert. They knew each other's most sensitive spots as only a woman could and it wasn't long before first Aricia and then Anja were screaming in explosive release, surprising both of them with the force of their orgasms. Only Martin's touch and aura could produce something stronger than what they had experienced, and it hadn't stopped there.

Anja had pulled Aricia quickly to her feet and almost forcefully pushed her to the couch. Her blood was on fire unlike anything she had felt before, and she descended upon Aricia's flesh with fire in her eyes. Aricia was powerless to do anything but wither in delight as Anja's hands, fingers, lips and tongue explored her body with lustful abandon, always moving, never stopping. Her wonderful tongue had finally sought out Aricia's dripping pussy and with little preamble Anja had used that four inch tongue to practically fuck her senseless as only her tongue could. When Aricia cried out in her second orgasm, her come erupting into Anja's urging mouth, it triggered something within her as well. A fire ignited within her own blood, her aura increasing in power and intensity, matching Anja's now pulsing aura.

Whether it was the lack of Martin's touch on them, or the absence of his aura washing over them, it served only to increase their desire for each other to the extreme. That had been two hours ago, and now Aricia's chest heaved as she felt Anja's lips and wonderful tongue slowly begin to work their way up her sweat covered abdomen in fluttering kisses and gentle licks. Her hands dropped to caress her lover's shoulders and arms as Anja moved higher, teasing her still painfully hard nipples and gently cupping her full breasts, while she spread her tightly packed and petite frame across Aricia's equally flawless body.

Anja brought her face even with Aricia's and there were no words exchanged as Aricia grabbed her head and pulled her lips down to her. Aricia almost gagged when Anja plunged her tongue deeply into her mouth, searching and exploring, tangling with Aricia's moist and incredibly warm tongue as they kissed in heated passion. Aricia wrapped her arms around Anja's back, pulling her tightly with her wolf strength and moaning deeply into the kiss. Anja's groans matched her lover as her drenched pussy and erect clit rubbed maddeningly against Aricia's taut thigh, sending ripples of resurfacing pleasure jolting through her. Anja pulled her lips from Aricia's quickly, saliva connecting their lips in a long strand as she buried her face into Aricia's hair and throat and shivered in delight.

"What... what has gotten into us Little Wolf?" She gasped out the question.

Aricia's hands clamped onto Anja's firm tight, ass and pulled her hips down against her thigh. "I... I don't care!" Aricia gasped out. "It's... glorious!"

Anja reached up and pushed some damp hair from Aricia's face and stared into her azure blue eyes. "God... you taste delicious." She said softly.

Aricia's eyes were alive with love and passion. "Only... only one thing would make this perfect in every way." She said, nuzzling Anja's throat and eliciting a groan of delight.

"Martin." Anja gasped out. "God... I want his cock inside me so badly I can almost taste it!"

Aricia nodded, nibbling Anja's ears with a groan. "Oh yes! Feeling him fill us as only he can!" Aricia groaned, her body tensing in an electric surge of pleasure. "He... he stretches me so fully my love."

Anja smiled in passionate response. "He is wonderfully huge." She agreed her fingers dancing across Aricia's sensitive breasts, pinching her stiff nipple between her thumb and forefinger. "And he is the only man I

know who is built like that and knows how to use it so well. God even without his aura setting fire to my blood he could turn me into putty.”

“We... we need him Anja!” Aricia spoke breathlessly. “We need him so badly.”

Anja’s head came up quickly looking at the door. “Wait!” She said. “Maybe... maybe we can have him as well.”

Aricia looked at her oddly. “What... what do you mean?” Anja slid off Aricia’s body with a groan, ignoring the weakness in her legs as she moved to the dresser. Aricia rolled onto her side sensually reaching for her. “Where are you going?”

Anja yanked open the dresser quickly and began searching for something. Her eyes lit up when she found the long walnut colored box. She snatched it up and turned to Aricia on the bed, her jade green eyes nearly glowing in the soft light of the moon, and matching the fire in Aricia’s blue orbs. “Dysea made this a long time ago.” Anja said. “She never... she never had to use it that lucky elf bitch.”

Aricia watched as Anja returned to the bed carrying the box. “What is it?”

Anja opened the box and her jade green eyes narrowed hungrily. She gripped the item and shoved the box off the bed without a second thought, Aricia’s eyes growing wide at what she held.

“Anja!” She exclaimed.

Anja smiled as she held up the twenty-four inch flesh colored double ended cock. “Dysea... Dysea is just so skilled.” Anja said looking at Aricia. “She told me she made this from a cast of Martin’s... of his cock.”

Aricia reached out and touched it with her fingers. It was cool to the touch due to its rubbery texture, but she could tell great care had been taken in making it. Every ridge, every vein of Martin’s beautiful cock, which she now knew intimately, was exacting in every detail. There was a divider of sorts between the two ends, a wide base made from the same material. She looked at Anja.

“Dysea made this?” She asked in wonder.

Anja nodded. “When she first discovered she... it was for her and Tarifa.”

Aricia’s eyes grew wider, “Dysea and Tarifa?” She asked.

Anja nodded. “They discovered each other.” She said. “But their lives pulled them apart.” Anja looked at Aricia, “Which was a bonus for us, because she is delicious.”

Aricia smiled and nodded her head. “Yes she is.”

Anja smiled. “We can have Martin with us Little Wolf.” She said, “At least the feeling that he gives us both.”

Aricia’s face was bright as she tossed the covers from their bed and shifted her body around, spreading her long legs revealing her engorged labia and dripping pussy. Anja seductively tossed one of her legs to the side and lowered the double sided copy of Martin’s cock between them. Aricia hunched her hips forward. “Hurry my love!” She gasped. “I burn to feel him.”

Anja inserted the large head of the dildo into Aricia’s sopping pussy lips hearing her lover groan loudly in unabashed need. She shifted her hips further and inserted the other end into her equally wet pussy, “Long... long and slow... or hard... hard and fast?” She gasped.

Aricia’s answer was to grab Anja’s thigh and pull. They both screamed as the dildo slid easily into their burning depths until it disappeared completely. Their pussies came together at the base of the double sided cock, their jutting clits smashing against each other over the edge of the base. Anja’s hands grabbed Aricia’s thigh, while her hands gripped her own leg almost painfully hard.

“Ohhh fuck!” Anja gasped through clenched teeth as the exact copy of Martin’s wonderful cock stretched her, the walls of her pussy adjusting quickly to the enormous size in a familiar embrace. She felt Aricia’s lower body quivering as her younger lover shuddered in a powerful orgasm while she rotated her hips unconsciously against the base of the rubber cock, her stiff clit brushing against Anja’s erect bud.

“Ahhhhhhh,” Aricia cried out, her fingernails digging into Anja’s taut thigh holding on for dear life as the orgasm ripped through her.

Anja’s eyes nearly rolled into the back of her head at the pleasure that surged through her. Their legs were scissored on either side of each other, their pussies mashing against one another at the base of the double sided copy of their love’s cock.

There was only one thing missing they both knew as their eyes closed in bliss, and suddenly they were granted that wish as they felt their minds open up and Martin's aura hit them like a runaway freight train; pure, raw and unshielded in any way.

They screamed in sexual abandon, both of them falling back onto the bed, their blood pounding like never before as Martin's presence and aura washed over them, caressing them, fueling them with passion and love. They grabbed each other's hands, grinding their pussies together almost painfully hard, their clits smashing back and forth against one another as they both fucked the double sided cock with all the remaining strength they had, their hips moving frantically back and forth.

"Martin!" Aricia screamed first, her entire body convulsing madly as the orgasm exploded from her with the force of a hurricane. Her pussy clamped down on the hard rubber, her stomach and leg muscles feeling like they would rip through her flesh as brilliant white lights went off behind her eyes.

Anja's upper body arched off the bed as she held Aricia's hands tightly. Her hips bucked madly, her firm powerful ass clenched in breathless abandon as the orgasm ripped through her as well. Her cum splashed wetly against the base of the double sided cock, coating both the thin strip of her own Persian red hair above her spasming pussy and Aricia's thin strip of raven black hair. Her neck muscles bulged, the veins standing out in her throat, her jade green eyes now completely rolled back into her head.

Martin's aura exploding through their veins prolonged their orgasm intensely, his very essence surrounding and joining with them like never before. They could feel him projecting his love and maddening desire for both of them through their telepathic connection and it only served to increase the sensations ripping through them. Their own auras reached out to him, enveloping him, pulling him into their telepathic embrace. They projected unquestioned love and desire, passion and need, worry and understanding. Everything they had felt since learning he had been injured, and he returned it to them in spades.

I love you. His voice filled their minds as their bodies collapsed onto the bed, and then it was gone, leaving the feelings of love and devotion.

Aricia's eyes popped open when she felt him throw up a staggeringly powerful shield around their minds and she smiled.

I... I miss you so Little Wolf. His voice told her softly.

Aricia felt tears in her eyes when she realized there was just the two of them within the connection and he was directing all his love and passion upon her. *Oh... I miss you so much my love.*

We will be together soon my Queen. He spoke firmly, his voice tinged with something Aricia could not place. *Be mindful of the tasks you have given yourself Little Wolf. Regardless of what anyone says... it is you and only you that I could not live without, for you are of our kind, our people. The end game is rapidly approaching here on earth, and we need to be together.*

And you my love, Aricia told him. *You are all that I will ever want or need Martin. I would not...I could not be complete without you. Don't do anything reckless.*

Martin laughed softly within their connection. *I won't. I will see you soon Little Wolf.*

I look forward to that day my love.

Aricia allowed the feelings of love and devotion flow through her as Martin left her mind and her entire body relaxed in the aftermath. Anja was already asleep she noticed, her last orgasm claiming her into the world of dreams. Aricia smiled and did the same, allowing sleep to take her, the dildo still buried within both of their pussies.

CANADA

"The traitor and the Queen are to be taken alive." The Drow officer briefed her unit of soldiers. Her amber eyes burned in the dim light of twilight, her memories of what Anuk had done to her very clear and very vivid. "And I want the flame haired one for myself. I intend to make her pay for what she did to me." She looked once more at the small map she had drawn in the dirt. "We will use our tranquilizer darts, for Aelulip does not want dead bodies littering the timber around our city."

"Won't they try and reclaim them Kawyona?" A male Drow asked.

“They are humans and a mixture of other elf clans. They are no match for Drow.” The Drow commander replied confidently. “Once we break their perimeter, they will most likely scatter into the timber in fear.”

“These are not normal humans and elves Kawyona.” The second Drow female spoke. She was the Commander of the second Drow Cadre of fifty warriors, a skilled warrior with much more common sense. Kawyona commanded the first Cadre. “There is something very different about them. The flame haired Wood elf is the perfect example. She should not have been able to take you down so easily.”

“She caught me off guard Alosola, nothing more!” Kawyona hissed. “Elder Aelulip has tasked us with completing this mission and we will do so!”

“Does Elder Hwia agree with this order?” Alosola asked.

“Aelulip commands the military portion of our people, not Hwia!” Kawyona spoke. “Are you refusing her orders?”

“No!” Alosola spoke quickly.

“Then we will do this my way!” Kawyona spoke. “You will take your Second Cadre around the eastern ridge and come at them from the deep timber. I will lead my First Cadre through the city and when you attack we will close the distance between the city and the timber in under a minute and catch them in a pincer movement.”

Alosola nodded slowly, a terrible feeling beginning to take hold in her gut.

Alosola winced as the grenade exploded only meters from where she huddled behind the three foot wide tree stump. She heard the shrapnel whistle through the darkness shredding leaves and tearing bark from the centuries old tree. She silently cursed Kawyona to every pit of hell there was. She had led her Cadre for nearly two hundred years, and in all that time she had lost only two of her soldiers in hundreds of battles with the Alliance and their vampire and human troops. She nearly sobbed as she turned her head and saw the remains of five of her soldiers not six meters from where she laid, their bodies shredded beyond recognition from a land mine. It had been triggered by a microfilament stretched between two small trees, and when her lead scout tripped it the mine had burst from the ground to a level of one meter before it exploded. Alosola had watched as her five troops never knew what killed them, their bodies punctured in hundreds of places by tiny flechette needles.

Her head turned around as the heavy sound of assault rifles pierced the night air, burning off controlled and accurate bursts of fire. Alosola watched as three more of her troops fell, their bodies tossed back by the heavy caliber weapons. She looked at the young female Drow as she threw herself on the ground next to her.

“Commander six more of our Cadre have fallen!” The Drow screamed.

“They moved their perimeter west!” Alosola yelled back. “These are prepared positions, not security outposts! They knew we were coming! Get me Kawyona!”

Alosola ducked again as another grenade exploded not far off. She poked her head around the stump only to snap her head back just as a burst of fire slammed into the stump she was behind.

“Commander Kawyona!” The second Drow yelled shoving a hand set into her palm.

Alosola lifted the ancient radio handset to her ear. “We are coming under heavy fire! They moved their perimeter four hundred meters west! I have lost nearly half my Cadre Kawyona!”

“We are almost to your position!” Her voice yelled back through the radio. “Hold your formation!”

“They knew we were coming damn you!” Alosola screamed. “How did they know we were coming?”

“Magic!” The decidedly male voice echoed in her head from the side.

Alosola whirled around, her amber eyes going wide when the enormous black man appeared next to her, his eyes changed to yellow orbs and sporting vicious looking fangs nearly an inch long. Alosola didn't have time to even scream before Dan clubbed her in the side of the head with his Nehtes. She dropped like a rock from the blow, the radio operator rolling over desperately attempting to yank her sidearm free. She came to a halt against something solid and lifted her head, her eyes filled with horror at the visage of the large black and gray furred wolf. The wolf opened its jaws revealing huge gleaming white teeth and the Drow screamed just before the wolf snapped its jaws upon her shoulder and crunched down.

The Drow's screams intensified from the pain and terror rippling through her body and she beat on the chest and shoulders of the wolf until she felt the wolf close its jaws further, the terrible pain shooting through

her brain like an electric shock and shorting out all nerve activity. Her body went limp as she passed out, just as Danny stepped over to her. A silvery flash of light and Melancton was squatting above the Drow, wiping blood from his jaw.

“What are you doing?” Danny yelled at his father.

Melancton looked at his son as he disarmed the Drow and stripped the radio from her pack. “She will survive.” He said with a grin. “I have been doing this far longer than you my son. Bite down in the shoulder area close to the neck and the pain is excruciating. It overloads the sensory nerves and causes them to pass out.”

“She will change now!” Danny snapped.

Melancton nodded. “Do you see how these Drow fight? They are fearless. She will make a fine Spartan. And her blood tasted good.” He spoke with a wide smile.

“Father you...” Dan felt the twitch against his psychic shields, a message of warning and request for help, *Anuk?*

Daniel... they are descending upon us from the rear! Anuk’s voice betrayed her exertion and Dan knew she was fighting.

Anuk I’m coming! Danny spoke looking at his father.

Go! I will sweep the area and deal with the rest while Vengal cleans the outer Perimeter! Go!

Danny turned and wasted no time. In a flash of silvery light he had changed and was bounding through the trees, Anuk’s scent guiding him as surely as if he had tied a rope to her. His anger began to build as he ran, images of the woman he loved sliced open like in the tunnel. Nothing would keep him from her, not this time.

Anuk ducked under the Drow warrior rushing her, and called her Shi Viska. In another silvery flash the shield weapon sprang into existence and leaped from her arm. Anuk had not extended the razors on the edges of her silver shield and it slammed into the nearest Drow like a truck, lifting the male elf off his feet and dropping him to his back out of the fight. Anuk spun around, her *Nehtes* sweeping around in a vicious circle, the spearhead slicing through the shoulder and chest of another Drow warrior in a single motion.

Nayeca’s was only a few meters away, Drow knives in both her hands. She was a blur of motion, her shimmering white hair the only sign that she was even moving as it whipped back and forth. Two Drow rushed her and Nayeca leaped over the top of them, ramming her knife into the back of one as she executed a somersault. The razor sharp blade cut through cloth and body armor with ease, opening a long, deep cut across the shoulders of the female Drow warrior sending her staggering into the range of Anuk’s *Nehtes*. The Drow’s eyes were filled with pain, and had only a second to register the thrust by Anuk before the *Nehtes* speared her through her chest, tearing out her lungs and cleaving her heart. She was dead before Anuk withdrew the *Nehtes* and spun gracefully, the spear moving with a will of its own as she launched her Shi Viska once more.

The sweeping motion of the *Nehtes* and the strength with which it moved caused the razor like spear head to slash through the leg of another Drow warrior just as Dekton and Aihola appeared in full battle motion. Anuk’s Shi Viska, blades now extended bit into the neck of another Drow warrior and hardly paused in motion and it sliced cleanly through flesh and bone, removing the Drow’s head before curving back around to return to Anuk’s arm.

“Anuk behind you!” Nayeca screamed, her blades ripping into the Drow in front of her and slashing out, spilling internal organs and blood onto the grass at their feet.

Anuk spun around just a bit too slow, and she felt the three small pin pricks of pain in the side of her neck. She stopped and reached up, quickly yanking at the darts, her blue eyes wide as she staggered trying to focus. “What?”

Nayeca screamed and rushed forward, her lips pulled back in a savage snarl. She leaped upon a Drow that had rushed from the darkness and was reaching for Anuk. Nayeca grabbed his long white hair and his jaw and ripped to the left with all her elf strength. The Drow’s neck snapped audibly and he went limp as a noodle. Nayeca grabbed Anuk as she began to fall.

“NO!” She screamed, “My Queen!”

Nayeca spoke no more as she felt the three sharp pin pricks in her own neck and she snapped her hand up to yank the darts from her flesh. She grabbed onto Anuk’s body armor and began to yank her towards where Aihola and Dekton were fighting to get to them. She could feel the poison working through her body quickly.

The thought that they had improved the knock out drug entered her mind, as the strength was leaving her body. She dropped to the ground, all the feeling in her arms and legs leaving her. The last thought she had before darkness took her was that she would never be able to feel Anuk's flesh against her own. Nayeca's eyes rolled up into her head as she collapsed across Anuk's chest in a heap.

Aihola saw Nayeca fall across Anuk's inert form and she screamed out her rage, surrendering to the vampire blood lust raging through her veins. The moment the attack had begun Dekton had been out for blood, and now his aura washed over her and she embraced it in all its glory.

Aihola fisted the K12 in her right hand, her finger twitching on the trigger again and again as she moved with a speed and power even Dekton had not witnessed. Each shot struck home and Drow troops fell. The High Elf R4 Hybrid knife designed in the weapons center in Eden filled her left hand and each swipe with the vicious knife opened up a massive wound no matter where it struck. She could see several Drow dragging Nayeca and Anuk deeper into the timber as she fought to reach them.

Dekton they are taking Anuk and Nayeca. She blasted out the telepathic message to her mate.

This was no random attack! Dekton shouted back telepathically. *They are after you and Nayeca!*

"Dekton!" Aihola's voice screamed.

The Spartan whirled around at the strange tone of Aihola's voice and saw her stagger, reaching for her neck. His dark blue eyes went wide. "No! Little Drow!" He screamed.

Dekton lifted his left arm and called his Shi Viska. The silver shield sprang into existence but before his mind could launch the weapon he felt the pin pricks in the side of his unprotected neck. Instantly the drug seized his system, his hand dropping the extended *Nehtes* as he slumped to his knees.

"Little Drow!" He croaked out before he fell forward onto the damp earth and darkness claimed him.

Kawyona struggled with Anuk's limp body over her shoulder as she crashed through the branches. She could hear more of her people on either side of her; one carrying the traitor Nayeca and the other carrying the Queen. The mission was a success, but as her heart burned in effort she wondered at what cost. She broke into the small clearing and skidded to a halt, her eyes wide as she saw the large dark brown wolf baring her path, its lips drawn back in a savage snarl.

"By the gods!" She gasped out, Anuk's body slipping to the ground as she stumbled.

LET HER GO! The voice screamed inside her head.

Kawyona's eyes were wide as she leveled her sidearm at the beast in front of her. "What... what manner of monster are you?" She gasped. She snatched up Anuk's head by her hair and yanked her body closer, putting the barrel of the weapon against her head, causing the huge wolf to growl deeply, snapping at the air with its powerful jaws. "I... I will kill her here and now!" She screamed.

LET HER GO! The voice screamed in her head once more.

"Commander what are you..." The Drow running behind her skidded into the small clearing as well, her eyes going wide in horror at what she saw. She couldn't stop her forward momentum and she staggered in front of Danny. Her eyes were wide in horror as she saw the large wolf rear up on its powerful hind legs and lash out with a paw.

Kawyona saw the paw connect with the face of her fellow warrior, heard the tear of flesh and the snapping of bone as the Drow female's head was twisted around like a top. As the body fell Kawyona clawed for the tranquilizer sidearm on her belt.

NOW YOU WILL DIE! The male voice screamed once more.

Kawyona watched in horror as the dark brown wolf leaped at her. Her elf reflexes were all that saved her life as she brought the tranquilizer gun up and fired six shots as she dodged to the side. She heard the yelp of an animal; saw the flash of silvery light, and Danny's body landed in a cloud of dry grass and dust just as half a dozen other Drow filled the small clearing at a dead run. They looked at her in shock, their amber eyes going to Danny's unconscious form. Kawyona took a deep breath and hauled Anuk back onto her shoulder. "Take him!" She barked. "Quickly! Before they pursue us!"

The other Drow watched as their commander disappeared into the darkness as if the hounds of hell were pursuing her, leaving them with the task of carrying Danny's huge body and risking death. Two males shook their heads at this unc customary display of poor leadership on their Commander's part. Yet they were Drow and conditioned to follow orders. They leaned down and quickly lifted Danny's body between them and took off after their Commander.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

NEW MIAMI

"It's a Drow city." Yuri spoke as she walked casually into Moran's office in New Miami.

Moran looked up and watched as she came into his office, moving to the small wet bar he kept fully stocked along the wall, as the door slid shut behind her. The light blue jumpsuit Yuri wore clung to her figure like a second skin, and he eyed her hungrily as she poured herself a small glass of three hundred year old scotch.

Yuri had taken to coming into the center of New Miami more and more since they had shared blood with each other, moving comfortably among the many government office buildings, and checking on the progress of their many genetic programs. At first he thought she was simply checking up on him, insuring that he didn't stray while he was not in her company. Her visits to his office became less frequent over those days and she spent more time with the genetic researchers now. She needn't have worried, Moran had wanted her since that first day, and now that he had her all to himself, he wasn't about to do something so stupid as to lose that. In his eyes Yuri was not only the most beautiful female he had ever shared a bed with, but she was extremely intelligent and utterly ruthless when she needed to be. And she was completely uninhibited in their bed he thought to himself with an inner smile. Her words struck him and he sat back in his chair.

"A Drow city," He asked. "Are you sure?"

Yuri nodded and sipped the scotch gingerly while moving to the chair in front of his desk. "Based on what Graham was able to transmit to us before they killed him, and what our own people are telling us, it is the only thing it could be. The Drow Queen and her Spartan bodyguard are absent from Eden, and Vengal hasn't been seen in several days. Not to mention those reported outgoing flights from the Eden airfield."

"Were you able to learn anything from Deval's corpse?" Moran asked, sitting back further in his chair.

Yuri allowed her eyes to rest on this man, his question not registering with her immediately. If anyone had told her two thousand, or even a thousand years ago that she would be fawning over a human male, she would have ripped their face off without thinking twice. Yet here she was, for the first time in her long life actually wanting to spend the rest of her days with a man, and a human man at that. Well almost human, she thought, as Robert had been genetically created. When she looked back, Yuri had been attracted to him almost immediately, even that first day five hundred years ago. Yes he was a Genome that her hated enemy had created, but there was something different about him; a certain cruelty that she found almost irresistible. She had intended to turn him into a vampire slave that night he came into her cell with only one thing on his mind. She had known what he was there for, and while she could have just as easily killed him in the blink of an eye, the lust she saw in his eyes was not general. It was a lust for her and her alone, and that had turned her on incredibly. He had fucked her senseless in a way that had left her craving more. He had dominated her in a way she had never allowed any man to dominate her, and the way he responded to her made her blood burn for him. When she bit Robert she remembered that his blood was warm and spicy, and now it tasted like the finest wine she'd ever had. Robert had crushed her to his hard body while she fed; not pushing her away in panic or retreat, almost as if he wanted what she was going to make him. That fact and the cruel intelligence she saw in his eyes are what made Yuri cradle him in her arms, protecting him until he was reborn. Yuri was born of pure Vampire blood, her mother and father both pure blooded vampires and when she drained Moran of his blood that night he was reborn as something far more than just a Genome Vampire.

Their brief liaisons continued even when she was on the moon station EDEN enduring Leonidas's slobbering attempts at sex. She always secretly met with him when she returned to earth; Moran's rough treatment of her, his dominance of her during sex had kept drawing her back to him. Yet while he hammered

her endlessly it seemed, he was always mindful of who she was, and what she was capable of, and he never pushed her too far. He respected her and what she could do, and that respect above all else is what made Yuri seek him out shortly after the comet came and destroyed all that they had known.

He had protected her over the next decade, always remaining at her side. He had been highly perturbed when she turned the Drow elf Marcus some two hundred years later, thinking Marcus was going to take his place at her side and in her bed. While that had never been Yuri's intent, Marcus was only a tool in Yuri's eyes; it had affected Moran enough to stay away from her for nearly twenty years. He had given himself a transfer to a different Alliance stronghold to try and break the bond that he had built with Yuri. During that time Yuri had taken no other lovers, and while many offers came to her in that time, she now understood why she had never accepted. Robert Moran had taken hold of her and gotten into her blood in a way no man ever had. A way that Yuri had sworn no man ever would after what Xerxes had done to her.

She had never openly showed it but when Moran came back into her life she was ecstatic. She had hoped they could continue what they had shared for so long, yet he remained distant in many ways, and it frustrated Yuri to no end. She did some investigating and digging on her own and discovered that in that twenty year period while he was away Moran also had been celibate, which was amazing to her considering the beauty of the female elves that Dymas had created. She learned he had studied for nearly a decade under a vampire elder on the Asian continent learning more and more about his skills and what he was capable of.

Yuri finally ordered him back into her bed, and though he came reluctantly, the sex between them was even better than she remembered. He was a more powerful vampire than when he had left her, with new skills and strength, and he displayed them with her. Yuri accepted his idea to invite others to join in with them, and while she suspected he did this out of spite, she had succumbed to his wishes because she wanted him to see that she did care for him deeply. It did not happen often, only three times, and he was always in a foul mood afterwards, as if he regretted it. Yuri had physically enjoyed the sessions greatly, but had always made sure Moran was the focus of her attention, and only he was allowed to have her ass.

Things between them had grown deeply over the last few months since learning Martin might be the descendant of Leonidas, and their feelings had grown very quickly to Yuri's delight. He had become more protective and more obsessive about their relationship, and it had caused Yuri to reciprocate those feelings until finally they had professed to each other that night when they had shared each other's blood. It was a common misconception that vampires did not know love and devotion, for Yuri had devoted herself to Moran in every way she could think of, physically and mentally. Just his simple embrace could sooth her restless heart. Yuri had probed his mind one night shortly after they had fed on each other's blood, essentially becoming husband and wife in vampire culture. While he slept beside her, unable to fight the urge to see how deeply his commitment to her went, Yuri probed his mind. She was considered a powerful vampire telepath; some said second only to her father and she had used her telepathy on many occasions to get what she wanted. She had used it to alter someone's perceptions, she had used it to force sex and she had even used it to kill on four different occasions. In all the time Moran had been at her side, she had never once used it to look into his thoughts. Part of that was the fact that he had powerful mental shields of his own; the other part was that she just didn't want to read his mind out of her growing feelings for him. When she could no longer resist and she had probed his mind after a breathtaking night of sex, it had stunned her to see his thoughts about her, and the happiness their relationship had generated in him. Apparently with her in his bed next to him he did not feel the need to subconsciously shield his thoughts, and it allowed Yuri free access to his mind.

Yuri discovered that she was not the only female vampire who considered him attractive and since the night they had shared blood he had been approached four times by other vampire females, wanting to establish a relationship with him. Robert had not even blinked in replying that he was already quite spoken for and to leave him alone. His only thoughts of women were of her exclusively and many of them were quite erotic in nature. She had detected not even the slightest interest in another female and Yuri had withdrawn from his mind feeling a sense of peace at what she had discovered, and the next morning to Moran's stunned surprise, he had woken up with Yuri cuddled against his body in a way she had never done before.

Yuri had decided that night before sleep had taken her that she would never deny him anything. That he was so content with just her made it all the more easy for her to make the decision that no matter what he wanted, she would do it for him.

"Yuri?" Moran asked softly.

Yuri shook her head quickly. "I'm sorry, yes I am sure." She spoke answering his question.

Moran smiled. "I asked about Deval." He said.

"I know that!" She snapped at him, but softened that with a smile her dark orbs glittering in the light of the room.

"Are you ok?" He asked.

Yuri chuckled and nodded her head. "Yes." She answered. "I was just thinking about some things."

"Care to share them?"

Yuri shook her head. "They are not important right now." She replied looking at him with smiling eyes. "Our psychics were able to discover who it was that initiated the telepathic assault and the fact that she was able to do it so successfully is not good. Martin's werewolf bitch Anja found a sliver of Deval's thoughts in Graham's mind and traced it back to him."

Moran's eyes narrowed, "Graham's mind? How is that possible?"

"It seems that Deval failed to tell us he turned Selene many years ago." Yuri said. "He was a pureblood and had the knowledge of how to make his genes dormant so they would not take over until he was ready to fully change her. When Graham bit Selene it triggered her change into a full vampire, and then the Drow Lynwe completed the change when she bit Selene in their attempt to override Graham's subconscious commands. Anja was able to track that filament of Deval that he left in Selene's blood. When Graham fed on her he took in what Deval had left. Enough for Anja to trace his blood all the way back to him."

"She's that powerful telepathically?" Moran asked.

Yuri nodded. "Martin is King Leonidas's son." She said. "The Lycavorians are born telepathic; I've told you that, but the family of the Lycavorian King was always the most powerful. Many of them are even more powerful than our strongest Vampire Mages; Leonidas's father was a match for my own father, who is generally considered by many as the most powerful telepath in the universe."

"You think Martin is this powerful?" Moran asked.

Yuri shrugged. "It is hard to say... but he is obviously much more powerful than we first thought if Anja's abilities have advanced to the point where she could have touched Deval through Graham. That is not easily done by even the most experienced Mages. She has Martin's blood in her now, as do Dysea and Aricia. Their skills would be ten fold more powerful because of that. Hadarians and Lycavorians are some of the most powerful telepaths in the universe, and it would not surprise me in the least if the youngest of them becomes just as powerful as Martin."

"You're talking about this Aricia female?" Moran said.

Yuri nodded. "She is a pureblood Lycavorian. And since she is still considered very young in Lycavorian culture, her telepathic abilities will only grow stronger now that Martin has taken her. It stands to reason that if she and Anja can do it, Martin can as well, and there is no telling what else they are capable of."

Moran got up and went to the bar, pouring himself a glass of the same scotch. He turned and leaned against the bar. "You should know that they discovered Ephialtes." He spoke softly, "And Autolykus's involvement with us."

Yuri's eyes snapped up to look at him. "Ephialtes had outgrown his usefulness in my opinion. He was a holdover from Xerxes who relied on him far too much." She spoke.

"He gave us good information over the years." Moran spoke.

Yuri waved that off casually. "He was a traitor to his people and Martin will insure he pays the price. Losing Autolykus is not a large matter either, as we did not expect his foolish plan to work anyway. The Spartans would have never let a wolf of the Eurypontid line sit on the throne for very long. He would have been assassinated within the first month. The more important question is what of our assassin?"

Moran nodded as he returned to his chair. "He's the one who reported in. He's safe for the moment. Sparta was locked down right after the bombing, so he went underground to the safe house. Leonidas also destroyed the Coven castle on the other side of the mountains. He hit it with ten thousand Spartans and they razed it to the ground in two hours. No one was spared."

Yuri shook her head, "How many?"

"Three hundred nineteen," Moran answered softly, "Though the envoy from your brother survived. For all the good it did him, he's now in Spartan custody."

Yuri looked at him, shaking her head. "My father will not be pleased about that. Most of those in that castle were purebloods." Yuri's facial expression changed as the rest of what Robert told her sank in. "Envoy from my brother?" She asked. "What are you talking about?"

Moran met her gaze. "I thought you knew and just didn't tell me. Xerxes sent an envoy of some sort to Sparta under the protection of Autolycus."

"An envoy? I knew nothing of this! Why would he send an envoy?" Yuri demanded.

"To demand Spartan surrender or to hand over Leonidas," Moran answered. "At least that was supposed to be the plan. They thought he was harder hit than he really was after the bombing and Autolycus sent for the envoy while Leonidas was recovering."

"Damn him!" Yuri spat coming to her feet. "He's trying to undermine my authority and get back control of the High Guard!"

"Yuri," Moran spoke. "It didn't work."

"You don't know Xerxes." Yuri said. "He will do anything to get back control of the High Guard. And he will keep trying to subvert all we do until he has succeeded." Yuri whirled around. "Damn... if only Leonidas had killed him that day!"

Moran moved up behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist pulling her close to him, feeling her body tense for just a second before relaxing in his embrace and pushing back against him. "He's on his way here right?" He spoke.

Yuri closed her eyes enjoying the feel of his body against her. "Yes." She replied. "And he will undoubtedly contact our father to report that I failed to protect the envoy."

"Can we pick up his ships with our equipment here?" Moran asked.

Yuri turned in his embrace. "The spaceport could, why?"

"Beat him to the punch." Moran said. "Contact him and demand to know why he acted without your orders. Only make sure you have your father involved in the conversation so that he can see it was Xerxes who acted without orders from the Commander of the High Guard."

Yuri's eyes glowed in delight as she stared at him. "Robert... that is... that is positively sinister." She spoke.

"You would have thought of it sooner or later, but he pisses you off so much that you lose your control and you don't think straight." Moran said.

Yuri sighed as she slipped her arms around his shoulders. "You are correct. Even after all this time he still has a knack for perturbing me in every way."

Moran nodded. "And he knows it." He said. "That's why he does it."

Yuri kissed him tenderly. "I will do as you suggest." She said with a laugh. "It will drive him mad with anger."

"What about this Drow city?" Moran asked.

"I believe it would be a good test of our new soldiers don't you?" Yuri asked.

Moran grinned. "Yes it would. Carson did make the Drow to be the closest thing to the Spartans as he could."

Yuri nodded. "Marcus will have the reactor online in one week." She said. "When he does... we will strike. Send one division of our new troops north to find the Drow city and destroy it and have the remaining four divisions that are ready begin preparations to march on Eden. Combined with our regular troops we will outnumber them three to one."

"Won't Martin mobilize the Spartans?" Moran asked.

"It won't matter. By that time Xerxes will be here, and if I know my brother he will have crammed his ships with ground troops. Our combined forces will number over three million and that will be more than enough to finally kill that Lycavorian bastard."

Moran nodded. "That works for me." He said.

Yuri chuckled to herself again. "Yes... I'm sure it does." She spoke as her hand dropped to his crotch. Her eyes never left his face as she squeezed his cock inside his pants and felt it begin to thicken. "When is your next meeting?" She asked in a husky voice.

"Not for another hour." He replied.

“Is there anything you can think of to occupy yourself for that hour?” She asked turning her face up to his and licking his neck as her hands quickly unbuttoned his pants and pushed them down freeing his now hard cock. She gazed into his eyes as her hands stroked the thickening ten inch shaft. Yuri believed that Leonidas would always have the distinction of having the largest cock to ever penetrate her, but Robert’s hard shaft was the only one she had ever truly desired.

Yuri’s face showed her surprise when Robert’s hands came up and entwined themselves in her raven black hair and his eyes changed to vampire cobalt blue.

“Suck me.” His voice spoke, deep and commanding, his eyes wide and bright.

“Robert you know I don’t like to do…” Yuri started to say.

“Suck my cock bitch!” Moran growled loudly, pushing her down to her knees with his vampire enhanced strength.

Yuri eyes were wide at this, feeling his strength pressing her down. Surprisingly Yuri didn’t resist as she sank down to her knees in front of him. Yuri had sucked off men before and even allowed them to come in her mouth, most of which she spit back out in disgust. She didn’t like the taste of come and thought the act of sucking a man’s cock degrading and beneath her. Yet something in her body reacted differently now as her eyes stared at the blood engorged cock only inches from her face and lips. She could feel warmth spreading out from her pussy, which to her amazement had become damp with her own juices.

“Suck it now!” Moran demanded more harshly, pulling her head to his crotch.

Yuri gasped when his cock slapped her cheeks. It was hot, hotter than she had ever felt it, and as her hands came up quickly to wrap around the thick length she felt a surge of pleasure through her. With a groan Yuri wrapped her ruby lips around the engorged head, the heat between her thighs expanding into her belly now. She heard Robert groan loudly and one of his hands let go of her hair, moving to push her hands away from their stroking of his shaft. Her eyes lifted towards his face, and she saw him smile just before he rammed his entire ten inch cock down her throat. Yuri’s eyes bugged out of her head and she gagged almost violently, her hands rising quickly to push against his strong thighs.

“No!” Moran snapped, pinning her hands against his chest as he pulled her head tighter to his groin, her lips smashed against the thick hairless base of his cock. “Take it all!”

Yuri’s eyes filled with tears quickly, and she tried to twist her head away, but he held her firmly, grinding his entire cock into her throat, making her stomach heave and she gagged nosily. She could feel every ridge of his shaft, every vein as it pulsed inside her warm tight throat. She could feel his large warm balls pressed against her jaw, bloated with come. She blinked rapidly, trying to clear her vision, and then Robert began to fuck her throat with long powerful thrusts. His hand cupped the back of her head, his fingers entwined almost painfully in her long hair as he drove his hips into her face repeatedly, withdrawing his cock until only the head remained in her mouth and then slamming back into her throat with violent strokes.

Yuri was a pureblood vampire, and therefore very capable of defending herself. Her strength was equal too if not greater than Robert’s, and her eyes changed to vampire cobalt blue, her fingers clenching against his hard chest, dragging painfully down his skin as she prepared to shove him back, her anger growing. She placed her palms on his driving thighs, feeling his powerful muscles flexing in effort and she started to push when her cobalt colored eyes flew open wide and she shuddered in the most intense orgasm of her life. She screamed out around the thick cock pile driving into her throat as her juices flooded out of her, drenching the crotch of the light blue jumpsuit in seconds.

“Yeah,” Moran screamed. “I’m there!”

Yuri felt him slam forward once more, grinding his cock deeply into her stretched and sore throat. She felt his pole expand in size, his large balls drawing up tight, and then she felt the come rushing up the length of his cock, pressing against the tight confines of her throat, prolonging her own orgasm. She screamed again around the thick cock, wrapping her arms around his driving hips and grabbing his clenched ass cheeks as he erupted into her mouth. A less powerful orgasm gripped her as his warm come flooded into her belly, and the heat that had been building in her stomach became a full fledged fire. She gulped his load hungrily, like a starving kitten, one hand leaving his ass cheek to reach between his legs and grab his emptying balls.

“Fuck yeah!” Moran shouted, throwing his head back and driving his cock even deeper, feeling her squeezing his balls almost to the point of pain, milking him like cattle. “Drink it all! Yes… swallow it all!”

Yuri was happy to oblige, flexing her throat against his shaft, constricting it, milking it. She released his ass with the other hand and dropped it quickly between her thighs, rubbing her spasming pussy underneath the jumpsuit fabric as hard as she could, her ass pressing into the heels of her feet.

Robert's come still leaked out of his shaft, but much less forcefully now as he shivered in the aftermath. Still Yuri did not want to release him, the sensation of his entire cock buried in her throat causing her to groan loudly. She drew her head back halfway up his shaft, his strength gone from the back of her head, but instead of spitting out his cock and the come in her mouth, she swirled it around within her mouth, savoring the texture and taste, her tongue working madly against the five inches still trapped within her lips. She gripped the exposed portion of his cock and stroked it hard, milking it even more, tasting the residual come squeeze from the tip. The point of her tongue delved into that small slit, marveling at the taste of him, and the quivering of his powerful legs when she did that to him.

Moran's hands finally pulled her face away from his groin and Yuri moaned in regret, her hands wrapping tightly around the still hard shaft, stroking it and wanting more. She looked up pleadingly into his cobalt eyes, come dangling from her lips. "Ro... Robert what..."

Moran pulled her back into a standing position, his lips covering hers and kissing her hard, almost brutally, his tongue driving into her mouth meeting her own tongue and doing battle. She felt his hands frantically tearing at her jumpsuit, the cool air touching her skin as he peeled it away more quickly than she would have thought possible. He spun her around quickly in front of him, his hands reaching around to grip her huge breasts, pinching her nipples painfully, causing her to gasp in delight. Yuri was lost in this new world as her vampire husband dominated her in every aspect, and unlike at any other time in her life, she accepted it willingly and without question.

Moran turned her towards the desk, bending her over the edge, shoving items out of the way to make room for her. He was totally engrossed in her, nothing else occupying his thoughts except pounding her senseless in every way he could. She felt the hotness of his cock press between her firm asscheeks and for a fleeting moment she tensed, expecting him to ram his cock deeply into her yearning ass.

Yuri's eyes went wide and her mouth opened in a breathless scream of pleasure as he speared her tight pussy in one powerful thrust. Her breasts were crushed against the walnut desk top, her hands gripping the edge of the desk as another orgasm rocketed through her. She felt his hands grab her large breasts and he pulled her up to him, his cock sinking even deeper inside her tight pussy. She felt his lips graze and then nibble her ear lobe, his breath hot against her skin.

"I..." Moran drove his cock into her hard with each word he spoke. "Don't... need... anyone... but... you!"

Yuri screamed as he bit gently into her shoulder just at the base of her neck and he began to feed on her blood. She felt the fire race through her veins, burning heat and searing pleasure ripped through her as she started to come then and there.

She didn't stop coming for the next hour.

CANADA

"By the gods what happened?" Aelulip asked Kawyona as the Drow commander dumped Anuk's body on the ground in the cell.

"They were waiting for us!" Kawyona growled as she began to strip Anuk's body armor from her, being none to gentle about it. Aelulip turned as Nayeca was brought into the same cell and dropped on the floor. "Strip them naked and search for weapons! Where is the monster?" Kawyona ordered.

"He was taken to the beast cages." The Drow replied as she began to strip Nayeca of her clothes and weapons, while another female continued what Kawyona had started.

Aelulip grabbed Kawyona's arm and pulled her out of the cell. "You were told to retrieve only the traitor and the Queen! What have you done?"

"This Wood Elf bitch embarrassed me in front of our people. It is my right to make her pay!" Kawyona snapped. "I intend to make her my slave, to serve me in every way!"

“Who is this monster you speak of?” Aelulip asked her. “What happen out there? The shooting could be heard for miles. Hwia is seething with anger!”

“The giant dark skinned human.” Kawyona spoke. “He is her mate and he tried to stop us from taking her. He is a monster somehow. He changes into an *Ngauro*! He almost killed me! I shot him six times with the tranquilizer gun before he fell.”

“And the Queen,” Aelulip asked her eyes wide with fear and the knowledge that things had gone terribly array. “Where is she?”

“She is being taken to the quarters you ordered.” Kawyona spoke. “She fought like a devil... they...”

“What have you done?” Hwia screamed as she rushed into the cell block, her eyes wide and filled with anger.

Aelulip stepped up to her quickly, blocking Hwia from getting to Kawyona. “I ordered this.” She spoke immediately. “I...”

Hwia slapped her viciously across the face rocking her head back and causing her to stagger backwards. Kawyona’s eyes went wide as did the eyes of the other Drow at this action. None of them had ever seen Elder Hwia so incensed. “Do you realize what you have done?” She hissed.

Aelulip looked back to her, amber eyes filled with anger, her cheek stinging painfully from the slap. “I acted as a Drow Elder.” She barked. “Something you were not willing to do.”

“You acted like a spoiled stupid bitch,” Hwia snarled back at her. “She is the Queen of our people and you treat her as a common thug! She bears the medallion of the family Anatyla, the royal family!”

“She does not deserve the right to wear that medallion!” Aelulip snapped.

“That is not for you to decide!” Hwia screamed at her. “She has survived alone out there for all this time. She was willing to talk with us, and perhaps we could have changed her views on many things! She came here freely, and now your actions will make her angry and she will not view us the same.”

“She would not bow to Drow law!” Aelulip spoke loudly. “She said as much! As Queen she needs to mate with the strongest of our males to produce stronger children! Not cavort with that human male and the Queen of our enemies! She defiles our code by sharing herself with another woman!”

“We dispensed with that law over a century ago!” Hwia snapped at her. “You yourself agreed that it was something that needed to be changed. And you yourself have taken Drow women into your bed... and forced others!” Aelulip looked at her wide eyed. “Did you think I would not discover this? Three High Elf females and two human females... that you forced into submission in your bed against their will! Do you dare think yourself so arrogant and superior as to pass judgment on our Queen for that act when you do the same thing! At least the High Elf Queen shares her bed willingly and with love!”

“Love has nothing to do with it! And as Queen she needs to stay within her own people!” Aelulip snapped right back.

Hwia looked at Kawyona, her eyes going to Nayeca and Anuk unconscious on the floor of the cell and now completely naked. “Why did you capture the Wood Elf female?”

“She dishonored me and I...” Kawyona spoke.

“She defeated you in single combat with little trouble!” Hwia snapped at the senior Drow Commander. “Now you wish to avenge yourself upon her; a childish display of emotion from the senior Drow military commander!”

“She will be my slave!” Kawyona barked. “And she will serve under me at my whim! Those are the spoils of combat! I will...”

“I care nothing for your petty differences with this Wood Elf! The traitor is another thing but you will do nothing to this female unless I authorize it! Do you understand Commander?” Hwia ordered.

“I will...”

“You will do nothing or you will answer to me!” Hwia shouted stepping closer to her. “If you disobey me I will have you stripped of your rank and used as a common slave Kawyona! Is that in any way unclear?”

The Drow Commander looked at her shocked. “As... as you order.” She said softly.

“I didn’t hear you Commander!” Hwia yelled.

“As you order it Senior Elder Hwia, I will comply!” Kawyona spoke, containing her anger and embarrassment as best she was able, which wasn’t very much.

“How many Drow warriors did you lose in this misbegotten adventure?” Hwia asked her. “And speak truthfully.”

Kawyona paused for a long moment and even Aelulip looked at her. “They were... they were expecting us!” She said.

“Answer my question damn it!” Hwia demanded, “How many of our people returned with you Commander?”

Kawyona looked at the floor, “Fifty-seven.” She answered.

Hwia’s eyes were wide now. “How many Cadre did you take?” She asked.

“Two!” Kawyona replied.

“Two!” Hwia gasped. “You... you return with fifty-seven out of a hundred? You lost forty-three of our best warriors?”

Kawyona met her eyes. “They fought... they fought better than I anticipated.”

Aelulip turned to Hwia. “They will be remembered with honor.” She spoke.

Hwia glared at her. “Remembered with honor?” She spoke. “We have to be around to remember them you fool!”

“What... what do you mean?” Aelulip asked.

Hwia held up the data pad. “The Queen gave this to me before she left yesterday. Do you want to know what is on this? This is a brief history of how this city Eden was built. She gave us information that would be considered sensitive because she wanted us to trust her! Your actions this night will have ruined any chance of that! They fought better than you anticipated Kawyona? You are fucking lucky they didn’t kill every one of you!” Hwia whirled around taking several deep breaths before turning back to them.

“It is very eye opening Aelulip.” Hwia spoke turning back around. “There are over a million elves and humans living in this city right now. There are another million and a half living in settlements across the lower portion of the continent that have aligned themselves with this Eden. They are aligned with the High Elves and their remaining cities. They are aligned with seven other elf factions across what was once the United States and Canada. This city state Eden has a standing army of eleven divisions of elf and human soldiers! Eleven divisions you moron! Almost half a million elves and humans trained to fight the same way as the thirty or so you attacked last night! And they kicked your ass! How long do you think we will last against half a million troops trained like them! We are barely over six thousand.”

“They would never move against us!” Aelulip said confidently. “Not while we hold Aihola and the others.”

“And what of the Elf High King and what he will do when he discovers what you have done?” Hwia asked Aelulip. “She gave me a sample of this King’s DNA and I tested it while you were off starting a war that will destroy our people for good. His DNA matches that of the Elf High King the Holy One created so long ago, the King that the Alliance butchered whilst he slept so he would not unite the elf clans across the planet.”

“You believe all this?” Aelulip asked taking the data pad. “These are lies! All of them.”

“Have you gone completely...?”

“Release us!” The female voice yelled. They all turned to see Anuk standing against the bars of the cell, completely naked and holding out her left arm. The Shi Viska hummed atop her forearm, as if anticipating leaping for the kill. “Release us now!”

“By the gods,” Hwia gasped.

“Your cell will not hold us.” Anuk spoke shaking her head. Her vision was still fuzzy from the drugs in her system and she failed to see Kawyona lift her side arm and point it at Nayeca who was still on the floor unconscious.

“She will die before that weapon leaves your control!” Kawyona growled. “Make it go away, now!” Anuk blinked several times, still trying to focus. Kawyona jacked back the hammer of the sidearm. “Do as I say or I will kill her without hesitation!”

Anuk stared at Kawyona for a long moment before she willed the Shi Viska to disappear, and in a silvery flash of light it was gone. Anuk didn’t see the second Drow lift the tranquilizer gun in that split second and fire three more darts into her side. She felt the pin pricks of pain and then blackness washed over her once more.

“What manner... what manner of weapon is that?” Hwia gasped.

“She and several others had similar weapons.” Kawyona spoke, her voice hesitant and filled with fear. They... they killed many of our warriors with these weapons.” She looked at the Drow fighter. “Secure her arms behind her back. If she wishes to display her weapon again she will only injure herself.”

The Drow fighter rushed to comply. “Commander... do you think she can... do you think she can change like the big man?”

“Change?” Hwia asked. “What is she talking about?”

“The Wood Elf’s mate,” Kawyona spoke. “He is... he is a...”

“He is a what?” Hwia snapped.

“He is *Ngauro. Natha Zze’ill*.” Kawyona whispered.

Hwia looked at Kawyona, her eyes wide with fear. “What... what have you brought down upon us?” She gasped. She turned to Aelulip. “We must convene a meeting of the senior Drow family leaders! Quickly, before all we have built here is destroyed in one fell swoop due to your arrogance and stupidity!”

“He’s coming around!” The voice spoke.

Dekton’s eyes fluttered opened and the sunlight caused him to blink several times. When his vision focused clearly he was staring into the young beautiful face of his Queen.

“Don’t attempt to move just yet Spartan.” Aricia’s voice filled his ears. “The drug they used still circulates through your system, but it will be purged within a few hours.”

“My... my Queen... why are you...” Dekton asked, looking around slowly. His eyes went wide then and he sat up quickly. “Little Drow? Where is Aihola?” He yelled his dark blue eyes searching frantically.

Aricia grabbed his shoulder to keep him from trying to get to his feet. “Don’t move Dekton! You must rest!”

“They... they took my mate! I will kill them all until I have her back!” He snarled trying to gather his feet under him, a wave of nausea washing over him. He made it to his knees before it overwhelmed him and he doubled over.

Aricia kept him from falling back to the ground, and another pair of hands gripped his arms as well. “Stand easy Dekton.” Vengal’s voice spoke.

“They have... they have my Aihola!” He snapped again.

“Yes... and they have my daughter as well.” Vengal replied as Dekton turned to look at him.

“And my son,” Melancton’s voice spoke.

Dekton gripped Vengal’s arm to steady himself, his other hand resting on Aricia’s slim shoulder. “What... what happen?” He asked as he slowly got to his feet.

“They were only trying to snatch Aihola, Nayeca and Anuk. Daniel only got in their way.” Melancton spoke again. “Vengal’s decision to have a Bravo Light camp kept them from overwhelming us completely. They attacked with two forces, the second one we did not detect until they were upon us.”

“They... they came from upwind.” Dekton spoke remembering he didn’t pick up the scents of the second group of Drow elves until they were already upon them. “The wind... the wind carried their scents away from us.”

“I have pulled us back to the extraction point.” Vengal spoke evenly. He wore a small bandage on his cheek, his face drawn. “Aricia arrived only an hour ago.”

Dekton looked at the youngest of Spartan and Lycavorian Queens and saw that she wore the black body armor and crimson cape of a Spartan for the first time. Her raven colored hair was pulled into a long pony tail and draped over one shoulder. She looked fit, confident and ready for battle.

“How... how long have I been unconscious?” He asked.

“Nearly six hours.” Aricia replied. “I felt a brief flash from Anuk within the Drow city but then she was lost again shortly afterward. They live Dekton but most likely they are unconscious... still under the effects of the drug they hit you with. The Drow will not hurt them.”

Dekton turned to Vengal, “I... I smelled our people... how... how many?” He asked.

“We lost five dead and nine wounded.” Vengal said slowly, his voice tinged with anger. “That is why I pulled us back. Ben has already returned to Eden with the dead and wounded, and I established a more secure perimeter with the troops that came with Aricia.”

“We killed thirty of the Drow and have thirteen prisoners.” Melancton spoke as he got to his feet. “Among them is one of their senior commanders. She saw Daniel shift and she is now extremely frightened but still very defiant. They all are.”

Dekton turned quickly to Aricia. “The King must be made aware of what has happened.” He said.

Aricia smiled and patted his arm. “Anja and I have already done so.” She said. “When Ben returns, she and Tarifa will contact him from Eden. He has dispatched a SPAT with a hundred Spartans to our location. They should arrive within the next few hours and then we will see about getting out people back.” Aricia touched his face gently. “You need to rest and then gain your strength back. Right now you need to touch your other mate. Tarifa is worried beyond words about you. Vengal and I will handle things.”

Dekton nodded quickly. “Thank you... thanks to you my Queen.”

Aricia smiled warmly. “Dekton... I am not officially a Queen of Sparta, and I may never be.” She said, the tone of her voice indicating she didn’t care in the least as long as Martin loved her. “Our laws will not allow it, and I am still considered a child by many.”

Dekton met her azure blue eyes. “You are a Queen of Sparta and of the Lycavorian people, our people.” He stated firmly. “No law made will ever change that fact. And you are no more a child in my eyes or the eyes of a Spartan Centurion than me or Melancton would be considered a child.”

Melancton nodded his head, “Words of truth.” He spoke. “Dekton speaks very true my Queen. And you should not question the King’s will when it comes to this. If there is a way, he will find it. His love for you is great.”

Aricia chuckled. “There are many things I question Melancton,” She said looking at him. “Martin’s will is not one of them. And I am the youngest of his Queens, and while he loves us all, I believe Dysea shares his heart more than Anja or I.”

Melancton smiled at her and shook his head. “I would not be so sure of that my Queen.” He said softly. Aricia looked at him oddly before Vengal broke in.

“Dekton... I need you clear headed so sit your ass down and rest.” He ordered. Everyone smiled at his words, his time spent with Daniel and Martin having affected the way he talked more than he cared to admit to anyone. “Once Tarifa speaks with Martin we will decide our course of action.”

Dekton sank back to the soft earth and nodded. Aricia motioned Vengal away with her head as Melancton squatted next to his fellow Spartan. They moved far enough away so that no one could hear them speak. Vengal looked at her.

“I will inform everyone that you will be taking command Aricia. I...” Vengal began to speak.

“No.” Aricia spoke. “This is your mission to run now that Aihola has been taken. I would imagine Tarifa will be coming north as well.”

“I thought... I thought you would want to assume command when you arrived.” Vengal said.

Aricia shook her head. “I do not have the military knowledge to command just yet Vengal. I am learning much from Martin and Dysea... but there is much I still need to learn. No this is your mission, and even when the Spartans arrived they will fall under your command. Martin trusts your skill and knowledge.”

“He trusts yours as well Aricia.” Vengal said.

Aricia smiled. “I, however, do not.” She answered, “At least not yet.”

Vengal nodded. “We will maintain a tight security perimeter with the additional troops you brought and wait for Tarifa to speak with Martin.”

“I would like to see the Drow prisoners however.” Aricia said. “I might be able to get something from them when others could not.”

Vengal smiled. “I will take you to them myself.”

Dekton looked at Melancton after watching Aricia and Vengal walk away. “He does not know?” He asked Daniel’s father.

Melancton shook his head. “He has not been among our people long enough to be able to pick that up for himself. You and I smell it because of our age.”

“Technically he is far older than both of us my friend.” Dekton said.

Melancton nodded. “Yet he has been in suspended animation for most of those years, and he is still learning the little things that you and I learned through life with our people. What troubles me more is that even Aricia doesn’t seem to know it.”

“How is that possible Melancton?” Dekton asked.

“I don’t know. Her mother may know, but she loves her daughter and if the King makes Aricia happy, she will not mention it to her.” Melancton spoke. “It does not affect all our women, and the only ones that I know of are Malaika and your former mate. It is not something that is bandied about.”

“We must tell him.” Dekton spoke.

“No! The love they share is obvious even to any fool.” Melancton spoke. “I don’t believe the change will affect her in any way based on her actions so far. She may be over the worst of it already and not even know it.”

“So we do nothing?” Dekton spoke.

Melancton nodded. “Not unless we need too.” He answered. “He is the son of Leonidas Dekton. That is a dream none of us ever entertained, and I for one am looking forward to leaving this planet and seeing the stars that we saw once we send these vampire scum to hell.”

Dekton smiled and nodded his head. “Then it will stay between us.” He spoke.

SPARTA

“Have you been able to contact them yet?” Martin asked.

He stood in the communications room of the villa, the large six by six monitor screen attached to the wall, a computer console directly underneath it. Andreus and Walter stood in the room with him, Dilios occupying one of the three chairs. Tarifa, Anja and Tareif sat at the conference table in the Eden Command and Control Center.

Tarifa shook her head slowly. “Not yet.” She replied her voice filled with worry. “Dekton has just recovered consciousness however, and they may be keeping *Nya Istel* and the others sedated.” She looked at the table now, barely holding back her emotions.

Martin looked at the monitor. He knew Tarifa almost as well as his queens due to what they once shared, and even though they had gone their separate ways and found new loves in their lives, he considered her very special to him, “Tarifa?” Martin waited patiently until she lifted her sapphire colored eyes to him. Even in the monitor, he could tell her eyes were red from previous bouts of crying.

“I... I will be fine.” Tarifa spoke softly. “I’m... I’m stronger than this.”

“Yes you are.” Martin told her.

“Ever since... ever since Dekton came into our lives Martin... Aihola and I have finally been able to look to the future.” Tarifa said, “A future with children... and peace. By the gods I am so weak!”

“She is not gone Tarifa.” Martin said softly. “I would feel it and so would you. You are the mate of a Spartan Centurion Tarifa, and the soul mate and lover of the Drow Queen. Do you think they love you because you are weak? They love you because you are the strongest woman they know. And you are one of the strongest women I know. Do not question yourself ever again. I won’t allow you to.”

Tarifa took a deep breath and looked at the screen. “What... what would you have me do Martin?”

“Go north to Canada and link up with Aricia and the Spartans! Tareif... begin moving your division north as well. We went there to help them, and they have killed five of my people. If they wish to cling to the past, that is their right, but they will return our friends to us or I will bring down that city until there is not a single brick left standing.” Martin spoke.

Tareif nodded. “We will leave immediately.” He said.

“No not you Tareif.” Martin spoke.

Tareif looked at the screen. “Sire... they are... they are my men.” He said.

“You will promote Leland to command your division; for as of today you are the overall Military Commander of all Eden’s military, second only to me.” Martin said stunning Tareif into silence. “They now are *all* your men. You are the better tactical mind for large units and I need you to put together a defensive plan for Eden and the settlements. After what I will do today, the vampires will go on the offence. I would imagine they’ll come straight for Eden initially. They won’t attack Sparta because they still fear my people and what we could do even with their overwhelming odds. We need to make them fear the elves and humans in Eden as well.”

Anja leaned forward in her chair, her brow furrowed in alarm. “Martin what are you planning?” She asked hesitantly.

“Xerxes and his forces are at best a week away.” Martin said seeing their surprised looks. “You are positive they found another Class Five Reactor?”

Anja nodded. “That much was very clear in Deval’s mind. They were discussing what they could do when EDEN was fully operational again.”

“Given the information we now have Anja... it’s safe to assume that they have the technology to get the reactor online within a week wouldn’t you agree?” Martin spoke.

Anja nodded. “Yes?” She replied immediately.

“Then we must move quickly.” Martin spoke. “Xerxes sent some sort of Envoy here to Sparta with the intent to demand our surrender or cooperation. He’s going to get neither so I’m guessing he’s not going to be too happy. I intend to piss him off some more.”

“Is that wise sire?” Tareif asked. “If we are to believe everything that has happen up until now, and after what I have seen these past months I don’t doubt it to be true, he could very well remain far above the planet and just bombard us couldn’t he?”

“To what end?” Martin asked. “Any military commander knows you have to put boots on the ground to actually win a battle. And bombarding us won’t be an option when my people get here. He’ll need to try and win on the ground.”

“Martin... we will be heavily outnumbered.” Tarifa said.

“She’s right Marty... even with the other elf clans... Yuri’s forces will outnumber us three to one all by themselves.” Anja said. “That doesn’t count any troops that idiot Xerxes brings with him.”

Martin smiled gently when Anja used her nickname for him. He sent a pulse of love and warmth through their link and saw her close her eyes quickly relishing it. “War Master what is the best way to defeat an enemy when they outnumber you?” Martin asked.

“Make them come to you.” Tareif answered immediately. “Fight them on the terms you decide and lay out.”

Martin nodded. “And that’s what we will do.” He spoke. “And it won’t hurt to get brother and sister mad at each other too.”

They looked at him oddly. “How will you do that?” Tarifa asked.

“Now I can’t reveal all my tricks can I?” Martin said. “Where’s the fun in that?”

“Martin...” Tarifa spoke. “How do... how do you suggest I handle the Drow?”

Martin met her eyes and smiled. “I would imagine that the Queen of the High Elves and one of the Queens of Sparta can come up with something.” He told her. “Be mindful of communicating telepathically with Aihola or the others. If any of them are working with the vampires, they could have psychic deadeners in which case telepathy won’t work.”

“Aihola and I have shared blood Martin.” Tarifa spoke her mind already working. “Our connection is deeper, Dekton has told us this.”

Martin was silent for a long moment. “Very well... just be mindful and speak in code if you feel anyone is monitoring what you say.”

Tarifa nodded, her self assurance rapidly reasserting itself. “I will not play games with them Martin.” She spoke her voice firm.

“I don’t intend for you to.” He told her. “They will conform to how the world is, or they will be left out of it. Make them understand that. The Spartans I sent know they will answer to you and Aricia. The two of you are alike in many ways, and you will get along with her well.”

Tarifa nodded. “I believe so.”

Martin nodded and saw Walter motion to him. “I have to go.” He spoke. “Keep in touch with me. The Spartans will have several long range communications hubs that are brand new and completely secure. If you need me to do anything... just contact me.”

“Good luck.” Tarifa said as she got to her feet.

Martin looked at Anja in the screen. “Thr’won is coming to Eden with part of the Royal Guard and Dysea. I spoke to her briefly about what you and Lynwe have experienced. She’s far more knowledgeable than Peder.”

Anja nodded. "I'll meet her at the airfield. And it will be good to see Dysea again."

"I will join all of you in several days. I have to tie up some loose ends here and then I will join you."

Martin told them. "I love you Anja."

Anja returned his affection with a pulse from her own aura within their connection and Martin smiled feeling her essence sooth him. "I love you more." Anja's voice spoke from the screen before it went dark.

Martin turned from the monitor and looked at Walter. "You sent what I asked for Aricia and Anja?"

Walter nodded quickly. "The Oracle did the work herself. They were magnificent in my opinion." He held out the large plain box. "She sent this for you."

Martin took the box and opened it carefully seeing the helmet that rested inside. He reached into the box and drew out the matte black helm. This helmet was now decorated with a crest of soft fine hair broken into four colored sections that reached six inches above the helmet. The first section was raven black hair, followed by platinum blond, Persian red and another section of raven black hair that extended down the back and would stretch to the middle of his shoulders in the back. He gazed at the helmet with an almost reverent look.

"Wow." Martin said finally seeing Andreus and Walter smile.

"The Oracle does good work." Walter said. "And she put her blessings upon it as well. You should try it on."

Martin did, sliding the helmet onto his head with ease. The full face helmet left only a narrow portion in the center unprotected, exactly like the Spartan helmets of old. A narrow strip of armor extended down over the bridge of his nose and a four inch wide gap between the cheek armor plates. As he got used to the texture and fit of the helmet, two tinted visors fell in place over his eyes slits and a myriad of information came to life on the two small screens, feeding information directly to him instantly.

"Oh now that is very cool!" Martin spoke with a grin.

Walter chuckled. "The Oracle thought you might like that. It appears her skills go beyond just being the wisest among us."

"Oh yeah man, very cool indeed!" Martin said. He looked at Walter. "Shall we go talk with our vampire guest?"

"I was hoping you would say that." Walter spoke.

"And what became of Ephialtes?" Martin asked casually.

Walter just stared at Martin. "He was very helpful sire." He replied. "Very willing to tell me whatever I wanted to know. Right up until the time I told him I was going to stake him to the earth in the middle of a fire ant colony. He became very hostile then."

Martin nodded his head as they left the communications room. "Just insure his remains are recovered. I do not want anyone finding his bones or to see the way he died. It would be unnecessarily brutal especially for a young child. We are civilized after all you know."

Andreus laughed softly as they walked. "Of course sire."

"What about Autolycus and the others?" Martin asked.

"They were executed two hours ago sire." Walter replied causing Martin to stop walking and look at him.

Martin turned his head to Andreus. "Captain I am..."

"He may have been a bastard up until the end, but for his many faults sire, at least he died a Spartan in the end." Andreus answered firmly. "Autolycus and his son went whimpering like babies."

"Your father's name will not be spoken of in the same breath as those traitors Andreus." Martin said softly. "Misguided he may have been... he did what he thought was best for Sparta. And that is how he will be remembered."

Andreus looked at Martin surprised. "Sire he betrayed you... he was working with our most hated enemies... he..."

Martin shook his head. "No. His deeds concerning the events with our enemies will be stricken from our history. He will be remembered as the man he once was; a man of honor. I would hope you and your brothers and sisters would carry that with you and remember him as he was then, not who he was at the end. Your father died the day Autolycus was able to corrupt him. And that is who you should remember."

Andreus was silent for a long moment before he bowed his head to him. "You give honor where none was returned sire." He said softly. "Why?"

“I give honor where it was deserved.” Martin said, “Nothing more, nothing less. And this has nothing to do with Aricia or her status. That never mattered to me in the least, and you know it. This has to do with not being able to remember my father, and honoring his deeds with what I do. You and your siblings can look back at what your father accomplished and be proud of those achievements for Sparta. That is how Xenos will be remembered in my version of history.” Martin reached up and squeezed his shoulder before heading quickly for the door to the villa.

Andreas looked at Walter. “Why does he do this Senior Polemarch?”

Walter smiled. “I would think that was obvious... it is the right thing to do.” He answered softly.

“Was... was this something King Leonidas would have done?” Andreas asked.

Walter shook his head quickly. “No... but he is not his father.” Walter answered. “And that is why he will one day be a greater King than Leonidas. If we all survive that is.”

CANADA

DROW CITY OF KELWOOD

“What are you saying Elder Hwia?” The older Drow woman asked.

There were seven major families within Kelwood that had survived the purge over a hundred years ago and eleven smaller families. Now... thirteen female and six male Drow were part of the senior Drow families and Hwia had quickly called them all together.

“How many of you knew of this misguided attack Aelulip authorized?” Hwia asked sternly looking at the men and women in the room.

“What attack?” An older female Drow asked.

“What are you talking about?” A male Drow spoke.

Hwia watched them carefully, nine of the senior family heads shouting questions and demands at her. The rest sat there quietly, unable to meet her eyes.

The female Drow that had spoken first finally stood up, “Silence!” She barked at the others, waiting for them to be quiet before turning to Hwia. “What exactly are you speaking of Senior Elder Hwia? I know of no attack conducted by our warriors.”

“Two Drow Cadre went out last night and conducted an attack against our Queen and those with her.” Hwia told them evenly, seeing the looks of horror on the faces of the nine who had been questioning her. “They kidnapped our Queen, the traitor, a Wood Elf female and one of the males with her group.”

“They... they took the Queen?” The female asked.

Hwia nodded. “They brought them back here to our city. They are locked up like common criminals.”

One of the oldest Drow males stood up now. He was leader of the second largest Drow family and was perhaps one of the most skilled warriors in their ranks. He was also a very strict Drow, adhering to the ancient way religiously and the father of Katatin.

“I supported this operation.” He spoke. “And I will not deny it. The daughter of our former Queen does not deserve to be our Queen. She disrespects our laws with contempt. She mates with a foreign human male, and consorts with the Queen of the High Elves in a physical relationship.”

“That is not against the law anymore Ael'main!” The female Drow who had stood up barked.

“She is a Drow! Only Drow men and women should share her bed!” Ael'main snapped.

“Who are you to dictate to the Queen who shares her bed and who doesn't?” The female demanded.

Hwia let her eyes linger on the woman for a moment. Thonsya led the largest Drow family remaining, and while she was a strict Drow and stern disciplinarian, she also knew that the Drow needed to change in order to survive in this new world.

“I am a family head!” Ael'main spoke.

“You are not the Queen!” Thonsya shouted. “And you have no place to tell her anything! You sat here and listened to her speak for three hours! She survived without us... without her people for years! The Alliance vampire torturers could not break her; the wild lands could not break her! She survived it all by herself!”

“And that gives her the right to violate our laws!” Ael'main said. “She sat there and told us she would not abide by many of our laws!”

“She said she would review the laws we have in place and if changes needed to be made she would change them for the betterment of our people!” Thonsya snapped. “Did you see the look in her eyes, the joy at finding so many of her people alive? Did you see the look of wonderment in the eyes of her brother? Did you look at anything besides the way she filled out her clothes?”

Ael'main stepped towards her. “You will not speak to me that way!”

Almost instantly several Drow warriors broke from the file along the wall, moving quickly to stand behind Thonsya. As if on cue, more still broke from the opposite wall and backed up Ael'main.

“I will speak to you any way I wish!” Thonsya snapped at him. “Or does your family wish to challenge mine once more? The last time you did, we beat you like dogs! Shall we do so again?”

“Enough!” Hwia screamed. “This will accomplish nothing! We need to decide what to do.”

Ael'main glared at Hwia. “That is obvious! She must renounce her status as Queen so we can choose another. She is not fit to lead our people.”

“That is outrageous!” Another Drow male spoke coming to his feet. “She came here to bring us out this decrepit place we have called home for so long! Our people can once more move and breathe the air of freedom. You have all heard what she said of this city she helps to lead. The Drow with her now... those that escaped from the Alliance vampires... they live and work freely. Many have taken husbands and wives!”

“Husbands and wives that are not now and never will be Drow!” Ael'main shouted. “They are traitors to their people!”

“I would like to see you call the Queen or her brother a traitor to their faces.” Thonsya snapped.

“Enough!” Hwia screamed. “Our very existence depends on what we do now.”

Thonsya looked at her. “What do you mean Hwia?”

Hwia held up the data pad. “Aihola left this for me before she departed yesterday.” She said handing it to her. “It is a detailed history of this city she now leads at the behest of the High King. Many of the things on this pad were not meant for common eyes, and that alone shows her sincerity for the future of our people. It also tells us what we will face if anything were to happen to her.”

“What nonsense is this?” Ael'main asked as Thonsya's eyes grew wide at what she was reading.

“By the gods,” Thonsya gasped looking up at Hwia. “Are... are these numbers accurate? Eleven... eleven complete divisions?”

“Aihola has not lied to us yet.” Hwia spoke. “Would you all agree the Drow are the finest warriors alive? That we are a match for even the Alliance vampires?”

“That is why the Alliance has not come after us here.” Another female Drow spoke up.

“No one could hope to defeat us in open combat.” Ael'main spoke arrogantly. “The successful mission last night proves it.”

“Does it?” Hwia said.

“It was successful wasn't it?” Ael'main replied. “The Queen is now in our custody, as is the traitor and my son's attacker! Kawyona reported to me when they returned. We also captured the Wood Elf female who struck her, and a human male who got in her way. He obviously has more guts than brains and she tells me he is well gifted. He should make an excellent toy for our females.” He spoke with a smile of superiority.

Hwia glared at him. “Did she also tell you how many of our warriors were lost in the raid you supported?”

“She mentioned nothing of casualties, so I assume there were none.” Ael'main answered even more arrogantly. “Who could stand against our warriors?”

Hwia saw the nods and smiles of many of them men and women gathered and she stepped up to Ael'main and slapped him viciously across the face, “*Dos dosib wael!*” Hwia screamed, “*Il xunus naut mention ol p'wal forty-three d' udossta sargtlinen zhahen elggen wun nindol thalackz'hind d' dossta!*” **(You fucking fool! She did not mention it because forty-three of our warriors were killed in this raid of yours)**

Ael'main glared at her holding his face with one hand as several other family heads came to their feet.

“Impossible!”

“A lie!” Another gasped.

“It is no lie and it is very possible, because it is true!” Hwia shouted. “Two Cadre went on this raid you and others supported Ael'main, only fifty-seven returned. Oh yes... one hundred of our finest warriors against perhaps thirty men and women with the Queen. They slaughtered forty-three of our warriors and we

outnumbered them over three to one!” Hwia pointed to the data pad Thonsya held as she looked at her in horror. “And this city state she leads has eleven complete divisions of men and elves trained as those we fought last night! Eleven divisions do you hear me! Nearly half a million men and women and elves under arms! Trained exactly like those that slaughtered an entire Cadre even while we outnumbered them three to one!”

“That is...” Ael'main looked suddenly very ill.

“*Xun dos jal talinth nind orn xun naubol vel'drav nind screa d' nindol,*” Hwia asked her voice more sedate now, “*Xun dos talinth nind orn ori'gato nindol alu unpunished?*” **(Do you all think they will do nothing when they learn of this? Do you think this will go unpunished?)**

“Hwia... do you... do you believe she will unleash these forces on us?” Thonsya asked.

Hwia stepped back and took a deep breath, her eyes never leaving Ael'main. “I do not believe that is the question we should be asking ourselves.” She said before looking at her. “The question we should be asking ourselves is will her High Elf lover unleash these forces on us? The man she took as her mate may very well be dead due to our actions. We Drow do not give our affection lightly, you all know this. And you could sense it in Aihola yesterday. We have killed the man she calls husband! And we have taken her from her elf lover!” Hwia shook her head. “Tarifa of the High Elves is not someone to be trifled with, you all know this. It was she who defeated us in our war with the High Elves. She and her father Tareif. And we have killed, assaulted and kidnapped friends of the Elf High King. What do you think she will do? What do you think he will do?”

Ael'main snorted. “They would never attack us if we have them.” He spoke. “They risk killing those they supposedly care for.”

Hwia looked at him. “You would stand against them?” She asked the question stunned that he would suggest it. “You suggest we fight them?”

“We are Drow!” Ael'main barked. “We know the city! We know the entire area! We can hold out for months! Years if need be!”

“At what cost?” Thonsya spoke softly. “At what cost to our people and their future?”

“Our people will endure!” Ael'main snapped. “They...”

All heads turned when the Drow warrior rushed into the chamber and went directly to where Hwia stood. He whispered furiously into her ear, her eyes growing large. She looked at him.

“You are sure?” She asked.

“I saw one of them with my own eyes Elder Hwia.” He replied softly.

Thonsya came to her feet. “Hwia what is it?”

Hwia looked at her, visibly shaken. “Our... our mountain observation posts have detected a large number of strange looking aircraft off loading troops near the edge of Whitewater lake.” She looked at the Drow fighter and nodded her head. “Tell them.”

“There are at least a thousand of them.” The Drow soldier spoke. “And they are heavily armed. And we... we saw two missile platforms off loaded from a huge transport. It was tracked and they were loading it when I departed.”

“We are only sixteen miles from Whitewater Lake.” Thonsya spoke.

Hwia glared at Ael'main, his face drawn tight. “How do you propose we fight them when they can bring our city down around us without even getting close?” She shouted, “You pathetic moron!” She turned to the scout. “Dispatch one Cadre to the lake. They are not to engage these forces. I want intelligence! Nothing more! Make it clear to the Cadre Commander that they are not to stand and fight.”

The scout nodded and bowed his head quickly before turning and moving out of the room.

Hwia looked at the men and women. “I want a war council assembled to discuss our options when the scouts return!” She snapped glaring at Ael'main. “And you... you have brought this down on us, and it is you who will lead any attack or defense of this city! At least if we are to die, I will have the satisfaction of knowing you will die first.”

CANADA

Dekton crushed Tarifa in his embrace, his face buried in her long black hair, his aura washing over and through her completely. Tarifa had shifted into the form of a wolf the moment she set foot on the ground.

Dekton had instructed and explained to her many things about her wolf form, the speed and agility she would have with four legs and a tail, as well as her enhanced senses. There had been times where Aihola and Dekton were left on the ground laughing at her antics as she was learning how to run and walk in her wolf form. The three of them had spent hours in the timber around Eden, Dekton teaching her all he knew, while Aihola shared in this knowledge if nothing else but to know the two people she intended to spend the rest of her life with better.

Aihola had found her vampire genes kept her body from fully changing into wolf form, and for the first few days this had saddened her. Watching Dekton and Tarifa scamper through the grass and mountains was almost too much for her to bear. That was until Dekton showed her what she could do now that she had both vampire and wolf genes in her body. Aihola found her normal senses were twenty times more acute. Her sense of smell and taste and hearing, while unaffected by her vampire genes, were completely changed by the wolf genes in her now. She was even stronger than before, her vampire strength and speed enhanced even more by the addition of Dekton's genes into her body through his bite. She could scamper across the plains just as quickly as they could, easily maintaining the same speed and agility as they could in wolf form.

This was how Dekton trained them then. Alone they were deadly, but together, the three of them were devastating. Tarifa no longer felt like the third wheel, knowing Dekton and Aihola were superior to her. They had never made her think this, but until she mastered the gift Dekton had bestowed upon her she felt like the odd person out. That had all stopped when they began training in the mountains.

In her wolf form of silky black hair, it took Tarifa only three minutes to cover the two miles to the main camp from the landing zone, and the moment she spotted Dekton running to greet her in his large brown wolf body, her heart leaped for joy. He shifted immediately upon seeing her and Tarifa waited until she was within ten feet before shifting in the middle of a leap towards him. He caught her in mid air, their lips coming together in a hungry kiss. Aricia, Melancton and Vengal stood off to the side viewing this with smiles on their faces.

Tarifa took Dekton's tanned weathered face in her hands as he held her off the ground and looked into his dark blue eyes. "You... you had me so worried." She spoke.

"I am fine." He told her with a smile and gentle nuzzle of her elfin ear. "You should not have come."

Tarifa's eyes closed in bliss when his aura washed over her and he nuzzled her sensitive ear. She smiled in contentment opening her eyes once more and looking at him as he lowered her to the ground. "Martin directed me to come here." She spoke. "Selene and Anja are busy consolidating the elf clans we have been able to contact, and once Dysea arrives in Eden they will have more than enough Queens."

Dekton chuckled and kissed her hard again, Tarifa relishing in the sensations he produced in her. "I am glad you are here." He spoke.

"Has *Nya Istel* tried to contact you?" She asked.

Dekton shook his head. "Not yet, but that could be from any number of reasons. Her aura and heartbeat are strong so I know she is no danger for the moment. I was going to meet the SPAT from Sparta when I heard you were landing."

"Martin told me he was sending them. I did not think they would arrive so quickly." Tarifa said.

"It seems that since your former Captain arrived in Sparta and became our lead pilot, we have learned many things of our aircraft that we did not know before." Dekton spoke with a smile. "Including how fast they can go." He sensed Aricia and the others come up and he turned, still holding Tarifa's hand.

Aricia wasted no time and stepped up to her quickly embracing her tightly and then putting her hands on her shoulders. She leaned over and kissed both her cheeks and then her forehead before stepping back. "Welcome Tarifa." She said softly.

Melancton was next, Tarifa looking surprised at the gentleness with which the giant of a black man gripped her shoulders and gave her the three kisses. "Welcome Queen of the High Elves. You bring much honor to our people, as your kind always does. I believe now that we have the three most beautiful elf queens on the planet mated to Lycavorian Spartans, things will start looking up!" Melancton shoved Dekton in the shoulder. "May your sons take after their mothers and not their father. That would be a terrible thing." He said with a chuckle.

Tarifa had never seen Dekton embarrassed and she couldn't help the smile that crossed her face at Melancton's words.

Dekton looked at her with a smile. “It is customary among Spartans to greet new family and friends this way. They can smell that you are a new wolf.”

“You... you are Daniel’s father?” Tarifa asked.

Melancton nodded. “Lucky for him he took after his mother in the looks department. If he looked like me he would not have Anuk.” He said with a laugh. Tarifa again could not help the smile that split her face. She had not realized Martin’s people were so open and humorous. “Ah yes... you are probably wondering why Dekton is not as happy as me?” Melancton looked at him. “Not all of us Spartans are ogres with no humor.”

“So you’ve told me many times in the past my friend.” Dekton said.

“With two mates that look like Aihola and Tarifa I’d be walking around with a perpetual smile on my face all the time.” Melancton said looking at Tarifa once more. “You should work on that part of him. Get him to loosen up.”

Tarifa chuckled and wrapped her arms around his waist. “*Nya Istel* and I will start working on that as soon as this is over.” She said.

“Good.” Melancton told her. “He needs an injection of humor into his otherwise dull personality.”

“I see where Daniel gets his sense of humor from.” Tarifa said.

Vengal put his finger to his ear and listened for a second. “Aricia... the Spartan force just landed.” He said. “The senior Spartan is requesting that you meet him at the landing zone.”

Aricia nodded, “Very well. Tarifa, Dekton can take you to where our command post is set up, I will join you in a few minutes and we can devise a plan to get our people back.”

Tarifa nodded feeling happier than she had in days, but knowing they still had to get Aihola back. Something she was determined to do. Aricia watched as they walked away and then turned to head for the landing zone, Melancton falling in beside her.

“Why would the senior Spartan request to meet me?” Aricia asked. “Martin surely gave him their orders. They should report to Tarifa or Vengal.”

“Perhaps they have orders for you as well.” Melancton said.

Aricia shrugged. “Let us go, I don’t want to waste time with ridiculous orders when our people are in danger.”

Aricia didn’t see Melancton smile just before they both shifted into wolf form and sprinted for the landing zone. They covered the distance faster than Tarifa had due to their experience and were at the landing zone in just under two minutes. They shifted back as they reached the edge of the clearing and saw the SPAT reaching back into the sky, leaving behind a hundred Spartan Centurions in black and crimson, fully armed and armored. They even wore their helmets, which told Aricia they meant business here. The Spartans turned towards her in perfect formation when they saw her, the Spartan out in front of the formation issuing an order she did not hear.

Aricia got to within fifty meters when the wind shifted and she caught the familiar scent. She came to an abrupt halt then, the scents of the hundred Spartans blowing over her, but that single scent was more distinctive than the others for some reason. It was coming from the lead Spartan, a tall heavily muscled man. She couldn’t make out his face just yet under his helmet, but she knew him somehow. Aricia reached ten meters from the formation and saw the lead Spartan reach up and remove his helmet.

Aricia stopped abruptly, her hands going to her heart as she gasped in shock. Melancton was beaming as Atropos walked up to his younger sister proudly. He stopped in front of her and Aricia let out a small sob.

“Atropos... Atropos is it really you?” She gasped.

“My youngest sister has grown into a woman while I have been away.” Atropos spoke loudly, “A beautiful young woman at that.”

Aricia could not contain herself any longer and threw herself into her brother’s strong arms, to the smiles of many of the Spartans in the ranks behind her. Aricia hugged him tightly, drinking in the scent of family, of the brother so many spoke of in nefarious terms, but the brother who had bounced her on his knee and played with her as a small child when Andreus took her to see him.

Atropos hugged her back tightly. “It is so very good to see you little one.” He spoke into her ear in a whisper.

Aricia looked at him, her azure blue eyes wide. “Atropos... how...”

“It is a long story.” He told her with a smile. “And one I will happily relay to you and to our mother when we see her. First I have a duty to perform, a duty given to me by the King.”

Aricia looked at him. “Martin... how is he?” She asked excitedly.

Atropos smiled warmly. “He misses you little one, don’t doubt that.” Atropos turned and looked over his shoulder, “My sons!”

Aricia looked surprised as the two young Spartans stepped forward quickly, one carrying the normal Spartan helmet under his arm and the other holding a large walnut case, “Your sons?” Aricia asked stunned.

Atropos smiled proudly. “Pasha is my oldest.” He spoke. “Damon is six years younger.”

Aricia could see the resemblance easily between her brother and his two sons. They had his facial structure and his eyes. “Hello.” Aricia didn’t know what else to say.

“Milady,” They spoke together, bowing their heads to her.

Aricia looked back to her brother, “Another of your secrets?” She asked with a smile.

Atropos shook his head. “Not anymore.” He set her down and turned to Melancton, reaching back to his youngest son and taking the Spartan helmet. He held it out to Melancton. “The King thought you might need this. We have your son’s helmet as well, and his mate’s. We will need them before long I think.”

Melancton nodded. “That we will old friend; that we will.”

Atropos turned back to Aricia. “The King told me to tell you he will scold you and his other Queens for not bringing your full equipment with you when you left Sparta. He said he will take extra time in scolding you.” Atropos said with a smile causing his sister to blush deeply even under her tan.

“Atropos... I... I am not a Centurion.” Aricia spoke slowly.

Atropos nodded. “No you are not.” He said calmly. He turned to his oldest son Pasha and nodded. The young Spartan opened the case and almost reverently Atropos reached into the case and drew out the Spartan helm. That the helmet had been made for a woman was obvious in its less harsh lines and curved edges. It was crested exactly as Martin’s with raven black hair extending six inches above the top of the helmet and then curving across the top where it ended in a middle of the shoulder tail. He turned back to his sister and held up the helmet to her, his face beaming. “You are not a Spartan Centurion... you are a Queen of Sparta, and of the Lycavorian people; our people. Recognized and honored by the Spartan Senate by unanimous vote, only hours ago.”

Aricia saw every Spartan watching drop to one knee and bow their heads, including Melancton and her brother.

“Atropos... I...?” Aricia said softly.

He looked at his sister and smiled. “This is your destiny sister. Your purpose since the day you were born. Reach for it Aricia and do not be afraid. You are a Queen now sister, one of three that our King has chosen. His blood burns for you brightly sister and yours for him. Take it.”

Aricia reached out slowly, touching the soft crest of the helmet in his hands. Slowly she let her fingers encircle the matte black metal, entranced by the engravings carved into the sides of the cheek plates. She stared at it for a long moment, everything that had happened in her life flashing through her mind in an instant, all of it leading to Martin and her standing at his side. Aricia took a deep breath and lifted the helmet up and without another thought slid it down onto her head, sealing her destiny forever.

Aihola kept her amber eyes closed as her senses slowly returned to her. She breathed evenly, not wanting to reveal to her captors that she was now aware once more. She was on a bed, the sheets cool against her naked skin. She could hear calm even breathing and the beating of three hearts coming from somewhere nearby. Her guards she assumed, wherever she was, and judging by the beats of their hearts and their breathing, relaxed but alert. Dekton had taught her much about the skills she had gained with his genes racing through her system. She had fed on his deliciously spicy blood only four other times since that first night, mainly because he could turn her to putty in his hands with just his touch, much the same as Tarifa could do to her. Aihola counted herself blessed by having both of them. Never had she imagined she could love two people so intensely and without question, and that one of them was a beautiful woman only reinforced the position that they were meant for one another. She rarely bit either of them during sex anymore, as they were so attuned to each other, the added fire was not needed. Aihola needed them both just as they needed her.

Aihola kept her mind closed to everything around her until she got her bearings. She could feel the remnants of Dekton and Tarifa both in her thoughts, worry coursing through their auras. She could also feel the aftereffects of someone much more powerful who had reinforced her mental shields and it took her a moment to realize that it was her King's youngest mate and Queen Aricia. Her confident and strong aura pulsed within her thoughts as well, reassuring and soothing, and it was that tendril that she reached for slowly and tentatively. She needed to keep her head about her, and not deal with a barrage of questions from the two people who loved her most, at least not just yet. Tarifa's aura was closer than she had expected and Aihola realized she must have left Eden and come north.

Her amber eyes opened slowly taking in everything around her. The room was large, with a comfortable looking sofa and several chairs not far from where she lay on the bed. She saw the two female Drow standing beside the door, their weapons slung over their shoulders. There were three in the room though and she could still hear the heart beat of the third person. That third person turned out to be a male and he came out of what appeared to be a kitchen area holding something in his hand that he was eating. He glanced at her quickly and his eyes grew wide when he realized Aihola was awake and looking at him.

"She's awake." The male hissed dropping his food and sprinting towards her.

Aihola took a deep breath and heaved herself off the bed quickly, fighting back the nausea that threatened to double her over. Though she was still groggy and rubber legged, she still managed to land the side kick to the Drow's shoulder. It only carried enough power to stagger him slightly and then he was upon her. She could feel the other two Drow moving towards her as well as the male wrapped his arms around her from behind. His hands grabbed her breasts roughly which caused anger to shoot through Aihola, burning away the grogginess and sluggish movements.

"Do not struggle!" The male Drow spoke pulling her tighter. "I don't want to hurt you."

"I am your Queen!" Aihola snapped. "Release me immediately."

"You are not my Queen!" The male snarled. "Shoot her again, quickly!"

"I'm warning you to release me a last time!" Aihola spoke her words filled with anger and hate.

"Shut up!" The male snarled once more. "Shoot the bitch damn it!" He twisted her around giving the female Drow a clear shot as she raised the tranquilizer gun and fired.

Aihola winced as she felt the three pin pricks of pain in her bare abdomen, and that only served to fuel her rage more. "I warned you to unhand me!" Aihola spoke. "Now you will die!"

Aihola heard the male Drow laugh, "Yeah sure! Give it a moment and you'll be sleeping like a baby in seconds. You feel good bitch."

"No not this time." Aihola growled.

Aihola snapped her head back viciously, the crown of her head impacting with the Drow's nose and Aihola heard the satisfying crunch of cartilage. His arms released her instantly and he reached for his nose, blood spurting from his nostrils and the sliver of cartilage that had torn through his skin. Aihola spun around faster than any of the three could follow and drove stiffened fingers into the male's throat, crushing his larynx instantly. His amber eyes went wide when he could no longer draw in a breath and he gagged.

"I warned you dog!" Aihola snarled hatefully. "No one but my mates put their hands upon me!" Aihola stepped into the Drow and drove the heel of her palm up into the bridge of his broken nose. The broken cartilage splintered more and several pieces drove deeply into his brain. His body went limp immediately and he slumped to his knees dead before he hit the floor. His body leaned back and he fell, his legs still bent underneath him.

Aihola did not pause and using her vampire speed she blurred to the side just as the two other Drow lifted their weapons and fired. They could not track her movement and the one closest to her felt her weapon ripped from her grasp. Her amber eyes went wide as Aihola flipped it in her hands and drove the butt into the female's face. The warrior dropped like a rock and Aihola used the rifle as a club, swinging it back around by the barrel viciously. The stock of the weapon shattered as it struck the second warrior in the temple. The warrior's skull fractured with an audible crack and she joined her comrades on the floor.

Aihola's wolf hearing heard the click of the door and she heaved the broken rifle at the doorway just as it slid open. The broken stock and barrel slammed into the head of the first Drow through the door with enough force to lift him off his feet and drop him to the floor unconscious, blood squirting from the jagged slash in his forehead. Snatching the dead male's sidearm from the holster on his belt she blurred towards the doorway. Her

wolf sense of smell detected Hwia's scent and that was who she locked her hand around, kicking out with a front kick that sent another Drow skidding across the floor. Aihola slammed the Elder against the wall roughly, drawing a grunt of pain and she placed the barrel of the sidearm to Hwia's wide eyes.

"One more step and she dies." Aihola snapped.

"Hold!" Hwia gasped loudly as Kawyona and three more Drow burst into the room.

Aihola stared at Hwia with burning amber eyes. "You will not survive Elder Hwia. That much I guarantee. And when you kill me... my mate and my lover will tear this city down around you and none of you will survive!"

"You can't kill us all!" Kawyona snapped from her spot.

Aihola smiled and her hand blurred in motion. There was a loud report of a gunshot and then the sidearm was once more pressed against Hwia's head. The body of the Drow warrior standing next to Kawyona dropped to the floor, a neat hole above her left eye now leaking blood and brain matter. "Would you like to take bets on that?" Aihola growled.

"None of you move!" Hwia screamed. "I command you!"

"Explain to me why you attacked us?" Aihola barked. "Explain to me why I should not just kill you right here and now and take my chances? I came here in peace and this is what you do?"

"My Queen... I..." Hwia struggled to find the words.

"Do you realize what will happen now?" Aihola asked. "Do you? My mate is not dead. And Tarifa has arrived already, as well as hundreds more troops from Eden. I can feel them even now moving to set up and encircle your city here. My mate Dekton is usually very reserved in his emotions for he is a Spartan, and Tarifa rarely shows what she feels outwardly because she is the embodiment of a Queen, always in control, never showing emotions. Do you wish to know what I feel from them? I can sense them telepathically, their thoughts and feelings. And at this moment they would be very content to slaughter every Drow in this city. Is that what you wish?"

"I... I believe you know that not to be true my Queen." Hwia stammered.

"Then why have you done this? Where are my friends?" Aihola snapped. "And return my clothes to me before I truly lose my temper."

Hwia looked at her wide eyed. "You... you are not angry now?"

Aihola laughed. "Angry?" She asked. "That fool male you left to guard me decided he would rather feel me up than live. No one but Dekton and Tarifa lay hands on me. No one! I was perturbed he did listen. He paid the price." Aihola released Hwia's throat but kept the sidearm pressed to her head. She reached down and plucked the three darts from her side and tossed them at Kawyona. "And your drugs will no longer work on me. It is one of the benefits of both your mate and your lover being a Lycavorian, a Spartan and a werewolf, and being half vampire! Your drugs will only work once before our bodies analyze and destroy them the moment they enter our blood stream."

"My... my Queen... I did not authorize this misguided attack against you and your people!" Hwia spoke. "I swear to you."

"She has killed four of our warriors!" Kawyona gasped. "How can you let her live now?"

"Three actually," Aihola spoke without taking her eyes from Hwia. "The young female there will live, though she will have a hell of a headache when she wakes up. And if you think this is bad, you will see bad when Daniel wakes up and he discovers you have taken his mate from him." Aihola smiled cruelly. "Then you will see how bad things will get."

"You speak of the giant male; the one who is *Natha Zze'ill*; that is who you speak of?" Hwia asked. (**A Werewolf**)

Aihola smiled. "So you know what he is." She said. "That is good. At least you will know what kills you before you die. Yes, he is *natha zze'ill*, and a Spartan. Your commander here decided she would kidnap Anuk, his mate. Daniel will take great offense at this trust me. I have seen him in action before."

"We should kill him now!" Kawyona snapped.

Aihola smiled. "Yes... that is good advice indeed. Kill him now." Aihola said. "In fact... kill me as well... then I will not have to witness the end of my people, for if that happens, the Drow people will truly cease to exist."

"We will fight them!" Kawyona barked. "We are not afraid!"

Aihola laughed at her. “Then go ahead, kill me. Kill Daniel, kill all of us. When that happens a hundred thousand *natha zze’ill* will descend on you and they will feast on the hearts of every Drow in this city, and there is nothing you will be able to stop it.”

“Lower your weapons!” Hwia spoke. “All of you!”

“Elder Hwia, what are you doing?” Kawyona spoke stunned.

“Lower your weapons now damn you!” Hwia shouted the order. “She is our Queen! Now do as I say or I will cut out your innards myself!”

Aihola felt more than saw the five Drow fighters and Kawyona lower their weapons slowly. “Now bring me my uniform! And my mother’s medallion.”

“That is the medallion of the Queen!” Kawyona snapped. “You have no right to wear it! You... you are no longer Drow!”

“That medallion was left to me by my mother!” Aihola snapped. “It is all I have left of her, and neither you nor some ridiculous Drow law will keep it from me! Once that is in my possession, and I am properly clothed, I shall surrender this weapon and we will talk more cordially.”

Hwia looked at Kawyona. “Do it now!” She screamed.

“Elder... Elder Aelulip has it.” Kawyona replied. “Just... just after you left to come here a message was received from the High Elf Queen. She requested a meeting in the plains outside the city. Elder Aelulip and several of the family heads have gone to meet her.”

Aihola looked at Hwia and shook her head slowly. “See... now that is going to be a bit of a problem.”

Nayeca cradled Anuk’s head in her lap, softly stroking her long rust colored red hair. Anuk’s arms were tied behind her back, insuring that if she called her Shi Viska it would do more damage to her than any she chose to attack with it. Nayeca knew they were being watched via cameras, and she was careful not to try and release Anuk’s arms. She let her eyes wander across Anuk’s naked body, taking in the sensuous curve of her hips and the jutting mounds of her firm breasts topped by small pink nipples. There was no hair between her thighs, her pussy as bald as the day she entered this world, and Nayeca had used all of her will power to restrain herself from stroking Anuk’s pale skin. Her mound was perfectly shaped, her thighs lean and powerful, matching her long lithe legs all the way to her bare feet.

The touch of Anuk’s soft cheek on her naked thigh and her satiny hair splayed across her ebony skin continued to send small shivers of pleasure through Nayeca. She was so different from Nayeca’s dead lover in every way. The contrast of their skin color against each other was driving Nayeca mad with desire. Anuk’s body was lush and fertile, the shape of her powerful ass insanely perfect. Nayeca had always been the dominant female with her dead lover, always demanding and receiving pleasure from her. Nayeca remembered her lover’s touch upon her and how it made her feel. She had always been so submissive and loving in every way, yet Nayeca had never been able to bring herself to taste her, and the kisses they had shared were brief and never meaningful. Nayeca wanted to taste Anuk’s lips. She wanted to feel Anuk worship her body, her lips and tongue exploring her in every way; she wanted to feel Anuk’s pale skin pressed against her own ebony flesh.

Nayeca heard Anuk groan softly, and her head stirred gently on her thigh. She placed her hands on Anuk’s shoulders in a gesture of reassurance. She leaned over close to her ear, almost pressing her lips to the elegant pointed ear.

“Wake slowly Anuk.” She whispered softly. “The drugs are wearing off, but you will be weak. Do not try to sit up quickly.” Anuk’s cerulean blue eyes fluttered open blinking rapidly. She felt a dull pain in her shoulders and tried to flex her arms. She felt Nayeca’s warm hands grip her tighter. “No! Your arms are secured behind you so you can’t use your shield weapon. They have been that way for several hours.”

“Nayeca... Nayeca...” Anuk spoke softly, her lips dry. “I... I can’t feel my fingers.”

“Wait.” Nayeca spoke and reached down slowly and began to massage her hands and fingers vigorously, pulling on them and pressing the flesh to get the blood flowing.

“Where... where are we?” Anuk asked.

“Prisoners of my people,” Nayeca answered quickly. “We are in what you would call a holding cell. It is where they bring... it is where they bring slaves until they... until they learn their place.”

“Their place?” Anuk asked sniffing the air softly.

“We... we are Drow Anuk.” Nayeca spoke still massaging her hands and fingers. “It... it is not uncommon for my people to take females and bring them... bring them here to be trained in pleasuring other women.”

“You... you mean rape them?” Anuk spoke.

Nayeca sighed heavily. “Yes...”

Anuk couldn't turn her head very far but she knew she was resting on Nayeca's thigh as she could see her knee. The scent of sweet apples was very strong and Anuk wished she had a large sweet apple right now to suckle on. It took her only a moment to realize it was emanating from Nayeca. This was the first time she had noticed Nayeca's scent and that she smelled of sweet apples. It sent a tingling through her body that she hadn't felt before.

“Nayeca... did you...” Anuk started to ask.

“My lover... my lover was a Moon Elf female.” Nayeca answered softly. “She was captured in a raid led by her father against our city here shortly after I became a full warrior. I knew I was too young to have the opportunity to choose a male so I... so I took her instead, so the answer to your question... is yes. We... we were together for ten years, and she had many chances to leave, she chose to stay, and I thanked the gods for every day I had her. I... I lost her four years ago to slavers. Her name was Jenia and I loved her.”

Anuk turned her head on Nayeca's thigh and looked at the Drow. “But you raped her.”

“I never took her by force.” Nayeca said. “I showed her kindness and caring and I protected her. I let the others think I forced myself on her, that I took her, but I never did. Our love for each other developed over time and it was she who discovered pleasure in my arms. If that is considered rape, then yes I am guilty of that.”

“Why did they take our clothes?” Anuk asked.

“It is a way to break us down.” Nayeca spoke. “Unfortunately for them, I am completely comfortable without cloths. I will try to shield you as much as I am able.”

Anuk shook her head. “I am not afraid of my body Nayeca, nor do I feel ashamed of showing it.” She replied evenly. “Daniel's love for me has purged me of such silly aversions.”

Nayeca looked at Anuk, her amber eyes bright. “Can you feel your fingers now?”

Anuk nodded. “Yes... will you help me to sit up?”

Nayeca gripped her shoulders and easily helped her into a sitting position. She choked down the gasp when Anuk's breasts brushed against her arm.

“How long since they have been in here to check on us?” She asked softly.

“If my sense of time is accurate; almost three hours,” Nayeca replied moving a few steps away from Anuk, but not wanting to leave the warmth that her body projected. “You produce more body heat than other elves?”

Anuk nodded, her eyes sweeping the room alertly. “When Daniel changed me, when he made me like him, made me his mate, my genes changed as well. I do not understand much of it; Queen Anja attempted to explain it to me one time but it was beyond me. I prefer to treat normal wounds and not delve into genetics and such. One of the advantages to being half Lycavorian now is that I am almost never cold.”

“Can you touch him?” Nayeca asked knowing she was trying to reach Daniel.

Anuk shook his head. “He is either unconscious still, or this room is lined with psychic deadeners.” She replied. “I can sense Aihola barely, she is conscious, but that is all I can sense.”

Anuk looked at Nayeca and for the first time realized she was completely naked. Her eyes grew a little wider as she gazed at Nayeca's flesh exposed for her to see. Her body was lean and muscular, with large firm breasts topped with darker half dollar sized nipples that were at the moment standing out quite proudly. Her stomach was flat and exceptionally well sculpted in definition. Anuk considered herself to be lean and very well built; especially after all the Spartan training she had taken. She had dropped all of her child fat and added ten pounds of muscle easily, most of it in her ass and legs due to the constant nights when she and Daniel would shift to their wolf forms and chase each other through the mountains around Sparta before finding a cool spring where he would make love to her until she was screaming his name to the stars.

Nayeca she noticed was built like a Drow warrior who lived a life of constant activity and fighting. She was the same height as Anuk, but much more defined. Her shimmering white hair fell to the middle of her back, her ass even more divinely shaped than her own. Daniel had told her on many occasions that next to her eyes he loved her ass the most and he had spent many hours just caressing it or exploring it endlessly with his lips. She

didn't mind in the least because it gave her enormous pleasure and usually led to him filling her with the huge ebony cock she craved so much. Anuk had never looked at another woman as she now examined Nayeca, and it was sending tiny shivers of desire surging through her. She let her eyes drop to between Nayeca's thighs and she saw the thin line of equally white hair just above the dark lips of her pussy. She blinked several times, feeling a wave of desire surge through her once more, stronger than before, and she knew then it was desire for this Drow in front of her.

"Anuk... are you alright?" Nayeca asked softly.

Anuk shook her head quickly and looked up to meet her amber eyes. "Yes. We must... we must escape and get to Daniel and then Aihola."

Nayeca looked around the room quickly, subconsciously pushing her breasts out further for Anuk to gaze at. "If I am not mistaken we are on a sub level of one of the larger buildings in the center of the city." She said turning back to Anuk, feeling her own desire rising. "You are bound so that you can not use your shield weapon. And I doubt even the two of us could defeat every Drow we encounter between here and the surface."

"They don't know I can shift." Anuk spoke. "If they did, someone would be in this cell with us. These bindings will not contain me."

"What do you propose?" Nayeca asked. "I have no wish to remain here. My people have changed, and I do not wish to be executed for denying the attentions of a man like Katain."

"When they come we..." Anuk started to speak but was cut off by the sound of the door opening.

They both turned to see three females and one male enter the room quickly, two of the females with weapons leveled at Anuk. Nayeca recognized the rank of the third female as a senior lieutenant.

"Well... well, you are finally awake." The lieutenant spoke, her amber eyes looking at Anuk cruelly. "That is good. I prefer victims who are awake."

"You will find I am no victim!" Anuk growled.

The female lieutenant laughed. "Commander Kawyona has given me permission to break you in herself." She said. "And I intend to do just that."

"I warn you..." Anuk spoke. "I will kill the first one of you that touches me or Nayeca."

"Ah... yes! That would be quite a feat considering you are bound. You are attracted to the dear traitor." The lieutenant said. "I saw it on the monitor. The way you look at her and she at you, it is so obvious. Tell me traitor, have you had her yet? Have you forced her to your will?"

"I am not like you!" Nayeca hissed. "I do not need to force myself upon those I desire!"

Anuk kept the look of surprise off her face at Nayeca's words, but she looked at the powerful Drow warrior in front of her and suddenly she could smell it strongly.

"How long has it been Nayeca?" The lieutenant asked. "How long has it been since you have had pleasure? Since your lover Jenia was captured and killed? Take her!"

Nayeca moved to defend herself but was too slow and one of the females hammered her in the back of the head with her rifle, knocking her to the floor stunned. The lieutenant snatched the single chair from the corner and slammed it down near her as the male and female Drow pulled Nayeca up and shoved her into the chair. The male moved behind the chair and held her hands tightly, causing her breasts to push outward.

"Release me!" Nayeca snapped, her head coming up, but her eyes still dazed.

"No I don't think so." The lieutenant said as she moved around Nayeca, her finger sliding along Nayeca's shoulder and neck lightly. "You are going to help us break this Wood elf female in before you die. Then you are going to watch as we take her again and again, and you will know you have lost another lover that you desired before the life leaves your eyes."

"Leave her alone!" Nayeca screamed.

"Now why would I want to do that?" The lieutenant spoke as she traced the edge of Nayeca's elf ear seductively.

Anuk saw Nayeca twitch at the touch, pulling her head away, but knowing the caress had the desired affect. It was the same for all elf females, something that most human men did not take the time to learn or simply did not care. The outer edges of their elfin ears were incredible erogenous zones, and after only a few gentle caresses or soft licks any female elf would be panting in desire. Daniel had done it to her enough, and she knew the King could simply nuzzle Dysea's ear and she would be putty in his hands when combined with his aura.

“Don’t touch me!” Nayeca barked, fighting the surge of pleasure in her belly.

“Oh but I am going to touch you Nayeca.” The lieutenant spoke. “I’m going to get you so worked up that it is you who takes this Wood Elf.”

“Never!” Nayeca spoke.

The lieutenant brushed her fingers across Nayeca’s ears once more, eliciting another shiver of delight from Nayeca. She struggled to pull her arms free from the male holding them but he had the leverage against her in such a way that she could not even use her legs to kick out or her shoulders would dislocate. Nayeca inhaled sharply when the lieutenant lowered her fingers to her breasts and flicked her nipple hard, causing it to become instantly harder than it was before. She chuckled as she did the same thing with her other breast, and soon Nayeca’s nipples were protruding a good quarter inch, painfully hard and intensely excited.

“Stop this!” Nayeca gasped. “It... it is wrong!”

“You forget Nayeca,” The lieutenant spoke. “We are Drow and we take what we want.” Her hand dropped lazily down Nayeca’s muscular abdomen, her body jerking in response and her fingers teased the soft white hair above Nayeca’s pussy. “Let us see how long it has been shall we?” Nayeca almost screamed out at the excruciating pleasure of the Drow’s fingers as they slipped inside her deeply. Her hips hunched forward of their own accord, driving the fingers deeply, causing Nayeca to groan loudly. “My... it has been quite some time hasn’t it Nayeca? Your pussy is so tight.”

“Stop! Please!” Nayeca gasped out. “Not... not this way! I... I beg you.”

Anuk was on her knees only four feet front Nayeca and her passion was assailing her senses as only Daniel had ever done. Nayeca’s sweet apple scent permeated the room now, at least to Anuk’s wolf sense, and the clenching of her powerful belly was a good indication she was fighting the pleasure surging through her with everything she had. The only problem was; it was affecting Anuk as well. She could feel heat building in her own groin and for the first time since she had talked with Daniel about it, Anuk found herself admitting that she wanted this Drow female, and wanted her badly.

Anuk’s eyes widened with sudden pain as the lieutenant snatched her by her long rust colored hair and yanked her head back. She looked up into those evil amber eyes, “Time to show you how we break our females and make them willing slaves to us.” She growled.

“No!” Anuk croaked out between dry lips. “I won’t do it!”

“Oh... I think you will.” The lieutenant answered. “Or you will watch me gut her in front of you and then my male colleague will fuck your ass until you are screaming for more.” She yanked Anuk forward on her knees, shoving her into Nayeca, her face pressing into her ebony abdomen. She could hear Nayeca’s heart racing in lust and desire, as the lieutenant fisted her hair again and pressed her face lower. “Eat her pussy Wood elf! Learn your place beneath the Drow!”

Anuk tried to fight, her neck straining against the Drow lieutenant, but she too had no leverage. She felt her lips touch the white hair above Nayeca’s now very wet pussy, her sweet apple scent nearly overwhelming. Anuk’s body was now on fire, the burning in her own pussy increasing as Nayeca’s desire and scent swarmed through her head. Anuk slammed psychic shields in place around her mind, knowing that if Daniel awoke to what was happening he would go berserk and most likely kill anything and everything in his way to get to her before they brought him down with sheer numbers.

“This is where you should be bitch!” The lieutenant snarled, “Serving the Drow in this way.” She looked up at Nayeca’s face and saw her staring at Anuk between her thighs, her amber eyes filled with lust and dominance. “Eat her now!” The lieutenant barked drawing the knife and placing it to Nayeca’s throat. “Eat her pussy or I will cut her throat right now!”

Nayeca was too far gone to care. It had been four years since Jenia had died and in all that time she had not taken another lover, male or female. Her desire was controlling her now, and the one thing she desired at this moment more than anything was Anuk, her amber eyes nearly glowing in their heat. “I... am Drow!” She spoke, her voice quivering with need. “You will... you will please me!”

Anuk’s lips were millimeters from Nayeca’s engorged pussy, her clit unhooded and demanding attention at any cost. The tip of her nose brushed the outer lips of her pussy, Nayeca’s scent causing her to close her eyes in dizziness.

“Do it!” The lieutenant yelled shoving her head forward. “You know you want to bitch! Your disgusting cunt is dripping! Now do it or...”

Anuk's eyes popped open suddenly, staring at Nayeca's dripping pussy in front of her. The Drow was right, the burning need in her own pussy was beyond what she could contain and she had started to leak copious amounts of come as her own desire rose. Anuk made the decision right then to surrender to the desire she also felt, the desire for this dominant Drow elf.

Nayeca's head flew back and she wrenched her arms free as Anuk's soft lips covered her entire pussy and she stabbed her tongue deeply between the dark folds. Her hands came up to Anuk's head and grabbed it tightly, grinding her pussy against Anuk's tongue in too long denied passion and lust. The Drow lieutenant held up her hand as the male began to reach for Nayeca's hands once more.

"Yes!" Nayeca screamed. "Eat my pussy Anuk! Make me cum all over your beautiful face! Eat me like you want me!"

Anuk was lost in her own little world now and she happily complied with Nayeca's direction. She drove her tongue deeper into Nayeca's dark pussy, groaning because she so wanted to wrap her arms around Nayeca's hips and lose herself in the sweet taste of this new treat she had found. Her tongue drove back and forth into Nayeca's tight pussy, her come leaking into her parched throat, tasting the same way Nayeca smelled. Anuk's face was covered in Nayeca's juices, as she tongue fucked Nayeca with all the gusto of an amateur who loved what they had just found. She felt Nayeca's hands on either side of her head, pulling her face tighter into her groin, grinding her pussy on Anuk's tongue.

"Yes!" Nayeca cried. "Like that... ohhhh like that! Yes!"

Anuk crawled closer on her own, settling willingly between Nayeca's wide spread legs, feeling her new dominant lover drape her long legs over her shoulders and pull her tighter. She ground her naked ass into the heels of her feet trying to stimulate herself in any way that she could. She felt Nayeca's hard clit brush against the top of her mouth, and almost be instinct she used her tongue to probe the eraser hard bud. Nayeca's body went rigid and she gripped her head tighter.

"Yes! You... you wonderful... yes! Like that! Suck it! Suck my clit! Do it!" Nayeca demanded.

Anuk did as she was instructed, took the hard nub between her lips and sucked hard, using her tongue to batter Nayeca's clit mercilessly. Nayeca's back arched off the chair, her mouth opened in a breathless scream and she erupted in a mind blowing orgasm more powerful than anything she had yet experienced in her life. Anuk's eyes went wide when the first eruption showered her lower jaw and lips with Nayeca's sweet tasting come. Thinking quickly and not wanting to lose a drop she released Nayeca's clit and fastened her soft lips over her entire spasming pussy in time to catch the next eruption of cum completely and she swallowed it down greedily, her tongue flicking madly across the engorged lips of Nayeca's dark delight and lapping away like a puppy.

Anuk heard the Drow lieutenant laughing at her antics, but didn't care in the least as lost as she was in the wondrous moment. She vaguely heard a zipper sound and then the male Drow spoke.

"Lieutenant I want her to suck me before we kill her." His voice carried to Anuk's ears.

"You may choke her to death for all I care!" The lieutenant replied as she began to undo her own uniform. "I intend to have this flame haired wench next. She loves the taste of pussy so much. Look at the way she laps the come of the traitor. Oh yes... she will be a wonderful find."

Anuk opened her eyes and saw the male Drow pull out his thickening cock, and savagely grab a handful of Nayeca's hair with his hand, yanking her face towards his groin.

"Suck me traitor!" He snarled.

It was at that moment that something in Anuk snapped. She pulled her head from between Nayeca's quivering thighs, her cerulean blue eyes changing to her wolf eyes, her teeth lengthening into fangs.

"You will not touch her!" Anuk screamed with a blood curling voice.

In a silvery flash of light Anuk shifted and the body of the gorgeous Wood Elf disappeared and took on another form of beauty as the rust colored wolf was all that remained. All of the Drow stood there frozen in shock, unable to react. They had not been aware the female could become *natha zze'ill* also. The Drow behind Anuk was the first to die. Pivoting on her powerful hind legs, Anuk reared up while turning her body and before the Drow knew what was happening, Anuk's jaws clamped down on her throat and ripped down. Her body had not yet fallen before Anuk whirled on the second Drow female, a large paw slashing out with dazzling speed and raking across the Drow's face. The black razor like claws ripped across her skin, tearing her right eye from its socket and crushing her nose before ripping away part of her mouth and jaw.

The Drow male was the first to recover his senses as he struggled to pull up his pants. He needn't have bothered as Anuk leaped the four feet to where he stood and hit him with all one hundred and forty pounds of her wolf body. She drove him to the floor relentlessly and the last thing he saw before she bit down on his face was her savage blue eyes and the need to protect what she considered hers. Anuk snapped her powerful jaws together, crunching through bone and tissue with almost two thousand pounds of pressure per square inch. The male's head cracked open like an egg and his arms and legs twitched madly.

Anuk heard the gasp and swung her muzzle around, dripping with blood, to stare at the Drow lieutenant. Her face was ghostly white if that was possible as she stared at the instrument of her death. Anuk snarled exposing blood stained razor sharp teeth and gums. The blood staining her muzzle looked darker on her rust colored fur, but it was easy to discern as it dripped to the floor. Anuk concentrated and in another flash of silvery light she was standing in front of the Drow lieutenant. Her naked body was stained with blood; dripping from her jaw and down between her breasts and the ropes that had bound her were now on the floor in a heap. Slowly Anuk lifted her left arm, the Shi Viska appearing in a smaller flash. Anuk's eyes were still changed to that of her wolf persona, her teeth still protruding from beneath her soft lips.

The Drow lieutenant backed up against the wall, her uniform half undone and she stared at Anuk defiantly. "You will not... you will not live long past this moment." She hissed at Anuk.

"Nayeca and I will live far longer than you." Anuk spoke in a low menacing voice. "I have to thank you... I knew she desired me... but I did not know how to approach that with her. You solved that problem for me, and now she and I will be together, and we will share a man as well as each other. You will be dead."

Anuk telepathically released her Shi Viska and did not even bother to watch as it leaped from her forearm. She turned to face Nayeca while the silver Shi Viska struck the Drow lieutenant just above the Adam's apple and severed her head from her shoulders before she could speak what was on her tongue. Her head rolled to the side and hit the floor with a loud plopping sound as Anuk held out her arm to capture the Shi Viska once more. As it returned to its master, the lieutenant's body followed her head to the floor. Anuk snatched the single canteen of water from the belt of the first Drow she had killed and used the water to wash the blood from her mouth and jaw. She spit several times on the floor to remove the foul taste of flesh and then drank greedily.

Nayeca still sat in the chair, shuddering in the aftermath of her orgasm and sobbing almost uncontrollably, tears pouring down her dark cheeks.

"Nayeca?" Anuk said softly, reaching out to take her hands as she knelt next to the chair. Anuk could still smell her sweet apple scent filling the room, though now it was mixed with the stench of blood and the relaxed bladders of the dead.

Nayeca looked at her with tear stained eyes. "Anuk... for... forgive me!" She sobbed. "I... I did not want too... I tried to fight it... but it... it has been so long without the touch of someone I..."

"Someone you desire." Anuk said softly.

Nayeca looked at her in horror. "You... you knew?" She gasped.

"I am *natha zze'ill* Nayeca." Anuk replied with a gentle smile as she reached up to stroke her cheek. "I... I have known since the first moment you saw me. It wafts from your pores. Daniel... Daniel smelled it too."

Nayeca's eyes went wide then. "Your... your mate will kill me for what I have done!" She gasped. "Leave me here! Find him and go! Please!"

"That is something I will not do." Anuk spoke firmly. She stood up and straddled a wide eyed Nayeca on the chair. Slowly she lowered her naked body on top of Nayeca, insuring their flesh met in as many places as she could manage, and eliciting gasps of pleasure from both of them even among the death in the room.

"Anuk... Anuk... what... what are you doing?" Nayeca gasped as she felt another surge of pleasure race through her as Anuk's firm breasts mashed against her own and she felt Anuk's dripping pussy come to rest against her powerful abdomen.

Anuk's body was flush with desire and blood lust, her blood pounding in her head. She grasped Nayeca's face in her hands and looked at her, her cerulean blue eyes speaking all that Nayeca needed to know. "You... you will never take me from the man I love Nayeca." She said softly, wiping away the tears on her cheeks. "As... as long as you are willing to accept that, I will happily serve under you... at your desire. Who knows... one day you might even see that Daniel can give you pleasure unlike anything you have ever experienced. Can... can you accept that Nayeca? For I believe that would make both of us very happy indeed."

“Anuk... Anuk I...but why would you do this?”

“Because you taste deliciously divine and I do not want some other lucky female to get that pleasure. I want it all for myself! And because I have growing feelings for you, feelings that I would very much like to explore.”

Anuk covered her soft lips with her own and plunged her tongue into Nayeca’s mouth while grinding her overheated body against Nayeca’s sweat covered ebony skin. Nayeca’s eyes burst open wide as new sensations ripped through her and she groaned in unfulfilled desire as Anuk gave her the blistering kiss, her warm tongue dancing across the insides of Nayeca’s teeth and lips. After only a moment’s hesitation Nayeca’s arms wrapped around this female and she pulled her close, hearing Anuk moan in satisfaction, as Nayeca surrendered to the very first kiss she had ever shared with someone.

The kiss seemed to last forever and when Anuk finally pulled back, Nayeca was out of breath and her heart was racing as if she had just come half a dozen times in rapid succession. Anuk traced her cheeks with her fingers, staring into her amber eyes.

“Stay with Daniel and I Nayeca.” Anuk spoke longingly. “Stay with Daniel and I and I will worship you like no female you have ever had. Is that... is that what you desire?”

Nayeca stared into her eyes and nodded slowly, her hands holding Anuk’s hips tightly, “More than anything I have ever desired in my life.” She answered softly.

“Daniel will not pressure you into something you do not want Nayeca. He is too much a gentlemen and a Spartan for that.” Anuk spoke. “Just be open to him and you might discover how good he can be to you, to both of us.” Anuk said with a grin. “He is wonderfully gifted and has plenty to go around.”

“If it means I can have you, I will be open to anything that keeps me in your life. And... he *is* very handsome.” Nayeca said shyly.

Anuk smiled brilliantly, kissing her softly and with feeling. “Then let us go find *our* mate and your Queen and get the hell out of this dreadful place.”

Nayeca couldn’t help herself and she hugged Anuk to her, pressing her head against Anuk’s breasts and squeezing her tightly just to make sure this was not all some horrible drug induced dream. She heard Anuk chuckle softly in her mind as her arms encircled Nayeca’s head, holding her tightly. New sensations coursed through her as well, and next to Daniel holding her in his arms, they were absolutely wonderful.

There is no dreaming going on here my Drow Mistress. This is the beginning of a new life for all of us. Anuk projected into her thoughts. *We just have to defeat these vile vampires and everything we have ever wanted will come true. That is enough to keep me going.*

VHC WIND OF DEATH
VAMPIRE HIGH COVEN REVERENCE-Class DREADNOUGHT
XERXES COMMAND SHIP
FOUR DAYS FROM EARTH

“...tell me why you sent an envoy here to earth without informing me, or obtaining my permission?” Yuri’s holographic projection from earth was clear and in full color. Her image occupied one of the chairs at the far end of the table. “You know full well envoys may only be dispatched by the High Commander or our father. I suggest you explain yourself quickly Xerxes.”

Xerxes sat in the command chair at the head of the table and leaned back with a small laugh. He was on board one of the newest Dreadnoughts in the Vampire High Coven fleet, the remainder of his seventy-six ships spread out around WIND OF DEATH in exacting formation as they prepared for their next jump, an LSD jump that would bring them even closer to earth. He looked little different than he did three thousand years ago he was proud to say, his skin deeply tanned and his head devoid of any hair. He had several rings piercing his face and at least half a dozen gold chains draped around his neck and wrists. The only flaw to his person was the five inch long scar on his right cheek beginning just under his nose and continuing past his ear. It was given to him by that bastard Leonidas when he had thrown his spear there at the end of his life, drawing blood and tearing several of Xerxes piercings from his skin.

“Yuri my sister, I was doing you a favor.” He answered. “I assume you discovered I sent him because he succeeded in convincing those Spartan dogs of their impending doom and they have surrendered.”

Yuri’s laugh was not complimentary in any way as she sat in the conference center of the spaceport. The slave island was the lone spaceport of earth, thus it was used to transfer slaves and supplies through the vampire territory. It was separated from the mainland and heavily guarded by regular vampire troops in the guise of the Alliance. She looked stunning in the holoprojection, wearing a light gray jumpsuit, her raven black hair cascading down past her shoulders.

“Actually dear brother,” Yuri spoke. “Leonidas has captured him, and he most likely was tortured for every scrap of information he had before they killed him.”

Xerxes leaned forward in his chair now. “You lie!” He said.

“I will ask my question again Xerxes.” Yuri spoke. “Who authorized you to send this envoy, for I know I didn’t.”

“I don’t need your authorization!” Xerxes snapped. “I sent him to do my bidding.”

“On the contrary my son,” The deep voice spoke now, and Xerxes watched his father’s image shimmer into existence at the chair next to Yuri. “Your sister is the Vampire High Guard Commander, not you. And you *do* need her permission.”

Veldruk, or Master, in the ancient Vampire language was a tall gangly man who at first appearance did not appear to be the most ruthless leader in the known universe. He had conquered nearly two thousand worlds in his nearly fifteen thousand years of life, and he was the epitome of a brutal leader. He was aware of everything that went on within the realm of his empire, having untold numbers of spies on planets across the stars feeding him information. He appeared no more than sixty years old, with slick black hair and sunken dark eyes that could burn holes in you if angered.

“Fa... father?” Xerxes stammered. “I... I thought you were returning from The Arcan Nine Conference?”

“I am.” Veldruk spoke. “I was reviewing your sister’s daily reports and came across something that interested me so I contacted her. She asked if I had sent an envoy to those scum in Sparta. I believe you know what my answer was.”

“Father... I can explain.” Xerxes spoke.

“The time for explanation is well past Xerxes.” Veldruk said. “Actions like these only do more to make me see removing you as High Guard Commander was the appropriate course of action.”

“I was winning!” Xerxes snapped with vehemence in his voice. “If that dog had not died and made himself a martyr I would have solved these problems millennia ago!”

“The fact remains is you let the power go to your head my son.” Veldruk spoke. “And in the process you allowed your commanders to underestimate Leonidas and the Spartans. That cost us dearly, and since then we have been in a running battle with the Spartans and humans for control of earth, not to mention his death was a rallying cry for every Lycavorian in the rebellion and only served to spur them on. You failed Xerxes. The sooner you realize that and begin to do things right, the better of you will be.”

“How many planets have I given you father?” Xerxes demanded. “I have conquered and captured thirty-nine worlds for you. Stripped them of their riches and they now pay you tribute! Is that not worth something?”

“And I have had to spend four times what I have received in tribute to repair the damage you caused in taking those worlds.” Veldruk spoke.

“What had Yuri given you tell me?” Xerxes’s veins were pulsing in the side of his head now.

“Your sister has done exactly what I have asked her too.” Veldruk replied. “She has kept the descendants of Leonidas confined to earth, and insured they did not make it off earth to spur further rebellion. And she has overseen the development and cloning of our vampire super soldiers without fail. Not to mention she has maintained excellent morale within the High Guard, as well as captured nineteen planets for the Coven. All without leaving earth or glassing the planet from orbit. What did you expect to accomplish by sending this envoy to Sparta?”

“I was offering them surrender terms.” Xerxes spoke.

“There is no surrender for the line of Leonidas!” Yuri spat. “You know that Xerxes! And no Spartan or Lycavorian would ever willingly surrender to us!”

“It is obvious you have not been reading the reports that are sent to you.” Veldruk spoke. “Or you would know that the descendant of Leonidas on earth at this moment is not just of his blood... he *is* his blood.” Veldruk saw Xerxes looked at him in shock. “Yes... he is the unborn son that we hunted for so long and then thought killed. He...”

“He is Leonidas’s son?” Xerxes snapped.

“I grow tired of having to repeat myself with you son.” Veldruk spoke. “I...”

Xerxes’s head turned as did the images of Yuri and his father when the door to the conference room slid open and the captain of *WIND OF DEATH* walked in quickly. “I told you not to disturb me!” Xerxes barked angrily.

“Forgive me Milord... but... you will want to take this transmission Prince Xerxes.” The captain spoke looking at him. “It is from... it is from the son of Leonidas.”

“What?” Xerxes demanded. “How is that possible?”

“He is broadcasting on the envoy’s encryption communicator sire.” The captain spoke.

Yuri looked at her father who had begun to chuckle. “Ingenious.” He said softly. “Let us hear what the young upstart has to say son.”

Xerxes nodded and the captain went to the console touching several brightly lit panels and then the image of Martin shimmered into life. He stood beside the vampire envoy, whom had his hands secured behind his back and looked as if he had been beaten. Three other stern looking Spartans were also in the transmission, one that Yuri recognized immediately.

“Dymas,” She whispered to her father’s image from her chair.

Martin wore his full Spartan body armor and the Spartan King’s helmet that Helen had made for him, the multicolored plumed crest very evident and giving him an almost regal stature.

“Xerxes my best buddy,” Martin’s voice exploded out of the transmission. “Man you are one hard coward to track down, where you been hiding your bald ass cockbreath?”

Xerxes’s eyes nearly exploded out of his head.

**LYCAVORIAN HOME GUARD FLEET GROUP ONE
ATTACK CRUISER *LEONIDAS I*
SEVEN OF THIRTEEN JUMPGATES COMPLETED
NINE HOURS UNTIL NEXT JUMPGATE
SIX DAYS FROM EARTH**

Riall sat on the bridge of the *LEONIDAS I* sipping the mug of tea and going over the reports from the previous gate jump. The fleet was holding together well, and they had only had to replace three LSDs so far. They were making better time than any of them had thought, pushing their ships and crews harder than they had ever pushed them before, and Riall and Ceneu could not have been prouder of their crews. Riall turned when the doors to the bridge opened and Gorgo and Isabella strode in. He felt Gorgo touch him with her aura lovingly, and he reciprocated the touch. Isabella was her usual beautifully stoic faced, but Riall now knew that to be only a ruse to confuse and hide what the vampire Princess truly had going through her mind. He did not know all of it, as Gorgo and she were hardly ever apart, but he knew that Isabella had opened up to Gorgo in a fashion that no one on Apo Prime had ever experienced. Gorgo held the long black jacket with crimson shoulder boards and crimson satin rings around the cuffs of the sleeves.

Riall recognized it immediately as the formal dress uniform jacket of a Lycavorian Union officer. The four glittering silver pins above the right breast signified the four permanent founding members of the Union, The Lycavorians, the Hadarians, the Elves and the Algolians. The shoulder boards were crimson and bore the seal of the Lycavorian Royal House on them, a gold image of a wolf’s head howling at the moon of their original home world. Riall’s eyes grew a little wider when he saw the fourteen rows of colorful vertically aligned ribbons, some of them holding small silver three star clusters on the fabric.

Gorgo held it up for him when she reached the chair. “Well... what do you think?” She asked.

Riall looked at his mate. “Did you perhaps overdo it somewhat my wife?” He asked with a small smile.

Gorgo gave him a dirty look. “Hardly, Isabella would you show him?”

Isabella held out the data pad. “We were able to sift through his memories and discover a photo of him in...” She looked at the pad. “A Navy SEAL Dress White Uniform. Apparently these humans from before the comet kept meticulous records. You will see the decorations the humans gave him on the uniform he wears in this photo.”

Riall took the pad and glanced at the photo, his eyebrows rising. “Impressive.” He spoke looking at them. “What do they mean?”

“The humans decorated my son a total of twenty three times for bravery.” Gorgo spoke proudly as any mother would. “He was awarded several medals, three Bronze Stars, two Silver Stars, two Distinguished Service Crosses, four Navy Crosses and the...” Gorgo looked at Isabella. “What was the last one child?”

Isabella looked at the pad. “The Congressional Medal of Honor,” She replied. “It was supposedly the highest award the humans could bestow on someone. What is Congressional?”

“I believe it is some form of government that they practiced.” Gorgo answered. “Anyway... I compared what he was awarded by the humans and found equal awards in Lycavorian Fleet terms and this is what I have come up with.”

Riall smiled. “My love... he will never wear this. He is a leader of men, not some pompous royal scum.”

Gorgo looked at him. “He needs to wear something at the coronation when we return to Apo Prime.”

Riall couldn't help but chuckle at her words. His head turn quickly when he heard the odd beeping sound. He saw his communications officer move to the panel quickly, his eyes growing wide. He turned to him.

“Admiral we are receiving an encrypted communication on a known vampire channel!” The man spoke.

Riall came to his feet. “What? How is that possible?”

“It appears it's being piggy backed on a very old radio wave transmission sir!” The senior lieutenant and communications officer replied.

“Source?” Riall asked.

“There are two parts to the communication sir!” The lieutenant answered. “One is being beamed to us... the other is being beam to...” The man's eyes widened. “Admiral... the second and main transmission is being beamed to a *REVERENCE*-Class High Coven Dreadnought!” The young man's hands flew over his panel. “Sir... it's Xerxes ship the *WIND OF DEATH!*”

“What's the source?” Riall demanded again.

“Source for both communications is... Sparta.” The man replied.

“Holographic?” Riall asked.

“Yes sir!”

“Route it to the main holo projectors here on the bridge and let's take a look.” Riall told him looking at Isabella for a brief second and seeing her shrug.

In a moment the holoprojections of Xerxes, Yuri and the Vampire High Lord himself appeared seated at a table. That Yuri and Veldruk were projections themselves was easy enough to tell as their images faded in and out, and then another image appeared and they saw Martin in full Spartan gear standing next to a vampire in what appeared to be the Spartan Senate building. Riall looked at his officer.

“Give us sound damn it!” He exclaimed.

“...where you been hiding your bald ass cockbreath!” Martin's voice boomed over the bridge speakers.

Riall and the others stood on the bridge watching the holoprojection enthralled by the events occurring.

“So the son of Leonidas finally shows his face.” Xerxes spoke from the chair of his Dreadnought ship.

“Have you decided to give yourself up and save your sacred Sparta? Or is this just a social call?”

Martin could be seen laughing. “I have to hand it to your communications people. They are top notch. Your envoy here had some really cool gear with him. I especially like this communication thing. It even picks up the old radio waves and I can hear music playing.” Martin's head turned and he looked at Yuri. “Well... well if it isn't my favorite vampire bitch herself. How are you doing there Yuri? You are looking positively disgusting as always.”

Yuri did not take the bait and looked at Martin's image. “Enjoying your last days of life I hope Martin.” She said.

“Ever so confident,” Martin said. “I always liked that about you Yuri, lousy in the sack, but always confident.”

Riall and everyone on the bridge of the *LEONIDAS I* turned and looked at Isabella when she laughed out loud in an uncharacteristic display of emotion, her hand going to her mouth.

“What is it you want son of Leonidas?” Veldruk asked calmly. “We were just discussing how to best wipe out your pathetic rebellion and I would like to get back to it.”

They saw Martin chuckle at this and shake his head. “Veldruk... I called to talk to your pig smelling son, but it’s always nice to talk to the head asshole. I’d really like to chat; we have much to talk about you and I,” Martin’s eyes changed quickly to yellow/gold, his fangs easily visible as they extended below his upper lip drawing murmurs from everyone on the bridge of the *LEONIDAS I*. “I got a message from my grandfather for you, but I’ll wait until I see you so I can shove it up your scrawny ass personally!”

Veldruk’s face flashed with anger and he lifted his hand slightly. Gorgo screamed out as they all saw Martin go flying back, smashing into the low concrete wall and flipping over, half a dozen chairs splintering under the weight of Martin’s body as he slammed into the concrete wall with a loud grunt of pain. Riall felt Gorgo grab his arm, fear for Martin coursing through her aura and he reached out with his aura to comfort her. Their heads snapped back as they heard laughter coming from the holoprojection.

Martin picked himself up off the floor of the Senate building laughing as he did so. The eyes of everyone on the bridge were wide with shock and they watched Martin spit blood from his mouth. “Oh that was good!” Martin spoke, “A little on the weak side but very good.”

They could see the look of surprise on Veldruk’s face as he stood up quickly from the chair he was sitting in on his ship, “You insolent whelp! I will strip the skin from your bones and listen to you howl and beg me for death!” Veldruk thundered lifting his hand again.

Martin lifted his own hand in the transmission and everyone saw his arm snap back several inches. Martin smiled, blood leaking from his lips. “Fool me once shame on you; fool me twice shame on me.” He spoke before shoving his hand back within the transmission.

Riall, Gorgo and everyone on the bridge could only watch in stunned silence as the Vampire High Lord was physically lifted off the floor wherever he stood and was flung back until he smashed into the solid colored bulkhead behind him. Veldruk scrambled to his feet immediately, blood leaking from a small cut on the side of his head. His face showed his disbelief at what had just transpired. He had not been telepathically assaulted like that since the time of Leonidas’s grandfather, the true Lycavorian King.

Martin smiled, “A little gift from my grandfather.” Martin growled looking at him. “I’ll deal with you in due time old man, right now I want to talk to your idiot son.”

Xerxes had come to his feet now, his face a mask of rage. “I am four days away from earth you fool!” He screamed. “I will find you and I will drive your father’s spear through your heart!”

“You gonna do that yourself fuck nut, or have one of your little errand boys do it for you?” Martin snapped. “You aren’t man enough to kill anyone. Hell you needed a million men to kill my father you blithering moron. Nice scar by the way. It stands out just right against that butt ugly face of yours!”

Riall noticed that Veldruk and Yuri remained silent during the exchange now, simply watching the events unfold, and seeing first hand Xerxes meltdown.

“I will kill you dog!” Xerxes screamed. “I will make you watch while I take your women in front of you, and then I will disembowel them after I give them to my men!”

Martin laughed at this, causing Xerxes to become even angrier. “Xerxes... you couldn’t find your dick with both hands and a fucking supernova helping you. My youngest Queen Aricia could slap your sorry ass into oblivion and not even break a sweat!”

Yuri leaned forward in her chair at the spaceport on earth. “What do you want dog? You will not win and you will die like an animal, just like your father did.”

“God I hate vampires! Earth is mine!” Martin spoke now. “Do you hear me? It is mine. You bring your sorry ass here Xerxes... I’ll be waiting for you on the North American continent if you got the balls. You killed my father you shit sorry motherfucker, and you’re an even sorrier excuse for a vampire than your old man, and I am going to take great pleasure in ripping your heart from your chest and feeding it to you. Once my elf army wipes the planet with Yuri’s sad excuse for vampire super soldiers, it will be just you, me, my Spartans and your precious Immortals. We’ll do it all over again, just like before. How does that sound Xerxes old buddy?”

“I have thirty thousand Immortals among my army coming to earth you fool!” Xerxes screamed, “And another seventy thousand veteran troops.”

Martin nodded with a smile. “Good. I’ll bring three hundred... just like my father did. That ought to be enough to kick your sorry ass! I’m leaving five thousand troops in Sparta, enough to hold off any attack you think you can muster. I think I’ll leave twenty thousand in Eden, that way I can send the other three million to smoke your sister.”

Yuri’s head snapped around, turning to a control console. “Trace the transmission!” She barked to someone, “Quickly!”

“She’s on to what he’s doing.” Ceneu spoke from near the bridge lift, everyone turning to look at him in shock.

Riall nodded quickly. “Yes she is. Do we have this recorded?”

“Every bit of it Admiral,” The communications officer replied.

“Damn fine tactical move!” Ceneu spoke coming up to stand beside Riall. “He’s telling us all we need to know.”

“What the hell are you two talking about?” Gorgo asked stunned. “He’s telling them how many troops he’s leaving in places we need to defend!”

Riall nodded taking the data pad from the officer. “He’s his father’s son, no doubt about that.”

They watched as Martin turned to Veldruk who had remained silent after regaining his feet. “Don’t you worry old man, I’ll come for you soon enough! Well... it’s been nice talking to you. Hey cockbreath... remember don’t forget to wear your dress, I’ll need a good laugh.” Martin looked at the vampire envoy standing next to him. “Oh... I almost forgot.” Martin reached up and the K12 was in his hand now. He placed the barrel against the vampire’s temple and pulled the trigger without batting an eye. The envoy’s head exploded in a mass of blood, bone and brain matter. “Andreas... help me get this trash out of here will you. I really hate vampires!” They heard Martin mutter something softly that they could barely make out and then it was over.

The transmission ended and Riall turned to Ceneu. “I want General Vistr to shuttle over here right now! Bring me the specs on every ship in the fleet! Ceneu will you...”

Ceneu held up his hand. “I’ll order all the spare LSDs ready for immediate movement.” He spoke.

Gorgo stepped up to her husband. “Husband... what is going on?” She asked.

“The King just told us where to deploy Gorgo.” Riall told her.

Gorgo looked surprised. “He did?”

Riall smiled and kissed her. “Please my wife... I have some urgent business to attend to.”

Gorgo turned to look at Isabella and saw her staring blankly with her hazel/green eyes at where the holo transmission had just ended. “Isabella, are you alright?”

Isabella looked at her and nodded. “Yes... I’m fine.” She turned to the communications officer. “May I have a copy of the transmission Lieutenant?”

The officer didn’t hesitate. “I’ll have one downloaded to your quarters before you return Princess.” He said.

“Thank you.”

Gorgo was left there on the bridge as Isabella moved for the door they had entered.

ALLIANCE SLAVE ISLAND FORMERLY THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

“Xerxes you damn fool!” Yuri barked into the transmission now that Martin was gone. “He was using the transmission to warn his forces! You told him exactly what he wanted to know! Fuck!” Yuri got up and went to the computer panel. “He was sending a transmission to a Lycavorian Attack Cruiser, piggy backing it on an old radio wave, completely unsecured!”

“The Oracle,” Veldruk spoke softly causing Yuri to turn to her father’s image, “The Oracle that we could never find. She has been on earth all this time, helping him. She must have adjusted the controls of the envoy’s equipment; she is the only one who would have this knowledge.”

“Father?” Yuri said softly.

“I have not been attacked telepathically like that since the days of his grandfather. I hit him with a full power psychibolt, and he laughed it off.” Veldruk spoke.

“Father... the distance was very great.” Yuri said.

“Perhaps... but I have not felt a telepath as powerful as him in millennia.” Veldruk replied. His eyes lifted to where Xerxes stood silently still shaking in rage. His dark eyes took on an angry glare, “You!” He raged. “I can not believe my own son could be so stupid!”

“Father I...”

“Silence you fool!” Veldruk spoke. “I can not send anymore reinforcements to earth, it would take too long! The Lycavorian forces have pulled back to staging areas across the universe. They have ceased all attacks against our strongholds, and now I know why.” He turned to his daughter, “Yuri can he truly have three million elves fighting under his banner?”

“Impossible!” Yuri spoke quickly. “The elves have been fighting each other for centuries. He would have to unite all of them to bring that much manpower to bear!”

“Find out daughter! Find out quickly!” Veldruk spoke.

“I will father! I promise you.” Yuri told the image. She watched him turn to Xerxes in the transmission. “Pray that you die on that wretched piece of rock Xerxes, for even if you return victorious I will see to it that you spend the rest of your days in a pain amplifier!”

“Father you...”

Veldruk waved his hand once more and Xerxes end of the transmission disappeared. The Vampire High Lord turned to his daughter. “Are the Super soldiers ready?”

Yuri nodded quickly. “I have one division moving north right now to destroy a Drow city we have discovered. We know that one of his Queens... the one he spoke of... Aricia... she is there leading the forces he sent there. They are trying to pull the Drow elves into the fold with them.” Yuri answered. “I have the rest preparing to assault this city he has built. He will never pull the Spartans out of Sparta and leave the city undefended.”

“I agree, however I want you to be prepared to evacuate all materials pertaining to our genetic programs.” He spoke.

Yuri looked puzzled. “We can hold earth father.” She said.

“Holding earth is now secondary to protecting our interests.” Veldruk answered. “Your brother will die on that pitiful rock, of that I have little doubt. This Leonidas... he wants revenge on Xerxes so badly for killing his father and that revenge makes him powerful and willing to do anything to obtain it. I will not lose you because your brother is an ignorant slob. Prepare all the materials for evacuation, and hold at least a division of our new soldiers in reserve. When events become untenable as I believe they may, I want you off that stinking world. Is that clear?”

Yuri nodded her head. “You sound so sure that Leonidas will win father.” She spoke. “Have you lost faith in me as well?”

“You are the High Guard Commander for a reason daughter.” Veldruk answered. “And for those reasons I will not lose you to some stinking Lycavorian scum! If you can win, it will add another notch in your belt for the time you will take my place. However I do not want it to be known that my oldest daughter as well as my son is a raging lunatic. You must maintain order, and to do so, conducting a strategic retreat is *not* considered a failure in my eyes. I have done it before when odds were not in my favor. You have governed well these last millennia Yuri; do not throw it all away over this son of Leonidas. When and *if* the time comes, you will evacuate earth.”

Yuri nodded slowly, “As you order father.” She spoke. “I will not fail you.”

“Losing the only daughter I have left would be the failure.” Veldruk spoke. “And your mother grows impatient to have another child.”

Yuri looked at her father. “She wishes to give you another heir father. To replace what that bitch Isabella took from you!”

Veldruk nodded his head and Yuri saw him smile for the first time in hundreds of years. “Yes and perhaps it is time. Your mother will be the death of me you know, with her constant demands of attentions.”

Yuri matched her father’s smile. “You should consider it an honor that she only has eyes for you father.” She said. “And that has never changed in the ten thousand years you have been together.”

Veldruk nodded. “Yes I know. I am returning home for now. Contact me on our personal channel if you need to speak with me about anything. My personal Captain of the Immortals is accompanying Xerxes’s forces

and he will make contact with you when your brother arrives. His orders are clear. He is to protect you at all costs.”

“I have security father.” Yuri spoke.

“Ah yes... this pet you have taken.” Veldruk said seeing her surprised expression. “Did you think I would not discover this Yuri?”

Yuri took a deep breath. “I did not want you to kill him before you were able to see that he is worthy of me father. I wish to take him as my concubine.”

“He is human!” Veldruk spoke.

“No... like our soldiers he was genetically created. He is different father, and I ask that you meet him before you make a decision.” Yuri said. “I have never asked you for anything, I ask you for this now.”

“He stirs you this much?” Veldruk asked.

“He does.” Yuri spoke. “And he is a superior warrior, an equal too many of our most experienced vampire soldiers father. Please I...”

“I will do this for you Yuri.” He spoke quickly. “You have always been my favorite and I will not have you beg me for something that is your right as Princess of the High Coven. I will have Cha’talla observe him and he will live for now. Keep me advised of everything that is going on, even if you must disturb my time with your mother.” He spoke with another grin.

“I will father.” Yuri spoke. She watched his image fade out and she let out the breath she had been holding for the last several moments.

CANADA

Tarifa stood in the middle of the cracked and broken pavement of what was once a well used highway. She was focused and clear headed, Dekton standing directly behind her and Aricia on her right. Tari stood beside Tarifa on the left, tall and proud in the Spartan armor and helmet. Dekton’s presence behind her not only showcased his height as he stood six inches over Tarifa’s own five foot seven, exuding power and death, but it allowed her to feel the embrace of his aura. Standing behind them were thirty of the Spartans that Aricia’s brother had brought with him, all of them in close formation and looking positively formidable with their armor and helmets covering their faces and bodies. The plume of Aricia’s helmet crest blew softly in the breeze giving her an air of power and grace, while Tarifa could feel Dekton’s heart beating evenly, but his aura tinted with rage, much the same as her own

Since Dekton had changed her, Tarifa found she was much more passionate about many things, but the one thing she was absolutely certain of was her love for Aihola and Dekton. Their love it seemed had increased ten fold since that first night, and it swarmed around the three of them like a storm.

Arrayed to the side in front of them were the bodies of the Drow from the failed attack. They were wrapped reverently in white silken linen and placed on the ground sheets to keep from getting dirty. It was the exact way that the Drow wrapped their dead before burning the bodies. Exactly the way *Nya Istel* told her during one of their nights cuddling and talking of their people and their futures.

Tarifa’s long black hair was flowing around her face, cascading around her shoulders and moving in the slight wind. They watched as the eight Drow moved slowly across the pavement towards them. Four were armed, their weapons held ready, while four wore flowing cloaks and appeared to be older.

“They are tense and nervous.” Aricia spoke softly, sniffing the wind blowing in their direction.

“As well they should be.” Tarifa replied.

They watched silently as the eight Drow stopped two meters away from them, and Tarifa had to admire their bravery.

“May I know who I am addressing?” Tarifa asked.

“I am Drow Elder Aelulip!” The Drow snapped. She was younger than the other three Tarifa noticed, but not by much. “This is Matron Thonsya, Matron Emyon and Patron Ael’main, the leaders of the largest Drow families. We demand you leave our territory immediately!”

Tarifa’s sapphire eyes saw the Drow Queen’s medallion hanging loosely around Aelulip’s neck partially hidden by her robes. Her eyes went back to Aelulip’s face, staring into her amber eyes. “We have brought the

remains of your dead.” Tarifa said struggling to hold her anger in. “They have been cleansed and wrapped in the tradition of the Drow. They are ready for the Ceremony of Ascension according to your laws.”

This invoked a surprised look from the other two Matrons and they looked at Tarifa. Thonsya stepped slightly forward. “Where did you learn this Queen of the High Elves?” She asked pointedly.

Tarifa met her gaze. “I am the lover of my Mistress the Drow Queen.” She replied evenly. “Did you think she would not teach me about your ways?”

“Mistress?” Emyon spoke now. “You... you are submissive to her?”

“In the bed we share yes.” Tarifa answered without embarrassment. “That is your custom isn’t it. I am happily submissive to her desires, whatever they may be. Outside of our bed we are equal in every way, and we lead Eden together, by order of the Elf High King.”

“*Nindol Obok Darthirii l'essnil ulnen,*” Ael'main hissed in the ancient Drow language, “*Udos z'klaen z'reninth naubol il telanthen!*” (**This High Elf wench lies. We must believe noting she says**)

Tarifa looked at him, allowing her eyes to change to wolf black outlined orbs of sapphire, “*Usstan xun naut ulnar nesst! Telanth ulu uns'aa 'sohna a dosst peril auflaque; whol Usstan orn naut hesitate ulu harventh dos harl vel'klar dos fre'sla!*” (**I do not lie man! Speak to me again at your peril dog, for I will not hesitate to cut you down where you stand!**)

All of the Drow looked at her wide eyed in shock, stunned that she knew their language so fluently.

“My Mistress came here in peace.” Tarifa spoke. “It was her only desire to bring her people to Eden and give them the freedom and security that all of us share in Eden. It is all that has occupied her thoughts these last weeks. Now you come out here, bearing the Queen’s medallion. Why is that?”

Aelulip tucked the medallion into her robes quickly. “She is not our Queen!” She barked. “She refuses to follow our laws, and her intent was to change them to suit her! We will not allow that.”

“Where is she?” Tarifa asked.

“She is somewhere in our city.” Ael'main answered now. “We will not tell you where.”

“And our other friends?” Aricia asked this question.

“Who is this woman that she thinks she can speak in our presence?” Aelulip asked harshly.

Tarifa smiled. “This is Aricia. She is the Queen of Sparta and mate to the Elf High King, which also makes her High Queen.” Tarifa answered. “I suggest you use a more respectful tone when addressing her.”

“I will address her however I wish!” Aelulip snapped. “Where are our warriors? All of their bodies are not here!”

“Thirteen of your soldiers survive and are being well cared for.” Tarifa answered. “They are in no danger.”

“You will return them to us!” Ael'main spoke. “All of them.”

“Certainly,” Tarifa replied, “As soon as you bring our friends to us, including Aihola.”

“Your friends will stand trial for subversive actions against the Drow and the male will be executed along with the traitor. The female elf will serve as pleasure slave to our senior Drow Commander.” Aelulip spoke smugly looking at Tarifa. “The imposter Queen will be placed on trial separately and if found guilty she will be executed as well.”

“My Mistress is the daughter of the Drow Queen Anatylya, and the rightful ruler of the Drow by succession alone.” Tarifa spoke. “By what right do you dismiss that?”

“My right as an Elder!” Aelulip snapped. “You do not fool me High Elf Queen. You play the part well, but you would never allow yourself to be submissive to a Drow, even one who claims to be Queen. It was you that led the last war against my people. I have no desire to trust you, or speak with you for that matter.”

“You are a child who plays at being an elder!” Tarifa shouted, startling Aelulip with the ferocity of her verbal assault. “A true elder of the Drow people would never usurp succession of the Queen! By your own admission you still practice slavery! That has been forbidden by order of the High King for more than a year!”

“Drow do not acknowledge a High King!” Aelulip barked. “We rule ourselves by our own laws, as it was meant to be!”

“The old ways are dead!” Tari joined the conversation. “They died with my mother the Queen!” He saw the looks on their faces. “Yes... I am brother to the Queen, and as her brother I demand that you release her and our friends!”

“You demand nothing half breed!” Aelulip snapped. “We know what you and your sister are! You have the blood of vampires in your bodies. They are as much our enemy as those you stand with now!”

“Aihola came here in peace and this is how you repay her?” Tarifa asked calmly. “She is my Mistress and she is this Spartan’s mate,” Tarifa motioned to Dekton behind her. “We want her back, and our other friends. I will exchange your people for them, and then we will leave you to rot here in your city of hate.”

“I will make no such exchange!” Aelulip spoke, causing Thonsya and Emyon to look at her. “They will stand trial and they will die!”

“You make it sound like their fate is already decided.” Aricia spoke softly as she sniffed the air and smelled the adrenalin dump into Aelulip’s system as she spoke the lie.

This didn’t go unnoticed by Dekton either and Tarifa felt his emotions spike behind her. She looked at Aricia, still not skilled enough with her wolf senses to detect such a subtle shift in a person’s scent.

Aricia what is it?

She’s lying to us Tarifa. Aricia spoke. *They will kill them regardless of what we say or do.*

She reeks of lies! Dekton added vehemently.

Tarifa looked back to Aelulip who stood there arrogantly. *The two other females do not seem to agree with this Aelulip person.*

The male does. Aricia said. *If I didn’t know any better, I’d say they were planning to take over after they kill Aihola and the others.*

Tarifa chuckled within the telepathic link. *Let no one accuse you of not being a shrewd politician Aricia, for they would be horribly mistaken.*

Like Martin I have no patience for liars and those who enslave others. Aricia said proudly.

Yes nor do I. Tarifa replied. “I am offering one last time to exchange the Drow we hold for Aihola and our friends. I urge you to take this offer.” She told Aelulip.

“Or what?” Aelulip snapped. “There are six thousand plus Drow in our city. All of us will fight! You are no match for us!”

Tarifa smiled but the smile held no warmth to it. “I beg to differ.” She said.

Aricia’s Nehtes appeared in her hand and extended in less than a second. She drove the weighted end of the spear into the ground next to her feet, “SPARTANS!”

Aelulip and the others watched as the thirty Spartans behind them performed the exact same movement in precise detail. Thirty Nehtes slamming into the cracked pavement at the same instant made an awful sound. What made their eyes go wide were the flashes of yellow/gold light and the Shi Viskas appeared on the forearm of every Spartan, the sunlight reflecting off the shields. Wolf eyes replaced normal eyes, fangs became visible and suddenly the Drow were looking at thirty half changed men and women in full Spartan battle armor. They looked back to Aricia and saw that her azure blue eyes had shrunk and become outlined in black, and with new flecks of gold within the blue. Her fangs had also lengthened, now protruding from her upper lip quite visibly.

Tarifa took a step forward, half changed now as well. “I will give you six hours.” Tarifa spoke softly. “You hold two Spartans within your city; you hold my Mistress and Dekton’s mate, and one who has become our friend. Her name is Nayeca. Six hours to return Aihola and our friends unharmed. If you do not then I will unleash not only the Spartans that you see here, but the seventy that hold position in the timber. I will begin by destroying your buildings on the surface with artillery and aircraft, and once I have reduced this wretched city of hate to rubble they will come into your tunnels. You will die. Your people will die.”

“You... you would kill the babies as well?” Emyon asked horrified.

“If my Mistress and our friends are not standing here in six hours, when I am finished with this city, the only thing that will remain of your people will be ash.” Tarifa growled. “Do not make the mistake that I am unwilling to give that order, for I will. Six hours... I suggest you move quickly.”

Dekton stepped slowly around Tarifa and moved up to stand in front of Aelulip. His eyes and fangs were all that showed from behind the helmet and it was the most frightening thing Aelulip had ever seen. He sniffed the air deeply around Aelulip, careful not to get too close to her.

“I will find you witch.” He spoke in a low menacing voice. “Out of the thousands of your people I will find you. I know my Little Drow’s body intimately. I have explored her flesh in more ways than your feeble mind could comprehend. If so much as one hair on her body is out of place it will take you three very long and painful days to die. This I swear to you on my blood as a Spartan!”

Aelulip shuddered inwardly as Dekton calmly moved back to stand beside Tarifa. Tarifa took his hand within hers and looked at Aelulip as the remaining Spartans moved from the timber to take up position with their comrades.

“Six hours.” Tarifa spoke. “I hope you make the right decision.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

LYCAVORIAN HOME GUARD FLEET GROUP ONE ATTACK CRUISER *LEONIDAS I* SEVEN OF THIRTEEN JUMPGATES COMPLETED EIGHT HOURS UNTIL NEXT JUMPGATE SIX DAYS FROM EARTH

“Do we have a firm location of this city Eden?” Riall asked.

“Yes Admiral,” The young officer replied. “It is situated between these two mountains ranges in what they used to call Ut... Utah. It is located on the North American continent.” He used an infra red pointer to signify the position of the city on the charts they had. “Our charts of earth are five hundred years old, so we don’t know exactly what terrain we will be moving into, but I doubt the King would put his back against a wall without a way out.”

Riall nodded. “Well... if we have seen anything of our new King, it is that he does not lack for courage or military strategy.” He spoke. “Using the vampire’s own communicator and an ancient radio wave signal was brilliant and he gave us the exact details of what he wants us to do.” Riall got up and went to the holographic star chart along the wall. “I want our fastest ships pulled out of the fleet. Vistr you will transfer fifteen thousand of your Spartans onto these ships. Fill the blasted corridors if you have to, I don’t care. We need to make up two days and do it quickly.”

“Is that possible?” Vistr asked.

“We are re-distributing all the spare LSDs that we brought.” Ceneu spoke leaning forward in his chair. “The only ships capable of keeping up with the *LEONIDAS I* are the newer *NOVA*-Class Attack cruisers, our *AUTUMN MOON*-Class Attack Frigates and our own version of the Vampire’s *ORIC*-Class, the *VANGUARD*-Class Heavy Cruiser. We have nineteen of those, but so far they are untested in extended LSD jumps, not to mention combat itself. They are the newest class of ships we have, but we deployed before we could complete their shake downs. That makes seventy-three ships in all. With all the spare LSDs moved to these ships, yes it is possible.”

“That’s almost half the Fleet Group.” Vistr spoke. “Is that wise to do?”

Riall nodded. “Xerxes was closer than we first thought if he is only four days from earth. Our intelligence had him putting down the rebellion on Pricot Four with his task force. He wouldn’t leave the majority of his ground troops without support. Even he isn’t that stupid.”

“Even half his task force outnumbers what we would arrive on earth with if we left half the Fleet Group behind.” Vistr spoke.

“We can not leave our King on Earth for two days without fighter and planetary weapons support!” Riall exclaimed. “Xerxes would simply obliterate the planet from orbit.”

“Well... he would not have the luxury of any extra LSD units.” Ceneu said as he worked the options in his head. “The nearest Coven Support facility with LSDs is forty light years from earth. He has to be pressing his ships hard to get to Earth from Pricot Four if he will be there in four days. Not to mention he does not have the First Elf Engineering Corp.”

“How many ships do you estimate will he need to leave behind due to some sort of LSD failure?” Riall asked.

“Coven engineers are not as skilled as our people. The added stress on the engine plants and power conduits would be extensive if he is pressing as hard as we think. We have burned out thirty-seven power transfer couplings ourselves and we were prepared for this type of movement.” Ceneu said. “If I had to guess, I’d say he loses thirty to forty ships on the trip. As with us, only his cruisers and frigates can keep up with a

REVERENCE-Class Dreadnought. The *WING OF DEATH* would be the only Dreadnought in the system, and we have the advantage in experience knocking out capital ships. And by the time those that remain with him get to Earth, their Light Speed Drives will be so taxed with overuse they wouldn't dare use them for any insystem jumps."

Riall nodded. "So the odds shrink to two, possibly three to one in his favor." He said looking at the star chart intently.

"Those are odds I'll take Riall." Ceneu said. "We'll be going in with fresh LSD cores and full stores of weapons and fighters. My Home Fleet One is the best we have, all of the Captains hand picked for their experience and skills. We can do this!" He got up and went to the chart, the holographic map of earth and its moon on it. "The moment we jump into the system we have two frigates wipe this moon base from existence. The weapons on this station will not hurt our capital ships but it might be dangerous to our fighters. We set up a standard defensive perimeter with our cruisers and begin shuttling down our troops with the remaining frigates. They are the only ships capable of atmospheric entry. I send one wing after Xerxes ship, and the rest we go toe to toe with. We can launch fighter and support craft from orbit and hit the Coven fleet with full missile barrages. We have proven our missiles hit harder."

Riall nodded. "The Coven ships will have the advantage in range however." He said.

Ceneu shook his head. "It won't matter this close to the planet."

"If we do this, how much time do we shave off the trip?" Riall asked.

Ceneu expanded the chart to encompass their current location. He pointed to the seven remaining Jump Gates. "If we make six LSD jumps between gates, replace the LSDs before we go through the gate..." Ceneu did some fast figuring in his head. "We can be to earth in eighty-six hours."

"It is a very large risk!" Vistr spoke from his chair. He held up his hand before Ceneu could reply. "Let me play devil's advocate for a moment my friend, but know that I do agree with you. What we have been doing with the multiple jumps and using the Gates so frequently is not something we have done before. Leaving half a Fleet Group behind and knowingly jumping into battle against a superior force would not be something any of us would do in a normal situation. These are things we need to consider. Is the life of one man worth so many, even that of our King? Would he approve of such a tactic just to save him?"

"May I answer that question Admiral Riall?" The voice spoke from the side of the room.

They all turned to see the Elfin Ambassador move gracefully into the bright lights of the conference room. He was tall for an elf, nearing six feet with long dark hair and an angular shaped face. His ears were slightly less pointed than many elves but that was because of the fighter pilot's helmet he had worn for so many decades.

"Ambassador Legsim," Riall spoke from beside the chart. "You are always welcome among us."

Ambassador Legsim was a legendary figure in the Lycavorian Union, a former fighter pilot with more Coven kills than any pilot alive. He was an elf that had fought in some of the most vicious battles of the war between the Lycavorian Union and Vampire Coven. He was almost four thousand years old; the lines on his face etched deeply the wisdom all his years had taught him. He had accepted the offer to become the Elf Ambassador only ten years ago, and had been re-elected to his office with nearly ninety five percent of the nine billion elf votes cast only two years previous.

"General Vistr... you ask if one man is worth so many." Legsim spoke as he came fully into the room. "I have been pondering this question since we discovered the youngest son of Leonidas still lived. Normally I would say no, and I would hazard a guess and say our new King would most likely agree with me based on what we have seen so far. But if you will allow me to tell you what I have seen with my own eyes these last few days that changes my mind." He looked at each man in the room. "I have seen images among my people of the elf female he has taken as one of his Queens. She may have been created by the Guardian of the Line, but her beauty alone surpasses any elf female I have ever known. Add to that the history she has apparently put behind her, the things we discovered from our King's memories. Her images are turning up all over the fleet, in lockers, on desks and one young pilot even had her image burned into the side of his cockpit. I see the same among the Hadarians and Lycavorians with images of their new King and Queens. As I walk the corridors of these ships I feel something that I have never felt before, an energy that pulses through everyone, and it extends to how they are doing their duties. Have you not noticed the extra little effort by your crew in their jobs? I certainly have. My people have fought alongside yours since the very beginning Riall, and when our royal

family was butchered by the Vampire Coven we turned to the Lycavorian King for leadership. He adopted my people without question, without remorse, for that is who he was. Admiral Ceneu... I understand it was much the same among your people was it not?"

The Algolian Admiral nodded without hesitation. "My people turned to the one thing that gave us hope for our future; and that was King Resumar. He never questioned our appearance, or our reptilian nature, and he treated us with honor and respect."

Legsim nodded. "King Resumar and his Queen are still revered to this day among my people gentlemen." He spoke softly. "Some would say even more than our own lost King and Queen. We fought as a scattered remnant for centuries, until Resumar's son Leonidas became known to us. I do not need to tell you what his death did, as we were all there when King Leonidas's death galvanized us... all of us, to unite as one and form the Union we now hold so dear. My friends... King Leonidas's son is not just one man... he is a symbol to us all. The very knowledge that he still lives... after we had thought him lost so many years ago... that has elevated him to the status of legend already and we have not even met him. His Queens have become symbols... inspirations to thousands, millions of our people in just a few short weeks. Do we as leaders of our people... do we let those symbols perhaps perish before they can galvanize the entire Union? We have an opportunity here to gather countless other worlds to our cause. Those that would not fight with us before will see that the son of Leonidas, the grandson of King Resumar... that he lives on, and has been fighting his entire life for freedom and justice, not even knowing who he truly was. Now he knows who he is... and not only does he continue to fight, he has embraced what he is with a passion we have not seen since King Resumar. No gentlemen... Martin Leonidas is not just one man... he and his Queens have become the symbols of freedom and hope for trillions of beings. By what right do we let that slip away? We should not be concerned with the lives that might possibly be lost over saving one man... but the lives that possibly could be lost if that one man is not saved."

The room fell silent for a long moment as the men allowed what Legsim spoke to sink in. The Spartan General Vistr was the first to react and he came to his feet with a deep breath and pride swelling in his chest.

"I will begin shuttling my Spartans to the necessary ships." He spoke firmly. "And I will tell them what you have said this day Ambassador. After they hear your words I would turn them loose on the vampire home world and I believe they would win handily."

Ceneu nodded his head as well. "I'll insure we have enough LSDs for every ship that we take with us. I will instruct the remaining ships to continue on at a normal pace and to deploy in a defensive formation when they arrive in the system. We will have either won... or we will be dead."

Riall waited for the room to empty before stepping up to Legsim. "I will never again question the wisdom of elves my friend, even in jokes. I will remember your words this day for the rest of my life."

Legsim smiled. "Can we do it Admiral?"

Riall met his gaze. "Before your speech I would have had doubts." He said honestly. "Now... no doubts exist. We can do it, no matter what it takes."

CANADA

DROW CITY OF KELWOOD

Nayeca clutched Anuk's naked body to her as they crouched in the shadows, Anuk holding the Drow warrior firmly in her grasp, one powerful hand clamped over his throat, the other across his mouth. Nayeca's one hand held Anuk around her waist, while the other held the sidearm, her amber eyes searching the corridor they had just exited. They could still hear the sound of running feet and the clanging of several bells as the alert was raised that they had escaped.

They had found no clothes that fit them, and opted instead to escape out of the cell block they were in as quickly as they could. Nayeca held Anuk's hand tightly as she led them through the myriad of tunnels and labyrinths, always moving up toward where Anuk could smell Daniel. She knew the city and she trusted Anuk's sense of smell to guide them, so she kept them to the shadows and side tunnels avoiding people. It was common for her people to run these drills where the alarms would sound and unless you were a regular fighter, you

secured yourself within your quarters. The corridors were mostly free of normal travel and made it easier for them to move.

Nayeca nodded when Anuk looked at her over her shoulder and she turned back to the Drow she was holding, her wolf eyes and fangs still very evident, "The man like me." Anuk hissed into the Drow's ear. "Where is he?"

The male Drow didn't hesitate and pointed to their left. That jived with where Daniel's scent was coming from, and she twisted the Drow's head viciously, hearing his neck snap with a dull crack. She lowered the body slowly and turned to shove him into a deep corner.

"He's not far." Anuk whispered as she pressed close to Nayeca in the shadows. Though their flesh was touching in all the intimate places, neither of them felt desire sweeping through them. They were both too concerned with getting out of here alive. Whatever their fate may have been before, they would surely be killed now.

Nayeca looked at Anuk's face for a long moment. "Whatever happens from now on Anuk... know that..."

Anuk kissed her hard, savoring the feel of her lips and the sensuous touch of her ebony body against her. She drew back quickly and put a finger to Nayeca's lips. "You will not die on me Mistress." She said softly. "I have not had you nearly enough yet, and I do want to explore intimately what you have brought out in me."

"I did not wish... when the time came I had wanted to seduce you Anuk. Not force myself on you." Nayeca spoke.

Anuk smiled. "Then I will look forward to that day Mistress." She replied.

"And... and Daniel... what will he do to me?" Nayeca asked softly.

Anuk's smile was full of sexual mischievousness, "Nothing that you don't want him too." She said in reply. "He will not react as you think Nayeca. Trust me, when we get to Daniel we will be in better shape and you will see for yourself."

Nayeca fought down the urge to take her right there, and gripped her hand tightly. "Come let us find Daniel and escape this place then."

They started moving once more, always keeping to the shadows, which was easy for Nayeca. As a Drow she lived in the shadows, and for Anuk, her wolf persona welcomed the darkness as an ally. They turned down the short corridor and saw it ended a hundred yards further ahead, but this was the other cell block where Daniel was being held. Daniel's nutmeg scent filled her senses now and Anuk felt pleasure, joy and relief sweep through her as they got closer to where her mate was.

They stopped when they heard the female Drow voice. "I will have you now!"

Anuk couldn't help but smile when she heard the deep booming voice of the man she loved. "It will take more than a nice pair of tits to get me interested bitch!" They heard a muffled scream and a deep thud like a fist hitting flesh. They rushed forward to the door where the noise was coming from and looked into the open frame, seeing a very naked Daniel body slamming the Drow female to the hard packed earth once more. "I told you to get off me bitch! Now where is my Anuk?"

"I am here Daniel?" Anuk spoke softly stepping into the room.

Nayeca gasped at the speed with which Anuk's hulking mate spun around, his arm coming up and his Shi Viska flaring into existence. His eyes had changed to yellow orbs and his fangs were extended in anger. The moment he saw her and detected her scent, his eyes returned to normal and the Shi Viska disappeared. Nayeca then saw his huge cock dangling limp between his legs and her eyes went even wider. Anuk had not been kidding her when she said he was huge.

"Anuk baby," Danny blurted crossing to her in three strides and scooping her into his arms. Nayeca watched them, their lips coming together in a blistering kiss of unrequited passion. Nayeca knew at that moment that she would never take Anuk from this man, no matter how hard she might have tried. Truth be told, Nayeca admitted to herself, the possibility of having them both as lovers thrilled her to an extent unlike anything she'd ever felt.

Anuk ran her hands over Danny's bald head and face lovingly as they parted from their kiss, their auras mingling together easily. She drank in his handsome face, her fingers caressing his eyebrows. "I have missed you husband." Anuk told him adoringly. "I see you did not like your company."

Danny grinned widely. "I much prefer a certain red head thanks very much." He told her, nuzzling her throat and hearing her hiss in contentment.

"We need to get out of here and find Aihola." Anuk said, fighting down the urge to have him take her right here.

Dan set her down slowly and turned as the Drow female on the ground moaned. He watched Nayeca step up to her quickly and kick her savagely in the head. His eyes grew a little wider when he smelled Anuk's cinnamon scent on Nayeca, and then he finally noticed the scent of sweet apples lingering on Anuk's face and lips. He looked at Anuk his eyes filled with questions. Nayeca turned back and noticed the look on his face as he turned to Anuk. Her belly clenched in fear at what he might do to her, and she stood there frozen in her spot, willing herself to accept whatever his actions were.

"Anuk... what...?" Danny asked reaching up to touch her lips.

Anuk smiled and took his hands quickly; her cerulean blue eyes now back to normal and flowing over him with love and adoration. "Our captors... they thought to force us together my love. They did not know that the attraction for Nayeca was already inside me. It happen Daniel my love... and it was most pleasant, and I wish it to happen again and again; in more agreeable surroundings of course."

Danny turned his head to look at Nayeca, his dark eyes unreadable. She stood her ground, holding her chin up and meeting his gaze. He stepped over to her and leaned over to inhale deeply next to her throat, causing Nayeca to shiver in desire and fear, her hands clenching into fists. He nuzzled her cheek and then her sensitive elf ear, causing Nayeca to shudder in delight, her eyes wide in astonishment at the feelings he was causing in her. Danny turned slowly back around to face to Anuk then.

"Why is it that we come thousands of miles; get captured by a dangerous enemy and you two are able to get it on, and I get beat up?" Dan asked. "How does that work out to be fair here?"

Anuk laughed softly and stepped up to him, folding her naked body against his and as she squeezed him tightly she hit him with her aura. "I will make it up to you Daniel." She said seductively.

"You promise?" Danny asked with a grin, her scent and aura pulsing through him.

Anuk kissed him softly. "Oh yes... I guarantee it." She said.

Dan's expression changed and he grinned wider. "Ok... let's beat feet out of here then and find our uniforms. Then we get Aihola and kiss this place goodbye."

Nayeca looked at him strangely. "Why... why would I want to beat my feet?" She asked.

Aelulip held her bloody mouth as she lay on the floor beneath Aihola. She and the others had returned to the meeting chamber only to find Hwia and Aihola sitting with the heads of the families that had not gone out to meet Tarifa. The moment Aelulip had entered the room Aihola had set upon her, hitting her three times before Aelulip could even respond. Now she lay bruised and bloody as Aihola reached down and took her mother's medallion from around Aelulip's neck and held it up.

"This belongs to me." Aihola spoke sternly, replacing the medallion around her neck and sliding it under the body armor she wore.

"Why is she free?" Aelulip demanded as she scrambled away from her. She looked at Hwia. "She should be in chains!"

"She is our Queen Aelulip, and the sooner you recognize that the better things will be for all of us." Hwia spoke. "She has agreed to remain here willingly and speak with us about the future and what she desires for her people. I for one find much of what she already has said very appealing, as do the other family Matrons."

"You did this behind my back?" Aelulip snapped.

Hwia nodded. "Much as you went to meet the High Elf Queen without telling me. Not to mention taking the Queen's medallion from her, and leaving her naked like some common whore!" Hwia's voice rose in anger.

Aihola moved back to the chair she had been sitting in. "You have met with Tarifa?" She asked. "What did she say?"

"She told us lies!" Aelulip barked.

Thonsya pushed past Aelulip, her face stern. "She told us if we did not release you and the others within six hours she would destroy this city and kill all of us!" Thonsya uttered. "She has... she has dozens of the

natha zze'ill with her. They... they are led by a young woman with strange blue eyes and raven black hair. She... she said they would destroy the entire city above us before moving into the tunnels and they would not stop until we were all dead.”

Aihola chuckled softly. “That does sounds like my love Tarifa. She does have quite a temper when pressed too far. And the woman you were referring to is Aricia. She is one of the High Queens and a Queen of Sparta.”

“She said... the High Elf Queen... she told us you are her Mistress.” Emyon spoke stepping forward.

Aihola looked at her and nodded casually. “In our *bed* Tarifa is my slave and she has been for over a year. It is a wonderfully pleasurable arrangement for both of us, and I would not change it for anything. I love her with all that I am, and I love my mate with equal passion. Out of our bed, Tarifa and I are equal in every way and we lead Eden together.”

“That... that is what she said, almost to the word.” Emyon said stunned.

“That surprises you?” Aihola asked. “We love each other, and we share the same mate as well. We have been through much together Tarifa and I, and every morning I bless the day she came into my life.”

“He... he was there too.” Thonsya spoke. “He... he threatened to kill Elder Aelulip if their demands were not met.”

Aihola smiled once more. “Do you see?” She said calmly. “They care not that I am Drow, nor do they care that my brother or any other Drow is among them. We have formed an Alliance of our own. Eden allows all elves and men to live free and in peace. Why is it so hard for you to let go of the hate you have and embrace the future.”

“What future do you offer?” Aelulip snapped, “A future where we lose our identity to humans and other elves? What future is that?”

“I offer a future for our children!” Aihola snapped back at her. “A future for the children I will have! You will lose nothing, and only gain from this! Yes... you will no longer be able to take females and force them into submissive slaves. You will no longer be able to raid other villages for supplies and food. You won’t need too! What do you offer our people except hardship and having to hide within the walls and tunnels of this city? The High King has outlawed slavery, and once the Alliance is dealt with, you will no longer be able to hold others against their will! He will not allow it! I will not allow it!”

“We do not recognize this High King!” Aelulip spat. “He is human! And we do not recognize you!”

Aihola shook her head. “No... the High King is not human. He is *natha zze'ill*. He is a Spartan, just as my mate is a Spartan. And he commands thousands of *natha zze'ill*, millions of them across the universe of stars!”

Aelulip laughed out loud. “What rubbish do you speak of?” She demanded. “You will contact this High Elf witch and tell her we will kill you if they attack us. That is what you will do. And you will keep silent and not poison the minds of our people with your fables!”

Aihola shook her head. “I will do no such thing.” She spoke. “Why do you fear what you don’t know Aelulip? Is it because you fear losing the power you now wield? Do you fear losing the hold you have on our people that keeps them down and under your thumb? Is that why you hate me so much? I bring freedom and you offer nothing but the same dogmatic view that nearly destroyed our people to begin with!”

“Be silent!” Aelulip shouted. “Guards... if this wench speaks another word you will shoot her like the dog she is!”

Hwia held up her hand at the three Drow warriors in the room, keeping them in their spots even though none of them had made a move to respond to her order. “They will do no such thing.” Hwia spoke. “They...”

Kawyona burst into the room then, her eyes wide. “They have escaped!” She gasped. “The traitor and the Wood Elf female have escaped. They freed the rogue male, and now eleven of my warriors are dead across the city!”

Aihola smiled cruelly. “You have *two* Spartans loose in your city?” She said. “I won’t begin to explain to you what Daniel and Anuk have gone through to finally be together. I would truly hate to be you with the two of them and Nayeca running free.”

Kawyona stepped towards her. “You will order them to surrender!”

Aihola shook her head. “Sorry... can’t help you.” She said. “I could... I can reach them with my thoughts. You see, the Spartans are all telepathic; they can speak to one another with their minds. Since my

mate is also a Spartan, he has that ability as well. And Tarifa once saved my life by allowing me to feed on her blood, which allows us this same connection. So you see... with one command I could stop whatever they have planned. With one command I could order Daniel and Anuk to come here. I will not give that command.”

Kawyona stepped up to Aihola and lifted her sidearm, pointing it at her head. “You will give that order or I will kill you!” She growled.

Aihola blurred in motion, moving with her vampire speed. She stepped to the side of Kawyona and grabbed her wrist, twisting viciously, Kawyona’s arm popping out of the socket as Aihola twisted her arm nearly all the way around. Her sidearm dropped from her hand and Aihola caught it easily. She tossed Kawyona aside like a ragdoll and held up the side arm. She ejected the full magazine and then cycled the chamber, ejecting the bullet that was in the chamber.

“I grow tired of being shot and having weapons pointed at me by the people I came here to help.” She growled at the stunned men and women in the room. Aihola had taken down the senior Drow commander faster than even the red haired female had.

“I can not believe you are allowing this?” Aelulip demanded.

Hwia glowered at her. “I intend to allow a lot more as well.” Hwia spoke. “I ask the heads of our Drow families if they wish to hear what our Queen has to say.” She turned and looked at the men and women. “What say you?”

“We are the Elders!” Aelulip shouted. “We make the laws!”

“I wish to hear what the Queen has to say.” Thonsya spoke.

“As do I,” Emyon echoed.

“Aye,” A man spoke.

It was quick and almost unanimous as sixteen of the Matrons and Patrons of the Drow families agreed with Hwia. The only three that did not agree were solidly aligned with Ael’main and Aelulip.

Hwia nodded. “It is decided.” She spoke. “The family leaders have spoken and we will allow our Queen speak with us about what she envisions for the future.”

“I would be happy too.” Aihola spoke.

“All the while her friends kill more of our troops while they roam our city streets!” Ael’main nearly shouted.

Hwia looked at Aihola. “My Queen... we have...”

“I have one condition for doing this.” Aihola spoke. “You will allow Tarifa, our mate, my brother Tari and the Queen of Sparta into the city to help me show you. In return for this, I will order Daniel, Anuk and Nayeca to stand down and come here. We will surrender our weapons, with the understanding that should you in any way violate this truce, everything that Tarifa told you will happen and it will happen immediately. And it will not stop until you are all dead.”

“You will die as well!” Ael’main snapped.

Aihola looked at him. “Perhaps... but we will have a better chance of surviving than any Drow, of that I can guarantee you. None of you will live through this day if you betray me again.”

Hwia saw the nods of the Drow family leaders and looked at her. “We will honor these terms.” She said. “I do not wish anymore of our soldiers to die. Please... call off these Spartans that you speak of.”

“It is already done.” Aihola said.

“How do we know this?” Aelulip asked harshly.

“Because you are still alive bitch,” The male voice spoke in a snarling tone from behind her.

The Drow leaders sprang out of their chairs as Daniel appeared from behind the wall, the handgun leveled at Aelulip’s head. Anuk and Nayeca swept in on either side of him, carrying Drow assault rifles. They had found their uniforms in the room next to where Daniel was being held and had made their way to where they smelled Aihola in the room. Her telepathic message and command had stopped them before rushing in and assaulting the room.

“Daniel... I gave them my word.” Aihola spoke.

“They tried to rape my mate and Nayeca! You know how Spartans view rape!” Daniel growled in reply, his changed eyes never leaving Aelulip. “They used me as a punching bag. Why should I believe anything these assholes have to say?” His weapon never wavered from Aelulip’s wide eyes.

Aihola stepped up to him and put her hand on his arm, "Because I am asking you too." She said adding, "At least for now."

Dan met her amber eyes for a long moment. "If anyone so much as breaths wrong at Anuk or Nayeca, I will start dropping Drow elves like flies and I won't stop until they are all dead or I am."

Aihola nodded, "Fair enough." She said.

Nayeca was looking at Daniel with wide eyes as well, for completely different reasons. He would defend her to the death if need be, he had just announced that to the world. She looked at Anuk and saw her cerulean blue eyes meet her amber orbs and they held nothing but affection in them.

Daniel flipped the sidearm around and let it drop to the floor. Anuk and Nayeca slowly did the same, and then they stepped over to stand next to Aihola and Daniel.

SPARTA

"Do you think they understood?" Martin asked Helen as they walked along the path taking them to the landing pad. He carried his helmet under his arm, an aviator's kit bag tossed over his shoulder. The P190 was strapped to his back in its usual place, his Nehtes secured on his thigh.

Helen nodded. "I believe you made it quite simple for them to understand." She said with a smile.

"What did he hit me with Helen?" Martin asked.

"Sire, you must understand, Veldruk is the most powerful telepath that has ever existed." Helen replied. "The only individual who was an equal was your grandfather King Resumar. Veldruk used what is called a psychicbolt, a concentrated burst of energy from his mind. It is a form of telekinesis, but much more powerful in nature. That you were able to shrug it off as you did and then respond in kind to him... well..."

Martin looked at her as they walked. "What?"

"Your father never had the opportunity to explore his telepathic abilities as you have." Helen spoke. "I believe... and it is only my opinion... your abilities will one day rival that of your grandfather. That Anja and Aricia were able to do what they did with Deval only affirms that for me. They will not be as powerful as you, but because of what you share with them, they will have abilities that others do not, more so Aricia than the others for she is Lycavorian. I suggest when we are finished here on earth, you and they return immediately to Apo Prime. That is the seat of the Lycavorian Union now. There you will find powerful telepaths that will better be able to help you channel your powers. And I suggest you encourage Thr'won to attend as well, as she has shown a healthy increase in power since touching your mind, and there are few enough Elf telepaths in the Union."

"Will I have that effect on everyone?" Martin asked.

Helen shook her head. "Only those that you have chosen to have a deeper connection with, and they too must be at least moderately telepathic." Helen answered.

"Helen can... can we win?" Martin asked as he stopped walking. "Or is all that I am doing for naught?"

"What do you think my King?" She asked.

"I think I do not want to see my friends and the women that I love die for a cause that we don't have a snowballs chance in hell of winning." Martin told her. "Should I just wait until our people arrive and then leave earth?"

"Do you believe you can not win sire?" She asked another question.

Martin chuckled. "You're almost as bad as Walter when it comes to answering questions with questions." He said.

"I will take that as a compliment sire." Helen answered with a smile. "Being compared to the Guardian of the Line is a great honor."

"Will you answer my question?" Martin told her.

"What do you wish me to say sire?" Helen asked. "All of the years you have fought; the battles you have survived and the scars you bear to this day; without even knowing what you truly were... Did you fight for a reason then?"

Martin met her eyes. "I fought for my friends. I fought for justice and freedom and those who could not fight for themselves. At least I tried too most of the time. There were times when I did not agree with what I was told to do." Martin answered.

"And the men and women you have had to bury? How many have there been since you began this task?" Helen asked.

Martin's head lowered. "Too many as far as I am concerned." He replied.

"Did they die for nothing sire?"

"They died for what they believed in! What we believed in!" Martin spoke more harshly than he intended.

"Would you be able to leave the elves to whatever fate Xerxes has in store for them after the friendships and family ties you have forged with them? Tarifa, Aihola, General Vengal, who I know you admire greatly, would you just be able to leave them?" Helen asked.

That answer was even easier, "No never."

"Do you believe in what you are doing sire?" She asked another question. "Do you believe this battle is worth the sacrifices that many of our people and the elves will make? Humans have been the bane of this planet since the dawn of time, yet your father's first thought when he was dying was to tell Dymas to protect them and watch over them, as well as you. Your grandfather's first thought when he was dying was not for himself or those close to him, but for the thousands he would not be able to help." Helen took his hand. "The Spartans... our people... they will follow you into the very pits of Hades if you commanded them... without a second's hesitation. The elves on this planet would be right behind them. They would do this because they know that you will do everything within your power to see them through, and that you would be there with them. You are not just a leader of men and a King Martin Leonidas; you are a symbol of hope for the future. Is that not worth dying for?"

"Yes." Martin replied without hesitation.

Helen smiled. "Then you just answered your own question sire." She told him. She reached up and placed her palm on his cheek. "You have doubts and fears... and so did your father and grandfather before him. That is what made them true leaders of men. They did not shrink from their calling because of those doubts and fears." Helen smiled at him. "I will tell you something I told your father a very long time ago. Do not be afraid to lose Martin, for the moment you become afraid to lose something or someone, you will become afraid to act. And when *you* become afraid to act... all will be lost."

"You make it sound like it all revolves around me somehow." He said. "I am just a piece of the puzzle."

Helen nodded. "Yes you are. But you are the center piece, the piece that all others must be built off of in order to fit properly. And that is the difference. Do not let your anger at Xerxes for what he did to your father override your sense sire. That is the quickest way to destruction. Remain true to who you are, as your father and grandfather did and all else will fall into place."

"And what of the future," Martin asked.

Helen looked at him with a gentle smile and took a deep breath. "I will tell you this, my King. You will know love and death, fear and pain, hate and joy. Face them as you have faced every day up until now, without fear of the unknown, and you will have a rich full life."

"Can you see the future?" Martin asked.

Helen laughed. "No my King, no one can see the future." She answered. "I have a sense of things that is all."

"Then I want to ask a question of you." He said. "And I want an honest no shit answer."

"Of course sire." Helen replied with a smile. "I always give honest no shit answers."

"How can I feel for four women, one of whom I haven't even met yet, how can I feel the same thing for all of them?" Martin asked.

Helen couldn't help the smile that crossed her face. "You are the only King in our history to have more than one Queen Martin. And make no mistake... they will all sit beside you as Queens, for that is their purpose. You claimed three of them under the Centennial of the Moon, and you will do the same with Isabella when the time comes. To our people that is more than just a full moon. It is a sacred time because of the blood of wolves that runs through us. And no matter what you may think you feel; you do not feel the same for each of them."

“Isabella is a vampire.” Martin said, “The daughter of the man who ordered my father’s death, my grandfather’s death. How can I feel anything for her but hate?”

“Because you are far more than your father and grandfather that’s why.” Helen said in reply. “They would never have stood beside a vampire, even a half vampire and called them friend and fellow warrior. You have gone beyond that... and that is why Isabella pulls at you so.”

“You told Dysea that she would always hold a special place within me because she was the first I turned.” Martin said.

Helen nodded. “And she will, that is very true, but when you look deep within you, what do you feel? Who calls to your blood, to your very soul just that tiny bit more?”

Martin looked at her. “Little Wolf.” He answered almost immediately.

Helen nodded once more. “There will be growing pains with her due to her age, but you are Lycavorian Martin, and Aricia will always call to you in a way the others will not, for she is of our blood as well. They will all hold a place inside you that the others will not have, but when all is said and done, it is Aricia that will be your true power. She does not yet know how much she loves you, but when she realizes that, you must go to her no matter the cost, no matter the pain, for when two claim each other under the Centennial of the Moon it is for all time. It is a sin of the heart to deny this. And while it may seem like it to you, it *does not* happen often between our people.”

“Pain?” Martin said in surprise. “Why would she cause me pain?”

“To deny or violate that moon claim in any way,” Helen looked at him. “It will destroy them from the inside until it is healed, if it is healed at all.” Helen smiled and waved her hand in a dismissive manner. “Now you have me babbling.”

Martin chuckled. “You’re very profound when you babble.” He said.

“Remember my words to you Martin.” Helen said taking his hands. “Now... you have a battle to lead and a war to win my King. After that... you have a people to govern. I will always be here to guide you, and I will take part in the defense of our city. One other thing you must know...” Helen spoke. “No matter where you go, no matter what you do, know that Sparta is and always will be your home. Not some far away land or city, for while you may not have been born here, this is where you discovered who you truly were. And it is here you will come to heal all wounds of flesh and soul.”

Martin smiled warmly. “That is something I will never forget, I promise you.” He said, “Never.”

Helen nodded. “Then my prayers and blessings go with you and all our soldiers leaving Sparta to do battle. Now go... your transport awaits you my King.”

Martin pulled her to him and embraced her tightly, surprising her with this action, “For Sparta.” He whispered, “For our people.”

Helen closed her eyes as tears rolled down her cheeks, “For us all. For us all.” She whispered back.

Martin didn’t look back at her as he sprinted for the SPAT transport, much of what she had just told him forgotten by the time he got to the SPAT and he could feel the engines of the craft begin to power up as soon as he touched the ramp. This energized him, empowered him and he realized he missed the excitement of the unknown completely.

“Be strong my King,” Helen whispered to the wind. “You will be tested much in the future, and if you stumble once, all will be lost.”

Andreas stepped up to him as Martin let his eyes scan the three hundred men and women that sat in the rear of the transport.

“Is this all of them?” Martin asked.

Andreas nodded. “Yes Milord, all of those that were chosen at Thermopylae, less those you assigned to protect Queen Anja and Queen Dysea, and an additional one hundred and seventy-three volunteers. May I ask why you assigned none to my sister sire?”

Martin looked at him. “She doesn’t need more protection.” He answered. “That’s where we’re going to be.”

Andreas smiled, “The Drow?”

Martin nodded. “They will either fall in line with us willingly, or I will destroy them. I will not allow slavery to persist, and I most certainly will not allow their view of others to persist. Aihola and Tarifa both contacted me and told me what is going on. They asked me to come to their location, and that is where we are

going. Tell them where we are going Captain, for they have just become The King's Legion." Martin touched the panel of the side wall near the ramp as it finished closing, "Endith?"

"I'm right here!" Endith replied from the cockpit, Martin hearing Tina laughing in the background. "You don't have to shout!"

Martin chuckled at the petite red haired elf pilot who had been with him since the very beginning it seemed. The more time she spent away from Ben, the more she bitched about that fact and the more she became just like him. And that suited Martin just fine because both of them were the finest pilots he had ever seen in action bar none.

"Endith... how fast can you have me in Canada?" Martin asked.

"That depends boss man." Endith spoke.

"On what exactly," Martin asked.

"How air sick you want to get!" Endith answered.

Martin laughed. "At this point, the sooner I get Aricia in my arms, the better off everyone will be."

They all heard Endith let out a war whoop from the cockpit and the SPAT leaped into the sky. Martin could see many of the Spartans shaking their heads with smiles. She had become known as the little "firecracker that could". No matter what she asked the SPAT to do, it seemed the aircraft would always respond to her touch without question or hesitation. And the many Spartans who had attempted to get into her pants during her stay in Sparta had all fallen flat on their faces. The little red headed elf was totally and completely in love with Ben and Tina.

"We're coming home Benjamin!" Endith yelled from the cockpit as she shoved the throttles to full power and the SPAT torched through the sky accelerating to nearly four thousand miles an hour in less than a minute.

The flight would take just over two hours.

CANADA DROW CITY OF KELWOOD

If ever the Drow House leaders had ever seen a more submissive lover, none of them could remember at the moment. The minute the Drow patrol had led the Queen of the High Elves into the gathering chamber, Tarifa had rushed across the room and thrown herself into Aihola's arms. Their kiss they had shared was passionate enough to make many of the House leaders fidget in their seats. There was no mistaking that Tarifa was the submissive in their relationship, as Aihola drew Tarifa into her arms and dominated their kiss from the outset. Aihola was only an inch taller than Tarifa, but the way the High Elf Queen melted into Aihola's arms left no doubts in anyone's mind that she knew her place, at least in the context of that part of the relationship she shared with Aihola. After the long toe curling kiss, they parted slowly and Tarifa reached out to stroke Aihola's cheek.

"Do not ever frighten me like that again Mistress." She spoke softly, not intending her words be heard by anyone, but they were loud enough for her voice to carry to the sitting Matrons and Patrons of the gathered Houses, and they looked at one another in shock.

Aihola smiled with an adoring love and nuzzled Tarifa's elfin ears, relishing the smell of her lover and friend. "I have missed you so much slave." She replied in an equally soft voice, but still loud enough to carry to the others. She looked up and saw the others watching her and Tarifa and now she smiled shyly. "Forgive us... we have not been away from each other for more than a few hours in the last year. Four days has been hard."

Tarifa kissed her again hungrily and then smiled almost shyly as she pulled away, "Too hard! I found a wayward soul on my way here *Nya Istel*." She said. "He was rather insistent that I bring him along."

Aihola could only smile as she looked at Dekton standing next to Aricia and Tari. She released Tarifa and moved quickly to the man she loved as dearly as Tarifa, "Dekton." Aihola said softly as he gathered her into his embrace and blasted her with his aura. Aihola had no aura of her own to return the sensations, but she could surely feel him sweeping around and through her and she squeezed him with every ounce of her vampire elf strength while burying her face against his chest and inhaling the smell of warm leather deeply into her lungs.

“You gave me a moment’s pause there Little Drow.” He told her, holding her tightly to him as Tarifa came up and snuggled to his side. “Perhaps in the future I will tie you to my person so that you don’t get lost.”

The leaders watched his arm release a laughing Aihola only to encircle Tarifa within the same embrace, nuzzling both of them gently as they chuckled and basked in his attention.

Hwia’s eyes were as wide as the others in the room and she watched the other female remove the helmet she wore to reveal a distinctly human face, but one they all knew could become that of a wolf in a single heartbeat. Hwia had to admit, Aricia’s beauty was stunning, the blue of her eyes almost heart stopping, and for a single moment even she wished this female served under her, pleasuring her. The Spartan Queen’s body bespoke of firm lushness and hours of pleasure. She studied Aricia as she stepped over to where Daniel and Anuk stood, touching each of their foreheads with her own for brief periods of time. That they treated her reverently due to her station was also quite obvious.

Hwia turned back to look at the others, her eyes searching for but not finding Ael’main or the two Matron mothers that supported him. Aelulip was also absent. Hwia dismissed this quickly, for Aihola’s words were beginning to sound truer and truer. Aelulip and the others were purposely keeping their people grounded in the ways of the old Drow culture so that they could keep the power they wielded. Aelulip and the others knew that if Aihola assumed the role of Queen, as Hwia now had no doubts she would; all that power would disappear in an instant.

Aihola finally pulled herself from Dekton and Tarifa’s embrace and still holding their hands tightly she turned to Hwia. “The Drow that we captured are being returned as we speak. Their injuries were tended too, and they were well fed. No attempt was made to interrogate them and they were kept apart from the others. Please send a recovery team to bring back the bodies of those we have lost. It seems Elder Aelulip did not think it necessary to honor our dead.”

This statement more than anything sealed the decisions these Drow House leaders had already made to themselves and had not yet admitted to anyone else.

“There are a dozen Spartans with the bodies keeping them safe.” Aricia spoke from where she stood in front of Daniel and Anuk. “Spartans have always respected the skills of the Drow Elves. The Guardian of the Line created them to be most like us and we would be honored if you would allow us to help you in their Ascension Ceremony.”

Hwia looked at Aihola quickly, unsure what to do. Aihola nodded to her, and Hwia turned back to Aricia. “The... the Drow accept your offer Milady.”

Aihola looked at the men and women in the chamber. “I had Tarifa bring as much information on our city and what we have done as she was able to carry.” Aihola turned to where Tari held the box under one arm. She reached for his free hand with a glowing smile and he took it to give it a gentle squeeze before he handed her the box. Aihola turned back to face the men and women. “There is information in here on Eden and on the city of Sparta and the history of both. We will answer any and all questions that we can for you, provided they do not put security at risk. The High King is also on his way here to greet all of you.” This caused many of them to look at her wide eyed. Aihola smiled. “There is no need to fear him.” She said.

“He is *natha zze’ill*.” Thonsya spoke. “You have said so yourself.”

Aihola nodded. “He is, but it is also he who pushed for me to come here in the beginning. He can tell you far more of Sparta and his people, as can his Queen Aricia. But if you are sincere, you should never fear him.”

Hwia looked at Aricia once more. “You are his Queen?” She asked.

Aricia nodded. “I am the youngest of his three Queens.” She replied.

“Then he must think greatly of you to come here alone.” Hwia said.

Aricia was silent for a moment before she smiled, realizing that Hwia had spoken very true words. Aricia hadn’t thought of that at all. Martin had never questioned her decision to come here, not even a little. That knowledge made a warm sensation creep through her.

“Perhaps,” She said finally.

“The Drow are my people,” Aihola spoke once more. “And I have no intention of letting them fall ever again.”

SPAT *SPARTAN 01*

Endith adjusted her course slightly, feeling the SPAT respond instantly to her command. There were no standard controls in the cockpit of the SPAT like those in a Raptor, with the exception of the throttle control. The other controls were on half a dozen control panels situated between her and Tina, and above their seats. They had become a single mind when flying, knowing each other so well they could almost predict what the other would do in almost any given situation.

Spartan 01 flew at a thousand feet, rocketing over the trees and mountains at a more moderate nine hundred miles an hour, the computers adjusting automatically for terrain and course. The helmets that she and Tina wore covered their entire faces except for their eyes, and upon command tinted shields would drop into place and allow them to see in the dark as well as protect them from explosions and glare. The SPAT was technically a heavy transport, able to carry three hundred Spartans as they now did, or several metric tons of equipment and supplies. Though considered a transport, the *Spartan 01* was also heavily armed and armored, with dual missile launchers able to extend on either side of the middle of the ship, and a single kinetic chain cannon turret under the nose of the craft that was slaved to Endith's helmet.

Learning to fly the SPAT had been ridiculously easy for Endith, and only after Thr'won had examined her did they learn that Endith had the incredible ability to remember everything she read, and had reflexes ten times faster than the normal elf. She was also able to almost see things before they happened, like a precognition type of telepathy, which added her flying immensely.

"Forty minutes." She spoke settling back into her seat. The Spartan engineers had to rework the pilot's seat for her small frame, but now it fit her like a glove.

"You realize he will demand that we teach him how to fly this baby." Tina said as she looked at Endith. It no longer made her pause that she could love this elf female just as intensely as she loved Ben. It seemed so natural for the both of them to slip into each other's arms, and during the last few weeks both of them had missed Ben terribly. They could comfort and love each other, but they both knew Benjamin was an integral part of that love and they needed him.

"I know." Endith said with an evil grin, "But that will make it easier for us to make demands."

Tina laughed behind her helmet. "Oh baby you are so wonderfully devious." She said.

"I think at least ten hours in bed with both of us for starters would be fair." Endith said with a smile.

"An even dozen," Tina spoke. "He's getting up there in years you know. We don't want to wear him out too much."

Endith joined her laughter until the soft chirping caught their attention. Tina leaned over her console, "Ground contact, twenty miles and closing." She said.

Endith looked at the screen between their seats. "Up here?" She asked. "Neither the Alliance or Eden has units this far north large enough to trigger our ground sensors."

"I'm increasing forward sensor power." Tina said. "Localizing... zooming in." Her eyes went wide, "Holy shit, call Marty quick!"

Endith triggered her helmet mic which was plugged into the intercom. "Milord... please come forward quickly!"

"Jesus Christ this column is huge!" Tina exclaimed. "I'm picking up tanks, APCs and a shit pot full of hoppers."

"Is it Alliance?" Endith asked, her voice echoing her concern.

Martin appeared then and came up behind them. "What's wrong?" He asked.

"Ground sensors detected a large force moving west." Endith spoke. "Tina?"

Martin moved closer to the area between their seats. "What do you have Tina?"

"Shit Skipper... I ain't seen a force this large since the invasion of Iran." Tina replied. "I'm picking up at least three hundred tanks and APCs! An equal number of trucks and what looks like artillery and mobile launchers."

"Are they Yuri's people?" Martin asked.

Tina shook her head. "I can't make out insignia of any kind." Tina answered leaning closer to the small screen between her legs. "There's a fucking ton of troops in those trucks though. I got radar vehicles and what

appear to be gun hoppers, Jesus they got it all! Hold on!” Tina adjusted her small screen and zoomed in to the strongest magnification that she could. The screen centered on the launcher vehicle in the column and her eyes flew open when it turned toward her. Another alarm began blaring madly in the cockpit. “Fuck me! They got us painted! Active radar! Vampire! Vampire! Break right baby! Break right!”

Endith did not question her and the SPAT heeled violently over to the right in a gut wrenching turn just as the launcher vehicle unleashed two missiles. “Shit we have inbound! We have inbound missiles!” Endith yelled.

Martin gripped the hand holds over his head tightly as Endith slew them into another radical turn.

“They’re tracking us!” Tina yelled out, “Launching decoys!” Her finger stabbed down on a panel just as Martin found his way to the empty engineer’s seat and strapped himself in. “Decoys are away!”

“I’m going vertical! We need altitude!” Endith snapped shoving the engines throttles to max and commanding *Spartan 01* to climb. And climb it did, almost straight up.

“It’s tracking!” Tina yelled, “Still on us! There! One missile took the bait, one more still inbound!”

Tina watched the small explosion on her screen, calmly reaching for the console next to her. She had been under fire before, and the worst thing she could do was worry. She had to do her job, and let Endith worry about flying. “It’s coming up on our five o’clock, two miles!”

“Pop three flares!” Endith called out.

“Only three flares?” Tina asked.

“Just three Tina, at two second intervals,” Endith ordered, her hands moving over the controls.

Tina tapped the panel twice. “Flare away!” She paused two seconds. “Flare away!” Another two seconds. “Flare away!”

“Hold on!” Endith snapped, tapping her own controls now.

Spartan 01 seemed to slew over on its side, and suddenly Martin was looking out the small window to his right and staring at the ground. “You have got to be fucking kidding me!” He muttered looking at the tree tops in the window. “I’m going to be sick!”

“*DO NOT* vomits in my cockpit!” Endith screamed as *Spartan 01* twisted into another stomach dropping turn in the opposite direction.

Tina looked at her wide eyed. “Baby... you just turn us back into the missile!”

“Yep!” Endith said.

“Shit! Nine hundred meters! Endith...”

“Watch this!” Endith said standing *Spartan 01* on its tail and rocketing straight up once more.

The Alliance missile lost track of the heat source of the SPAT’s engines and corrected its computer guidance to target the next brightest heat source. It slammed into the second flare Tina had dropped and exploded, its five hundred pound warhead showering the area around the flare with deadly shrapnel, but hitting nothing as *Spartan 01* was now three miles above the missile.

Tina screamed in joy and turned to look at her lover. “Now that was pretty!” She said.

Endith waggled her eyebrows at her and turned to look at Martin, “Sire?”

“Man I really hate flying.” Martin said his face two shades lighter and he was holding his stomach with one hand. “You enjoy doing this to me don’t you?”

Endith and Tina laughed. “It’s the only time we get to abuse the King and get away with it.” Tina chuckled.

“Very funny,” Martin said unbuckling his straps. “I think we can rule out that they were friendly.” He spoke as he moved forward.

Endith returned them to their base course and rubbed the outer shell of *Spartan 01*. “Thank you sweetie,” She whispered. The SPAT seemed to be alive as the pitch of its engines purred in reply.

Tina had turned back to her screens. “Well whoever they are, we are either out of their range or they think they scared us off, which is stupid because they don’t know who is on this ship.”

“Division sized unit?” Martin asked her.

Tina nodded quickly, “At least.” She answered, “If not more.”

“What’s their direction?”

“West,” Tina answered. “If they stay on that stretch of interstate it will take them to...” Tina looked at him. “It will take them to Kelwood.”

“Fuck!” Martin snapped. “Yuri is beginning her attack early! Endith!”

Endith was already advancing *Spartan 01*'s engine power increasing their speed. “We’re there boss!” She said.

Spartan 01 once more leaped effortlessly forward accelerating without hesitation.

EDEN

“No!” Anja exclaimed in an even voice looking at the three human and two elf medics. “Make sure the outer clinics are fully stocked first. They will get the wounded straight from the airfield. Only the most serious will be brought to the main hospitals! We can’t mass treat everyone here so we need the clinics to take the lightly wounded and then move them to the temporary field units for follow up treatment.”

The medics nodded and moved off quickly, as Anja turned to the senior doctor in this hospital. He was an elf, and had been practicing medicine for well over a hundred years.

“I have designated the first three floors for critically wounded Milady.” He told her handing over the data pad. “The fourth and fifth floor will be used for serious injuries, and I have established two portable surgical units per floor.”

Anja nodded. “Make sure every floor has plenty of whole blood, and all of them have at least fifty units of the cloned blood strictly for any Eden’s Drow that come in. That is all it will be used for.” Anja said. “They may not like to drink blood but damn it, it will save their lives if it comes to that.”

“I’ll see to it.” The elf spoke. “Where will you be setting up Milady? We will need to establish a direct com link with you.”

“Martin says they can only come from two directions, North or south.” Anja replied. “I’m going to set up at the northern clinic by the airfield. I want you running the southern clinic.”

“Me?” The elf spoke surprised.

Anja smiled. “You are even more skilled than me.” Anja admitted. “The southern clinic puts you closer to both main hospitals in case they need a critical care surgeon. You are a far better surgeon than I am.”

“My Queen the airfield will undoubtedly come under heavy fire.” The elf spoke.

Anja nodded. “Probably... but that is where our people will be flown into, and I need to be there.”

The elf nodded. “I will make everything ready.” He said.

Anja turned to the two Spartan Royal Guards that had become her constant shadow since they had arrived eight hours before. “Let’s get over to the airfield.” She told them.

“This way Milady,” One Spartan spoke motioning with his hand.

“I have twelve heavy gun nests scattered along this entire ridge, and they are supported by an entire battery of our mobile launchers. If anything gets this far, we can turn this entire ridge into a maelstrom of death.” Tareif stood next to Dysea in the large hanger as they went over the defense of the airfield. William Wallace and Lynwe stood on the other side of the table facing them. The Raptors and four SPAT Attack ships had been taking off and landing every few minutes to keep whoever was watching the airfield in a constant state of confusion.

Dysea nodded. “We must assume they will reach this far.” She spoke, tracing the mountain ridge on the map. “*Nauta Melme* tells us they have one division moving for the Drow city as we speak. We have to assume that will hit us with at least two divisions, possibly even more. “Arm every other gun nest with a portable mortar crew, the old 82mm ones that my people had in our stores should work nicely. They will have to come down this interstate, passage through the mountains will be too perilous, and they won’t be able to get their armor and vehicles through the deep timber.”

Tareif nodded slowly looking at the map. “The King picked a fine location to build Eden.” He said, “Only two ways in and out, mountains all around.”

“Our defensive line must encompass the reservoir.” Wallace said looking at the map. “It is our only means of fresh water. Once Alliance forces are detected by our scouts switch all the controls from the pumping station to the secondary command hub at the center of Eden.”

Tareif nodded. “We should activate the minefields now and have a team monitor the field. They can activate and deactivate the field after receiving confirmation of identity.” He spoke. “It will be another six hours before every one from Salina is moved into Eden.”

Dysea looked at him, “Mountain City?”

Tareif looked at her. “My people are anchoring down and preparing for an attack, but I don’t believe they will attack any elf city until they deal with Eden. They know the King would support any elf city that came under attack, and even the Alliance does not have the manpower to conduct multiply attacks. One, perhaps two... but that is all. I believe they will throw everything they have at us here, hoping to defeat us and then they can destroy our cities at their leisure.”

Dysea nodded. “I concur. The minefield is set up along Highway 5300 North correct?”

Tareif nodded, “Half a kilometer deep and two kilometers wide. It stretches across the entire valley.”

“Enlarge it to a full kilometer deep.” Dysea ordered. “And do it before the end of this day. Use every engineer we have to do this. Tomorrow have them do the same thing with the field that covers the intersection of Old 89 and Route 62. They will hit us from both routes, I’m sure of it. I want three batteries of the rocket launchers covering Route 62. Place ambush sites throughout this entire mountain pass. If they come down Route 62 I want them to pay a price for every foot they come. Use anything we have that is portable, mortars, anti-tank rockets, heavy machine guns and mines. We must make them pay for everything in blood Tareif, but make it clear to our people that they are not to sacrifice themselves. When they are no longer able to inflict damage they are to retreat at their best possible speed, even if it means leaving weapons.”

“They can hit us from the other side of the mountains in the south.” Lynwe spoke her amber eyes bright and alert. “They have artillery that can reach that far, just as we do.” She said. “And the Alliance has never had any misgivings about shelling civilian targets if it meets their goals.”

“We have the shield, and that will absorb much of the damage as long as we don’t lose any of the power stations. We must make sure all of them are heavily guarded.” Dysea said. “And we must also be aware from now on of any new faces within the city.”

“My Queen we have a population within Eden itself of over a million.” Lynwe said. “How do we do that?”

“And most of Eden’s citizens have had months to know their neighbors and friends.” Dysea spoke. “We will undoubtedly receive calls that are nothing but false alarms, but we must treat them all as threats until we are sure. If we lose even one of the power stations, we lose the shield, and then it will become a free for all. Tareif... inform the internal security teams they will respond to any calls of even dubious nature. Many may turn out to be nothing, but it only takes one bomb to destroy one of the power stations.”

Tareif nodded after a moment. “I’ll make certain of it.”

“Ben is leaving twelve Raptors here in Eden and Kenny is flying the lead craft.” Wallace spoke.

Dysea looked at him. “Your plan is set?” She asked.

Wallace nodded. “We’re only taking a small strike team.” He replied. “The King and I felt it would be best to keep it small; myself, Anari, Radama and seven others who fought with us. Anari and the elves have near photographic memories, so getting around is not going to be a problem; one of our SPAT Attack ships will insert us via hard drop half a kilometer from the station. We’ll enter through the ventilation conduits, and then move to the secondary control hub.”

“Is the mission essential Admiral Wallace?” Dysea asked. “Is there no other way?”

Wallace shook his head. “The King wants to save EDEN. The automatic laser defensive turrets won’t be able to hurt the larger ships, but they could play havoc for the fighters. If we can secure the secondary control station controls, then we can transfer all EDEN control to that point. There won’t be a god damn thing Marcus can do about it. The King is certain once our people arrive in the system he will be able to contact them, and let them know what we intend to do. Even a minor distraction is all we will need to seize control of the secondary hub. If things work out, and our people are as advanced as we think, EDEN could well be used as a forward base for any number of things and only minor modifications will be needed.”

Dysea smiled. “He did say you loved that station.” She said.

“I came to think of it as a second home outside of Sparta.” Wallace replied.

“When do you leave?” Dysea asked.

“Tomorrow evening.”

“Very well,” She said. “What else?”

“I recommend we set up long range scouts all along where Route 62 cuts north.” Lynwe spoke again. “It runs along the Piute Mountain range and they can see for many kilometers.”

“Make it so, but the same orders apply to them.” Dysea said. “We do not need to expend lives needlessly. We can’t afford too Tareif.”

“I will make that very clear my Queen.” Tareif spoke.

“Once *Nauta Melme* returns with the Drow, he will assume command of the southern defensive line. It is the largest. You will stay here and command the northern defensive line. You must hold before they reach the reservoir. You will have the majority of the artillery tasked to you as well as the bulk of Eden’s troops.”

Tareif looked at her. “The King intends to hold the southern perimeter while I have the bulk of our forces oriented north? How will he do that?”

Dysea smiled. “As we speak... there are twenty thousand Spartans crossing the ocean at low altitude aboard every transport aircraft we could scrap together and rebuild. They will arrive by tomorrow evening and they will occupy the southern zone.”

Tareif looked at her as if she was mad. “Where... where did you get the men and women to do that?”

“The Alliance engineers on the oil platform that we destroyed.” She replied with a smile. “*Nauta Melme* made them an offer many could not refuse.”

“And that was?”

Dysea chuckled. “Change and work for freedom of all people, or he would drop them all into the ocean to drown or be eaten by sharks.”

Tareif couldn’t help the hearty laugh that escaped his lips. “And how many accepted this generous offer?”

“All but a hundred and six,” Dysea replied. “They were last seen two hundred and fifty miles offshore paddling for their lives if I’m not mistaken.”

Tareif nodded his head at the manner of their death. It was fitting for what they had supported over the years. He looked at the map once more, his dark eyes scouring it completely. “He will still be heavily outnumbered my Queen, even with your Spartans.”

“You will be to the north with six divisions. Lynwe will take the east with two divisions. She will command Dienes’s specially trained scouts as their skills better suit Lynwe as Drow. Any Drow warriors that arrive will be assigned to her and if needed they can reinforce *Nauta Melme*. Lynwe... your forces will have the most difficult task. Not only do we all agree the Alliance will come from the east, but they will undoubtedly send even their specially trained Grizz beasts and the gods only know what else across the mountains, directly at you.”

Lynwe nodded. “We have been digging positions and tunnels for months my Queen.” She answered. “Let them come. They will find we will not be so easy to uproot.”

“Leland will have your two Dragoon divisions Tareif and the forces from the elf clans that have reached us already. Vengal’s division will directly support *Nauta Melme* and the Spartans once he returns.”

“That is enough?” Tareif asked.

Dysea smiled. “All twenty thousand of these Spartans are what the vampires... any vampires... they are what vampires fear above all else. And it will give them pause.”

“What is that my Queen?”

Dysea met his eyes and smiled a very cruel smile, “Pureblooded Ngauro. Each of them is the descendant of one of the original 300 that was lost with *Nauta Melme*’s father. They are the strongest of all Spartans.”

Tareif nodded his approval. “Will the King’s people... will our people... the elves... will they come to our aide in time my Queen?”

Dysea met his gaze. “That is our hope.” She said. “I want you to pass the word among our forces here Tareif. When they aren’t working at their duties, they are to be home with their mates, husbands, wives and girlfriends and any children they may have. There will be no more alcohol taken after today, those are the king’s orders. If we win, we will all get stinking drunk and dance into the night Tareif.”

“I take it those are the King’s words.” Lynwe asked with a smile.

Dysea chuckled. “They are certainly not mine.” She said.

“What is the word from the King?” Tareif asked now.

Dysea took a deep breath. “They have a division of troops bearing down on them even now, but he will begin evacuating the Drow as soon as he lands.”

CANADA

DROW CITY OF KELWOOD

The Drow house leaders had sat listening to Aihola and Tarifa tell them of Eden. They asked pointed questions, and they received pointed answers, and as time passed the Drow leaders became more and more impressed. Aihola told them how she and Tarifa had met, how their relationship had developed, and all of them noticed Tarifa was not in any way the least bit embarrassed. She sat proudly next to Aihola, some of the time holding her hand, other times looking at her with love in her eyes. This fact made many of the House leaders look at each other as the minutes ticked by, and they were slowly coming to the realization that the Drow were not feared and hated by as many as they first thought. Almost all the Drow that had come to Eden with the Queen’s brother Tari were now in relationships, some of them with humans, some with other elves, male and female alike. And in almost all those relationships, the Drow were dominant, but in a way that was respectful and caring toward the man or woman in the relationship with them. Aihola told them those relationships were some of the most solid and unbreakable bonds in Eden.

The Spartan male sat slightly behind them, his dark blue eyes always attentive to them as they spoke, and it was obvious to all of them that his feelings were powerful for both Aihola and Tarifa. Aricia answered all the questions directed at her with confidence and honesty, leaving nothing out. The House leaders realized that they posed no threat to these Spartans, and Aricia knew this and determined she could share with them all that she knew. Aihola was speaking to them about the bonds they had formed with other elf clans across the world when they all heard Aricia gasp. They watched as she came to her feet a strange look on her face. A look of pure joy mixed with worry.

“Aricia what is it?” Tarifa asked first as she stood up. “What’s wrong?”

Aricia met her eyes and smiled as she felt Martin’s aura swarm around her, enveloping her within its embrace, and she reveled in the sensations it caused. “Martin is arriving.” She said finally looking at Tarifa. “He wants us to meet him on the edge of the city.”

Aihola stood up now as well. “He’s early.” She spoke. “What is wrong?”

Aricia reached out to him and all he told her was that it was important. “He won’t say; he just wants us to meet him immediately.”

Aihola turned to Hwia. “Elder Hwia... now would be as good a time as any to have the House leaders meet the High King.”

Hwia nodded. “We would be honored my Queen.” She replied, having made the decision an hour ago that the future of the Drow, of her people lay in the hands of their Queen.

Aihola looked around. “Patron Ael’main is not present.” She said. “Nor those that support him.”

“I fear he and Aelulip are reacting as you predicted they would my Queen.” Hwia spoke. “They do not want to give up the status their positions have granted them.”

Aihola snorted. “Then they can rot for all I care!” She snapped. “The well being and future of our people is paramount to their petty needs and desires. Come my new friends... let us go and meet the Elf High King and the King of Sparta and the Lycavorian people.”

Aihola let the Drow patrol lead them all onto the surface, making their way to where Tarifa had met with Aelulip upon the cracked and worn interstate. They could see Atropos shouting orders to the Spartans while he stood next to Vengal. All of them could see the elf and human troops moving around, even within the timber,

and they knew something was up then. Aihola watched as Vengal and Atropos moved over to where they had stopped.

“Vengal... what is going on?” Aihola asked.

Vengal shook his head. “We don’t know. Atropos here got a message from the King to stand everyone too, and be prepared to move out.”

Aihola looked at Tarifa. “My love has anything happened that you don’t know about?” She asked.

Tarifa shook her head, “Nothing that I am aware of.”

Aricia nodded in agreement, “Nor I.” She said.

“Martin does not panic *Nya Istel*, you know this. If he wanted everyone to stand too there must be a reason.” Tarifa spoke.

“I know, but something tells me that this...”

Her words were drowned out as *Spartan 01* came roaring in over the tops of the buildings and began to lower quickly to the ground, making all conversation impossible. Endith lowered *Spartan 01* gently to the ground a hundred meters away on the open highway, the rear ramp already open and fully down. The moment *Spartan 01*’s landing struts touched the hard packed pavement Martin stepped off the ramp, Andreus at his side. They watched as another four Spartans followed and then the whole of the ship began to empty.

The Drow House leaders stood in awe as the nearly three hundred Spartans filed off the amazing flying ship in front of them, the tall and very heavily muscled man moving towards them. The multicolored crest on his helmet shimmered in the daytime sunlight, the crimson cape sweeping behind him in the breeze. They watched him stop in front of their group and remove the helmet to reveal a ruggedly handsome face with long, shoulder length black hair and immaculately trimmed goatee. He handed the helmet to the young Spartan next to him, his dark eyes never leaving the face of his young Spartan Queen.

Aricia’s heart was beating madly, her blood rushing through her veins, her whole body calling out to Martin. Her aura was mixed with his in a way only he could do to her and she reached up to remove her own helmet with quivering hands. It had been nearly three weeks since he had last held her in his arms, and Aricia ached to feel him against her. Martin did not disappoint and ignored everyone watching as he stepped up to Aricia and pulled her into his arms, lifting her from the ground. Aricia cried out in joy without shame as she took his tanned face into her hands and lowered her lips to his. She felt her blood burn as his tongue teased its way between her lips and she did battle with his talented and warm appendage, loving the sensations his tongue caused to shoot through her.

Aricia felt something new within him, something about the way his aura embraced her. It swirled around her in a different manner, as if reaching into her very soul, and as they kissed deeper than they had ever kissed, she felt his aura surround her like a shield of impenetrable love. It was the most passionate and loving kiss she had shared with Martin and it curled her toes inside her combat boots, making her wolf senses giddy with happiness and undeniable passion

Martin finally released her and slowly set her back on the ground, his hands coming up to take her face within his grasp as he gazed at her beautiful face with his dark eyes. His thumbs traced her cheeks and lips and she caressed his temples as she knew he liked. She met his dark eyes and smiled. “What is it my love?” She asked softly.

“Ask me some time.” He answered. “I have missed you so much Aricia.” He told her softly.

The way he said it, the warmth and depth in his words nearly made Aricia burst out in tears. And he had not used his nickname for her, which told her the words came from deep within his heart and that meant more to her than he would ever know.

Aricia leaned up on her tip toes and kissed him hungrily, “I have longed for your touch my love.” She spoke.

Martin buried his face in her hair and breathed deeply of her sweet coco scent, filling his lungs three times before he drew back and kissed her once more, tenderly and with delicate passion. Aricia pressed her body against him tightly, enjoying the warm kiss, and Martin could certainly kiss, so well in fact that the touch of his lips usually was enough to ignite several fires within her as they were doing right now.

“Sire?” Aihola asked softly.

Aricia detected the disappointment in Martin’s eyes and her hormones screamed in protest as he pulled slowly away from her, but he kept her hand tightly within his. He turned to look at Aihola and he smiled.

“I apologize... it’s been a couple of weeks since I have seen Aricia, and I have missed her.” Martin said.

Aihola glanced at Tarifa and she saw her lover blush at this. They had been apart only a few days and were nearly bursting at the seams to tear each others clothes off and pleasure each other. And they both felt the same burning need coming from Dekton, though he controlled it far better. To have been away from each other for as long as Martin and Aricia had been would have driven them mad long ago.

“Yes sire... I do know what you mean.” She said.

Martin looked at her his face taking on a scowl. “God damn it Aihola!” He barked, causing her to look at him in surprise. “What have I told you about that sire crap?”

The Drow House leaders were stunned at his words to their Queen and they watched equally stunned as the Elf High King pulled Aihola into his embrace and hugged her tightly. Tarifa laughed when he set her down and she stepped into Martin’s arms for a similar hug before he stepped up to Dekton and put his hand on Dekton’s shoulder. Dekton did the same and Martin nodded to him.

“You have done well my friend.” He spoke.

“I followed your orders to me Milord.” Dekton replied.

Martin shook his head. “No... you followed your heart.” He told him. “That makes it all the better. Are you happy?”

Dekton looked at Aihola and Tarifa standing next to each other before turning back to his King and nodding. “Happier than I have been in many years Milord.”

Martin nodded.” Good.”

Aihola was about to introduce him to the House leaders but saw him step over in front of Daniel. The ebony skinned giant was even taller than Martin’s six foot two frame, and they stood face to face staring at one another. The area around them grew quiet, Martin and Danny gazing at one another. They had been together since the very beginning, forming a bond of brotherhood and friendship that nothing would ever come between. No words were spoken as the two men embraced tightly, and one could only shake their head at the size and amount of muscle between these two men.

Martin looked at Dan with a large grin. “Staying out of trouble I see.” He said softly.

Danny chuckled. “I always stay out of trouble Skipper. I hate violence, you know that.”

Martin laughed and looked at Anuk, stepping forward to pull her into a half embrace and kiss her forehead. “Are you keeping this guy out of trouble Anuk?”

Anuk hugged Martin warmly. This was the man who Daniel considered his brother, the man who had risked everything to save both of them, with no regard for his own well being. “I do try... but he is sometimes very obstinate.” Anuk spoke with a grin.

“Don’t I know that is the truth.” Martin said.

“Martin... this is Nayeca.” Anuk spoke motioning to her. “She is...”

Martin squeezed Anuk in reply, smelling Nayeca on her body and figuring out at least part of what had happen, “Nice to meet you Nayeca.” Martin spoke, so that Anuk would not have to speak in front of everyone just yet. “Welcome to my family.”

As Nayeca pondered this comment, her eyes wide, Aihola came up next to him. “Martin... this is Elder Hwia of the Drow, and these are the leaders of the remaining Drow Houses.” Aihola spoke motioning to them with her hand.

Martin turned and looked at the men and women. “I am honored to meet you.” He spoke slowly. “And it makes me very happy to see that so many of Little Drow’s people have survived. I know what has transpired since she first arrived and I hope we have moved past that point.”

Hwia nodded, moving a little in front of the House leaders. “Sire... our... our Queen has made us see what we have been missing. The future Eden could mean to all of us.”

“You will keep many of your customs my friends, for I do not want to change who your people are at their core.” Martin said quickly. “That would be wrong on my part. Tarifa tells me there are quite a few parts of Eden that have become home to different clans of elves and even humans. This is something you can do as well with your people, allowing you to keep your culture and traditions close to your hearts. There are however, differences in your customs that the majority of other elves and humans would not accept and nor would I. We must move beyond what customs and traditions brought us to this point and make our own now. I want the Drow to be a part of that. Your people have a warrior background second only to my people, and while I respect

your desire to show you are dominant in all that you do, you have probably seen that you can still be dominant in a fashion that does not injure or demean.

“Many of those Drow that live in Eden now have reached for and elevated themselves to that point, and while they are still dominant, they revel in the new freedoms they have, and the respect that freedom brings.” Martin looked at them. “It will take time; nothing changes overnight I know this, but all I ask is that you be open to new things and not shun them as you have in the past.”

Thonsya nodded. “If even half of what Queen Aihola has shown us is true, my House is ready to move on sire.”

Martin saw the nods of all of them and smiled. “Then what has happened up until this point will be forgotten.” He said. “The time has come for the Drow to fight and run at the same time.”

Aihola’s and Tarifa’s eyes turned to him, as well as Aricia and all those gathered. “Martin... something has happened.” Aihola spoke. “What is it?”

Martin looked at her. “Yuri has decided to launch her attack against us, and she is starting with those of us here. There is a complete division of her new vampire clones heading here as we speak. Nearly forty thousand soldiers with tanks and artillery. It’s time we got your people out of here and to the evacuation point. This division has only one purpose, and that purpose is to annihilate anything they come in contact with. They already fired on my ship as we flew over them. We need to start moving the Drow out of here, and do it within the next six hours.”

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA ISLAND

Though it was once part of the North American continent, the state of California now resided two miles off the western coast, the result of two major earthquake vaults superheated to the extreme by the passing of the comet and causing an earthquake uncharted in scope since the dawn of the planet. It had taken three years for the aftershocks to fully stop and then the state of California had become a single water locked state.

The Alliance had quickly assumed control of the island, and it was here that they built their spaceport. Tucked into the crook of two joined valleys the spaceport was massive in size, equal in everyway to the spaceports Yuri recalled from her homeworld. It was heavily fortified and guarded by loyal vampire soldiers. This was the true seat of power for the Alliance, and it was here that Yuri felt safest. Nothing short of a direct and intense planetary bombardment could penetrate the hardened bunkers and chambers underneath the spaceport. It was here that hundreds of Vampire High Coven ships had come to transport slaves and take on supplies, Yuri attempting to build the port into one of the finest in the Coven Empire. And it was now here that she had come with Robert and select dozen or so pureblood aides to control and monitor the war that was coming.

Yuri sat quietly in their bed, the sheet barely covering her naked body. She had been ecstatic when her father reacted favorably to Robert being in her life, against everything she had thought. After that transmission she had been so happy, she pulled him into their quarters for a four hour long session of hot and heavy sex. Now she sipped the glass of fresh blood and watched him as he sat in front of the monitor speaking with the division commander in Canada.

“Got off two missiles at it, but they were able to evade them.” The Division commander reported. “It was definitely a Spartan ship. It had that inverted ‘V’ emblazoned on the side. It escaped off to the west, which really only confirms the reports that there is a city somewhere up here.”

“What is your destination?” Moran asked.

“We’re headed northwest right now,” The man answered. “I have us broken down into three brigades and we’re spread out from Sidney to the edge of Lake Manitoba. That is the direction the Spartan aircraft went, and since we know they don’t have anything up here, it stands to reason they were heading towards this Drow city.”

Moran nodded. “I concur.” He spoke. “If it is Drow then it will appear to be nothing more than a deserted city on the surface. Use caution whenever you approach a city of any size. They’ll come out of the fucking sewers at you if they can.”

“We’ll stay alert Colonel.” The man replied. “When can we expect to receive our air support?”

“Our transports are no match for Eden’s Raptor’s or that Spartan ship.” Moran spoke, “And only three of the Raptors with the advanced avionics packages are available for you right now. The rest are not back from the moon and won’t be until the end of the week. Make sure you need them before you call for them Major.”

“I understand sir.”

“Contact me the moment you have confirmed a location for the Drow.” Moran spoke.

“Yes sir.”

Moran ended the transmission and turned in the chair to look at Yuri. Her black hair was wildly strewn about her face and she made no attempt to hold up the sheet where it dipped down over her chest exposing one full breast.

“It’s all coming to a head.” He spoke softly. “Within a week this planet will be engaged in a full scale war, and the main event is going to be right here in North America.”

“Are you concerned Robert?” Yuri asked him in a serious voice. Their passions had by now cooled enough that he moved back to sit on the bed. Yuri leaned over and draped her upper body across his naked thigh.

Moran looked at her. “We’ve got growing reports of elves becoming bolder all across the planet.” He said. “We’ve lost contact with two dozen of our smaller outposts across Europe and Asia. Our power base is here in North America. We don’t have the resources to investigate every failed communication with outlying outposts, but I could guess that the majority of them no longer exist.”

“And you think they have somehow contacted hundreds of other elf clans?” Yuri asked.

“Contacted them no,” Moran answered. “I think that word has spread with what they have done with Eden, and that it’s well known that Leonidas is the Elf High King, I think the other elf clans have decided it’s time to rebel. Any way they can.”

Yuri met his eyes. “What are you thinking Robert?”

“I’m thinking the lid is going to blow off this planet if we don’t kill Leonidas.” Moran spoke. “And people have been trying to kill that fucking SOB for years. He had a price on his head from just about every terrorist organization and petty dictator government in the world, and they couldn’t do it; then a comet passes between the earth and moon and he survives that, only to come back to earth and discover who he really is. He’s like a bad dream... he keeps coming back for more.”

“You don’t think Xerxes’s added troops will help?” Yuri asked.

“What could he cram on his ships honestly Yuri, fifty thousand troops; a hundred thousand?” Moran spoke. “In the larger scheme of things... no I don’t think it’s going to matter in the least. You saw the way he reacted when Leonidas taunted him. He about went through the ceiling. He had veins popping out of his head for fuck’s sake.”

“And you think he will do what?”

“I don’t think he gives a damn about earth, you, the elves, or the bigger picture. He’s coming here with only one thing on his mind. Kill Leonidas. And he will use his forces for just that purpose.” Moran spoke.

“Your father was right Yuri. We need to be ready to evacuate.”

“Are you giving up already?” She asked surprised.

Moran looked at her. “Giving up? Hell no... we can beat him... but we are going to have to do it quickly, before elves across the planet start rebelling in force. If that happens we’ll be well and truly fucked.”

“What are you suggesting?”

“Start moving our forces now, and the moment that idiot Marcus gets EDEN’s weapons platform on line we hit Eden with everything we have.” Moran spoke. “Artillery, air strikes, the works. And we keep hitting them until we bring the fucking place down. We put hits out on him and everyone close to him, especially the whores he sleeps with. Offer whatever we need to offer.”

Yuri looked at him. “He has held off launching his missiles because nothing we have done has been linked directly back to us.” Yuri said. “Such a blatant disregard for the agreement we made could very well cause him to fire those missiles.”

Moran looked at her. “I don’t believe he has them.” He spoke. “I knew him before the comet Yuri, before you came into the picture. He was a bleeding heart even back then, always trying to do the right thing, always trying to save the downtrodden masses. If it hadn’t been for Wallace he would have been busted half a

dozen times for disobeying orders. He is not going to kill thousands upon thousands of humans just to kill a few hundred vampires. Even he isn't that callous."

"How many agents do we have left in Eden?" Yuri asked.

"Five." Moran replied immediately. "They are bunkered deep and contact me once a day. They are the last of my genome team that I turned. The reports I got today from them indicate that Eden is mobilizing and preparing for an extended assault. They aren't in a position to gather any hard intelligence, but they can cause a whole lot of problems, and possibly get close to two of Leonidas's women and the half elf bitch Selene. Anja and the elf whore Dysea are in Eden. For the moment it appears Selene has been giving the instructions on their news channel."

"It surprises me that he allows a full blooded vampire to live and hold such a position of power within Eden." Yuri spoke. She looked at him. "Is there anyway they can get close to her?"

Moran shook his head. "She's never without at least half a dozen security personnel, and two of them are Spartans. If all our indications are correct, then the Drow Lynwe is her lover, and also a full vampire. Both of them, not to mention the Spartans would detect my people almost immediately because of their vampire genes."

Yuri nodded. "That would fit with them attempting to neutralize Graham's control. Once Selene changed completely, and if she and this Drow are lovers and she has changed her?"

Moran nodded. "We do know that this Lynwe is a General, and will undoubtedly be part of any defensive operation." He said. "The Drow Queen Aihola and Tarifa have been missing for a few days, their Spartan bodyguard as well, but you knew that. Their absence only lends more credence to that rumors they found a Drow city somewhere in Canada."

Yuri nodded. "Yes it does." She said thoughtfully. "You would sacrifice your men to kill them?"

"They're soldiers... and they'll do what I order." Moran spoke. "And I wouldn't be sacrificing them in vain. It will hurt Leonidas, and possibly give us the edge we need. And it helps to protect you. If I order them to target those three and they succeed, it could very well give us the edge we need. The loss of either of his women will throw him into a fit and make hi stupid."

"It just doesn't seem wise." Yuri spoke, "Provoking him in such a blatant manner."

Moran chuckled. "I didn't say it was smart." He answered. "But the potential benefits outweigh the risks in my opinion. My people are well trained, and I'd rather send them up against the females he's turned as opposed to the Lycavorian female. My guess is she's up north with him. I've been reviewing the scrolls and books you gave me after you told me the truth about everything, and she's a pureblood just like him. They wouldn't get within a few hundred yards of her, but the other two... it's risky but worth it."

"And you don't think he has these nuclear weapons to use against us if they fail?" Yuri asked.

"It's just a gut feeling." Moran replied, "But if he was so inclined to use them, why hasn't he already. He knew where we were when he used the suitcase nuke on the oil platform and the school. Why not just take you out then?" He said. "I think it's because he doesn't have them."

"That is a very large risk Robert." Yuri said.

Moran nodded. "It sure is. But it's one I'm willing to take... mainly because we are here now. The decision is yours ultimately, but I think it's a good risk to take."

Yuri was silent for a long moment, mulling over what he said in her mind, "And the humans?" She finally asked.

"Fuck them; they're food Yuri, nothing more." He replied quickly.

Yuri laughed at his comment and tossed her hair to the side looking at him seductively. "Sometimes you are even crueller than I am husband." She said. "I find that very arousing."

"As well you should." He answered with a grin.

Yuri nodded. "Very well... we'll take the chance." She said. "Give the orders to your agents. I will contact our people in the major cities and tell them begin their evacuation to our location here."

"Tell them to be very discrete Yuri. We don't want to tip off Leonidas." Moran spoke.

"I will don't worry. You believe he is in Canada don't you?" Yuri asked.

Moran nodded immediately. "Getting the Drow on his side would be a major coup if they are of any real size." He said. "Of course... if all goes well that won't really matter because two of his women will be dead, and hopefully we'll be in the process of bringing Eden down."

CANADA

“You have anything yet lover?” Endith asked. Her eyes skimmed the controls for the hundredth time in the last ten minutes, even though the computer held them in position with unerring precision.

Spartan 01 hovered just above the tops of the two hundred foot high pine trees, its maneuvering thrusters keeping the ship completely still. They had been skimming the tree tops for thirty minutes as they closed in on their target, moving no faster than a hundred knots. They were far too low to be picked out of ground clutter by even the most sophisticated radar set that the vampire division might have.

“I have the bridge.” Tina replied her face nearly buried in the screen to her front between her legs. “At the speed they were traveling, they should have been here by now.”

“Maybe they are being more cautious now that they saw us.” Endith replied.

“It’s possible, but have you ever seen a cautious vampire in your life?” Tina said, “At least since we realized they actually exist.”

“Well you got me there.” She replied.

“Hold on!” Tina said quickly, her hands adjusting her scope. “I got something... looks like some sort of APC moving down the road. Speed is thirty KPH.”

“They did slow down.” Endith spoke to no one in particular.

“More vehicles coming into view.” Tina said. “Wait a minute...”

“What?”

“Same type of vehicles, same uniforms...” Tina lifted her head and looked at Endith. “No where near as large as when we first saw them.”

“Shit that means they split up.” Endith snapped.

“It’s definitely a main force. I’m picking up at least a hundred tanks and APCs.” Tina said. “Looks like about twenty-five to thirty hoppers all loaded with troops. Yeah... they definitely split up. If I had to guess I’d say only a third of what we saw is here. They are half a mile west of Macdonald moving North West.”

“Range to target?” Endith asked.

“Thirty Kilometers straight line azimuth,” Tina answered. “Track is clear if we shoot from here, twenty-eight seconds to impact, nominal bearing.”

“Fuck it!” Endith snapped. “Prime two Penetrators. We’ll launch from here and then see if we can’t find the others.”

Tina’s hands and fingers glided over the weapons panel to her left with practiced ease, touching buttons and panels. “Penetrators primed.” She spoke. “Extending missile pods.”

The middle section of *Spartan 01* extended outward three feet on either side of the ship, exposing the launch tubes for its weapon load. The tips of a dozen missiles per side could be seen easily.

“Pods are locked!” Endith spoke.

Tina looked at her quickly. “Hey... you think these Spartans missiles will work?” She asked. “We’ve never fired them before, and until we discovered them, they have been sitting dormant in their launchers for god knows how long.”

Endith glanced at her. “This is a fine time to bring that up!” She snapped.

“I’m just saying that...”

“Firing!” Endith exclaimed, touching the button on her panel without further delay.

Spartan 01 shuddered twice almost imperceptibly to anyone but her flight crew. They felt the shudder, saw the missiles ignite and leap from the two rails in fiery trails of smoke which dissipated instantly.

“Both missiles away clean,” Tina exclaimed. “You little bitch!” She added with a grin.

“You know what Ben says Tina. Never question something just before you pull the trigger.” Endith replied with a grin.

The target was a two lane bridge over the river the vampire column was heading directly for. Built nearly six hundred years ago, it was one of only half a dozen bridges in the area that had withstood the test of time and the comet. The thick bases on both sides of the quarter mile long bridge were reinforced with wire

mesh and steel, the center support nearly ten feet thick all by itself and built into the ground of the riverbed itself.

The missiles fired from *Spartan 01* were not normal missiles as Endith and Tine were used too. Unbeknownst to the two pilots, these missiles were an older version of a Lycavorian anti-ship missile designed to punch gaping holes in star ships with considerably better armor and shields.

Three Vampire APCs had raced to the other end of the bridge to secure it, and the lead elements of the column were just now reaching the bridge. Four tanks and three APCs started across along with six Hoppers fully loaded with troops. The tank commander in the lead tank saw something out of the corner of his eye and snapped his head around in time to see the large missile bearing down on the bridge abutment. He opened his mouth to scream out a warning, but the words never came out.

The first Penetrator missile struck five feet below the base of the roadway directly in the center of the east abutment. Instead of exploding on contact, the missile did what it was designed to do and it fired additional rocket engines burrowing an additional ten meters into the concrete structure before triggering its detonator. The equivalent to three thousand pounds of C-9 explosive exploded, rupturing concrete, steel and wire mesh in a deadly cloud of stone shards and steel darts. The sound was a low muffled noise of thunder and the eastern end of the bridge surged into the air almost thirty feet before exploding outward. Two tanks and an APC were crushed by the force of the explosion alone, as the other vehicles already on the bridge were launched into the air like toys.

The second Penetrator missile struck three tenths of a second later on the western abutment and the effects were just as ghastly. The Vampire APCs that waited on the far side of the bridge were tossed casually into the air, most of the vampires inside the vehicles and around the bridge base were killed instantly by the concussive force. Three seconds later, unable to support the weight of the entire bridge, the middle support columns buckled and collapsed into the river, sinking the thirty-four feet to the bottom.

Endith and Tina had watched this with wide eyes and then they looked to each other, “Holy shit!” Endith exclaimed.

Alarms began blaring and Tina looked to her screens. “Search radar!” She yelled out, “Twenty-eight miles!”

“Time to go!” Endith announced, her fingers stabbing at the panels. *Spartan 01* heeled over to the right and rocketed west over the tree tops.

Martin stood in the four story building above the Drow meeting chamber, his finger stuck in his ear as he listened to Endith’s report. He could see hundreds of Drow pouring from the buildings and sewer entrances like ants to honey. Many carried small packs and other items, and everywhere they turned were Spartan and Drow warriors standing shoulder to shoulder directing them to head for the timber.

Martin turned as Atropos walked up to him with Aricia and Aihola. He nodded as Endith finished speaking into his implant, “Understood.” He replied. “Proceed on a search pattern and try and find any other bridges they could use in the immediate area. Bring them down as well. And be watchful for other columns. It sounds like they have split into reinforced brigades and they are moving online with each other on different azimuths. Stay frosty... and if I yell... come and get us ASAP.”

Martin looked at Atropos. “Take the first group of Drow to the extraction zone.” He ordered. “Endith took out the main bridge on the interstate and that will slow them down, but probably not by much. I’d guess we have maybe twelve hours tops before they come rolling up the road to say hi.”

Atropos nodded and hurried from the chamber.

Aihola looked at him. “We will not have everyone evacuated by then.” She exclaimed.

“We’d better.” Martin replied, “At least into the timber. They can’t follow us with armor, but they’ll damn well follow us with ground troops and those that aren’t fighting need to be long gone. Aihola send Tarifa and Dekton with the second group five hours from now, you will lead the last group out of here.”

“What about you?” Aihola asked.

“Aricia and I will remain behind with the Spartans and any Drow warriors that you can spare and delay them as much as possible. Then we’ll beat feet out of here.” Martin answered.

“Martin... you are the Elf High King... and the King of Sparta... you...” Aihola started.

“Will have my orders obeyed.” Martin told her. “Send Hwia with Tarifa, Thonsya with Atropos, and Emyon goes with you. The Drow know these mountains better than us, so I suggest we tell them where we want to go and then let them have it getting us there.”

“Hwia has refused to leave until all our people are gone.” Aihola said.

“She is a Drow Elder... the only one with common sense... and she needs to keep her people motivated damn it!” Martin exclaimed.

“I... I will do as you ask sire.” Hwia’s voice spoke from the door. She had heard the entire exchange between Martin and Aihola, and whatever doubts may have lingered in her mind were immediately washed away.

Martin nodded. “If your people see you leaving, they’ll follow without question, and if you are with the second group you can keep them calm and moving. Thonsya is the senior Matron correct?”

“Yes sire.”

“Then she should be the first to go with Atropos. She has more soldiers, and I’m splitting up the Spartans into smaller groups so that they are equal.” Martin spoke.

Hwia nodded. “I will pass the word to Emyon as well.” Hwia spoke before turning to leave the room.

Martin looked at Aihola. “What about this Aelulip person, and the Patron Ael’main?”

Aihola shrugged. “I don’t know. No one has seen or heard from them since Tarifa and Dekton arrived in the city.”

“Have everyone keep their eyes open.” Martin said. “They either already left the city, or they are waiting to spring a trap the first chance they get.”

Aihola nodded. “I will make sure everyone knows.” She said.

“Get going Little Drow.” Martin said. “Let’s get your people out of here as quickly as we can. I got a feeling that Yuri is going to pull something big real soon.”

Aricia stepped up to him as Aihola left, her azure blue eyes studying Martin’s face. “We will be the last to leave?” She asked.

Martin nodded, “First in last out.” He said.

“And when we get back to Eden my love?” Aricia asked.

Martin looked at her. “We’ll be in for the biggest fight of our lives.” He answered.

“I... I am not as skilled as Dysea Martin, but I will...” Aricia began.

Martin put a finger to her lips and smiled, before pulling her tightly to him and kissing her deeply. She melted into his arms in response and wrapped her arms around his shoulders. When he pulled back and looked into her face, her azure eyes were wide and bright.

“I would rather have you here at my side more than anyone else.” He said softly, nuzzling her cheek and ear.

Aricia smiled as his aura swept over her, and she squeezed him even tighter.

“What do you say we go plan a little surprise for our guests?” Martin said.

Aricia grinned. “That sounds wonderful.”

The vampire division commander was pissed off in a big way. Over forty-two tanks and twenty five APCs lost in the destruction of the three bridges. Not to mention over seven hundred troops if you included the destruction of two dozen Hoppers. The majority of those killed had come on the last bridge attack. The fool of a brigade commander had sent his entire force across the bridge at the same time in a mad dash for safety. Thirty-one tanks and eleven APCs had been on the bridge when the missiles struck. All of them had been lost to the river below, drowning before they could be saved. All of his brigades had sent skilled engineers forward in an attempt to building portable bridges, and that had gone extremely well, until snipers began to pick his men off like dogs. They had saturated the area around them with artillery and smoke; dropping over a hundred rounds before his snipers got into position and could sweep the area. By that time their attackers were long gone, their task complete. They had forced his men to deploy and slowed their advance even further.

And then there were the three ambushes they had encountered. Usually the first sign was when one of his tanks or APCs had exploded from either a mine or rocket. Then those damned Shi Viskas had come from the timber, whistling along through the air soundlessly as his men watched the carnage in front of them. He lost

nineteen the first time due to their carelessness, another twenty-two after the second ambush, but then only nine during the third ambush as his men had wizened up.

His other two brigades were experiencing similar opposition, their progress no better than his. He had hoped to reach the Riding Mountain National Park before evening and put his plan into action, but it looked now like that was not going to be the case. He had sent out scouts to the surrounding cities with orders to inspect them and report back.

The vampire commander was no fool, and he knew they were being stalled for a reason. He now sat inside his APC looking at the holographic chart on the side of the interior, his two aides sitting silently beside him. His brigade occupied a position just outside the city once known as Neepawa, his First Brigade on his right at Plumas and his Second Brigade occupying Rapid City. Dusk was falling, the sun dipping below the horizon, and most of his troops settling in for the night.

“Have we heard back from the First Brigade scouts?” He asked.

“They advanced as far as Glenella Colonel.” The senior aide replied quickly. “The scouts from the Second Brigade have moved as far north as Newdale. None of them have spotted any signs of activity.”

“And our own scouts that we sent up Route Five to investigate Riding Mountain and Kelwood?” He asked.

“They have not yet reported back sir.” The aide replied.

“How overdue are they?” The Colonel asked quickly.

“Only seventeen minutes sir.” The aide replied. “They reported the city of Riding Mountain was a ghost town. No signs of habitation in the least. They should have reached Kelwood roughly thirty minutes ago. It was a slightly larger city, and perhaps they are still investigating.”

The colonel nodded, “Perhaps.” He said softly. “The bridges... the snipers... all of the attacks began as soon as we started moving northwest.” He said. “Within two hours of seeing that Spartan ship we began coming under these stalling attacks. They blow the bridges so we either leave our armor or have to build our own. When we use our engineers they kill them with snipers.”

“There is no indication that we neutralized any of the snipers either sir.” The aide spoke. “We could not determine where they were shooting from for the most part. It had to well north of us on the higher peaks though.”

“Commander Moran has told me that these Spartans under Leonidas... many of them have been with him since before the comet. They are well versed in long range sniper shooting. Most of them could kill a target from three kilometers away with the correct weapon. Based on what we saw today that is exactly what they were doing.” The Colonel spoke.

“Sir?”

“They are doing their job by delaying us. Our armor has to deploy when the snipers strike for fear of incoming artillery support.” The Colonel spoke. “And if they are doing it now, that means we are close to this Drow city. Every time we stop to deploy, they gain more time to evacuate the Drow.” He looked at the map for a long moment. “It has to be Kelwood.” He said.

“But our scouts haven’t reported in sir.” The aide said.

“And most likely they never will.” The colonel spoke. “Orient our main forces to the north. I want a wide awake camp this night. There are Spartans among these rebel and they will try to sneak into our lines and wreak havoc. It is something they are very good at. There will be no sleep this night for any of us. Tomorrow we move at full speed into Kelwood, and we move quickly before it is discovered what we are doing, or we will all die.”

“They are different than other vampires sire.” Andreus spoke as he knelt next to Martin in the cool night air.

Martin looked up at him, his back propped against the wide tree, his helmet resting on the ground beside him. Aricia sat between his legs and was sipping the steaming hot mug of tea that she had fast cooked on the small portable stove in her small pack. Danny leaned against another tree next to Martin, Anuk between his legs and Nayeca leaning against the tree very close to him. His presence alone gave her strength and she had not wandered far from either Anuk or Daniel since they had begun hitting the vampire column earlier in the day.

Two senior Drow warriors also sat in the small group, eating the field rations that had been given to them by the Spartans as if they had found delicacies of food.

Martin looked at him as he took the mug from Aricia and took a grateful sip of the delicious hot tea, “Different how?”

“They are harder to kill for one.” Andreus replied. “A normal vampire will usually fall after one swing from a Nehtes. These scouts we caught, one did not begin to sing until we removed his arm and legs, and the others remained stoic and unmoving. They only began to talk after I used my ultra-violent light on them. As small as it is, they were spilling their guts to me before I took one complete pass over their faces.”

“Ultra-violet radiation,” Martin spoke with a smile, “The bane of a vampire’s existence.”

“Our scouts report the vampire columns have stopped for the night.” Andreus spoke, “All three of them.”

Martin nodded, handing the mug back to Aricia as he spoke. “This division commander isn’t some silly Alliance commander.” He said. “He’s one of their super soldiers, and I’ll bet you a month’s pay the entire division is like that.”

Aricia looked at Martin over her shoulder. “We do not get paid for what we do Martin.” She said in a half scolding voice. You know this.”

Martin chuckled. “It’s a figure of speech Aricia.” He told her, leaning over to nuzzle her neck and hair and hitting her with part of his aura. Aricia’s eyes closed in contentment as she absorbed it and reflected her own aura back at him.

Aricia had been fearless today, not once leaving his side, even in the thickest parts of the three ambushes they had conducted. Her skills with the Shi Viska branded to her arm were lacking, but that would come with training and time, but there was no doubting her skills with a P190 or the Nehtes, both of which she had used quite lethally. She may have been the youngest of the women Martin loved, but she was turning out to be very deadly in her own right.

“Please you two!” Danny said with a grin. “Find a bush or something willya.”

“That would be hard to do since you’ve already scoped them all out.” Martin replied.

Anuk looked at Daniel her eyes wide. “Daniel!” She spoke in a mock voice of embarrassment. “You let others see you do this? I told you to be more careful!”

This comment caused everyone to laugh softly and relax even more. Nayeca couldn’t help but chuckle at Anuk’s comment and the look on Daniel’s face. She felt the hand on her thigh and her amber eyes went to Anuk.

“Do not be afraid to move closer Mistress.” Anuk spoke softly looking at her with those cerulean blue eyes.

“I am... I am fine really.” Nayeca replied surprisingly embarrassed.

Anuk scooted her firm butt over and padded the ground next to her between Daniel’s legs. “Please let us chase away the chill of the night air.”

Nayeca’s eyes went to Daniel’s face and she found him looking at her intently. He motioned with his head slowly and Nayeca smiled gently, scampering across the ground quickly to settle between his legs next to Anuk. She immediately felt the warmth that Daniel projected with his body and inched closer to both Anuk and Danny possessively. Anuk smiled and squeezed her thigh gently.

The two Drow warriors eyed the High King and Queen as well as those with him. They had been chosen along with nine others to fight a delaying action for their Queen, and with nineteen Spartans they had left Kelwood to harass and kill as many of the vampires as they could. Through three ambushes they had witnessed the fighting prowess of the Spartans and their High King. Twice it seemed their fellow Drow fighters would fall to the enemy, and both times Martin had snatched them from the jaws of death to fight on. His speed and power was unlike any they had ever seen, easily surpassing even the most skilled Drow warrior. His Queen was equally lethal on the battle field if a little more hesitant. The giant called Danny was a true monster, and the red haired elf that was his mate was like an extension of his body; always swarming around him with speed and power and savage grace. Nayeca had not left their side and she complemented their skill, easily guarding their flank with her own brand of speed and fighting skill. The more they fought beside these Spartans, the more they blessed Elder Hwia for being the one to forge a peace between them. They could learn much from these Spartans, and they had already taught the Drow many things.

“They are settling in for the night.” Martin spoke with a vicious grin, “Which is actually a large mistake on their part when you think about it.”

“What do you mean sire?” The senior Drow fighter asked.

Martin looked at him. “I guarantee he’ll have his men up all night. They may be vampires but they ain’t machines. By the time dawn hits they’ll be tired and careless.” Martin took a bite from the ration bar. “We’ll hit them an hour before dawn. How much time does that give Aihola to move the last group out?”

“As long as they do not decide they want to move during the night...” Andreus spoke. “She will have five hours head start on us.”

Martin nodded. “It will have to do.” He said. “Same set up as before Captain. We’ll sneak in close, plants some mines and then fall back. The Drow with us will open the dance, we’ll hit their flanks, and then we all turn tail and head for the mountains, one sweep through the perimeter, no stopping. Pass the word Andreus; I don’t want any dead Spartans or Drow tomorrow.”

Andreus nodded. “I’ll make sure they know sire.”

Martin nodded. “Everyone get some sleep. Two hour shifts on security, no fires. Use the stoves we gave out to heat tea or coffee as long as the wind blows with us.” Martin smiled. “Come morning we’ll be on our way into Riding Mountain National Park, and hopefully in two days time we’ll be on a flight back to Eden.”

“You think the vampire witch will strike soon sire?” The senior Drow asked.

Martin nodded. “I see her sending her forces against Eden before Xerxes gets here.” Martin said. “If she lets Moran command most of the units, as it appears she is doing, it’s going to be a long draw out fight. Moran and I went to the Naval War College together. He’s one ruthless bastard and that was before Yuri made him a vampire.”

“We shall prevail.” Anuk spoke confidently.

Martin chewed the ration bar. “I certainly hope so; I’m really looking forward to seeing my mother for the first time in nearly three thousand years. Dying would make me very unhappy.”

The vampire division commander had awoken only a few minutes ago, bringing himself out of his cramped APC to breathe the morning air. Dawn was just extending its soft rays of light across the land, and shadows filled the timber all around them. Like his men he had remained awake all night, going over reports and three times walking the lines they had established. He had led this division, training them and spending almost all his time with these men and women, unlike the other genetically bred commanders. They left the training and practice to their subordinates, and chose instead to revel in their new power.

The division commander knew what he was and he embraced that from the time he left the incubation chamber thirty-six months ago. He was a genetically bred vampire, with all of their strengths and none of their weaknesses. He and his brothers and sisters could fight in the mid day sun if called upon, their strength and endurance almost twice that of a normally turned vampire. While they would never match the power of a pureblood vampire, he and his comrades were the next generation. And they were being used.

“Donovan?” The soft female voice spoke from inside of the APC.

The six foot tall, hundred and ninety pound division commander turned slowly and saw the stunning brown haired woman step down off the ramp. She barely reached five and a half feet tall, but to Donovan Nestor she was the most godlike creature he had ever seen. She was dressed similarly to him in dark gray fatigues, but on her they looked so much better.

“Rebecca you should stay inside where it is safe.” He spoke as she walked up to him.

The human female stopped in front of him, her light blue eyes bright and her soft lips shining in the dim light from the interior of the APC. “I will go where I see fit Donovan.” She spoke. “At this moment it is to discover what vexes my husband so.”

Donovan Nestor, Alliance Division Commander and genetically engineered vampire stared down at the human woman who had captured what little heart he had from the first moment he had seen her over a year ago as a slave. Donovan and the others like him had been schooled since they were small children in the ways of the vampires, granted access to information and history that even the turned vampires had never seen. What Donovan had discovered was not something he liked; a history of death and subjugation, a history of conquering and crushing those who the vampire purebloods saw as inferior to them. It had not been until

Rebecca had come into his life that Donovan realized what it was coursing through him. He had taken her that night, from the slave pens of New Richmond, with the intent of raping her and then feeding on her blood. He had gotten through the first part with little problem, forcing himself on this woman, yet by the time his desire was sated, she was clutching to him in breathless abandon. As he had prepared to feed on her rich blood, taking every drop from her lush young body, she had looked at him with those eyes and spoken the words that had changed his life forever. Donovan was thrown back to that night so many months ago.

“You could be so much more.” Rebecca had told him, her sweaty body beneath his, her legs wrapped around his waist, his thick organ still buried within her warmth. She had urged him on at the end, clutching his strong back, while meeting his powerful and dominant thrusts into her body with her own hips, crying out as one raging climax followed another.

She had looked into his cobalt blue eyes his fangs fully extended in preparation of piercing the flesh of her supple neck and killing her. Small tears formed in her eyes as she gazed at him. “May I touch your face?” She asked.

Donovan looked at her, the surprise in his eyes very evident even to her. He hesitated before slowly nodding his head.

Rebecca’s warm hands had gently taken his face in her grasp and with loving ease she had kissed him ever so softly on his lips. “You... you are not like the others.” She had told him softly. “You can be so much more.”

“I am a vampire!” He had stated forcefully. “I must feed!”

Rebecca had nodded then and lifted her chin away from him exposing her vulnerable throat. “Then kill me.” She stated bravely. “I can not stop you, but if you do this, you will become what they want you to become, a mindless killer of innocents. And you could be so much more.”

Donovan stared at her face for a long moment; her eyes tightly shut waiting for the feel of his fangs piercing her neck signifying the end of her life. He could see the small tears rolling down her cheeks as she waited for her death. He suddenly felt the need to explain to her what he was.

“I am a vampire!” He stated once more. “I serve the High Coven Princess. I can not change who I am.”

Rebecca turned her head to face him once more. “If you... if you could not change who you are, why did... why did you not just sate your own sexual desires and kill me? Why did you prolong this night until I was screaming for more?”

Donovan had simply stared at her. She was right of course, after he had taken her forcefully the first time and seen her crying on the bed, he felt the need to at least allow her some pleasure before he killed her. He had spent the next three hours doing just that, manipulating her body with his hands and even his lips until she was screaming out to him begging for more. Something he had gladly given her many times over.

“What... what is your name slave?” He asked.

“My name is Rebecca... Lord Vampire.” She answered. “I am yours to do with as you see fit.”

“Why do you tell me I can be more?” He demanded. “What do you mean?”

“They... they made you.” Rebecca said. “They made you to serve them... no matter what they demand. If... if you were not different would you have done what you did this night?”

“You have a strange speech slave.” Donovan said. “Where do you come from?”

“I am European by birth my Lord.” She answered. “The history of your race is... the story of your race goes deep in our own history books. I was studying this history when I was captured and my family killed. I served the High Princess for six years until it was deemed I was too old. I was given to the slavers only two months ago.”

“You served in her house?” Donovan asked.

“She has many normal humans who serve her willingly.” Rebecca spoke. “It is a matter of our own survival. I learned much while I was there, simply by listening and not speaking.”

“And what do you know?”

“I know that you and the others like you are meant only to serve her as soldiers.” Rebecca said. “You will never be allowed to explore anything else. And they do not know what they have given you.”

“What do you mean?”

“You and many of those like you are not the same as the others of your race.” Rebecca spoke softly. “You are capable of thinking and making decisions on your own. Do you not wish for something more?”

“What more is there?” Donovan asked.

“You could have a future,” Rebecca said, “A future with children; a life of freedom and fighting for what you want, and not the power that others will hold. You could have a future of choice, choices that you make, not others.”

“You speak blasphemy!” Donovan snapped. “By rights I should kill you right here and now for even thinking such things.”

Rebecca nodded slowly. “Then kill me.” She spoke softly. “I have nothing to live for. No future... no choice. Kill me and put me out of my misery. Take my blood, and you will lost forever, as will I.”

Donovan watched as she had turned her head again in submission, offering him her neck. Donovan hadn't killed her that night, and eight months later he had made her his wife in secret.

“They are out there.” Donovan said his eyes looking into the shadows of the timber. “Whoever is leading them is the right hand of the Grim Reaper. He knows what we will do; he attacks and withdraws without mercy or fear.”

“Do you think it is the Lycavorian King my husband? The Spartan King that the High Princess so fears?” Rebecca asked.

Donovan nodded. “Our intelligence indicates he is in this area.” He answered, “Though we have no solid proof. We try to reach the park and join with him, but he strikes from the shadows, not knowing our true intentions.”

Rebecca smiled at him. “Then make our intentions known husband, and have faith.” She said.

Donovan looked at her. “He is a Pureblood my wife.” He spoke. “We... even as children in the accelerated growth programs we were taught to fear him and his kind, Pureblood Lycavorians, Pureblood werewolves.”

Rebecca slipped her arms around his waist and pressed her body close to his. “You know he is different husband. You have seen those who follow him without question. Half vampires; and now even the full blooded half elf that pig Deval turned. She is fully vampire and she still commands respect and leads his city in his stead. Is that not proof enough that he is different then what we have been told?”

“Yes.” Donovan spoke.

“You have chosen your men well husband. Not one of them thinks different than you do. We have wives and children with our columns, and we must let him know we wish to join him, not die at his hand.” Rebecca took his hand and placed it on her abdomen. “Our child grows in my womb Donovan. I do not wish to lose either of you.”

Donovan looked at his wife and a small smile spread across his face. He leaned over and kissed her deeply before stepping back. “Major!” He bellowed into the dawn air, not caring in the least who heard him.

He saw his second in command and closest aide's head extend out of another APC, “Sir!”

“Issac... we have come far enough! Now is the time to let our intentions be known. Give the orders quickly my friend before the next attack comes and more of our people die.”

The blond haired Major smiled and stepped back into his APC.

“Fuck me! Skipper you seeing this!” Dan hissed softly into his implant, his eyes taking on what was happening inside the vampire perimeter.

“I see it Danny!” Martin's voice answered. “All units stand by! Hold for my order!”

Martin used his small macrobinoculars to scan the line of the Alliance Brigade. Every tank turret had been reversed to face inward, none of the positions they had targeted were manned any longer, and it appeared that nearly a thousand men and women were gathering in the center of the Alliance position around several APCs. Martin's eyes grew even wider when he saw that there were small children and unarmed women in the group as well.

“What does everyone see?” Martin asked into his implant.

“I see a lot of vamps... all of them unarmed.” Danny answered.

“Women and children,” Anuk’s voice carried in his ear.

“It could be a trap.” Aricia spoke softly.

“I agree.” Nayeca’s voice said.

Martin nodded and looked at Aricia next to him, her blue eyes leveled at him. “What do you think Little Wolf?” He asked her softly.

“I don’t smell fear.” Aricia spoke.

Martin nodded. “Neither do I. If they were planning an attack using this tactic, there would be fear saturating the entire area. We’d smell it.” He turned to Andreus, “Captain?”

Andreus was still scanning the perimeter with his binos. “They have stacked their weapons sire.” He said. “They know we would smell any attempt at duplicity. None of their forces left the perimeter last night so they don’t have troops waiting just inside the city. The women and children in the perimeter are both human and elf, and they are not afraid. I am... I am confused.”

“If you were a prisoner of some nasty vampires... wouldn’t you be afraid?” Martin asked looking at Aricia.

Aricia nodded immediately. “I would be terrified.” She answered. “But they still outnumber us a hundred to one my love. We are only thirty.”

Martin nodded, “Maybe... maybe not.” He spoke. “We...”

“We know you are out there!” The voice carried through the trees amplified by an intercom system on the APC. “I know you can hear me. My name is Colonel Donovan Nestor, and I command this division. We have stacked our weapons and gathered the majority of our forces in the center of our perimeter. Many of us have wives and children! We... we surrender!”

Martin looked over the top of the log he was behind, Aricia’s eyes on him. “I know that look my love.” She spoke. “You can’t!”

“There’s no other way to see if they are truthful or not.” Martin complained.

“Not at the risk of your life Martin.” Aricia spoke quickly.

“All of us are important Aricia.” He told her.

“All of us are not the King.” Andreus spoke, agreeing with his sister.

“Listen... I...”

“You must think we’re stupid!” Dan’s voice ended the debate then. “You’ve been chasing us for a day and a half!”

“You did not give us the opportunity to tell you we have come to fight on your side!” Donovan’s voice returned the shout. “We have only tried to maintain as few casualties as we could until we could communicate with you.”

“You fired on our ship!” Daniel barked.

“My missile chief thought it was an Alliance craft!” Nestor replied. “We have stacked out weapons, you must see this. We have gathered our families around us. Your... your King can smell them, I know this. Does he smell fear from them? We are not here to fight you! We have come to join you!”

“For what reason?” Martin shouted now, Aricia and Andreus looking at him.

“Freedom,” Donovan replied, “And a fair opportunity for a future!”

“Walk five hundred meters north Colonel Nestor! There’s a small waterfall in that direction.” Martin shouted. “Alone! If any one of your boys moves you die! Then they die! I got men all over the area, enough to wipe you all out!”

“Martin what are you doing?” Aricia asked incredulous.

“What if he’s telling the truth?” Martin asked her.

“And what if he isn’t?” Aricia asked.

Martin grinned, “Only one way to find out.” Martin spoke. “Danny you copy?”

“Go Skipper!”

“I’m going to meet this lug head.” Martin said. “If any of his people twitch, you waste as many as you can and then run like hell!”

“Marty... is that...” Dan started to protest.

“You forget how to take orders baldy?” Martin asked with humor in his voice.

“No... I’m just getting tired of bailing your ass out of trouble.” Dan answered. “I got you covered boss.”

Aricia took Martin's arm. "I'm going with you." She said.

Martin saw the set of her jaw and knew he wasn't going to dissuade her. He nodded quickly and looked at Andreus. "Let's go."

Donovan looked at the small waterfall that fed the stream, straining with his eyes and ears to detect any sign of the rebel leader who had told him to come here.

"Where are they?" Rebecca's voice spoke.

Donovan whirled around and saw her just coming into the small clearing that paralleled the stream on either side. "Rebecca he told me to come alone!" He gasped. "What are you doing here? They will kill you!"

"I will not let you face this man alone." She answered moving up to him quickly.

"You must go back!" Donovan snapped. "You must..."

"Don't move an inch!" The male voice spoke causing Donovan to freeze in place as he saw the single Spartan warrior step from the shadows of a large stump, his P190 leveled at him and Rebecca.

"You must allow her to go back!" Donovan exclaimed. "She has no part in this!"

"Turn around vampire!" The second male voice spoke from behind him. "And do it very slowly."

The sound of the voice sent a chill down Donovan's spine and he closed his eyes slowly, still holding Rebecca's hands. Moving ever so slowly he turned in place, while gently moving his wife behind him, protecting her with his body. He saw the tall, muscled Spartan warrior standing behind him his hands empty, another Spartan a female stood beside him. They wore the same armor as the one with the 190 pointed at them, but they also wore helmets. The male's crested helmet had four different colors in it, while the female's was raven black.

"I... I came freely!" Donovan spoke. "You must let Rebecca go back!"

Martin stepped closer to him. "Why would I want to do that?" He spoke sternly. "I told you to come alone!"

"I came of my own accord!" Rebecca spoke quickly.

"You are not a vampire... I'd recognize your vampire blood if you were, so tell me why you are here now!" Martin asked. "And do it quickly."

Rebecca took a deep breath, "To protect my husband!" She stated firmly.

"This dog holds your husband!" Aricia snapped.

Rebecca stepped around Donovan and took his arm tightly within her hands. "Donovan is my husband." She stated flatly.

Martin's eyes grew a little wider, "He's your husband?"

Donovan gazed at Martin and knew without doubt who stood before him. "It... it is you isn't it?" He spoke softly. "You... you are the son of Leonidas. You are the King of Sparta, the King of the Lycavorian Union."

Martin's eyes changed then to yellow/gold orbs and his fangs extended to their full length. He felt Aricia change as well, and Andreus followed suit, all of them shifting to their humanoid wolf forms.

"What if I am?" Martin spoke.

Donovan dropped to one knee then and bowed his head. "I submit to your will sire." He spoke. "We... we are not like the others. My men and I wish nothing but to serve you."

"And why would a vampire want to serve me?" Martin spoke drawing his *Nehtes* from his thigh and extending it with a flick of his wrist, the *snik* sound of the spear locking into place causing Donovan and Rebecca to flinch.

"Speak quickly vampire," Aricia spoke now, her voice full of malice and hate. "Your time is short and you can not afford to waste it with lies."

"I do not lie!" Donovan spoke.

"I've heard that a lot from your race." Martin said. "So far their batting average ain't so hot."

"*Usstan tried ulu tesso dos nindol zhahus naut natha bwael ul'hyrr ussta 'ranndi.*" **(I tried to tell you this was not a good idea my wife.)** Donovan spoke in the Drow language, which also happened to be the ancient vampire tongue. "*Udos zhal'la inbal fridj vanished wund l' trezen lu' dro'us doeb udossta drasven.*" **(We should have just vanished into the north and lived out our years.)**

“Ulu vel'bol end m'rannidii? Nind orn'la inbal muth lu' elggen udossa, lu' udossta dalhar orn'la thlu elghinyrr 'zil al. Nindol zhahus udossta er'griff kestal whol freedom lu' gre'as'anto.” **(To what end husband? They would have found and killed us, and our child would be dead as well. This was our only hope for freedom and peace.)**

Martin looked at Aricia quickly, seeing her eyes go wide as well. Being telepathically linked with Martin gave her many skills, one of them being his fluency in whatever language he could speak. The ancient vampire tongue just happened to be one of those languages, passed down to him from his grandfather through his blood.

“Dos carry nindol sanguine's dalhar?” **(You carry this vampire's child?)** Martin asked seeing their heads come up and their eyes go wide.

“Xunus dos talinth udos orn'la naut zhaun l' xanalress d' dosst dazzan,” Aricia asked calmly. **(Did you think we would not know the language of your race?)** *“Lu'oh zhah ol dos carry nindol sanguine's dalhar?”* She asked. **(How is it you carry this vampire's child?)**

Donovan looked at Martin. “There is much that the High Princess did not know about those she created sire.” He spoke. “We did not know it ourselves until it happen. Rebecca has been my wife for almost a year. We discovered she was with child only four months ago. This knowledge is what sealed my decision to seek you out at the first opportunity. When the Colonel sent us north to find a city of Drow I knew this was the only chance we would get.”

Donovan returned to his feet and held his head up high. “It is said you have allowed the Drow warriors that escaped, the ones who are half vampire, they say you have allowed them to grow and prosper in this city you call Eden, that you are even friends with many of them. This is what I seek for my troops as well.”

“Why?” Martin asked.

“If I am to die fighting... then I wish it to be for something that I believe in. If I am to die I want it to be something that my wife can hold her head up high for, that... that my son or daughter can be proud of.” Donovan spoke.

Martin stepped up to him quickly, looking into the man's face searching for something in those dark eyes that would give him away. “Why is it that you are so different than the others?”

“I had a thirst for knowledge when I came out of the incubation chambers Milord.” Donovan said. “They made the mistake of allowing me access to whatever material I wanted. I have seen what the vampires have done on this world; on other worlds. It is not something I want to be part of. When Rebecca came into my life... her gentle nature only reinforced this for me.”

“I didn't think anyone but Pureblood Vampires could have children.” Martin said.

Donovan let out a small smile. “As I said sire, it is something that the High Princess does not know either. Her genetic tampering knows no bounds as you are aware. These men and women... all of them in my unit... I have handpicked them myself for their loyalty and dedication to the same ideals as myself. Many, like me, have taken wives and husbands. Elves, humans, loved ones that we have kept hidden until now. Tell me what we must do to show you... to prove to you that we are serious in our endeavors. Tell me and I swear to you we will do it.”

“Why are you and those with you the only ones like this?” Martin asked.

“The men and women you see with me, in our three Brigades, we are all from the first group of vampire clones they created. We learned quickly to not let our individuality to show, as we did not want it taken from us.” Donovan spoke softly. “I will not stand here and try to tell you I have not done evil things... for I have. But since Rebecca became my reason for going on, I have tried to make amends in all that I do. I have not been entirely successful, but I am trying.”

“None of us is entirely successful Colonel.” Martin spoke. “That is why we are not perfect. You have given me pause... and I do not know what to do.”

Aricia stepped forward looking at Rebecca keenly, her nose sniffing the air around her carefully. “He has bitten you.” She spoke finally.

Rebecca didn't hesitate and pulled the collar of her fatigue top to the side, revealing two small puncture holes on her otherwise flawless neck. “Donovan has never taken enough of my blood to hurt me.” She said softly. “It has happened during moments of... moments of passion, and never without my consent. It is... it is very pleasurable, for both of us.”

Martin stepped up to her as he detected the change in Rebecca's skin texture and the temperature of her body spiked. He saw slight signs of embarrassment flush her skin, even under the tan she had and her scent changed slightly as endorphins were dumped into her system due to the embarrassment of revealing something so private to complete strangers. He kept his eyes on Rebecca when he spoke next. "How fast can you re-direct your division to Utah and come in from the north of coordinates I give you in three days."

Donovan looked at him. "Utah?" He asked. "Sire there is no way for us to cover that much distance in three days." He replied honestly. "Not if you wish us to remain a cohesive fighting unit that can help you in the defense of your city."

Martin took his eyes from Rebecca and smiled. "I know that." He said.

Donovan's eyebrows narrowed. "Then why ask the question of me?"

"Because if you had told me you could do it, I would have known you were lying and I would have killed you both right here and now." Martin answered.

"There would be no point in lying at this time Milord." Donovan spoke. "You will either accept us as allies, or we will have to move further north and hope that you win."

Martin looked at him. "How many families are within your unit here? And the other two Brigades as well?"

"Five hundred sire." Donovan answered immediately, "In all perhaps two thousand women and children." He saw the look in Martin's eyes. "We could not leave them behind Milord."

Martin nodded. "No you couldn't." He said. "I want you to assigned Hoppers from each of your Brigades to transport your women and children to our extraction point."

"Sire?" Donovan looked at him strangely.

Martin grinned. "Your people will be safer in Eden than traipsing across the continent with us don't you agree?"

Donovan felt the first flickers of hope in months shoot through him. "I do sire."

"Good... get your people moving. You just joined the Lycavorian Union." Martin told him.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

EXTRACTION POINT WHITEWATER LAKE CANADA

Ben throttled back the engines of *Raptor 41* and was throwing switches and pressing buttons before the ship's engines were even completely powered down. He pulled his helmet off quickly, almost tossing it to the side as he locked the controls into place and pushed his seat back. His heart was pounding madly and he looked at his co-pilot, an elf he had been training for five months now, and a pilot that was going to be almost as good as Endith. He was not as instinctive as she was, but he was smart and made excellent decisions.

"Jasper?" He asked the elf male.

The elf male chuckled and nodded his head. Ben had been like a school kid acting his age when he learned that Endith and Tina were with Martin in Canada. They had dropped the load of Drow women and children before immediately turning and heading full speed back north.

"Go Benjamin." Jasper spoke with a smile. "I will power everything down."

Ben almost leaped out of his chair and took the four steps into the cargo area where four crewmen were preparing to take on another load of Drow. He hadn't been this happy in a long time, and the months apart had made Ben miss the two of them more and more each day. He ran down the ramp, his eyes searching. He found the sleek looking SPAT parked nearby, but no red or blond hair. He could see hundreds of Drow women and children milling about, as well as men, not to mention the Spartans and elves of Tareif's division that were maintaining the perimeter.

"Benjamin!" The soft voice called out, causing him to turn to the east and a large smile to break out on his face.

Endith and Tina were running towards him at a fast jog and he didn't move as he looked at them get closer. They looked like they had slimmed down and packed on muscle, and both of them were much more tanned now. Endith was the first to reach him and she launched her petite body into his arms. Ben caught her hundred and six pounds with ease, their lips coming together almost immediately in a blistering kiss that made him remember just how much he had missed them. Ben may have been fifty five years old, but damn he wasn't dead just yet, and feeling Endith's firm power packed body in his arms made his body respond like he hadn't gotten laid in months, which he hadn't.

Endith took his weathered face in her hands and placed kisses all across his cheeks and nose. "Oh Benjamin I have missed you so." She said between her kisses.

"You have no idea I much I have missed you Little One." He told her, using his hands to caress her elf ears and seeing her shudder in desire. He leaned over and kissed her hard once more, feeling her press closer to him. Yep... he certainly wasn't dead.

Ben pulled apart from Endith and saw Tina standing there next to them. Her smile was bright and happy. "Hey there big guy, think you can put up two undersexed females for a while?"

Ben laughed and pulled her into their embrace, laying a lip locker on Tina that had her shivering in delight. Their antics were catching the eye of many Spartans and elves, and one of the younger Spartans troops that had tried to hit on Endith in Sparta leaned closer to Atropos as they watched.

"Senior *Lochi*... what does the human have that I do not? I am a Spartan *and* a wolf. I could please her more than he ever could." The young Spartan asked.

Atropos looked at the young man, relishing hearing that term once more. *Lochi* were the smallest tactical unit of Spartans, numbering fifty to a hundred in strength. When needed they would form with a *Mora* with three other *Lochi* to essentially make a Brigade sized force of six to eight hundred warriors. Given the current circumstances, Martin had asked the Spartan Senate to waive all punishment against him due to his time in exile and immediately reinstate Atropos to his former rank and position. The Senate agreed with the King unanimously, and not only was Atropos returned to his full status, he was placed at the top of the list for promotion to Polemarch.

Atropos smiled and shook his head. "Do not be too sure young Spartan." Atropos spoke. "Technically this man is older than you and has commanded the King's air units for as long as they have known each other. They are good friends... and no doubt our King has passed on his skill with the ladies. It takes more than good looks and a big dick to impress female elves Lex. I have learned their ears are very sensitive, and if you find an unmated female elf and she looks interested, find a way to stroke her ears. That will make your intentions and desire known."

The young Spartan looked at his *Lochi*. "Forgive me Senior *Lochi*, but Lilika is a wolf. How do you know that?"

Atropos looked at him. "You forget the King's Captain is my brother Lex. He is mated to an elf, as is our King. Why do you think Kmyla and Queen Dysea walk around with smiles on their faces all the time? They are fulfilled thoroughly, not only physically but emotionally as well."

Lex smiled brightly. "I will try this Senior *Lochi*, thank you."

"Just insure the female elf is not already mated Lex." Atropos spoke with a laugh. "If you do this to a mated female elf, they will take great offense and probably cut your wolf balls off."

Lex blushed slightly and nodded. "I will make sure." He said.

"Next to a Lycavorian female Lex, female elves are the most demanding in bed. Prepare yourself if you choose to go that way." Atropos spoke. "And do not claim any woman you do not intend to spend the rest of your days with Spartan. If I discover you are simply slipping it to whoever is willing young Spartan, I'll cut your cock off myself. We are Spartans... and we must think of our honor before our dicks. You are also a young Alpha... have your fun... but do not disrespect any female, elf or otherwise. Make your intentions known, and if they are agreeable enjoy yourself. But always be respectful to females of all races."

Lex nodded the smile on his face fading. "I will insure this Senior *Lochi*." He spoke.

Atropos nodded and saw Ben standing with Endith in one arm, his hand absently stroking her left ear. She was leaning into him, her expression speaking all she needed to say. "Watch him Lex... you could learn quite a bit from this human flyer." Atropos spoke before moving towards where he was to meet the King.

“We were not privy to the entire plan.” Donovan was explaining as they stood around the holographic chart in the observation platform of Raptor 34. “We were tasked to come north after your Raptors were seen in this area several times, and then we lost contact with a patrol up here investigating that.”

“But up until then you were in on the plan to assault Eden?” Martin asked.

Donovan nodded. “Yes.” He pointed to the map and the depiction of Eden. “There are six divisions of genetically enhanced vampires.” He spoke. “All of them are roughly equal to what I have, all commanded by Colonels such as me.”

Aihola stood next to Tarifa and Dekton and she looked up at him. “Why didn’t the others become like you?” She asked.

Donovan smiled gently. “As I told King Leonidas, we were from the first batch of clones, and therefore granted more leniency in what we did so they could learn as much about us as necessary. As the other clones were produced they were allowed less such outside exposure. And... they did not meet Rebecca, I did. It took me almost a year to handpick my men, and I played the good little vampire soldier who preached hate and vengeance that entire time. It was not easy... but having my wife to go home too every night made the effort worth it.”

“And you kept her hidden all that time?” Tarifa asked.

Donovan nodded. “I filed paperwork the next morning that she had become a casualty of training. That was... that was how elves and humans were listed if they were...” All present could see that having to reveal that information was shameful to him.

“Enough about that,” Martin ended the questions. “Donovan’s future starts today and his past no longer matters. That is how we have treated everyone isn’t it?” His eyes went around the small table and he saw everyone nod.

“Forgive me.” Aihola said softly. “Part... part of me still remembers the things I was forced to do while serving the Alliance and the shame it brings me.”

“You are the Queen of the Drow.” Donovan spoke. “Rebecca taught me to move past what I was forced to do and look to the future. You have done that here as Queen with your people Milady and you have found your redemption. My actions over the next few days I hope will bring me mine.”

“Wise words Colonel.” Tarifa spoke taking Aihola’s hand, “And very true.”

Vengal leaned across the table then. “How will they hit our city?” He asked.

Donovan looked at the chart. “The plan as I last knew it was very simple. They would come in from the north with at least six divisions of troops including three of the super soldiers. The south would be their focal point, as Colonel Moran felt it was better suited to our armored vehicles and breaching the defenses. The remaining divisions of genetically created vampires would hit from the south with at least ten divisions of our normal troops.”

“Thirteen divisions,” Tarifa gasped, “That... that is half a million troops attacking from the south alone.” She looked at Martin who remained quiet. Dekton’s face was impassive as were Daniel’s, Melancton’s and Andreus. Vengal’s face showed little surprise, though as he looked at the map his eyes grew narrow. “Martin?”

Martin looked at her, “Huh?”

“Martin we can not stand against that many.” Tarifa spoke. “I am no coward Martin, but we are facing nearly a million troops in total. And that does not include the vampire witch’s brother and the hundred thousand he supposedly has. We have only eleven divisions Martin, possibly twelve if we draft enough to fill spots.”

“We won’t face that many.” Martin spoke matter of factly. “Colonel...” He looked at Donovan to continue.

“The lead divisions will concentrate on breaching your defenses and bringing down the power stations that control your shield.” He continued. “Moran believes that without the shield the regular Alliance troops with vampires mixed in can shatter your city... our city,” He spoke, everyone catching the correction in his words, “By hammering us with artillery until nothing remains on the surface, walking the artillery fire on line in front of the genetically enhanced vampires.”

“How tough are these super soldiers really?” Danny asked.

“We were created to do battle with Spartan/Lycavorian ground troops. Against even pureblood werewolves we are a match in speed, less so in pure strength. We have all the vampire strengths, and like Queen Aihola, we can feed to heal wounds. Not to mention, we are designed to withstand more damage. Personally I do not believe we could sustain injuries like the Spartan troops and survive, for while you can shift to heal your wounds, we do need blood to heal ours.”

“And you can’t carry that much blood into battle with you.” Martin said softly.

Donovan nodded with a cruel smile. “Each soldier will have perhaps a pint or two of blood with them on their person. After that... they would need the blood that will be carried in trucks similar to ours. Destroy those trucks and Hoppers, and their advantage in numbers will no longer matter. The regular Alliance troops will not stand against what they will face, at least many of them won’t. If what I know of Queen Tarifa’s father is true, the War Master is a tactical genius when it comes to large forces and static defenses. His city defenses in Mountain City alone have stood for centuries with barely any losses.”

“But never against so concentrated a force,” Tarifa answered.

Donovan nodded. “The premise is the same Milady.” He said. “My recommendation would be to target the blood trucks first. If we can destroy all of them, or enough to make the vampires in their ranks pause, the normal Alliance forces will not factor all that much.”

“How far back do they usually travel?” Martin asked.

“It depends primarily on the division commanders.” Nestor answered. “Some have them directly behind the main units, which I find ignorant. Others like me keep them several miles back but alert and ready to move forward.”

“The human units,” Danny asked now. “What about them?”

Donovan shrugged. “Most are former gang members and scum who have been given weapons and uniforms. Criminals really, and aside from a few scattered one sided contests against elf or human outposts, none of them know what actual combat is.”

Martin shook his head. “Yuri doesn’t strike me as the stupid type.” He spoke thoughtfully to no one in particular. “The majority of their army is made up of scum?”

Donovan nodded. “I know sire, it is hard to believe, but you must understand, she has ruled with an iron grasp for centuries. Any voice that speaks out against her vanishes within hours of doing so, in well orchestrated *accidents*. She has Vampire Secret police that are constantly investigating her own advisors. This increased even more when Minister Torcrum was discovered alive and working with Eden.”

“Sounds like the fucking Nazis all over again.” Dan said.

Donovan looked at him. “Adolph Hitler was a pureblood vampire sire.”

They looked at him as if he’d lost his mind. “You’re joking right?” Martin asked.

Donovan shook his head slowly. “No Milord. It is written in the vampire history scrolls; Genghis Khan, Hitler, Josef Stalin, Saddam Hussain, many of the most vile and hated leaders in the history of this planet were vampires and or subservient to the High Princess and her father in some way.”

“We’ve been fighting them this long and didn’t even know it.” Martin said.

“We have known sire.” Melancton spoke now. “We have known since the time of your father. And we have always fought against them, directly or indirectly. They could not risk exposing themselves so openly back then due to the obvious human reaction that knowledge would have elicited. After the comet however things changed.”

Martin nodded. “With the destruction of all known forms of government and the death of three quarters of the world’s population they became bolder and more open.”

Melancton nodded. “Many humans... regardless of whether they tell you or not know, they know that vampires are among us and have been for centuries. The knowledge of our people was more closely guarded and many of the myths and legends that show us in a dishonorable light were begun by vampires themselves. That is why werewolves are considered the more barbaric of the two species. We never thought to dissuade this type of thinking. We have come to realize that tactic was wrong.”

“Tarifa... how many humans are left on the planet?” Martin asked.

Tarifa shrugged. “A billion... perhaps slightly higher,” She answered. “The comet wiped out entire races Martin, and the Alliance never conducted a census.”

“What is the elf population?”

Tarifa looked at Aihola her eyes wide. This was something they had never thought about. She looked back to him. "I... I don't know." She said, "Certainly several hundred million I would think. Again a complete census has never been conducted."

Martin nodded slowly. "Yuri has been using maybe several million vampires to rule all of the humans and elves with fear and hate and distrust." He shook his head. "Damn that's impressive."

"Sire?" Andreus looked at him surprised.

"No... I mean the humans have allowed them to rule, even knowing what they were. The elves had no say in it, they were born into slavery. The humans had a choice and they decided to let the vampires rule." Martin said his anger growing at the knowledge. "How many Spartans have died protecting a race that has the intelligence of a fucking gnat?"

"It was your father's wish sire." Melancton spoke.

Martin nodded. "Yes I know... but I wonder if it was worth it all of these years." He spoke.

"Martin my love, you aren't suggesting we abandon the humans to their own fate are you?" Aricia asked, stepping up to him and taking his arm.

Martin shook his head looking at her. "No. I would never do that." He replied. "I'm thinking there has to be a change of leadership on this planet, and the elves need to play a major role in that or the humans are going to become extinct either by their own actions or because they choose to fight the elves."

"We have started that Martin." Aihola spoke hopefully, "With Eden and the many other settlements. There are far more humans that feel as we all do than we ever knew."

"Yes we have, but now we need to expand it across the planet for it to work fully." Martin said. "It's the only way to keep the vampires from returning to earth once we win."

"Win?" Vengal spoke. "Forgive me Milord, but we have not yet begun to fight."

Martin smiled. "Yes I know... but we'll win." He said confidently.

"You sound so sure." Vengal asked.

Martin nodded. "I suppose I am." He answered with a smile. "I positively hate to fucking lose." He looked at Nestor. "Colonel how good is your acting skill?"

Donovan looked at him confused, "Sire?"

LEONIDAS I

THREE DAYS FROM EARTH

Isabella bounced back lightly on her feet deflecting the weighted end of the staff as her senior soldier attacked. She wore only a pair of black skin tight stretchable fabric shorts and a white half tank top that left her rippled abdomen exposed. The black shorts left little to the imagination, as they appeared painted on and outlined every luscious curve of her hips and her muscular ass. Her large breasts strained against the fabric of the tank top, extremely firm and round without the need for any support. Her black hair was pulled into a long pony tail and braided with fine elfin silk. She wore the black leather gloves and the forearm gauntlets which effectively hid the Shi Viska from plain sight. She twirled the staff in her hands, deflecting another aimed attack by her senior soldier. They had been sparring for close to an hour, and Isabella was feeling full of herself. He had not come close to landing a blow on her, while she had tagged him at least a dozen times. This soldier had been with her for decades, always protecting her, and fighting beside her. Isabella suspected he had a very large infatuation with her, but aside from the five times he had been able to land a blow on her and claim her for the night, she had never shown any interest in the man. Even their five nights of fucking had been nothing more than release for both of them, though she had found herself at least looking forward to the times with him.

Isabella felt none of that now. No desire... no anticipation of sex... it was not there anymore. She found herself fighting harder than ever to keep her troops from landing blows on her and she could not explain it.

They had drawn a crowd now, her other three soldiers, plus almost a dozen Lycavorian scout troops that had come aboard. Many of them had never seen Isabella in action, and they were impressed to say the least.

She glanced at her senior soldier and grinned. "You are tiring Tomas." She taunted him. "You surprise me."

“You are fighting hard Princess.” Tomas replied arrogantly. “Much harder than you usually do, almost as if you do not wish my company this night.”

Isabella looked at him and forced the smile to hide the exact same thought. She also noticed Tomas seemed different somehow, more on edge and angry. “Perhaps you have just grown weak.” She spoke softly. “You know I despise weakness, and that is why I fight harder.”

Tomas’s face took on a snarl and he launched himself at Isabella with renewed fury, his staff flashing forward with electrifying speed. With a cry of surprise Isabella shifted her own staff just enough to deflect the blow as she rolled to the side. He was upon her like a striking viper, his staff a blur of motion as Isabella backpedaled quickly, blocking each impact, but unable to counterattack due to the ferocity of his strikes. She could feel the jarring impacts against her staff, each blow sending jolts of pain shooting through her arms and shoulders. His anger was fueling his strength, and he was using his larger size to complement that.

Isabella was no fool however, and she was a supremely skilled fighter. She lowered her left shoulder as he drove another blow towards her left hip. As his strike was sliding off the end of her staff, Isabella spun around with vampire speed, blurring in motion and bringing her staff up quickly. She snapped it into the back of his shoulders with a loud crack, the blow carrying enough power in it to drive him forward until he lost his balance and careened forward staggering until he sprawled onto his face and chest on the mat beneath him rather ingloriously.

Isabella laughed as she finished her spin and turned to face him. “Tomas... you are losing your touch! A second year student would know enough to block that type of attack. You are slipping my Senior Guard. We have been training all afternoon and we are tired. We will end the training for today I think.” Isabella turned casually and began to make her way to the ladies portion of the locker room. The Lycavorians who were watching the training began to break up complimenting to each other on Isabella’s skill.

With an inhuman howl, his eyes now cobalt blue and his fangs extended, Tomas came to his feet and leaped at Isabella once more.

Isabella whirled at the sound of his howl, her hazel/green eyes going wide as she saw him bringing up his staff in a vicious uppercut strike. His staff had already been in motion when he howled and Isabella turned far too slow to counter the attack. The end of the shaft hit her cheek with the force of a hammer, causing stars to flash in her eyes, as her cheek split open and blood splashed wetly across the mat. Isabella staggered from the force of the blow and spun around dropping to her knees, her staff skittering across the floor of the gym. The other vampire soldiers and several of the Lycavorian scouts stood stunned at this turn of events. The vampire soldiers were stunned because their senior guard had never gone this far against the Princess, his cobalt eyes filled with bloodlust and pure sexual lust. The Lycavorian scouts had never seen a fight between Isabella and her soldiers before and therefore did not know what to make of what was happening.

Tomas stood above Isabella triumphantly, and he laughed. “Never drop your guard Princess!”

Isabella shook her head to try and clear her thoughts, her vision blurred and her face throbbing with pain. “I... I ended... ended the training.” She gasped.

Tomas hissed in reply at her, his fangs fully extended. “The training is never over!” He screamed. “I have connected with the Princess and I claim my right!”

Isabella felt the blood pouring freely from her cheek, the pain sharper than anything she had felt in a long time. Her mind was confused and she was unable to focus, the spots still very bright in her head. She could feel his presence above her, standing over her.

“You will... you will not touch me!” Isabella hissed as she turned, trying to bring her focus back under control.

Tomas laughed and slapped her injured cheek hard, causing Isabella to gasp in fresh pain and reach up to clutch her face as she fell over onto her side. “By your own decree, if we contact you in battle, we have you for the night!” Tomas roared. “I intend to make you keep that decree.”

Tomas bent over to grab Isabella’s legs and never saw the combat boot coming from the side. As his head lowered and the boot came up it caught him squarely on the nose snapping his head up with such force that his legs left the mat and he flipped ass over head to come smashing to the mat on his stomach, his nose a flattened mass of blood and broken cartilage. He felt no pain though and his eyes lifted to glare at his new attacker.

“Your Princess gave you an order.” Gorgo spoke coldly, standing in a combat ready stance next to Isabella, who was still on the mat trying to get her bearings. “I suggest you follow it now.”

“Do not come between me and my prize she-wolf.” Tomas growled rising quickly to his feet.

Gorgo sniffed the air quickly, her senses fully alive now, her dark eyes changing to become a dark yellowish brown color, her fangs extending fully. “You have not fed Tomas!” She barked loudly. “Your blood lust is peaking! You must control it, for I have no wish to hurt you.”

“I will not control it! Not any longer! I relish it!” He screamed.

“You fool!” Gorgo spat. “You know what happens to your people when you do not feed! You lose control of your cravings and become nothing more than a wild animal. You are not an animal Tomas! Control it and we will get you blood to sustain yourself.”

Gorgo’s urgent hand signals to the vampire soldiers had the desired effect. Two of them broke into sprints from the gym to find their blood supplies, while the third hefted his staff and stepped up next to Gorgo ready to help defend his Princess.

“She is mine!” Tomas screamed spittle flying from his lips. “And I will have her in front of all of you if I have too.”

Gorgo quickly turned to the third vampire soldier and snatched the staff from his firm grip, surprising him with her strength. Gorgo spun the staff gracefully in her hands with the skill of a Master surgeon, the eyes of the vampire soldier and the Lycavorian scouts wide in astonishment and shock. This was the mild mannered woman from the Tuya University on their home world. Many of them had been taught in one of her classes. She was a skilled educator, and a very firm teacher, never giving grades away to student, most certainly never playing any favorites and always challenging the students to think.

Gorgo looked at Tomas, her eyes firm and her hands steady. “Then let us fight Tomas!” She snapped. “You will not defile the person of your Princess while I stand here breathing.”

Tomas grinned madly, his mind totally lost in the blood lust of a vampire who had not fed in several days. “I will skewer you she-wolf.” He spoke hysterically, his hateful words spilling out easily now that his mind was gone. “You are nothing more than a teacher of Lycavorian scum!”

Gorgo smiled and it was not a pleasant thing to see in any way, as her lips came back in a snarl and her fangs were revealed in their white glory. “Then allow me to teach you.” Gorgo spoke calmly before leaping at Tomas.

The move caught him by surprise and before he could bring his staff up, Gorgo had landed directly in front of him and pummeled him three times with the training staff. Two quick, hammer like blows above his waist and one that smashed into his jaw, snapping his head skyward yet again. Tomas staggered back several meters, bringing his staff up to the guard position. His cobalt eyes went wide when Gorgo simply slap it aside with a flick of her wrist and drove the opposite end of her staff into his chest with startling force. He winced and howled in pain as three of his ribs shattered under the impact and Tomas suddenly realized he was not facing just any school teacher. His eyes were wide when he looked at her and Gorgo simply smiled.

“You looked surprised Tomas!” Gorgo spat. “Did you mistakenly assume I was always a teacher? That will be your final mistake this day.” She whirled the staff around viciously above her head watching as his eyes followed the movement. When Gorgo had his attention focused upward, she halted the spinning of the staff and drove the low end in her left hand forward and up. The blow caught him directly under the jaw for the second time in as many minutes, the sound of his jaw popping and breaking in more than one spot extremely loud in the stillness of the gym. Tomas lifted off the floor and came crashing down onto his back, unbearable pain lancing through his body. His staff fell quickly from limp hands and he withered on the floor, his screams muffled due to the broken jaw. His arms and legs twitched and strained, the muscles appearing as if they would rip from his skin as the full force of the bloodlust coursed through him. His eyes were wide in agonizing pain, blood gushing from his mouth where his vampire fangs had sliced through his lips.

Gorgo stepped forward to go to him but felt the fingers close around her arm and stop her. “No.” Isabella spoke softly as she got to her feet, the cut on her cheek barely beginning to heal. “There is nothing we can do for him.” She spoke. “The Blood Fever has destroyed his mind, and now it is killing him. Even blood will not save him from his fate.”

Gorgo had never seen a vampire die from Blood Fever, and Isabella’s words rang true a few seconds later when the veins in Tomas’s face began to shrivel and burst open underneath his skin. It was what many

vampires feared most, starving without the opportunity to feed on fresh blood, and thousands of vampires had died through the years due to this. Their minds would be destroyed first, turning them into nothing more than raving mad men, and then it would spread to the rest of their body, their internal organs shriveling into nothing. A few had survived the Blood Fever, only to live out the remainder of their days in clinics securely tied to beds. It was not a pretty sight to watch, and it took nearly a full three minutes for Tomas to die. His skin was now streaked in ruptured blood vessels, his cobalt eyes now leaking blood and turned a sickly red color. His face was frozen in a hideous death mask of pain, blood leaking from both his nose and his ears. When she was finally able to tear her eyes from the scene they had returned to normal and Isabella was staring at her.

“Isabella your face is not healing?” Gorgo spoke reaching up with her hand.

Isabella grabbed her hand before she could touch her skin, her hazel/green eyes still looking at her with shock. “I will heal.” She spoke softly. “I was waiting until I returned to my quarters to take my substance for this week.”

“Then why are you looking at me like that?” Gorgo asked.

“I have... in all the hundreds of years I have known you, I have never seen you lift a weapon in anger.” Isabella spoke softly. “Yet you did now.”

Gorgo appeared to blush under her tanned skin. “It has been quite a while.” She said almost embarrassed. “I was quite good at one point.”

Isabella smiled gently. “It appears you have lost none of your skill.” She said. “Why would you protect me?”

Gorgo looked at her and now she smiled gently. “No matter your past daughter of Veldruk, you have proven countless times that you are an ally of our people as well as our cause and regardless of what you think others say under their breath Isabella, they do not speak unkindly of you or your people that chose to follow you.”

“Then why do I see evil glares at every corner whenever I come into a room?” Isabella asked quietly.

“Perhaps because that is what you have conditioned yourself to see even though it is not there.” Gorgo spoke softly.

“I... I don't know if I can see anything else.” Isabella told her. “My... my life has always been filled with death and mistrust. I have known nothing else.”

“Then perhaps it is time for you to reach beyond the unknown and grasp hold of the future.” Gorgo spoke.

Isabella's eyes went a little wider and she looked at Gorgo strangely. “Have... have you been speaking to your son?” She asked.

Now it was Gorgo's turn to look confused. “I have not spoken with Martin since he appeared on our ship over Apo Prime. Why do you ask?”

“He... he spoke those words to me.” Isabella said quietly.

“He touched you telepathically?” Gorgo asked surprised.

Isabella shook her head. “The message he directed to this ship. At the very end of the transmission he muttered something under his breath. I had a copy sent to me so that I could study it.”

“What did the message say?” Gorgo asked, keenly interested in anything relating to her son.

Isabella looked at her. “He spoke... he spoke in the ancient vampire tongue.” She said clearly impressed with this feat. “There are perhaps a few dozen of my people who can still speak this language, and they are nothing more than wrinkled old story tellers now. How can he know this?”

Gorgo shook her head. “I don't know Isabella. What did he say?”

“*Xun naut treemma l' noamuth Bella; Ul'plyr whol ol lu' erl'eele ol, whol ol zhah udossta ulin.*” Isabella said softly. “It means... Do not fear the unknown Bella! Reach for it and embrace it, for it is our future.”

“Wise words,” Gorgo said proudly.

“How would he know I was watching, and that only I would understand the words he spoke?” Isabella asked.

Gorgo smiled. “I don't know... but why don't you ask him when you see him.” She spoke taking Isabella's arm, careful to touch only the covered portions of her arms. “Right now let's get you cleaned up.”

“No... I must tend to Tomas.” Isabella said quickly. “He was my soldier and loyal to me until his death.”

Gorgo smiled. "Perhaps you and my son are not so different after all." Gorgo told her.

"Gorgo... there... there could be nothing between us." Isabella said.

"And once more perhaps that is perhaps what you force yourself to believe." Gorgo spoke. "I am rapidly learning my son does not particularly care for many rules and regulations that do not suit his morals and values."

"No one... no one has ever survived a psychicbolt attack from my father." Isabella said softly. "How was he able to do this?"

Gorgo smiled and this time took Isabella's face in her hands gently. Surprisingly however this time Isabella allowed her to touch her flesh and Gorgo's warm hands caused ripples of sensation to flow through her. "That is something I believe we will discover together. I will leave you to attend to your fallen soldier child. And if nothing else, keep my son's words in your head and heart."

"Thank you Gorgo." She said softly.

"My door will always be open to you Isabella. Never doubt that, for my son has marked you, and if there is anything of his father in him, he will pursue you until he wears you down. Then perhaps you will see that things are not what you believe."

Isabella smiled gently, picturing the Lycavorian King pursuing her for her affections. "Perhaps, we shall see."

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA SLAVE ISLAND

Moran ran into the communications room. "Let's have it!" He yelled.

"Commander... we have an incoming message from Colonel Nestor!" One of the vampire techs yelled out from his station.

Moran stopped by the tech's station and looked at the large monitor. "Put it up." He ordered.

The monitor came alive with the sounds of gunfire and explosions. Nestor's face appeared on the screen from inside his command APC. The entire side of his face was stained with blood from what appeared to be a large cut on his head that had not been treated. His face was drawn and his eyes wide.

"Colonel Nestor?" Moran snapped, "Report!"

"Commander Moran!" Donovan exclaimed. "We've engaged the Drow sir! They built a huge city in Riding Mountain, a relatively medium sized city, but it appears much of it is built and maintained underground. I have my division split and we are assaulting from three different locations. They are fighting hard Colonel, as you can see." Nestor replied flinching as another explosion made his vehicle shake.

"And Leonidas is there?" Moran asked.

Nestor nodded. "He's been leading the defense sir! He has about two hundred Spartans with him and the Drow have fielded three times that! They've been conducting hit and run attacks since we came into range of the city, but we finally got our heavy guns in position and are shelling the city now." As if to emphasize this point, Moran and the others heard the heavy booming of large guns in the distant background.

"I'll order our aircraft into the area to support you!" Moran spoke.

"Negative Commander!" Nestor snapped. "They appear to have an extensive anti-air capability! They shot down all my Advanced Recon Drones, and I've grounded the rest in my Brigades. I fear that any ships that arrive in the area will be immediately targeted. Their anti-air crews are hiding and moving, never shooting from one position."

"What are your casualties?" Moran asked.

"They are heavy sir!" Nestor replied, "But we are steadily advancing. May I suggest that all our commanders have their Blood Trucks stay well behind the main forces Colonel? A Drow scout stumbled upon ours when I pulled them forward and they tried very hard to destroy them."

"I'll inform our other commanders." Moran spoke watching as another near miss caused Nestor to wince as shrapnel could be heard bouncing off his APC. "You're taking fire now?"

Nestor nodded quickly. "They have small mortars set up within the city. We are targeting them, but it is a slow process. They beat back our first two charges, but we have finally made it into the city proper itself. Now

it comes down to building to building and house to house!” His eyes looked bright. “The Spartans have killed many of our troops Commander, but we are superior to them, just as you and the Princess hoped. We have wiped out at least three quarters of those Leonidas brought with him and I believe we have injured him badly. He was last seen retreating underground carrying the body of one of his Queens. The she-wolf Aricia I believe.”

“She was dead?” Moran asked.

“We don’t know for sure sir, but I have reinforced the ground troops who reported this with additional armor and we will find out!” Nestor reported.

“The Drow Colonel, have they rallied behind their Queen?” Moran asked.

They saw Nestor nod, “For the most part yes. A small percentage of them have chosen not to follow her because they believe she has been tainted by Tarifa of the High Elves. They were not happy when they discovered their Drow Queen and Tarifa shared a bed.”

“That is interesting?” Moran said his eyes wide in surprise. “Can you defeat them Nestor?”

Nestor nodded. “Yes sir!” He answered, “Without question.”

“How soon before you can secure the city?” Moran asked.

“At our current rate of advance I estimate we will have secured the city and begun moving into the underground tunnels within three days.” Nestor answered. “I want to insure we have a completely secure perimeter above ground before we begin moving into the lower levels.”

“I can have another division detached to you.” Moran spoke excitedly now.

Nestor seemed to be weighing this over in his mind for a moment before he nodded. “That might be advisable sir. I recommend a new vampire division like my own sir. Our regular divisions would not be able to stand against the Drow. Fighting them is just as bad as fighting the Spartans.”

Moran nodded quickly. “I’ll have one on its way to you within the hour.” He spoke.

“Order them to come up Canadian Route Ten sir, it is a straight shot north to our location and we have left scouts along the entire route to guide them.” Nestor spoke.

Moran nodded. “Colonel Morelli is the furthest north right now. If he turns north he can be to your location in less than two days.”

Nestor nodded. “Once we have secured the city I will wait until Morelli arrives before moving below ground.”

Moran nodded. “Excellent! We will be launching our attack against Eden in two days Nestor. If you have tied up Leonidas there, and the Drow Queen and Tarifa are dead, we are in better shape than we had hoped. Tarifa must be having fits about now, as it was reported to us that she and the Drow Queen were very close. Tareif is handling the defenses of Eden now, with Leonidas’s two other Queens, though we hope to take them out of the picture as well by the end of the day today.”

They could see Nestor’s smile was cruel. “That would throw the Spartans into disarray Commander!” He spoke. “We still have assets in place that can do this?”

Moran nodded. “We do. Five of them actually... but I can’t tell you more.”

Nestor nodded quickly. “Nor do I wish to know more.” He answered. “With Morelli’s added forces we can secure this Drow city easily, and finally kill that Spartan dog! Do you wish me to move south when this is done?”

Moran shook his head. “No. If you can kill Leonidas and the others there, then I give you leave to take whatever prisoners you like and use them in any way you see fit. Save several dozen of the strongest Drow for further experimentations, but you may kill the rest when you are done.” Moran spoke. “Xerxes will be here in just under three days with his forces, and I want to assault on Eden to be well underway by then.”

“We will not fail you Commander.” Nestor spoke.

“If you do this Nestor... Yuri will give you anything you desire.” Moran told him.

Nestor grinned. “I like the sound of that.” He said. “I must return to my lead command element sir. I will report back when Morelli’s forces arrive.”

Moran nodded. “Well done Colonel. Well done.” He watched the monitor go black and he smiled. “Now that is some damn good news.” He said to himself. As an afterthought he turned to another officer. “Have one of our high altitude drones pass over that area. It might be able to pick up some information that Nestor can not see from the ground level.”

The man nodded and began working his control panel. Moran smiled as he left the control center to find Yuri and report to her.

CANADA

EXTRACTION POINT NEAR WHITEWATER LAKE

Nestor turned from the screen and looked at Martin who had been standing by the end of the open ramp during the entire conversation. The area around Nestor's APC had fallen silent now as the Drow and vampire soldiers stopped firing their weapons into the air and setting off grenades into the pits that had been dug. Another barrage of Nestor's heavy guns sailed over their heads targeting the cities of Riding Mountain and Kelwood.

Nestor wiped the blood he had applied to his face away with a rag from a ration pack. He got to his feet as he came down the ramp. "I'll have my gun crews fire several more volleys into the cities to make it look believable from the air."

"You think he'll send one of these drones overhead?" Martin asked.

Nestor nodded. "He may be a vampire now sire, but he has not lost any of the skills given to him when he was created by the Spartan Dymas." He replied. "And he has become the closest advisor to the High Princess. They are almost never apart, and many have begun to think they are sharing a bed every night now."

Martin looked at him, "Really?"

Nestor nodded. "The High Princess rarely gives orders without allowing Moran to review them. It is almost as if she treats him like..."

"Like what?" Martin asked.

Nestor met his eyes, "As you would treat your queens Milord. She is normally very reserved and quick to anger. Lately however, she has become calmer, and more relaxed with the vampire Ministers and others she has contact with. She is also now making more appearances outside the confines of her home in New Miami. Moran is almost always by her side, and she looks upon him with something akin to affection."

Martin smiled. "Well now... that is interesting." He spoke. "I knew Moran before the comet, and he was a prick then. As long as he accomplished the mission he didn't care who or what he had to do."

"If what I have heard is true... she turned him very soon after arriving in what was once the United States." Donovan told him. "And it is my understanding he is the first man she ever turned completely."

"I thought Marcus was..."

Nestor shook his head. "Marcus is a tool she uses to enforce her will, nothing more." Nestor replied. "She has berated him in public before on many occasions, and he has never shared her bed if what I hear is correct. Only Moran has that distinction."

"If what you say is true, that means she turned him right before she came to EDEN." Martin said. "She has always known who I was, and Moran has been helping her as a vampire since even before the comet."

Nestor nodded. "It would appear so Milord."

Martin nodded. "Well... I'll deal with them when the time comes." He spoke looking at Nestor. "You are sure you can pull this off?"

Donovan nodded. "Having them come up Route Ten will send them through several points where I can decimate their entire division and not expose myself. I have given orders to my other two Brigades and they are moving to ambush positions even now. Morelli's division will not survive sire."

Martin nodded. "Make it clear to everyone Donovan; they are not to sacrifice themselves needlessly for any reason." He spoke. "You have risked a great deal in coming here as you have, and I won't see you throw it away in an effort to prove something to me or to others."

"You risked a great deal in trusting us sire." Nestor spoke. "You could just as easily have slaughtered all of us. My men... we wish to prove to you that we are sincere in our desires for the future. I wish to see my child born, and the rest of us wish nothing more than to see their children grow and be happy. Something we were told we could never have."

Martin smiled. "Well if we win this fight... we'll all have that." He said. "And you'll get a chance to meet another High Princess of the Coven."

Nestor looked confused. “Another...,” His eyes grew wide. “Yuri’s sister lives?” He gasped.

Martin nodded. “And she’s coming here with my people. She’s been fighting beside them for the better part of a thousand years now. Apparently she doesn’t care much for her family.”

Nestor smiled brightly. “Now that would be a very great honor indeed Milord. To actually serve under her when she is so hated by the same people we loathe. That is added incentive to fight well.” He looked at Martin. “You will return to Eden now?”

Martin nodded. “There are still agents working in Eden and they are targeting my Queens, which doesn’t make me very happy in the least.” He spoke. “The knowledge that I am up here and pinned down might make them careless. Moran did say they were going to strike before the end of the day today and when that happens I intend to be there.”

Nestor nodded. “Would you be willing to leave a detachment of Drow here with me sire?” He asked. “They... they would make fine forward scouts and spotters for my people.”

Martin nodded. “I can do that.”

“We will not fail you sire.” Nestor spoke.

Martin nodded. “Good luck Colonel. Contact me when you have achieved your goals.”

Nestor nodded and turned to jog to the Hopper that waited for him as Tarifa and Aihola walked up with Aricia.

“Can we trust him completely my love?” Aricia asked, folding herself into Martin’s embrace.

Martin looked at her and then to Tarifa and Aihola. “There are very few people I trust completely, three of whom are standing here right now.” He replied evenly. “Tarifa when we return to Eden I want you to go to the command center with Aihola and Dekton and use your command keys to target one of the missiles on Nestor’s column. There is a tracking device on his command vehicle, use that to lock on. Once you have done that return to your home and stay out of sight until the battle begins.”

Tarifa nodded, her body tingling at the thought of just a few hours alone with Aihola and Dekton. “You don’t trust him then?” She spoke.

“I haven’t detected any lies up until now, but if Yuri was able to genetically create him and his troops to be able to fight in sunlight, there is no telling what else they can and can not do.” Martin said, “Better to be safe than sorry.”

“And the women and children they left in our charge?” Aihola asked.

“We treat them with every respect.” Martin replied quickly. “They could very well be exactly what they appear to be, and I will not have them harmed if that is the case. Put them all in a single shelter together, and if everything works out in the end, they can be assigned permanent housing once we have won.”

They turned to see Dekton walk up. “The last of the Drow and civilians are loaded.” He spoke. “Endith is waiting for us.”

Martin nodded. “Then let’s get back to Eden. Time is going to move quickly now, and I want to be prepared for everything.”

RAPTOR 41

Martin stood next to the chart table in the upper deck observation lounge on *Raptor 41*. He had opted to return to Eden in the Raptor to draw less attention to himself and Aricia. In the cargo hold were perhaps seventy Drow men, women and children and only a handful of Spartan warriors. The rest would slip in this evening aboard *Spartan 01*. He was going over the map of Eden and the valley and mountain ranges surrounding Eden, Tareif’s and Dysea defensive plan already being implemented and transmitted to him.

Aricia came into the lounge quietly, purposely shielding her thoughts and aura from him. She closed the door silently; making sure the lock was engaged before moving up the short flight of stairs into the lounge. Her whole body burned for Martin, and had since he had first arrived in Canada. She needed him now, and it didn’t matter to her where they were. She stared at his back hunched over the chart table as she slowly unfastened her body armor and fatigue top, dropping them quietly to the floor. He must have been engrossed in the defensive layout if he had not detected her by now, and Aricia smiled as she stepped up behind him. She dropped all her shields and hit him with her wildly aroused aura full force. The effect on Martin was both immediate and very

satisfying to Aricia. She hadn't known if she could elicit this type of reaction in him, as he was normally the one who initiated intimate moments with her. Seeing his body stiffen and his head snap around filled Aricia with greater lust and passion, especially when she saw his eyes.

"I... I need you... I need you my..." Aricia couldn't finish her statement as Martin's lips had descended upon hers and his arms had crushed her to him. She groaned into his kiss as his tongue sought and gained entry into her warm mouth. She felt him spin her around and he lifted her slightly, practically tear her fatigue pants down before he set her butt on the chart table, his hands coming up to take her face.

He pulled back from their kiss and stared at her, his thumbs caressing her cheeks, his eyes wide and filled with passion and desire as well; a burning desire for her that made Aricia's hormones dance with glee. "I have missed you so much Little Wolf." He spoke in a soft husky voice.

Aricia looked at him, her azure blue eyes bright and alive with desire and lust. "As much as you miss *Melyanna*," She asked him, using Dysea's name for Anja.

"No one calls to me like you do Aricia." He told her softly, his thumbs still caressing her cheeks. "I love you all, desire you all, but only you are wolf, and only you can make my blood pound as it does now."

Aricia smiled shyly, liking the sound of his words in her ears. Her hands reached up to pull at his armor and fatigues, fighting to get them off his body. "Then take me Martin." She gasped, yanking open his pants, her azure blue eyes never leaving his face. "I burn for you my love!"

Martin lowered his face to her throat, and Aricia gasped as he nibbled her skin, his lips and tongue dancing across her flesh, igniting fires throughout her body. She felt his hands move down, his fingers curling around the thin white panties and she gasped against his shoulder as he ripped them away in one powerful tear. Aricia was already wet and her rich sweet coco scent filled Martin's senses, driving him into his own fever. He brought his fingers up to delicately caress her tanned skin, tracing his fingers along the outsides of her thighs, up the sides of her ribcage and slowly dragging across to her breasts until they lightly pinched Aricia's engorged nipples. He was staring into her face as she grimaced in powerful unfulfilled desire, her arms wrapping around his powerful shoulders as she thrust her full firm breasts out, crushing them against his half clothed chest, her nipples burning points of heat even through the fabric of his t-shirt.

Martin brushed his lips across hers in a tantalizing promise of what he intended while his fingers dropped to her dripping center. Aricia groaned and shifted her hips forward, giving him better access and pressing her soaked mound against his delving fingers. She gasped as his fingers traced the outside of her aroused labia, lightly skimming the delicate flesh, driving her mad with desire. Aricia's heart was hammering against her chest so hard she knew he could hear it, the blood pounding in her head as Martin's fingers slipped inside her, curling upward as they entered her tightness. Her forehead came to rest on his chest as she groaned out her pleasure, her pussy muscles clamping down on his fingers. He stopped moving them as she almost reached her peak, and then the waves that had been building in her belly slowly subsided as he claimed her lips once more, kissing her quite thoroughly until the quivers of her impending explosion subsided. As she breathed deeply, her skin breaking out in sweat, he began again, his fingers curling upward to touch that spot within her. Her eyes were tightly shut, the pounding in her head beginning again, more powerful than before.

"Bas... bastard," Aricia gasped. "Stop... stop teasing..." She moaned when she felt his thumb press into her fully erect and unprotected clit.

Aricia saw him smile as he kept plunging his fingers inside her slick pussy, his thumb brushing against her hard clit, stroking side to side, her breathing coming in short uncontrollable gasps now. She felt her legs tighten and she brought them up to curl up along his waist, her fingers entwined behind his neck. The pressure built and built, her belly clenching in sweet pleasure and Aricia felt as if her abdominal muscles would stretch to a breaking point. And then everything did erupt and she threw her head back and cried out softly as she shuddered in the powerful orgasm, her come flooding out of her, soaking his fingers and the edge of the table with her juices. Her neck muscles strained, her eyes rolling into the back of her head and before the quivers of bliss had even subsided she felt Martin grip her ass cheeks tightly and he pulled her forward.

Aricia didn't recall when he had removed his pants, or the ridiculous picture it would have made to see his fatigue pants bunched around his knees. All that mattered to her was the rapture of feeling his wonderfully thick twelve inch cock spear her in one fluid motion and slam completely home into her depths. Conscious thought left her then as he moved inside her, his urgent desire and need matching her own in every way. His aura exploded forth and washed over her, heightening the sensations his powerful thrusts made her feel. His

strokes became fierce and powerful, his aura hungry for her as she shook in his arms with each delicious plunge into her pussy. She clamped her muscles down on him with each backward motion, causing his eyes to change and his teeth to lengthen in his own lust and desire as he hissed in agonizing pleasure.

Aricia had just experienced a powerful orgasm by him using his fingers on her, and she already felt the pressure building again deep in her belly.

“More my love,” She gasped against his lips. “Possess... possess me! Fuck... fuck me!” She cried out, using words now she had never used before.

Martin did just that driving, deeper into her velvet warmth, her words spurring him on. The heat from her clenching pussy was driving him mad with desire, her sweet pungent coco scent overwhelming everything else. He adjusted his thrusts into her wetness, altering the angle slightly, and placing his hands under her thighs lifting her a little. This allowed him to stroke deeper into her hungry pussy, his large balls filled with come, banging against her firm upturned asscheeks as he drove forward again and again. Like Aricia he was lost to the passion now, his hands caressing her satin flesh, his lips dropping to suck hard on her right nipple, drawing a gasp of sensual pleasure and pain from her. His hands moved to hold her hips; his fingers bruising her skin and neither of them cared in the least. Aricia’s long nails dug into the muscles of his shoulders and neck as she hung on for dear life, the pleasure ripping through her more intense than anything they had yet experienced together. His aura was so pure, so powerful, and right now it pulsed and burned only for her, causing her to wither in unabashed delight as it filled every nerve ending of her lush body.

Aricia buried her face in his neck, breathing deeply of his mint scent, feeling his long black hair against her skin, her senses alive like never before. Her own aura glowed with a power she did not know she had, and she felt the waves overwhelming her. She wrapped her arms around his shoulders, her body feeling like it was on fire and then she was leaping off that cliff in a whirlwind of mind blowing ecstasy. Her entire body went rigid within his embrace and she felt him slam into her one final time, his scorching out balls pressed tightly to her ass. His huge cock swelled even larger inside her and then his searing hot come was blasting into her womb with jet like force. The first blast of his seed triggered her own orgasm and she joined his scream of release as her pussy clamped down on his deeply buried shaft and her come flooded from her with a force she had not yet felt.

Aricia bit down on his powerful shoulder muscle, quivering madly as his eruptions into her followed one after the other. She shook in intense orgasms of her own as he unloaded more of his come into her than ever before, his arms wrapped around her body, crushing her to him with almost painful pressure.

It was several minutes before his embraced lessened, and he slowly brought his hands up along her back. She was still quite impaled upon his thick shaft, his orgasm not lessening his immense size within her. She looked at him with wide eyes, feeling his desire for her remain a strong smoldering thing, enveloping her. He kissed her hard, and Aricia felt the fires ignite once more deep within her as she met his tongue with her own in an erotic battle. She felt him stretching her, filling her completely, the heat of his buried cock mixing with her own fires. Their lower bodies were slick with their combined juices and he simply stared at her as their kiss broke; the passion and lust still very evident in his yellow/gold eyes.

“How... how long before we land?” He gasped.

Aricia shook her head and groaned sensually as he flexed his huge cock within her. “I... I don’t care!” She gasped. “I... I want more of you now!” She spoke, her own eyes changed into her azure blue wolf orbs. Aricia saw him smile lustfully exposing his fangs and she groaned as the fire in her belly ignited once more.

“You... you are very demanding today Little Wolf.” He spoke, clenching his teeth as she moved her hips on him.

Aricia smiled wickedly. “Are you not up to the task my love?” She asked in a low alluring voice.

Martin’s eyes narrowed slightly and he matched her wicked grin. “Let’s find out!”

Aricia screamed out her pleasure as he laid her across the chart table and put her legs on his shoulders. He took hold of her hips and slammed into her completely. Aricia’s eyes rolled into the back of her head once more as Martin showed her just how up to the task he was.

Kenny brought the Raptor around slowly, coming off the base course he had been using since leaving earth's atmosphere. He had to adjust his course every few minutes to keep EDEN's sensors from detecting his approach, and now thirteen hours later, the tiring exercise was paying off. He plunged in low over the moon's surface, well below EDEN's surface scanners, and eased back on his throttles to a more sedate speed.

"We're in the pipe Admiral!" He called back into the cargo hold.

Wallace moved forward quickly, wearing the special pressurized suit that they would drop to the moon's surface in. He settled to one knee next to Kenny. "Any chance they detected us?" He asked.

Kenny shook his head. "Not a chance. I'm guessing they are still pretty new at using our equipment. I can tell you they got partial main power back though. Passive sensors picked up power grid fluxes from five of the eight generators."

Wallace nodded. "We expected as much. No weapons or sensors?"

Kenny shook his helmeted head, "Nothing that is sweeping and no chirps from the weapons grid either. Maybe they can't make the reactor work. It is Russian."

Wallace chuckled. "As much as I would like to agree with you Kenneth, the vampire engineers are well skilled and have enough intelligence on how to install even a Russian reactor in place."

"It was a long shot." Kenny spoke with a shrug. "Seven minutes to drop zone. You still want to go in at this altitude. I can get lower."

Wallace shook his head. "Our plan calls for a one mile drop, and we'll stick to it. Give us a soft nudge Kenneth."

Kenny nodded. "Count on it Admiral." He answered. Wallace started to turn but Kenny stopped him, all seriousness on his face, "For Sparta Admiral."

Wallace nodded, "For Sparta." He spoke before moving into the back cargo hold where Anari, Radama and the seven others waited. He looked at them, pride in his eyes. Four of them were Drow warriors like Anari, two of Vengal's Wood Elf Rangers and a human that Dienekes had trained. Martin had informed him of this plan four months ago, and Wallace had been drilling this team since that time. He and Anari knew EDEN, and neither of them had been happy to win back the station from Graham only to lose it. Now was their chance to get it back.

"Remember to follow your beacons once on the surface." Wallace told them. "The area where we are landing is three kilometers from EDEN's furthest entry point. Activate your gravity thrusters before leaving your pod, and move as normally as possible. We are undetected and do not need to rush. I do not want dead heroes my friends. If we can not accomplish this mission, Kenny will be on station a short distance away, and we will depart."

"How many enemy?" The human asked. He was a man of medium height, but very lean and muscular. Dienekes had said he was the best of the scouts he had trained, even better than the few elves in the group.

"We don't know exact numbers Mical." Anari replied to his question, "But we have to assume at least two or three thousand by now. This isn't an assault... our mission is to sneak into the secondary control room, secure it and then use it to transfer all EDEN's power when the King give us the signal."

"Don't worry," Mical spoke. "I have no desire to tangle with three thousand vampires. Just a certain half vampire," He stated looking directly at Anari. His green eyes were very direct in what they expressed and this caused Anari's eyes to widen in surprise.

Wallace chuckled. "The passive scans indicate that the secondary control room is in an area of EDEN that the Alliance is not patrolling on a regular basis." Wallace told them. "As long as we are cautious and alert we should have no problem infiltrating the base."

"Three minutes out!" Kenny's voice came back to them.

Wallace nodded. "Alright... let's get to our pods and I will see everyone on the surface."

Anari stepped up to Mical as he began opening his drop pod. "Mical..." She spoke, unsure of what to tell him. Anari had long ago decided not to hide what she was and her rock solid relationship with Hetyon and the now deepening friendship she shared with Lynwe and Selene had only reinforced that. "It would... it would not be wise to seek... to seek a relationship with me." She said.

"You mean because of Hetyon?" He asked.

Anari nodded. "That is... that is part of it yes. Nothing will ever come between us Mical; we love each other too much."

“I’m not looking to come between you and her Anari.” He replied, securing a piece of his equipment to his pressure suit, his face calm.

“Mical... I am... I am different.” She said.

Mical looked at her evenly. “If you are referring to the equipment you are packing,” He spoke, seeing Anari’s eyes go wide. “Do you think I would still be standing here talking with you if that mattered to me?”

“You know... you know of...” Anari gasped.

“Anari... I like to consider myself a student of history.” Mical spoke. “I have never agreed with how elves were treated... and you and Hetyon are just about the two hottest female elves I have ever seen. I believe it is the King who says we should not fear the unknown, well I fear quite a bit... but what I don’t fear is you. The interest is there Anari... how you wish to proceed is entirely up to you.”

Mical stepped up into his pod and smiled at her as the hatch slid into place. He pressed a panel on the inside and smiled once more. “See you on the ground.”

Anari nodded slowly, her eyes still wide at what he had just told her, and she watched his pod lower into its recessed launch tube. She shook her head quickly to clear her thoughts and then moved for her pod. If she didn’t know any better, Anari would say another door into her future had just opened, and surprisingly she found herself very willing to step through it.

EDEN

Lynwe turned as Hetyon and Anisa came into the command center and she waved them over next to her. They both wore visitor passes on their shirts and they moved to stand next to her. Hetyon took her hand and squeezed tightly as she kissed her cheek.

“They have just launched.” Lynwe spoke softly, pointing to the large monitor in front of them. “We’ll be able to pick up their internal communications as soon as they deactivate their retro boosters in about twenty seconds.”

Anisa looked around the command center, taking in the silence of the men and women as they waited. There was a mixture of humans and elves, with a smattering of Drow elves in the room at assorted consoles. She saw War Master Tareif standing next to Selene and Treblar, King Anon beside them. Anisa had the distinction of being the first female who was half elf/half Lycavorian in Eden that was carrying a child. She and William had discovered she was pregnant about three months ago, and she was just starting to show signs of that pregnancy. Anisa considered it the most sacred of gifts for her to be carrying this child, and she had done everything right so far. And William, though many considered him a crotchety old Spartan Wolf, doted over her as if she was a cherished treasure.

“Burn through,” A voice called out.

Static was replaced by voices chattering away in calm crisp statements.

“Descending through half a mile,” Wallace’s voice spoke first.

“Watch your spacing,” Anari’s voice echoed in the speakers now.

Lynwe smiled and shook her head looking at Hetyon’s worried face. “She always was the more adventurous of the two of us.” She said.

“Use your horizontal thrusters to maintain proper spacing.” Anari’s voice echoed again.

“Prepare to engage braking thrusters on my mark people.” William spoke, “Three... two... one... mark! Engage braking thrusters!”

The sound pitch coming from the screen changed as they could all hear the powerful thrusters engage in Admiral Wallace’s pod through his com channel, “Looking good people. Adjust course three degree port roll, execute!”

“Mical!” Anari’s voice echoed. “You didn’t execute the roll!”

“Port thrusters are frozen!” Mical’s voice filled the com channel now. “Shit... stand by!”

“Mical... you have to roll three degrees or you’ll end up on the far side of the moon!” Anari’s voice told him, concern in her tone now. “Roll now!”

“Keep your panties on!” Mical replied testily. “God damned machine!”

The sound of metal against metal echoed on the intercom and then the loud noise of firing rockets. They heard an escaping sigh of relief.

“Pod rolling,” Mical’s voice spoke. “Someone want to tell the King that we need to upgrade these damn pods? They’re only six hundred fucking years old!”

The men and women in the control room heard chuckling on the intercom from several different people and then Wallace’s voice spoke. “I’ll be sure to tell him that Mical.” He spoke in reply. “What’s your damage?”

“No damage. I just had to hit the control modulator with the butt of my HK for it to see things my way.” Mical replied. “I’m leaking oxygen... but I’ll be able to set down with no problems and switch to my suit’s air.”

“Are you sure?” Anari asked more concern in her voice.

Lynwe looked at Hetyon when she heard the tone of Anari’s voice. “Who is this Mical?” She asked softly.

Hetyon blushed slightly. “He is a human male that Dienekes has trained. He has shown... he has shown an interest in Anari and me.” She replied.

Lynwe smiled, “Really?” She asked. “And he is human?”

Hetyon nodded. “We did not think anything of it at first, until Dienekes mentioned it to Anari some weeks ago. He continues to try and invite us to dine with him. I don’t believe he knows... I don’t believe he knows in what way Anari is different.”

Lynwe smiled. “If that is all that matters to him, then he is better off left alone.” She said. “Perhaps you and she should pursue this Hetyon.”

“Lynwe... we have... we have you and Selene.” Hetyon replied.

Lynwe nodded and felt her body flush. The four of them had enjoyed many encounters in the last months as friends and lovers, and it only made them that much closer. “And you always will... but if this human male is open to it... then perhaps children could be in your future together with Anari.”

Hetyon looked at her, the expression on her face showing that this was not something she had considered. Mical’s voice filled the intercom then. “Yeah I’ll live. Man I hate machines!” Mical’s voice echoed.

“Ok people cut the chatter!” William’s voice spoke. “Radio silence from here on in until we link up on the ground. Good luck all!”

Lynwe turned fully to Anisa and Hetyon. “It will be perhaps an hour before they link up on the surface and begin movement to EDEN.” She said. “Selene and I will wait with you in the lounge.”

Selene stepped up to them as Lynwe said that and slipped her hand into her lover’s with a smile. “The first phase is finished.” She spoke looking at Lynwe. “Did you invite them?”

Lynwe nodded. “Just before you came over.” She said.

Selene turned back to Hetyon and Anisa. She stepped up to Anisa and took her arm gently. “The Admiral asked that we take extra special care of you.” She said with a warm smile.

Anisa chuckled. “I’m sure.” She said. “Did he give you the menu he has me on?” She laughed.

Selene looked at Lynwe with a broad smile as Lynwe took Hetyon’s hand. “He most certainly did... and Lynwe and I intend to ignore it completely while he is gone.”

Anisa laughed heartily. “Thank the gods.” She said softly. “Is the food good here?”

Selene squeezed her arm as they headed out of the control room. “It has to be better than what he is feeding you.” She said. “What exactly is Asparagus Salad?”

Anisa shook her head. “You don’t want to know.”

“I have them.” The vampire spoke, his eyes taking in Anja and Dysea as they left the Eden Command Center holding hands and climbed into the Hopper. “They are leaving, heading back to your location as usual.”

“Affirmative,” The voice replied in his headset. “Maintain your surveillance for another twenty minutes and then bring our vehicle to the rendezvous.”

“Understood,” The vampire/genome soldier spoke. The vampire soldier set aside his binoculars and pulled the canteen over to take a drink. He was lying on the roof of the fifteen story apartment building six blocks from the command center, giving him an unobstructed view of the front entrance of the Eden Command facility. His keen vampire eyes detected the armored Hopper pull around the front of the building and move slowly to the side where it stopped. “What’s this?” The vampire spoke, setting aside the canteen and retrieving

the binos. Even his enhanced vampire vision could not get details from this distance and he needed to use the binos.

He brought them to his eyes just as the side door of the Hopper slid open and four fully armed Spartans took up positions outside the Hopper, their weapons at the ready, their helmets covering their faces completely except for the gap in the front. He felt the familiar surge in his gut upon seeing them, the small grasp of fear instilled in all vampires, turned or pureblood at the sight of Spartans in full armor.

He adjusted the binos for a clearer picture just as the shimmering white hair poked out of the Hopper and Aihola stepped out, followed quickly by the long raven black hair of the High Elf Queen. The genome vampire felt his stomach lurch even more now, knowing that these two women were not supposed to be in Eden. They were supposed to be Canada being pinned down by one of the vampire super soldier divisions. His heart began to race at what he was seeing as they made their way into the side of the building followed by the stern looking Spartan warrior who was last out of the Hopper.

“Surprised aren’t you!” The voice spoke from behind him.

The genome vampire rolled over and was coming to his feet using his vampire speed, but it didn’t matter. The point of the *Nehtes* entered his abdomen and plunged completely through his body. The genome vampire’s eyes went wide in agony as he felt the razor like spear head slice through his organs before punching out his lower back. He looked up slowly, his hands holding the shaft of the *Nehtes* buried in his guts and saw the tall muscular form approach him through clouded eyes. Blood began to seep from between his lips as he recognized Martin when he stopped only two meters away from him.

“I can’t have you telling your friends what’s going on now.” Martin spoke calmly. “That wouldn’t be fair.”

“You’re... you’re supposed to be in Canada.” The vampire spat, blood pouring from between his lips.

Martin nodded his head, his eyes changed to yellow/gold orbs, his fangs protruding from his mouth, the crested helmet hiding all but the four inch gap in the front of his face. He looked especially ferocious staring at one of the men he had known from before the comet.

“How does it feel scumbag?” Martin asked in a low voice. “You... you were a good soldier once... what happened?”

“The Colonel... the Colonel saved us from the disease.” The man spoke slowly, his eyes showing the pain he was in, his hands wrapped tightly around the shaft of the *Nehtes*, “Had... had to follow him.”

Martin stepped closer grasping the shaft of the *Nehtes* and twisting slowly, causing the genome vampire to rise up on his tiptoes in an effort to make the pain scorching through his guts go away. “So you became a brutal killer?” Martin asked. “All of you?”

“We... we wanted to live.” The man replied. “I... I know you. You... you won’t kill me. We... we are alike. You... you always were... you always were a bleeding heart!”

Martin smiled from behind his helmet and it was not an exceptionally pleasant smile. He gripped the *Nehtes* tighter. “You don’t know me.” He growled. “You never did... and you never will.” Martin ripped the *Nehtes* free of the genome vampire’s guts, the spearhead ripping intestines and pieces of flesh from the man’s body as Martin yanked. “And all of you were sorry excuses for soldiers!” He spat as the genome vampire slumped to the rooftop, half his abdomen open to the air and blood rapidly pooling around his knees. He was losing blood at such a rapid rate his face took on a grayish color and it only grew darker and more wrinkled as he slumped forward to land on his face.

Aricia! He reached out with his mind.

I am waiting for them my love! I have plotted the positions of the other four. I will advise Anja and Dysea when they enter our home. Aricia answered immediately.

Can you handle them Little Wolf?

Martin heard Aricia chuckle softly in his head. *We will handle them my love.*

I’ll see you there!

Martin collapsed his *Nehtes* and in a silvery flash of light shifted into his wolf form as he began to run towards the edge of the building. He cleared the side of the rooftop and made the ten meter jump to the next rooftop as easily as if stepping across a bridge.

The massive black wolf was last seen ducking into the doorway of the emergency stairs leading down to street level.

“I just think we should adjust the medical teams to more suit your command teams.” Anja was explaining to Dysea as they entered their home. “Assigning medics to the command teams is something we should do anyway and...”

Having Dysea arrive two days before had been a godsend for Anja, as she missed Aricia terribly, much more than she thought she would. Dysea’s firm warm body had chased away the loneliness of not having Aricia with her and her wildflower scent and taste was very welcome and exceptionally delicious, but Anja and Aricia had grown far closer. These last weeks together had deepened their relationship to the point they could almost sense each other’s thoughts. Next to Martin, Aricia was the only person Anja truly needed to be with anymore, and she was sure Little Wolf felt the same way.

The rich smell of coco filled their senses as they entered their home and they both came to abrupt halts. Both knew immediately what it was, their eyes going wide as they saw Aricia come around the corner from the kitchen with a huge smile on her face. Anja’s face lit up and she broke into a small jog, crossing the distance between them in six steps.

“Aricia!” Anja exclaimed.

Dysea stood to the side with a smile on her face as Anja and Aricia shared a soul deep tongue filled kiss. She didn’t feel left out or neglected, as that was not what their relationship was all about. She loved both Anja and Aricia deeply, but she knew that Isabella was the one she was meant for. It was as if fate had paired Martin’s Queens together; Anja and Aricia, and she and Isabella, yet they all loved Martin more than their own lives. And Dysea knew that Aricia would be the true strength behind *Nauta Melme*, as she was of his people, and she was becoming stronger as the days passed. Dysea sniffed the air deeply, detecting something odd about Aricia, something just lingering under the overwhelming scent of *Nauta Melme* all over her. She had been with him recently, and that thought made Dysea yearn for him as well. However there was something different about Aricia now, and she could not place it. Those thoughts were quickly brushed aside as Aricia stepped over to her and embraced her, and their lips came together to share the deep passionate kiss.

After a long moment they parted and Aricia looked at them, reaching out to take Anja’s hand. “Martin is on his way here now.” Aricia told them. “There are four vampire agents, genomes that Moran turned, surrounding the house.” She told them seeing their senses become alert and tense. “We believe they will try to enter the house tonight.”

“How did you enter if they are watching the house now?” Dysea asked.

Aricia smiled. “They are watching the front of the house.” She said, “Not the back. The wolves that Martin allows to come and go as they please in the back helped me. I followed members of their pack into the yard and then waited until I could dash inside.”

“How will Martin get in?” Anja asked.

“He will remain outside until dusk, and when they move on the house he will tell us and we will strike.” Aricia spoke, her cruel smile infectious as she saw Anja and Dysea take on a similar smile as well.

Ladies! Martin’s voice filled their minds.

They had spent the better part of two hours filling each other in on what had transpired over the course of the last few days, until finally they had been content to simply lounge against each other on the large couch. Martin’s deep confident voice brought them to full alertness in a split second.

Martin! They responded almost simultaneously.

Company is coming to visit my lovely trio, time to lay out the welcome mat. He told them, *Genome vampire from the north, one east and one west. I’ll take the asshole at the front door.*

Martin did not see them split up inside the house, but he could sense it and he smiled at the precision with which they moved. He could smell their confidence and courage, and the simmering pulse of their auras for him. He grinned sending his own aura back to them in much the same way.

There was a large bay window on the east side of their home, and here the first Genome vampire moved stealthily, using his vampire speed in short bursts and then waiting to insure he was undetected. He reached the

window, kneeling down just below the edge and lifting only his eyes to peer in. The room appeared empty, and the shadows would suit him well as he reached up to use the small laser. He attached the suction cup with one hand and proceeded to cut a large section of the window out of the frame, enough for his body to slip in. Using the suction grip he lowered the four by four piece of glass to the ground beside him and then began to inch his body into the opening. He was on his back as he slid through the opening, his silenced sidearm held in one hand across his chest, his vampire eyes searching the darkness in front of him.

“Hi there,” The soft female voice spoke from the side.

The genome’s eyes went wide as his head snapped over to see Dysea standing in the shadows next to him. Her emerald wolf eyes blazed in the shadows and she smiled, showing her vicious looking fangs. In a single blink he was bringing his silenced weapon up, but not quite fast enough as Dysea drove her *Nehtes* down through his skull between his wide eyes. The spear point exploded from the back of his skull, severing the spinal column and his hand with the silenced weapon twitched once before going limp.

Dysea twisted the *Nehtes* savagely before ripping it back out of his head insuring he did not get back up. She glanced outside the window before moving like a ghost to the doorway.

Aricia stood to the side of the door on the west side of the house. It opened onto a small patio that had outdoor furniture on it, and she breathed evenly, careful not to let her heart race. Her prey was a vampire, and while their hearing was not as keen as a wolf, they could detect the sound of a pounding heart. Her eyes had changed to wolf azure blue, her fangs protruding from beneath her soft lips as she waited. She could smell the vampire outside the door, and her nose wrinkled slightly. He smelled as if he hadn’t bathed in a week and Aricia knew then he was the most inexperienced of the genome vampires. No experienced soldier would come close to a wolf’s home smelling as he did. She waited, breathing evenly as she watched the doorknob turn slowly, another sign of his inexperience. Martin had installed this old fashioned door in their home for looks mainly. It was made of rich pine and quite sturdy, but it was also a defensive measure. He obviously did not know that this door opened outward, and when Aricia’s hearing detected the soft inaudible click of the door clearing its latch she stepped away from the wall and kicked the door with all her strength.

The hard pine wood door impacted the vampire’s face, instantly crushing his nose as his body sailed back several feet to sprawl on the patio. Aricia was on him before he could recover, stepping into a vicious kick to his head that caused him to see bright stars flash in his cobalt blue eyes as several of his teeth, including his fangs were painfully ripped from his gums. As he rolled over, his hands going to his face screaming in agony, Aricia dropped all one hundred and fifteen pounds of her weight onto the small of his back in a knee drop. She heard his spine snap with a loud crunch as she reached forward and grabbed his jaw and his dirty hair. She yanked his head to the right, nearly tearing his head off with her wolf strength, his neck popping like a gunshot.

Anja was tracking the genome that was making his way into their home through the sliding back door that opened into the yard. He had the door open half way when Aricia’s kick to the side door snapped his head around and made him freeze. Anja was poised to strike instantly, and when the genome made the decision to go help his comrade she struck without mercy. Anja punched her fist through the plate glass window and snatched the genome vampire’s collar before he went two steps. As the glass shattered and began to fall she yanked him into the room savagely, tossing him into the wall with a mighty throw. Anja heard him grunt in pain as she stepped up to him before he could recover and she drove her *Nehtes* through his chest, imbedding it in the wall he slumped against. His cobalt eyes were open in shock and pain, but nothing except blood poured from between his lips as her thrust had sliced completely through his vampire heart and shredded his lungs as well.

The front door hissed open and Anja turned her head seeing the last genome vampire come rolling into the room his weapon chattering out silenced death. Flame belched from his weapon, and Anja threw herself behind the couch quickly, rolling with all the speed she could muster bullets zipping over her head and impacting the wall and glass behind her. She heard a soft gurgle and came to her knees, the K12 in her hands leveled at the door.

The last genome vampire was looking oddly through his cobalt eyes at the long shaft of the *Nehtes* that had pierced completely through his thick neck. The spear head had severed his spinal column just below the base of his skull, and all motor functions ceased, his hands dropping to his sides as his weapon clattered to the floor. Anja’s jade green wolf eyes watched him warily as she came slowly to her feet, the K12 never wavering.

“Shoot up my home will you?” The distinctly deep male voice snapped from behind the vampire in the shadows. Anja felt the smile crease her face as Martin stepped inside the doorway, and she could see the blue sirens of Eden’s internal security over his shoulder through the open door.

Martin stepped in front of the vampire and glared at him. The obsidian eyes were already dead and Martin reached out, tearing his *Nehtes* free of the man’s neck, the body falling to the floor of the hallway. He collapsed the *Nehtes* and turned slowly, looking at Anja as Aricia and Dysea came from the two sides of the house to stand next to her. Martin stepped further into the house and looked at them.

“Do you realize how much work we’re going to have to do to fix all this shit?” He told them. “I’m a soldier... not a carpenter!”

Anja was the first to reach him and she practically threw herself into his arms, his face plastered with a huge smile as Aricia and Dysea stepped up to him quickly, his aura flooding through all of them with pure unadulterated love.

MOON BASE EDEN

To say the walk across the surface of the moon went well would be a large lie. Wallace was the only one with zero gravity training, and while he had attempted to teach them about it as much as he could, without the proper facilities, it was next to impossible to fully teach. All of the six men and women who had accompanied him were having difficulties right out of the pods. They had landed thankfully within a twenty meter radius, and Wallace was able to keep Anari and Radama from floating away. They had forgotten to activate the gravity thrusters on their suits and almost ended up drifting far up into the stars. Once he had them all situated together, their eyes wide behind their face plates with fear and exhilaration they headed for the base. A thin nylon rope tied them all together, and while Wallace led, Anari brought up the rear.

It was slow going until all of them got their space legs under them and were able to move more fluidly. If they had been seen from a ship it would have been a humorous sight, seven gray clad figures bounce running across the surface of the moon looking like penguins as they waddled along. It was almost ninety minutes before the edge of the base came into view, and all of them were shocked at the size and magnitude of what lay before them. Anari had known EDEN was huge, but she had never seen it from the outside like this and it appeared as if they were staring at a massive city. Wallace guided them forward, very few lights dotting the structure around them, indicating that this area of the base had minimal power reaching it. He led them to a position under the twenty foot high terminal section, the five foot thick steel legs providing support for the structure above them.

“This is one of the secondary landing pads on the east side of the base.” Wallace told them as they huddled underneath the overhang. “It’s the furthest location from the main Command Center.”

Anari’s amber eyes scanned the terminal section above them keenly, looking for any sign of recent use. “There does not seem to be very much power to this section Admiral.” She spoke.

Wallace nodded, his eyes doing the same thing. “They must be restoring main power to the grids in order as they charge up the new reactor.” He replied. “And it appears they are more efficient than we thought. As we crested the ridge back there I saw main power to almost three quarters of the station. That tells me they’ve had the reactor online for at least a day already.”

“They can’t detect us?” Radama asked.

Wallace shook his head. “This base was built in the crater for a reason.” He answered. “Any attack against it would need to come from transports we would detect with our sensors. We never installed ground sensors for the type of operation we’re doing right now.”

Radama looked at him. “I thought you said you had done this before.”

Wallace grinned behind his face plate. “I have... in simulations.”

“You mean...” Mical started.

Wallace nodded. “Congratulations... you are the first seven astronauts to ever conduct a land assault on the moon.”

Anari began to chuckle first and then Wallace heard all of them join with her in some fashion. He smiled to himself knowing they had gotten over the worst part and all of them had remained in control and alert.

“The emergency hatch is over here. Once we get inside... the oxygen might be a little thin. Since power on this end of the base hasn't been restored fully, the ventilation circulators will only be working at half power.” Wallace told them. “Don't try to take deep breaths, short controlled breaths work best until you grow accustomed to it.” He saw them all nod and he headed for what appeared to be a hatch of some sort. The small panel on the side was blinking green and he opened the cover. There was a small control panel and he entered a seven digit code, the light changing to solid green and no longer blinking. There was a loud grinding noise and then the hatch slid open to reveal a dark interior. He turned back to them. “Remember... don't take your helmets off until we adjust the internal pressure or you will set off the pressure sensors and they'll know they have visitors.” Once more he saw the nods and he turned to lead them into the interior.

EDEN

Martin shook hands with Tareif as the others in the command center exchanged embraces and greetings. Eden's Internal Security had kept a tight lid on the events at their home, and the only information that had been released so far was that an assassination attempt on Anja and Dysea had occurred.

“I reviewed the defensive plan while I was returning,” Martin told him. “Couldn't have done it better myself War Master.”

Tareif smiled at his King's words. “We will be heavily outnumbered if what Tarifa tells me is true sire.”

Martin nodded. “Yeah... well I have some surprises that might cull that number down a bit. It's coming down to do or die now my friend, and unfortunately I believe it is my fault.”

Tareif shook his head. “It would have come to this sooner or later sire.” He said. “Having you discover your history and position did nothing but make it happen sooner. And I would much rather face these odds with you knowing who you are, and the friends we have made this past year.”

“My men are here?” Martin asked.

“The Spartans are arriving at the alternate airfield and moving into position through tunnels.” Tareif replied with a nod. “They are remaining out of sight in case there are more spies within Eden itself.”

Martin nodded. “Keep them out of sight for now.” He said. “Yuri will undoubtedly think I will not bring Spartans here to fight her for fear of leaving Sparta unprotected. It will be a big surprise when they are seen.”

Tareif looked at him. “Twenty thousand sire? *Have* you left your city unprotected?”

“Eden is my city as well.” Martin replied. “And no... I haven't left Sparta unprotected. If Yuri wishes to attack Sparta she is more than welcome too. Sparta has a population of almost half a million men, women and children, three quarters of them ready to fight if necessary. The regular Spartan army isn't large, only eighty thousand centurions, but unless they hit Sparta with an overwhelming force of vampires the city is in no danger.”

Martin and Tareif turned as Lynwe came up to them, Selene holding tightly to her hand. Martin smiled as he hugged the tall Drow warrior. “Lynwe... it's good to see you again.” He said.

Lynwe smiled. “We are happy you have finally returned sire.” She said. She looked at Selene and pulled her closer. “Sire... I don't believe you have ever met Selene.”

Selene stood in front of the tall Spartan King and couldn't help but shiver. She had not gone through the same schooling as most full vampires and therefore did not have the ingrained fear of pureblood Lycavorians, but looking at Martin, Selene nevertheless felt the fear grip her stomach as his eyes settled on her, dark eyes that seemed to pierce her very soul. Martin reached out and took her hand gently. “It is a pleasure to finally meet Eden's Chief Secretary.” He spoke.

Selene was stunned at the gentleness and warmth his hands displayed, her blue eyes wide at his words. She glanced at Lynwe quickly and then back to Martin. “Thank... thank you sire.” She stammered.

“I actually brought a book back from Sparta that I think your father will enjoy.” Martin said. “It's not T.S. Elliott, but it's a good read nonetheless. As soon as my gear catches up with me I'll make sure I give it to you.”

“I'm... I'm sure he would enjoy it sire.” Selene replied still somewhat stunned at his reaction to her.

Martin chuckled. “You are surprised at something?”

“I did... I did not expect such...” Selene began to say.

“Acceptance?” Martin asked with a smile.

“Yes Milord.” Selene replied honestly.

Martin chuckled. “Did you think I would hold what happen to you against you Selene?” He asked. “I would not wish on anyone what you have gone through in the last few years, and to see that you are strong and still standing says quite a bit of your character.”

Selene glanced at Lynwe again, this time with smiling eyes. “I have had a rock to lean on Milord.” She said.

Martin nodded. “So you have. And many people have leaned on you lately and for that I thank you.” He said. “Now... we will have to lean on each other. I plan on putting you in charge of the defense of the bunkers.”

Selene looked at him shocked, “Sire?”

“You are a politician Selene, I know that. But you are also a full blooded vampire with certain strengths that others do not. I need you to combine all your skills now, and if things begin to go badly for us, I need you to lead the people out of here.” Martin told her.

“Me sire?” She asked.

Martin nodded. “I know Lynwe has been schooling you to use your vampire skills, and while you have not had to use them yet, I need someone who is strong enough to lead should anything happen to us.”

“Sire... the people follow Tarifa and Aihola and you.” Selene spoke. “They would never follow me.”

Martin grinned. “No?” He asked, “Tareif who exactly is the most popular politician in Eden right now?”

Tareif smiled. “I dare say that most of the conversations at the cafés recently have been in regards to how well Selene has been leading Eden with Tarifa and Aihola out of the city.” He answered. “You may not see it child, but when people look at you, they see the good a vampire can do. Not the vileness that Yuri has wrought.”

“You have been the one to convince over half the elf clans across the world to join our cause according to Tarifa.” Martin said. “They trust your straightforwardness and your candor. By the way, telling the Forest Elves in South America if they did not conform to the future and abolish their slave practices that you would come down there personally with the whole of Eden’s military and wipe their sorry ass off the face of the earth was brilliant!”

Selene looked at him embarrassed. “You know of that?” She asked.

Martin laughed. “Strangely enough Tarifa and I have become like brother and sister. She tells me almost everything. You frightened them so badly that they abolished their slave laws the next day.”

“Your... your people... they hate vampires sire.” Selene said softly.

Martin nodded slowly. “One day I encourage you to read the history of my people and of Sparta. Among that history you will see that yes the hate runs very deep, among them my father himself, but you will also find that Lycavorians and Spartans are a very forgiving and compassionate species. Our hatred is not all consuming, and over the years it has allowed many vampires to live freely among the Lycavorian people, including one of the High Lord’s own daughters and several million who follow her. I tend to judge people on their actions Selene, and your actions, as well as Lynwe and all those like her have been beyond reproach.”

Selene looked at him for a long moment before a small smile crossed her face. “You honor me with your words my King.” She said.

“And you honor Eden and all those who live here with your actions.” He told her.

“I will do as you ask sire.” Selene spoke confidently. “I will not fail you or the people of Eden.”

Martin nodded. “I know you won’t.” He said. “We’re going to have a full meeting in several hours for all ranking officers and Council Elders. Yuri is going to move rather quickly when she discovers what has happened. We need to be prepared.”

The monitor in the main room came alive then and Tareif touched Martin’s arm. “Sire... we are getting the feed from Admiral Wallace again.”

“I’ll see you both in a few hours.” Martin said quickly, turning to follow Tareif into the main communications room.

Lynwe squeezed Selene’s hands and pulled her into an embrace. “I told you.” She said.

Selene relished in the feelings of Lynwe’s strong arms around her and slid her own arms around her Drow Mistress and lover’s waist. “We have much to do Lynwe.” She said.

Lynwe nodded. “Yes we do.”

“We are secure for now.” Wallace reported.

Martin and Tareif stood near the middle of the room looking at the monitor. Eden techs were at their stations and staying busy. The men and women in this room held the highest clearances of anyone in Eden, nearly all of them elves. That was only because they had helped to establish and build this center, not for any other reason. As more people were needed to run the massive control center, everyone was treated equally and vetted before being allowed into the Command Center. Anisa stood with Hetyon off to one side watching the monitor.

“No problems getting in?” Martin asked.

“None sire.” Wallace replied.

Martin sighed. “Admiral how many times do I have to tell you...”

“I am a Spartan sire.” Wallace cut him off. “You are my King. You could tell me until you are blue in the face, but it will change nothing.”

Martin shook his head with a smile, “Very well. What’s your plan?”

“Mical is running feeds into the main conduits now with Radama.” Wallace answered. “We’ve been able to remotely tap into the security feeds. Most of the humans that were left here when we departed are being held in one section, roughly about two thousand of them. I’ve seen the Drow elf Marcus... he has taken over my old office. Anari estimates there are about seventeen hundred vampire troops on the station. Most of them are billeted in the eastern living section. Surprisingly there are not many patrols through the corridors.”

“What about the troops?” Martin asked.

Wallace shrugged. “They are relaxed and unaware.” He replied. “We’ve been monitoring the security feeds for nearly two hours now, and have only seen a dozen or so leave that section. The reactor plant they brought is operating at seventy-two percent output, but there are power fluctuations in many of the grids. They are attempting to fix them as they find them, but the core output has not changed in eighteen hours if our readings are correct.” Wallace’s face changed. “Milord... there is something you should see.” Martin watched him turn to someone off the screen and then the picture changed but his voice remained. “We discovered this when we first tapped into the feeds.”

The image was dark, but there was no mistaking the bodies that lined the room very haphazardly, all of them obviously dead, their skin gray in color and shriveled up. Martin heard several gasps from the men and women in the command center at the hideous scene.

“How many are there?” Martin asked softly.

“It appears at least fifty or sixty in this room alone sire.” Wallace answered. “We have not yet been able to tap into the internal sensors to get a reading on lifesigns. There could be more of these rooms.”

Martin nodded. “They’re using them as food.” He spoke his deep voice full of barely controlled hatred and rage. “Do you have any video into the living sections where the civilians are being kept?”

Wallace shook his head, “Not as of yet.” He answered. “We’re working on it however. I am proceeding slowly so as not to have all the systems flutter within minutes of each other as we tap them.”

Martin nodded and took a deep breath. He felt the hand on his arm and turned to see Aihola next to him. “I may only be half vampire Martin,” She spoke softly. “But even I can feel the rage you are projecting outward.”

Martin held her gaze for a few more seconds and nodded again. “Admiral you will proceed at your discretion.” He said finally. “I am ordering you to avoid any and all contact with Marcus or anyone else on that station. Set up your remote consoles and be prepared to shunt all station control to your location.”

Wallace nodded. “Understood Milord, and I will pass the word to my team. After what we have seen, no one wants to get captured up here.”

“Plot as much as you are able where the vampires go, what they do and where they gather.” Martin spoke. “When our people arrive, I’m going to have them vent those sections and let those shit sorry bastards freeze to death in space.”

Wallace nodded his approval. “I will attempt to get that information to you as soon as possible sire.”

“This channel will remain open and secure for your reports only Admiral.” Martin spoke. “It’s a low band microwave transmission set. Leave your receiver deployed and you’ll be connected immediately.”

Wallace nodded and turned his head slightly, his eyes going to where Anisa stood. Her face lit up when she saw him. “*Nya Cundu.*” She spoke and everyone saw the gentle smile that split Wallace’s face.

“You are well my wife?” He asked.

Anisa smiled and nodded her head, her hand going down to rub her abdomen. William had married her in a traditional elfin ceremony shortly after they returned to earth, and they promised to have a Spartan wedding when the battle was won. “I am well husband.” She spoke. “He is already starting to kick William.”

Wallace chuckled, “Half Spartan, half elf. It surprises me that he is not busting to come into our world now.” His eyes gazed at Anisa lovingly and he nodded. “I will see you soon my wife. Do not fear. Hetyon... I will have Anari contact you as soon as she returns with Radama.”

Hetyon smiled and nodded. “Thank you.”

Wallace turned back to Martin. “Sire... I will report again in six hours on our progress.”

“Cover your six Admiral.” Martin spoke.

Wallace nodded. “Always sire.”

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA ISLAND

“All Alliance units are signaling they are ready to depart their individual staging areas Commander.” The vampire major reported to Moran as he made his way in to the Spaceport’s command center.

“And the High Coven Rapid transport?” Moran asked.

“It is moving to the southern docking pylon now.” The man reported.

Moran nodded. The transmission had come in only an hour before from the Vampire High Coven Rapid Transport. It had entered the system undetected except for the sensors on the spaceport. To Moran’s knowledge neither Sparta nor Eden had the ability to track anything outside the atmosphere, and definitely not throughout earth’s entire system. He had been studying the configurations and types of ships that the VHC had, and to say he was impressed was an understatement. He had seen the multitude of science fiction shows growing up as a genome, and the starships depicted on those shows and in the movies. EDEN and the Raptors had been the extent of the technological advances for the United States in 2068 when the comet came, but he had no doubts given time that would have changed. Now seeing that such things were very real made Moran excited as a virgin about to pop his first cherry.

The realization of who was on the transport sobered him up immediately. Yuri had gone to meet the Immortal Captain of her father’s personal guard Cha’talla. He was the man that would now protect Yuri, and watch him to see if he was fit enough to be Yuri’s concubine. Moran shook his head. *Fuck him*, he thought, I’m not going to second guess myself because of some vampire idiot of his wife’s father.

Moran nodded to himself making his decision. “Order all units to move from their Lines of Departure and close on Eden. Xerxes gets here in thirty-six hours and I want Eden to be well on the way to being wiped out when he arrives!”

“Transmitting the departure order Commander!”

“What’s the status on Colonel Nestor’s division?” Moran asked.

“Colonel Morelli is only three hours from linking up with Colonel Nestor’s forward elements.”

“Good! Someone find out why our assassination team hasn’t reported in yet!” Moran snapped. “Bring all defenses online here and prepare for air and land bombardment. I want to be ready for anything.”

Moran smiled as his men and women leaped for their stations to pass the orders.

The senior Captain of Immortals Guard bowed his head deeply to Yuri, his glittering obsidian eyes downcast in reverence and respect.

“It is a distinct pleasure to see you once more majesty.” He spoke. His voice was deep and hollow.

Yuri looked at him with small smile. “Cha’talla you have not changed.” She spoke, “Still the finest actor of any Immortals Guard that I have known.”

The Immortals Captain lifted his head and stood up to his full six foot five height. He tossed back the hood of the cloak he wore and stared at her. His dirty gray skin was pulled taut across his face, highlighting a powerful jaw and abnormally thick and ridged cheekbones. His obsidian eyes were sunken into his thick brow bone, no hair on his face in the least. His vampire teeth were fully extended as they always were, his body thickly muscled and devoid of any body fat in the least. His hands were large and ended in sharp claws, small barbed teeth on the outside of his palms. His head was entirely bald, the skin here also withered and pulled taut. His flattened nose took up a large portion of the center of his face, and finished the frightening visage that all Immortals were.

Taken from their home world of Cu'Akrux II at age five and inducted into servitude of the Vampire High Coven, the Immortals were well known throughout the galaxy as the High Coven's most elite and vicious soldiers. Their world had been among the very first to be conquered by Veldruk and his forces nearly twelve thousand years ago, and to keep their people from being wiped out, the Akruxian High Priest had sworn his people to eternal servitude to Veldruk and the vampires. It had been one of the High Lords wisest decisions yet, as over the millennia all forms of resistance had been bred out of the Akruxian people, and they now served willingly and without question. Cha'talla was the leader of his own tribe, and had served as the High Lord's right hand for nearly thirteen centuries now.

Cha'talla bowed his head slightly. "And you have not changed either I see majesty." He spoke.

"How soon before Xerxes arrives?" Yuri asked pointedly.

"I do not serve Xerxes Princess." Cha'talla answered. "I serve your father. It is he who has sent me to this misbegotten planet to keep you from butchering your brother." He finished his statement with a slight curl of his lips.

Yuri laughed. "I will have no need to butcher Xerxes at the rate he is going." She spoke.

Cha'talla nodded. "This is what I hear as well." He said.

"Tell me Cha'talla... has my father also sent you here to kill my chosen concubine?" She asked confidently. "And do not lie to me Captain of the Immortals or I will string your body in the sun and let the insects feed on your entrails while you cook!"

"I was given no such instructions by your father Princess." He spoke rapidly.

"And when did my father decide to send you here Cha'talla?" Yuri asked.

"When he read your report that the descendant of Leonidas you had been tracking before the comet had somehow survived and was now on earth once more." Cha'talla answered. "He sent me to Xerxes Task Force and then ultimately on to you when it was reported that this was the son of Leonidas. His instructions were to assist you in any way and to study the one you have chosen as your concubine."

"To study him," Yuri asked. "Why would my father send you for such a task? He has many other more qualified individuals in the art of studying people."

Cha'talla shrugged. "I do not question your father's will Princess. Perhaps it is because you say this man is a warrior. I would like to think I am qualified to study that."

Yuri studied him for a long moment. "Yes I suppose that is true." She said finally.

"I would also observe that in your lifetime you have never taken a concubine, and you have shunned the Purebloods in your father's service. I believe your father is interested in the man who has claimed the affection of his daughter and the High Guard Commander." Cha'talla continued.

"Have you seen the Pureblood my father wishes me to take as a husband?" Yuri asked disgust in her voice.

Cha'talla nodded. "I have Princess."

"And what do you think?"

"I think he is the reason you have remained away from your home for so long." Cha'talla answered.

"But I have a feeling that may change now."

Yuri grinned. "You may be right Cha'talla. You may be right. First we need to defeat that dog Leonidas. This man's father and the Lycavorians who stood with him are responsible for the deaths of more Immortals than were lost in all the conflicts since that day." Yuri spoke.

Cha'talla nodded. "I am well aware of this history Princess. My own father was killed that day."

Yuri paused for a moment. "Forgive me Cha'talla; that is not something I was aware of."

“Few outside of your father and Xerxes are Princess.” He replied. “And you need not ask my forgiveness for anything. I exist only to serve your father.”

“And what are your feelings towards Leonidas as Captain of the Immortals?” Yuri asked.

Cha’talla looked at her. “If you are asking me if I wish to run out and butcher this son of Leonidas, the answer is no.” He answered evenly. “There were many sons, brothers and fathers that were lost that day, including his own.”

“You seem very nonchalant about that fact Cha’talla, and that makes me wonder why.” Yuri said.

Cha’talla nodded slowly. “Perhaps it seems that way Princess... but that is only how it seems.”

Yuri took a deep breath and nodded. “Very well... follow me to the command center, my concubine has already begun the battle plan we have put in place.”

Cha’talla looked surprised. “You allow him to command?”

Yuri smiled. “I allow him to do many things.” She replied. “Simply because he does them better than most of the pompous military fools who dot my father’s court looking to curry his favor. I think you will discover that Robert is superior to many of them.”

Cha’talla grinned flashing his vampire teeth. “I see your distaste for your father’s court has not lessened any in your years away.”

Yuri chuckled as they turned to walk. “No... if anything it has gotten that much more pronounced.”

“That is good Princess. Softness breeds mistakes. I trust your concubine is not soft Princess.” Cha’talla said.

Yuri shook her head with a smile, her thoughts drifting to their times together. “No Cha’talla, he is not soft in any way.”

REVERENCE-CLASS DREADNOUGHT

XERXES FLAGSHIP

WING OF DEATH

The white haired High Coven Admiral of the Fleet sat in the command chair on the bridge of his massive star ship silently fuming to himself. The *WING OF DEATH* was the newest and most advanced ship in the High Coven fleet; nearly three thousand meters long with ten squadrons of the newest VHC *RIPTIDE*-Class fighter and the ability to bring a planet to its knees with its bombardment capacity. He had worked long and hard over the course of the last four thousand years to obtain this position and now the idiot son of the High Lord was throwing it all away he fumed as he lowered the data pad with the newest information from the fleet that was doing its very best to keep up with his ship.

Fleet Admiral Malachi Dupree was nearly eleven thousand years old, one of the oldest Pureblood vampires, and at the moment the most worried man in Xerxes’s Task Force. He turned slightly as his second in command stepped up to his chair, a downtrodden look on his face.

“Admiral I...” The man began to speak.

Dupree came to his feet, “In my port quarters Captain!”

Dupree spoke firmly without pausing to look at the man as he marched across the bridge and down a small flight of stairs. A small door slid aside to admit him and he entered the medium sized office in four easy strides, going directly to the refreshment dispenser on the wall. He touched the panel and a small light appeared over the top of the panel before he spoke again.

“One bottle of Aldebaran whiskey and two glasses,” He spoke watching as the interior of the dispenser flared briefly and the clear glass door slid open. He reached inside the dispenser and took out the bottle with brownish fluid and two short glasses. He moved back to his desk and poured the whiskey into the glasses, offering one to his second officer without turning. “Take it Zachariah, and sit down.” He spoke. “I have a feeling we will need much more than this before we are done.”

The younger man took the whiskey from him and watched as the Admiral he had followed for three hundred years moved around the small desk and settled into the high backed chair while pouring another glass full of the whiskey. He waited for his second in command to take the chair opposite the desk.

“How many more have we lost?” Dupree asked.

Captain Zachariah Solomon set the data pad on his Admiral's desk, "Another four since the last gate." He answered. "Seven more ships report their LSDs can not sustain another jump without burning out all of their power conduits and having to resort to sub-light engines for the remainder of the trip."

Dupree shook his head. "I had held out hope that more would make it, but we have left nearly fifty ships without LSD drives in this mad dash. They will now take months to get to the nearest Supply depot that can replace their cores." He downed the glass of whiskey in one gulp and slammed the glass on the desk top. "We have three more jumps to make in the next twenty-four hours to reach our destination. How many will make it Zachariah?"

"We will arrive in earth orbit with just under a hundred ships Admiral." The officer replied. "That still gives us well over sixty thousand troops to put on the surface, not to mention twenty-six squadrons of fighters. Surely that is enough to subdue Leonidas's son and those few elves that fight beside him."

Dupree looked at the young man before leaning forward and pouring another glass of the whiskey. The most rewarding thing for Dupree about being a vampire was that he was immortal and he could not get drunk. No matter how much he drank, and that had increased quite a bit since Xerxes had come aboard two years ago, he could not get drunk. And he thoroughly enjoyed the distinct taste of the Aldebaran whiskey. "Did you study your history at the academy Zachariah?" He asked sitting back once more.

"Of course Admiral," The younger man replied.

"And how long have you been my deputy?"

"Three hundred and nine years sir," Solomon answered.

Dupree nodded. "Then you of all people should know that the unknown is the most dangerous adversary, for that is what I have taught you this entire time."

"Sir?" He asked confused.

"You read the same reports as I do Zachariah. You know as well as I that the Lycavorian Home Guard Fleet left Apo Prime roughly the same time we left Pricot Four." Dupree spoke.

The younger man nodded. "Yes sir... but only one Fleet Group from their Home Guard departed sir."

"Yes, the one under command of Admiral Ceneu." Dupree spoke, "Their most brutally experienced and efficient commander. Not to mention the entire Shock Division of Spartans that loaded onto transports before they departed Apo Prime." He took a sip of his drink. "Not only has this Fleet Group vanished from any known space corridors, it has nineteen of their new *VANGUARD*-Class Heavy cruisers assigned to it."

"Admiral... it is impossible for the Lycavorians to reach earth first." Zachariah said. "We were six thousand light years closer."

"I have come to the point in my life where I believe nothing is impossible Zach." He spoke using the short version of his second's name in a show of affection and concern. "Prince Xerxes races to kill the son of a man that marked him three thousand years ago. In the process he is forcing us to leave behind dozens of experienced ships and captains because we are pressing our vessels beyond normal means."

Zachariah nodded. "That is true sir, but even with the Gate technology that they stole from us they would still not be able to reach earth in time to make any difference."

"Are you willing to stake your life and career on that?" Dupree asked. "I have fought them for the better part of a thousand years, and I will not make the mistake of underestimating them. They do not surrender; they fight until the last man is left alive, taking as many of our kind with them as they can. We have more ships, while theirs can withstand more damage and still fight. Everything about them is stubborn and hard. And now that they have discovered the son and grandson of their two most cherished Kings still lives, I believe they will do everything within their power to get to him first."

Zachariah sat in the chair silently for a long moment contemplating what his Admiral was saying. Finally he lifted the glass of whiskey and with mildly quivering hands he downed the entire glass. "We will be leaping into a system with half expended magazines, worn fighter pilots, and LSD drives that perhaps will not allow us to jump back out." He said softly.

Dupree nodded. "Yes we will." He spoke in reply sitting forward once more. "So this is what I want you to do." He pushed aside the glass of whiskey. "The moment we jump into the system, divide the remaining ships into two sections. We will send all of Xerxes troops down to the surface in one wave. Cram them into whatever will fly, I don't care, but get them and him off our ships. One section will cover those transports while

the other readies for battle. Initiate immediate repairs if needed on all LSD drives to allow for at least one emergency jump and issue them these coordinates.” He slid the data pad across his desk.

Zach looked at him. “We will abandon Prince Xerxes to... to that animal?” He asked shocked.

“That animal you refer to Captain Solomon is the last vestige of the Lycavorian Royal family. Every member of the Lycavorian Union will throw themselves into an erupting sun to save him. You did not know the Lycavorian King Resumar Zachariah, I however did, and that man could inspire a rock to fight to the death for him. His grandson has this same trait. You do not remember King Leonidas on earth... I however do. He led his Lycavorian Spartans against Xerxes, and if not for the betrayal of one man, he would have killed far more of our kind than he did. It was Leonidas who built the Spartans into who the human historians remember them to be. His men followed not because of some oath of service or blind loyalty, they followed him because of who he was. And now his son exhibits these same traits.” He shook his head.

Xerxes...” Dupree snorted in a disgusted manner. “Xerxes doesn’t stand a chance against this man, and the High Lord will not lose his daughter and High Guard commander because of some personal vendetta his deranged son still carries. He will not lose the secret of our new genetically engineered soldiers to his son’s childish rants. These are his orders as much as they are mine.”

Zachariah looked at the pad and nodded. “I will give the orders Admiral.”

“Xerxes may win... though the High Lord does not believe so.” Dupree spoke. “The question remains is how badly will we hurt the Lycavorians before we need to retreat. And I intend to hurt them as much as I possibly can. If nothing else I will lay waste to that planet before I order a retreat.”

Zachariah got to his feet. “I assume these orders are to be transmitted without the knowledge of Prince Xerxes.”

Dupree nodded. “You assume correctly Captain.”

“I need to coordinate for the next jump anyway sir, with your permission I will begin that immediately.” Zach asked.

Dupree nodded. “You have my permission Captain.” He spoke.

EDEN

Tareif stood alone in the command center contemplating everything that had happened in the last year. The Alliance attempts at controlling his mind and his actions, discovering that vampires and werewolves did indeed exist, and now his oldest daughter was one of the Ngauros he had read to her about when she was a child. She was the mate to another such creature, a man he now proudly regarded as a member of his own family, for he had honored elf tradition and taken Tarifa in a very traditional marriage ceremony only two months earlier. That ceremony had been very quiet and reserved with only his family and close friends attending. The fact that his daughter was the submissive lover of the Drow Queen still caused his head to shake, as well as the fact that Aihola was also the mate to the same man as his daughter.

Werewolves and vampires, Tareif thought with a bemused grin, how did such things ever escape him?

The Elf High King was a man he once exiled from Mountain City, and also the King to billions of other species across the universe. A shock to all of them, but most of all to the exceptionally lethal young man who had done what no one before him ever had. He had united nearly thirty-one elf clans across the globe and more were coming over to their side every day. It appears the Holy One had ingrained in his people the desire to follow this man and had not even known it, for the truth had come as a surprise to even him. Tareif had read human history many times, and after discovering who Martin truly was he had gone back and read that same history again, mainly about the Spartans and King Leonidas, Martin’s father. Even three thousand years ago werewolves had existed in history, amazing as that seemed, and then to discover that they were not even from this planet they called earth.

Tareif glanced into the small conference room where several couches had been brought. His eyes settled on the young man who was stretched out on the floor, his back against one of the couches. His head was lolled back against the couch, his lips parted slightly as he slept. It was a simply amusing sight, as nestled under his arms and tucked between his long legs were the figures of the three who were his queens. The Wood Elf Dysea’s face was snuggled against his exposed throat under one arm, the raven haired Lycavorian female Aricia

under his other arm, her face pressed against his chest. Lying between his legs with her head against his abdomen was the red haired female who was actually not even human herself.

Amusing until you considered that in that room, sleeping the sleep of the exhausted, were perhaps the four deadliest individuals that Tareif had ever come across in his nearly four hundred and fifty years of life. And they were the four people who right now carried the weight of an entire planet on their shoulders.

He detected motion to his side and turned, seeing Lynwe approaching with two large mugs of coffee in her hands. He smiled as she held one out for him and he took it gratefully. Standing beside him was a full blooded Drow vampire, a woman who not only could drink blood, but had the equipment of a man between her legs. Tareif had to admit however, that whatever her clothes hid, she was still an exquisitely attractive female, and over these last months had become his shadow, learning all she could from him in the art of war. And a dedicated student she was, and completely loyal to Eden and the life she now held so dear with Selene and the friends she had made.

Lynwe's amber eyes glittered in the dim light of the room as she looked at Tareif. "What are you thinking War Master?" She asked.

Tareif smiled. "I'm thinking about everything that has happened in the last year, and how we came to be where we are now."

"And what do you think about all that?" Lynwe asked for him to continue.

"We stand on the cusp of a war we all knew was coming." Tareif said softly, "But I don't think any of us believed we could win until he came to us." He motioned into the conference room where Martin slept.

"Do you think we can win War Master?" Lynwe asked.

Tareif met her eyes. "We will lose many Lynwe... those that we love... those that we know... friends and family. War does not discriminate."

Lynwe nodded in agreement. "No it does not." She said softly. "I only need to think of the hope he has brought to me... to us." She spoke looking at Martin through the glass. "We have the best chance now to finally throw off the yoke of oppression and begin to live as we were meant to. And he gave that to us even before he discovered who he truly was."

Tareif sipped his tea. "That he did." He said in agreement.

"He is taking the bulk of the southern front on his shoulders with just his Spartans." Lynwe said softly. "He could just as easily have placed elves or humans there, but he will stand there beside his queens and defend what is his as King. I ask again Tareif, do you think we can win?"

"We do not know if his people will reach us in time, and even with the vampire division that defected we will be outnumbered nearly twenty to one." Tareif spoke. "Do I think we can win? I have every intention of fighting this battle with that goal in mind Lynwe."

Lynwe smiled and nodded, "As do we all."

They both turned to see the sun begin to rise on the monitors as the cameras on the outside of the building recorded the event. The chatter on one of the communication consoles drew Tareif's attention and he saw the communications tech press his implant tighter against his ear. He saw him nod and turn quickly his eyes searching until they settled on Tareif.

"War Master... we're receiving a priority transmission from Far Eyes." He spoke referring to the scouts Eden had sent out many weeks ago to establish surveillance of the main Alliance cities nearest the borders. "They're reporting that the Alliance is rolling full out from New Memphis and New St. Louis, armor and troops."

Tareif nodded and looked at the man. "Order them to pull back to prearranged positions and await further orders." He turned to Lynwe. "Wake the King Lynwe... it is beginning."

CANADA

Colonel Donovan Nestor, superior vampire clone, husband and soon to be father watched the screen in his command APC with evil intent. No longer would he allow those he led to suffer the demands of their superiors. No longer would he allow his men to be the pawns in a greater scheme to destroy the very thing he had worked the last two years for. He had arrayed his entire division along Route Ten, an ambush box of some

twenty miles long and ten miles deep. To the east where his Brigade was situated, his mobile artillery guns waited for his order. To the west and south east the guns of his other two brigades stood ready, to the north... the battery of twelve MLRS 300IIs that his King had left him.

His King Nestor thought.

The Lycavorian King he and his men had been sent to kill, the man they had been bred to fear, the man they would now die for. And Donovan Nestor had no intention of letting that man down in any way.

“Report!” Nestor snapped.

“Colonel they are driving all out! Hoppers, tanks, APCs! Hatches open and canvas flaps tied up.” The man on the radio spoke. “That’s it sir! The last screening elements are in the kill box!”

Nestor got slowly to his feet. Martin, his King, had promised him the opening volley in this war they were about to initiate, and he had been true to his word. Nestor touched the panel on the console just under the large holographic screen.

“This is Colonel Nestor to all artillery batteries! We begin this war now men! And we will either emerge triumphant or dead! Weapons free! All artillery you may commence firing! Fire!”

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

CANADA ROUTE TEN

To say it was a spectacular sight would be a gross understatement.

Colonel Nikolai Morelli held onto the windshield of his armored Hopper as it skidded to a halt and he watched the clouds of smoke rise in the distance to his front. His tanks and APCs ground to a stop behind him in the six mile long convoy of armor and men. As he stepped from his Hopper his eyes wide, he had the sudden sinking feeling in his stomach that he was not going to live much more than a few minutes.

Ninety seconds actually.

The MLRS 300II battery went first, twelve rockets from each of the twelve launchers, rippling out less than a second apart, the flame from their rocket motors lighting up the entire area around the rear of the of the launchers, smoke billowing around each mobile unit until it was obscured behind a wall of white so thick no portion of the vehicle could be seen, and it reached for a quarter mile into the early morning sky. Along a twenty mile line on either side of Route Ten the deep low booming of over two hundred heavy artillery pieces rolled across the landscape ten seconds later. Nine batteries of twenty-four Alliance 200mm self-propelled guns erupted within the space of five seconds, hurling two hundred and sixteen, hundred pound shells through the dawn sky.

Morelli could only stand there and look skyward at his impending doom. Many of his division were paralyzed, never having been on the receiving end of heavy artillery. Some vampire soldiers panicked and leaped from their Hoppers or tanks and started sprinting for the hills on both sides of the four mile wide interstate in the hopes of outrunning the killing barrage. Even with their vampire speed, most would not make it to the treeline.

The rocket motors burned out as they reached their apogee and tipped over. At a thousand feet above the battlefield a timer blew open the nosecone of the rockets and released 500 small submunitions, each weighing only a pound. Developed in the early 21st century these small sub munitions were a shaped charge of C-9 explosive and small rocket motors of their own with enough force to punch through six inches of any known armor in the world. Since the armor on any tank is thinnest on the top, the munitions were considered the most lethal ever developed. Nikolai Morelli could only stare as the early morning sun was blotted from the sky by 72,000 dark spots that fell to a height of five hundred feet and then activated their own rocket motors, driving the sub munitions straight down at a thousand miles an hour. It appeared from a distance like a fireworks display and the sounds of non stop popping across the sky. Each submunition had a kill radius of three meters to be accurate, and in most cases accurate meant straight down. The tanks and APCs began to explode as the submunitions found their targets and exploded. They would send a superheated dart of titanium down through the tops of the armored vehicles, pushing melted steel in front of it and punching into the crew compartments

shredding flesh and steel with little regard. The lightly armored Hoppers received the worst of it as their armor was designed to stop only small arms fire, not titanium darts traveling at supersonic speeds. The engine compartments on many of the vehicles were pierced, the fuel igniting and adding to the conflagration. Oily black smoke began to billow into the sky as screams began to erupt from the Hoppers and APCs as vampire super soldiers, genetically engineered to be superior in every way were ripped asunder with ease.

Directly on the heels of the MLRS volley, came the two hundred and sixteen 200mm shells. A mixture of High Explosive Anti Personnel shells that exploded only ten meters above the battlefield sending of hundreds of one inch long flechettes in an expanding arc that shredded flesh and impact fused hard target shells that began to rip the earth into great heaving chunks as they landed in and around the tanks and APCs. Vampire bodies could be seen flying like ragdolls through the morning air, some missing body parts, but all of them screaming out their dying words.

Colonel Nikolai Morelli did not see any of this occur as a single submunition from one of the MLRS rockets had ignited directly over him and propelled its titanium dart at a thousand miles an hour straight down through his skull, his chest cavity and exiting out his calf into the ground below. His body fell away severed into two pieces.

Donovan Nestor watched all this from his command APC from three miles away, with wide eyes. He had never seen such devastation in his life, never seen the destruction his guns could wrought on a mass scale; at least not until now. He slammed his hand onto the control console beneath the huge monitor, "Nestor to all batteries! Shift positions! Target the blood trucks and fire!"

His order, while prudent, was unnecessary. The Eden MLRS battery, manned by a mix of elf and human soldiers and commanded by a former Wood Elf Ranger, had begun shifting their location the moment the last rocket had cleared its launcher. The twelve mobile launchers were speeding to their secondary positions even as Nestor was issuing his order. The mobile gun crews of his vampire division had begun reloading their huge artillery pieces as the drivers tore through the light timber heading for their next firing positions.

Three minutes after Nestor issued his shift order, another volley was launched down range at Morelli's division, and three more would follow every three minutes before Nestor sent in his tanks and APCs to complete the massacre.

The first battle in the war for earth had been fought and won in brutal, efficient and spectacular fashion by full blooded super vampires in service to their adopted Lycavorian King. Three hours later that same division was racing south at full speed, leaving behind them the blackened and shattered remains of nearly forty thousand of their vampire brethren, and the twisted hulks of metal and steel that had carried them.

EDEN

Martin stood silently beside Tareif watching the holographic map chart as it was updated every thirty seconds. Humans and elves were dashing back and forth across the command center shouting out instructions to others or carrying updated data pads. The map chart was showing the massive force bearing down on them from four different directions and spread out over nearly a hundred miles. The main forces were already across the Mississippi River and barreling west as fast as roads would allow, the leading edges of the four main thrusts just now reaching into the Wastes.

"Two columns from the south and two columns from the north," Tareif spoke. "If they continue at the speed they seem to be holding, they will cross the Wastes in a day and reach the border of old Utah."

Martin nodded. "And then the southern columns will separate and cut north." He spoke, "While the northern columns come across Interstate 70."

Tareif nodded. "It is the clearest and most even route sire. They could maintain a steady speed of roughly sixty to seventy kilometers per hour."

"Any signs of air support?" Martin asked.

Tareif shook his head. "Nothing yet except scattered sightings of their heavy transports. The Raptors they do have, they must be keeping in hiding."

"They're waiting for us to hit them with our aircraft first." Martin said. "Then they'll ambush our Raptors on the return flight. Follow them right in and hope to land or at least get past the shield."

Tareif looked at him, "Sire?"

Martin nodded. "It's what I would do." He said. "The Iranians attempted a similar move during the Invasion of Iran in 2063. They sent a flight of their best pilots in allied planes right on the tail end of an allied air strike. They followed them all the way back to the allied air field."

"Did they succeed sire?" Tareif asked.

Martin shook his head. "They got to within six miles of the airfield, just as the last planes were landing. They had squawked friendly IFF signals the entire trip. The entire command and control ADHOC was at this airfield. If a very alert sergeant hadn't spotted that the friendly insignia was in the wrong spots on the planes, they would have taken out the commanders for six allied divisions."

Tareif shook his head. "You were blessed that day." He spoke.

"We got lucky." Martin said. "Get Ben in here, I got something I want to run by him. Where are Tarifa and Aihola?"

"We're here Martin." Tarifa's voice carried to them as she and Aihola came into the command center, Dekton four steps behind them.

Martin smiled as the first thing he detected was Dekton's scent saturating both of their bodies heavily. That and the fact that both Tarifa and Aihola looked a little more unkempt than usual, their hair not perfectly in place, told Martin they had spent a wild night with their mate. He quickly put that out of his mind as they stopped in front of him.

"They've almost reached the triggering locations." He told them softly.

Tarifa and Aihola both reached under their body armor and pulled out the firing keys he had given to them months ago. "We are ready." Aihola spoke.

"I... I truly do not want to do this." Martin said softly.

Tarifa shook her head and reached up to touch his face. "Nor do we Martin." She spoke in a gentle voice. "With but a single turn of a key we will end the lives of more men and women than at any time since I have been alive. That does not fill me with joy Martin, but it is an attempt to save all that we have built and begun here. In that regard, for that reason, I will not hesitate."

Aihola nodded. "Nor will I."

Dekton stepped forward. "Sire... the very fact that you stand here questioning the decision you must make is what sets you apart from our enemies. To them it is not a matter of the cost; it is a matter of what they will gain. To you, to Little Drow and Tarifa, to all of us it is a matter of conscious, and that is what makes you different."

Martin met his eyes and nodded. "You're right, but it doesn't make it any easier." He said slowly turning to look at Tarifa and Aihola. He looked at them for a long moment. "Do it."

The two elf Queens, lovers and mates to one Lycavorian man who dominated their hearts now, nodded together in unison. Aihola took a deep breath and turned. "Initiate the missile firing station!" She barked.

A computer console came to life on the wall to the right of the monitor. There were two separate consoles, ten meters between each one to keep one person from completing the sequence alone. Tarifa stepped up to one, Aihola the other, while Martin and Tareif watched. They inserted their keys into the appropriate slots, and individually entered a password code into the computers. The small screens changed to pictures of the eastern seaboard, and they turned back to Martin. He nodded slowly and as if with one mind they reached out and turned the two red and white keys. The computer screens changed then to red dots upon a blue background.

An Eden tech lifted his head and turned. "We have confirmation from all missiles! They are active and beginning ten second launch sequence."

"Confirm coordinates for targets!" Tarifa barked.

"Coordinates confirmed!"

"Release to computer control!" Aihola spoke next.

"Tracking is confirmed. Missiles are hot!"

They stepped back over to Martin and Tareif their eyes now going to the large main screen in the room. This too had switched to a picture of the eastern seaboard, nearly two dozen cities marked in red dots.

"Missiles are launched!" The tech declared, and they watched as smaller tracks began to appear on the screen. Nineteen in total, as the United States' former nuclear missiles began leaving their launch sites all over the lower portion of the area within the Wastes.

MOON BASE EDEN

Marcus stormed into the command center for EDEN, his amber/red eyes bright, blood still staining his lips from the human female he had been raping and feeding upon for the last two hours.

“Report!” He snapped.

“Colonel... we have multiply launches detected from the lower portion of the Wastes in North America! Estimate thirteen minutes until impact on the eastern seaboard. Extrapolating missile flights... targets seem to be from New Boston down to New Miami.” The tech replied.

Marcus stopped by what used to be Wallace’s command chair, a cruel smile on his face. “Now it is time to show that dog Leonidas that we are not without our own teeth!” He proudly exclaimed. “Bring the reactor to full power and activate the laser weapons grid!”

Wallace and his entire team came fully awake when the lights went from their emergency setting to full power in little more than a blink, shocking half of them out of sleep. The secondary control room was not large, the twenty or so computer consoles packed closely together in a horseshoe style.

Wallace sat there for a moment stunned as Anari rolled out of her chair clutching her HK74 in her hands. “Admiral what is it?” She hissed.

Wallace glared at her. “It was a feint!” He gasped. “The station is fully active! The reactor is at full power!”

“But how could they have done it so quickly?” Anari demanded.

“They must have initiated a cold start!” Wallace replied. “Fuck I should have thought of that! If they have vampire engineers, they would have been plenty skilled enough to keep a meltdown from occurring with a cold start! Fuck... Anari get everyone at their stations! We have to take control now!”

“Now!” Anari gasped. “If we take control now, they will discover us! Your... your people will not be here for at least another day. We are only seven Admiral and we can not hold this control room with seven people for two hours much less twenty-four. That is not our mission.”

Wallace met her eyes knowing she was right. “Fuck! Get the King on the radio Anari! Secure feed.”

Anari nodded and moved quickly to the console.

EDEN CITY COMMAND CENTER EARTH

“Sire we are getting a transmission from Admiral Wallace!” The communications tech barked out. “Secure feed, very urgent!”

Martin nodded. “Put it up!”

Wallace’s harried image came onto the screen. “Milord... EDEN is fully operational!” He snapped, seeing Martin’s eyes go wide.

“Say again!” Martin demanded.

“They’ve been playing opossum sire! They must have conducted a cold start up of the reactor! If our instruments are accurate, they are bringing the laser weapons grid online now!”

“Are you sure?” Martin asked.

“Yes sire. We’re monitoring them doing it now from the secondary control room as we speak.” Wallace answered.

“Shit! What is the time to missile impact?” Martin asked turning to the tech officer.

“Ten minutes sire!” Came the answer.

Martin looked at the screen as Wallace talked with someone they couldn't see. He nodded quickly and turned back to Martin. "The laser grid will reach full power in two minutes sire." He spoke. "If what we are seeing is accurate, they have already locked onto all nineteen of the missiles."

"Thank you Admiral." Martin said quickly, his mind racing with options and scenarios. "You are too few to alter the course of actions now. Do not reveal yourselves until our people enter the system. We will deal with this here."

"Sire you..."

"Admiral I just gave you an order." Martin spoke. "You must maintain your position until our people arrive in the system!"

"Sire... without those missiles hitting their targets, you will be outnumbered thirty or forty to one!" Wallace spoke.

Martin nodded. "Maybe... but we have other options! You have your orders Admiral."

Wallace nodded, "Understood Milord."

"You've done what you can Admiral." Martin spoke more calmly. "And this battle is not over by a long shot! It's only just beginning."

"We will be ready sire!" Wallace spoke.

Martin nodded. "Eden control out!" The screen reverted back to the track of the incoming vampire armies as Martin turned and hurled the mug of tea he held in his hand against the glass wall of the conference center. The thick glass did not shatter, but the mug erupted into several pieces showering the glass with hot tea. "Fuck me! What an idiot I am! How could I not figure that she would have engineers capable of a cold start! Fuck!"

Tarifa and Aihola looked at Tareif. "What... what does the Admiral mean?" Aihola asked.

Martin took a deep breath and turned back around. "EDEN Station has a laser weapons grid specifically designed to shoot down ICBMs." He stated. "Marcus and Yuri have been playing us... me for a fool! She knew very well they would have the engineering knowledge to get that Russian reactor tied in and running in half the time. I should have thought about that! It stands to reason that she would have men and women who were skilled enough. They've had access to a spaceport for centuries, with her people coming and going at will." He turned quickly to Tareif. "Where the hell is Ben?"

"Keep your shorts on boss! I'm right here." The voice said as the commander of all Eden's aircraft came into the center.

Martin turned to look at him. "They got the laser grid online and powering up right now." Martin spoke. "How fast can you have Plan B in action, and is it still viable?"

Ben's mind raced with scenarios and he looked at Martin. "Twenty-two minutes." He spoke. "Twelve minutes to load the ordnance, and ten minutes for prep. And if the grid goes down like normal, yes it's still viable."

"Do it Ben!" Martin spoke quickly. "We have to hit them before they leave the wastes!"

Ben was already moving out of the center, pressing his finger into his ear and activating his implant. Martin turned to the others who were still looking at him.

"Martin... if Marcus succeeds in shooting down those missiles..." Tarifa looked at him. "We can not stand against over a million troops Martin."

"He'll succeed." Martin told her. "We conducted tests every six months of the grid when I was on EDEN; twenty-three tests and twenty-three successes. We shot down every dummy ICBM that was sent up. The laser weapons grid is computer controlled and targeted, and the minute our missiles make their turn to come back into the atmosphere, he'll blow them out of the sky." Martin moved quickly to another console and began working at the computer.

"What... what is this Plan B that Benjamin is conducting?" Aihola asked.

"It's something we threw together in case EDEN was fully operational." Martin spoke. "The missiles we just fired were some very old ICBMs that we found before the two of you came here. Our people cleaned them up and moved them to the silos they just launched from. We still have the missiles I brought from EDEN."

Tarifa and Aihola looked at each other confused. "The ones we... the ones we just fired are not these nuclear missiles you brought from the moon?" Aihola asked.

“No... they’re older nuclear birds... but they are poorly shielded and they’ll stick out like a sore thumb to the laser grid’s tracking sensors.” Martin answered. “The RNEPs are stealth missiles.”

“What is... what is a RNEP?” Tareif asked.

“A RNEP-39A, it stands for Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator.” Martin answered quickly, “The most advanced nuke in the United States military arsenal. EDEN Base had twenty-two of them and I brought them back to earth with me when we hauled ass.”

“Stealth you say?” Aihola spoke. “Like invisible?”

Martin shrugged, “Sort of. They were next to impossible to pick up and radar back then. There’s only one problem with the RNEPs I brought to earth with me.”

“What is that?” Tarifa asked.

“They are the smaller tactical ones, not ICBMs.” Martin answered, “Which means that they have to be fired from Raptors.” Martin touched the implant in his jaw line activating his COM unit. “Ben... you copy?”

“Go Marty!” Ben’s voice replied.

“I just transferred command codes and authorizations to Raptors 41, 21, 69, and 74!” Martin spoke. “I’ll upload targeting coordinates from the command center here; four missiles per bird Ben. And if you get your ass killed doing this I will personally come down there to hell and kick the fucking shit out of you!”

Everyone heard Ben’s voice laughing on the intercom channel. “Hell Skipper... I got a suite reserved right on the lava river! You might decide to stay!”

“Ben...” Martin said.

“I hear you boss.” Ben’s voice was serious now Martin detected. “I got way too much to live for to let these sorry bastards take me out. I’ll contact you when we are in position; CAG out!”

Martin got up from the chair and moved to the map chart on the table, the holo graphic chart showing the red dots of hundred of Alliance armored vehicles. “Tareif... my experience leans more towards small operations.” He spoke looking at Tareif as he came up next to him. “These are the impact points for the missiles Ben will launch.” Martin touched the panel and twelve blue dots appeared on the map.

“Martin won’t these missiles get shot down too?” Tarifa asked.

Martin shook his head as she and Aihola came up to the table. “They are stealth missiles, and its unlikely EDEN’s sensors would pick them up. And even if they did, once Marcus fires the grid destroying those already in the air, it will take twenty-nine hours to recharge the lasers. I’m betting that he doesn’t know that. The only other problem is that the RNEPs are FAE IIs. We switched out the payload a while back.”

“FAE?” Tareif asked.

Martin nodded. “It’s a Fuel Air Explosive weapon. They won’t saturate the area with radiation.” He answered. “We’ll need to have the explosions hit in as large a clump of Alliance shitheads as we can. That’s where you come in.”

“And what if you are wrong Martin? What if Marcus is able to shoot down these missiles as well?” Aihola asked looking at him.

Martin looked at her evenly. “Then we’re going to be in very deep shit.”

EDEN STATION

“We have a lock on all missiles inbound to Alliance cities Colonel. They are just entering the upper atmosphere now!” The tech shouted. “Weapons grid is forty-seven seconds away from firing!”

“Stand by to release the grid!” Marcus exclaimed.

“Grid is achieving optimal firing parameters!” The tech reported. “Lasers are at full power and reactor is holding steady at ninety-eight percent output!”

“Twenty-six seconds until firing mode achieved!”

“Released all safeties to the grid, and give the computer control.” Marcus ordered.

“Safeties released and the grid is now on automatic!” The tech replied. “Twelve seconds to firing!”

“Colonel Marcus we have an incoming transmission from Commander Moran at the spaceport! He says it is urgent!”

“Activate the holographic transmission grid!” Marcus snapped. “He’s is more than likely pissed off that I am about to save his vampire human ass!”

It took only several seconds and then Moran’s figure appeared in the small circle on the floor on EDEN’s command center. They could see figures moving back and forth quickly through the transmission.

“Marcus?” Moran’s voice filled the command center.

“Commander, we are tracking the missiles inbound to our cities and preparing to fire the laser weapons grid!” Marcus reported smugly.

“No you fool!” Moran screamed. “Abort! Abort! Do not fire the grid!”

Marcus’s face became confused then. “The missiles are targeting our cities!” He snapped. “We can shoot them down!”

“God damn it Marcus, abort the firing sequence now!” Moran screamed.

The screens in the center of the command room showed the laser grid lock into its final firing position and flare an intense white color as it released nineteen thin but powerful laser beams that reached out towards earth in the blink of an eye.

The nineteen missiles that Tarifa and Aihola had fired had just reached their highest apogee and were tipping back over to return to earth in terminal guidance mode. The thin laser beams, no thicker than an index finger began striking the missiles with unerring accuracy. The lasers were designed to be powerful enough to punch completely through the rock and earth of Mount Everest, and the thin shells of the nuclear missiles provided no protection from the burning heat. The first Eden missile took the laser clean through its guidance package and immediately fried the computer brain in the nose of the missile. With no commands coming from the computer brain in the nose of the missile, it immediately went into reset mode and the small explosive package detonated prematurely in a flash of silver sparks. The missile spun wildly out of control and began to burn up in the atmosphere immediately.

One after the other, the lasers struck with devastating results, sending missiles spinning out of control, or punching directly through the detonation packs, triggering the nuclear detonations while still on the outer edges of earth’s atmosphere, rendering the deadly radiation completely harmless. The vampire crew members in EDEN’s control room began cheering wildly as each missile was systematically destroyed without fail. Twenty-two seconds later Marcus looked at the holographic image of Moran and smiled smugly.

“I have saved our cities!” He announced proudly. “All the missiles have been destroyed.”

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA ISLAND

Moran could not remember the last time he was this angry, and this time he allowed it to swarm through him as he looked at the smug picture Marcus presented in the holographic imager. He didn’t see Yuri and Cha’talla enter the command center behind him.

“You have got to be one of the stupidest motherfuckers I have ever known!” Moran screamed. “And if you survive this battle Marcus I am going to rip your intestines from your pathetic body myself!”

“I have saved our cities!” Marcus’s image snapped.

“The cities were nothing you fool! All the vampires have left the cities, and there was nothing left but humans!” Moran barked. “You have left our ground forces completely unprotected!”

Yuri took this time to speak up and she came up next to him. “Robert what are you talking about?”

Moran turned quickly hearing her voice and he glanced at the fearsome visage of the Immortal Captain Cha’talla behind her. He dismissed the ugly bastard almost as quickly. “The missiles they fired were older ICBMs.” Moran told her. “He still has his RNEPs, and four of his Raptors just took off from the airfield heading in two different directions! We lost their signals when they engaged their stealth capabilities!”

“He has more missiles?” Yuri gasped.

Moran nodded quickly. “And I guarantee you he’s going to target our ground forces with them.”

“We will shoot them down as well.” Marcus exclaimed from the moon.

Moran whirled back around and glared at him. “You fucking idiot! If you spent half as much time studying the weapons systems on that station as you do fucking and killing the civilians left there you would

know that once you discharge the weapons grid in a full power blast it will take twenty-nine fucking hours for it to recharge!” Moran stepped closer to the transmission. “You’re a dead motherfucker when I find you Marcus. Dead!”

Moran slammed his hand down on the COM panel and Marcus’s image disappeared. He turned to one of the vampire techs looking at him wide eyed. “Get me the coordinates of all our ground units now! Put them up on the map chart!”

“Yes Commander!” The tech responded instantly.

“Robert are you sure of this?” Yuri asked him, her voice soothing his anger to an large extent.

Moran nodded. “It’s how he fights!” Moran said. “He may have been a do good bleeding heart when I knew him, but he was a motherfucker when it came to tactics. He could fight circles around almost anyone they put against him in training, and then in the field.”

“Perhaps you are overreacting.” Cha’talla spoke calmly walking forward. “It is well known that there are few Lycavorians that are superior to vampires in terms of tactics.”

Yuri motioned to the Captain of the Immortals. “Robert this is Cha’talla.” She spoke. “He is the commander of my father’s Immortals.”

Moran stared at Cha’talla. He was easily eight inches taller than him, and looked as if he could break him in two without a moment’s pause. Moran knew he had to make it clear who was in charge here and do it quickly, for his sake as well as Yuri.

“Cha’talla right,” He asked. “That is your name?”

“You are correct human.” He spoke confidently.

“Have you ever fought Martin Leonidas, Cha’talla of the Immortals?” Moran asked in a harsh tone. “Do you know how he operates? What he will do?”

Cha’talla looked at Moran and the posturing he was doing, surprised that the human was standing up to him. He glanced at Yuri and saw that the Princess was just as surprised. “No... I have not.” He finally replied his voice just as harsh.

“I knew him before the comet Cha’talla. I fought with him in two different wars!” Moran snapped. “I know how he works... and I’ve spent the better part of the last year studying every operation he was ever involved in. He’s a bastard to fight... he’ll throw anything he can at you, and not care how off the wall it seems. He’ll try to save everyone but he *will* sacrifice few to save many. During the war with Japan he let a city of six thousand men and women burn, everyone in the city dying so that he could save the provincial territory filled with a hundred and forty thousand civilians. I know what he will do for the most part, but he’s an unpredictable fucker, so unless you got something constructive to say... shut the fuck up and stay the hell out of my way!”

Moran turned quickly away, leaving both Cha’talla and Yuri with stunned expressions. He marched to the chart table as the two smiling full blooded vampire techs looked at one another as they brought up the information their commander had ordered. He certainly had balls big enough to berate a Captain of the Immortals in the presence of everyone in the command room.

“Get me communications with every division commander and do it fast!” Moran barked. “I don’t care if they’re out taking a dump. Tell them to pinch it off and reply, because we got maybe thirty minutes to save as many of our troops as we can. And cut loose a squadron of Raptors from the airfield to be prepared for an air to air intercept! Let’s move people!”

Yuri turned to Cha’talla and saw the stunned expression on his face and she stepped over to him quickly. “Cha’talla Robert did not...”

The Immortal Captain looked at his Princess, a large smile breaking out on his face, stopping Yuri’s words before she could speak them. “Oh I like this human you have chosen Princess!” He said with a large grin. “It has been many centuries since I have met a man who has balls bigger than your brother. And this human you have chosen as your Royal concubine has such balls by a factor of ten; and he puts the military advisors in your father’s court to shame with his command authority.” Cha’talla laughed. “Oh yes, I like him indeed.”

“He’s going to target our largest concentrations of troops moving west.” Moran spoke looking at the map. “Have the southern columns split now and disperse their forces by thirty percent. Have the northern column stop their advance and disperse by fifty percent.”

“You want them to stop commander?” The vampire aide asked.

Moran nodded. “They have flatter terrain to traverse... and it will be easier for them to regroup. The southern columns have too many mountains to deal with. If they don’t scatter now, they’ll catch the brunt of the attack.”

“You are sure he will attack?” Cha’talla asked now coming up to the table, keeping his voice neutral.

Moran nodded. “He knows that with the weapons grid on EDEN down now, he can fire every missile he has and there isn’t much we can do.” He replied. “Our normal anti-aircraft batteries will probably never pick up the RNEPs.”

“My transport has weapons far superior to your anti-air weapons. You are welcome to use it.” Cha’talla offered.

Moran nodded in thanks. “I think we’ll need to keep that as a last resort.” He spoke. “How much combat flying do your pilots have?”

Cha’talla shrugged. “They are the top pilots in the Coven fleet, having graduated at the top of their class only six years ago.”

Moran nodded. “That’s pretty... but how much have they had to fight?”

Cha’talla did some fast figuring. “They have taken part in five battles, but only as heavy transport pilots; never anything ship to ship.”

Moran nodded slowly. “No pun intended Captain... but they would be sitting ducks for Leonidas’s air crews. He’s got some of the best pilots ever to live on this planet flying for him. The elves that signed on with him almost a year ago and he had trained as pilots have probably dozens of combat missions under their belts in the last year alone. Better that we use your transport for something other than target practice.” He turned back to his aides. “Position our Raptors here along the eastern LOD ten miles behind our trailing elements, their radars radiating at full power. Once they get a lock they are to engage at maximum range with their missiles!” He told the aide. “And issue the dispersal orders immediately. They are not to be questioned... just simply followed.”

The aide nodded. “Yes Commander.”

Moran turned back to the map. “We have to save as many men as we can to hit the city itself or we will be well and truly fucked.”

EDEN

“Get me another Recon Drone airborne to the north!” Tareif barked as he and Martin leaned over the chart table.

Martin watched the chart as the vampire forces began to slow and then turn in opposite directions and begin to spread out. Martin was watching it in real time as orders were obviously being relayed to the vampire units. They would slow and then stop, the miles long columns waiting for several minutes before they began to move again. Martin stabbed the panel on the chart table.

“Eden to *Raptor 41*! Ben... they’re dispersing!” Martin snapped. “You have to fire now!”

There was some static in the background and then Ben’s voice came through clear. “Three of us are in position Marty. *Raptor 74* is lagging by two minutes.”

Martin shook his head. “You need to launch now! Seven Four will have to launch later!”

“Roger! Spool them up!” Ben’s voice ordered. “Raptor Flight you are cleared for immediate launch! Do not hang around to watch the show people. Launch and go! *Spartan 01* has us covered.”

Spartan 01 with Endith at the controls orbited high above the Raptors in a sixty mile circle, large enough to cover the Raptors, yet also allow them to respond should any of the Raptors come under fire.

Martin and the others listened to the chatter of voices on the intercom, most of them detailing the targeting and prep of the RNEPs. Martin turned to Tareif. “Moran is calling the shots on this.” He spoke. “He guessed this is what I would do and he ordered his forces to disperse so that the missiles don’t kill them all.”

“We need to knock their numbers down significantly sire.” Tareif spoke. “This is the only way. Even if we reduce them by a quarter, it works for us more than him.”

Martin nodded looking back at the map chart, his dark eyes gazing at the holographic image of the terrain. “Yes it does.” Martin turned back to the map. “Moran doesn’t know all the tricks I got up my sleeves though.” He turned to the elf Communications officer. “Get me Nestor!”

Tareif stepped closer seeing the evil glint in Martin's eyes. "What are you planning sire?" He asked. Martin looked at him and pointed to the city of New Memphis. "This is where they staged out of right?" He asked.

Tareif nodded. "Yes."

"And it stands to reason they have most of their supplies moving through this city right?" Martin said.

Tareif nodded once more. "Yes... it is central to both invasion corridors, and it can be reached by any of the other cities within Alliance territory across the river."

Martin nodded. "Can we tap into their communications arrays?" He asked.

Tareif looked at him oddly. He shrugged indifferently. "I suppose so sire, our people are skilled enough. Why would you want too?"

Their attention was drawn to the open channel with Raptor flight.

"Mark targets and fire!" Ben's voice barked over the channel.

"Firing!" Jasper's voice echoed.

The men and women in the command room could hear the large missiles rippling away from Ben's Raptor and the com traffic between the three Raptors that were firing. They could hear the pilots calling off good clean launches.

"That's it!" Ben snapped, "Missiles away! Turn and burn people! As fast as your asses will go!"

The moment the last RNEP left the rails of the Raptors; all three ships executed a smart one hundred and eighty degree turn and lit off their afterburners to get as far away as possible from the impending blasts.

Martin turned in the control room, "Activate the EMP shielding!" He snapped.

The Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator 39A was brought into life in the early years of the 21st century. Its sole purpose was to provide military leaders with a viable weapon that could destroy underground terrorist bunkers and command centers, as well as rogue leaders of would be powers. The RNEP was deemed unusable for the first few years due to the radiation that the weapon could release, and not until the advent of clean nuclear weapons in 2041 did the weapons once more come into use. They were fitted on a missile body similar to the venerable Tomahawk, with the most advanced avionics and computer brains available. The missiles were ten feet long and as thick around as a car tire. They could be launched from only three types of aircraft at the time the comet came, and the Raptors were the premier delivery vehicle. EDEN's stock of these weapons had been fitted to be fired from vertical launch tubes and designed primarily to destroy enemy satellites. When Martin and the others had escaped EDEN they were refitted back to their old style and now could be fired from the Raptors once more.

Three Raptors hovered sixty miles apart at only two hundred feet off the ground and ripple fired their four RNEPs. Once the long missiles cleared their rails the Raptors turned quickly and accelerated to their highest sub sonic speed, burning over the tops of treetops as they put as much space between them and the missiles as they could. The twelve missiles that were launched settled onto preprogrammed courses and the computer brains took over, extending small sets of steering vanes on each missile as it rose to five hundred feet and accelerated to five hundred and sixty miles an hour. They could fly up to a thousand miles an hour, but this is the speed they were programmed for. Each missile was equipped with advanced terrain guidance radar, allowing the missiles to dodge mountains and whatever else nature threw at it. Each seeker head of the missile brain pulsed forward in an expanding cone, looking for the point of impact they had been programmed for.

Martin Leonidas may have been many things, but no matter how hard he tried to project the image of a hard nosed commander, he was still a very compassionate man. He would and could make sacrifices in order to save the lives of others. He had done it before in past conflicts, sacrificing thousands across the scope of seven battlefields and countless covert operations to safeguard the greater good and his mission, but not without each action searing into his soul. He still carried those decisions to this day burned into his memory.

The RNEPs were no longer equipped with the fifty kiloton nuclear warheads normally carried by the missiles, and it was the only act of mercy Martin Leonidas would show. Instead they all carried the most powerful non-nuclear weapon in Martin's arsenal, at least against enemy forces in the open or lightly protected. The Thermobaric weapon, or more commonly known as the FAE or Fuel Air Explosive, was the most devastating weapon short of an actual nuclear bomb. Each of the RNEPs was equipped with the most powerful version of this weapon, the BLU-116 2000 lb FAE-II, and this was the only concession Martin was willing to make against the vampires.

The lead vampire column was just beginning to begin dispersing their forces, tanks, APCs and Hoppers beginning to spread out their formations. This division commander was acting on the orders of Moran, but he also did not want to lose operational control of his division, so he kept most of his command units within a mile of his command Hopper. This would serve only to hasten their deaths.

The first FAE screamed in over the vampire lines, many of the soldiers looking skyward as the missile appeared out of nowhere from over the far treeline. Its flight time was the shortest of the other missiles, just under thirteen minutes. Several more alert vampire commanders snatched up their radios, screaming at their anti-air crews to no avail. The FAE-II sped on oblivious to these calls as its seeker head was locked on the command Hopper which was radiating the largest transmission signals of any other vehicle.

The vampire Colonel in charge of the division was standing outside his command Hopper yelling into his radio for his units to move faster. He heard the screaming rocket engine and looked up to see the FAE-II appear over his command vehicle.

It would be the last thing he ever saw.

The FAE-II was the newer version of the fuel air explosive, and its first detonating charge burst open the missile body, filling the immediate area with liquid fuel mixed with a solid powder form explosive. There was a tenth of a second's pause as the fuel mixed with the oxygen of the atmosphere and then the second charge detonated, igniting the explosive within the fine vapor cloud.

The next instant the vampire Colonel felt the massive pressure wave before his entire body was obliterated by the massive blast wave of fire that propagated from the detonation center. A wall of fire and heat blew outwards from above his command Hopper in excess of 4000 degrees, instantly melting anything within the radius of the explosion. The wave rippled out at supersonic speeds, carrying the fire and heat in a pressure wave that lifted up and tossed eighty ton tanks into the air like toys, melting metal and flesh in seconds. In a matter of several blinks nothing within a kilometer of his command Hopper lived, armored vehicles laying flipped over, their occupants vaporized to ash, the metal of the vehicles blackened and melted into slag. And still the wall of fire reached out its killing fingers, the pressure wave and heat expanding for four kilometers around the detonation center, trees, bushes, insects and small animals caught up in the blast instantly vaporized by the weapon without conscious.

The mushroom cloud from the detonation reached into the morning sky, and would climb to thirty thousand feet before it was done. Similar mushroom clouds could be seen erupting in the distance as other FAE-II's found their targets and exploded tens of miles away, some of them causing an overlapping effect that caught vampire units who thought they were safe. In under a minute, a five hundred mile stretch of ground running south to north in the state once known as Colorado had become the largest killing field ever in the history of mankind. The once proud city of Denver; already destroyed and burned by the fires after the comet was once more burning brightly in the distance.

Raptor 74 launched its missiles three minutes after the rest of its comrades, and their four weapons were the most effective, targeting vampire units that had thought they had escaped the killing fields.

In the space of just under five minutes, eight entire divisions and many smaller groupings of vampire and vampire led troops had been reduced to nothing more than blackened ash on the landscape of Colorado. Almost three hundred thousand vampire and human troops incinerated inside their vehicles or on the open ground, unable to escape the expanding fires of death. The single most deadly military attack in the history of the planet earth, and it bought Eden roughly eight more hours before the vampire armies descended upon them.

Martin and Tareif stood in Eden's command center simply looking at their map chart. Tarifa and Aihola stood speechless at the destruction they had just wrought, their bodies shaking. Dekton saw this and quickly put his arms around both of them, showering them with the comfort of his aura. Martin looked at Tareif slowly, the two warriors nodding to each other without words. It had to be done they knew. To protect their way of life and what they had built, it had to be done. Their only regret as the leaders of this way of life was that the weapons had not touched the remaining fourteen divisions of vampire and vampire led troops still heading towards them.

Martin turned to an elf communications tech. "Have Ben rearm and then initiate Operation Smoker!"

The elf nodded his skin still somewhat pale at what they had just witnessed. "Yes... yes sire!"

"Get me Nestor!" Martin snapped.

"Colonel Nestor is standing by."

Martin looked at the large monitor as Donovan's face appeared, obvious that he was inside his vehicle as his division barreled south at their best possible speed, "Colonel?"

"Sire... one super vampire division is dead." He reported calmly. "We left no survivors as you ordered!" Martin nodded. "Well done Colonel."

"Sire... we are seeing... there are mushroom clouds in the distance sire." He spoke.

Martin nodded. "Yes there are. We just attacked the incoming vampire divisions with Fuel Air Explosive weapons. What is your location?"

"I am moving south at our fastest sustained speed sire!" Donovan reported. "We are passing through Bismarck North Dakota right now."

Tareif grunted in approval. "He is pushing hard south sire." He spoke.

"Donovan... I'm bursting you a transmission." Martin spoke. "I want you to cut your division east and head for New Chicago. I want you to broadcast that transmission throughout Alliance territory."

Nestor appeared to be looking at a map off to the side and he nodded. "I will pick up old route 94 and take that to old route 90 right into New Chicago." He spoke. "If we can maintain our present speed, we will arrive in New Chicago in nine and a half hours."

Martin nodded. "That's right around the time we expect the Alliance forces to start hitting Eden itself."

"Sire... what is this transmission?" Nestor asked.

Martin met his eyes. "It's a demand for their unconditional surrender." He said.

Nestor's eyes went wide. "Sire... they will... they will never accept this!"

"I am under the impression that the bulk of Alliance forces are right now barreling towards us here correct?" Martin said.

Nestor nodded. "That would most likely be a correct assumption Milord." He answered. "They would leave only small security detachments behind to maintain order."

"And the Alliance allows civilian governors to run the cities for the most part correct?" Martin asked.

Nestor nodded once more. "Yes sire."

"Then I'm going to give them a choice." Martin spoke. "They can either tell the Alliance to fuck off and stop supporting them, or I will begin dropping those same Fuel Air Explosives on their cities. I have thirteen left, and I will use every one of them! New Memphis will be first... in approximately forty-two minutes." He said. "I'm going to flatten that city right down to its structures, since that is where most of the troops are staging out of. Then I will stop until after you have delivered my message to them. They will have six hours to decide."

Nestor looked at the monitor from his bouncing APC, silent for a long moment. "Sire... sire that... you could kill millions." He finally managed to blurt out.

Martin nodded slowly. "Yes I could. They have had four hundred years of vampire rule, of supporting slavery and the brutal oppression of elves and humans who did not agree with their twisted ideals. I will not tolerate it any longer, and I will protect the elves and humans who have already sided with us. If I have to kill them to do it, I will not hesitate. Tell them that Nestor."

Nestor nodded slowly, his eyes going to his equipment and he saw his aide nod that they had received the transmission. He turned back to the screen. "Milord... is this... is this a test for me and my men?" He asked.

Martin shook his head. "This is no test for you Colonel. King Knon of the Cave Elves has been in New Chicago for three weeks rallying support and arranging the evacuation of those that support us. He will meet you there. You are simply the best man for the job. If they see that one of their Super Vampire Soldiers has rebelled against the Alliance and what it stands for... that has to count for something."

Nestor nodded after a long moment. "I see your point Milord." He spoke. "We are changing direction now. I will report to you as soon as we arrive in New Chicago."

Martin nodded. "Watch your six Colonel Nestor."

Nestor nodded in return. "Good luck sire." He spoke before ending the transmission.

Martin turned and looked at the others. "Do we have good COMs with Selene's father?" He asked.

Tarifa nodded. "He is standing by in a special bunker they built in New Memphis for the purpose of helping slaves to escape. Anton is with him."

Martin nodded. "Let's talk to him. He's got less than an hour before hell comes to visit that city."

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA ISLAND

“Someone want to get me a fucking report?” Moran spoke in a low menacing voice after what they had just witnessed on their map chart.

Cha’talla looked at the chart. “What did he use?” He asked looking at Moran. He took note that Moran was calm, as if he had expected this type of attack. Cha’talla was again impressed with him, as he did not seem to rattle under battle pressure. “There is no radiation signature, but the damage is almost identical.”

“It’s a fuel air explosive device.” Moran replied quickly, “Just as deadly as a nuke but without the radiation. We suspected nukes and he hits us with these that fucking bastard.”

“What is so bad about that?” Yuri asked her knowledge of weapons and war not as extensive as others even though she was the Coven High Guard Commander. Her skills were more tuned to subversive activities rather than large forces meeting head to head. “Our troops were supposed to be buttoned up in their vehicles.”

Moran shook his head. “It wouldn’t have mattered if they were. I’ve studied the Coven’s inventory of weapons Cha’talla, and while you have similar weapons, you don’t employ them in this manner.” He answered. “An FAE sucks the oxygen out of the area it encompasses. The heat at the center of a large one like he just used is upwards of 4000 degrees. The radius for a weapon like this could be out to five kilometers wide, and everything within that arc will have been incinerated instantly.”

“It appears he hit parts of eight divisions.” Cha’talla spoke, his hand waving over the map. “You are correct in that we have weapons similar to this in our inventory... and the blast radius usually varies. How badly will this have hurt our forces?”

Moran shook his head slowly. “The dispersal order went out and our troops were moving, but the residual EMP effects from these types of weapons will take several hours to dissipate, and our commanders will keep maneuvering until they are no longer in danger. We won’t know for sure until later today.”

“Does he have many of these weapons?” Cha’talla asked.

“We didn’t know he had these.” Moran answered honestly. “We thought they would be nukes. He apparently replaced the nuclear payload with the FAE weapons.”

“So he still has these nuclear weapons?” Yuri asked moving up to stand next to him.

Moran nodded. “It would appear so, but it’s unknown if he has the capability to deliver them in any way. EDEN only had twenty-two RNEPs according to the material lists that Yuri obtained before she left. It didn’t list any FAE warheads in their inventory.”

“So this is something he found after returning to earth?” Cha’talla asked.

“He was a Navy SEAL for the United States when it still existed. One of the elite units of military troops,” Moran answered looking at Cha’talla trying to explain the background. “He would have had access to all sorts of information and the locations of weapons depots that I would not have had simply because of his security clearance.”

“What about the agents we had in Eden?” Yuri asked. “They have not reported in.”

Moran shook his head. “If they haven’t reported in by now, they never will.” He replied. “I got a feeling Nestor was lying to us.”

Yuri’s eyes darkened. “What do you mean?”

Moran adjusted the control panel on the table and pointed to the monitor closest to them. “These images came in thirty minutes ago.” He spoke. “This is Morelli’s division, or what’s left of it.”

The recon drone they had sent north had made three passes over the smoking remains of the super vampire division, each one lower than the first. All it was able to pick up were destroyed vehicles and broken bodies which was what they were witnessing now.

“It appears Nestor has betrayed us.” Moran said calmly. “The two cities he said he was assaulting have been shelled, but not severely, and his three brigades were no where in the area. I’m guessing he ambushed Morelli as he was coming north, wiped out his division and then escaped.”

Cha’talla looked at him, his dark eyes flint hard. “This must not go unpunished!” He spoke.

Moran nodded. “I already activated the self destruct sequence for his division after receiving this feed from the drone.”

Cha’talla looked confused. “Self destruct?”

“Each clone has a small explosives charge in their head. It’s imbedded just beneath the bone of their skulls.” Yuri spoke now. “If for any reason we felt they were not operating up to our standards, it would be only a small matter to transmit a low frequency signal and activate the explosive.”

Cha’talla grinned. “Ingenious.” He said.

Moran nodded. “That was Yuri’s idea.” He spoke almost proudly.

Cha’talla nodded. “I’m beginning to see now why your father made you High Guard Commander Princess.” He spoke. “What you may lack in military expertise, you make up for in deviousness.”

Yuri nodded slowly towards him. “We can find them and collect their equipment when this is over.” She said. “Robert...”

“I need to get out there.” He spoke looking at her.

Cha’talla saw Yuri’s body tense up at his words, and he watched her closely, “For what purpose?” Yuri asked him.

“I can’t be effective here.” Moran told her. “I need to be out there with my hands around things Yuri. There’s a lull in the fighting now, and most of it has been at long distance, but if we are going to have a chance at fighting and winning against Eden, I need to be there and not have my orders relayed three or four times before reaching the units.”

Yuri took a deep breath knowing that he was correct. She nodded and put her hand gently on his arm. “Then go, but do not get yourself killed... husband.”

Cha’talla’s eyes showed his surprise at her words and he watched as Moran nodded leaned over and kissed her softly before turning and heading out of the command center. He watched Yuri gaze at him as he left and he stepped up beside her, “Princess?”

Yuri turned slowly and looked at him. “Now you know.” She spoke calmly, no sense of regret or worry in her voice as she met his gaze evenly.

“You... you have shared blood with this man?” Cha’talla asked in a stunned voice.

Yuri nodded, “On more than one occasion.” She replied confidently. “I have bound myself to him Cha’talla, willingly and without regret. Robert has bound himself to me as well, willingly and without regret.”

“He is more than a simple concubine to you isn’t he?”

Yuri nodded. “He has become my life... and my husband.” She replied. “We may be vampires Cha’talla, but we do know love and devotion.”

“Your father is only aware that you wanted to take him as your concubine.” Cha’talla spoke. “He did not know you have taken him as your husband.”

“I love and honor my father Cha’talla, and I have for my entire life.” Yuri spoke. “This is the one instance where I decided to follow what I wanted.”

“You are Pureblood Princess.” Cha’talla spoke softly.

Yuri nodded. “And I have poured every bit of knowledge I have into Robert. He is not a simple vampire soldier... he is much more. And he is my husband now, a fact I am most satisfied with.” She looked at his fearsome face.

“Does... does he know that you are betrothed to another within your father’s court?” Cha’talla asked.

Yuri nodded. “He does. And his devotion to me is such that he does not care. That pompous fool my father has chosen will never have me willingly Cha’talla, and I will do everything in my power to make my father see that.” He was silent for a long moment, saying nothing. “You are my father’s Captain of the Immortals Cha’talla, and you are obliged to report this too him. What will you do?”

“I have known you since your mother gave birth to you.” Cha’talla spoke. “First as a member of the Immortals assigned to protect your family and now as your father’s Captain. I have watched you grow and become what you are now. Your father does not know what Xerxes did to you Princess... though many of us do.”

Yuri looked at him wide eyed. “You know?” She gasped.

“It is a shameful secret that the Immortals have kept for three thousand years, under pain of death if we revealed it.” Cha’talla spoke. “Xerxes threatened to pulverize our homes if we revealed it. Since that time we have kept his secret all the while concentrating on helping to forge you into the woman you are today. The Immortals are loyal to your father and to you Princess. We have no interest in keeping Xerxes alive, or seeing him succeed in anything that he does.”

Yuri stared at him. "Revealing this to me Cha'talla, it could very well mean your execution." She spoke. Cha'talla nodded. "Yes it could." He replied. "It seems we both have secrets Princess."

"I will never betray my father Cha'talla!" Yuri hissed. "Not even for Robert!"

Cha'talla nodded. "We have no doubts of that Princess." He replied. "Xerxes is insane and he has become a loose cannon and he has become a threat to all of us. Our loyalty to you and your father has never wavered, in part because of the devotion you have to each other. If this man has touched you in such a way Princess... it is my duty to see that you and he survive. Perhaps in time... perhaps your father will come to see that this Moran is not just a simple concubine."

"That is my hope as well." Yuri spoke.

Cha'talla nodded. "Then I will accompany the commander and insure he returns to you uninjured."

"Cha'talla you..." Yuri began.

He shook his head quickly. "No Princess... my people are strong only as long as you and the High Lord are strong. And we will do everything within our power to see it remains that way."

Yuri watched him turn quickly and head out of the command center with long strides. She smiled to herself. Perhaps having the Captain of the Immortals on her side was not a bad proposition at all.

SPARTA

Walter looked up as Lander came into the small office he was using studying the map chart. Helen, Panos and his two sons were with him, as well as many of the Polemarch leaders. He had appointed Lander his second in command, and they had been charged with the defense of Sparta. Everyone turned as Lander strode up to the map chart.

"Well?" Walter asked.

"They are coming Senior Polemarch." He spoke. "They are coming from all over."

Walter smiled and nodded his head. "As I knew they would." He spoke finally. "Show me." He said indicating the map.

Lander pointed to the map. "A force of five thousand elves is mustering to our south. They are a mix of the different clans, former slaves, but they fight as one, and they have pledged themselves to Sparta's defense. They will be here by late today. They are under the command of a Drow Elf Dymas."

Walter looked at him, "A Drow?" He questioned.

Lander nodded. "I was surprised as well to see one so far from the North American continent but he is a Drow. Once he discovered that the Drow Queen had once more taken her mantle, he gathered his forces and began marching towards Sparta. They have destroyed four minor vampire bases in their trek, wiped them out completely."

"You did create the Drow to be most like us Dymas." Helen spoke softly. "It stands to reason if he has led this unit for any length of time, they would be more than a match for any vampire scum they came across."

Walter nodded. "Yes I did." He replied. "What else?"

Lander leaned forward slowly. "There is a force of three thousand humans and elves moving from Athens under General Leo. They will set up their defensive line along our northeast."

"Leo finally decided it was time to fight!" Panos exclaimed, "That old bastard! He must be close to a hundred years old! And for a human that is ancient!" That brought chuckles from those in the room.

Walter nodded as he scanned the map. "King Leonidas..." Walter stopped and shook his head slowly with a small smile. Everyone in the room knew why and they too smiled. Helen touched his arm.

"It has been many years since you have spoken that name Dymas." She said. "A name you thought to never speak again in such a way."

Walter nodded slowly. "It still... it still shocks me that all the years I raised him, spent time with him, instructed him, I never once realized he was something more than a descendant of my King. I never once entertained the thought he was Leonidas's son." He said looking at her.

Helen nodded slowly. "There were few who knew Gorgo was with child when Leonidas was killed. And only I in all of Sparta knew that. I had to send her away lest her unborn child become known and all our hopes for the future be crushed if she were to be killed."

Walter nodded. "You were right to do so." He said. "He is so much like his father Oracle, it is frightening sometimes."

"Yet he is very different than his father." Helen spoke looking at all of them. "He is our King... not only of Sparta... but trillions more lives across the stars. We must understand my friends; Sparta will always be the true home of his heart. I have told him this, and deep in his heart he knows this to be true. This is where he discovered who he truly was, but he commands so much more. As Spartans we must set the example for all those he leads. Many of the customs we have nurtured and developed over the centuries here in Sparta, on this planet, have extended to worlds beyond our imaginations. Our laws and methods are practiced across hundreds of planets. I was surprised at this when I first discovered it, but then I saw the truth behind it." Helen spoke. "We must always remember, he is the son of Leonidas, the King we all so loved, but he is also the grandson of King Resumar, the Lycavorian King that billions across the universe looked to for leadership. Martin is his own man as well. He thinks differently, acts differently, yet he is the same. But here... in Sparta... this is where everyone will look to in times of need. This is where others across the universe will see the first true battle of the new rebellion take place. Whether Xerxes is fool enough to attack us directly we will not know, but our King has left surprises for him nonetheless. And now we see others across this planet rallying to our cause, coming here to Sparta, and while we must be cautious, we must welcome them."

Helen's words brought everyone in the room to silence as the gravity of what she had spoken sank in. To think that hundreds of planets and billions of people across the stars used Sparta and Spartan law as examples of how to live shook them right down to their boots.

Walter nodded slowly. "And we shall welcome them." He said. "As we welcomed the Thespians that fought and died with us at Thermopylae like brothers, I will honor all those who come here to fight with us now in the name of our King."

Lander nodded. "All told there are perhaps fifteen thousand moving towards us in whatever they can scrap together. The last of them will arrive by this evening, and all of them have sent emissaries to express their desire to stand with us."

Walter looked at the map, "The shield that the King had installed?"

Panos nodded. "It is fully operational." He answered. "It is similar to this shield he has around this city of Eden, and it will protect us from air bombardment. Each of the six power stations will be guarded by a full *Mora*. I will lead the *Mora* closest to the edge of the city and will reinforce the northern wall if necessary."

Walter looked at the map chart. "We have a hundred and thirty thousand full Spartan centurions, and another hundred thousand reserves." He spoke. "Added to those that move to fight with us I believe we can cut loose another twenty thousand centurions to the King. That is where Xerxes will focus his attack, and the vampire armies are vast. You will be able to contact them telepathically when they arrive in the system Oracle"

Helen nodded quickly, "Easily. You don't think he will attack Sparta Dymas?" Helen asked.

Walter shook his head. "Not directly. He may send forces here, but his only wish will be to kill the King. Lander... I want you to begin choosing the *Mora* and have them begin moving to Eden and join our King. I do not know how many troops our people will be able to send, but we must be prepared to go to the King's aide. The battles have begun over there, and we no longer need to be discrete, but once they arrive have the Lycavorian transports use the route devised by the King to avoid contact as long as they can. Get them there quickly and have the transports return for another load. Once you have chosen the *Mora* and they are prepared, take your station on the southern wall. I will be on the northern wall." Lander nodded and left the room quickly. Walter looked at Helen. "How soon before our people arrive to help us Oracle?"

Helen met his eyes. "If the King is right, hopefully they will be here in the next thirty-six hours." She replied.

Walter nodded. "Xerxes's forces will be here by tomorrow morning which means the King must hold."

Helen smiled. "Do not underestimate him Dymas. If I have learned anything about our new King... he is a sneaky bastard when it comes to fighting a war."

Walter laughed heartily. "That he is! That he is!"

Jasper looked at his scope for the twentieth time in the last five minutes, his hands shaking somewhat each time he adjusted the sensors. He lifted his helmeted head once more.

“We’re still clear.” He spoke.

“Roger... coming up on the launch point.” Ben’s voice answered. “Stand by.”

Jasper could only shake his head at the calm in the human’s voice. He had flown with Ben now since three weeks after Endith had left for Sparta, and each time he went up with him, he marveled at the clam exterior the senior human pilot displayed in the face of danger. Jasper chanced a glance out of his window and he could see the nine other Raptors to his right holding position on their wing and inching forward just as Ben was doing. He couldn’t see them, but he had no doubts that the nine Raptors on their opposite side were doing the exact same thing. Ben had trained all of them well. He was a task master and a strict teacher, never letting up and demanding the best from all his pilots. Jasper and the other twenty-one elf pilots that had graduated only a month before were Ben’s new air force, and they had taken to flying the newly built Raptors much like Endith had. He doubted any of them would reach the same level of skill that Endith possessed, as she was a special young woman, but Ben had commented more than once that he and his fellow elf pilots were some of the best he had ever trained.

They were deep in Alliance territory, with no support and hovering only twenty miles away from the main Alliance staging area. Their stealth screens were operating at full power, but the moment they locked their missile tubes into place to fire, they would be seen on every radar and sensor scope for four hundred miles. They had trained for this mission, each detail committed to memory, and now they were going to see if they could pull it off. Eden’s intelligence estimated the Alliance had at least a full squadron of Raptors, yet they had not been seen so far in the opening hours of this new war, and that is what had Ben worried the most.

Ben’s helmeted head looked to his left and he saw the other Raptors lined up on the wing of his own ship, “Jasper how we looking?” He asked.

“Everyone is maintaining position Ben.”

Ben nodded. “Hey Red... you see anything we should know about?” He spoke into his helmet mike.

Endith turned *Spartan 01* into another slow back to the left as she orbited above them at eighty thousand feet. Tina had her own head buried in the SPAT’s sensors. Ben heard her soft elfish voice in his helmet.

“We are not detecting anything near you Benjamin.” She answered. “That does not mean they are not there however.”

Ben nodded slowly. “We know they have the same avionics package as our birds thanks to the vampire witch, but the question is can they use it as good as we can?”

“All of you will be sitting ducks as you are launching Ben.” Tina’s voice filled his helmet receiver.

“It’s a risk worth taking.” Ben replied. “I’ve been over this with Marty, and he voiced the same concerns. He also knows we need to do this.”

“You didn’t have to get this close though.” Tina spoke.

“It insures our missiles lock on.” Ben answered. “Relax you two... just keep your eyes open for any bad guys.” He turned to Jasper. “Prepare to launch.”

Jasper nodded and keyed his intercom to the channel for all the Raptors that were hovering only a hundred feet from the tops of the tress below them. “Raptor Flight this is lead! Initiate missile prep, extend launchers and prepare to fire.”

Jasper turned to Ben and saw him nod. “Execute!”

Nineteen Raptors hovered in a long line, all of them extending missile pods from their bellies. The noses of eight long range AGM-190 Joint Air to Surface Cruise Missiles coming into view. The AGM-190 was the most advanced land attack missile in the United States inventory before the passing of the comet, and search crews from Eden had found hundreds of them still vacuum sealed in an underground warehouse on a long deserted and picked over Air Force base in Arizona. The weapons had been meticulously inspected and cared for since their discovery, and now they were going to be put to use.

Jasper’s screen came alive with targets as the seeker cones in each warhead searched for and locked onto its primary target already programmed into the guidance system. With the missile pods extended, the Raptors lost all use of their stealth capabilities, and search radars began to do active probes looking to lock on to them as alarms were going off all across the Alliance forces arrayed by New Memphis.

“I have locks!” Jasper almost shouted. “Strong signals on all targets!”

“Stand by to launch!” Ben ordered.

10 miles east of New Memphis

The vampire pilot’s head snapped around as the alarms in his cockpit began to sound. The flight of sixteen Raptors had been hovering here for almost an hour now waiting for an attack that had yet to come. The vampire Major and his pilots had been training heavily in their new aircraft, learning how to fly the Raptors as opposed to their lumbering transports and gunships. It was like finding new toys as far as he was concerned, and now they were going into battle.

“Contact,” His co-pilot shouted, “Thirty miles northwest! Nineteen aircraft! I’m detecting missile radars Major!”

“That’s them!” The vampire major exclaimed. “Commander Moran was right! Order the squadron to engage! Weapons free and engage!”

Spartan 01

“Shit! I have contact!” Tina yelled, “Sixteen Raptors! No IFF! Fuck, they’re firing! They’re hostile!”

Endith’s head snapped around, “Where Tina? Where are they?”

“Twenty-six miles southeast... they...” Her eyes grew wide behind her helmet. “Missiles away, fuck I have missiles away!” Tina shouted back her hands dancing across her console.

Endith touched her control panel and put the SPAT into a southeasterly dive, “Benjamin enemy aircraft twenty-six miles southeast! They have launched missiles at you! You must evade!”

“All our missiles haven’t locked on!” Ben’s calm voice replied, “Forty more seconds.”

“Benjamin you don’t have forty seconds!” Endith declared. She glanced at Tina. “Energize our active sensors and give me weapons!” She announced clearly as she pushed the SPAT into a screaming turn at nearly a thousand miles an hour.

The air-to-air missiles were speeding towards their targets at nearly sixteen hundred miles an hour, oblivious to the commotion they were causing. They were instruments of death employed by one side. They knew neither good nor bad, only that they were built for one purpose, and that was to destroy the enemy. All of the sixteen missiles had obtained locks on the fiery engines of the Raptors hovering only twenty-two miles away now. Their engines burned at Mach Two, the hundred pound explosive warhead in each missile becoming active. They would reach their targets in just under thirty seconds.

“Jasper?” Ben asked calmly as his eyes remained focused on the incoming missiles displayed on his screen, as well as the vampire Raptors, which were now heading directly at them.

“Two missiles left to lock!” Jasper exclaimed as his hands practically flew over the weapons console. He was manually targeting each missile as it sped toward New Memphis to attack the more high profile targets and attempt to avoid as many civilian casualties as they could. When they had devised this plan, both Ben and Martin knew it would be impossible to attack a city like New Memphis and not cause innocent loss of life, and even though many of the humans that remained in the confines of the city supported the Alliance in one form or another, they did not want to inflict unneeded civilian deaths.

Ben switched channels in his helmet. “Raptor Lead to flight! If you have locked your missiles, bug out now! That is a direct order!”

“Bugging out now,” The voice echoed.

“We’re gone!” Another female voice broke into his helmet.

“Once you are clear... pop flares and chaff, engage the enemy aircraft at long range with your missiles and then turn home! We do not want to get in a shooting match with these assholes!” Ben saw at least five Raptors on his side break formation after locking their missiles on and they screamed for altitude, leaving behind brilliant flares and silver clouds of chaff in their wake as they fought for life giving altitude. Ben’s eyes glanced at the scope once more, narrowing. “Jasper... now would be a good time!” Ben said.

“Almost there!” Jasper replied, his fingers typing faster than Ben could follow. “There! All missiles locked!”

“Raptor Lead is breaking!” Ben exclaimed throwing Raptor 41 into a gut wrenching turn to port as the other twelve Raptors that hadn’t broke formation responded almost as if on cue, scattering like cockroaches exposed to the light and filling the sky with flares and chaff.

It was a brave move, remaining to lock all their missiles onto proper targets, but ultimately it cost them in the end.

Six seconds after Ben executed his turn the vampire missiles arrived and blotted eight of his Raptors from the clear blue sky in the blink of an eye. As Ben rolled Raptor 41 over, he could see wreckage falling from the sky and smashing into the trees below him. Fires erupted on the ground as he continued to mash his thumb down on the flare button of his control yoke, silently cursing that they had ever come back to earth, his eyes watching a crippled Raptor cartwheel towards the ground beneath him, its pilot screaming over the radio that he was going in.

“NO!” Tina screamed and she watched helplessly as eight of Eden’s Raptors were obliterated in a single instant. They were pilots she and Endith had met and spoken with not hours before and now they were gone in the time it took to take a breath.

Endith was not paying attention to that as she guided Spartan 01 towards the now advancing vampire Raptors. They still had not seen her, the composite coating on *Spartan 01*’s frame keeping it from reflecting back to the active vampire radars. Her teeth clenched in vicious hatred, Endith extended her air-to-air missile pod. The top of *Spartan 01* lifted in a six foot section, exposing the launcher pod with twenty-six small missiles loaded in it.

“Light those fuckers up Tina!” Endith nearly screamed.

Tina’s jaw was set in anger and she let her hands practically fly over the two consoles in front of her. In three seconds *Spartan 01*’s own radar, much more advanced than anything flying at the moment, activated and the sixteen vampire Raptors were illuminated like glowing stars on a dark night.

“Payback is a bitch you bastards!” Endith did scream now, her finger stabbing down on the red touch button on her panel.

The top of *Spartan 01* was bathed in white smoke for the four seconds it took to fire sixteen anti-air missiles. The more advanced Lycavorian missiles rippled away and sped toward their targets at far greater speed than anything known to exist. Death was coming to visit the vampire pilots, and none would survive.

The vampire major had a cruel smile locked on his lips as he readied another volley of missiles. His sixteen aircraft had shot down eight of Eden’s Raptors, blowing them out of the air as they twisted and turned trying to avoid the missiles. Flares and chaff filling the sky confused his firing computer for a few seconds until they got closer. At eight miles the major got a lock on and moved his thumb to the firing button on the control stick.

The Raptor on his right exploded violently in a flash of yellow fire, causing his head to snap around. He watched as the tiny pieces of the Raptor floated down to the earth and he saw another four meet the same fate in the space of three heartbeats, their ships being blown completely into atoms.

“Where! Where are they?” He screamed as he yanked his Raptor into a barrel turn, diving for the ground and spoiling his firing solution. He saw the missile smoke trail speed by his cockpit window as he dove for a lower altitude to get lost in the ground clutter. His vision was scared by the sight of seven more of his ships being obliterated from the blue sky as they fought a losing battle against the small missiles.

“Large contact directly behind us at seven miles,” His co-pilot yelled. “It’s closing on us!”
Spartan 01 was radiating its signature brilliantly now, Endith and Tina making no effort to hide their location.

“What the fuck is that? That’s no Raptor!” The major yelled, pushing his control stick over and sending his Raptor in a spinning turn as it leveled out over the treetops.

His co-pilot shook his head. “Unknown! I’ve never seen it before!”

“Flares! Give me flares and chaff!” The major yelled. “Flight leader to flight... form on me and we will attack in echelon!”

The major cursed as he heard no answering calls and he banked the Raptor over hard climbing once more. “I’ll kill you whoever you are!” He cursed.

“Target is closing!” His co-pilot spoke. “I can’t get a lock! There’s no definitive heat source!”

“Switch to radar lock then!” The major screamed.

The co-pilot shook his head, “Nothing! Intermittent contact only, nothing solid to lock!”

“Use the camera! Target visually then!”

The co-pilot adjusted his helmet visor and the small camera situated in the nose of the Raptor zoomed in on the closing form of *Spartan 01*. His eyes went wide. “What the fuck is that?” He exclaimed.

“That’s my Guardian Angel asshole!” The strange voice broke in on their intercom. “This is for my pilots you low life vampire bastard!”

The major turned his head in time to see Ben’s Raptor paralleling his exact course and speed with untold precision. He could only watch as if in slow motion the massive 30mm chain cannon under its nose oriented towards him. They had not installed any nose weapons in their Raptors yet, and the Major cursed this decision. It was a curse he would take to the grave.

Ben triggered a hundred round burst from his cannon and watched with great satisfaction as the 30mm rounds struck true and everything from the nose back to the forward section of the vampire Raptor began to disintegrate.

Ben’s eyes watched as *Spartan 01* whizzed past his pilot’s window and Endith executed a tight turn to bring her ship up next to *Raptor 41*. Ben had to admit, for being a big bulky aircraft, that puppy sure had some moves.

He saw Tina and Endith look towards him from their cockpit. “Benjamin are you...”

“I’m fine.” Ben answered before she could finish her question. “I sent the others back, but there was no way I was going to let this vampire prick get away with killing my people.”

“Chasing him was fucking stupid Ben!” Tina snapped. “You should have let us handle him!”

Ben chuckled. “No one has ever accused me of being stupid before.”

“We need to go!” Endith spoke now. “This area will be filling with anti-air weapons and who knows how many more Raptors. I only have ten missiles left.”

Ben nodded. “I agree.” He spoke.

“Lead out Benjamin.” Endith told him.

“What’s the matter Red... don’t you trust me?” Ben asked with humor in his voice.

“Do I have to answer that?” Endith replied as she turned *Spartan 01* to the west.

Ben didn’t answer and banked *Raptor 41* to his right and set course for Eden.

One hundred and fifty two AGM-190 missiles sped on towards New Memphis unaware of the air battle that had taken place behind them. Each missile was locked on a particular target, its internal guidance system making slight corrections to avoid trees and small hills as every missile flew at no more than a hundred feet off the ground. Each AGM-190 missile carried a thousand pound warhead fused for impact detonation. The advanced missiles ignored the air alert warnings blaring over New Memphis and dove for their targets.

Six bridges over the Mississippi river had survived the comet and the fires that followed. They would not survive this day as a total of thirty one missiles were targeted just on the bridges themselves. The east and west ends of all the bridges were struck within six seconds of each other, as well as the center pilings driven deep into the river bed. None of them survived as the thousand pound warheads exploded, creating a massive storm of dust and steel and concrete, not to mention a massive pressure wave that swept over dozens of vampire

guards and several civilians from the bridges and the surrounding riverbanks pulverizing their bodies into shattered remains. As the six bridges began to fall into the raging river below, and hundreds began to rush from their buildings and homes to witness their destruction, the remaining hundred and twenty-one missiles began to devastate the city. Massive explosions rocked the streets and buildings as first the known vampire command and control centers were obliterated, then the three large vehicle yards filled with tanks and APCs were struck, the underground fuel bladders erupting in sheets of flame five hundred feet high, and turning the vehicles into jagged melted remains.

The screams of the dying began to fill the streets as even more buildings were hit. The mainstay of New Memphis was her transportation control hub, and this was eradicated along with a hundred and ninety vampire troops by five missiles that dove into the central domed building. It would be years before any Trams visited New Memphis again.

The rain of destruction continued unabated for almost two minutes, and when finally the last missile struck its target, much of New Memphis was destroyed and ablaze. Smoke rose into the sky from hundreds of fires that had broken out, and there wasn't a building over five stories that had not been hit at least once.

The attack had severed the vampire lines supplying the troops on their way to attack Eden for all time, leaving them without their main access to fuel and ammunition. It would not stop their attack, but it would severely hamper their efforts, and it bought what Martin needed most of all.

That was time.

The tally of civilian dead would be enormous, but Selene Torcrum's father and those working with him had spirited over seven thousand men, women and children, human and elf, to safety in underground bunkers that were well stocked and able to withstand anything short of a nuclear weapon.

It also delivered the message Martin Leonidas wanted to send, and delivered it in a most spectacular fashion.

CAINEVILLE, UTAH 70 MILES EAST OF EDEN

Moran stood with Cha'talla as they watched the last of the armored columns arrive as the sun was beginning to set. They stood on the ridge overlooking Old Route 24 as the tanks and APCs rolled past to assume their positions.

Moran didn't turn as the aide walked up to where they stood. "That's the last of the surviving armor Commander." The man spoke.

Moran didn't look at him as he nodded, "It's better than I had hoped." He muttered. "How many of the cloned vampire units survived?"

The aide looked at the data pad quickly, "Eight complete divisions sir; with elements of another. Three of four remaining cloned vampire divisions made it through unscathed."

"What about the northern units?" Moran asked looking at him.

"They did not fare as well sir, the single surviving complete vampire division and two other divisions that have fully reformed. They have a smattering of single units, but it only totals to two Brigade sized forces." The aide replied. "Most of them were caught in the north and were still dispersing when that last Raptor fired its missiles."

Moran shook his head slowly. "Christ he took out eleven of our divisions with those fucking missiles!" He spat. "More than we first thought."

"And the reports of this city," Cha'talla asked the aide. "Are they true?"

The aide nodded his head. "It's gone Commander." He answered. "Princess Yuri sent a drone over the city at low altitude an hour after we heard about the attack. All the bridges are gone, the central Tram hub is wasted, and fires are burning out of control. It isn't pretty. The only good thing is that we got eight of their Raptors before our squadron was destroyed."

Moran looked at him. "Destroyed? How?"

"Spotters say it was not like any aircraft they had ever seen." The aide replied. "Sleek and long... they said it looked like a transport or something."

Cha'talla nodded. "A Lycavorian *STRIKER*-Class Attack Dropship." He said as Moran turned to look at him, "Capable of carrying three hundred troops and all their equipment, or twenty thousand metric tons of supplies and munitions. It has the speed and maneuverability of a fighter, and is extremely well armed and very hard to kill even with our best High Coven fighter craft. It is a ship that the Lycavorians give only to their finest pilots, and it is doubtful anything you have will even dent the composite armor it has layered on its body. How is it possible one of these ships is here? As I said, the Union only gives these ships to their finest pilots."

Moran met his gaze. "This is something new." He replied. "He must have got it from Sparta."

"Do we know how many of these ships he has?" Cha'talla asked.

"We didn't know he had this one until today sir." The aide replied.

"Is there a way to find out who is piloting this ship?" He asked.

Moran shook his head. "Doubtful. Whatever assets we have still inside Eden have gone to ground very deep. And Leonidas will eventually find them. The moment we attempt to contact them or vice versa they'll be all over them like flies to shit."

Cha'talla shook his head. "I recommend keeping your remaining Raptors out of the air." He said.

Moran turned to fully face him. "Why?"

"Until Prince Xerxes arrives with fighter support, this ship will rule the skies." Cha'talla replied. "You said it destroyed an entire squadron of these Raptors correct?"

The aide nodded. "Yes sir."

"I guarantee you whoever is flying that ship is either an elf or a member of the Union Fleet Forces. No other could pilot the ship. It is their most advanced ground attack ship; to be honest it is the most advanced ground attack ship in the universe, as much as that pains me to say." Cha'talla spoke. "Not even the High Coven has ground attack ships like this *STRIKER*-Class."

Moran looked at him. "We do know that the most capable pilot he has outside of the human commanding his air force is a female elf. She is the pilot that flies him everywhere."

Cha'talla nodded. "Then she is most likely the pilot of the *STRIKER*." He said. "Believe me Moran... your Raptors will not even scratch this ship in terms of maneuverability, speed or weapons. And if it is a female elf flying this ship, her reflexes will be far better than any vampire you can field. Most of the pilots for these ships are female elves. For reasons we have not been able to understand, they seem to be the most fearless and capable when flying ground support."

Moran looked at the aide. "Inform the remaining squadron commander he and his Raptors are grounded until further notice." He spoke.

The aide nodded and moved for the Command Hopper that was parked a short distance away.

Moran turned back to Cha'talla. "I'm not a fool Cha'talla," He spoke. "You have been around a lot longer than me... and have seen far more combat than all of us combined. I'm not fool enough to deny that experience. If you think of anything that can help us... don't hold it back."

Cha'talla looked at this human that his Princess had claimed as her husband. What he had told Yuri was ninety five percent true. He and many of the Immortals did in fact know of what Xerxes had done to his sister, and after he threatened to destroy their homes and families and tell his father they were all traitors, they had accepted his vow to never speak of it again. They did not of course tell him from that day forward, Yuri had become their means of retribution against the dishonor of Xerxes had thrust on them. The Princess may not have noticed it, but no matter where she went over the course of the next several centuries an Immortal was beside her, coaching her, teaching her. They had been instrumental in seeing to it that Yuri was named High Guard Commander. They had seen the devotion to her skills she had applied everyday. And the complete devotion to her father, especially after Isabella betrayed her father.

Veldruk may have enslaved their race in the beginning, but over the thousands of years since that day, Cha'talla's people had come to love the Vampire High Lord. Of all the races within the High Coven Empire, his people were held on a plane above others by Veldruk. He had granted them independence after five thousand years of servitude, and they had chosen to remain in his service willingly, and had become a large trading partner within the Empire.

Princess Yuri was held in almost as high a regard as the High Lord himself, and many Immortals had laughed secretly at the Pureblood that Veldruk had chosen to take his daughter's hand. It was a choice of political convenience they knew, but it made Cha'talla laugh inwardly when he realized the Princess held the

Pureblood fool in such dismal standing. Yuri was a strong willed woman Cha'talla knew, and it spoke volumes about the character of this genetically enhanced human that she had turned and taken as her husband in secret, knowing that her father would never approve.

"I will be honest with you human Moran." Cha'talla spoke. "Your military skills are some of the most refined I have ever seen. You lead by example... and you are not afraid to take risks or advice. Many of the Pureblood vampire officers in the High Lord's court are nothing more than pompous fools who have never seen a day of real combat. They have never witnessed the Lycavorians shred their troops on the ground, or seen severely damaged Lycavorian warships ram High Coven ships in an attempt to take as many of us with them as they can when they die."

"Yuri told me they are known to do that." Moran spoke.

Cha'talla nodded. "My instructions from the High Lord when I came here were three fold." He spoke. "I was to insure that the Princess did not perish on this forsaken rock of a planet; I was to insure that all information pertaining to our cloned soldiers was protected, and I was to insure that you were fit to be her Royal concubine by order of the High Lord."

"I'm guessing you know I consider Yuri to be my wife." Moran spoke.

Cha'talla nodded. "And she considers you a husband, which is surprising to say the least. She is known as a strong willed woman, and always has been, and if she sees something in you that makes her accept you as her husband, that is all I really need to know. I do not know what the future holds for the two of you, but know that you will have the support of the Immortals and all of my people. The Princess has earned that... and perhaps one day you might as well."

"You don't think we can win do you?" Moran asked.

Cha'talla smiled gently. "Your insight impresses me human." He replied. "No... I do not believe we will win. Xerxes will be bent on only one thing when he arrives, and if I could, I would love to see that animal Leonidas finish what his father started."

"Then why are you helping me?" Moran asked.

Cha'talla shrugged. "I grow bored easily, and it seems action follows you wherever you go." He answered with a smile. "Besides... I have been wrong before in my predictions. When do we depart to crush this city?"

"Six hours." Moran replied. "We'll move out at full dark, when our vampire vision will hopefully give us the advantage. I'm hoping by dawn tomorrow we will be hammering Eden with artillery."

Cha'talla nodded. "Good... I feel the need to feed on new elf blood, and I understand one of his Queens is a succulent elf female with platinum hair. I will enjoy feasting on her blood while I fuck her like the animal she has allowed herself to become."

They enjoyed a good laugh at that, unaware of the emerald green wolf eyes that were watching them from the top of the six thousand foot mountain on the edge of the Capitol Reef National Park.

Dysea lowered the matte black macro binoculars after taking in the mass of armor and troops that was rapidly filling the valley seven miles east of her. Her wolf eyes and the added power of the binos was all she needed to get an excellent view of the forces massed against Eden. She turned her head and looked at her female Spartan Royal Guard and the two Drow scouts that had traveled with them. Their Raptor was sitting in a field under heavy guard three miles further west of their location.

"We must get back and tell *Nauta Melme* what we have seen." She spoke softly.

"Milady... can you not just tell him telepathically?" The Spartan asked.

Dysea shook her head with a smile. "For all we know they have dozens of people monitoring all forms of communication, even telepathic communication. And *Nauta Melme* was very specific when I left. He told me if I got too close or took any unnecessary risks he would punish me severely."

The female Spartan chuckled softly. "That almost makes you want to get into trouble Milady... just so that he *will* punish you." She said.

Dysea grinned. "Yes... that is true." She answered. "However I have no desire to be captured by these pigs."

"Nor do I." The Centurion said in agreement.

"We will return and inform him of what we have seen, and then we will need to prepare for battle."

Dysea spoke.

The Spartan nodded and motioned to the two Drow who began to inch their way down the back side of the ridge they were on.

EDEN

Martin stood on top of his command bunker, his dark eyes scanning the landscape before him. His command bunker had been built directly into the hill overlooking the intersection of Route 89 and Route 62. He could see the five foot deep three foot wide trench that had been dug from the base of the hill in a curving “U” shape across both well traveled roads. They had been recovered for twenty miles in either direction over the past year for ease of Hopper travel to the settlements that surrounded Eden. His eyes could just pick out the figures of hundreds of Spartan Centurions lounging within the trenches chatting with each other or eating an early dinner. Stretched out in front of the trench, beginning two hundred meters from the edge was a minefield. One mile deep and stretching across the entire front of the trench, littered with landmines of all types, it was impossible to walk across the expanse without triggering at least one mine. Heavy chain gun turrets were spaced every two hundred meters along the trench, with interlocking fields of fire.

Martin let his eyes wander further back where he had two batteries of heavy 200mm towed artillery pieces set up and ready to fire. He kept going over the defenses in his mind, trying to determine if he had forgotten anything, and putting together all the events that had led him to this point in his life. The battles he had fought in, the friends he had to bury, the questions that had filled his head about who and what he was since he was old enough to realize that he could actually assume the form of a wolf. He had taken it all in stride, in an almost laconic manner, and now after so many years he understood why. It was in his blood.

Martin caught their scent before he saw them, and he turned slightly as Anja and Aricia came walking towards him, their fingers interlaced as they held hands. The scents of honey and sweet coco drifted over him, carried on the slight westerly breeze that was blowing. They loved each other almost as intensely as they loved him; he could smell that wafting from their pores. Dysea was returning to Eden from her long range patrol, and then three of the four women who would share his life into the future would be with him.

If they even had a future together that was.

“You are thinking too much Marty.” Anja spoke with a gentle smile as they came up to him.

It was the most natural thing in the world for them now and they folded themselves into his arms, nuzzling his neck and cheeks as he did the same to them, their auras swarming around and mingling with each other. This was part of being a wolf, and it was a part that Anja and Dysea had embraced whole heartedly, and a part that came as naturally as breathing to Aricia.

Martin looked down at her smiling jade green eyes. He had never really noticed just how short Anja was at only five foot three, but packed in that tight, muscular body was a warrior nonetheless. Aricia stood four inches taller than her at five foot seven, and he still had to look down into her azure blue eyes.

“Anja is right my love.” Aricia spoke softly. “We... you have done all you can. Now comes the hardest part.”

Martin nodded, “The waiting.” He said with a smile. “I always hated the waiting, even before I knew what I was.”

“Dysea is making her way here from the airfield.” Anja spoke.

Martin nodded. “I know. Vengal went to meet her so they could get the last details worked out. The airfield is going to be a major hub Anja.”

“Yes I know... and I already have a Spartan Lochi guarding my every move. Atropos has sworn to protect me with his last breath if need be.” She replied exasperated. “It’s... it’s not something I am used too Marty, having men and women ready to die to keep me safe.”

Martin nodded. “I know the feeling.”

Aricia nodded in agreement. “It makes me uncomfortable as well.” She said.

“If we win this fight, I have a distinct feeling there is going to be a lot that we will be uncomfortable with.” Martin spoke. “I guess we’ll just have to get used to it. Of course... both of you could tell me to take a hike and then you’ll never have to worry about it again.” He added with a smile.

“That will never happen.” Aricia said pressing her body against his side tightly.

“Yeah... when pigs fucking fly,” Anja echoed, doing the same.

Martin chuckled. “I’d be careful... with everything that has happened in the last year we just may see pigs fly some day.”

Anja laughed softly and nodded, “Point taken.” She said.

“Anja you...” Martin started.

Anja shook her head and put a finger to his lips. “I am a doctor first and foremost Martin, even before being one of the women who loves you more than their own lives. I need to be there doing what I was trained to do. What... what my people are supposed to do.”

“How’s it feel being the only one of your kind on this planet?” Martin asked with a grin.

“Jesus... that’s a scary thought,” Anja said shaking her head.

“Stay close to Atropos.” Aricia spoke softly squeezing Anja’s hand.

Anja nodded and turned her face upwards. Before she could speak Martin’s lips came down on her and he kissed her deeply, sending surges of love through her with his aura. Anja returned the sensations to him within her own aura, relishing in the feelings he could and did invoke from her all of the time. He pulled away from her slowly, his hand caressing her cheek.

“I love you “Firecracker”. Make sure you keep that delicious tail of yours out of harms way as much as possible.” Martin told her.

Anja laughed. “Oh boy... I got my own nickname now? You really are getting serious.”

Martin laughed and slapped her ass. “Get going!” He said. Anja turned and started walking back towards the bunker as Martin turned and pulled Aricia close to him. “Go with her to the Hopper Little Wolf.”

Aricia kissed him and nodded. “I will return soon with Dysea.” She said.

Martin watched her jog after Anja, taking her hand once more as she caught up with her and they continued walking.

“Sire?” Vengal’s voice spoke from behind him.

Martin turned slowly having smelled Vengal coming up the small hill minutes ago. “How is everyone holding up?” He asked.

Vengal nodded. “Surprisingly well sire.” He answered.

Martin nodded. “I handle the eastern edge of the trench Vengal; I want you taking the western end.”

Vengal nodded. “I figured as much Milord.” He replied. “The artillery batteries are standing by on both our channels. Hopefully the ambushes we have set up along Route 62 will cut down their forces quite a bit.”

Martin nodded thoughtfully. “Vengal... I’ll be leaving earth once this is over.” He spoke softly as he got down on one knee.

Vengal nodded as he dropped to a knee next to his King. “I assumed as much sire.”

Martin looked at him. “I want you to come with me.” He said.

Vengal looked at him a mischievous smile on his face. “I was hoping you would ask me that sire. I have already spoken with my wife and Anuk and Daniel.”

Martin chuckled. “I should have known.” He said. “Tarifa and Aihola are more than capable of handling things here, and with Selene and Tareif backing them, plus those in Sparta that will remain... if we win this... earth will be in good hands.”

“May I ask why me sire?” Vengal asked.

Martin looked at him. “Because you and I have gotten rather close over these last few months and I want...”

Vengal saw his King cant his head to the side slightly as if he had just noticed something. He looked at him puzzled. “Sire... what is it?”

Martin came to his feet quickly every nerve ending in his body alive and on alert. “Come with me!” He told Vengal before turning and sprinting for the bunker.

Martin entered the bunker to the sound of Admiral Wallace’s voice echoing from the monitor.

“...get me the King now!”

Martin stopped and looked at the monitor. “Admiral...”

Wallace saw him and his face changed slightly to one of determination. “Sire... EDEN’s long range sensors have just detected roughly eighty-seven ships entering the system. They began appearing four minutes ago out of nowhere! They are now passing Uranus and at their present speed will arrive above earth in roughly eleven hours.”

“Is it the Lycavorian ships?” Vengal asked quickly, excitement coursing through him.

“We don’t know who they are.” Wallace answered. “EDEN’s sensors can only detect them at the moment. We can’t identify them. We don’t even know what our ships will look like.”

“Then it could be the Lycavorian Union fleet?” Vengal asked turning to look at Martin. “Couldn’t it sire?”

Martin shook his head slowly. “It’s Xerxes people.” He responded, his voice soft. “And the shit is really going to fly now.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

LYCAVORIAN ATTACK CRUISER *LEONIDAS I* SEVENTEEN HOURS FROM EARTH

“How many ships have entered the system? And someone turn those damn alarms off!” Ceneu bellowed over the alarms that were blaring on the bridge of *LEONIDAS I*. He turned quickly when the elevator lift to the bridge stopped and the doors slid open to reveal Riall, Gorgo, Vistr and Isabella. He waved them over to the large star chart and began to move there himself. “And give me an accurate count!”

“Ceneu what’s going on?” Riall asked as he moved up to the table. “The entire fleet is coming to Alert Status Two.”

Ceneu nodded and his hands touched the control panel for the star chart, bringing up the map of the galaxy that held Earth and their King. “Long range sensors have detected a High Coven Fleet entering Earth’s system.” He reported to them. He turned when the bridge crewmen hurried over and handed him the data pad. He glanced at it and nodded. “Eighty-seven ships, including the *WING OF DEATH*.”

“Xerxes’s ship,” Isabella said softly.

Ceneu nodded and they watched as an aide manipulated the chart’s controls and eighty-seven miniature ships appeared on the chart table outlined in red.

“Less than we thought.” Vistr spoke surprised.

Ceneu nodded quickly, “By a significant margin.” He answered. “It appears he rode his ships harder than he should have. We will still be outnumbered, but no where near as badly as we first thought.”

“Have they detected us?” Riall asked.

Ceneu shook his head. “We are coming in from the far side of the system’s sun. They will not be able to see us until we are in the system and almost upon them due to the radiation this sun emits.”

“How soon before they reach this planet Earth?” Vistr asked.

“Nine hours before they establish orbit,” Ceneu replied immediately, “Another hour after that for them to be in position to begin a planetary bombardment.”

“Ceneu what do the data bank archives say we left at Sparta?” Riall asked. “Is there anything they can use?”

Ceneu reached for a different pad on the side of the star chart and read quickly, “Nineteen *STRIKER*-Class Attack Transports and three of the larger G12 Transports; seven storehouses of body armor and weapons, small power generators for the Shi Viska branding stations, and a Class Three Power generator in the lower level of their medical center.” Ceneu shook his head. “Nothing they can use with the exception of the body armor and weapons.”

“No one could fly the *STRIKERS*?” Vistr asked.

Ceneu shook his head. “I doubt it. As you know, eighty percent of our entire *STRIKER AT* complement of pilots is made up of female elves. The ships just seem to respond to them better for some reason because of the bio-circuits installed, and they are able to make the ships dance. Without the proper training I find it hard to believe they could use a *STRIKER*, even if there was a female elf with the natural skills to fly it.”

Gorgo looked at him. "In my son's memories, the one's that he passed to me, there was a force field of some sort protecting this city he has built on the North American Continent. It was built by the humans that accompany him and if he is using it that must provide some means of protection."

"It's possible." Ceneu spoke. "The humans had developed enough to build this base on the moon; they could very well have designed such a shield. The question remains, will it withstand a bombardment from orbit by a *REVERENCE*-Class Dreadnought?"

"I have been doing some reading on this planet," Isabella spoke now, everyone turning to her surprised. Isabella had been different since the death of her senior vampire soldier. No longer did she have fights with her remaining troops to see if one would share her bed. She had stopped that practice altogether. She had been seen in the archives of the *LEONIDAS I* on several occasions, and she had taken to eating meals on a regular basis with the members of the crew and not keeping to her quarters as was usually the case. She saw the looks on their faces and her own face scrunched up. "I do read!" She exclaimed defensively, but with a touch of humor that they had never seen from her before. "I have a very proper education!"

Gorgo chuckled and reached out to squeeze her arm. Riall and Ceneu noticed this, and a knowing look passed between them. Gorgo was the only one Isabella allowed to touch her person, but it was a start as far as they were concerned. "What have you learned child?" She asked.

"Their tools of war were for the most part, conventional explosive based weapons." Isabella answered. "The most powerful weapon they built up until the time the comet destroyed much of their civilization was a laser weapons grid."

"The one on this base on the moon," Ceneu spoke nodding his head. "It will not hurt our larger ships, but it could cause some concern for our fighters and transports."

Isabella nodded. "Yes... after that the next most powerful weapon was nuclear based. In all actuality, they probably would have discovered faster than light speed within twenty years had the comet not decimated their world. I would surmise that this shield is meant to protect against more conventional weapons and most likely there is no way it would stand up to a plasma bombardment from orbit for more than a few minutes."

"Then they would be protected against whatever Yuri has on the surface, because that would be conventional." Vistr spoke. "The few humans I have come in contact with within the Union have no love for vampires, and even with access to a spaceport as the Vampire Coven undoubtedly has, they would not risk using anything more than what the planet was capable of in terms of technology for fear the remaining humans would revolt."

Riall nodded. "They would not want to fight a rebellion on more than one front." He said. "And these humans have proven to be extremely adequate vampire killers in the past. And they will fight viciously when their backs are against the wall." He looked at Gorgo. "Can you contact him from here Gorgo?"

Gorgo looked at him intently for a long moment. "I can try... but I would need the help of several Tier Five telepaths. Do we have any within the fleet that travels with us?"

Ceneu nodded. "Several of my senior officers are Tier Fives." He answered.

"I am willing to try Riall... but we may still be too far away." She told him. "I would need Isabella within the link as well."

Isabella looked at her surprised. "Me? Why would you need me Gorgo?"

"You are connected to my son in a way that we are not," Gorgo spoke ignoring the looks from the others that were flashed her way. "If he feels you within the link, reaching out for him, it will be easier for him to establish a connection."

"Gorgo... he is that strong telepathically?" Vistr asked.

"We saw what he did to Isabella's father in that transmission." Riall spoke. "I spoke with Deia about it and according to her if he was able to do this, his telepathic power will rival that of King Resumar. He will need many months of instruction under our senior telepaths, but Deia says his power could very well be uncharted."

Gorgo nodded. "We will attempt it... but we may not succeed."

Riall nodded. "We'll enter the system in twelve hours, but not reach earth for another five. That gives Xerxes six hours to lay waste to everything on the planet before we get there. And we do not know what Yuri has on the surface."

"Is there no way to boost our sensor range and discover this?" Vistr asked.

Ceneu shook his head. “The senior elf engineer already has them operating at nearly twenty percent above their specified levels. Any more tweaking and we risk shorting out the main long range sensor array. We can pick up lifesigns but nothing more. Three massed concentrations are within sixty kilometers of this city of his on the North American continent.”

“Even if we were able to establish a connection with him,” Gorgo spoke. “There is still nothing we can do for him until we arrive.”

“There may be something.” The female voice spoke from behind them.

Their heads turned to see the female elf standing behind Ceneu quietly. Her golden colored hair hung down to between her shoulder blades, the dark roots barely noticeable. Her dark brown eyes were bright, alert and very alluring to look at for any length of time. She wore the dark gray flight uniform of a senior Union pilot with the rank of full Star Commander.

Ceneu stepped to the side to allow her to move up next to him. She was tall for an elf at nearly five foot nine, and she had very long legs. Her uniform clung to her slim but muscular body in all the right places, most noticeably around her extremely well shaped ass. Her chest was not large, even by elfin female standards as they tended to have fuller breasts, but there was no denying that she was a female.

“My apologies For’mya,” Ceneu spoke quickly. “Riall... this is Star Commander For’mya, my senior flight officer and the finest *STRIKER AT* pilot in the Union at this moment.”

The elf nodded her head in respect to Riall. “It is an honor Admiral.” She spoke.

“For’mya?” Riall said looking at her in surprise. “You are the daughter of L’tian and Far’nyel aren’t you?”

The female elf looked at him surprise on her face now but nodded her head. “You honor me with the knowledge of my parents Admiral.”

“That’s high praise coming from Ceneu Star Commander,” Riall told her with a smile. “He rarely gives compliments to anyone, though I suspect you already know that.”

The female elf smiled and her very beautiful face relaxed even more. To say that she was more nervous now than at any other time in her thousand years of life would be a complete understatement. For’mya knew she was in the presence of the two most decorated officers in the Lycavorian Union, and that alone was enough to awe her. She had never met Admiral Riall but his personality certainly matched everything she had ever heard about him. His list of victories and battles against the Vampire Coven was more extensive than anything she had ever read. She also knew he was mated with the mother of their King and they had six children together, but to now be standing across from Gorgo was another high honor for her. The most respected and well thought of instructors at the Apo Prime Higher University, Gorgo’s life story was required reading and now For’mya was standing with her in the same room.

“Thank... thank you sir.” For’mya finally was able to say, her dark eyes settling on Isabella’s porcelain like beauty, her hazel green eyes boring into her.

“What is it you have in mind Commander?” Riall asked.

For’mya tore her eyes from the intoxicating face of the vampire Princess and looked at him. “Sir... I’m sorry. We can use our *STRIKERS* Admiral.”

Riall looked at her. “I don’t follow.”

“The fleet can not make another jump so soon out of the Gate Admiral, our LSDs need time to recharge and have minor adjustments made. Our *STRIKERS* are not so limited because they haven’t even been used.” For’mya spoke as her military training took over and she recited the plan she had been working on in her head for two days now. “Load an elite team of General Vistr’s Spartan Shock troops, and let me take six of our *STRIKERS* to earth. The *STRIKERS* have their own LSDs sir, and we are not affected by the strain of Gate travel, as I said. I have calculated an LSD jump that will put us within an hour of this planet Earth where the King is. If we leave in the next hour we can be there before Xerxes arrives and at the very least give him an advantage defeating the ground forces that seem to be massed against him.”

Ceneu shook his head slowly. “That is not something I even thought of.” He muttered to no one in particular.

“You’ve given this some thought then Commander?” Riall said looking at her.

For'mya nodded. "I have been working out the details for two days Admiral. I know which of my pilots I would take if you and Admiral Ceneu approve the plan, and we can have our aircraft ready to depart in thirty-six minutes."

"Let's hear it." Ceneu spoke.

"I factored in a full weapons load and the extra pilots to fly the *STRIKERS* that are stored in Sparta and a limited amount of spare stores if the weapons on the *STRIKERS* in Sparta are not useable." For'mya spoke confidently. "Each aircraft can carry an additional one hundred and twenty-seven troops and we can easily make the jump with our LSDs intact and at full power. We would arrive on earth in full fighting form."

Vistr stepped forward. "I can have every Spartan Scout Troop in my Expeditionary Force ready to move in less than an hour." He said looking at Riall. "Eight hundred SSTs are the equal to an entire division with their training and I will lead them."

"I will go as well." Gorgo spoke quickly, "Isabella with me."

Riall looked at her. "Gorgo..."

"If it is my time to die husband then I will die beside the son I thought I lost so long ago." Gorgo told him taking his hand. "However since you are here, I will rely on you to make sure I don't die." She told him with a smile.

Riall looked at her with a loving smile before turning to Ceneu. "Ceneu... what do you think?"

The Algolian Admiral nodded. "I like it." He spoke. "It puts them well within range of earth and Gorgo should be able to contact the King easily. For'mya can then relay back to us whatever he wants or needs before she lands."

"And when Xerxes begins to bombard the planet?" Riall asked.

"I don't believe he will bombard the planet Admiral," Isabella spoke again. "We all saw how badly Martin embarrassed him in front of my father." Gorgo looked at her carefully and was the only one who noticed that she used her son's name in an almost affectionate tone. "He will want to prove to my father that he is superior to him. He will head directly to the surface in search of Martin."

Ceneu looked at Riall. "He has let his arrogance override his common sense on many occasions Riall." He said. "We can use this to our advantage."

Riall nodded slowly, but his decision was already made and he knew it. "Do it!" He snapped.

EDEN

Nayeca stared at the shimmering light blue shield as it extended up and around the edges of Eden and encompassed the entire city. She sat on the thick tree stump at the base of the hill where the King's bunker was situated. She had seen him rush into the bunker with General Vengal only moments before, and she determined that was why the shield had now gone up. Something was happening, and the battle was drawing closer, that much she could feel, but Nayeca didn't feel fear for the battle that was coming. In fact, this was the very first time in her life when she didn't feel fear for her life, and the two reasons for that were walking towards where she sat carrying several ration packets of food.

They had returned to Eden two days before and after all that had happened in bringing the Drow to Eden, Nayeca was sure she would be returned to the small one room apartment she had stayed in before departing with the Queen to Canada. That had not been the case, as within minutes of landing on Eden's airfield, Anuk had taken her hand and they had filtered back towards the city with the other troops. Many knew they would have only one night, possibly two to enjoy whatever down time they could find, and they wasted no time in heading back to their families and friends. Anuk had led her to a medium sized three bedroom home within three kilometers of the airfield which she told Nayeca was her and Daniel's home. He was going to the Command Center to attend a debriefing, and would be returning later.

What followed had been the most pleasurable night of Nayeca's young life, and she shuddered inwardly in exquisite joy as the memories came rushing back to her.

TEN HOURS EARLIER

Nayeca stood under the hot beating water of the shower, letting the soothing heat relax the muscles in her shoulders, and allowing her to think about what had happened the last few hours. No matter what she tried, Anuk kept entering her thoughts. She had truly not wanted her first time with Anuk to be forced in any way. She had wanted to seduce the young Wood Elf, make Anuk *want* to give her pleasure. As the water fell over her body and flowed between her full breasts, Nayeca thought of Jenia, and realized that she desired Anuk more than she had ever wanted Jenia. She had loved her Moon Elf lover, of that she was sure, but there was something about Anuk that caused ripples of pleasure to course through her.

She had not been able to stop herself when the Drow officer had forced them together, the feel of Anuk's soft lips on her pussy causing her to lose all of her control. What stunned her more was the fact that Anuk had reacted the way she had. She hadn't fought what happen to them, and she almost seemed to relish in it. It had not taken Nayeca long to reach her peak as it had been so many years since that kind of pleasure had seared her veins, and Anuk had gulped down her passion like someone who hadn't drunk fresh water in days. Nayeca had been distraught afterward, thinking the one thing in this mad world she so desired would turn against her in hate and disgust. It had stunned her when Anuk had seductively lowered her still burning and perfect body against hers; ignoring the blood of the Drow she had so effortlessly killed lying all around them, and kissed Nayeca with blistering passion. Jenia had never kissed her in all their years together, and when Anuk's lips found hers, Nayeca felt her entire body ignite like nothing she had ever experienced. It was...

"Mistress?" Anuk's soft voice filled her ears and her amber eyes opened to see Anuk standing there in the middle of the small bathroom, wrapped only in the towel she had dried off with after her own shower. Her rust colored red hair was still plastered to her head, the freckles dotting her lightly tanned skin, and her cerulean blue eyes were staring at Nayeca's wet, naked body with obvious lust and desire in them.

Nayeca surrendered to her own desires at that moment, and she stepped slightly out of the shower spray. She felt a wave of hunger sweep over her and she let her dominant nature take over. She seductively ran her hand down her glistening body, trailing her fingers between the deep cleft between her large firm breasts. "Do you see something you desire slave." Nayeca spoke in a low voice, "Something that you want?"

Anuk's eyes were wide and bright as she nodded her head slowly. "Yes... yes." She stammered.

Nayeca stepped closer, thrusting out her firm breasts proudly. She stepped further out of the water spray and grasped the towel around Anuk's body, pulling it off quickly. "What is it you desire slave?" She asked in a seductive voice, pulling Anuk closer to her in the shower.

"I... I want you... Mistress," Anuk answered in a husky voice, her blood pounding in her veins as she stared at the firm, gorgeous body of this Drow female in front of her.

"I can see that slave." Nayeca said stroking Anuk's shoulders with her fingers softly, tracing her fingertips down the insides of her arms and slowly moving to circle lazily around Anuk's already rock hard nipples. Nayeca smiled when Anuk inhaled sharply at her touch, her body on fire. She squeezed Anuk's breasts tightly in her hands, her conical breasts almost as large as her own, and drawing a gasp of wanton desire from Anuk. Nayeca could feel the heat building inside her quickly; having this luscious red haired female elf pressed to her was driving her mad. She lowered her lips to Anuk's and kissed her hard, her hands filling with Anuk's large muscular ass cheeks and pulling her tightly to her body. She pressed her right knee between Anuk's thighs, and directly up against her bald pussy. Anuk's labium was already engorged in need and her juices coated Nayeca's thigh quickly as her arms wrapped around Nayeca's back pulling her closer. Nayeca pulled her lips from Anuk's with reluctance, saliva joining their moist lips for a brief moment. The red haired elf could kiss, and given Nayeca's lack of experience with that, she did not want to succumb so quickly. She wanted this to last as long as she could prolong it. "You must tell me what... what it is you wish slave." She spoke, her lips close to Anuk's ear.

"You Mistress," Anuk's reply came out in an almost pleading nature. Her body was responding to Nayeca's touch, the contrast in the color of their skin making her burn with need similar to when Daniel crushed her against him and filled her with his huge ebony cock. Her cerulean eyes stared at Nayeca's large breasts, her mouth almost watering at the sight of her small dark nipples and the quarter sized areolas.

Nayeca reached up quickly and wrapped her fingers in Anuk's hair, and pulling her head back quickly, small jolts of pain coursing through Anuk's scalp, and making her body burn even more. "You must tell me

what you want to do slave!” Nayeca demanded her amber eyes glowing with scorching hot desire now. “Tell me what you want to do slave!”

“I... I want to taste you Mistress!” Anuk gasped. “I want to eat... I want to eat your pussy Mistress!”

Nayeca grinned as the words she so wanted to hear from Anuk burst from her lips. “Then get on your knees and eat me slave!” Nayeca demanded, pushing Anuk down with her hands on her shoulders until she was kneeling before her. “Eat my pussy like you want it slave! Make me... make me come all over your beautiful face!”

Anuk was lost in the lust and desire of the moment as she gazed at the thin line of pure white hair above Nayeca’s pussy. The dark pussy lips were puffed out in desire and lust, Nayeca’s stiff clit nearly a half inch long and demanding attention. Anuk’s hands came up to stroke Nayeca’s taut thighs and then slid around to grasp her full muscular ass cheeks in her hands. Surrendering to the desire burning inside her, Anuk pulled Nayeca’s pussy to her and fastened her soft lips onto that delicious clit.

Nayeca gasped in unabashed delight, pleasure surging through her belly as Anuk began to suckle her painfully hard clit. She wrapped her fingers in Anuk’s damp lustrous rust red hair and pulled her head tighter against her pussy, lifting one leg up and draping it over Anuk’s shoulder. “Eat me slave!” She gasped. “Suck my... suck my pussy like you want it! Suck it... suck it like you really want it slave!”

Nayeca’s words of dominance only served to fuel Anuk’s growing desire, and she lashed Nayeca’s pink clit with her warm tongue, her lips pressed tightly over the top of her pussy. She felt Nayeca pulled her head tighter and hump her mouth, making her clit bang against her teeth causing jolts of pleasure surging through her Mistress. Anuk released one hand from holding that beautiful ass and brought it back around to reach up and fondle Nayeca’s left breast. She pulled on the stiff nipple hard, pinching it between her thumb and forefinger, drawing a gasp of delight from Nayeca at the sharp pain. Nayeca grasped her wrist with one hand, but did not stop her manipulations, while her other hand tightly held Anuk’s face in her crotch.

Anuk extended her tongue out, taking long slow licks of Nayeca’s delicious pussy, the scent of sweet apples overpowering as her juices were beginning to lubricate the insides of her pussy and coating her tongue and lips with her nectar.

“Yes!” Nayeca almost screamed. “Ohhhh... you... you eat my pussy so good!” The fire in her belly was building to a climax, and Nayeca’s limbs began to quiver in a way they never had before. She looked down wide eyed at Anuk feasting on her slit, her tongue working madly as her fingers pinched and teased the nipple of her breast. It was never like this with Jenia, Nayeca thought to herself. It had taken Jenia nearly three years to be able to make Nayeca quiver in such a way. “Oh... my slave... you are... you are going to make me come!” She gasped. “Do you want that Anuk? Do you want to taste me?”

The moan Anuk let out was all the answer Nayeca needed and she gripped her head harder, fucking her driving tongue faster. Anuk’s grip on her ass cheek tightened, and she pinched her nipple once more, harder than before.

“Fuck!” Nayeca screamed, her head tossing back. “Ahhhhhhh... here it comes slave!”

Anuk fastened her lips over all of Nayeca’s spasming pussy and groaned loudly as she dropped her hand from Nayeca’s breast and shoved three fingers into her own, bald dripping pussy. Nayeca’s ass tightened in Anuk’s grip and her sweet apple tasting come erupted into her mouth. Her belly heaved almost violently as her orgasm ripped through her, stronger than anything she had yet felt in her life. Her amber eyes were wide in pleasure, spiraling colors flashing in her mind as she convulsed a second time, sending more of her come splashing into Anuk’s eager mouth.

Nayeca didn’t know how or when they had moved to the bed, the only thing she was aware of was the intense pleasure her new slave was lavishing upon her. Anuk’s tongue was a tireless machine, dragging three more incredible orgasms from her while she sat astride her gorgeous face, grinding her pussy down on Anuk’s tongue while pinching and twisting her own dark nipples. They shifted until she was sitting on Anuk’s face, the deep cleft of her ass cheeks buried over Anuk’s pert nose. Nayeca found herself fondling Anuk’s lightly tanned breasts and pinching her erect pink nipples, something she had never done with Jenia. Nayeca found herself gazing at Anuk’s bald pussy, so completely soaked with her own juices and Nayeca found herself licking her lips. Twice Nayeca had to stop her face from falling into Anuk’s thoroughly soaked pussy with the intensity of her orgasms, feeling Anuk’s breasts crushed against her heaving abdomen. Anuk’s tongue was licking every part of her body, exploring every centimeter of her clutching pussy, delving deep between her dark ass cheeks,

her tongue tickling Nayeca's virgin asshole. It was driving her mad, and she kept finding her eyes drawn to Anuk's dripping snatch and the cinnamon smell that was emanating so intensely from her pussy.

It was in the middle of her third staggering orgasm when she felt him in the room with them. Nayeca watched intently through amber eyes clouded with passion as he climbed onto the bed his massive ebony cock nearly bursting with hot desire. Her amber eyes took in every thick vein that adorned the easily foot long length as he moved between Anuk's satiny thighs. He was enormously muscled and deliciously defined, unlike any man she had ever seen before and when compared to Anuk he appeared like a towering black giant. Anuk moaned against Nayeca's pussy above her when she felt Daniel's hands gently part her legs and the head of his huge cock poised at her opening. She had smelled her husband the moment he had entered their room and had called to him using her aura alone. Danny's reaction was obvious and quick.

Nayeca was frozen in fear and passion, not knowing what to do, her hips moving of their own accord on Anuk's face now, her tongue working furiously to bring Nayeca to orgasm again, Anuk's hands holding her hips in place, refusing to allow her to even move off her face. Nayeca's fears were quickly shattered and brushed aside when Daniel reached up to her face and covered her lips with his as he impaled Anuk with one powerful plunge of his huge ebony cock. Nayeca was vaguely aware of Anuk screaming out her pleasure as she shuddered in a massive orgasm brought on by her husband's huge cock burying itself deeply into her. In the midst of the kiss he was laying on her, Nayeca couldn't help but whimper in her own crushing climax, her juices splashing into Anuk's hungry mouth.

What followed for Nayeca was the most erotic and exciting sexual experience she had ever been involved in, and it had left her craving more. Daniel knew just where to touch her, just where to nuzzle her, and between his roaming kisses and caresses and Anuk's driving tongue, Nayeca lost count of her orgasms after the tenth one. She gasped when they shifted positions and Daniel held her hips lowering her dripping pussy onto his face. Nayeca rode Daniel's face in unadulterated pleasure as she watched in awe Anuk slamming her tight pussy down on his enormous monster cock, his tongue driving even deeper into her than Anuk's. She was able to see the look of pure bliss on Anuk's face as she rotated her hips on his massive ebony cock buried in her belly and when Anuk reached for her to kiss her she returned Anuk's wanton kisses with equal lust and passion.

It continued for hours, neither of them seeming to tire of sharing her body. They both worshiped her with their tongues and at times she would rest while Anuk pleased her husband, taking his entire huge cock within her velvety throat until his body would go rigid and he exploded, his come flooding deep into her belly. And then he would do the same to her, leaving her screaming out her love for him. Daniel lavished her body with kisses and in time Nayeca discovered he was almost as good as her new slave lover when it came to eating her pussy. He never once tried to enter her body with his huge cock, content to have Anuk service him, which his mate did with great gusto.

When the moment came... Nayeca could not contain herself any longer... and she grabbed his massive cock in her hand and without pause sank her tight Drow pussy down over that enormous shaft until her pussy lips anchored at the base of his thick ebony cock in one breath stealing plunge and she was crying out in orgasmic bliss. His entire body had lifted from the bed, all except his head which was trapped between Anuk's gorgeous thighs as she was coming all over his face. Nayeca forgot herself even more then and in that passion clouded minutes she leaned forward to brace herself on Anuk's body and found herself suckling her slave's gorgeous breasts without thinking, sucking hard on her nipples and squeezing her wonderful globes of flesh. This only served to set Anuk off once again and she ground her tight pussy down on her husband's face, his large ebony hands holding tightly to her hips as he lapped up her come hungrily.

It was too much for Daniel and with a heave of his hips his massive cock grew even larger inside Nayeca and she felt him erupt deep within her with the force of a volcano, his searing hot come blasting into her depths just as Anuk's lips claimed hers and they melted together in a tangle of flesh and pleasure that would continue for another two hours before they all fell spent onto the bed.

Nayeca watched them walking towards her as the last memories of the previous night drifted in her thoughts. Anuk snuggling tightly in Daniel's arms, her back pressed to his chest, while her head was pressed tightly to Nayeca's obsidian colored breasts, their legs entwined in a mass of flesh. Nayeca was able to stare into Daniel's eyes then, and she felt warmth and peace wash over her as his long powerful arms encircled both her and Anuk within his embrace. Anuk was sandwiched between them, protected from any harm and Nayeca held back the tears that threatened to pour from her eyes as Daniel stroked her ears before drifting off to sleep his eyes telling her all she needed to know. Nayeca quickly smiled and then she allowed the small tears to fall as she nuzzled Anuk's hair, while squeezing Daniel's arm on her hip.

Nayeca had never felt more secure and fulfilled as she did last night, and she knew without question where she now belonged. She had never met any female who took the role of submissive so completely, and even Daniel allowed her to direct and at times dominate him. The one thing she regretted from their night together was that she had not the courage to do the one thing she wanted too. She had wanted to taste Anuk and eat her pussy to return to her the pleasure she had given so completely and willingly. Nayeca had never considered giving pleasure to a submissive partner, and the very fact that she so wanted to with Anuk told her all she needed to know. And if she had anything to say about it, and they survived this battle, she had every intention of tasting her submissive lover over and over.

Anuk settled to the ground next to her with a smile, holding out the ration pack. "One delightful rations meal." She spoke cheerfully, attempting to lighten the somber mood that had slowly been building among all the troops. Waiting for battle was the worst experience anyone could endure. "It doesn't taste anywhere near as wonderful as you do Mistress, but it will have to suffice for the moment."

Danny chuckled as he sat down in front of both of them. "If we had more time I'd whip up my famous MRE surprise." He said.

Anuk grunted with a nod. "Now that is a delicious blend of shit." She said as she tore open the packet.

Nayeca looked at both of them with adoration and confusion in her eyes. They accepted her so completely for whom she was, and this was not something Nayeca was used to in the least. Even when Nayeca was demanding her slave to eat her pussy harder, grinding her crotch on Anuk's face, Daniel had not batted an eye at her treatment of his wife and mate and he had continued in his own actions. "The... the shield has been activated." She spoke finally, unsure of the words she truly wanted to speak.

Danny nodded looking back at the shield as he chewed the ration bar. "I figure we got about four hours before all hell breaks loose and Eden turns into the center of attention."

Nayeca looked at him. "Can we win Daniel?" She asked him softly.

"The Skipper and I don't take part in battles we can't win." He answered her quickly. "It's not in our nature."

Nayeca looked surprised. "You... you have never lost a fight?" She asked stunned.

"We've lost a few battles... but never the war." Danny answered. "Though I will admit... this will be the toughest one we have ever faced."

"Yet you do not appear frightened in any way." Nayeca asked clearly impressed. "How do you do that?"

Danny laughed. "Nayeca... I'm scared shitless." He told her, seeing her eyes go wide. "We just hide it better than most. I guess it comes with the Spartan blood we have in our veins. Besides..., I have too much to live for now to go and get myself killed." Daniel tilted his head slightly which told Anuk someone was communicating with him via his implant. Danny nodded, "On my way Skipper." He spoke in reply and began getting to his feet.

"What do you have to live for Daniel?" Nayeca asked him.

Danny leaned over and kissed Anuk passionately, his fingers caressing her sensitive elf ears, Nayeca seeing her shudder in delight. "What do I have to live for?" He spoke, repeating her question to him as he stared at Anuk with love and passion. "I have my mate and wife..." He answered turning to look at her. He caught Nayeca off guard when he leaned over and kissed her just as deeply. She whimpered against his lips as his fingers sent a shiver through her body as they gently caressed her sensitive ear ridge. "And I also have you to live for Mistress." He said softly his dark eyes bright.

Nayeca looked at him stunned as he smiled and then turned and headed for the bunker. She looked at Anuk quickly and saw her beaming smile and bright cerulean blue eyes. "We want you to stay with us always Nayeca." Anuk told her.

“Anuk... you and Daniel... you...” Nayeca stammered.

Anuk moved closer to her until their thighs touched and took her hand within hers. “Last night was the most pleasurable experience of my life.” She said with a bright smile. “And Daniel’s as well Mistress. He told me so.”

“I am Drow!” Nayeca said.

“After last night didn’t we prove to you that we don’t particularly care about that?” Anuk said. “Did I not please you enough? Didn’t Daniel make you feel things that you have never felt?”

Nayeca looked at her. “Yes... oh yes Anuk.” She replied quickly. “It was beyond wonderful. But you... you and Daniel are mated. What... what could I ever be to the two of you?”

Anuk leaned over and in very wolf like fashion she nuzzled Nayeca’s sensitive ear gently, extending out her tongue to tease the ridge causing Nayeca to gasp and squeeze her hand tighter. “You will be our Mistress silly.” She replied.

Nayeca looked at her. “This... you are willing to do this?” She asked.

Anuk smiled. “We know it is the one true way to keep you in our lives.” She answered. “We know you are Drow Mistress... and that it is in your nature to be dominant in all that you do. We are willing to accept this if all you will do is remain with us and share our lives. For however long we have years remaining. Daniel... he... he can give us children Mistress, a future. Is that not worth it?”

“If we win this war,” Nayeca spoke.

Anuk nodded slowly, “To have the promise of a long full life with Daniel; to have his children and watch them grow? Isn’t this enough reason to fight harder than ever before? We will see many places we could never imagine Nayeca, for Martin is like a brother to Daniel. Where our King goes, Daniel will follow. And so will I. We... we want you to come with us and share in our lives always.”

Nayeca looked at her with her amber eyes, the prospect of a future with Anuk and Daniel and exploring every facet of the relationship they could have pulling at her like nothing she had ever known. A small slowly spread across her face as she looked at this red haired Wood Elf who had so taken her soul and wrapped it within her embrace. “I... I think I would enjoy that very much... my slave.” She said with a seductive grin.

Anuk’s face brightened even more if that was possible and she leaned forward to kiss her Mistress deeply. Nayeca pulled her head closer, dominating their kiss, her tongue searching and exploring. They parted after a long moment and Anuk’s face was beaming.

“Then we must win.” Nayeca spoke confidently.

Anuk smiled. “Yes we must.”

Dan entered the bunker and saw Martin poring over the map chart with Vengal next to him. “What you got Skipper?” He asked as he made his way over to the table.

Martin looked up at him. “Dysea just got back and this is what she saw.” Martin told him gesturing to the map chart.

Dan’s eyes widened slightly as he saw the forces arrayed against them just coming from the south. “That hurts.” He spoke quickly, “Artillery?”

Martin pointed to a small clump of red marks. “They’re setting up ten miles west of Angle.” Martin answered, “From what she was able to make out nearly four hundred and fifty pieces of artillery. All of it aimed at us.”

“Fuck me.” Dan commented. “They really don’t like us do they?”

Vengal chuckled at his son-in-law’s remark. “It would appear not.” He spoke.

“That ain’t the worst of it.” Martin said.

“Shit Skipper... with us when it rains it pours. What else?” Dan said.

“Xerxes’s forces entered the system ninety minutes ago according to Admiral Wallace. He’s keeping tabs on him, but they’ll be here in just under seven hours.” Martin told him.

Dan’s face became serious now. “Now you have my attention.” He said. “I don’t know what you have been thinking, but our shield is only going to be effective against conventional artillery. If he sits up there in orbit and decides to blow us straight to hell, there ain’t going to be a whole lot we can do to stop him.”

Martin nodded in agreement. “Yeah... I doubt the shield will hold against whatever his ships will be firing.” Martin looked at him. “But I don’t think he’s going to sit up there and bomb us. I think he’s going to come down here and come looking for me.”

“What makes you say that sire?” Vengal asked.

Martin smiled. “I called him some choice names when we spoke last time.” He said. “He wasn’t too happy about that. And I embarrassed him in front of his old man.”

Dan and Vengal looked at him surprised. “You saw the head cheese?” Dan asked.

Martin nodded, “Ugly bastard too.” He said with a smile. “We need to make sure that we have Moran’s forces well in hand before our buddy Xerxes gets here.”

“I’m listening.” Danny said. “How do we do that?”

“The governor of Circleville passed on the knowledge that he has some people who know an old logging trail through the mountains 20 miles south of Route 62. It leads all the way up to Otter Creek State Park. Once you hit Route 22 you can come straight north and come in behind Moran’s artillery and catch them napping.” Martin explained.

Dan nodded. “Nice. What are you going to give me to do this?”

“A window seat on a very big space ship when it gets here,” Martin said in reply.

Dan laughed and nodded his head. “It better be a big window.” He spoke looking at the map. “We have two batteries of 300IIs that we were holding in reserve.”

Martin nodded. “And eighty Scorpions that Leland was holding back for his indirect fire if needed.”

“Is that gonna leave him short?” Vengal asked.

Martin shook his head. “Tareif is already pulling one of his 300II batteries off the northern line to take their place. Along with all the 120mm mortars that were set up in Mountain City, Leland will be well covered. Our air attack hit them harder in the north so Tareif can afford to be down one battery of launchers.”

Dan was leaning over the map table and measuring distances. “If I leave in the next hour I can be in position roughly about an hour before baldy shows up. It’s going to require us to do some serious driving.”

“The Governor assures me the road is stable and he has people posted all along the route that will direct you and then form up with you. It should give you an extra two hundred infantry troops to use as you see fit.” Martin said. “Take out as much of that artillery as you can Danny. Our people along 62 will inflict some serious casualties on Moran’s forces as they plug along, but it won’t stop him. If we can take out a majority of his artillery, he won’t be able to bring all of his guns to bear on Eden and the shield at one time. They’ll be supporting his advance for the most part until they are in position to launch an attack against Eden itself, so the artillery won’t move until then.”

“That’s going to leave you even thinner along the southern perimeter Skipper.” Dan said. “Moran ain’t no fool. He’ll have infantry trailing his armor all along 62.”

“Let his infantry come.” Martin spoke. “If they live through all the ambushes and get to the minefield we’ll cut them down there.”

Dan nodded. “I’ll start pulling the Scorpions out of the line. I’ll leave in forty minutes.”

Martin nodded. “Good luck brother.” He spoke seriously.

“To you as well, oh mighty King.” Danny grinned as he spoke and turned to duck out of the bunker before Martin threw something at him.

Martin shook his head and turned back to Vengal to speak just as Dysea and Aricia came into the bunker from the other entrance holding hands. They would remain with him here due to their fighting skills. Anja would be blanketed by no less than thirty Spartans at any one time thanks to Atropos and his Lochi. Dysea came up to him and hugged him tightly.

“It looks as if the entire world is arrayed against us *Nauta Melme*.” She spoke softly.

Martin smiled and nuzzled her ear. “It only looks that way *Melda Min*.” He said. “It’s really only three quarters of the world.”

Dysea and the others chuckled at his words and she stepped back from him slapping his hard abdomen. “Do you ever take anything seriously?” She asked him with gentle humor.

Ask me that when I have the three of you in my bed after all this is over. Then we’ll talk about serious.

Martin projected into her thoughts, as well as Aricia’s and Anja’s.

Promises; Promises, Anja’s voice answered from the airfield north of them.

He did very well the last time my love. Aricia spoke with a small grin on her face.

He was lacking a certain seriousness when he got to me, after you drained him twice Little Wolf. Anja replied.

I'll eat more vegetables next time. Martin said with a chuckle. His attempt at levity had worked and he could feel the three of them being to relax somewhat. He had gone into battle enough times to know that even mindless banter helped to relieve the stress of a coming fight or operation.

I get him first. Anja exclaimed.

I think we can arrange that Melyanna. Dysea spoke standing next to Aricia. *Little Wolf and I have much to catch up on.* She gazed at Aricia and waggled her eyes brows.

Aricia's azure blue eyes held nothing but promise and pleasure as she smiled at her. *Yes we do, don't we?*

Ok... enough already. I have a war to fight here. Martin spoke.

Spoilsport, Anja's voice echoed.

The echo of thunder rolled in the air and Martin looked at Vengal as he stuck his finger in his ear to listen intently to his implant. He turned to look at Martin.

"Our ambush teams have started." He stated quickly. "They are hitting the leading elements of the vampire armor coming down 62."

Martin nodded, "Time to get into position." He spoke. "Moran has started this dance, and I intend for us to finish it."

STRIKER 414

For'mya reached above her and touched the control panel as the view from her cockpit window filled with the blue green planet in front of her. She turned her head quickly side to side to insure the other STRIKERS had made the jump and satisfied she adjusted her controls.

"Power down the LSD feed coils," She ordered quickly, her helmeted head turning to the console on her left, her hands flying over the console with inhuman speed and ease.

"LSD coils powering down." Her co-pilot spoke.

"Give me a position update!"

"Nine four three mark six eight two." The co-pilot spoke quickly smiling as she answered her. "Right where you plotted we would be Commander."

For'mya couldn't help the confident smile and turned as Gorgo and Isabella came into the cockpit. Her dark brown eyes met Isabella's briefly before she turned to look at Gorgo. "We're here." She announced.

Gorgo stared at the planet below her, almost sensing the presence of her son without even being able to tell where he was. "Well done Star Commander." Gorgo spoke with a smile. "Well done indeed."

"Have we been detected?" Isabella asked.

For'mya shook her head. "They are still too distant to pick us out of the radiation clutter from the sun. We're too small a target to be seen. We should be able to sneak down to the surface with little difficulty. Thankfully it appears the atmosphere of this planet is charged with ionized particles, and it will suffice to mask our approach."

"How soon before we can land?" Gorgo asked.

"Forty-nine minutes Milady." For'mya answered.

"General Vistr?"

For'mya nodded. "All six of our STRIKERS made it." She said. "We are in a tight diamond formation and will remain radio silent until we enter the upper atmosphere. The Coven fleet might not be able to detect our engine signature, but they will detect communications channels if we attempt to speak with each other."

Gorgo nodded and reached out to squeeze For'mya's shoulder firmly. "We don't need communications channel." She said confidently. "I should be able to touch Martin from here." She took Isabella's hand and guided her into the rear of the *STRIKER*.

Once in the back Isabella waited until they had settled to the seats across from one another before speaking. “Gorgo... if I may, what is it about this female elf that has everyone on edge?”

Gorgo looked at her. “What do you mean?”

“I have never seen the Admiral act in such a way with a junior officer.” Isabella spoke. “He treats everyone with respect, but it almost seemed as if this... this For’mya made him *more* respectful.” She looked at Gorgo. “Why is that?”

Gorgo smiled. “For’mya’s father is the great grandson of the elfin King that was executed so many years ago.” She answered. “Technically she is of Elfin Royal blood.”

“What exactly does technically mean?” Isabella asked.

“For’mya has to my knowledge never asked for or received any special treatment because of her bloodline.” Gorgo replied. “Everything she has accomplished has been on her own merits, and she is sometimes...” Gorgo stopped as she searched for the right word.

“Arrogant?” Isabella asked knowingly, finishing her statement.

Gorgo looked at her and chuckled, “Another reason why you and my son will get along so well child,” She said. “You both have the uncanny ability to cut through all the political makeup and bring it all to the basics.”

Isabella looked at the deck uncomfortably. “Gorgo... my words the other day on Apo Prime were uncalled for.” She spoke softly.

Gorgo looked at her surprised. “Isabella... do I hear an apology coming from your lips?” She asked.

“I have done some thinking of how events in my life have progressed since I left my father.” Isabella spoke, lifting her head and meeting Gorgo’s dark eyes. “Tomas’s death brought many of my ideals into question. I have been insular and unresponsive to you and to others who have tried to befriend me. I feel I must apologize for that.”

“Isabella... you need never apologize to me.” Gorgo spoke. “I can not begin to imagine the life you had to live before you came here to us. Whatever your decisions that made you join the Union, I for one am very happy to know you.”

Isabella looked at her. “You... you remind me a great deal of my mother.” Isabella spoke softly. “I... I have researched your life Gorgo... Admiral Ceneu granted me access to quite a bit of information that I would not normally have had.”

Gorgo leaned back. “And what did you discover child?” She asked her voice still caring, soothing and warm.

“You... above anyone still alive today within the Union; you have more right to despise my people than anyone.” Isabella spoke. “My father and brother took from you the man you loved, and your oldest son. They hunted you and your infant son like an animal for nearly two and a half millennia, and you even thought they took your youngest child from you. You have more reason to hate me than anyone... yet you... you have wished only to be my friend.” Isabella looked at her deeply with her hazel/green eyes. “Why?”

Gorgo met her gaze for a long moment before taking a deep breath. “In many ways child you and I are alike. We felt like outcasts when we first came to the Union, and both of us had suffered more pain than any one individual should have to suffer. I did not want you to have to suffer the pain I had to suffer.” Gorgo reached out and took her hands within hers. “You may be a vampire Isabella... but you are a Princess, and you are still a person. I do not know what led you to leave your father and the Coven, and perhaps one day you will share it with me or someone close to you so that you do not have to hold that hatred and anger inside you. It will ultimately destroy you in the end, as it almost destroyed me.”

“I... I am so different than your son Gorgo.” Isabella spoke. “Regardless of what I may feel... there could never be anything between us.”

“You say that as if you don’t truly believe it.” Gorgo said confidently. “If you did...” Gorgo placed her hand over the bridle of the Shi Viska under her gloved hand and forearm. “If you believed that completely and without reservation Isabella... what you wear on your arm would not be there.” Gorgo smiled and squeezed her hands. “These are things that time will unravel Isabella. You are two different people yes... both of you are strong willed and set in your ways... but opposites do attract as they say.”

“And what of his three Queens,” Isabella asked. “I doubt very much they will approve of me.”

Gorgo smiled, “Really?” She said. Gorgo’s mind filled with the memories passed to her by Martin, specifically about his platinum blond she-elf Queen and her comments in regards to Isabella. “I think perhaps you might be surprised.” Isabella looked at her oddly and was about to ask what she meant when Gorgo shook her head. “Come... we must attempt to establish a connection with my son before we enter the atmosphere so that For’mya can transmit a message back to the fleet.”

OLD ROUTE 62 TWENTY-THREE MILES FROM EDEN

The Drow soldier felt the light tap on his shoulder and he squeezed the trigger of his ARMBURST R19II Anti-tank launcher two heartbeats after. It was an old weapon, dating from long before the Great Sky Fire, but it was effective nonetheless, especially when used in tandem and fired from above. He and the Wood Elf five meters to his right fired within two seconds of each other, both of them targeting the lead tank. The missiles leaped away and traveled the half mile to the Alliance tank in just over seven seconds, barely enough time for the tank commander to take notice of the flashes and bursts of smoke.

The R19IIs were fire and forget missiles, each with five pounds of shaped explosive heads, and the tank Commander could only watch as the two missiles struck just beneath the edge of his hatch. The resulting explosion turned the tank into a slag heap as the two missiles achieved what was called a spring kill. The turret of the ninety ton tank erupted from the body of the tank, launching into the air with a thunderous explosion, announcing its death for all to take notice. The turret flipped over twice in mid-air and then came crashing back down on the burning hulk of the body of the tank, the four member human crew ripped to small pieces by the exploding shells and fuel.

The first three tanks and one APC died in similar fashion, causing the remaining armored units behind them to scatter from the roadway in different directions, which is exactly what the small strike team from Eden had hoped for. Instantly four more tanks struck anti-tank mines which at the very least ripped treads from the tanks and killed the crews with the concussion. Two of the tanks were lifted ten feet into the air and flipped over, the mines exploding directly under their treads as they were rolling off the side of the road and not level.

The prepared ambush was precise and executed perfectly. As the last explosion died away and human and vampire troops began to unass the armored Hoppers and APCs, three heavy machine guns began to hammer out death in the form of large caliber lead. Seventy human and vampire troops were shredded within twenty seconds of the guns opening fire, the remaining troops scattering to get behind cover.

The Alliance troops were well trained and responded respectfully, a dozen tanks and APCs returning fire within the first sixty seconds of the ambush, the far treeline becoming a maelstrom of death and destruction as trees were blown to smithereens and huge chunks of earth torn up in the barrage. Unfortunately for the Alliance troops, their returning fire killed nothing but a few rabbits and a fire ant nest. As soon as the machine guns had opened up the elf commander had tapped his missile teams on the shoulders and they had withdrawn at a dead run. They would proceed to their next ambush site, and do it all again until they were dead or out of ammunition for their weapons, and then they would retreat back to Eden at their best foot speed. They knew these mountains and hills, and they could slip through the timber with little trouble. The orders from their King were clear... delay the Alliance army to their best of their ability, but do not die needlessly.

As the Alliance Commander inspected the destroyed vehicles and called for a wrecker to come forward and push the burning tanks from the road he shook his head. This was the fourth attack in two hours, and each time he lost men and vehicles. They had only covered six miles in that time, and he was beginning to wonder if he would have any troops left when they finally reached Eden.

In his particular case it wouldn’t matter. As he crossed the distance to inspect one of the smoking APCs the 20mm round fired by the High Elf sniper entered the left side of his chest, blowing through his left arm and severing it completely. He felt nothing as the 20mm round tore through his body, exiting out the right side, blowing that arm clean off and taking most of his internal organs with it. He was dead before the echo of the shot reached his aides and the troops huddled in the area.

No one saw the eight large wolves linger for a long moment taking in the carnage before they too blended into the timber and went in search of more targets.

ALLIANCE FIELD HEADQUARTERS

“We aren’t moving fast enough!” Moran barked out as he surveyed the map in his APC.

“The elves are hitting our columns every few miles Commander.” An aide spoke. “They destroy the first few vehicles and slaughter a few dozen troops and then disappear into the timber.”

“We knew they were going to do that god damn it!” Moran snapped. “Why don’t we have scouts out in advance of the columns?”

“We can’t raise any of the scout units on COMs Commander.” The aide answered.

“Bullshit!” Moran popped. “Those scouts are the best cloned troops we have! No elf is equal to them!”

“It is the Spartans.” Cha’talla spoke from the seat.

Moran turned to look at him. “What?”

“He must have Spartans acting as forward observers.” Cha’talla spoke. “His father did the same thing. They destroyed all of our scouts, added their bodies to the Phocian Wall that they built at Thermopylae.”

“Cha’talla these are our cloned troops.” Moran spoke. “They are more than a match for Spartans.”

Cha’talla nodded slowly. “In a one to one fight I have no doubts of that.” He replied. “However in the confines of the timber and in tactics such as what they are using the Spartans are superior in every way. They have perfected Guerilla Warfare to an art form, even off world. It would not surprise me if they have eliminated all of the scouts and have free roam in the land.”

“Fuck!” Moran swore. He looked at him. “I’m open to suggestions.”

Cha’talla smiled. “We have developed an effective means to neutralize this advantage, at least momentarily.”

“Let’s hear it.” Moran spoke.

“The artillery is preparing to open fire on the city yes?”

Moran nodded. “They’ll commence firing in ten minutes.”

“Shift several of your batteries to lay down a blanket of artillery all along this route 62 in advance of the columns.” Cha’talla spoke. “We would normally do this from orbit, but until Prince Xerxes’s ships arrive we will have to make due with what we have.”

Moran looked at the map quickly, calculating the distances and what he needed to shift quickly, “Order batteries five through thirteen to shift their targets to support the columns advancing down Route 62. Have them lay down quadrants of concentrated fire on either side of the interstate as the columns move north. They are to continually shift, and keep up the shelling until our columns come into contact with the outer defenses of Eden!” The aide nodded and began issuing new orders. Moran looked at Cha’talla. “I got some surprises for Leonidas... don’t you worry. And one of them is about to hit his airfield in roughly four minutes.”

EDEN

Those surprises began arriving just as Anja got to the trauma center set up in the hardened bunker on the edge of the airfield. Five of Eden’s Raptors were idling on the tarmac waiting for permission to take off and join with Ben and Endith currently orbiting ten miles west over their makeshift airfield.

The missiles were similar to the AGM 190s that Martin had ordered fired at New Memphis, but they were longer by three feet and packed a bigger punch. Thirty of these missiles appeared over Eden’s airfield almost simultaneously, spilling their sub munitions out across a huge area before finally diving head long into buildings that had been programmed into their computer brains. Anja’s head turned at the first explosion of the largest hanger on the airfield and she winced as the vibrations from the explosion caused her to stumble. She and several of her medics could only stand in shock as the terminal building seemed to collapse in upon itself when the missile detonated its remaining fuel load, which was substantial, in the center of the hanger.

That was when Anja's wolf eyes noticed the sub munitions falling through the sky on top of them, "Inside now!" She screamed as loud as she could, physically tossing the female elf medic into the bunker's tunnel entrance and leaping after her just as the sub munitions began to explode ten feet above the ground.

Each submunition was filled with nearly two hundred lead bearings, and as the triggering detonation went off they were blown outward in a two hundred meter cone of death, shredding everything they came in contact with. Four of the five idling Raptors began to come apart under the withering barrage, the pilots killed almost immediately as pieces of their aircraft were literally sliced away around them. Nothing on the airfield was left untouched, many of the hangers falling in upon themselves as the lead bearings punched thousands of holes into the structures. It was as if some great being had stood above Eden's airfield and let out a massive gust of breath.

When the last submunition unleashed its lethal cargo, almost every building on the airfield was destroyed, four Raptors were burning intensely, the fifth one un-flyable without intense repairs and over three hundred humans and elves lay dead or wounded.

Six minutes after that, artillery began to rain down on the shield protecting the city, dozens of white spots appearing across the shield as artillery shells exploded harmlessly against the light blue surface. Anja didn't see this as she was trying to save as many lives as she could.

Martin ducked below the trench line once more as another volley of Alliance artillery landed in and around the minefield they had laid out around their positions and to the front. Like the northern minefield, this field was a mile wide and extended the entire distance from the base of his command bunker to the timber off to their right some two miles away. His three hundred Spartan Royal Guards were spread out within the trench with him, like the other Spartans and elves, sitting on the bottom of the trench out of harm's way of the spraying shrapnel from the exploding artillery shells and mines that were being set off. The mines were exploding in bunches as the Alliance artillery carved great swatches of earth up, setting off any mine in the area.

"Fuck!" Martin swore loudly, Aricia and Dysea watching him intently as they huddled across from him on the bottom of the trench. "Counter battery fire!" Martin screamed into his implant. "Do you have them locked?" They saw him press his finger to his ear over the din of exploding artillery and listen to whoever was responding to him. Dysea and Aricia looked at each other quickly.

This was a part of Martin that they had never seen before; intense and determined and exceptionally pissed off. They could feel his aura burning with hatred for the vampires and everything they stood for. He walked upright except when the shells were falling in the minefield, never showing fear and always in full view of those in the trench with them. Andreus had stopped trying to get him to stay out of sight in the first several minutes, knowing that his King would not listen to him.

"Then give them a fucking rocket barrage! They want to shoot at me, than we make them pay for every volley they get off! Mix High Explosive and White Phosphorous and send those vampire bastards right straight to hell!" Martin screamed out after listening for several seconds. "We need to make them shift fire or we'll lose half the minefield! You are weapons free Major... if you lock a battery, blow it the fuck away!"

Six seconds after he spoke, they all heard the telltale sound of rockets roaring into the sky and the white smoke that blinded them from seeing the actual launchers two kilometers away. There was no mistaking the twenty-four rockets that sped off into the eastern sky as the sun was coming up on the horizon.

Martin turned as Ealin skidded to the ground next to his King. "They hit the airfield!" He exclaimed, "Missiles of some sort! We lost five Raptors that were waiting to take off, and casualties are heavy!"

Andreus looked at him. "The Queen..."

"The Queen is doing the job she was trained for!" Martin barked more harshly than he intended. "She wouldn't listen to me even if I had the mind to tell her to hunt a hole! Which I don't! I need her doing her job and letting others see her to keep their spirits up. We've never been shelled like this before, and everyone has to see that we are here and in command! Your brother will keep her safe Captain, don't doubt that." Martin touched Andreus's shoulder. "Have faith Captain."

Martin smiled when he saw Andreus's jaw set and he nodded, clutching his P190. "You are right sire!" He spoke.

Aricia got to her feet. "Martin... let me go to her." She said.

Martin shook his head. "I need you here with me. You and Dysea have the fighting skills Anja does not! Tareif is going to waste anyone stupid enough to come down that interstate at him. Moran's main push is going to come at us here in the south! I want to go to her too Little Wolf, but this is where we need our best fighters."

Aricia took a deep breath as she felt the worry for Anja within Martin, matching her own, and she nodded as Dysea squeezed her hand and she pushed the worry further back into her mind, suppressing it for the sake of all of them.

She is skilled enough Little Wolf. Dysea spoke with her mind, seeing Aricia look at her. *Your brother will allow no harm to come to her if it is within his power, you know this. Nauta Melme is right, we are needed here.*

Aricia nodded and looked at him. "Give us something to do." She demanded.

Martin grinned. "I'm going to stay here in the center... *Melda Min* I want you to take a Lochi and move to the west. Aricia you move to the east. Stay within a hundred meters of me here. If it comes to the point where we have to leave the trench, we'll surge out and link up together."

Martin watched his Queens nod and they moved briskly to follow his instructions.

Lynwe's voice filled his ear piece at that moment, and it was obvious she was yelling to be heard over the sound of explosions all around her and that she was running.

"...Begun shelling the ambush sites before we can get to them," Her voice told him. "They are saturating the entire route in advance of their armored vehicles sire! We can not get into position long enough to strike!"

Martin swore loudly as Andreus looked on. "Moran is no idiot." He snapped before answering her, "Lynwe can you alternate side to side?"

"I will try Milord!" She yelled back. "They are targeting both sides of the interstate however, and we would need to move further than our anti-tank weapons have the range to engage."

Martin closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Then he gave the order that would send many of his troops to their deaths. "Lynwe... you need to slow them down as much as you can until Danny moves into position!" Martin ordered. "I don't care how, but if you don't slow them down their armor will blow through the trench line here and they'll have a free shot at Eden!"

Martin heard nothing for several moments and was about to repeat his order when Lynwe's voice replied. "We will do as you order Milord, on my word as a Drow!"

Andreus watched Martin's face and even for a seasoned warrior such as himself the murderous look he saw flicker across his King's face was enough to make him go pale. He glanced at the two Spartans closest to him and noticed they too had seen Martin's face. It could only be described as one thing they saw sweep over their King.

And that was death.

Martin's blood boiled insanely, and as he watched Aricia lean over tap several Spartans on the shoulder as she went by, he felt a tingling in his mind and then a powerful awareness filled his thoughts. His brow furrowed and he looked at the sky.

Mother?

Spartan 414

My son! Gorgo projected to Martin, relief filling her being at touching her youngest son and the only link to her past. Isabella and Vistr sat with Gorgo on the benches of the *STRIKER*, their eyes closed and providing whatever support they could. Gorgo was considered an extremely strong telepath within the Lycavorian union, easily surpassing what would be a Tier Six by Spartan standards. She had no trouble maintaining the connection with Martin due to his own telepathic power and the proximity they now shared. Gorgo shivered briefly in the telepathic connection, feeling her son's power and control. He is so strong, she thought to herself subconsciously, and with so little training he rivals his father at his peak.

Mother where are you? Your presence is so much stronger. Martin asked her from the trench on earth.

Martin we are forty minutes away! I have almost a full Mora of General Vistr's finest with me and he is leading them. We are aboard six fully armed STRIKER AT aircraft and are forty minutes from entering the atmosphere.

How... hell never mind, Martin answered. Is the General there with you?

I am here Milord. Vistr answered immediately.

They are hitting us with conventional artillery right now, and their armor units are on the move. Martin told him. The major push is coming from the southern tip of Eden, fully three quarters of Moran's remaining armor. I have ambushes set up to delay his ground forces, but they won't be able to stop him. This is what I need...

For'mya turned her helmeted head when the small beeping noise sounded from her co-pilot's console. "What is that?" She asked quickly.

"We're detecting aircraft in an orbiting pattern twenty kilometers north of the King's position. The craft are strange Commander, their signal is intermittent but it is there and..." Her co-pilot stopped talking and looked up at her, eyes wide.

For'mya met her gaze. "What is it?"

"There is a *STRIKER AT* orbiting above these aircraft as well." She said.

For'mya looked at her. "Impossible! No one on this planet could possibly have the skill to fly a *STRIKER*." She spoke, the arrogance of her own flying skills coming through in her voice.

"The engine signature is accurate Commander." The co-pilot reported. "I'm running it through the database now and..." Her panel beeped once more and she nodded. "It's confirmed Commander For'mya... it is a *STRIKER AT* left in Sparta's inventory seven hundred and nineteen years ago."

"Tell Lady Gorgo!" For'mya snapped. "If she is speaking with the King ask her to confirm this with him." For'mya watched as her co-pilot scrambled from her seat and headed into the rear. She looked out the window of her cockpit at the approaching blue/green planet below and shook her head. "Impossible." She spoke softly.

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA ISLAND

"How far away are they?" Yuri demanded as she stood in the command center of the spaceport monitoring the battle taking place in the mid west.

A full vampire tech turned to look at her. "The flight leader says they are thirty-one minutes from entering the atmosphere Princess. They detected six ships briefly on the far side of the planet just entering the atmosphere, but they were unable to determine if it was a sensor malfunction or not."

How did they get so far ahead of our main fleet?" Yuri asked.

"These are the newer VHC-21 Heavy Strike Fighters Princess!" The tech answered. "They have their own LSD drives."

"And the flight leader reports they may have seen ships?" Yuri asked.

"Yes Princess."

Yuri was silent for a moment. Lycavorian ships entering the atmosphere would mean they had to have come from somewhere, and a fleet of rebel ships in the system now would not bode well for them maintaining control of earth.

"Contact that idiot Marcus and find out if he has detected any Lycavorian warships entering the system." Yuri ordered. She turned as the senior officer in charge of the processing of slaves came into the command center and marched directly up to her.

"Princess we have secured nearly three thousand slaves in our ship's cargo hold, as well as all material having to do with the cloning process for our troops." He reported.

"Have all the Ministers from the cities arrived?" She asked.

He nodded. "The last is boarding the ship now Milady." He answered. He met her eyes evenly. "Are we abandoning this planet Princess?"

Yuri looked at him. This officer was a Pureblood and nearly as old as she was. He had controlled the slave pens with an iron grip, not allowing his position of power and influence to make him go soft over the centuries. Yuri knew she needed soldiers like him that were loyal to her. "The High Lord's directive was clear Captain." She spoke. "If events here on earth do not appear to be going our way, yes we are ordered to evacuate. Our cloning program is too important to lose."

The Captain nodded. "And the slaves we have not chosen Princess? What do you wish done with them?" He asked.

"How many of them are there?"

"Including the elves and the experiments that we were conducting just over twelve hundred," He replied quickly.

Yuri thought for a moment before making her decision. She turned to face him and stood up to her full height of five foot eight. "Pull all of our soldiers into the Spaceport and then release the experimental animals into the elf pens. Let them do our work for us."

"Do we give the elves weapons to fight the creatures?" He asked.

Yuri shook her head. "Fuck them!" She replied. "Let them die like the slaves they are."

The Captain nodded his head with a cruel smile. "It will be done Princess." He spoke turning to leave the command center.

"Princess... we are receiving a transmission from Princes Xerxes!" The vampire communications tech turned in her chair.

Yuri sighed heavily and nodded to her. "Let us hear what my dimwit brother has to say." She spoke.

The large screen came alive with Xerxes's face, and he did not look happy in the least. "What are you doing countermanding my orders to my fighter squadron!" Xerxes demanded.

"I am the High Guard Commander Xerxes, not you!" Yuri spat. "I ordered those fighters to support our ground attack on Leonidas's city! Attacking Sparta is foolhardy and will only hasten a defeat on this planet!"

"That is the base of his power!" Xerxes screamed.

"That is one of the bases of his power you fool!" Yuri hissed at him. "Attacking Sparta is foolhardy. They have been able to mass nearly twenty thousand additional fighters to defend Sparta! A mixture of elves and humans! And that is on top of the three hundred thousand Spartan Centurions already there you fool! It would be suicide to send our fighters against a city so well defended."

"I will assume command of the ground attack when I arrive in two hours!" Xerxes nearly shouted.

Yuri shook her head. "You will do no such thing!" She told him. "Commander Moran and Cha'talla have things well in hand and they are advancing on Eden as we speak. You will do nothing without my permission or theirs. Is that clear brother?"

"I will have Leonidas's head on a pike before this is over Yuri!" Xerxes screamed.

"Then that makes you a fool!" Yuri told him in a mocking voice. "The son of Leonidas will butcher you and finish what his father should have, if you do not follow my instructions. We have only one chance to win this Xerxes... and I will not allow you to ruin that chance."

"My task force will arrive in orbit in three hours!" He snapped, knowing it would be pointless to argue with her. "I will bring my Immortals down to the location of your ground offensive and observe events until I decide to act! And then I will act!"

"Xerxes you..."

The screen went blank and the tech looked at her. "Prince Xerxes has severed the transmission from his end Milady." She spoke.

Yuri shook her head, "That fool!" She exclaimed. "His hatred makes him stupid!" She looked at the tech. "Send a message to Robert and inform him that Xerxes will be arriving within three hours and to be prepared." Yuri ordered. "And then get me a direct link with Fleet Admiral Malachi! I want to speak with him!"

Tarifa shook her head at the elf engineer. “No... I want the entire building wired to come down.” She ordered. She wore the standard combat uniform that everyone in Eden had adopted, dark gray combat fatigues, additional body armor and heavy combat boots. She wore a K12 strapped to her belt and an HK74 hung from quick release clips on her harness. Her black hair was pulled into a tight pony tail and Aihola had tied it up with red lace. Dekton stood off to one side of the command center simply watching her.

Gone was the tentative and submissive female elf that shared his and Aihola’s bed. He knew everything that had occurred in her life these last years, including the nightmare that the last year alone had done to her. If not for Little Drow, Tarifa would still be under the thumb of the Alliance and they would quite possibly not be standing here. Tarifa was no longer timid and questioning, if she ever was. Dekton knew she had been a firm and strong willed leader of her people for decades, until the Alliance drugs had stripped her of that persona, and turned her into something weak and unsure. Since Aihola and now him, had come into her life, the old Tarifa had been slowly returning. She had accepted completely her new life, and what she now was due to her love for both him and Aihola, and Dekton had to admit to himself, she looked equally beautiful to him and Aihola even in her full wolf form. After Dekton had bitten her and completed the change her short lived relationship with the King had begun, Tarifa had been reborn. She threw herself into learning all she could about her new abilities and the new shape she was able to take. He had had to scold her on two occasions because she had refused to change back to human form after a training session, so engrossed in her new body and the power it gave her.

Tarifa and Aihola’s telepathic abilities had tripled since he had first come into their lives, and now they only spoke to one another verbally when in the company of others. The old Tarifa had finally been reborn in the last two weeks, and it was noticeable to everyone around her, and needless to say they were all very happy about it.

“Martin and I do not want anything left for them to have or use if we need to evacuate.” Tarifa was telling the engineer. “Arrange it so there will be nothing but a crater left if we have to escape.”

The elf engineer nodded his head quickly and turned to make his exit. Tarifa turned back to the main wall sized monitor that showed the disposition of Eden’s forces and all those vampire units arrayed against them. The feed from Endith’s aircraft was clear and unbroken and she could see the force that Daniel was leading had begun to move east now to engage the Alliance forces. It would be roughly three hours before they were in a position to attack.

“Inform my father that the first Alliance forces from the north are moving directly at him and will be within range of his artillery in just over an hour.” Tarifa told the human tech who sat at the communications console. She turned as Dekton stepped up next to her. “It is considerably less than what we first thought.” She spoke more softly.

Dekton nodded. “Their main push is coming from the south as the King thought.” He said. “That is why he sent Daniel as he did.”

Tarifa looked at the screen. “They are coming at us with eleven divisions from the southern route Dekton.” She spoke. “Three of which are the vampire super soldiers.”

Dekton nodded. “Have faith Tarifa.” He spoke.

“Milady... I have your mother from Mountain City. She says it’s urgent!” The human spoke.

Tarifa nodded. “Put it on the main monitor.”

Palina’s face appeared in the white cluttered for a few seconds before it cleared up and they could see her harried face clearly. Tarifa’s eyes narrowed. “Mother... what is wrong?”

“Telan’s father has led a coup attempt!” Palina spoke quickly. “Cantel and others were able to put it down, but nearly all the Elders are dead! He had several dozen vampires helping him Tarifa.”

“What of Anlain?” She demanded.

“He was severely injured, but he is alive!” Palina spoke. “We...” They saw Palina flinch in the transmission as an explosion caused a shudder to pass through the room she was in. She ducked instinctively at the sound, but remained calm. “We are cleaning up the last of the turncoats, and if my information is correct this has happened in all the High Elf cities. It is out of control Tarifa.”

“Mountain City is secure?” Tarifa asked.

Palina nodded. “Most of the Dragoons left here were your father’s personal guard, led by your brothers. They dealt very harshly with them.”

“Good!” Tarifa spoke her voice flint hard and unforgiving.

“We are secure here, but the other cities are in turmoil.” Palina continued. “Cantel has interrogated Anlain to some extent. The pain drugs allowed him to reveal that a force of these super vampire soldiers are infiltrating down from the north along old route 15. All he knew was that they were going to cut across the Tushar Mountains and attack the airfield.”

“How many mother?” Tarifa asked as Dekton moved to the map chart.

“He did not know exact numbers Tarifa.” Palina replied. “Only that is was supposedly a substantial force.”

Dekton became tense as he heard this. “Leland’s defensive line does not extend all the way north to the airfield.” He exclaimed looking at the map chart. “There is a six miles gap that is uncovered.”

Tarifa’s decision was immediate. “They are still recovering from the missile attack!” She echoed Dekton’s worry. “Dekton...”

He nodded without having to be told. “I will take a force and go to the airfield.” He told her moving up next to her. “Contact Little Drow and have her detach from Selene and meet me there with her Drow warriors. I’ll inform Atropos on the way there.”

Tarifa nodded and squeezed his hand. “Be careful my love.” She said.

Dekton smiled and nodded, “Always.”

Tarifa turned back to her mother as her Lycavorian mate and husband rushed form the command center yelling for others to follow. “Mother... I don’t care what you do... get as much information that you are able from Anlain and then see to it he no longer remains a problem.”

Palina’s smile was just as vicious as Tarifa’s voice. She nodded. “I’ll see to it.” She spoke. “Be careful my daughter... and pass on my love to Aihola and Dekton as well.”

Tarifa smiled at this. Her mother had questioned Tarifa’s relationship with the Drow Queen at first; given their history and that Aihola was a woman. Over the past months her attitude had changed enough to realize that Aihola loved her daughter intensely, and nothing would change that. Palina now considered Aihola a member of her family, something Tareif had accepted long ago. “I will mother. Be safe.” Tarifa said just before Palina ended the transmission.

She turned quickly and looked at the human communications tech. “Begin monitoring any and all frequencies that it is possible for us to monitor.” She said. “This force of vampires must be communicating with someone and if we are lucky we might pick something up.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Nya Istel? Tarifa reached out with her mind.

I am on my way to the airfield my love. Aihola’s voice responded immediately. *Dekton has already filled me in.*

Be mindful of everything Nya Istel. Tarifa told her. *We did not expect the attack on the airfield and that tells us these vampires are capable of using unorthodox tactics to complete their missions.*

Do not worry Tarifa I will be careful. Aihola answered.

My mother sends her love to you both Nya Istel. Tarifa said. *As do I.*

I will see you soon Tarifa. Aihola told her.

Tarifa nodded to herself as they severed the link, but she could not shake the feeling that something was wrong and that she would never see them again. She shook her head gently to clear her thoughts and turned back to continue positioning forces where they needed to go.

Old Route 62

Lynwe skidded to a halt behind the huge tree stump, the thunder of artillery exploding among the trees a kilometer back still echoing in her ears. She watched as first a handful and then dozens of her scouts and the Spartans among them began to take shape from the timber and sprint to where she was at least partially under cover.

“Four teams... four teams were caught in the last barrage General.” The Drow reported. She delivered the information without emotion, though her chest was nearly bursting from the kilometer sprint they had just conducted.

The seven Wood Elves, five High Elves, eight human scouts and five Drow settled around where she knelt on one knee while the others began to set up their rockets to make another attempt. The four Spartans that had survived up until this point eyed her curiously, wondering what her next orders were going to be.

“The King has ordered that we need to keep attacking.” Lynwe told them. “We must slow the columns down.”

“Keep attacking!” One of the human men spoke. “We’re getting our asses handed to us! The artillery is not letting us set up into our positions and their tanks are blasting our asses the minute they see us running through the fucking woods! We have to fall back!”

“Fall back to where?” Lynwe demanded. “The only thing behind us is Eden! Do you have a family there?”

The man nodded, “My wife and two kids.” He replied.

“If we do not slow down these columns long enough for Daniel Simpson to get into position and take out their artillery then Eden will fall!” Lynwe snapped. “Our minefields and trenches will not stop an armored attack! Everything that we have built in the last year, everything that we have come to love and it will all be destroyed if we fail!” Lynwe was silent as her words sunk in, and for the briefest of moments Selene’s beautiful face filled her mind. The future they could have would be nothing if they failed here this day. “I have no particular wish to die my friends...” She continued. “I too have discovered something valuable to me to love and cherish. But if I must die here to insure that what I love does not die with me then I will gladly give my life. Do not think that the King dismisses us out of hand with his orders. All of you know as well as I do that he will fight until there is no breath left in his body. We must do this.”

There was silence among the group, and even those who were busy setting up portable mortars had stopped. The echo of artillery being fired in the background filled the silence around them, and then the distance explosions as more of their friends and fellow soldiers died in vain attempts to stop the armored columns.

“We dig in here.” One of the elves spoke up, “As much as we can... as deep as we can. Once they finish the shelling of this portion we pop up, whoever is left and we hit them.”

One of the Spartans nodded. “They are being systematic in their shelling.” He spoke. “The elf is right... if enough of us survive the bombardment of this area, they will not be able to shift fire back so easily. We could wreak havoc among both the columns before they were able to shift fire again. By that time we could all be cutting north and be long gone.”

Lynwe was silent for a moment weighing her options. It was an easy decision really. She tossed the small pack from her shoulders to the ground and began digging for the collapsible entrenching tool. “We stand here then.” She said. “Dig as fast and as much as you value your lives and the lives of those you love!”

Spartan 01

“I know I saw something Endith.” Tina spoke, her helmeted head buried in her consoles, her eyes sweeping the two small sensor scopes.

Endith looked at her from her pilot’s seat, “Where?” She asked.

“East of us,” Tina answered, “High Altitude... just coming out of the atmosphere. Then they just disappeared.”

“You have nothing now?” Endith asked turning to look out her window as she banked Spartan 01 one in a slow lazy turn at forty-six thousand feet above the ground.

Tina shook her head, “Zip.” She exclaimed.

Endith touched the panel to her left, “Benjamin do you copy?”

“I’m here.” Ben’s voice was clear and strong. He and the remaining thirteen Raptors from Eden’s Air Force were orbiting below her at ten thousand feet.

“Benjamin... our sensors hit on something that came in at high altitude and then Tina says they disappeared from our screens.” Endith spoke calmly.

They heard Ben’s voice in the cockpit of his Raptor. “Check our scopes too.” He told Jasper. “Tina... did you get a profile?”

Tina shook her head at his question, “Too fast Ben.” She answered, “If there was anything there at all.”

“You aren’t sure?” Ben asked his voice even.

“I don’t know Ben.” Tina spoke. “They looked like... they looked like fighters, but if that was the case why no attack profile. Marty told us that this Xerxes idiot had forces in the system, but they were still hours away. It doesn’t feel right Ben.”

Major Ben O’Connell had flown and been with Captain Tina Sims enough years to know her instincts were almost always dead on accurate, and being the pilot he was and the relationship they had Ben never questioned her instincts. “Raptor Flight from lead. We have possible enemy fighters in the area. Maintain full active sensors on all bands and arm your air-to-air missiles.”

“Ben...” Tina spoke from *Spartan 01*. “It could be nothing. I’m guessing.”

They heard Ben chuckle. “I’ve come to learn that your instincts are more often than not completely accurate and they have saved our asses on more than one occasion. I trust your guesses more than most people’s facts.” Ben’s voice answered, “Better to be safe than sorry.”

Vampire Flight Leader VHC-21 Squadron Flight of Twenty-four

“Level out at four hundred feet and maintain profile. Recheck Shroud generator function and arm missiles.” The lead pilot spoke. “Stand by to launch in two minutes.”

The VHC-21 was the newest heavy fighter to be produced by the High Coven Military Production factories. The Lycavorian forces had nicknamed it the *Bloodletter* due to the deaths it had caused among their ground troops, giving it the same nickname as the successful VHC cruiser that had served for so long. It was used primarily for long range strikes against Lycavorian ground targets, but was quite capable of fighting in the sky. The VHC-21 was also the only fighter equipped with its own LSD drive and the newest invention of the High Coven scientists, the Shroud Generator. This generator essentially rendered their fighters invisible to all but the most advanced sensors, and even then it gave off intermittent signals to confuse the sensor operators. This was the reason his squadron had been able to penetrate the atmosphere and slip to this low altitude without detection by the *STRIKER AT*. The VHC-21 was heavily armed and armored, and while it had a slight speed advantage over the *STRIKER AT* that was orbiting above the strange human craft, he had the ship outnumbered and was not taking any chances. They would close the distance and half his force would launch at the *STRIKER AT* first, obliterating it from the sky before going after the human craft. The other half of his squadron would launch at this force shield protecting the city to their southwest.

They had no information on the capabilities of these human flying craft, but he took nothing for granted. Once the *STRIKER AT* was destroyed they would launch another volley of missiles at the human craft, destroy them and then proceed into their attack profile to finish destroying the city shield and then targets of opportunity.

LYCAVORIAN FLEET GROUP ATTACK CRUISER *LEONIDAS I*

“...Has people prepared to take back this base on the moon!” Riall spoke. “We need only target three sections of the station to vent the majority of it to space and allow them to regain control from a secondary control room.”

Ceneu nodded. "I will detail one Heavy Frigate to that task." He spoke using a long pointer to move one of the blue lights signifying Lycavorian ships over the moon.

"The King believes Xerxes will come directly for him and therefore Sparta is not in any danger." Riall continued. "The last report he received from the Guardian of the Line was that they had received an influx of twenty thousand elf and human troops to help with the defense of Sparta. It has its own shield similar to what surrounds this city of Eden." Riall took that time to look at Legsim. "Ambassador... it appears that though these elves may have been genetically engineered and created by the Guardian of the Line, they do your race proud. They are rallying all over the planet if what Gorgo reports is true."

Legsim smiled and nodded his head. "Unfortunately however, many of them can not move to the King's aide."

Ceneu was looking at the precisely accurate map that Star Commander For'mya had been able to transmit to them. Though the images were not moving, they had an excellent idea of the disposition of forces for both their King and the vampires.

"He has roughly six hundred thousand elves defending this city with another twenty-five thousand Spartan Centurions." Ceneu spoke. "His plan is excellent, even though they are heavily outnumbered. The surprise attacks they have launched so far have made the number against them dwindle by quite a bit."

Riall nodded. "Yes but whoever is leading the vampire attack is also no fool, and he has the advantage of numbers he with the losses they have suffered. Twice he has launched surprise attacks of his own and succeeded." Riall spoke. "The King says this man knows him from before the comet passed. It is safe to assume he has been the bed partner of Yuri since that time and has learned far more than the normal vampire soldier. She would not have put him in charge if he wasn't. We must not underestimate him."

"Xerxes fleet is less than two hours from obtaining orbit." Legsim spoke.

Ceneu nodded. "Going based on the assumption that Xerxes will not glass the planet, and that Admiral Malachi is commanding his Task Force, they will undoubtedly follow his standard orbital assault. The ground troops will be cut loose in their heavy transports, more than likely to link up with the commander of the ground attack now. He will break his remaining ships into two sections and have them on standby to provide fire support from orbit."

"The shield surrounding this city will not hold against more than two of three plasma shots from orbit." Riall spoke. "It is designed to sustained conventional explosive based attacks, not stand against plasma cannons and pulse turrets."

"We will enter the system and come in from behind this planet Mars." Ceneu spoke. "The radiation from this system's sun will blind their sensors enough until we are almost upon them. I will split our group into three sections... I will take one and position myself directly over this city to provide support to the King. Riall will bring another section in behind the planet's moon and hit them from high orbit. The Coven ships will either need to turn and meet your attack or evade into the atmosphere which pulls them away from supporting their forces."

"And what about the third section," Legsim asked keenly aware they were looking at him.

"Ambassador I am officially recalling you to active duty as of this moment." Riall spoke evenly. "You will command the third section and all the Heavy Frigates loaded with the remaining troops of Vistr's division. You will take command of the Frigate *VALIANT STAR* and drop directly from orbit into the King's lap."

Legsim looked at him. "You are serious?" He asked.

Riall nodded. "For'mya relayed how many Frigates we have in our force, which Gorgo then passed to him. He has detailed a spot for each Frigate to land and unload its troops. With any luck and the Frigate's firepower, it will break the back of the Vampire attack."

Legsim looked at the map as those positions came up marked in amber. He looked at Riall. "Twenty-four Frigates Riall?" He asked. "I have not served in quite a long time my friend. Surely there are more qualified officers to take this section."

"There are... and many of them will be going with you." Ceneu replied. "But only you carry the title of Ambassador."

Legsim met Riall's eyes and a smile spread across his face, "Very well." He spoke. "Tell me what I must do."

Vampire Flight Leader
VHC-21 Squadron
Flight of Twenty-Four

The Vampire Flight Leader was a Captain with countless missions under his belt. He was patient and confident and was proud to fly in the service of Prince Xerxes, who he considered to be a great man.

“This is Flight Lead!” He spoke into his helmet mic. “Prepare to launch on my mark! First section will fire on the primary target; second section will target the aircraft!” He touched his co-pilot’s shoulder. The man sat in front of him and slightly lower. “We will launch at the *STRIKER*.” He said seeing his co-pilot nod in front of him. “Flight lead to all craft... three... two... one... mark! Fire!”

Spartan 414

For’mya brought *Spartan 414* through the atmosphere smoothly and with barely a bump, her co-pilot automatically adjusting their trim and configuration for atmospheric flight. Both their heads snapped around when the cockpit began to sound off with the missile alarm.

Her co-pilot ducked her head to her screen, “Missiles!” She exclaimed, “Anti-air and air to ground!” The female elf adjusted her controls quickly. “Signature makes them as twelve VC-9 Air-to-Air and twelve YK-55 Air-to-Ground!”

“Twenty-ones,” For’mya snapped, “It has to be! Nothing else carries the YK-55! Full power sensor sweep! Power all weapons!” For’mya barked wrenching *Spartan 414* into a hard right turn to unmask her powerful Missile Approach Warning System, MAWS sensor array.

“I have them!” Her co-pilot sang out. “Twenty-Four VHC-21 Heavy Strike Fighters bearing four nine three mark six. They’re proceeding into post attack profile, splitting apart!”

“Damn... and the King split our force!” For’mya swore. “*Spartan 413* and *416* follow me in! Target the Twenty-Ones going after the fighters!”

Spartan 01

Endith was pulling *Spartan 01* around in a gut wrenching tight turn and diving for the ground as her systems were screaming at her that they had two missiles locked on them.

“Countermeasures,” Endith barked as she rolled *Spartan 01* over and dove for the surface.

“Launching flares and chaff,” Tina’s voice spoke calmly.

“Benjamin evade!” Endith screamed into her helmet Com. “Evade now!”

“Missiles are locked on Endith!” Tina exclaimed. “Break left now!”

Endith didn’t question her and threw *Spartan 01* into a screaming left hand turn that had its powerful engines roaring in what could only be described as approval as Endith was finally using her ship’s full capability. “Where did they come from?” Endith screamed as she yanked *Spartan 01* into a staggering twist and mashed her thumb down in the flare and chaff dispenser filling the blue sky with enough radar jamming material that you could walk on it.

“East of us, low and slow,” Tina echoed back. “Ben... evade south now! You have a missile on you!”

“Watch your own ass!” Ben’s voice carried back to them, and they could hear the strain in his tone as he was executing some dazzling maneuvers, taking the Raptor to the very edge of its performance capabilities and then beyond.

“Shit!” Tina shouted. “There’s still one on us! I’m picking up aircraft inbound! I... I’ve never seen anything like them!”

“If they are shooting at us they are not friendly!” Endith shouted executing another stomach turning maneuver, her eyes focused on the screen between her legs and not looking at the horizon as Ben had taught her. “Weapons, give me weapons!”

“Weapons free!” Tina yelled, “Twelve targets, bearing four three two mark nine seven southeast! Endith we only have ten missiles left!”

“And I’m going to use them!” Endith grunted as she got a lock on almost immediately as the vampire VHC-21’s gained altitude to close with their victims. Endith mashed down on her firing button ten times in quick succession, her own anti-air missiles rippling out in blinding speed and tearing away toward the Vampire aircraft.

“Second missile has lost track!” Tina called lifting her head slightly. “It couldn’t follow the turn!”

Endith ignored her missiles and looked at her own screen seeing four Raptors blotted from the sky and the others twisting and turning for their lives, “Benjamin no!” She exclaimed.

Raptor 41

“Two miles,” Jasper called out, “Still on us!”

“Fuck me!” Ben grunted as he threw *Raptor 41* into another vomit inducing twist. “Pesky fuckers aren’t they Jasper?”

“I can’t find out how they’re tracking us!” Jasper exclaimed. “The SPAT’s flares and chaff worked, but ours isn’t! The fucking missile is coming right through the clouds!”

“These aren’t Alliance weapons!” Ben shouted. “This is their first team! Pull the BTLs off line! Give me the positioning thrusters!”

“Thrusters,” Jasper asked incredulous.

“Do it now!” Ben snapped the straps biting into his shoulders as 41’s engines screamed in protest when he turned the Raptor on its side and began to climb.

“BTLs down, Thrusters online,” Jasper told him the fear in his voice almost a palpable thing in the cockpit.

“You want me...?” Ben spoke through clenched teeth.

“Nine hundred meters,” Jasper called. “Fuck we’re all done!”

“...You have to find me!” Ben finished his statement. “Hold on!”

Ben slammed his finger down on the control toggle to his right.

The vampire missile tracking *Raptor 41* was locked onto not the heat from the ship but the molecules of titanium metal in the composite frame. When the missile was only seven hundred meters from the blazing dual exhaust fans of the strange aircraft when the signature of the metal it was tracking simply vanished. The advanced computer in the missiles brain swept the area in front of the nose cone twice in the blink of an eye, and when it determined that the metal was longer being tracked, it self destructed. The plasma warhead erupted in a burst of fire and concussive force equal to the explosion of one hundred pounds of C-9 explosive. The missiles were designed to take out much heavier armored Lycavorian fighters. The blast wave spread out covering roughly three hundred meters in all directions.

The concussive plasma shock wave slammed directly into the unprotected belly of *Raptor 41*.

Ben’s finger stabbing onto the panel had caused the Raptor’s vertical hovering thrusters to fire at emergency power. Combined with the ship’s forward speed the resulting maneuver caused the Raptor to jump straight up at nearly three thousand miles an hour, effectively breaking the lock of the vampire missile. Ben did not expect the missile to self destruct only two hundred meters under his ship and the resulting explosion ripped the control stick from Ben’s grasp breaking all the fingers on his right hand as the tail of *Raptor 41* flipped end over end and put the ship into an upward forward spin and completely out of control.

Vampire Flight Leader

The Vampire Captain smiled a savage smile as he saw this flight of twelve VHC-21s had successfully destroyed eleven of the thirteen human aircraft with almost laughable ease. His own missiles had been thwarted by whoever was flying the Lycavorian *STRIKER AT* as he knew they might be. The Union put only their very best pilots into the *STRIKERS*, and most of them were female elves. The Captain's smile grew even larger as he prepared to have his entire flight launch on the *STRIKER*. Let the female out fly twelve missiles.

"Coven Flight from leader, prepare to fire on the *STRIKER*! Coven 39 you will close with and finish the remaining two human craft!"

"Coven 39 affirmative," The reply reached him.

"Coven Flight stand by to..."

Spartan 01

"You motherfucker," Endith screamed louder than she had ever screamed in her life.

They had watched Ben evade the missile with a maneuver that was beyond impressive. She and Tina had breathed a sigh of relief for all of two seconds until the missile detonated and they watched in horror as *Raptor 41* was caught in the blast radius and thrown into a forward spin that both of them knew was unrecoverable.

Endith saw her future... the man she had hoped would give her the children she had always wanted... the man who had stolen her heart from almost the first moment with his quick wit and compassionate soul. The man who had curled her toes whenever he had taken her to bed, the man she had thought she would be with always. That future had just been ripped from her, taking with it her soul. She heard Tina sobbing uncontrollably in the seat next to her, even as her anger drove her to follow the orders of her pilot.

"Kinetic Cannon," Endith screamed once more, the tears pouring down her cheeks.

Endith touched her control panels and *Spartan 01*, as if sensing its pilot anguish and mental state reacted instantly to her commands.

Spartan 01's engines roared in protest as Endith flipped their ship over in an impossible maneuver, turning the nose of the ship in the completely opposite direction they were facing just one second before. As the ship completed the one hundred and eighty degree flip, it twisted impossibly fast until it was upright once more.

And then the nose of *Spartan 01* lit up like a small sun.

Spartan 414

"Impossible!" For'mya gasped at what she had just witnessed.

For'mya had been flying for almost seven hundred of her thousand years of life, and never in all that time had she seen any pilot execute such a maneuver with a *STRIKER AT*. It just wasn't possible at the speed the *STRIKER* had been going. Yet she had seen it with her own eyes.

"We are in range!" Her co-pilot yelled out.

"Fire!" For'mya screamed out.

Vampire Flight Leader

Unbelieving of what he had just seen the vampire Captain was unable to respond as *Spartan 01* suddenly filled his cockpit window and the Kinetic Cannon flared to life. His eyes changed to vampire cobalt blue and his co-pilot screamed as two hundred rounds of kinetically charged projectiles shredded the entire forward section of his VHC-21.

His last conscious thought was that he had done everything right.

Four kinetic rounds punched into his chest effectively ending any other thoughts that might have been forming, and his VHC heavy fighter disintegrated all around his pulverized remains. He was not alive to witness

the missiles from the newly arrived *STRIKER ATs* obliterate the eleven remaining aircraft of half his squadron from the blue sky with no warning.

The remains of Raptor 41 were scattered across three quarters of a mile of timber, leaving a blackened stretch of land that marked its death spasms. Dozens of trees hundreds of years old had been ripped from the ground as the crippled Raptor slammed into the earth and plowed a furrow in the dirt, leaving wreckage and fires burning in its wake. The tail section broke off upon impact and was burning out of control.

The cargo section had split open like an egg shell scattering pieces of the interior across a three hundred meter wide area along the path of the skidding aircraft. The forward section, since it housed the cockpit, was more heavily fortified and armored and survived for almost the entire skid before surrendering to the stress on its frame and splitting open. The observation lounge had been sheered off by a three hundred and seventy year old limb six feet in diameter. The limb peeled back the entire top of the Raptor like a can opener.

The nose of the aircraft to include the pilot's compartment had come to a stop buried in the stump of an ancient tree trunk torn asunder by an earthquake from ages ago. The bloody remains of one pilot lay half in and half out of what remained of the cockpit, his elf body ripped to ribbons by branches and steel. His helmet had protect half his head, the rest was a mass of brain matter and crushed bone from being smashed against the instrument panel that had severed his legs.

She stood on the small ridge and took all this in with gleaming cobalt blue eyes as her small team descended upon the crashed ship. The timberland pattern fatigues hugged her tightly packed petite but decidedly female frame. She stood perhaps five foot three at her tallest, and weighed only a hundred and eight pounds, but was one of the deadliest young women walking the planet at the moment. She clutched the sub machine gun in her right hand, a small curled wire going from the shoulder mounted radio and wrapping around the back of her ear. The long shiny black hair was pulled to the opposite shoulder and hung down over her 34C breasts.

"One of his craft I take it?" The male voice spoke from behind her.

She didn't turn, knowing immediately who it was and nodded slowly. "Yes but there does not appear to be any survivors."

"Then the battle for this planet has begun and you must make yourself known to him."

She turned to look at the smallish Asian man. He was completely bald and leaned heavily upon the single thick walking stick. The Japanese robes were dark blue in color and wrapped around his frail body voluminously.

"Is that the best course of action?" She asked softly.

"It is the only course of action. This is already known to you." The old man replied.

"How do I know he will not just kill me?" She spoke softly once more. "I could never hope to match his power. Not now that he has discovered who he really is."

"He is the only link to your past." The old man said. "And he is not his father. If you still maintain any hope of finding your sister, he is the only one that can help you. You have told me before he was the only one to show you true kindness."

She nodded. "Yes."

"Then trust in that now. He will not turn you away."

She tilted her head slightly as the female voice echoed in her ear piece. "The pilot is alive!"

She turned to look back at the shattered remains of the Raptor. "The pilot still lives." She said.

The old man chuckled. "Killing those that follow him is decidedly difficult, as your mother will discover."

"She was never my mother!" The young woman hissed vehemently.

"And that is why you must go to him now!" The old man spoke.

"What of... what of you?" She asked her voice filled with kindness and affection.

"I have taught you all I know." He answered. "Now it is time for you to leave this valley and find your sister and then set her free; no matter what that entails. And only he can help you."

She stood up slowly. "You will return to the caves?"

“I am no longer needed. Go with my blessing Yuriko... for you both will need your wits about you to defeat the vampire Princess.”

“I will never forget you.” Yuriko spoke softly as the old man turned and headed back into the timber surrounding them. She reached up and pressed her finger to her earpiece as she headed towards the crash. “Extract him carefully! Do not cause him anymore injury! Move the rest of the team up and stabilize his condition as best we are able. We’ll contact his forces when we are no longer in Nomad country. Quickly... they will not stay frightened for long.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

EDEN CITY

The YK-55 missiles plodded along over the tops of the trees at nearly four thousand miles an hour, their computer brains and nano-chips ignoring everything around them except for the massive blue shield they were targeting. They had been configured for atmospheric flight before being loaded on the VHC-21s and they were at their maximum atmospheric speed, tearing across the landscape. They were designed to punch holes in starships, and the shield they were approaching should provide little resistance, but Admiral Malachi had taken no risks when devising the attack plan.

The missiles were unaware of the furor they were causing as every Anti-Air battery set up within the fifty mile air radius Eden City claimed was coming to life and tracking the missiles. This provided little comfort to the operators of the batteries as they were designed to shoot aircraft and not missiles. They had to silently curse as the missiles sped by their locations intent on their path of destruction. They would strike in just under a minute.

In Eden’s Command Center Tarifa’s eyes were wide as she and the techs watched on their huge screens the approach of the missiles.

“They’re locked on the power generators for the shield! They must be homing in on the unique power signature of the shield and where it’s being generated from.” One tech screamed, “Three missiles per generator!”

“Get the sentry troops away from the tower generators!” Tarifa ordered quickly. “Why aren’t our missile batteries firing?”

“They can’t engage against missiles!” Another tech screamed, “Only aircraft! Fuck!”

“Is there nothing we can do?” Tarifa demanded.

“Break the lock!” The human tech that had come from EDEN with Martin a year ago spoke moving up next to her. He had taken part in building the shield to begin with when they landed in that valley so long ago. Tarifa looked at him wide eyed.

“How?”

“I helped build the thing! It is powered by very small nuclear reactors, no larger than a cigarette box.” He spoke.

Tarifa looked at him. “What is a cigarette?”

“That doesn’t matter! Shut down the shield! The missiles must be homing on the minute radiation that is put off by those reactors!” The man spoke. “It’s the only way! The missiles will break lock and there’s a chance they won’t hit the power stations!”

“Drop the shield?” Tarifa exclaimed. “That’s insane! The Alliance artillery strikes would decimate the city! We would lose hundreds!”

“If we don’t, those missiles will penetrate the shield, destroy the towers and we lose either way.” The tech spoke. “The shield begins at a hundred feet Tarifa! The dish on top of each tower is what broadcasts the signal, but the shield itself doesn’t begin until an altitude of a hundred feet off the ground! Those missiles are on the deck and will sneak in under the shield’s edge! It’s designed for artillery fire, not direct fire! If we drop the shield and power down the control towers we might be able to save the stations and get it back up after the strike!”

Tarifa looked at him and then at the monitor. "Might be able too?" She demanded.

"It depends on how much damage is done." The tech told her. "But if we don't shut down the control towers there won't be anything left to try and save!"

Tarifa looked at him, her sapphire blue eyes wide. She had made decisions before as Queen that impacted the lives of many, but never in so great a number. She closed her eyes taking a deep breath and Martin's words came back to her the night before he had departed for Sparta.

"I don't know what I am Tarifa... and I have to do this to find out. The answers I have sought for so long are there in that city. What you and I shared for those few days was incredible and it opened us both to new ways of thinking and accepting what was happening around us." He had taken her hands in his as they stood there and Tarifa could feel his power and aura radiating through her with the staggering love of a dear brother.

"What would you have me do Martin?" She asked.

"You are the only one I trust with continuing what we have started here." Martin said, "Even more than Aihola and Selene and the others. You and I are cut from the same mold Tarifa. And while our lives may have taken us in different directions and to new people, we have always kept that closeness. You are like the sister that I never had, and to me that is what is important now. Aihola owns your heart, as Anja and Dysea and Aricia own mine. I leave here knowing that Eden is in the hands of the one person behind me who will do everything in her power to keep it safe. I will never abandon you, never cast you aside and forget you. And if you are ever in trouble all you have to do is call and I will answer. That is how much I trust you."

Tarifa reached up and placed her hand against his warm skin and smiled. "It is strange Martin, but your words ring so true in my ears. Perhaps... perhaps this is what the Holy One meant when he said we would set each other free; that we would open each others eyes to that which we could not fathom alone. I will always be here for you... no matter what Martin Leonidas. And as you have spoken to me... all you need do is call."

Martin trusted her above all others.

Tarifa's sapphire eyes sprang open at that instant. "Shut them down!" She snapped. "Inform all commanders on the universal channel that we are attempting to defeat inbound missiles! They are to hunt any protection they can! Inform Selene first as she is directing the movement of civilians to bunkers and to remain in the location she is now! I want damage control squads on standby throughout Eden to respond should one of the towers be damaged! Move people! We have only seconds!"

Martin was the first of hundreds to turn as in between the artillery landing all over the area, though considerably lessened due to their precise counter battery fire, they saw the shield shimmer and then vanish from around Eden. Martin's eyes went wide and he reached out telepathically for the one person he knew would know why.

Tarifa!

Her reply was immediate and very much to the point. *Martin we have inbound missiles and we shut the shield down to break the locks they had on the control towers! It was the only way to attempt to save them.*

Martin did not question what she had done, as Tarifa had just as much invested in the survival of Eden as he did, perhaps even more.

Can we do anything?

You can defeat those vampire bastards Martin! Her voice was filled with determination and confidence, *Leave Eden City to me.*

Martin smiled. *I will do that. Keep me informed.* He turned to Andreus and those close to him. "There are missiles inbound targeted on the control towers!" He barked. "Tarifa shut the shield down to break the lock they had in an attempt to confuse them! Andreus... send a runner to Vengal and let him know what is going on. Be prepared to have a detachment move to the nearest control towers and assist in any repairs that might be needed!" Andreus nodded and moved off down the line of Spartans to where one knelt. Martin looked to the south and reached out once more.

Soon would be a good thing brother.

Spartan 01

“I have a lock!” Endith barked and mashed the trigger of her Kinetic Cannon, sending a single hundred round burst downrange and shredding the entire tail section of the VHC-21 that was vainly trying to avoid her.

Endith was in the midst of a killing frenzy, having seen the man she loved dearly swatted from the sky only minutes before. She and Tina had ignored For’mya’s repeated attempts to contact them, not caring in the least that they had only their cannons to shoot and immediately tore after the planes firing missiles at Eden. The ensuing long range battle carried them almost all the way back to Eden City and this is where it would come to a finish.

“Four hundred rounds left!” Tina called out, tears staining her cheeks as she too had watched one half of her future careen out of control into the ground far below them, “One more... three o’clock baby!”

They were both on automatic now, killing anything that came even remotely close to looking like the enemy. The two *STRIKERS* that For’mya had ordered to pursue the vampire fighters had taken down five of them before she ordered them off for fear the out of control female elf pilot in *Spartan 01* would mistake them for the enemy.

Their rage made them powerful and brought them closer together. Endith flew and Tina gave her the directions and headings to the enemy, no questions were asked and no words of sorrow and remorse were exchanged. The man they both had loved more than their own lives had been killed and now all that was left to them was to take as many of the bloodsucking vampires with them as they could before they were blotted from the sky.

Tina listened as another extended burst of the Kinetic Cannon sheared of the stubby wing of another VHC-21 and sent it tumbling to the ground in a fireball as Endith banked over. Her head turned to look out the cockpit window and her eyes widened when she saw what appeared to be hundreds of troops moving below her. It was then that Tina’s mind clicked back into military mode and she glanced at her small chart strapped to her left thigh. The chart gave the location and disposition of all of Eden’s forces, and whoever was beneath them were not from Eden.

“Endith,” She snapped. “Enemy troops on the ground below us! Turn back quick! Hard left!”

“There are more fighters!” Endith clenched her teeth and increased her speed at the next nearest VHC-21 which was madly climbing for altitude to escape the vengeance of the crazed *STRIKER* pilot.

“Endith!” Tina screamed causing the head of the red haired elf to turn and look at her with those dark blue eyes. They had been together for nearly a year, sharing the same bed, and the same man as well as each other. “I loved him... I loved him too baby.” Tina said softly looking at the tear stained eyes of her elf lover. “He... he would not want us to do this Endith. He... he would want us to complete our mission and make sure Marty and Eden City survive.”

Endith stared at her for a long moment, the drone of *Spartan 01*’s engines filling the deathly silence of the cockpit. Endith looked back forward and allowed the vibrations from the engines fill her being just as Ben had told her.

Feel your aircraft. Be your aircraft. It can bring you peace. He had told her as he had trained her to fly the Raptor. *Let it be your heart and it will always bring you home.*

Endith’s hands moved on the control console and *Spartan 01* executed a steep rolling turn, its engines roaring in approval as they turned back, “Coordinates!” Endith exclaimed as fresh tears filled her eyes. “Where are they?”

“If my figures are accurate they are three miles west of us and...” Tina’s head came up and looked at her, her own light blue eyes wide in horror, “Two miles from the northern edge of Eden’s airfield.”

Spartan 414

“Commander she has broken off!” For’mya’s co-pilot nearly yelled. “She is turning back west!”

“413 and 416 pursue and engage the remaining fighters!” For’mya snapped. “Do not let them escape.” For’mya got a verbal confirmation from the two pilots and watched as they turned tightly to go after the three remaining vampire fighters that Endith had not killed in her rampage. “Track her!” For’mya had tried to raise the pilot of *Spartan 01* on a secure frequency, but the voice of the pilot had been quite clear and very forward.

“*Stay the fuck out of my way!*” Had been her reply when For’mya ordered her to stand too and fall into formation.

“Ground sensors are picking up targets!” Her co-pilot spoke once more. “Grounds troops and they are closing on the King’s airfield!”

For’mya looked at her. “The airfield’s defenders are still recovering wounded from the missile attack they suffered a few hours ago!”

“The missiles targeting the power modules for that shield will begin impacting in less than thirty seconds!” The co-pilot spoke.

For’mya shook her helmeted head. “We can not stop them! Energize the Kinetic Cannon! We will go after the ground forces! Instruct General Vistr to offload his *STRIKER* to the northeast edge of the airfield!”

“Cannon is energized!” The co-pilot called out.

For’mya threw *Spartan 414* into a full power dive from nineteen thousand feet. “Hold on everyone,” She called to Gorgo, Isabella and those hanging on in the rear of her ship. “I have never seen so insane a pilot before, but damned if we are following this crazed she-elf in!”

EDEN

Selene gripped her HK tightly as she pulled on the arm of the woman next to her. She wore standard battle fatigues, and Lynwe had outfitted her with items she had never used before. Her Drow lover had given her a very quick run down on what the equipment could do, tied her hair into a tight pony tail similar to Tarifa’s and wrapped it with light blue Drow silk. If they had been following the old Drow customs and ways, the silk was used to “mark” a female as spoken for, but in the case of Tarifa and Selene and nearly three dozen other such willing Mistress/Slave relationships that had come about since Eden had been formed, the silk was used as a show of deep love and feeling. Each Mistress wore a silk wrap of the same color around their upper arm as a show of their status and devotion to their “slave”.

The roar of turbine engines brought Selene up short as men, women and children hurried into the protective bunker built in the school’s basement. Her cobalt blue vampire eyes looked skyward and she saw the small dots on the horizon streaking towards them.

“Faster!” She screamed. “Move faster!”

The sound of her voice and the sheer terror in it surged through the sixty odd civilians left outside the bunker, and they surged towards the entrance as others inside practically grabbed them and pulled them out of the way. Human, Elf, Drow... it did not matter to the citizens of Eden color or creed. They were all in this together, and if their King failed, they failed. They had found the one point of hope for the future in this city they had helped build, and it would not be productive for them to die before they saw it grow even more.

Selene turned in the doorway as the bunker’s heavy titanium door began to slid shut, the roar of the missiles almost deafening to her sensitive ears.

Then the bunker’s door sealed and it was dark.

The moment Tarifa ordered the protective shield powered down, the twelve YK-55 missiles targeted on the control towers lost the lock of the radiation that had guided them this far. Only sixteen seconds from impact the missiles advanced brains told the YK-55 to adjust course slightly and target the largest structure nearest to their primary targets. The internal sensors of the missiles activated in a heartbeat and conducted two sweeps and choose twelve separate targets. All of them were buildings taller than ten stories. All of them struck without error on their new targets.

And without fail, all of them utterly destroyed those targets as the equivalent of three, two thousand pound bombs in each missile detonated within three seconds of each other. Seven targets were high rise buildings near the control towers, and those buildings were struck on their ground level supports. The missiles exploded and the steel and concrete ruptured like so much porcelain in the hellish blasts. Denied the support of their foundations, the high rise buildings could not stay up and they began tumbling down. Four other structures were hit as the building slammed into neighboring towers and either added their contents to the tumbling buildings or the high rise's snapped in half and fell to the streets below.

Two missiles lost lock on their secondary targets due to the massive clouds of dust and fire that reached into the sky and simply self destructed above city streets, their explosive power directed downward shattering anything beneath them and succeeding in destroying one of the medical clinics on the eastern edge of Eden. The clinic was simply flattened, crushing the two hundred and eighty doctors, nurses and injured that had been brought into the clinic up until that point.

The last missile had been preprogrammed with a single one story structure as its secondary target and Martin's home disappeared in a single gigantic explosion, pieces of the garden and walkway he had tended tossed hundreds of feet into the air. It was one of these pieces of concrete sidewalk, nearly four feet long and two inches thick that was propelled at nine hundred miles an hour through the air, directly at the control tower on the very edge of the airfield only six hundred meters away. The huge slab of concrete struck the power building a glancing blow, but it was enough to rip open the entire side of the tower and expose wiring and control circuits that sparked and shorted out, starting a small fire.

Automatic fire suppression equipment quickly put out the fire, but the damage was done. Eden City's shield was down.

EDEN

AIRFIELD MEDICAL COMMAND POST

Anja looked up from leaning over the female elf she was working on as the lights inside the trauma center returned to normal and the dust falling from the ceiling stopped. The explosion of the missile so close to their position and made the bunker shudder and groan, but its sturdy construction held without problems.

Anja looked at the elf female on the table in front of her, her face dirty and grimacing in pain. "Stay with me!" She exclaimed. "We're almost done."

The elf female had two large puncture wounds in her chest from an artillery shell that had snuck through the shield during the constant bombardment. She had come into the center bleeding profusely and the field medic had been unable to staunch the bleeding. Anja had immediately known what was wrong and plunged her smaller hand into one of the two fists sized holes and grabbed the end of the artery that was cut. With her hand in the female's chest cavity, Anja had directed one of her senior medics in repairing the damage done.

"The shield," A voice yelled turning heads as the human ran into the bunker. "The shield is down. Missiles have hit all over the city!" He began moving portable beds closer to the doors. "Prepare for incoming wounded. The missiles dropped seven buildings over ten stories high!"

"Well is the shield back up?" Anja asked quickly.

"No! Tarifa shut down the control towers to break the missile locks if the chatter on the radios is right." The medic reported. "The missiles flew off course and began hitting buildings. When they attempted to turn the shield back on, they discovered one of the towers took damage. There are crews moving there now."

"I got it," The elf medic across from her said.

Anja turned and watched as the female elf's vital signs began to climb rapidly as her medic pulled his bloody hand out of the other hole in her chest. "I'm releasing the artery. Hold on." She spoke softly.

Anja moved her fingers carefully and released the slippery vein she had hold of. The elf's vitals stayed strong and she smiled. "You're going to make it!" Anja spoke. "No running marathons though you hear! Not for at least two months!"

The female elf couldn't help but smile at her Queen's words. She had been awake through the entire operation, thinking that she had been given a pain killer. Anja had not told her that one of the pieces of shrapnel had severed her spine and that she would never walk again.

Anja looked at the medic who had assisted her. "Give her more for the pain and then get her into the lower level for recovery." She spoke before turning to the medic who had run in and told them about the shield.

"We must make ready for crushing injuries." Anja spoke. "Have all the Bone Marrow Regenerators that we have brought up to this level. Get all the portable amputee kits up here as well. And make sure we have at least a hundred Rejuvenating Packs on standby. I want a hundred units of whole blood and fifty units of cloned blood for any Drow that are brought in!"

"Tarifa brought the shield down on purpose!" The medic spoke unbelieving.

Anja took the man's arm. "She was there... we were not!" She exclaimed. "If she shut the shield down it was to save lives. Trust in her... Martin does."

At the mention of his name the medic's face took on a look of renewed energy. He nodded quickly. "I'll get the equipment sent up to this level right away." He spoke before moving off.

Anja turned and looked around the trauma bunker. Incredibly... their casualties had been light from the missile attack. They had suffered only eighty-four dead, and her medical teams had been able to save over a hundred and fifty lives with quick thinking and superior medical skills. Eighty-four was better than the two hundred they had first projected and Anja allowed herself a moment of self gratification... the rigid system she had put in place before going to Sparta with Martin had succeeded and many of the field medics that moved in and around Eden City at this moment could easily be field surgeons themselves if they had to.

Anja looked skyward when she heard the roar of a passing aircraft and the buzzing sound of what could only be the kinetic cannon on Spartan 01. Her eye brows furrowed at this and she was about to reach out to Martin when Atropos burst into the bunker.

"My Queen we must go!" He demanded. "We must go now!"

"Atropos... what is going on?" Anja asked as he came up to her.

"We have just received a transmission from the King's pilot!" Atropos began. "She is attacking a force of what appears to be six to seven hundred super vampire soldiers only half a mile from our location! They are advancing quickly and we must get you out of here now!"

"I'm not leaving my people." Anja spoke firmly.

"Milady please... it is my duty to protect you." Atropos spoke though it was obvious he was in a very large hurry. "We must leave now. We have only forty Spartans here and a few walking wounded. We will not be able to hold against that many vampire soldiers."

"And I have nearly three hundred wounded in the four levels below us!" Anja told him. "I will not leave them to the mercy of those fucking scum!"

"Milady... you are a Queen of Sparta! A Queen of the Lycavorian people! You must..." Atropos spoke his words ending when he saw Anja reach for her helmet and pull it on, the Persian red crest very prominent and the jade green of her eyes firm and unrelenting. Anja lifted the P190 from the table against the wall and turned back to Atropos.

"You are right Atropos." Anja spoke. "And as one of the Queens of Sparta and the Lycavorian people, I have no intention of surrendering our people to the murderous assholes that are coming here. Form whoever you can and we will meet them like Spartans! And we will not retreat! And if we die... we will take as many of the bloodsucking fuckers as we can before we do."

Atropos could not speak for a long moment and then a swell of pride swept through him and his chest heaved as he smiled broadly at her words. "It will be as you command Milady!" He spoke.

The vampire clone commander lifted his head from the ground once more as the STRIKER AT peeled away after firing another long burst from its nose cannon, chewing up the area around him, as well as dozens of his men. He got to one knee and surveyed his situation. He had begun this mission with seven hundred clone vampire troops, superior fighting machines, and now he was down to just over five hundred. The two STRIKER ATs had been brutally accurate with their strafing runs, and he had no way of firing back at them. It matter not

as they were only a hundred meters from the edge of the smoky airfield. They could still see fires burning in the distance, and small figures running in the distance. He smiled the smile of a predator thinking he was going for the kill.

“We move now!” He ordered into his wrist radio. “Close the distance to the airfield before they can come around for another attack! All companies move forward at a double time!”

As if on cue, hundreds of heavily armed vampire clones got to their feet and sprinted towards the airfield.

Spartan 01

“Fuck!” Endith snapped wrenching Spartan 01 over as she banked tightly. “They’re sprinting for the airfield! We’ll never get another pass in before they are mixed in with friendly troops!”

“It doesn’t matter!” Tina barked. “We’re dry baby! We’re out of gun rounds and missiles!”

“Shit! Shit! Shit!” Endith cursed long and loud. “What about the other SPAT!”

Tina shook her head. “They are looping out further than us! They’ll never be able to make another pass in time!”

“Get War Master Tareif! He must have some sort of artillery he can shoot danger close!” Endith yelled. “Anja... Anja is down there!”

“Stand by!”

Spartan 414

For’mya was seeing the same thing and making the same deductions as Endith and she cursed just as loud and long as her counterpart did, “How many?” She snapped.

“Ground sensors put them at just over five hundred!” Her co-pilot replied immediately. “They are... we’re picking up a defensive line in the middle of the airfield. Seventy in number! A mix of what looks like Spartans and humans and elves! I’m reading over two hundred and seventy lifesigns within the bunker on the southern end of the airfield. They are...” The co-pilot saw the flash of red on her gun camera and quickly spun it back, “By all that is holy.” She gasped centering the picture.

For’mya looked at her. “What? What is it?”

The female elf turned and looked at For’mya, “The... the red haired Queen. She is... she is down there Commander, on the defensive line.”

For’mya’s eyes were wide and her mind was racing at a millions miles a minute. She turned quickly and looked at the hundred and twenty Spartans scouts she carried, not to mention Gorgo and the vampire Princess Isabella who were staring at her wide eyed.

“*Spartan 419* what is your status? How long before you land at the airfield?” For’mya asked.

“We just completed a mine delivery run ordered by the King Commander.” The pilot’s voice replied. “ETA to the airfield is seven minutes!”

“They don’t have seven minutes!” For’mya snapped uncharacteristically. “Open a channel to the crazed elf! Quickly!”

The co-pilot touched her console. “Channel open!”

“This is Star Commander For’mya to the unidentified STRIKER AT, I am orbiting at you port do you copy?” For’mya asked.

“What do you want, we’re kind of busy!” Endith’s voice snapped back.

“The vampires are going to overrun the airfield!” For’mya stated the obvious.

“Wow... you’re fucking brilliant! I can see that myself thank you! We’re trying to get some artillery directed back to cover them.” Endith popped quickly.

For'mya bit her tongue, her face turning a bright shade of red in a combination of anger and embarrassment. "I am carrying one hundred and twenty Spartan scouts and I can drop them on the airfield but I will need someone to draw the fire of the vampires!"

"Christ why didn't you say something already!" Tina's voice barked now.

"I'm coming around!" Endith yelled. "Follow me in!"

For'mya's eyes narrowed. "My sensors say you are out of weapons!" She stated. "What could you possibly do?"

"Are you dense?" Endith snapped. "I have thrusters! I'll cook the sonsofbitches! Now follow me in."

"I don't know who you are she-elf, but I am Star Commander For'mya of the Lycavorian Home Guard Fleet. I..." For'mya stated now losing her temper with the ill-tempered and obviously crazy she-elf pilot.

"You listen to me miss high and fucking mighty!" Endith's voice screamed over the COM. "These bastards have killed the only man I have ever loved today! They swatted him out of the fucking sky right in front of me, and I will be damned if I let them kill one of my Queens because of your tight ass! I am the King's pilot! This is *Spartan 01* and if you don't follow me in right now, I will find you and I will kick your ass from here back to whatever planet you fucking came from! Is *that* in any way unclear to you?"

For'mya looked at her co-pilot her eyes wide. The expression on her co-pilot's face mirrored her own. Her hands quickly manipulated her flight controls. "I'm falling into formation with you." She stated.

"I'll break off right above them and make like I'm going to land on them! As soon as they open up on me, break left and land on the airfield behind the Queen's defensive line!" Endith ordered.

"As you order," For'mya replied. She looked at her pilot. "Prepare for full engaged landing!" She ordered. She turned her head towards those in the back. "Lady Gorgo... we are going into the airfield in the middle of a vampire attack. Spartans you will exit this aircraft and join the Queen's defensive line and prepare to repel the assault. We will try to provide as much support as possible! Stand by!"

Spartan 01

Endith looked at Tina, who met her eyes evenly. She took Tina's hand in hers and brought it to her face, "For Benjamin." She said softly.

Tina nodded, a firm set to her jaw, "For Ben."

Endith leaned over quickly and kissed her as hard as she could and then touched two buttons on her console. *Spartan 01* leaped forward just as Endith let out a war whoop that would have shamed even the gladiators of ancient earth.

EDEN CITY AIRFIELD

Anja stood beside Atropos slightly behind the row of Spartans and humans and elves. Her jade green eyes scanned the horizon in front of them, unable to pick up almost anything due to the heavy smoke. All of her senses were alive now, as were Atropos's and every Spartan in the line. They were impassive to what they faced. To die in service to their King was the one sure way to glory as far as any Spartan was concerned. To die in service to their king while his Queen fought beside them was a path to immortality in history.

"We must keep them from the wounded in the bunker!" Anja spoke loudly, her voice carrying to all of them, but directed mainly to the elves and humans. "We are Spartans and we must remain. Those of you who are not yet ready to die fall back now while you still have the chance."

Atropos looked at her out of the corner of his eye. She was a tiny thing when compared to the King or himself, and how his King did not break her when he bedded her was something of a mystery to Atropos. Her words however explained to him just how much courage and heart this female had... and though he would miss his sons and Lilika, to die next to her in battle was a glorious way to go. His eyes scanned the small line in front of them, and he smiled when no Spartan even turned to look at her, and not one single elf or human turned their heads. They only gripped their weapons tighter and prepared to go down fighting.

“We have not known each other long my Queen,” Atropos spoke. “But I am honored to be here by your side this day.”

Anja turned to look at him, her helmet giving her a fearsome facade for someone so small. She smiled at him revealing her lengthened fangs and the jade green wolf eyes outlined in black. “And I will be honored to fight beside you Atropos.” Anja spoke.

“They are coming!” A Spartan called out. “I can smell their vile stench!”

“Spartans,” Atropos barked. “Shi Viskas!”

In a single flash of brilliant yellow/gold and one silver, thirty-seven Shi Viskas appeared on the arms of Anja and the Spartans.

“Steady!” Atropos called out. “On my mark you will...”

The deafening roar of the two STRIKER ATs drowned out his words as they dropped from directly overhead. The swirling smoke allowed the Spartans and other Eden City defenders to catch a glimpse of the hundreds of vampire clone soldiers only four hundred meters away moving quickly in a line across the tarmac. Anja watched as the ship she knew Endith was piloting made straight for the vampire line while the other descended in an ear shattering blast of engine power directly behind her. Anja’s head snapped back around as the line of vampire soldiers began to pour withering fire at the STRIKER AT overhead, the bullets striking the craft only a hundred feet above their heads as they scattered in panic.

“Shi Viskas!” Anja screamed, “NOW!”

There was a moment’s pause and then thirty-seven Shi Viskas launched downrange at the line of vampire soldiers in the blink of an eye.

“Fire!” Atropos echoed his Queen’s command, and the line of seventy defenders opened up with all the firepower they could muster.

Spartan 414

“Go! Go! Go!” For’mya screamed wincing as stray rounds ricocheted off her armored windshield. In a testament to her training and skill, For’mya kept *Spartan 414* as steady as a rock as she hovered only four feet off the tarmac.

Gorgo and Isabella were the first to sprint from the ship, and it was Gorgo who saw the Persian red crest standing high on the Spartan helmet in front of her. One of her son’s Queens!

“To the Queen!” She shouted, waving the Spartans piling off the STRIKER AT forward. “Form with her line! Go! Go!”

For’mya let her co-pilot keep tabs on the offloading while she gazed at the aft facing camera in her HUD and watched as the ship she now knew as *Spartan 01* waded in above the vampire soldiers with no weapons and no shields against small arms fire from so close. She could see the bullets slamming into the armored skin of the ship, and true to her word, the pilot known as Endith was using her maneuvering thrusters to burn the vampires alive. They would fire at odd intervals, torching four or five in a group as the ship moved slowly over the line of vampire clone soldiers. It was a feat of flying that For’mya could only shake her head at in awe.

“Empty!” Her co-pilot barked. “We are empty!”

For’mya slammed her hand down on the ramp controls and in an incredible feat of her own flying spun *Spartan 414* in a complete 180 degree turn only four feet off the ground.

“*Spartan 01* we have offloaded our troops! Pull up and I will make a cannon pass as you leave the area!”

“Mow them down!” Endith’s voice echoed over the COM.

For’mya smiled a cruel smile and inched *Spartan 414* forward over the top of the Spartan defensive line. The moment her cannon cleared the view of their heads For’mya mashed down on her firing button, sending hundreds of kinetically charged projectiles downrange at nearly ten times the speed of sound.

Anja watched as the second SPAT made a slow forward sweep over the vampire line, the cannon in the nose of the ship belching flame and mowing down cloned vampire soldiers. Movement caught her eye and she

turned quickly, watching as dozens more Spartans fell into perfect formation on the line, their Shi Viskas flaring to life and launching downrange with barely a pause. These were not Spartan from Sparta, their body armor while similar was different in many ways, and their crimson cloaks were a slightly different shade. Anja turned further as she saw the two women sprinting up to her and Atropos, and her jade green eyes went wide as she realized who she was looking at.

The two women slowed to a stop in front of her and Anja saw Gorgo smile brightly. Anja couldn't help but blink as she stared at a woman who she had read about in earth history books when she was a child.

"I see we came at a good time my Queen." Gorgo spoke quickly.

"Gorgo...?" Anja gasped.

Gorgo nodded with a smile not surprised at the reaction she received. "It has been almost three millennia since I have been back to earth. I was hoping for a pleasant visit, but I see that will not be the case."

Anja turned as she heard the SPAT's engines roar and the ship began to lift further into the sky, "Atropos!" Anja barked.

"Spartans," He shouted above the din of battle, "Defensive Phalanx!"

Gorgo and Isabella watched as the rank closed tighter and the Shi Viskas were now used to cover an overlapping area of the next Spartan in the file. The new Spartan warriors had obviously been trained in identical tactics and knew just what to do at the shouted order. The Shi Viskas were large enough to shield a squatting man, and as Gorgo watched the line in front of them became one solid wall of Shi Viska shields. She stepped up closer to Anja, Isabella moving to Anja's opposite side, and then they were just behind the solid line of Shi Viskas and crimson cloaks.

Anja inhaled and smelled both Gorgo and Isabella distinctly and she turned to look at the taller vampire Princess who would share their bed and their lives in the future. "Welcome Bella." Anja spoke softly. "It is a distinct pleasure to make your acquaintance."

Isabella looked at her, hazel green eyes wide. "You are Anja?" Isabella said quickly watching Anja nod. "Are all his queens as insane as you? You are outnumbered five to one and you stand in the open."

Anja laughed and Gorgo couldn't help but join in. "If you want to see insane, wait until you meet Dysea and Aricia. They are far more skilled than I am, and they are crazier." Anja spoke her eyes watching as the vampires began to regain their line.

It was time.

"No prisoners!" Anja barked loudly.

"No mercy!" Atropos echoed, "For they will show you none!"

"They must not reach the bunker behind us!" Anja called lifting her Shi Viska into a defensive position and her P190 just over the edge of the shield as she lowered herself into a tighter crouch. She saw the yellow/gold flash to her right and the silvery flash to her left and then both Martin's mother and the last woman who would be one with them lifted their Shi Viskas into a defensive posture.

The vampire soldiers began advancing again, this time firing their weapons. The bullets began to bounce wildly off the unbroken line of shields that lay in front of them. Endith's maneuver and For'mya's last strafing run had decimated the ranks of the vampire clones, splitting them into un-unified groups of as small as two and as large as six or seven. The combined attack had also slaughtered nearly two hundred of their number, and while they still outnumbered the Spartans in front of them, it was not nearly as lopsided as before. As they poured fire down on the line of Spartans, several elves and humans fell in the ranks struck by bullets that ricocheted off a Spartan shield, but the line did not break.

Ready weapons! Anja projected to the line of Spartans, the power of her telepathic order reaching all the men and women in the line, to include Gorgo and Isabella. Gorgo couldn't help but look at her with a stunned expression at the power Anja so casually used to project her thoughts. The barrels of nearly two hundred P190s and HK74s eased slowly into the small gaps left by the overlapping shields, or just above the tops of them.

NOW!

The cloned vampire troops had been moving at a steady clip towards the line, firing indiscriminately until their weapons were empty and then reloading as they moved. They received no return fire and this emboldened them to move faster, which made others of their kind surge forward as well.

Anja waited until they were barely a hundred meters away and then gave the order to fire. Nearly two hundred weapons opened fire at once, sending a fusillade of hot lead into the staggered ranks of the cloned

vampire soldiers and bodies began to fall. Thirty... then forty... then fifty of the vampires fell... but still they marched on.

When they reached twenty meters Anja gave them order.

Charge!

The line of Spartans moved forward in a blink, even the Spartans that had never seen a day on earth responded to her telepathic command without thinking. She was their Queen, her helmet and bravery showed them that. And if their Queen would stand and fight, and possibly die, their King must be something indeed.

The two lines of troops collided in a loud clashing of bodies and weapons and the battle became a free for all, the wind blowing smoke and dirt over the tarmac obscuring what was taking place from any eyes that might have been watching.

TEN MILES SOUTH OF SPRINGFIELD MISSOURI

The pain was no dream and he groaned as it lanced up the backs of his legs and across his lower back. His head felt as if someone had used it for a game of polo, and he was unable to move his left arm. His right arm ached at even the slightest twitch and he could barely move his fingers. Even opening his deep blue eyes was an exercise of will power as painful as everything in his body was. His vision was fuzzy, and he dare not shake his head to make sure it would not simply roll off his shoulders. He saw a black form take shape in front of his eyes and he froze.

“Your eyes will adjust Major O’Connell.” The female voice spoke. “Blink them a few times to clear your vision, but do not move just yet. My doctor had quite the time repairing your body and she would not be happy to see you ruin her excellent work.”

Ben did this slowly, and after each time his vision cleared a little more until he was looking into the face of the stunning young female with black hair and cobalt blue eyes. Her skin was tanned but not too deeply, her lips soft and unpainted. Her cheeks were high and the corners of her thin lips turned up slightly. “Where... where am I?”

“I am very happy to see you return to us.” She spoke with a soft voice. “I am going to give you a pain patch now. I did not want to do this before because I did not know if you were going to survive.”

“I’m... I’m in heaven right?” Ben spoke, even those words causing small shivers of pain to course through his cracked and dry lips and cheeks.

The young woman chuckled as she lifted the rectangular patch to show him before placing it on his chest. He must not have been wearing a shirt if he felt her touch on his skin. His eyes eased slightly as the pain medicine instantly took effect and everything receded to a dull throbbing.

“Better?” She asked.

Ben nodded, “Heaven.” He replied looking at the young woman, her voice somehow sounding familiar to him. She had said his name. “You... you know me?” He asked as she busied herself at his side.

Yuriko looked at Ben and held up the small container of water to his lips, dabbing some on his parched skin before pouring a small amount into his mouth. “Drink slowly Major,” She spoke. “You have been through a most amazing trauma and I am still not sure how you survived.”

“Luck... luck of the... of the Irish.” Ben spoke slowly.

Yuriko smiled. “I know this phrase... and it appears you just may be correct. Your Raptor was shot down Major. Regrettably your co-pilot was killed instantly. You sustained two broken legs, a broken arm, seven broken ribs, numerous lacerations, some of them requiring internal stitches and I believe you have injured your back, though I do not know how badly. My doctor wanted to wait until you were stronger before she examined you further. You are strapped onto a flat board so that your back remains immobile. I’m sorry it is not the most comfortable position, but with the pain patch, you should be more tolerant in a few moments.”

“Where... where am I?” Ben asked.

“You are in one of our safe houses in southwestern Missouri. You crashed about twenty five miles from where we are now. I had you treated by my doctor as I said, she’s quite good, and then we moved you here.” Yuriko replied.

“I am... I am a prisoner?” Ben asked.

Yuriko shook her head. “No Major O’Connell, you are not my prisoner. You are my guest.”

“You... you know me.” Ben spoke the words coming easier now. “You... you look familiar somehow. Your voice is...”

“It has been many years since we last saw each other Major.” Yuriko spoke. “I believe the last time we saw one another, you were showing me the intricacies of activating my life preserver in case of a crash.”

Ben’s eyes narrowed as he looked at her, trying to determine where he had seen her and who she was. Memories flashed through his head quickly as he stared at her. She made no move to tell him, apparently wanting to figure it out for himself. “I... I never flew with children. Not until I was assigned to...” Ben’s eyes widened considerably, “Yuriko?”

Yuriko saw him tense quite a bit and she rested her hand on his chest. “You have no fears with me Major O’Connell.” She spoke quickly. “And it makes me happy that you remember me.”

“You are... you are Yuri’s daughter!” Ben hissed. “You’re... you’re a blood...”

Yuriko kept her face neutral, knowing that they had been fighting Yuri’s forces for nearly a year now, and though they had vampires and half vampires within their ranks, they trusted those individuals. “Yes Major... I am a vampire.” Yuri said evenly. “However that murderous bitch was never my mother!” Ben’s eyes told her he didn’t believe her and Yuriko smiled. “I assume that you are aware of who and what Martin Leonidas is, and the fact that werewolves and vampires are not just the myths and legends from ancient earth lore used to scare small children?”

Ben nodded slowly. “Yeah... we... we figured that out a while ago.” He replied.

Yuriko looked at him. “Of course you would have. You have been my adopted father’s pilot for many years, and it stands to reason that you would be among the few who knew if not who he was than what he was.”

“Adopted... adopted father?” Ben spoke in disbelief.

Yuriko looked at him and nodded. “I am the daughter of two Pureblood vampires Major.” Yuriko spoke. “The woman you know as Yuri killed my parents when I was very small and used me as part of her “cover” to gain Martin’s trust and confidence. She is not my mother, and I would gladly empty my weapon into her black heart should I ever meet her face to face.” Yuriko settled to the ground next to Ben in a lotus position. “I may be a vampire Major, but we do know love and devotion to our children, and I was denied that by Yuri when she slaughtered my real parents. Martin Leonidas was the only man who showed me any type of concern and caring, and even in the short time we were together, I came to consider him the father I never had.”

“You... you were on earth when the comet came.” Ben spoke. “How did you... how did you survive?”

“I survived no thanks to Yuri.” Yuriko replied quickly. “We survived the initial passing of the comet, and moved with Doctor Carson to a secure facility in the Blue Ridge Mountains. It was only when the fires began in the sky that she abandoned me to my own fate. The fires did not engulf the planet all at once you see... and they had time to move to another facility buried much deeper in the earth. When they moved for this facility, Yuri left me to die.”

“Obviously that didn’t work out.” Ben spoke.

Yuriko smiled. “As you are no doubt aware, it is very hard to kill vampires.” She said. “I survived with several others who were left behind as well. The United States government was not foolish Major; they knew exactly what Yuri and I were. When the comet came there were hundreds of vampires in very high ranking positions of governments across the world. King Leonidas may have defeated them openly three thousand years ago, but all it did was drive them underground and make them rethink how they fought their wars. It was Yuri behind it all. Over the centuries they infiltrated almost every facet of government in dozens of countries. Many were killed in the aftermath of the comet, but many more survived. The humans on this world know of their existence and have for hundreds of years. They have worked with them in order to keep their power and status which is how Yuri has become so powerful.”

Ben nodded. “We figured that out just recently.” He said. “We didn’t think she could have gotten away with all of this on the sly.”

“Humans Major... and I mean no disrespect to you when I say this, but humans are extremely good at surviving.” Yuriko spoke.

“She didn’t know you survived?” Ben asked.

Yuriko shook her head. “No. I changed my name and remained far away from the large cities that she built on the ashes of the remains. I gathered many like me and we have remained in hiding all of these years, training and preparing for the day when he would return.”

“Wait?” Ben spoke. “You... you knew he would return?”

Yuriko nodded. “We have friends in many places Major, human, vampire and elf. Like Martin Leonidas we do not turn away allies because of race or creed. They have to earn our trust yes... but like... like my father... when that trust is earned we do not abandon them.” Yuriko explained. “We have several people in positions of relative power, and it was they who let me know what Doctor Carson discovered. The moon was returning to its normal rotation of the planet and then the space/time continuum would be back to normal. Since the moon had no oxygen to burn, it was deduced that the base on the moon would have likely survived and that my father would return to earth and discover what had happened here.”

“Then you know about Colonel Nestor?” Ben asked.

Yuriko nodded. “Oh yes... when we discovered that he was sincere in his motivations we reached out to him quickly. He and those that follow him are among Yuri’s new super vampire soldiers. Not limited by many of the things that normal vampires are limited by.” She explained. “My father sent him to New Chicago a few hours ago to demand that the remaining humans withdraw all support of Yuri or he would vaporize their cities.”

Ben nodded. “I guess you are well informed.” He spoke.

“Does... does he have the weapons to do this?” Yuri asked. Ben looked at her for a long moment not saying anything. It went against every bit of his military training to reveal information to a potential enemy. Yuriko smiled and nodded her head slowly. “I will infer from your silence that he does.” She spoke. “And I will stop asking you questions relating to operations that may be ongoing, that was foolish of me, forgive me.”

“I’m not in much of a position to resist anything you do.” Ben told her.

“Major... rest assured if my intent was in any way hostile, or I had wanted information from you, I would have that information by now and you would be dead.” Yuriko spoke. “I am not your enemy Major... nor am I the enemy of my father.”

“You need... you need to stop calling him your father.” Ben spoke.

Yuriko looked at him and shook her head. “He is the only father I have ever known, and that is not something I will do.” She answered.

“He’s... he’s different now Yuriko.” Ben spoke. “He’s not the same man you knew on EDEN.”

Yuriko nodded. “Yes I know. He is the youngest son of King Leonidas.” She replied. “He is the King of the Lycavorian people, and billions more across the universe, including elves and numerous other races that are fighting the Vampire Coven.”

“You... you know about all that?” Ben asked clearly amazed.

Yuriko nodded. “You forget Major... I am a vampire. I have many identities that have allowed me to travel off world from the spaceport here on earth. My travels have been for my own purposes, but I know all about the rebellion and the Lycavorian people. I have several elves among my group of fighters that we rescued from a slaver ship several star systems from here. My doctor is a Hadarian that was also rescued by my group, the same race that Queen Anja is from if I am not mistaken.”

“I guess you do get around.” Ben spoke. “What purpose is driving you?”

Yuriko smile gently. “That is my business Major, and it is a personal thing. Colonel Nestor has succeeded in delivering the message my father wanted, and even now the humans who are in positions of power are beginning to turn against their vampire masters.” Yuriko spoke. “That is information that will be passed on to my father shortly, but I wanted to share it with you.”

“Where is Yuri?” Ben asked.

“At the moment we believe she is commanding from the fortified bunker beneath the spaceport itself.” Yuriko answered. “The slave island was a perfect location to build the spaceport due to its distance from the mainland. Her lover and an Immortal Captain are actually running the operations from somewhere in Utah, but she is undoubtedly within the command bunker of the spaceport.”

“How do you know all this?” Ben asked.

Yuriko smiled. “As I said Major... we have friends everywhere.”

“What happens to me?” Ben asked.

“You...” Yuriko began to speak.

“You need to rest.” The new male voice spoke. Ben and Yuriko turned and they saw the middle aged man enter the room with them. He was dressed similar to Yuriko in black fatigues, gray spreading out in his brown hair from his temples.

“Major this is Filrian. He is a Hadarian and he is the doctor I’ve been telling you of.” Yuriko spoke.

Ben watched the man kneel next to the back board and hold out what appeared to be a medical scanner of some sort. He ran it over the entire length of Ben’s body and nodded his head.

“Good.” He spoke, “The swelling has gone down considerably. There does not appear to be any permanent damage to your spinal column Major O’Connell. The resilience of your species does you credit Major. We can get you off that back board if you like.”

Ben nodded. “That would be good.”

Filrian looked at Yuriko. “We’ve just received word that a Lycavorian fleet has been seen entering the system. They are bearing down hard and should be here within three hours.”

“But not before Xerxes arrives?” Yuriko spoke.

Filrian shook his head. “Our people estimate he will begin putting Immortals on the ground within the hour.”

Yuriko nodded. “Then we must prepare.” She spoke getting to her feet.

“Wait... prepare for what?” Ben asked.

Yuriko looked at him. “We are going to return you to your friends Major, and we are going to officially enter this battle. Earth has become my home now, and like the man I call my father, I will not surrender it to the vampires without a fight.”

Ben watched as she turned quickly and left the room. His eyes settled on the Hadarian doctor as he moved closer and began to untie the straps holding Ben on the board. “She talks a good game.” Ben spoke.

Filrian nodded. “Yes she does.” He spoke. “Lucky for us, she is one of the few who can back up what she talks with action.”

“How... how long have you been here?” Ben asked.

Filrian looked at him. “I’ve worked with her going on two hundred and fifty years now.” He replied. “I was one of the first people she rescued from the Vamps. She was pretty badly injured doing that and I swore I would never allow that to happen to her again. She is not our enemy Major O’Connell. None of us are.”

“Yeah... I’m getting that feeling.” Ben spoke.

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA ISLAND

“How many ships total?” Yuri demanded.

“The radiation from the sun is not letting us get an accurate count, but at least seventy, maybe more.” The tech answered. “Princess... we were able to confirm that the *LEONIDAS I* is among them!”

Yuri sighed heavily and shook her head. “The Lycavorian Home Guard Fleet is not what we needed at this moment.” She spoke to no one in particular. “How soon before they are in range of earth?”

“Again we can’t get an accurate sensor scan, but based on the position we were able to obtain, no more than three hours.” The tech answered.

“Where is Xerxes now?” Yuri asked.

“His transport has just left the *WING OF DEATH*.” The tech replied. “We have forty-two OATs inbound now. Sixty-nine thousand Immortals Princess.”

“Fine,” Yuri spoke. “Direct the Orbital Assault Transports to Commander Moran’s location. He has cleared a large enough landing zone for them. And get me Fleet Admiral Malachi again!”

“Fleet Admiral Malachi is already standing by Princess.”

“Put him up!” Yuri said turning to the large monitor as the senior Fleet Officer of Xerxes’s task force appeared on the screen. They could see quite a bit of movement in the background on his bridge. “Admiral... I assume you have detected the Lycavorian fleet entering the system?”

Malachi nodded. "We have Princess." He answered. "I'm in the process of diverting one section of my remaining ships to form a picket of sorts. We've gotten several clear scans, and we will not be able to fight them head on."

Yuri looked at him. "What? Why? You outnumber them!"

Malachi nodded. "That we do Princess... but only by a dozen ships! And we are in no condition for a sustained fight. Many of my ships have only half magazines, and their LSD drives are nearly depleted. Your brother pulled us off the front so quickly we did not have time to replenish our stocks, nor conduct extended repairs. We pushed our ships too hard Milady, and the continuous and consecutive LSD jumps were too much stress on many of our ships. I had to leave over fifty behind as we came here. Our scans indicate that this is the Lycavorian Home Guard Fleet. This is their very best, and somehow they have managed to arrive here with full weapons magazines and fully charged LSDs."

"Why did you not tell me this before?" Yuri screamed.

"Forgive me Princess I was ordered not too." Malachi spoke.

"Ordered by whom?"

"Your father Princess," Malachi replied. "He trusts in your leadership Milady, and your skill, but he has lost all trust in your brother. His instructions to me were clear. If the situation becomes untenable I am to leave Xerxes to his fate, and escape with you, the Ministers and the plans for our cloned soldiers."

Yuri took a deep breath. "He... he gave me the same orders." She spoke softly. "However, things have not become untenable yet Admiral."

"I will do whatever I can Milady, but at the moment I have to realign my ships to face the Lycavorian fleet and still have enough power to escape when the time is needed." Malachi spoke. "The only complete squadron of fighters we had left, I already sent to you. They have been destroyed correct?"

Yuri nodded. "It appears the Lycavorians were somehow able to get an advance party to earth within the last four hours; among them six *STRIKER ATs*. They defeated our fighters but we were able to all but destroy their air power, as well as kill their Air Wing Commander."

"So we will have air superiority for the time." Malachi spoke nodding his head as he motioned to someone off the screen. "I will release what fighters we have left to your command Princess. All I can spare with the exception of fleet defense."

Yuri nodded. "Our missiles were able to bring the shield around Eden City down, but Leonidas's counter battery fire is savaging our artillery. We get perhaps one volley off before his damn rockets find and kill our batteries. Do you have anything that can move into a low orbit and provide support?"

Malachi turned as someone spoke to him off the monitor's view. He nodded and turned back. "We have one light frigate that was able to complete the journey here Princess. Her LSD drive is gone, but her captain will move into a low orbit and take his targets from you only. He has four planetary plasma batteries that will be at your disposal. It is not much I know, but it is the best we have at the moment."

Yuri nodded quickly. "Excellent. Four plasma batteries are better than none, and Leonidas has nothing that will shield them from plasma batteries." She spoke looking at the screen. "I truly do not want to abandon earth Admiral."

Malachi looked at her in the monitor. "You are the High Guard Commander Princess. The loss of this planet is insignificant to your safety and the plans for our cloned troops. If I may Princess... you have proven yourself a hundred times over, and you are needed elsewhere. Your brother is too young to take command of the High Guard if you perish."

Yuri looked at the monitor stunned, "My brother?" She exclaimed. "I spoke with my father recently. Why would he not tell me this?"

Malachi allowed himself a small smile. "I was told not to reveal this to you unless it was necessary. I believe it was the High Lord's and your mother's intent to surprise you. You have a younger brother Princess. A fine lad if I do say so myself. He has completed Flight training, and joined Coven Fleet Orion 31 as a Squadron Commander."

"He has been bloodied already?" Yuri asked.

Malachi nodded. "Yes Princess."

"Coven Fleet Orion 31 you say?" Yuri spoke.

“He is an exceptionally skilled pilot Milady. Your father felt he should be with the best.” Malachi spoke. “And your Uncle’s fleet is the best.”

Yuri nodded. “Indeed it is.”

“If we can not win, do not hesitate to abandon this wretched planet. Your father would not, and he has done so in the past when needed. Follow his lead Princess.” Malachi spoke.

Yuri nodded quickly. “Rest assured Admiral... I have too much to look forward too now to die on this rock.”

Malachi nodded. “Good. Our fighters are launching now Princess... and I will have the frigate commander contact you when he is in position.”

ALLIANCE GROUND COMMAND POST

“Shit!” Moran yelled throwing down the data pad. The echo of artillery fire was filling the background as he exited the APC.

Cha’talla turned to look at him as he came up, “The attack against the airfield?” He asked.

Moran nodded. “The Lycavorian fleet has entered the system! Somehow they got their *STRIKER AT* craft here to earth in advance. They wasted all our fighters, but we took out Leonidas’s air support. Reports indicate there are only two perhaps three of these *STRIKERs* left.”

“The fleet is sending down more fighters?” Cha’talla asked.

Moran nodded. “And Xerxes will be here within thirty minutes.” He spoke.

“Your plan has been excellent so far Robert Moran.” Cha’talla spoke. “The shield around Eden City is down, and even though they are hitting our artillery with counter fire, we are inflicting heavy damage. Our armored units are continuing to advance, the infantry right behind them. Our plan is proceeding well.”

“Our plan...?” Moran asked.

Cha’talla nodded turning back to watch another volley leave their heavy gun batteries. “I serve Princess Yuri without question. If she has placed you in command of this attack it is for good reason. And so far that has proven to be an excellent decision, her personal feelings for you notwithstanding.” He looked at the human. “I was sent here to serve the Princess and observe you Robert Moran; to see if you are worthy of being the Princess’s concubine.”

“I don’t particularly care why you were sent here Cha’talla.” Moran spoke. “I’m doing what I was born for. And I’m doing this because it helps keep Yuri safe.”

Cha’talla chuckled. “That is quite obvious Commander. You are a strange genetically engineered human Moran. You are vicious and brutal. You are an excellent field commander, and a man who despises weakness. Yet your one weakness is your devotion to my Princess. And that is why you have earned my respect. I intend to recommend to the High Lord that you be given your own command Moran. What do you think of that?”

“I’ll think of that when and if we win here.” Moran replied.

Cha’talla smiled and nodded his head. “Good...”

“The unit of cloned soldiers we sent against the airfield engaged the defenders there.” Moran spoke. “We don’t know the outcome of that fight, because the agent we had watching the airfield went offline right after the missile attack. He may be dead.”

“The last report indicated they had only a small group of defenders.” Cha’talla spoke.

Moran nodded. “Yeah... well Leonidas happens to be one of the luckiest bastards I have ever known, and until we get a report that the airfield is ours... we have to assume they were beaten. Yuri is going to send a fighter patrol over Eden City as soon as they enter the atmosphere.”

Cha’talla nodded. “Then we press the attack.” He spoke.

“You know what your Immortals are capable of Cha’talla.” Moran spoke. “What is the best way to utilize them, and to keep Xerxes out of my hair?”

“Xerxes thinks of himself as a superior commander, when in fact he is a pompous fool.” Cha’talla spoke. “He is the reason we lost so many of my brethren to Leonidas’s father that day. Do not let his physical appearance intimidate you. He is tall and muscular, but it is more for show to the ladies than anything else.”

“He’s not a good fighter?” Moran asked.

Cha’talla chuckled. “The Princess could defeat him on her worst day with only her feet.” He spoke. “He uses his size to instill fear in others. Stand up to him and do not allow him to commandeer your command. The Princess has placed you in command... and make sure he understands that.” Cha’talla looked at him. “And always keep in the back of your mind that he is the one who raped your Princess bride on several occasions.” Moran’s jaw hardened when Cha’talla said that, and his face became unreadable.

“What about the Immortals with him.” Moran finally asked.

“When the time comes... they will answer to me. Not Xerxes.” Cha’talla said evenly.

Moran nodded. “Good.”

SPARTA

The female elf pilot of the STRIKER AT moved quickly down the ramp of her ship, followed by eighteen other flight crews and four dozen Spartan troops. All of them came to an abrupt halt at the bottom of the ramp as they saw the entrance of the landing bay fill with Spartan Centurions, their weapons and Shi Viskas prepared to fire.

“No! Wait!” The female elf screamed rushing forward her arms waving frantically. “Don’t fire!”

“Hold!” Walter’s voice bellowed in the confines of the landing bay. He stepped slowly through the three deep ranks of Spartans that held their weapons at the ready. “Speak quickly she-elf, for we Spartans are not in a forgiving mood this day!” He yelled.

“I am Commander Forla; Lycavorian Home Guard Fleet! I was sent here by the King!” She shouted, feeling the sweat begin to roll down her forehead.

Walter moved closer to her. “What do you know of the King?” He demanded.

“I am part of an advance force sent here to assist the King!” Forla spoke quickly. “The King ordered me to bring these other pilots to crew the STRIKER AT ships that are stored here in Sparta!”

“I am Senior Polemarch Dymas!” Walter/Dymas declared. “How do I know you are who you say you are?”

Walter/Dymas watched the burly Spartan step up next to the elf. “I am Polemarch Radmor of First Scout Company, Lycavorian Ninth Spartan Expeditionary Division!” He shouted. “We are brother Spartans Senior Polemarch! On the heart of King Leonidas I swear this!”

Walter stepped closer holding his hand raised slightly. He came closer to the elf and Spartan standing near the back of the ramp and watched as the other Spartan Centurions dropped to one knee and lowered their heads in honor of his rank, “Oracle?” He shouted.

Helen stepped from around the edge of the entrance and looked at them as she quickly crossed the distance to where he stood. “They are who they say they are Dymas.” Helen spoke. “They are fellow Spartans. Can you not smell the wolf in them?”

Walter nodded. “The King has taught me many things; chief among them is to never take anything at face value.”

Helen nodded. “And an excellent viewpoint that is. Do you know who I am?” Helen asked.

Radmor looked at her. “If we are to believe you are an Oracle, then only one Oracle survives and it is she who made it known that the son of King Leonidas still lived. You are Oracle Dustha.”

Helen touched Walter’s arm. “Only the rebellion would know my name Dymas.” She spoke. “We are among friends here.”

Walter smiled. “In that case... welcome to Sparta my friends.”

Radmor and Forla felt relief wash over them and they stepped up to Walter. “I have brought pilots for the STRIKER AT ships that you have in storage here.” Forla spoke. “The King wants them airborne and back in North America in two hours.”

Walter nodded and motioned one of his men forward. “Take the she-elf and her fellow pilots to the storage hangers, quickly.”

The Spartan centurion nodded and motioned with his hand to the side.

Radmor looked at Walter. "You have not been attacked here?" He asked.

Walter shook his head. "They are concentrating their attacks on the King's city in North America." He answered. "How many came with you?"

"Six STRIKER ATs right now," Radmor answered. "The fleet is only hours away. But Xerxes is landing as we speak." He stepped closer to Walter. "You... you are the Guardian of the Line?"

Walter nodded. "I was." He replied. "It appears the King no longer needed a Guardian once he discovered who he was. He made me Senior Polemarch and left me in charge of the defenses here."

"You... you are the only Senior Polemarch in all of the Lycavorian ground forces." Radmor spoke almost in awe. "As Senior Polemarch you should be with the King."

"He asked that I defend the city we call home." Walter spoke. "That is an honor above all else."

Radmor nodded. "Then I place myself and my men under your command Senior Polemarch. And we will remain here to help you defend the city of our King and the city of our ancestors."

Walter smiled. "These aircraft will carry three hundred troops each correct?" He asked.

Radmor nodded quickly. "Yes."

"Good. I have five thousand Spartans standing by to join the fight in North America." Walter spoke. "And since Xerxes is not fool enough to attack us directly, you and I Radmor will lead those five thousand Spartans to North America to join our King."

Radmor looked at him. "I thought the King ordered you to remain here and defend Sparta?"

Walter looked at Helen and smiled. "He did... but I have not listened to the King since he was a boy. I don't intend to start now at my age."

Radmor laughed heartily. "Then it will be an honor to serve with you!"

Walter looked at the line of Spartans to their rear. "Lander... order the reinforcements to begin moving to the underground storage hangers. We have pilots now... and it is time we joined the fight!"

EDEN CITY AIRFIELD

It became abundantly clear the moment the two forces came together that these vampire super soldiers were not all they were cracked up to be, at least not against edged weapons. Those dozens that had continued to fight even after being shot several times fell just as easily as the others when the Spartan troops began using their Shi Viskas and their Nehtes to wade into the line of vampire soldiers.

The battle quickly became a free for all, and a battle that would be decided not at long range, but close up and down and dirty. The airfield's defenders were outnumbered three to one even after the STRIKERs had decimated their ranks; the cloned vampire troops easily a match physically for the Spartans and elves. It is what Yuri and her scientists had designed them for. Unfortunately for the vampire troops, they had not armed themselves for hand to hand combat, and nor were they prepared for the ferocity of the defenders as they waded into battle. When it became too close for using their assault rifles, many resorted to using them as clubs and battering rams. Against Shi Viskas and Nehtes, it wasn't even close.

Anja had long ago discarded her P190, and was hacking through vampire troops with her Nehtes. Her instructor in Sparta had been correct when she told Andreus that whatever Anja hit would not stand back up. The spearhead of her Nehtes dripped with blood as she thrust and swung the weapon with the skill of a master. No matter where she connected, a limb came off. No matter where she stabbed, she skewered some vital organ. Blood whipped through the air all around her, and Gorgo could only stand beside her, her own Nehtes drenched in blood and look on in awe. Even Isabella, who preferred the two wicked looking curved blades in each hand, was impressed beyond measure. Neither Gorgo nor Isabella had ever seen a member of the Hadarian species fight so savagely and without regard.

The elves and humans among the defenders fared better than most, but they were just no match for the superior vampire troops and many of them fell to horrific deaths, many even being fed upon in the midst of the battle so that the vampire soldiers could heal their own wounds.

Bodies littered the tarmac, and blood ran like a river over the solid black ground as the battle raged. Slowly the vampires were beginning to take the upper hand, as more and more Spartans fell. Vampire soldiers

scooped up the Nehtes from dead Spartans and began to use the weapons against the centurions. The occasionally shot from a handgun could be heard in the mass of bodies, the crack of breaking bone and slap of flesh against the blood stained ground.

The vampire commander clutched the mortally wounded female elf in his arms and sank his fangs into the flesh of her neck drinking deeply of her rich blood as her blood twitched in his grasp. He tossed her aside like a rag doll, his cobalt blue eyes scanning the battlefield. He smiled a bloody smile, as he realized his men were winning. They were taking horrible losses, but they were winning. He heard the shout behind him and whirled; his eyes going wide as he saw the blade of the tip of the Nehtes slam into his chest, and explode out between his shoulder blades. He looked up and saw the enraged face of the Spartan warrior as he ran up and wrenched the Nehtes free, tearing out pieces of his lungs. Dark rich blood spilled from his lips now, his blood and his eyes looked up lazily as the Nehtes spun wildly through the air and bit deeply into the flesh of his neck.

All thought stopped there.

Anja heard the battle cry and whipped her head around just as Dekton and Aihola led a hundred Drow and human fighters down upon the vampire soldiers with hatred in their eyes and vengeance fueling their movements. Caught as they were from behind, the vampire troops had no defense and in what seemed like an eternity, but was in reality only three minutes, the last vampire super soldier fell to Dekton's Nehtes and the battle for the Eden City airfield was over.

Anja ripped her Nehtes free from the soldier she had just run through the chest, his flesh and blood adding to the copious amounts of blood already staining the ground, and she spun around her chest heaving in exertion and the rush of battle. Her helmet was stained with splashes of blood, her fangs fully extended. Her chin was cut deeply, leaking blood onto the ground, but she ignored this as she surveyed the tarmac as the smoke cleared momentarily from a gust of cool wind. Her jade green wolf eyes took in the hundreds of bodies that littered the tarmac of the airfield as she felt Gorgo and Isabella step up to her on either side.

Anja's eyes turned to see Dekton and Aihola standing nearby, their own chests heaving their weapons streaked with blood.

"Dekton!" Anja called.

"Forgive us for being so late my Queen!" Dekton spoke as he began walking towards her. "A building dropped on us as we were passing by."

Anja saw Aihola smile as she fell in beside him and they moved up to her. "You arrived in time Dekton. We were almost lost."

Dekton looked at Gorgo and Isabella from under his helmet and his eyes widened. He dropped to one knee instantly and bowed his head, "Milady Gorgo!" He gasped.

Gorgo looked surprised at his actions and she reached up to remove her helmet. "You know me?" She asked.

Dekton nodded. "There are few who do not know the face of the King's mother Milady." Dekton spoke. This pronouncement caused Aihola's eyes to widen as well and she too dropped to one knee.

"Stand up Spartan!" Gorgo demanded. "If my son does not stand on formality than neither shall I. And the Queen of the Drow elves on earth should bow to no one."

Dekton got to his feet slowly, his eyes looking at Aihola before turning back to Gorgo stunned that she knew who Aihola was. Gorgo saw this and smiled.

"My son passed much to me in his memories, first and foremost among that was who his dear friends were." Gorgo spoke. "And the two of you rank very close to the top." Gorgo looked around the tarmac her dark eyes saddened at the loss of life, "So many lost." She spoke softly. "I... I thought I had left war and sacrifice behind."

"That day will come when my father is dead and the Vampire High Coven destroyed." Isabella said in a soft voice.

"My Queen... we should gather our wounded quickly and retreat to the cover of the bunker." Atropos spoke as he moved over to stand next to Anja. "We do not know if there are more out there."

Anja nodded quickly. "Let's find out." She tilted her head quickly to the side activating her implant, "Endith?"

“I am here Milady.” Endith replied instantly. “I am orbiting three miles away, but ground sensors are picking up no other enemy in the area. I will need to land soon my Queen. I took some minor damage that needs to be repaired.”

“That was an insane move Endith.” Anja spoke.

“It worked Milady.” Endith answered.

“Very well... we will begin moving our wounded and clearing the dead from the tarmac closest to the bunker. Give us thirty minutes and then you may land.” Anja spoke.

“We will be ready Milady.”

Anja looked at Atropos. “Call for the medics in the bunker. Endith reports there is no other enemy activity in the area. We must see to the wounded quickly.”

“The vampire wounded Anja?” Aihola asked. “What about them?”

Anja met her eyes. “Fuck them! They started this dance, not us. Let them rot.”

Isabella looked at Gorgo as Anja began moving for the bunker, Atropos, Dekton and Aihola right in step with her. Gorgo detected what had to be the first genuine smile she had ever seen from Isabella. “Spirited isn’t she?” Gorgo spoke.

“I... I am at a loss.” Isabella spoke. “I’ve never seen a Hadarian act as she does.”

“Come... they will need our help.” Gorgo spoke. “And I want to find my son.”

With that, the battle for control of Eden City Airfield was over. It would be known as a victory, a costly victory no doubt but a victory nonetheless. A monument erected with the names of the hundreds that fell on this day would be built in years to come, but it would better known for one thing above all others.

It would be known as the first turning point in the Battle for Freedom on the planet Earth.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

EDEN CITY AMBUSH TEAMS NORTH OF ROUTE 62

Lynwe ran the back of her hand gingerly over the side of cheek, wiping away the dried blood and sweat that caked her face. The patch had dulled the pain to nothing more than a throbbing now, the three inch long slice from the corner of her eye down her cheek coming from a large chunk of shrapnel that had caught her looking up over the top of the small hole she had dug in the ground. Of the four dozen Spartans scouts, elves and humans in her personal command team, only eleven remained. The rest had been killed over the course of the last seven hours of constant fighting. Lynwe had seen combat before, she was no stranger to death and misery, but watching as the scouts and ambush teams she had commanded were killed off in groups of three or four had worn at her gut. She had never been locked in sustained combat before, and certainly never for this long a period of time. She had never been on the receiving end of heavy artillery and the constant booming and vibrations as the artillery landed all around her shredding men and elves under her command had frayed her nerves.

She had not wanted to lead such a large group of men and elves, and when she had discovered the King had made her a General it had shocked her right down to her elfin/vampire toes. She didn’t think that Martin had that much trust in her, and it wasn’t until a long and private conversation with Tarifa that she realized that Martin did indeed trust her. That she had been with Tarifa and Aihola and protected them for those few months and then risked her own life with Selene had proven to Martin that Lynwe’s heart was solidly with them. Tarifa had told her all this and it had strengthened Lynwe’s resolve to be the best she could be, as a General and Selene’s lover.

She and her troops had dug as fast and as deep as they could before the Alliance artillery had struck their position. They huddled in pairs or by themselves hoping to live out the barrage so that they could sneak in under the covering artillery and attack the Alliance armor that was steadily advancing in two columns down the wide expanse of Old Route 62. The Alliance had wizened up after Lynwe’s teams had totaled sixty odd tanks and APCs destroyed and nearly a full brigade of Alliance troops slaughtered. Now they were using their heavy

artillery to smash the ground in front of their advancing troops to pulp, not giving Lynwe's ambush teams time to set up their ambush positions along the interstate. This tactic had proven costly to Eden City's defenders and now only a third of the original ambush teams remained and they were a decimated bunch. They were being pushed back slowly but surely towards Eden City's main defensive line.

The bulk of Lynwe's divisions were stretched out in a wall of defensive formations covering the entire eastern limit of Eden City. Hidden in the timber of the hills and mountains were countless bunkers and fortified positions waiting for the Alliance infantry or whatever other horrors they unleashed to come at them through the timber. Lynwe had chosen to go with her ambush teams to coordinate as much as possible. She was the only one among the teams that could communicate telepathically with those in Eden City, and she determined her best place was where she could see the most. She was starting to have second thoughts about that now.

Three hours ago her King had ordered them to delay the Alliance advance in any way they could, no matter the cost. She could feel the pain in his voice as he knew the order would send hundreds to their deaths, but Lynwe took comfort in the fact that they were buying the defenders of Eden City precious time. And that meant her Selene would have time as well.

Lynwe glanced at the human who lay beside her in the depression, his hands clutching the ARMBURST R19II. He was the same human who had complained only hours before that they were being picked off and needed to retreat. He had been one of the eleven that survived the barrage, and something inside him had changed. Twice he had saved Lynwe's life as they raced through the hills and timber from position to position. Since that artillery barrage her eleven member team had managed to slip in behind the artillery and attack the Alliance convoys twice, inflicting moderate casualties, but most importantly, making them slow their advance and deploy to respond to attacks that weren't coming.

"I got one rocket left Lynwe." He told her, sweat dripping down his face.

"Then we will make it count." She told him, "The command tank; the one bristling with antennas? Can you hit it from here?"

The man adjusted his eye scope and sighted in on the ninety ton tank. He measured the range and nodded slowly. "It's on the very edge of the envelope, but yes." He answered.

Lynwe tilted her head and glanced fifty meters to her right where her only other remaining rocket team waited. She touched the implant in her jaw line. "Samuel... we are going to target the command tank." Lynwe spoke. "How many rockets do you have left?"

"Two."

"Send one into the first vehicle and then finish off the command tank." Lynwe spoke. "We must make them deploy. The SPAT has finished laying the air delivered mines around the next bend in the road. If we make them deploy and run, they will not reform in time before hitting the minefield."

"Once we have fired our rockets?" The human man asked.

"Then turn and run as fast as you are able Samuel, for they will undoubtedly turn their tanks loose on us. We are firing from maximum range and they will see the missiles coming." Lynwe spoke.

She heard the human chuckled in her implant. "I hear that General." The man replied.

"Do not stop running until you reach our defensive line." Lynwe told them. "Once we conduct this attack we are without weapons that can slow them down. Reports from Eden City are that the shield has failed and Alliance artillery is raining down. Tarifa will get the shield back up my friends, but we have to give her time, and that means making this last attack count."

"We'll hit them good General." The human replied.

Lynwe met the man's eyes, seeing him staring back at her from sixty meters away. "Samuel... I have... I have never had much use for humans in my life." Lynwe spoke. "I can honestly now say you are among the bravest I have ever served with and I am proud to fight beside you."

Lynwe saw the man nod from his position. "The feeling is mutual General." He answered. "Now let's rip them a new ass and then haul our collective butts out of here."

Lynwe smiled and looked at the man in the position with her. "You will launch first Thomas." She spoke. "I will cover you while you track. Once your missile hits, do not hesitate."

"Same for you General," The man nodded.

Lynwe nodded and lifted her HK74, moving into a prone position on the ridge overlooking the bend in the interstate, "Now!"

The crack explosion was louder than she had been expecting, but her human gunner fired without hesitation and with nerves of iron tracked the missile all the way in. Lynwe used the integral four power scope on her HK and saw heads turn as another crack announced the launching from her second team. She pulled slowly back on her trigger and sent the first on many rounds downrange. Her first round struck exactly where she was aiming, and the head of the vampire riding in the open turret of the command tank blew apart in a mist of red, his body jerking back, lifting him almost clear out of the hatch. Thomas's shot was true and the ARMBURST rocket impacted the seam between turret and body of tank just as the driver began to turn. Lynwe watched as the command tank shuddered from the impact, the rocket penetrating into the turret and then exploding. She smiled a cruel smile as the turret erupted in flame and smoke and the concussion of the blast lifted the tank off its treads for a split second. When it stopped moving, smoke was pouring from the two hatches, as well as the melted hole in the side armor.

The second muffled explosion announced the death of the lead tank in the column just as it was turning off the paved road deploying in the face of the attack. This rocket struck the exposed head of the driver of the tank and drove into the thinner armor under the turret and exploded. The front of the tank vanished in a burst of fire and smoke as the engine was shredded by lancing pieces of shrapnel and everyone inside the tank was killed instantly by the pressure wave.

Lynwe had been picking her shots as best she could, dropping five more vampires fool enough to remain outside their hatches even after their attack started. The moment she saw the second missile strike Lynwe lowered her HK.

"Time to leave Thomas," She exclaimed.

"No arguments here!" The man spoke tossing aside his launcher and grabbing his HK before turning and taking off at a dead sprint west through the timber, following Samuel and the other nine members of their team. Lynwe took one final glance back as the Alliance forces were still deploying, got to her feet with a small smile of satisfaction and then turned and followed her men.

ALLIANCE GROUND COMMAND

"I don't want excuses!" Moran snapped. "Clear the fucking wrecks and continue forward! We're halfway there and they can't keep hitting us like they have been. They'll run out of troops before we do!"

Moran lifted his macrobinoculars as he saw the dozen or so large transport Hoppers stop along the base of the road several miles away. He could just make out the crazed bodies of the two dozen Grizz beasts they were releasing into the timber ahead of the advancing infantry. Genetically mutated monsters loosely based on the grizzly bears that once roamed the timber, they were now nothing more than crazed killing machines augmented with increased healing properties and heavy armor. The Dogs of War, Moran mused silently as he watched even the vampire soldiers scramble to get out of the way as the animals, finally freed, raced for the dark timber as was their nature and instinct.

"Who is in charge here?" The deep voice bellowed behind him.

Moran felt his stomach tighten somewhat at the sound of the voice. It was one he had heard before, and knowing whose voice it was, Moran fought down the urge to turn suddenly and shoot the crazy fucker in the face. Instead he remained cool and lowered the binoculars at his own pace, and then turned, hearing many footfalls come up behind him.

He gazed at Xerxes, and fought back another urge to laugh. He looked ridiculous in the gray jumpsuit with his bald head and the piercings dangling from his face and nose. He wore a utility belt around his narrow waist, accenting the muscular proportions of his upper body and his long legs. He appeared to be easily six foot six or seven, nearly a foot taller than Moran's five foot teen. The belt held a strange looking sidearm, one that Moran had never seen before, and the jumpsuit bore nearly a dozen pins of differing brightness on his broad chest. Obviously Xerxes was trying to impress someone... but Robert stood there impassive. He had read every stitch of history from vampire and Lycavorian data scrolls that Yuri had given to him. Once they shared blood with each other, she had held nothing back from him, providing him everything he wanted or desired. He had a voracious appetite for Yuri, which pleased her more than he would ever know, but that appetite also extended to

history, and he had read all there was on the battle that Xerxes had fought against the first King Leonidas, and the dozens of blunders he had made.

“Prince Xerxes.” Moran spoke slowly and evenly, “It is an honor to meet you.”

Xerxes ignored Moran and looked at Cha’talla who stood next to him. “Report Captain!” He demanded.

“I do not command here Prince Xerxes.” Cha’talla replied evenly.

Xerxes continued to ignore Moran, who stood there stoically without emotion, Cha’talla impressed by his control. He looked at Moran’s senior aide who stood to the side. “Get me a report of ongoing operations!” He demanded, “Logistics and correlation of forces! And have someone put up my command tent!” The aide didn’t move and his eyes went to Moran, something that did not escape Xerxes. “What are you waiting for? Do as you are instructed fool!”

“Lieutenant...” Robert spoke evenly. “Please get the latest reports from the field units and give them to Prince Xerxes. And you can pass on the correlation of forces... but the logistics intelligence is not something he needs at the moment. As for putting up his command tent, I’m sure the Prince brought enough men of his own to do that. We don’t have the additional bodies to spare.”

The lieutenant nodded his head quickly as Xerxes turned to glare at his Commander and he turned and sprinted off to the command Hopper.

“Do you know who I am human?” Xerxes bellowed as he stepped closer to him, using his height and build to attempt to intimidate Moran just as Cha’talla said he would.

Moran stared at Xerxes... not impressed in the least. He had fought countless enemies since his inception, many of them just as physically imposing as Xerxes, and a lot smarter. None of them ever made Moran back down.

“I know who you are Prince Xerxes.” Moran spoke.

“Then you know I am here to assume command of this battle human.” Xerxes spat, his obsidian eyes dark and menacing.

Moran smiled and shook his head. “No... I’m sorry. That will not be happening here.”

“What did you say?” Xerxes demanded.

“I command this battle.” Moran spoke. “The Vampire Coven High Guard Commander put me in charge. You are not the High Guard Commander any longer... and since I have received nothing from her stating that I am being relieved of my duties... and I won’t receive anything from her stating that fact... this battle will remain under my command, period. If that is something that will be a problem for you I suggest you take it up with her. I would be more than happy to brief you on what is happening...”

“I do not need your briefing half breed!” Xerxes bellowed. “I was fighting Lycavorian scum thousands of years before my sister turned you into her pet! That is what you are you know... her pet!”

Moran smiled. “Yes I know all about your record in fighting the Lycavorian Union Prince Xerxes.” He spoke, “Six hundred and nine engagements in the past five thousand two hundred and twenty-four years. Your Task Force has suffered ship losses at a forty-three percent rate higher than the next closest Coven Fleet in that time period.” Moran’s eyes changed to vampire cobalt blue as he spoke. “You charge into battles with no plan and worse still, no exit. You have glassed seventy-three planets because you failed to put down the forces that were defending the planets, denying the High Coven the resources and riches those planets could have brought us. And your battle strategies have cost the lives of seven million vampire troops, and nearly ninety-six thousand Immortals.” Robert stepped closer to him, unafraid and feeling full of himself now. “The seven million troops I can accept as battle field losses Prince Xerxes... but the loss of twenty-six thousand Immortals; that is totally unacceptable in any way, shape or form.” Cha’talla saw the reaction this caused in Xerxes’s Immortal detachment, their helmets covering their expressions, but their eyes telling him they heard Moran loud and clear. “You use them as cannon fodder, and if not for their exceptional skill that number would be triple in size if not more. Forgive me Prince Xerxes... those types of losses are unacceptable to any competent commander, and we won’t even mention the losses you suffered on this planet three thousand years ago.”

“You dare speak to me in this way?” Xerxes nearly screamed. “I will have you skinned alive and then staked to the ground to burn in the sun at its peak for your insolence!”

Moran smiled. “Well... number one... your sister turned me Prince Xerxes... so with her blood running through my veins... the sun doesn’t really much bother me, much the same as you and the Immortals and other

Purebloods, and I don't need to work on my tan. As for skinning me alive... you are very welcome to try. Whether you succeed or not is another story of course."

Xerxes glared at him utter rage in his eyes. He could not assault the appointed Sub High Guard Commander and get away with it and he knew it. Yuri and his father would see to it he was butchered in the vilest of ways. He had also met only one man that had not cowered in his presence, and he was unsure of how to proceed. That particular man left him with the scar he now wore on his face. He did not see the looks of stunned satisfaction coming from Cha'talla and the other Immortals nearby who had heard the exchange.

"You try my patience human!" Xerxes snapped.

Moran nodded. "I'm sure." He spoke. "Now... would you care for a complete briefing, which I would be honored to give myself, or can I get back to fighting a war?"

"My Command tent is not yet set up." Xerxes spoke.

Moran smiled. "I don't use a command tent. My Command Hopper is right over here however, but you'll have to stand, my techs use the seats." He motioned with his hand to where his Lieutenant had run.

EDEN CITY AIRFIELD

Endith walked slowly along the belly of her aircraft, one hand extended up to trace the smooth surface of the *STRIKER AT*. She was looking for any sign of damage that the small arms weapons may have inflicted on her craft, but so far she had discovered nothing. Tina was doing the same thing on the other end of the *STRIKER*. Neither of them wanted to stop long enough to realize that Ben was gone, and the only way to do that was stay busy. He would not want them to fall to pieces, and doing anything they could to achieve victory was now all that mattered to them. The moment they landed two elves and two Spartans had immediately begun rearming their *STRIKER* with the missiles and cannon ammo that had been brought by For'mya. They did not notice the looks they got from the elves and Spartans reloading their craft, and neither of them stopped long enough to realize that they were not elves and Spartans from earth. Unknown to either Endith or Tina, word would spread rapidly about their flying skill and the acts of heroism they had displayed.

Neither of them took notice of For'mya as she walked up to Endith with an air of superiority about her.

"You," For'mya snapped as she stopped only meters from where Endith was checking the recessed intake of the port engine.

Endith turned her blue eyes on the blond haired elf without emotion. She recognized the voice of the pompous elf who had tried to give her orders, and she had no desire to deal with her now. She turned as Tina came up.

"Starboard side is clean." Tina spoke looking at her longtime elf lover with sadness and desire. They had shared a bed for nearly a year, starting a life with Ben that Tina had never dreamed of. Endith had brought her and Ben so much closer together, and entwined herself within the fabric of their lives so much so that they were never spoken of singly now, always as a trio. Endith was not only extraordinarily beautiful in her eyes, but she was as smart, if not smarter than Ben, she was a natural born pilot, and totally uninhibited in their bed.

Endith nodded, "A few minor dents." She spoke in reply, "Nothing besides that."

"Minor!" For'mya exclaimed glaring at her. "Do you know how much one of these aircraft is worth?"

Tina returned the taller elf pilot's glare. "Gee... I suppose you're going to tell us huh?"

"Do you know how many flight procedures you have violated?" For'mya demanded. "Who taught you to fly she-elf, a human?"

It was the wrong thing to say, at the wrong moment. Endith stood only five foot five inches tall and barely over a hundred pounds to For'mya's five foot eight height and a hundred and twenty-three pounds of firm muscle. It didn't stop Endith from unloading all her considerable elf strength in the punch that connected with For'mya's jaw and sent her flying back nearly ten feet and plopped her on her back stunned. Endith was all over her then like a red haired ball of unmasked fury.

"You bitch!" Endith screamed. "Don't you talk about Benjamin like that! Don't you dare talk about him at all!"

For'mya simply tried to protect herself as first Tina and then a Spartan pried Endith off her, kicking and flailing at the startled elf Star Commander. She scrambled quickly to her feet, her dark eyes burning in anger.

"I will have you arrested for this!" For'mya screamed at her.

"Let me go!" Endith shouted. "I want to kick her pompous elf ass! Let me go!"

"You'll never fly again!" For'mya screamed, wiping the trickle of blood from her lips. "I'll see to it..."

"You will do nothing." The male voice spoke firmly.

For'mya turned and saw General Vistr walk up slowly, only his eyes and lips visible under his helmet. "General... this she-elf almost crashed her *STRIKER*! On purpose!" For'mya complained. "She has violated numerous flight protocols, not to mention endangered other friendly aircraft in the area. She..."

"She is the King's pilot!" Vistr snapped loudly silencing For'mya quickly. "And she has flown him wherever he needed to go for the last year, including into battle!" Vistr stepped up to Endith who was glaring at him, Tina beside her and holding her tightly. They watched him slowly remove his helmet and look at them with his grizzled features. "Queen... Queen Anja... she has told me of your loss this day." He said. "I understand he was an exceptional pilot, the very best in the King's service."

"We've fought with... we've fought with Marty for over ten years." Tina spoke, the tears in her eyes beginning to form. "Ben... Ben was..."

"Benjamin was the man we loved." Endith finished before turning and burying her face in Tina's chest and letting the tears come flooding out.

Vistr looked at Tina who was close to the edge herself. "To... to have known and fought with the King that we have sought to find for so long, that you refer to him so informally is an honor I hope one day I achieve. I can not express to you what it feels like to lose a... to lose a mate as you both have this day. My mate still lives and my words would be hollow. Grieve for him now if you must... but if he is like what the Queen described briefly to me... I don't believe he would want you to fail. This... this battle is not won yet... and I would hope that you will be ready when the King calls for you once more."

Tina squeezed Endith in her arms, pressing her cheek against her grimy, sweat soaked red hair. "We'll be ready." She spoke firmly. "It's what Ben would have wanted us to do."

"I am General Vistr... and I would be honored to fly with you any time." He said. Vistr bowed his head slightly and turned, taking For'mya's arm as he headed back for the bunker.

"General she..." For'mya began to speak.

"I had heard you were somewhat of an arrogant fool Star Commander." Vistr spoke firmly. "I have witnessed that first hand this day."

"General... she..."

Vistr stopped and looked at her. "The human you so maliciously referred to Commander, was the mate for those two women! And yes... he was the one who trained her to fly... he trained her to fly everything but that *STRIKER AT*! She taught herself how to fly that!"

For'mya looked at him. "Impossible!" She snapped.

"Do you wish to call the Queen a liar to her face Commander?" Vistr demanded. "I'm sure I could arrange that! I spoke with her only briefly before she returned to treating our wounded, but she does not strike me as the type of person who enjoys pompous attitudes in any way! And from what I understand... she is the most relaxed of the three Queens our King has chosen!"

"General..."

"Listen to me carefully For'mya." Vistr spoke, his tone softer. "The humans and elves we are encountering here are not like what you and I are so familiar with." He told her. "They have fought with our King far longer than we have known he was alive. They worship the ground he treads upon, and they have a sense of duty to him unlike any I have seen. They are more passionate and expressive with their emotions... but they will stand beside us without question. The man you so callously insulted just now was killed this morning and if everything I have heard about him is true... he is far superior a pilot to you, and he *was* human! Think about that while you rearm your *STRIKER* Commander, for I feel our King is going to unleash you very soon."

For'mya stood there shocked as Vistr walked away calling to one of his aides. She followed him and then her eyes went back to where Endith and Tina stood. The red haired elf was wiping her eyes and stunningly, she and the human female were back under the nose of their aircraft looking intently at the nose cannon and speaking to each other. For'mya didn't believe it... an elf and a human man and woman in love! What kind of

relationship was that? The General had to be wrong... what elf would subject herself to bedding a human man and woman. For'mya shook her head and moved back for her own *STRIKER*.

EDEN CITY NORTHERN DEFENSIVE PERIMETER

“Hit them again!” Tareif screamed into his implant over the noise of the rocket launchers in the background.

Almost before the words left his mouth, the four batteries of 200mm self propelled guns fired almost simultaneously, the ground he was standing on vibrating madly, even though there were over three hundred sandbags protecting the top of his bunker. He had refused to cower inside the bunker, and stood on top of it, several members of his Dragoons formed in a loose circle around him.

Twenty-one seconds late and twenty-one miles northeast the barrage began landing in and around the remains of the Super Vampire Division that had been closest to Eden City and closing fast. The initial volley of rockets and 200mm shells had been a complete surprise. They had been told there would be light artillery only and what hit them had brought their advance to a screeching halt, and now the second barrage was adding insult to injury, dropping among the wounded and scattered remains of the vampire division of super troops. They had not even got close enough to fire a shot against their hated enemy, and they never would.

Tareif listened intently to his scouts and they reported back to him what they were seeing. He nodded quickly. “Maintain your position and advise when the infantry begins to advance!” He ordered. He turned to his senior elf aide. “The elite vampire division is finished! Report this to my daughter but inform her that there are still three divisions of infantry moving forward. I will attack as each one comes into range.”

“That’s all they have War Master?” The aide exclaimed.

“The King was right; they are throwing everything at the southern line!” Tareif replied. “Once our artillery have finished with the vampire scum, have Batteries two, four and six orient north and one of the rocket batteries as well, and release command of them to the King’s Fire Support officer! They are shelling the city and we must free up as much return fire as we can to keep damage from increasing until my daughter gets the shield back up! Quickly now!”

EDEN CITY COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER

Tarifa didn’t turn as Aihola and Dekton led a small group into the command center. They had left the remaining Drow at the airfield under the command of the Spartan General. Her attention was focused on the monitor as she spoke to the tech.

“An hour, maybe more,” He nearly screamed.

“That is not acceptable Lieutenant!” Tarifa snapped. “The Alliance artillery is hitting the city as we speak! If it continues for much longer, the wounded will overwhelm our medical facilities that still operate!”

“I know Tarifa!” The man answered. “Whatever hit the tower did more damage than we first thought! We have to replace all the circuit boards and restore coolant to the reactor. I can do it in an hour... maybe forty minutes if I disregard all the safety protocols I learned...”

“Disregard them damn it!” Tarifa snapped. “And do not mention protocols to me again when our people our dying Ronald!”

The man nodded. “I’ll get on it! We...”

The massive explosion lit up the area near he was in and the entire command center shuddered as something struck the city on the western edge.

“Holy fuck!” Ronald’s voice echoed in the transmission.

“What was that?” Tarifa barked.

“Shit... some big fucking beam thing just hit the apartment corridor in the west!” Ronald yelled. “It’s gone man! Christ it’s gone!”

Three more massive shudders rippled through the command center causing the man on the monitor to duck down, all of them able to see his eyes wide in fear.

“Shit! They’re hitting us from fucking orbit!” The man screamed. “That came from in the sky!”

Tarifa turned and looked at another tech. “What is it?”

The female elf looked at her and shook her head. “Some sort of ship has dropped into low orbit directly over Eden City!”

“An Alliance frigate!” The voice spoke and Tarifa turned to see the two women who stood next to Aihola and Dekton.

“Tarifa this is Gorgo!” Aihola spoke quickly stepping up to her, “She is... she is Martin’s mother! And this is Princess Isabella. They helped us repel the attack against the airfield”

Tarifa looked at her wide eyed. “We can not defend against this!” Tarifa snapped. “Is there nothing we can do?”

Isabella turned quickly to look at Gorgo. “Gorgo... the *STRIKER*’s LSD coils!” She spoke. “We can use it to enhance the strength of this city shield enough to withstand the frigate’s fire, at least for a few hours!”

One of the vampire troops that had accompanied Isabella stepped closer. “I can do it Princess.” He spoke. “I will need For’mya to pull the coil and meet me at this tower.”

“Don’t we need to do the same to all the towers?” Tarifa asked.

Isabella shook her head quickly. “No... we can bypass the interconnecting conduits and generate enough power from just the one tower.” She turned to her soldier. “Go quickly Diego! There is little time!”

Aihola squeezed Tarifa’s hand. “Dekton and I will lead him!” She spoke. “Many routes have been blocked since the shelling began.”

Dekton nodded and kissed Tarifa quickly. “Keep everything together woman.” He told her.

Tarifa smiled at him and kissed Aihola. “And you as well husband.”

Dekton looked at the vampire soldier. “Diego is it?” He spoke.

The man nodded. “Yes, Diego Talbot.”

“Do you think you can keep up with a Lycavorian and a Drow Diego Talbot?” Dekton asked.

The vampire soldier grinned. “I will not slow you down.”

Dekton nodded. “Then let us go!”

Tarifa watched them head out of the center as a beeping noise caught her attention and she turned back. The tech looked at her. “It’s Colonel Nestor!”

Tarifa nodded. “Put him up.” She spoke.

Donovan Nestor’s face burst into the transmission clearly his eyes focusing on Tarifa. “Queen Tarifa?” He announced his voice slightly surprised. That quickly passed. “I am Colonel Nestor! I was trying to contact the King. He...”

Tarifa nodded. “He has moved to the southern defensive perimeter Colonel... what is it that I can do for you? We are rather busy here.”

Nestor nodded his eyes catching the face of Isabella staring at him on the monitor. He returned his attention to Tarifa. “I have no doubts of that Milady. I have just received word that the human governor of New Miami is not complying with our directive to discontinue support for the Alliance forces. I contacted him via video conference and repeated the demand. He told me to shove it up my traitorous vampire ass.”

Tarifa’s eyes narrowed slightly. “He did?” Tarifa spoke coldly. “Are you still connected with this man?”

“He told me he would not speak with anyone but the King.” Nestor spoke. “He’s standing by.”

Tarifa turned to her tech. “Can you do a split screen?”

The female tech nodded and adjusted her controls. The large screen split and suddenly the face of the dark haired man was beside Nestor’s.

“Who are you?” The man snapped.

“You are the human governor of New Miami I take it?” Tarifa asked.

“I told that traitorous vampire asshole I wanted to speak to this idiot who calls himself King Leonidas.” The man spoke. “I don’t take kindly to demands.”

“I am the Chief Administrator of Eden City Governor...” Tarifa asked.

“You don’t need my name elf bitch!” The man spoke harshly. “No one threatens to destroy my city!”

“Governor... we are currently in the middle of a full scale war with the Vampires that you report too.” Tarifa spoke. “We have asked nicely that you end support of their troops moving against us. Vampire rule is over on this planet. You can either choose to accept that, or you can take your defiance to the grave.”

“Fuck you she-elf!” The man snapped. “Elves were meant to serve humans, not the other way around! The vamps know that and that is why I’ll support them, and there isn’t a god damn thing you can do about it!”

“You saw what we did to New Memphis Governor.” Tarifa was still calm, though her anger was building rapidly. “Do you wish to see that happen to New Miami?”

“What are you gonna do bitch! Kill millions of humans! That will really advance your cause!” The man spoke. “I’ll continue to support the vampires until they lose. And then I’ll lead this city the way I want too.”

“With slavery and brute force,” Tarifa asked.

“It works!” The man barked. “I got me plenty of slaves just like you! I fuck them every night... and I don’t want to give that up any time soon.”

Gorgo and Isabella watched Tarifa stand up straight to her full height of five foot nine. “Chief... contact Raptor 66.” She said.

“Yes ma’am.”

Tarifa looked at the man on the screen. “Elves are not slaves Governor. That was not our purpose, and Martin and I will not allow you to exist one minute longer than necessary. Slavery on this planet will end and you with it.”

“Like I said bitch, what are you gonna do?”

“I have Raptor 66 Milady.” The elf told her. “Audio only as ordered.”

“Raptor 66 this is Eden City Chief Administrator Tarifa... authentication code nine one six four seven.” Tarifa spoke.

“Roger Chief Administrator, authentication acknowledged.” The male voice replied. “We are standing by.”

Tarifa looked at the governor of New Miami, her beautiful face twisted in a snarl. “I will give you one fucking chance you vile piece of human filth!” Tarifa snapped angrily startling Gorgo and Isabella with the vehemence of her words. “You will surrender and stop your support of the vampire government or I will vaporize your fucking city and you with it and not think twice!”

The man paused briefly, looking at her, his expression wavering. “Let me talk with this Martin asshole!” The man spoke. “I don’t deal with elf bitches who think they are in charge.”

Tarifa smiled cruelly, her sapphire eyes reverting to her wolf persona, her fangs extending over her lips. “That asshole Martin as you call him is like my dearest brother Governor... and I am like the sister he never had.” Gorgo looked at this elf with wide eyes, easily smelling the peach scent pouring off her as she allowed the change to grip her halfway. Gorgo could also detect the scents of the Spartan soldier that had just departed, not to mention the Drow Queen all over this female elf. “When it comes to this planet, Martin and I now speak with one voice Governor. And that voice is announcing your death right now.” Tarifa looked down and touched the panel in front of her. “Raptor 66 you will target two FAE IIs on New Miami and fire when ready. Firing release code is Lycavorian two two three.”

“Raptor 66 acknowledges order.” The voice replied, “Spooling up missiles! Setting targets as New Miami. Targeting one missile at the north quadrant, one missile at the south quadrant, standing by?” There was a brief moment of silence, “Firing, missiles away!”

Tarifa looked at the screen of the pompous human. “Goodbye Governor. I hope your corpse burns for all eternity in Hades.” Tarifa turned to her tech. “End the transmission.” The man’s face vanished leaving only Colonel Nestor who was silent. “Colonel...” Tarifa asked. “How many people live in New Miami?”

“At last report almost four million Chief Administrator.” He answered.

Tarifa nodded slowly and turned to one of her security detachment along the wall. “Have a four member scout team make their way immediately to New Miami. Detour around the fighting and report back when they are able. If we don’t answer... it is because we have lost.”

The Dragoon nodded and moved to follow his orders.

Gorgo stepped up to Tarifa and placed her hands on Tarifa's shoulders. "You did what was needed child." She spoke softly, squeezing her shoulders. "I see that my son is not the only one with steel in their veins. And now I understand why you hold such a place of honor in his life."

Tarifa looked at her and Gorgo saw the sadness in her eyes. "Did I do the right thing?" She spoke softly. "Or have I become the very thing we are trying to destroy?"

LYCAVORIAN HOME GUARD FLEET *LEONIDAS I*

"I want target solutions locked in!" Ceneu shouted as he moved around the bridge. "We are thirty minutes from firing range and I want our first volley to hit them hard! And prepare for incoming fire people. Remember they out range us!"

"They are establishing a standard High Coven defensive picket!" A bridge crewman announced. "Split into two sections! One section is on the far side of the planet, the other is forming to meet us!"

"They split their forces?" Ceneu asked shocked.

"Yes sir! Sensors are picking up only minimal LSD signatures from the forward group! It would appear they are attempting to fall back and repair at least some of their LSDs!"

"Get me Admiral Riall!" Ceneu snapped.

"Admiral... the Vampire fleet is launching fighters! It looks to be a mixture of every class... one hundred and forty-nine in all!" A bridge crew member barked.

Ceneu nodded. "Xerxes wants to kill our King!" He bellowed. "Well we won't let him!" He spun around. "Launch every fighter we have! They are to execute primary plan! We will follow them in shooting!"

"Admiral Riall is responding sir!"

Ceneu turned to the holo projectors on the bridge. "Riall... they have split their forces! Their LSDs must be in even worse shape than we thought. We will slam head long into their forward picket line! Your wing can hit the ones that have dropped back from behind the moon when you execute your turn!"

Riall nodded. "We're updating out trajectory now! Why would they split their forces Ceneu! They have to know we are coming at them with full magazines and fully charged LSDs. They won't be able to maneuver for long."

Ceneu nodded. "Xerxes is already on the surface. Perhaps they are holding their forces back to protect him."

"You saw the High Lord in the transmission my friend." Riall spoke. "He was not at all happy with Xerxes! No... there is something else going on here."

"Perhaps he is not happy that both his children will be on this rock when we attack!" Ceneu spoke with a predatory grin.

Riall's eyes grew wide. "That's it!" He exclaimed.

"What?"

"Xerxes is acting of his own accord!" Riall spoke. "That is why they are holding half their task force back. I give you betting odds that they are going to abandon this planet when the situation becomes too much for them. When they know they can't win... that second section holding with the *WING OF DEATH* is going to jump clear of the system and leave Xerxes behind."

"The High Lord will abandon his own son?" Ceneu asked.

"His daughter is the High Guard Commander now. Not Xerxes." Riall spoke. "And our intelligence has been reporting for months that he has wanted Yuri to return to their homeworld and take a more active role outside of earth."

"So what do we do?" Ceneu asked.

Riall smiled. "We smash them into oblivion! If we can destroy their forward picket... they will retreat out of the system!"

"And if they don't?" Ceneu asked.

“Then we do it the hard way.” Riall answered. “I’m going to come out from behind this moon firing every missile we have Ceneu! I’ll leave you to deal with their forward picket. If we can inflict enough damage...”

Ceneu nodded confidently. “Then I’ll alter course and bore right in firing every battery I have. I’ll clear you a path Admiral.”

“Ambassador Legsim is hailing Admiral Ceneu!” The tech called.

“Tell Legsim we will see him on the surface Ceneu.” Riall spoke, “*LIBERATOR* Out.”

“Put him up on the screen!” Ceneu spoke turning to the tech.

The elfin ambassador’s face appeared in the holo imager just as Riall’s faded and his face bore a new determination in his eyes. “Ceneu we are ready! All frigates have their primary landing sites locked in and the Spartans are chafing at the bit to get on solid ground again!”

Ceneu nodded. “Long range sensors indicate the shield protecting this city in North America is down and the High Coven have positioned one of their frigates directly over it. It is using plasma cannons to bombard the city. Vampire artillery is having a field day, but the King is directing counter battery fire that is devastating to them. Xerxes is now on the surface with all his Immortals, and the Coven has just launched fighters. It could get hairy for you my friend.”

Legsim nodded. “We will prevail! What of the laser cannon weapon on the moon?”

Ceneu nodded. “Commander For’mya’s report indicated the King has a small force there on this station. They are waiting for us to move into position and they will take control of this weapons platform. The frigate tasked to this station has firing coordinates to blow holes in certain sections where the majority of the vampire forces are, and then it will land and deploy the Spartans onto the station to clean it up. Follow our fighters in Legsim; they will clear you a path. And destroy that blasted frigate before it levels the King’s city!”

The elfin ambassador smiled. “We will see you on the surface Ceneu. I will try to save as many Immortals for you as I can.”

Ceneu laughed heartily and nodded his head. “Riall wishes you good luck my friend.”

“To both of you as well Admiral,” Legsim replied. “Good luck to us all.”

Ceneu turned to another tech officer. “Get me a secure line to the she-elf that the King left in that Command Center. Tarifa is her name I believe. She is directing and monitoring everything that is happening and we need solid intelligence, not guesses.”

EDEN CITY SOUTHERN DEFENSIVE LINE

Martin grimaced as another volley of artillery made the ground tremble all around them. He hated artillery and he always had. The Iranians had been especially fond of blasting everything in their path before advancing, and he remembered the night he and his team had spent huddled in that cramped bunker while the artillery pounded down all around them. He heard the sounds of their outgoing return fire and lifted his head slightly watching smoke rise from his launchers as their out bound counter battery fire rippled over his head. He looked up and peered over the edge of the trench and saw dozens of fires burning in Eden City, stretching across the horizon, and his anger resurfaced. He turned his head and looked at the remains of the minefield they had laid. The ground in front of them had been chewed up not only by accurate Alliance artillery, but exploding mines as well. He glanced at Ealin, who sat next to Andreus closest to him.

“How much is left?” He shouted.

Ealin turned and looked at the digital computer screen. The minefield was electronically monitored so that it could be set off all at once, and it gave him a read out of what percent was still buried and active. He turned back to his King.

“Thirty-three percent is still active.” He shouted.

Martin shook his head. “Fuck!” He swore. “I didn’t think he had this much artillery on us! And now that fucking ship he’s got is killing us!”

“Daniel will be in position soon Milord.” Ealin spoke.

Martin looked at him and then let his eyes move down the line to where Aricia sat a hundred meters away. She forced a smile to him.

Be strong my love. She projected to him.

I underestimated what they had Little Wolf. They're killing my people! Ben... Lynwe... gone... so many dead.

They died fighting for what we have built Nauta Melme! Dysea joined in now. It was rare for Martin to block any of them when he spoke; they were all part of his soul and heart. *And we will have our vengeance!*

Help is coming Martin Leonidas! The new voice broke into their connection.

Isabella? They all spoke at once.

We arrived with an advanced party several hours ago. Isabella told them. *Your mother is here and General Vistr has landed nearly a brigade of his finest scouts in different locations. The STRIKER you had drop the mines was one of those that arrived with us, as was the one you sent to Sparta.*

Where are you?

We have made our way to your command center my son. Gorgo joined the connection now. Isabella had reached out and took her arm in the command center when she felt the depression hit Martin.

Mother!

Our fleet is almost here my son! You must remain strong Martin. You have not led these people this far to give up now. They have not... they are still fighting.

Martin turned when Ealin signaled to him wildly. "What?"

Ealin smiled. "Daniel is in position sire! He will fire in sixteen minutes!"

Martin smiled for the first time in several hours. *Thank you brother.*

He felt Danny chuckle and then his voice filled his head. *Stand by there Skipper. We got a shit pot full of mail gonna be inbound. I'm gonna give old Moran a wake up call like he ain't never seen before.*

ONE HUNDRED METERS EAST OF LYNWE'S DEFENSIVE PERIMETER

Lynwe groaned in agony as pain lanced through her legs and lower back. Her amber eyes fluttered open as she heard the roars and the sustained weapons fire. They had almost made it she mused painfully.

The Grizz beasts had caught them unaware as they pounded through the timber toward her defensive line. She had seen the first bunkered position and allowed a smile to split her face when the three Grizz beasts had attacked silently. She saw Thomas snatched up like a doll and ripped completely in half before she even realized he was no longer next to her. As she skidded to a stop and turned back, his screams filling the air the second Grizz beast caught her in the side with a massive paw. The blow sent her careening through the trees to slam against the unyielding trunk of a four hundred year old tree. Lynwe felt a sharp pain in her lower back as she slumped to the ground, her side torn open exposing the bones of her rib cage. Her dazed eyes watched as the troops manning their positions began to rush forward firing their weapons trying to save the vampire Drow General they had come to adore.

These were not the wild Grizz beasts she had seen in the wastes, these were the armored monsters used by the Alliance to track and kill their enemies. Even the rounds from the HK74s and P190s of the two remaining Spartan scouts were only serving to enrage the beasts as they tore through the ranks of her troops like a chain saw. Something flashed in front of her and Tari's face appeared, the Spartan woman he had found love with beside him firing her HK with a grim look on her face.

"Lynwe!" Tari barked.

"Get away... get away Tari!" Lynwe gasped, the words causing pain to lance through her side and back.

"Stay with me Lynwe!" Tari spoke as he tore at the medical pouch on his belt. "Julie... give me your MEDCOM Patch!" He snapped.

"We need to get her behind the defensive line Tari!" Julie spoke. "Hurry!"

Lynwe could only watch in silence as she shook her head, the tears coming down her face. As Julie turned to hand Tari the medical patch the Grizz beast struck her from behind. Tari looked up at her just as Julie's blood splashed across his shocked face. His amber eyes looked up further to see that the single blow

from the monster had torn open Julie's neck and blood was spurting from the fist sized hole in her neck, both her major arteries opened to the air as the Grizz beast lifted her body into its paws and crunched down on her side with its massive jaws.

Tari's eyes went wide in horror, his blood turning cold in his veins. "JULIE!" He screamed, his voice ripping through Lynwe's soul as surely as any blade. Lynwe's amber eyes began to close as Tari lifted his weapon and charged the monster that had snatched up Julie's body and begun shredding it in its jaws. "MOTHERFUCKER!" Tari pulled the trigger of his HK and advanced uncaring on the monster as the HK's rounds tore chunks out of the Grizz beast's unarmored flesh.

The monster roared in pain, tossing Julie's bloody lifeless body aside and rushing at Tari. The former Drow leader, who had taken his people from the clutches of the Alliance, died screaming his rage as the Grizz beast's muzzle snapped forward and engulfed Tari's entire chest in its grip. Still screaming in rage Tari continued to hold the trigger of his HK down and with his last dying effort; he lifted the barrel of the weapon to the monster's head and sent the last thirteen rounds punching into the Grizz beast's right eye and into its brain, shredding it to nothing.

Lynwe felt more hands on her body, her eyes fluttering open once more to look into the helmeted face of a Spartan that she did not recognize. She heard a deep booming noise and slowly turned her head to see another Spartan she didn't recognize holding the massive rifle to his shoulder. It was unlike anything she had ever seen, and when it fired again she followed the course of the round and saw a huge chunk of another Grizz beast come flying apart.

"General!" The Spartan yelled in her face. Lynwe turned her head back slowly to look at him. "You are the vampire Drow, General Lynwe?"

"I'm... I'm dead." Lynwe managed to croak out the words, blood spilling from her lips as she did.

Lynwe saw the Spartan shake his head. "I have been ordered to make sure that doesn't take place General!" He shouted. "I am Senior Scout Mennio of the Lycavorian Union Ninth Spartan Expeditionary Division. The Coven infantry is only half a mile behind these beasts, and we need to get behind the line you have established. Forgive me... but I must move you General."

Lynwe screamed in agony as the Spartan lifted her body as if she was a feather. She was not a small woman at nearly six feet and a hundred and fifty pounds of lean muscle, and this Spartan hoisted her as if she weighed nothing.

"Spartans! Back to the line!" Lynwe heard the man carrying her shout.

Lynwe's last conscious vision was of the bloody and ragged remains of Tari on the ground only meters away, his blood quickly soaking the earth around them. She thought she saw him move, trying to reach where Julie's twisted and broken body lay but then she allowed the blackness to claim her, hoping it ended her torment and saying goodbye to the love she had found and now lost.

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA ISLAND

"What do you mean gone?" Yuri barked.

"It's gone Princess. New Miami is gone. It was hit with the same thing that took out our ground troops. All communications is gone and we can't even get any video from the main computer tower. We detected a transmission from the governor there telling someone in Eden City that he was not going to obey the order to surrender and stop supporting our troops."

Yuri looked at the technician wide eyed. "He... he destroyed the city?" She gasped. "There had to be over four million people in that city, humans and elves. Martin destroyed the city." This fact made Yuri step back and stand up straight. This was not something she had expected. She knew Martin was a ruthless and brutal warrior, but to believe in something so strongly that he would wipe out a city of nearly four million, including those he was trying to save, she did not realize his devotion ran this deep. Yuri felt the first fingers of doubt crack her defenses.

"We're still trying to get a feed from somewhere." The tech reported. "It's not looking real good."

“Princess Yuri... Admiral Malachi has released his fighters to us! They are entering the atmosphere now and requesting orders!”

Yuri shook her head quickly. “Direct one squadron to pass over New Miami, the rest will be chopped to Commander Moran! Give them his frequency and tell them they will take their orders from him.”

“Long range sensors are detecting four squadrons of Lycavorian *DEVASTATOR*-Class M4 Heavy Fighters in bound with nine squadrons of T9 *TEMPEST*-Class Interceptors providing cover! Twenty-four *AUTUMN MOON*-Class Attack Frigates are eighteen minutes from entering the atmosphere! They are coming in hot with the fighters! The Lycavorian fleet is maneuvering to engage our forward picket line. We’ve lost active contact with half their number. They must be ducking around behind the moon!”

Yuri’s eyes grew even wider. “They intend to land troops!” She snapped. “How many troops can each frigate carry?”

The senior CIC Coven tech turned to face her. “If they strip the landing bays, each frigate can carry nearly 800 ground troops!” He answered.

“That’s almost twenty thousand Spartan troops!” Yuri nearly shouted moving across the command center and looking at the map chart. “Extrapolate their course!” Twenty-four red lines appeared on the map chart quickly moving into certain tracks and stopping. “Damn... they are going to land troops within marching distance of Eden City.”

“Commander Moran is advancing steadily Princess.” The senior tech spoke. “Our Grizz beasts tore into their eastern line and our infantry are about to engage them as well.”

Yuri shook her head. “Our cloned division in the north was destroyed by artillery fire from that bitch Tarifa’s father. He slaughtered them like hogs and they never got close. These Spartans are Lycavorian, and they will tear through our human troops as if they aren’t even there. The remaining cloned soldiers are leading Robert’s thrust against Leonidas’s southern line and he will not be able to divert them.”

“Princess... your brother is still landing his Immortals in the south.” The tech spoke.

Yuri looked up quickly. “Yes! Divert those still airborne to this location,” Yuri pointed to the northwest corner of the Eden City defensive lines. “Have them commence an immediate attack at this corner. Order our heavy fighters to saturate the northern minefield and set off as many as they can.”

The senior tech nodded and moved to the console to begin transmitting the order.

STRIKER AT GROUP

HEART OF SPARTA

FLIGHT OF 19

INBOUND FROM SPARTA

CROSSING INTO UTAH

NORTH OF EAST TAVAPUTS PLATEAU

They had done it in record time, the female elf pilot thought, tiny though she was, had the voice of command that spurred the pilots and flight chiefs into a frenzied state. They had disregarded countless safety protocols in the process and she hoped that would not come back to bite her in the ass. Weapons had been offloaded and reloaded in the *STRIKERS* sealed in the underground hanger outside of Sparta. A task that should have taken half a day under normal conditions they accomplished in only three hours. The female elf that Walter learned was called Lieutenant Aletya had the eighteen *STRIKERS* loaded and airborne six minutes after the reloading was done.

Aletya had to admit, these new Spartans, men and women that had never been off this tiny rock of a planet, moved and acted like no Lycavorians she had ever met. The Senior Polemarch, a rank that Aletya knew had not been held in nearly six centuries in the Union had driven his people hard, barking orders and instructions out with that monstrosly deep voice, and yet he was willing to throw his own strength and sweat into their task as she had seen herself. He looked oddly familiar to her in some way and it wasn’t until she was in her pilot’s seat that it came to her where she had seen him before. This was the lone survivor of the Battle of

Thermopylae and the Guardian of the Line. This was the man she and so many of her peers had read about in history books as they were growing up. And now she was going into battle beside a legend.

Aletya had put their altitude at five hundred feet to avoid any Coven radar and advanced her throttles to full power. Each *STRIKER* was already configured for atmospheric flight, and with the throttles at full power they were tearing across the landscape and oceans at nearly seven thousand miles an hour, Aletya burning her emergency thrusters the entire way to give them the extra speed. Once they reached North America forty-seven minutes later she had reduced her speed to a more sedate three thousand miles an hour as they were closing on Eden City.

“Aletya are you sure?” Her co-pilot asked looking at her before turning his head to look at the seated Spartans behind them.

“I’m positive!” Aletya spoke. “It is him! There is a portrait of him in the Academy lounge in full Spartan armor from three thousand years ago Falar! It’s him!”

“We are flying with the Guardian of the Line.” The young male elf spoke almost in awe. “It is said he killed four hundred Immortals alone in that first day of the battle.”

“I did not have much hope when we started this mission Falar.” Aletya spoke. “I honestly thought we would never reach the King in time. But now... knowing that we have him and we are flying him into battle...”

The male elf grinned. “It has rekindled your hope?”

Aletya nodded excitedly. “More than you could imagine. The man is a legend! A god to the Lycavorian people, and now he is Senior Polemarch, a title that has not been used since... in almost an entire millennia! This bodes very well for us.”

Aletya turned her helmeted head as the small alarm began to sound in the cockpit and her co-pilot buried his face in the sensor scope.

“Coven troop transports!” He announced seconds later. “Seventy four kilometers, bearing two eight five!”

“Passive scan,” Aletya barked, “Any lifesigns?”

The co-pilot adjusted his screen and Aletya saw him stiffen. His head snapped up quickly, “Akruxian!” He gasped.

“Track them!” Aletya snapped as she turned her head, “Senior Polemarch!” She shouted seeing Walter turn towards her. She motion with her head for him to come forward.

Walter was beside her in seconds. “What is it?”

“We’ve detected High Coven troop transports with Akruxian life signs ahead of us.” Aletya told him, “How many?” She asked her co-pilot.

“I count fifteen.” He answered quickly.

Walter looked at her. “Forgive me Lieutenant Aletya, is this significant?”

Aletya shook her head as she realized that while Walter was a Spartan he had never been off this planet, and he knew the Akruxian troops by only one name. “I’m sorry sir. These transports... they are loaded with Immortals.”

Walter’s eyes narrowed into slits at the mention of this and a vicious smile came over him. “Immortals you say?” He spoke. “These are the same Immortals that we fought at Thermopylae?”

Aletya nodded her head. “I don’t know if any of these Immortals fought there, but that is what these transports are full of. And they appear to be trying to sneak in around this city the King protects.”

“Your missiles Lieutenant, can you hit them from here?”

Aletya nodded with a vicious smile of her own. “You give me the word Senior Polemarch and we’ll blow them all into oblivion.”

Walter matched her smile and nodded. “Please do so Lieutenant.”

Aletya turned to her co-pilot. “Warm up the missiles.” She ordered. She touched a button on her console. “*Heart of Sparta* Flight this if Flight Lead. As I’m sure you are all aware we are tracking fifteen Coven troop transports loaded with Immortals. I have just been given permission to say hello to them. Everyone pick a transport, lock up and put four missiles into each one of those lumbering birds!” Aletya’s hands were working her console. “Once we have initiated the attack, Spartan 17 through 19 you will remain behind and make sure those scum sucking blood bastards are dead.”

Aletya heard excited confirmation over her helmet Com and looked at Walter. “We’re ready Senior Polemarch.”

“Then by all means Lieutenant... let us kill some Immortals!”

Walter Carson, lone survivor of the Battle of Thermopylae, hadn’t had this much fun in centuries.

HIGH COVEN IMMORTAL TROOPS TRANSPORTS

The senior pilot’s head jerked around when his missile warning radar began to give off a shrill warning. “I have missile warning! I have missile warning!” The co-pilot screamed.

“From where? Where are they?”

“From behind us, closing speed six thousand KPH! Impact in twelve seconds! Evade! Evade!”

The vampire pilot threw the transport into a turn it was not designed for, and any Immortal that was standing in the rear of the transport immediately went tumbling painfully against the bulkhead.

The senior pilot’s eyes narrowed as he knew there was no way he was going to evade air-to-air missiles at this range. He jinxed left and right, hoping to break whatever lock the missile might have had, but he knew it was to no avail.

Twelve seconds later the missiles from *Heart of Sparta* Flight arrived and blotted the fifteen transports out of the sky. With four missiles targeted per transport there was little that remained of any of the fifteen massive ships, and only debris and pieces of Immortal flesh floated to the earth below. In those seconds, as Walter watched the destruction on the sensor screen from the cockpit of his *STRIKER AT*, he was unaware they had just obliterated half of Xerxes’s Immortal troops that had been arriving on earth. It would not become known until many months later, and only in passing, that on this day Walter Carson, Lycavorian and Spartan, born Dymas of the City State of Sparta, passed the King he had served so willingly as the man who had killed more Immortals than any Lycavorian alive.

ALLIANCE GROUND COMMAND

“What do you mean they just appeared out of no where?” Moran screamed at the tech.

“Yes sir! Nineteen Spartan *STRIKER AT*-Class Attack transports! They just appeared on our scopes Commander and launched missiles at the Immortals transports the Princess diverted to the northern edge of Eden City!”

“What about the transports?” Moran screamed. “What about the transports?”

The tech shook his head slowly. “I’m sorry Commander... none... none of them survived.”

“Fuck!” Moran screamed. “Fuck!”

Cha’talla and two other Immortals stood to the side of the command Hopper watching, their normally stoic faces displaying their shock at the loss of so many of their brethren in one fell stroke. Cha’talla watched Moran with cold determination, seeing this human vampire hybrid so incensed over the lost of his brothers. Moran turned back to the tech.

“Divert two squadrons of the fighters coming down to us to track and destroy those fucking aircraft!” Moran snapped. “Do it now!”

Cha’talla stepped forward quickly. “Commander Moran if I may?”

Moran looked at him. “Cha’talla.”

“Our fighters would be no match for nineteen *STRIKERS*.” Cha’talla spoke. “Remember I have told you only their finest pilots get these aircraft. They are as deadly against fighters as they are against ground troops. This is one of the Lycavorian’s premier weapons, if not their premier weapon. They use it to their advantage. I have been informed that the fighters coming down to support us are only second line fighters Commander. Prince Xerxes left all of our frontline fighters on the planet he was subduing before he came here.”

“We just let them go?” Moran snapped. “They just killed thirty thousand of my best troops damn it!”

Cha'talla and the other Immortals noticed this display for the death of their fellow Immortals, and it would be something that would be remembered in the future.

"Our southern advanced has stalled due to the minefield that was laid by a passing *STRIKER*." Cha'talla spoke. "Prince Xerxes is preoccupied with establishing his command tent the fool." He added softly.

"What else hasn't that bastard told me?" Moran snapped. "He left his best fighters on another planet and came here with second rate stuff knowing what we were facing?"

"I have been told Prince Xerxes does not consider the son of Leonidas or his rebels a threat large enough to divert our most advanced equipment." Cha'talla spoke.

"I'll remember that when Leonidas hands him his ass!" Moran barked taking a deep breath and quickly getting control of his anger. He knew what Cha'talla was doing and he nodded in thanks. "Give me a status report on all units!" He barked. "And get me the commander of the lead division in the south!" His head turned as another volley of artillery fire launched from their positions behind his Hopper and he allowed the smile to split his lips.

The senior Immortal officer that had arrived with Xerxes stepped up to his Captain. "Forgive me Captain... but this... he displays concern for the deaths of our men. Why?"

Cha'talla didn't turn his head, "Because Lieutenant, unlike our dear Prince Xerxes; this man is a true leader of men."

"Captain... this is the man turned by Princess Yuri?"

"Yes Lieutenant. He is to be the Royal concubine." Cha'talla answered with a grin. "We must manage to live through this of course."

ALLIANCE GROUND COLUMN OLD ROUTE 62

"...Lost thirty-one additional tanks and APCs Commander," The Colonel spoke. "It appears the Eden City ambush teams were only delaying us long enough for this *STRIKER* aircraft to lay down the minefield, and my lead elements blundered directly into it!"

"Can't you go around it?" Moran's face was on the monitor in his command Hopper and he appeared to be holding back quite a deal of anger.

"It stretches across the entire width of the interstate Commander." The Colonel replied. "The timber in this area is too dense to get our armor through. I have scouts out now checking for an alternate route."

"While they're doing that deploy your launchers and have them target what is left of the minefield!" Moran ordered. "Use the proximity charges to burst in the air."

The Colonel nodded. "Yes sir. We are only ten kilometers from their defensive minefield Commander. Should I send my infantry forward? Once they discover we are bogged down I fear they will orient their artillery on us will we are trying to clear the minefield in front of us."

"I have fighters inbound now that will go after their artillery!" Moran spoke. "Just deploy your launchers and get that minefield cleared and then move your column forward."

"Yes Commander."

EDEN CITY COMMAND CENTER

Tarifa gripped the edge of the console as the command center rocked from a plasma beam hitting close to the building they were below. She regained her balance and looked at the monitor once more.

"Their artillery we can deal with!" Tarifa snapped at the picture of the lizard like man on the screen. "But this ship in the sky above us is killing our people by the hundreds! It has already laid waste to nearly half our city!"

Tarifa had been shocked to see the lizard man's face appear on her screen with her technicians doing nothing. She would have let out an involuntary scream had Gorgo not taken her arm quickly.

They are our friends Tarifa, and they are Martin's soldiers. She had spoken. That had been all that Tarifa needed to hear.

"I have some surprises detailed to that as we speak Milady." Ceneu spoke calmly. "In a few more minutes that ship will no longer be a threat. These are the coordinates that we have given our frigates to land based on Commander For'mya's report. That report is several hours old, and I decided to contact you for updated information. Please be quick Milady, we are about to engage the High Coven Fleet."

Tarifa looked at the map chart as the blue dots began to materialize. All the training her father had given to her throughout her life came to the forefront now. There was a reason War Master Tareif had a bounty on his head, and his tactical skill had saved her people more times than not. It was a skill he had instilled in his daughter as much as he could. Tarifa's mind raced as she looked at the chart.

"No!" She finally spoke after a few seconds, reaching across the chart. "These two ships go here! On the northeast edge! It will fill a gap we could not fill connecting my father's units to the eastern defensive perimeter. We are receiving reports there are normal human infantry pouring through that gap and I want that hole plugged. Daniel is about to spring a trap on their artillery to the east. With luck it will finish them. Nothing is coming at us from the west or north any longer. Send the majority of your ships to our southern line. That is where Martin needs them the most."

"Martin?" Ceneu asked surprised. "You refer to our King as..."

Tarifa looked at the screen, her temper flaring ever so slightly. "He is as much my King as yours Admiral... and given what he and I have been through together this last year, I will refer to him however I fucking choose! And he would expect that of me."

Gorgo stepped up quickly. "Ceneu do as she says!" She barked. "This is no time for such trivial things! Tarifa and my son share a closeness forged in combat among other things."

Ceneu nodded quickly. "Forgive me Milady... you are correct. Queen Tarifa I will relay your directions and orders, and as soon as I clean out this nest of vampire scum, I will begin sending down medical teams and engineers in droves."

"Admiral... you say they are holding half their force back?" Tarifa spoke her mind racing once more.

Ceneu nodded. "Yes... we believe it is because they wait to see how the ground battle proceeds. When they have that answer, they will either commit or they will retreat."

"Then we must win here on the ground." Tarifa spoke.

Ceneu nodded. "Yes we must Milady."

"Thank you Admiral... you have your instructions." Tarifa spoke quickly before nodding to her tech. Ceneu was only slightly surprised that she cut him off so quickly, but that quickly passed. All elves were a tad arrogant as far as he was concerned.

Tarifa turned to another console. "The Holy One's force from Sparta Ellen, where is it?"

Gorgo looked at her surprised. "There is a force from Sparta coming?" She gasped.

Tarifa looked at her and nodded. "The Holy One... the man who created the elves here on earth, I believe you know him as The Guardian of the Line."

"Dymas..!" Gorgo's face lit up with a smile. "He lives still?"

Tarifa nodded. "He has brought five thousand Spartan Centurions from Sparta. I was going to have him land and join with my father at the northern corner."

The human female glanced at her console quickly. "They'll be landing in three minutes Tarifa." Ellen answered.

Tarifa nodded and turned back to her. "Tell him where we need him to go. And then instruct the pilots of these *STRIKERS* that he came across the ocean with, that they are to remain under his command and follow his or my father's directives. It will be the only air support we can spare for them, and if what our scouts are saying is true, they will be facing three divisions of human infantry."

Ellen looked at her. "Against elves and Spartans?"

Tarifa nodded and allowed herself a small smile. "There are many humans Ellen that have trouble displaying anything resembling intelligence."

Gorgo watched the human female laugh heartily and nod her head. “Shit... don’t I know it Tarifa?” Ellen answered. “Your pop will show them the error of their ways I’m betting!”

Gorgo glanced at Isabella who had stood silently to the side taking everything in, and could only shake her head in awe. The resilience of these elves and humans that followed her son, even as outnumbered as they were was amazing to her, and from the look on Isabella’s face, even the vampire Princess was stunned. It was so much like the laconic bravery that her first true love had inspired in those who followed him, and Gorgo knew this was what the Lycavorian Union needed most of all.

“Shit!” A tech yelled turning heads. “Enemy fighters inbound! They’re going after the artillery!”

EDEN CITY SOUTHERN DEFENSIVE PERIMETER

Martin’s head snapped around when the anti-air batteries that were covering their flank suddenly rotated and launched a bevy of missiles skyward. He pushed his head up as far as he dared and saw the missiles streaking through the blue sky towards targets he could not see. He felt more than saw the explosions in the distance that signified the death of almost a dozen of his artillery pieces, as well as three of his six mobile launchers, the smoke and fire rising into the cloudless blue above them.

Martin felt hands grip him and yank him down just as another barrage of artillery on the minefield came in. He heard the screams of several men and women up and down the line and then finally heard the popping sounds of the airbursts over the minefield and the exploding of what few mines they had left.

He scrambled to his feet and looked at Andreus, who had pulled him down. Andreus gave him a look that transmitted his displeasure.

“Sire... if you insist on exposing yourself to enemy fire I will have to take it upon myself to sit on your body at the bottom of this trench.” Andreus spoke with a grin.

Martin chuckled. “Now that would be a sight to see.” He almost had to yell. He reached out telepathically for Danny. *Dan... now would be a good time. They just took out the rest of our minefield with airbursts, and these didn’t come from straight east. Their armored column is hitting us now.*

Jesus Christ we have to load the fucking launchers! Danny’s voice replied filling his head. *We had some kind of fighter pass over the top of us too. We had to shoot the fucker down and it took four missiles to do it! Give me two more minutes!*

You said that same thing six minutes ago!

Yeah I love you too! Now stop fucking bothering me!

Martin turned to Ealin. “How many do we have left?” He shouted.

“Three launchers and twenty-two guns,” Ealin spoke, his finger pressed to his ear to be able to hear over the constant bombarding. “Colonel Fowas is reorienting his remaining launchers to target the armored column! The remaining self-propelled guns will continue country battery fire until they are...”

Martin nodded slowly feeling Tarifa reaching out to him. She was passing to him telepathically the moves she was making as she had the last few hours, and he did not countermand them. They were solid decisions and the air support would do Tareif far better good than they would him. He could feel his mother and Isabella within the command center with Tarifa, sending him support through their connection.

Anja? Martin reached out to the only one of his Queen that he could not touch physically.

I’m here Marty. Anja replied immediately her voice sounding strained and tired.

Anja... how are you holding up? Martin asked as he felt Dysea and Aricia stir within the connection.

Just fucking wonderful! Anja snapped angrily. *I have dead piling up outside my bunker, I’m almost out of pain killers, the wounded keep coming, and I’m having a grand old fucking time patching up wounded with rubber bands and toilet paper!*

Martin grimaced. *Anja...*

God I’m sorry Marty. Anja answered her voice more subdued with a touch of desperation to it. *It’s worse than anything I’ve ever seen Marty. We’re operating on automatic here. Most of the wounded are civilians from the city who got caught outside protective bunkers. I lost count of the dead when it went past four*

thousand. And that's just here at the airfield Martin. The three Aid Stations that are still running are reporting the same thing. And those are only the men and women who have been able to get here. There are thousands more across the city. They've knocked down so many buildings that people can't get to help.

Martin lowered his head at this news. You are closer to the northern and eastern defensive lines Anja, any word from them? We can't raise Tareif or Lynwe from here. There was a long pause that caused Martin to look up. Anja what's wrong?

Lynwe is here Marty. She is in critical condition. Some of General Vistr's scouts brought her in. She... Lynwe and her ambush teams were attacked by Grizz beasts Martin.

Grizz beasts, you have got to be kidding me?

Apparently Moran let them loose into the timber before he sent his infantry across. They tore up the line in a couple of places before they were killed. They hit Lynwe when she and her team were re-entering the defensive line. Martin...

What is it Anja? Don't hold anything back from me. He demanded.

Martin... Julie... Julie and Tari are dead. They were hit by the same group of Grizz beasts as they were trying to help pull Lynwe back. I'm... I'm sorry...

Martin felt the wave of sorrow hit him like a brick wall. Julie... the same Julie who had been with him since they were children, as young as a year old he now knew. The smiling dark eyes and infectious laughter she could generate in all of them had endeared her to all who met her. She and Danny had been selected by Walter to help him protect who they now knew was the son of Leonidas; to protect him.

She was... she was pregnant you know. Martin spoke softly within his mind. She told me before she left Sparta. She and Tari were going to stay here on earth if we won. Tari... Tari was ecstatic. He was going to...

Martin I loved her too. Anja's voice echoed in his head.

Martin turned when he felt two sets of hands on his shoulders and Dysea and Aricia were beside him, nuzzling his neck then, sending their love and warmth through the connection to embrace all of them. Martin took a deep breath and directed the love of all three of them to Anja, and no one in the bunker understood why she suddenly wrapped her arms around her shoulders and smiled contently as the tears rolled down her cheeks.

We haven't come this far to fail. Martin spoke firmly. I haven't found the three of you and discovered who I really am to get to this point and fail. We... we must be strong for everyone else. We can mourn together when we are alone.

Martin felt the surge of confidence and power in all of them and they sent it back to him as well. Soon my Queens, soon we will take the fight to the enemy. And they won't be happy in the least.

HIGH COVEN FIGHTER WING COMMANDER

His cobalt blue vampire eyes took in the destruction they had wrought on the savages and their artillery and he smiled a cruel smile as he pulled up and leveled out over the top of this city they had built. He silently cursed Prince Xerxes and his stupidity that left their most advanced fighters behind. If he was commanding them they would have already laid waste to this city. He swept his eyes over the towering smoke clouds that rose from the ground searching for any Lycavorian scum he could strafe as he waited for the next volley from their orbiting frigate, the remaining fighters in his Wing having already climbed to high altitude to await further orders per his command.

His keen eyes detected movement near the edge of the airfield and he adjusted his controls to head that way, charging his plasma cannons as he looked at his ground sensor display. Yes... he had seen something. Seven figures place around that single thin tower. His smile grew as he swooped in low over the ruins, his cannons locking into place. They would discharge bolts of plasma no thicker than his thumb, but powerful enough to punch through even the thick armor of a Lycavorian fighter. Against ground targets it would be a slaughter. He executed a roll that brought him even lower and his targeting computer adjusted and locked on to the seven figures.

His vampire fangs were exposed in a vicious snarl as he squeezed the trigger on his control stick.

Aihola glanced back at the vampire soldier and female elf who were working frantically on the control tower, her HK pointed out at the ruins around her. She could just make out the airfield from where she was and her heart ached at the bodies that she could see lining one end of the tarmac.

“Hurry,” Aihola hissed at them. “That ship will fire in another two minutes!”

“We are working as fast as we can she-elf!” Diego snapped back, plugging the wires into the bottom of the cylinder object For’mya held in her hands. “If we do this wrong it will vaporize half this city!”

“This is crazy!” For’mya snapped. “This is never going to work!”

She had been stunned when Vistr came to her and told her to pull the LSD coil. She told them it wouldn’t work, that the systems were just too incompatible, and would cause an overload. Vistr didn’t listen to her and ordered her to remove her STRIKER’s LSD coil and move with the vampire soldier and the Drow elf Queen. For’mya was terrified. She had always been in the sky or the stars fighting, never having to actually race along war ravaged ground and dart between craters and destroyed buildings. This was not something she had been trained for, and as she watched the vampire soldier of Isabella’s and the Drow elf Queen, not to mention the four Lycavorian troops as they effortlessly glided across the ground, moving among the shadows and avoiding the artillery barrages, she had grown more frightened.

“It will work!” Diego barked. “I’ve done this before For’mya! Now hold the coil!”

“We are very exposed here Diego Talbot.” Dekton spoke. “Little Drow is correct.”

“Almost there.” Diego spoke.

For’mya’s elf ears heard the familiar sound and turned her head. Diego looked at her. “For’mya!”

“Quiet!” For’mya demanded as she turned her eyes to the sky searching. Her dark brown eyes grew wide as she saw the black dot approaching. “It’s a Coven fighter!” She screamed, “Coming right for us!”

The shouted warning came too late.

Super heated bolts of plasma lanced outward from the fighter coming at them, all of them scattering for cover as the plasma rained down on them, setting off tiny explosions of their own, pieces of concrete and steel ripping through the air.

Aihola screamed as a plasma bolt singed her thigh, carving a chunk of her flesh out and sending fire through her leg. The bolt slammed into the ground between her feet and sent slivers of concrete ripping into both her legs, causing her to roll over in agony howling in misery. She clenched her teeth together as the fighter passed overhead and rolled to her stomach trying to block out the pain that lanced up her legs and hips. With an inhuman effort, Aihola got her legs to bend and planted her feet underneath her, pushing herself up with her HK turning as she did so. She could hear the high pitched whine now as the fighter above them was coming around in an incredibly tight turn.

“Little Drow!” Dekton’s voice carried to her.

Aihola turned her head seeing him sprinting towards her, “Dekton!” She shouted.

Aihola’s eyes went wide when she saw the vampire fighter nose over and begin firing again. It happened in slow motion for her, and she could almost see the plasma bolts as they punched through Dekton’s chest, blood and bone fragments bursting from his body in a shower of red mist unlike any she had ever seen. Frozen as she was, watching the death of the man she loved, Aihola didn’t feel the plasma bolt slam into her own chest, physically lifting her up and tossing her back several meters, fiery pain blocking out all else.

For’mya looked up quickly from where she had thrown herself out of the line of fire. She had tumbled out of control, landing awkwardly and hearing her wrist snap. As she watched the Coven fighter climb back into the sky with pain clouded eyes she staggered over to where Diego had been working on the tower. Her brown eyes grew wide when she saw Diego sitting on the ground next to the tower, three large holes in his abdomen from the plasma cannons, yet as the blood pumped out of his body he was still trying to lift the last cable. For’mya scrambled over to him.

“Diego?” She gasped.

He turned his cobalt blue eyes on For’mya, blood leaking profusely from between his lips. “Last... last cable. Activate... activate shield.”

For’mya reached out with her good hand and took the cable from his bloody fingers. He no longer had the strength to lift it high enough. She saw the connectors and how he had configured the device and cable and For’mya plugged it into the side of her LSD coil, “Diego... what... what else?” She gasped.

Diego looked at her with his cobalt blue eyes, clutching the device to his chest and as the life left those eyes, his finger pushed down on the single green button. For mya heard power surge through the tower, incredible power and she backed up quickly as shimmering blue energy shot straight up through the tower into the dish on the end. And then the blue beam reached across the city in three different directions. When all the towers were once more connected, the shimmering light blue shield spread quickly across the sky, once more engulfing Eden City in its protective glow.

Eden City was once more back in business.

HIGH COVEN FIGHTER WING COMMANDER

The Wing Commander laughed hysterically as he pulled his ship up once more, climbing for altitude. His eyes had watched as he strafed the targets twice, and knowing he had hit at least five of the seven. He banked hard deciding to go back for one more pass when the shimmering light blue light filled his cockpit. His head snapped around and his cobalt blue eyes went wide. His scream died in the explosion of his fighter as it slammed into the inside of the reactivated Eden City shield at nearly a thousand miles an hour.

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA ISLAND

The Coven junior Lieutenant looked at the data pad in his hand and his cobalt eyes narrowed. He turned to look across the room and saw the Princess deep in conversation with the Captain of the *DARKBROOD*-Class Frigate currently parked in the Zero G docking bay. He made a decision that would either get him killed or perhaps get him a promotion and he strode up to where Yuri stood.

“Princess Yuri?”

Yuri turned to look at the junior officer, her eyes narrowing when she saw his rank. “What is it Junior Lieutenant?” She snapped.

“Princess... I was monitoring outbound COM frequencies and I detected an emergency message from one of our fighters sweeping over southern Utah. He reported seeing many track vehicles and nearly a battalion of infantry.” The lieutenant spoke quickly. “I... I only thought to bring this to you because we lost contact with the fighter shortly after this report, and his location at the time put him only thirteen miles south of Commander Moran’s position.”

Yuri turned to fully face the young vampire lieutenant. “Show me.” She spoke.

The lieutenant moved quickly to the map chart as the Command Center’s senior officer came over quickly. He was an older Colonel, a Pureblood vampire, and a strict military officer in every sense.

Yuri watched the lieutenant bring up the position of the fighter and it sprang into life as a gray dot since it was an unknown contact. “Colonel... do we have anything in this area?” Yuri asked quickly.

The Coven Colonel looked quickly at his data pad and then at the chart. “No Princess... it’s too far south.”

“Tracked vehicles?” Yuri asked slowly. “We know Leonidas kept almost all his tanks within the defensive perimeter. They were Scorpions, and would be little use against our heavy armor.”

The Colonel looked at the chart. “We know the armored column is bogged down here due to an air laid minefield. It is spread across the entire interstate and all reports indicate it is at least three miles deep. We’ve lost close to eighty tanks and APCs trying to cross it. Commander Moran finally ordered the infantry to leave them and proceed on foot towards Eden City. The launchers with the columns were able to destroy the last of the defensive minefield, so we have a free entry corridor into their city.”

“Nothing is free!” Yuri snapped. “Leonidas will make them pay in blood for every meter they advance, don’t doubt that. Where are the *STRIKERS* that destroyed the Immortals?”

“All of them are still orbiting in the north Princess.” The Colonel replied. “They appear to be providing ground support against our human divisions, and they are handling them rather roughly.”

“Fuck them!” Yuri spat. “They’re fodder, nothing more!”

“Their *TEMPEST* Interceptors and M4 *DEVASTATORS* have just started engaging our fighters; their frigates are still ten minutes from entering the atmosphere and...” He stopped as his eyes grew wider. He turned to the aide next to him. “Is this confirmed?”

“Yes Colonel. We didn’t know what the power signature was until more detailed sensor sweeps were conducted, but it is accurate now.” The aide spoke.

“And you didn’t think to tell us this before you fool!” The Colonel bellowed.

“What is it?” Yuri barked.

“It appears Princess, that Queen Tarifa has been able to re-establish the shield protecting Eden City. And now it appears that it is being powered by a Lycavorian LSD coil. The power signatures match!” The Colonel reported.

Yuri shook her head. “It won’t matter. Even with a Lycavorian LSD power coil charging the shield, it won’t last more than an hour against a plasma bombardment. I am more concerned about this unconfirmed sighting in the south. Robert... Commander Moran does not have any forces in this area, and that means they don’t belong to us; which makes them an enemy.” Yuri looked up. “Contact the orbiting frigate and have them conduct a sensor sweep of this area and tell me what is there. Detach a squadron of fighters to this location as well in case the sensors tell us there is an enemy force here. I want to be able to hit them immediately. I don’t want any surprises. Not when we are so close to victory.”

Those in her command sprang to action. It would be too late, but they would try regardless.

ALLIANCE/HIGH COVEN GROUND COMMAND

“The infantry is proceeding almost unhindered.” Moran’s senior aide reported. “They have met only light resistance the entire way and they are within five miles of the main defensive line.”

Moran stared at the map chart. “They’re sucking us in.” Moran spoke shaking his head.

“Preposterous!” Xerxes bellowed. “You have simply overestimated their abilities.” He stepped up and pointed to the map chart. “This is where I will attack with my Immortals.” He said pointing to the defensive line directly south.

“You could be walking into a trap.” Moran spoke. “We’ve cleared the minefield yes, but Leonidas had eleven divisions of elf and human troops when this started. And we have no way of knowing how many Spartans.”

“You have been shelling them continuously for nearly ten hours.” Xerxes spoke more confidently. “Why have they not launched some sort of counter attack? Face it Commander, your intelligence was wrong.” He turned to his Immortal Commander. “Are your men loaded?”

The Immortal nodded. “Yes Milord.”

Moran looked at him. “You loaded your men already?” He demanded.

“Of course I did human.” Xerxes replied. “I am Prince Xerxes... and I will not take my orders from you or my arrogant sister. I will kill Leonidas, and I will string his hide upon my will when I finished with him. Do you wish to try and stop me little man.”

Moran met his dark eyes. “It’s your ass Xerxes.” He stated flatly. Xerxes did not answer and spun around already heading for the landing zone. Moran turned to Cha’talla. “He’s going to get those men killed Cha’talla. Leonidas is no fool! He’s sucking us in some how.”

“Could Xerxes be right Robert Moran?” Cha’talla asked.

Moran looked at him for a long moment. “Yes.” He spoke finally.

Cha’talla nodded. “Then you are a better man than he for admitting it. I pray you are wrong, for I know many of those that go with him.”

“Fuck!” Moran shouted. “He got that fucking shield back up and now I got a really bad feeling about what is going to happen.”

“We outnumber them my friend.” Cha’talla spoke evenly. “Even in the north we are overwhelming them. We managed to destroy almost seventy percent of the northern minefield, and the entire southern minefield. Our forces are advancing with little resistance.”

“Numbers don’t count for shit if he does something off the wall or he is herding us!” Moran spoke.

They both looked up as thunder rolled across the distant clear blue sky. It was low at first, but easily heard and it traveled through the mountainous terrain like a shouted voice bouncing among the hills and ravines.

Moran snatched at his macrobinoculars and brought them to his eyes as he looked south where they originally heard the thunder. He could just make out the distant smoke, pure white in nature and his vampire blood turned cold.

“Cha’talla...” He looked back to the Immortal Captain. “Run!” He screamed.

Thirteen miles south of Moran’s position

“Pour it on!” Danny screamed walking behind the rows of artillery pieces as the crews were ejecting spent shells and slamming home powder bags and hundred pound shells. “Make the motherfuckers pay for every life they have ever taken!”

Danny moved quickly to the Scorpion Tank that had served as his command vehicle in the wild ride to where they were now. Danny hoped he never had to ride in a tank again after the pain filled ride to get here, bladders and internal organs being bounced around and not being able to stop to take a leak. The first thing his entire command had done when they arrived, including him was race into the timber and take a piss.

Now Danny stood with a cruel grin on his face as his launchers and guns delivered the mail he had promised his brother he would deliver. He glanced down to where Anuk and Nayeca stood watching in fascination at the mighty sight of nine MLRS 300IIs and nearly forty 200mm self propelled guns all firing at the same time. They seemed to feel him looking at them and they turned their beautiful elfin faces up to return his savage gleeful look of utter delight.

LEONIDAS I

Ceneu gripped the arm of his chair as he pulled himself back into a standing position from where the High Coven missile had tossed him.

“Give me a report!” He bellowed.

“Shields are holding Admiral! Two cruisers have dropped from formation with heavy damage!”

“What are their casualties?” Ceneu barked.

“They are reporting light casualties, but they are out of the fight now! Both have lost their LSD drives and have gone to secondary power cells!”

“Are we in range yet?” Ceneu demanded. “Tell me we are in range!” He turned to face his senior sensor operator. “Dorma... tell me we are in range boy!”

The Lycavorian turned to look at his Admiral with a gleam of evil intent in his eyes. “Admiral we are in range!”

Ceneu turned to look at the screen, his reptilian face cracking into a vicious smile his bridge crew only saw when he was about to do something utterly devastating to an enemy fleet. “Well it’s our turn now! Order fleet wide Dorma! Spin up all batteries! Charge all missiles, full yield on all warheads! Let’s show these vampire scums we don’t like them trying to kill our King!”

It took only seconds for his orders to be carried out and then Dorma turned to him once more. “Admiral the fleet signals we are ready!”

“That was fast!” Ceneu spoke with a glint in his eye. “Finally now we get to kill something! Enemy Suppression Barrage! All batteries and missile tubes! Fire!”

The *LEONIDAS I* was situated in the middle of a line of thirty-two heavy and medium class ships, and the stars surrounding these ships vanished in a firestorm of multicolored plasma beams and the smoke of huge anti-ship missiles launching as every ship in Ceneu's section unleashed their barrage at his command.

EDEN CITY WESTERN SHIELD CONTROL TOWER

She crawled across the shattered concrete, pulling her legs with only her upper body strength. A trail of blood signaled the path she had taken, until finally Aihola reached the goal that had driven her.

Dekton's body was mangled, the holes from the plasma bolts evident in his body, the blistering plasma cauterizing the edges of the wounds even as they inflicted the massive damage. His body had no chance to heal the wounds, and one of the plasma bolts having seared through his lungs and taken a small chunk from his heart, which was madly trying to keep up with pumping blood to his body, even as it ran out from the dozens of lacerations.

Aihola pulled her body up onto his broad chest, tears filling her amber eyes at the pain racking her own body and his mortal wounds, "Dekton." She gasped reaching out to take his bloody head in her hands. Dekton's left eye fluttered open, the right eyes bloody and slashed open. Aihola gasped when she saw his face and the tears came flooding out even more. "Dekton... no... don't... don't leave us."

Dekton was able to force a smile across his face and beating down the agonizing pain he reached up with his right hand and placed the back of his knuckles against Aihola's bloody cheek. "Tell... tell Tarifa I... I loved you both..."

"No Dekton." Aihola gasped. "You will tell her."

Dekton shook his head as much as he was able. "My... my body can not be repaired Little... Little Drow. You... you must take... take my blood. Save yourself. Save Tarifa."

Aihola shook her head back and forth. "No! No! I'll call Anja! She can save you! She has to save you!"

"No... no time. You... you will bleed to death. We can... we can not leave Tarifa alone. She... she would be lost without you."

"She'll be lost without you! I'll be lost without you!" Aihola cried.

Dekton smiled gently, blood seeping from between his lips. "You... you and she... you are one Little Drow. One... one can not go on without the other. You need each other more... more than you ever needed me."

"That's... that's not true!" Aihola barked.

"You... you loved me... yes." He gasped. "You love... you love each other more."

"Dekton... please... you can't leave us."

"If... if you love me Little Drow. If you love... love me... do as I ask you." Dekton spoke. "Take... my blood... before there is nothing left. Heal... heal yourself. You... you and Tarifa... great things you must still do. Together."

Aihola could barely see as the tears poured from her eyes and she shook her head. "Dekton... I can't..."

"I... I would rather die with your lips upon me Little Drow. Please... do... do as I ask you." Dekton croaked, a wrenching cough causing his body to shudder violently.

Aihola inched higher on his chest looking into his torn bloody face. "Dekton... we will... we will never forget you." She spoke softly.

"Hurry!" Dekton spoke, more blood spilling from between his lips. His right hand grasped Aihola's head and with more strength than he should have had he pulled her face close to his neck and he turned his head. "Now Little Drow! Now!"

With sobs wracking her body Aihola lowered her head and bit deeply into Dekton's skin. She did not see the smile of love spread across his face as he felt her fangs sink deep and she began to feed.

"You... you will forget Little Drow." He spoke, his voice barely a whisper. "And you... you and Tarifa will find... you will find love again."

Dekton's eye saw the bright sun beyond the light blue shield and then his eye closed slowly as his life left him passing into Aihola, her wounds beginning to heal even as she fed. Aihola drew back quickly when she felt his chest stop moving. The blood she had taken had repaired the most serious of her wounds, and Aihola laid her head on Dekton's unmoving chest hoping Tarifa would find her soon.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

MOON BASE EDEN

"They have begun their attack Admiral Wallace!" Anari spoke from where she sat at the single terminal. "Their ships... the Lycavorian ships are attacking the vampire fleet."

Wallace moved over next to her and looked at the sensor screen she was monitoring. "What's Marcus doing?" He asked.

"They seem to be monitoring the events as we are." Anari replied. "But none of EDEN's weapons platforms have been charged."

"Is the laser grid fully energized?" Wallace asked.

Anari nodded. "It completed recharging five hours ago." She spoke. "It's in standby mode right now."

"How soon before we pass to the dark side of the moon?"

Anari turned and looked at one of the others in their team. All of them were sitting at a console monitoring all that was happening, "How long?" Anari asked.

"Three hours twelve minutes."

"You been recording the intercepts right?" Wallace asked.

Anari nodded. "I've condensed everything into one four second burst to Eden City Command."

Wallace's eyes narrowed as he looked at the screen. "What is this?" He asked.

"It is a flight of vampire fighters that have broken from their main engagement. They are moving south across the North American continent." Anari answered.

"They're moving straight to where Danny has his artillery laying into Moran's position." He spoke.

Anari nodded. "Their course will take them right over his position yes." She spoke. "I tried to get a secure message to him, but they did not respond. The vampire ships that have been destroyed in orbit are distorting the signal and it bounces back to me."

Wallace's mind raced. "He's top heavy with artillery." He spoke. "And it took four missiles to bring down the fighter that passed over them a while back. They can't have many more missiles. Shit!"

"The Lycavorian ships bringing troops to the surface are almost down Admiral." Anari spoke. "Daniel Simpson's artillery is the only thing keeping the vampires from responding in kind."

Wallace looked at her. "Anari... we have to take control now." He spoke.

Anari nodded after only a moment's pause. "I agree. I can only hope that ship promised to us gets here quickly."

Wallace squeezed her shoulder. "We'll do what we can no matter what." He spoke. "Stand by to interrupt main power and shunt all station controls to our consoles!" Wallace moved to a lone console against the bulkhead and looked at the others. "As soon as we get control, bring the laser turret online and target those fighters heading for Simpson's location!"

"I'm already on it Admiral!" Mical spoke from his console.

Wallace's hands were flying over the console in front of him. "Circuits are powered! Backup conduits are energized. Get ready... on my mark. Three... two... one... Mark!"

Wallace pushed the dual yellow buttons on the console and the lights in their small room flickered briefly before coming back to full power.

"Yes!" Mical snapped. "We got control! Yeah baby!"

Anari smiled as she nodded. "All systems are responding Admiral; weapons, sensors, everything!"

Wallace went up next to her. “Mical... target the fighters! Anari... bring the laser turret online. We’re only going to get one shot at this! And send the prearranged signal so they don’t kill us as well!”

EDEN MOON BASE COMMAND CENTER

“What do you mean we no longer have control?” Marcus screamed.

“All command controls have been diverted Colonel! We no longer have control of any part of the station!” A tech snapped.

“How is that possible?” Marcus barked. “Find out what is going on!”

“I’m tracing now Colonel!”

“Colonel Marcus... the laser turret is powering!” Another tech yelled from his seat.

Marcus was beside him in six steps. “What? How? I thought we no longer had control!”

“It’s not us Colonel! Someone else is controlling the weapons grid!” The man snapped, his hands trying to override the controls. “I’m locked out! I can’t override the commands!”

“What’s it doing?” Marcus screamed.

“The turret is targeting our fighters in high orbit Colonel! They appear to be moving south over North America!”

“Contact Commander Moran! Tell him we no longer have control of the station!” Marcus ordered.

“We’re locked out of everything Colonel!” The tech barked out looking at his screen. “Communications are down! We... Colonel... I have airtight doors shutting in thirteen sections of the base!”

“Which sections?” Marcus screamed.

“Sections fourteen through twenty-seven, airtight doors are sealing those sections off from the rest of the station!” The tech replied.

“Why seal those sections?” Marcus mused. “Is this some sort of trap door program that we have triggered? Is this something left behind when they abandoned the station? Someone give me some answers!”

“Colonel... all those sections have our people in them!” The tech snapped. “None of the backup codes are working! They are sealed in!”

Marcus stood up straight. “It has to be some sort of intrusion program!” He snapped. “Find out where the controls have been routed!” He turned to look at the group of four guards by the main door. “Get some torches and get down to those sealed sections. Get our people out of there!”

AUTUMN MOON-CLASS ATTACK FRIGATE LU39 *DESTINY’S BLADE*

“Captain... we are receiving the signal! Low band... encrypted... but it is the signal we have been waiting for!” The Lycavorian Lieutenant Commander spoke turning from his station.

The Elf male turned in his command chair and looked at the younger man. The light of the bridge accented his angular face and sharp features, making the long jagged scar running down the right side of his face from the top of his head to almost his shoulder blade that much more visible. His left elfin ear was almost four inches in length, his right only half that, due to the same piece of burning plasma shrapnel that had given him the scar. He was the senior and most experienced *AUTUMN MOON*-Class Commander in the Lycavorian Union, he and his ship having been part of the Home Guard Fleet for nearly two decades now.

“Confirm that!” He snapped his voice carrying over the sounds of the bridge crew.

The Lieutenant Commander nodded quickly. “It matches the signal we were told to stand ready for sir!”

The elf came to his feet. “Well... it’s about time. I was getting tired of laying in wait. Secure from Transphasic operation people! It’s time to get into this war and do our part! Give me one half on the sublight drives! Bring torpedo launchers three through eight online and warm up their targeting sensors! Lock in the coordinates received from the King’s people! There are two thousand vampires on this station people, and even

more civilians. There is also a seven member unit led by the Spartan who used to command this station. I want perfection! I don't want the torpedoes to be off target by more than microfraction!"

"Captain... the station's laser turret is powering up!" The Lieutenant Commander barked.

"We were told they would take back command controls before ordering us in." The captain spoke. "What's the turret targeting?"

"It... it appears to be targeting a Coven fighter squadron in high atmospheric flight." The young man spoke.

"Then let them fire! If it switches to target us, we level the station!" The captain replied.

"Weapons board is green Captain! We're ready to fire!"

The captain grinned. He had the best people on his ship, hand picked by himself, and they were good at their jobs. "Then let's do this!"

The *AUTUMN MOON*-Class Attack Frigate appeared in the darkened crater on the moon as if by magic, shimmering back into shape as it lowered its stolen Coven Shroud Shield. The technology had been stolen within the last decade, and so far only the Attack Frigates had been equipped with the new CSS generators. The shield basically rendered the frigate invisible to the naked eye and all known Coven sensors.

Two hundred and sixty four meters in length with a wing span of one hundred and twenty meters, they were the smallest of the Unions combat ships, but they were also some of the deadliest. A crew of four hundred and thirty, and the capacity to carry 5000 metric tons of supplies and equipment or 800 fully armed troops as they were currently hauling, made them deadly ground support ships, while their speed and small size made them excellent long range escorts and fleet protectors. They were built to take a beating and stay in a fight regardless of their size.

Eleven seconds after engaging their sublight drives, the *DESTINY'S BLADE* was racing across the surface of the barren moon closing on EDEN Station faster than any Raptor ever had. The starboard wing of the Frigate flared four times and four bright Proton Plasma torpedoes sped ahead of the *BLADE* intent on destruction and death.

The Captain of the *DESTINY'S BLADE* had never left a Spartan behind, and he was not about to start now.

EDEN STATION

"Inbound!" Mical screamed, "Four... somethings!"

"It is the ship!" Anari echoed. "Admiral... Lycavorian ship coming in low over the surface! Range thirty kilometers! Coming in fast!"

Wallace looked at the screen, his eyes going wide. "I guess they don't believe in being subtle." He said.

"Right now... I'll take speed over subtle any time!" Mical barked.

Anari nodded in agreement "I as well." She said, "Laser turret standing by! Targets locked in!"

Wallace nodded. "Then let us do our part my Drow companion! Fire!"

HIGH COVEN SQUADRON

16 SHIP FLIGHT

MOVING TO ENGAGE ENEMY ARTILLERY SIGHTING

"I have them!" The Squadron Commander heard the announcement in his helmet. "Enemy positions, twenty-three ground kilometers, bearing 195."

The High Coven Flight commander nodded his head. They had just come down to fifty thousand feet and leveled off when their sensors began chiming. "Affirmative... all craft mark position and prepare for a high power descent! We'll use missiles first and then execute a high G climb out and return to strafe with Plasma guns! We..."

"Look out!" The voice screamed over the COM.

“We’re under attack! High orbit! What is it! They…”

The Flight leader’s head snapped around just in time to see the narrow blue beam slice through the port engine of the fighter to the rear of their formation. The engine immediately burst into flames and exploded, shrapnel ripping through the wing and starboard engine sending the ship cartwheeling out of control.

“Report!” He screamed. “What is that? Where did it…”

It happened quicker than his cobalt eyes could follow as more narrow blue beams reached for each of his craft in turn; slicing through the thin armor of their light fighters like it wasn’t there. He could only watch in horror as his fighters exploded or were sent spinning out of control by the unknown attack coming from orbit. His pilots were all barely out of flight school, and none of them had seen combat before this day. He had read the reports of this planet and cursed his luck at being chosen to come here with Prince Xerxes.

The Flight leader screamed out his rage just as the narrow blue beam cut across the nose of his fighter, severing his entire forward section, including his plasma cannons. As his controls became unresponsive and his fighter began to bank over out of control, he did the only thing his training could recall. He grasped the escape pod release and fired the small thrusters. His entire armored cockpit blasted out of the body of his dying fighter and he spun madly toward the brown earth beneath him, hoping his chute would deploy.

The Flight Leader then did something he had never done before.

He prayed to his gods.

ALLIANCE GROUND COMMAND

Moran inched his head above the edge of the deep bunkered trench that had been dug only a few hours ago. What he saw made his cobalt blue eyes go wide.

He could see his artillery men staggering through the fog of black smoke from the burning rocket launchers, most of them grievously wounded and not having long left in this world. He could see the shattered remains of his gun crews and the self propelled artillery platforms, many of them now twisted blackened and burning hulks. The artillery barrage had come in four seconds after he and Cha’talla had dove into this trench. They huddled at the bottom of the trench swearing that it was deep enough as the barrage from the south tore into his unprotected gun crews like an avenging god.

He estimated at least six, if not more rocket launchers, probably those MLRS 300IIs that Leonidas had been using so effectively as counter battery fire; added to that had to be at least four batteries of self propelled artillery platforms. Towed artillery would never had made it through the timber south of them and get into position. He knew the moment he saw the smoke from the barrage that they were done. He had hoped that his artillery would provide the back breaker to Leonidas’s forces, erasing the minefields and as many troops as possible before his super vampire clones had struck.

His plan had not worked out. He had not counted on the FAE devices Leonidas used to eliminate almost a third of his forces before they even got into position to begin their assault. He had not counted on Morelli being destroyed in the north by the traitor Nestor; or having him race east and take over New Chicago and then demand the surrender of the Alliance cities now that the majority of Vampire Ministers had evacuated. He had not counted on his northern Cloned Division plodding head long like idiots into the concentrated artillery fire directed by that High Elf fucker Tareif. Even now… his human infantry divisions were engaging his forces, and Moran knew there was no way they would defeat elves and Spartans.

The shield around Eden City had proved harder to bring down than he had expected, and now it was back up, and powered by Lycavorian technology. The Lycavorian *STRIKERS* had destroyed half his force of Immortals before they even set down on earth, and now his armored divisions were stalled in an air laid minefield while his infantry plodded forward on foot.

Moran heard the low thunder again and his cobalt eyes darted to the south and saw the clouds of white smoke even from this distance. If Moran thought the scenes he saw of Morelli’s division after Nestor’s artillery had wiped them out was bad, that was a picnic compared to what they were receiving right now here on his position. He ducked back down to the bottom of the trench and looked at a wide eyed Cha’talla.

“We’re fucked!” He stated before Danny’s second bunch of mail began arriving.

EDEN MOON BASE

Marcus pulled himself to his feet from where the four massive explosions had tossed him like a doll. He watched as the others in the command center regained their chairs at their consoles. They may not have been in control of anything, but they certainly could view what was happening.

“There are outer hull breaches!” The tech barked. He turned to look at Marcus. “All of them in the sections that were sealed! Our... our people are being sucked out into space!”

Marcus scrambled over to the man. “This was planned!” He screamed. “There is someone on this station directing the scum! Find them!”

“The trace is almost complete Colonel!” The tech spoke, wiping blood from his eyes from the gash in his skin. “It’s... there! It’s it looks like some sort of secondary control station!”

“Where is it?” Marcus snapped.

“Section fifty-three, corridor Two Four,” The tech replied. I’m... six, no seven lifesigns!”

Marcus stood up. He had twenty-six soldiers in and around the command center, including the seven technicians. He grabbed his rifle from the shattered console. “All of you come with me!” He barked. “If we are going to die, then I intend to take this scum with us!”

TEN MILES SOUTH OF SPRINGFIELD MISSOURI

Filrian walked beside Ben as they moved through the caves casually. Ben had counted at least two hundred fighters as they moved through the intricate cave system, some carrying crates, others just moving with weapons. Ben was still extremely sore, but his wounds had healed completely, or so the doctor had told him. He looked at the man as they walked in silence. He sure looked human, there was nothing that would tell Ben he was anything other than a regular person, yet no human doctor could have done what he did in saving Ben’s life.

“You are curious about something?” Filrian spoke as they exited a small tunnel that overlooked a deep pit where Ben saw dozens of black clad fighters and a myriad of equipment, some of it more advanced than anything he had ever seen before.

Ben turned to look at him. “I’m curious how you were able to save me.” Ben asked. “Yuriko tells me I was pretty mangled.”

“I am a Hadarian Major.” Filrian spoke. “My people are healers.”

“Healers?” Ben asked.

“Our planet is very close to what we call a Metaphysical Nebula.” Filrian spoke. “This Nebula bombards our planet every six months with Metaphysical Radiation. It saturates our cells and generates a healing field. We learned thousands of years ago that we could use this as a means to heal injuries, and since that time you will not see many members of the Union without a Hadarian medic or doctor nearby. When the High Coven, who you call vampires, discovered this, they attempted to conquer our people in the hopes that they could use our healing gift. Our leaders at the time turned to King Resumar for guidance. He told us to be patient and appease the Coven until the time was right to break away. Our King and Queen listened to him, and for hundreds of years we did as he suggested. When Resumar began the rebellion, we eagerly joined, as did the elves. And like the elves, our royal family was slaughtered like animals. The surviving members escaped into hiding, aided by the Lycavorian Royal Guard of the time. They protected us for centuries, even after their King and Queen were assassinated. We learned later that before our King died he abdicated all leadership to the Lycavorian Royal family. Since no one was alive to contest this, and none of the surviving Royal family dare expose themselves, it was left this way. Now... well I don’t believe my people would *want* to be led by anything other than a Lycavorian King as entwined as our peoples have become. I imagine it is no less for the elves, as almost the same thing happened to them. That is why the last members of the Royal Family sent their daughter here, they knew the son of Leonidas was here, and they knew eventually they would discover each

other. I don't think they realized she would end up as Queen of the Union, but I do believe my people will be very pleased."

"Wow... that's some story." Ben spoke.

Filrian chuckled. "There is so much more out among the stars that the humans from this planet have yet to discover."

"Wait... there are other humans out there, off earth?" Ben asked his eyes wide in stunned shock.

Filrian nodded. "Oh yes. Yours is not the only colony of humans to have survived. The Coven did not see your people as advanced enough to conquer, and that is why you were left alone here on earth and used only as a food source for them. That changed when King Leonidas was born." He answered. "I believe there are seven other human colonies, four that reside within the Union as members and are in fact very successful. Three remain isolated and independent, but they are not our enemies. The Union trades with them, and in some regards they have worked together in the past and I believe there is a mutual defense treaty with two of them. They obviously benefit from that more than the Union, but some of their trading goods, resources and exports are quite needed."

"Damn... I need to get out more." Ben muttered. "So this radiation allowed you to heal my injuries then?"

Filrian nodded. "While severe for a human, your injuries were relatively easy to heal Major, though I do recommend you do not attempt to crash land any more of your aircraft for a few months." He spoke with a smile.

Ben chuckled. "That's the ninth bird I've lost while flying for Marty." Ben spoke. "He does tend to find trouble in bunches."

"So it would appear."

"Where are we going?" Ben asked.

Filrian motioned down a steep inclined tunnel. "Our people are splitting into groups and leaving." He replied. "The Lycavorian fleet has arrived in orbit, and all the reports we are receiving indicate that we are winning, albeit with heavy losses. Yuriko has told everyone to seek shelter and wait for it to be over before coming forward."

"She's sending them all home?" Ben asked.

"Yuriko has been driven by only two things in her life." Filrian spoke, "Waiting for King Leonidas to return to earth and finding her sister. This group... we are together as a matter of necessity, nothing more. Yuriko was the defacto leader, but we have all known that once King Leonidas began this war as we knew he would, she would go to him. She has never allowed anyone close to her. I am as close to being her friend as anyone has every come, and I know practically nothing about her."

"She sure seems like a driven young woman." Ben spoke. "She was a cute kid."

Filrian looked at him as they walked. "Forgive me... you do not react like other humans on this world when told someone is a vampire Major. Why is that?"

Ben chuckled. "I figured out what Marty really was two years after flying with him." He replied. "I witnessed him change into a wolf at the tail end of an operation. He saved my life that day... and since then I have kept his secret. Though now that doesn't appear to matter anymore." Ben looked at him. "You could say working with Marty all these years has taught me not to fear the unknown."

Filrian smiled and nodded his head. "Then that makes you unique Major."

"Yeah well..."

"Major O'Connell it is good to see you up and walking around." Yuriko's voice spoke.

Ben turned and saw her standing in front of an aircraft he hadn't seen in decades. His eyes flew open as he gawked at the ship sitting in the large clearing. It was an ancient MH-60H Nighthawk helicopter. Painted all black, with the single enormous rotor on top and the ancient tail rotor in the rear. The aircraft had once been extensively used in Special Operations in the late 20th and early 21st centuries and had been retired the year after he enter the Marine Corps. "Oh man..." Ben gasped as he moved forward quickly. "Where did you find this baby... a museum?"

Yuriko allowed a small smile to etch across her face, "Actually yes." She replied. "It is fully functional... and we just finished topping off the fuel tanks. Do you think you can fly it?"

Ben looked at her as he ran his hand along the matt black skin of the old helicopter. “Fly it? Fly it where?”

“Eden City airfield,” Yuriko told him. “I believe it is time for us to enter this battle on my adopted father’s side. I have sent everyone else into hiding with instructions to either come forward after we are victorious, or continue with what we have been doing if we fail. Doctor Filrian and I will return with you.”

“You realize that this baby was state of the art back then... but compared to what’s flying now... it’s a bucket of bolts.” Ben spoke. “We may not make it to Eden City.”

Yuriko stepped forward and looked at him. “I believe you have as much reason as I to return Major.”

Ben immediately thought of Endith and Tina. “Damn straight I do.” He replied.

“Then I suggest we waste no more time.” Yuriko spoke.

LYCAVORIAN NOVA-CLASS ATTACK CRUISER *LIBERTY*

“Port side batteries fire,” Riall barked out the order from where he stood holding the arm of the command chair. “Starboard thrusters engage! Bring us to course six seven three two mark nine and prepare to launch LU70s!”

Riall hadn’t been involved in a battle in almost a decade and he had forgotten the thrill of battle during that time. He had brought his section of the LU Home Guard Fleet barreling from around the back of the moon to slam into the High Coven fleet with every battery and missile launcher oriented directly at them. The combined assault from Ceneu’s continued engagement and his new attack destroyed sixteen Coven ships, shattering the picket line, the intense battle degenerating into ship against ship, plasma cannons against plasma cannons, and missile launcher and torpedo against missile launcher and torpedo.

While the High Coven ships had the advantage in range of their armaments, this close in the heavy armor and shielding that the Lycavorian Union ships had proved the turning point. At point blank range the LU ships nine times out of ten came out on top in the engagement. Every successful hit on an LU ship, and the Coven ships were hit twice in return. The Lycon Corporation, the major ship building company within the Union, took great pride in building ships for their people that were tough and powerful, just like the Lycavorian people themselves. That toughness always paid off, and it helped that every Cruiser Commander was hand picked by Ceneu, and they were the most experienced, not to mention daring commanders in the entire Union space fleet.

Riall held tightly to the arm rest as the *LIBERTY* shuddered from multiply plasma hits. He turned slightly. “Target that cruiser, full spread on the Proton torpedoes!”

“Admiral we have structural damage on decks eleven through fourteen!” A voice yelled.

“Dispatch damage control teams! Insure force fields are in place and seal the bulkheads in those sections!” Riall snapped, “Torpedoes!”

“Armed and ready Admiral!”

“Lock target and fire!” Riall yelled turning to look at the image on the holo chart. He saw six points of light blossom from the front of the *LIBERTY* and speed toward the closest Coven ship. He snarled in glee as the Proton torpedoes slammed headlong into the side of the cruiser and internal explosions began to erupt inside, dotting the superstructure of the ship with bursts of yellow and orange.

“Direct hits, all Torps,” The sensor operator shouted. “Look at that Coven ship burn! Die you nasty blood sucking vampire scum!”

Riall had to smile at the young officer’s words and he turned at the next shout.

“Admiral Ceneu is hailing us!”

“Engage the holo imager!” Riall barked. He turned as the floor mounted imager flared to life and Ceneu’s complete body appeared in the transmission. “Ceneu... we have broken their picket my friend! It’s been too easy!”

Ceneu nodded. “I agree Riall. I believe you may have been right.” He spoke. “Reform Riall... we’ll chase the Coven bastards clear out of the system!”

“No!” Riall spoke. “The second section is not engaging us! Reform the fleet and hold position! Use this time to conduct whatever repairs we can and reload magazines! Legsim should be landing in a few moments! We will time our attack for just after he sets down!”

Ceneu nodded quickly, his reptilian eyes bright. “I know what you are thinking Riall!” He said. “Target the *WING OF DEATH?*”

“Recall the M4 *DEVASTATORS!*” Riall barked out. “Have them land and rearm as quickly as they can! We will reorient the fleet and drive straight for the *WING OF DEATH!*”

Ceneu nodded in the transmission. “It will be done.” He spoke.

Riall turned as Ceneu’s image faded from view. “Direct all power to forward shields and reload missile tubes! When we reorient... I want to shove everything we have right down their throats!”

EDEN CITY

He needed her blood.

He dragged his leg along the ground slowly, the two large holes in his thigh still leaking red over the rocks and slabs of concrete he was crawling over. He had dragged himself from the treeline of the airfield where he had taken the rounds through his leg and two through his chest. He had laid there listening to the screams of his brother clones as they fell under the weapons of the Spartans and elves. Even as the battle raged he had begun to crawl away, hoping to find some way to get blood and heal his wounds.

He had spotted her on the edge of the city, huddling near the control tower for the shield that had reactivated over the top of Eden City. She was sitting next to the dead soldier who held the control box in his lifeless hands, and she was making no move to leave the area. He had seen the fighter strafe them, striking down everyone but her, and then he watched as the Drow elf had crawled over to the mortally wounded Spartan, finally lowering her head to drink the last of his blood before she too collapsed on top of his body.

He had dragged his body this far and now he would have her. Using the last of his fading strength he pulled his shattered leg underneath him and launched himself at her from the side where he had snuck within four meters of where she sat staring into the sky.

For’mya’s elf reflexes nearly saved her as her head snapped around in time to see the vampire come sailing over the small concrete pile to her left. She was able to hit him in the jaw, rocking his head back, but she was sitting down and the blow carried no where near enough power to knock him away from her. For’mya screamed as she saw the flash of his gleaming white fangs as they plunged for her exposed neck.

The vampire cloned soldier sank his fangs deeply into the sweet neck of the elf while his arms crushed her too him, pinning her arms awkwardly to her sides, even as her legs kicked viciously. He ignored the several blows to his wounded leg as her warm blood flowed into his body and he began to heal.

For’mya couldn’t move and fear gripped her heart as she felt the vampire holding her growing stronger. Her strength was fading quickly as he fed on her blood, and she felt her body begin to grow cold, her dark brown eyes beginning to flutter shut as he continued to feed deeply. He pulled his fangs from her neck at the last moment before her life left her and he looked at the sky above smiling, For’mya’s blood running down his jaw. He could feel his body repairing itself, pushing the two bullets still remaining in his body out and repairing the bones and torn flesh. He looked down at the she-elf in his arms and for the first time notice she looked different from the other elves he had seen. She wore a strange uniform that looked surprisingly like a flight uniform. He contemplated taking the rest of her blood and leaving her corpse, but she was an elf and she would heal quickly and he might need her restored blood in a few hours. He squatted over her limp body and drove his fist down into her face as hard as he could, feeling her go completely limp in his arms like a boneless fish.

Grinning madly, the cloned vampire soldier hoisted For’mya to his shoulder and he took off in the direction he had seen the abandoned Hoppers.

He could make it if he was fast enough.

COVEN SQUADRON FLIGHT LEADER

His body was wracked with waves of pain as he pulled himself from the shattered remains of his escape pod. His fighter had exploded seconds after his pod had launched, and until the point where his drag chute failed to slow the pod he thought perhaps he would live. The pod struck the hard earth at nearly three hundred miles an hour, cracking open like an egg shell and though he was strapped securely in his seat, he could not stop it as the frame of the pod smashed through trees and piles of sharp sticks and bushes, ripping his skin open as if it was paper. When the pod finally came to rest, it rest at least eight feet in the air pinned against two smaller trees. He discovered one of his cobalt blue eyes had been ripped from his head, blood gushing from the wound and filling the air around him with the coppery aroma. His left arm hung useless in the straps, the bone protruding from his flesh just below the elbow. He screamed in agony as he reached up with his right hand and hit the release for his harness. He tried to stop himself from toppling onto the ground eight feet below but was unable to catch the frame of the pod before he fell. The landing took all the air from his lungs and sent agonizing pain shooting through his entire body.

Through force of will alone he was able to drag himself to the base of one of the trees and pull himself into a sitting position. His lone good eye caught movement in the light timber and he froze, sweat beginning to pour from his body. After a long moment nothing disturbed the area around him and with clenched teeth he dug into the vest of his flight suit. He pulled out the small vial of blood and pulled the cap off with his teeth, downing the liquid in one gulp. He felt a surge of relief as the bone in his arm began to knit back together and the skin closed over the wound quickly. His empty eye socket was another matter. His eyeball was completely gone and the Mediblood had only served to stop the bleeding, leaving a red gaping hole in his head. He did not have enough blood to re-grow the destroyed tissue, and by the time he got any it would be too late. He was down inside enemy territory, alone and very vulnerable. He leaned his head back and chuckled to himself.

“This whole cursed planet is enemy territory.” He murmured to himself.

“You have no idea.” The female voice spoke from almost on top of him.

The Coven pilot began to turn his head; his hand reaching for the small V71 Longnet Mark V blaster attached to his vest, but froze when he felt the cold flat steel press tightly to his neck.

“I recommend you do not reach for that weapon Vampire scum.” The voice spoke again from behind him.

The pilot watched as the feminine figure came into view from behind him to the left, the blade of the R4 Elf Hybrid fighting knife never leaving its position. He took in the dark skin of the female elf holding the blade to his throat and her strange amber colored eyes. She looked very lean and muscular, not particularly large for an elf, her silver white hair hanging over one shoulder in a long pony tail. He licked his lips, seeing the smooth skin of her neck and strangely she smiled at him.

“You are thinking perhaps that my blood might be to your liking aren’t you vampire?” Nayeca spoke with a causal calm as she settled into a squatting position, reaching forward slowly to unsnap the pocket that held the strange looking sidearm. “You are contemplating whether you should attack me, believing that you could easily overpower me since I am alone.” Nayeca shook her head with a smile. “That would be the second of your mistakes blood sucker. Your first was coming here to begin with.”

The Coven pilot felt the hot breath on his cheek before he sensed the presence of the Lycavorian. His good eye darted to the side and he saw the muzzle of the rust colored wolf almost touching his cheek, the two inch long razor sharp fangs bared in a snarl and the low growl escaping the chest of the muscular beast. His eyes grew even larger when his nose detected the distinct flavor of pure Lycavorian blood running in this wolf’s veins, but that was quickly chased away when the obviously female wolf lifted a medium sized paw equipped with black razor claws and placed that paw on his chest, her cerulean blue wolf eyes promising untold pain. He let out a grunt as the she-wolf pressed on him with at least a hundred and forty pounds of muscle and teeth.

Nayeca let out a small chuckle as she tucked the strange weapon into the large fanny pack at the small of her back attached to her combat vest. The blade of the R4 hadn’t left the place on the pilot’s neck. “I am a Drow elf vampire. And I am not like any elf you have ever come across.” She spoke confidently. “For starters... allow me to introduce my lover Anuk. I am her Mistress... and she is exceedingly protective of me as you can see. She is also very short tempered right now because you have tried to kill our mate, and any sudden moves by you will resort in her removing the flesh from your face in the time it takes for your small mind to form a thought. We are going to take you back to our mate vampire. He is the man that your flying machines were trying to kill.

And just so you know... Anuk and I are very fond of our mate... so trying to kill him has placed you in a rather bad position. If you so much as twitch in what could be regarded as a threatening manner, I will spill your innards across the plains while Anuk tears the flesh from your body. Please nod if you understand me.”

The Coven pilot nodded slowly, his lone cobalt eye unable to tear itself from Anuk’s murderous gaze.

“Excellent.” Nayeca spoke. “Please extend your hands in front of you.”

“My... my arm is injured.” The pilot spoke.

In a single blink Anuk’s jaws snapped shut on the pilot’s shoulder with nearly two thousand pounds of pressure per square inch and she crunched down through bone and flesh with ease. The pilot screamed in agony, his head going towards her soft muzzle to try and alleviate the immense pain that was ripping through his body.

Nayeca pressed the R4 tighter to his throat, a thin trickle of blood seeping from the point as it bit into his skin. “Did I mention what a mistake it would be to lie to us vampire.” Nayeca spoke. “We watched you drink your blood to heal the wound on your arm fool. Yet you are now out of your replenishing blood, and you have injured your arm again. What a shame.”

The pilot screamed once more as the R4 slashed down, the razor like blade slicing through the flesh of his shoulder and upper arm, cutting through the tendons and muscle like a hot knife through butter.

“Now you no longer have the use of either arm.” Nayeca said in that calm voice. “And we will not need the restraints.”

Anuk stepped back, her muzzle and teeth stained with his blood and Nayeca let her amber eyes linger on her lover’s beautiful wolf form. That this wolf across from her was a stunningly beautiful Wood Elf female no longer dazzled Nayeca. That she fought with and slept with creatures she had only believed myth and legend until a few short weeks ago didn’t faze her. That this beautiful wolf and female elf, and her giant ebony skinned wolf mate belonged to her and her to them still caused tiny ripples of delight to course through her. She smiled unfazed as the silver flash of light shimmered and then was gone, leaving Anuk in her equally beautiful elfin form, her cerulean blue eyes gazing at her. Her long rust colored red hair was tied identical to Nayeca’s, wrapped in soft Drow silk, and the black body armor did nothing to hide her delicious figure. She drew her arm across her mouth wiping away the blood and then she spit on the ground.

“Daniel was right Mistress.” Anuk spoke. “They do taste like week old shit!”

Nayeca smiled. “Hopefully I will never have to experience that my love.” Nayeca spoke slipping her hand under the pilot’s useless left arm as Anuk did the same with his right. “Come vampire scum... Anuk and I would like to introduce you to someone.”

The pilot howled in pain as they hauled him to his feet none to gently and began to drag him back towards where Danny was redirecting his artillery.

HIGH COVEN *INFILTRATOR*-CLASS LIGHT FRIGATE HIGH ORBIT ABOVE EDEN CITY

That they had made it this far was a testament to the skill of his crew and nothing else, the High Cove Frigate Commander thought a she sat on the bridge of his ship waiting until his four planetary plasma cannons recharged and fired again. They had inflicted heavy damage to this elf and human city for nearly an hour, he and his crew watching with satisfaction as they cannons crisscrossed a path of destruction on the ground below them.

The *INFILTRATOR*-Class Light Frigate was one of the newer class ships within the High Coven Fleet, built mainly for fleet defense and long range scouting missions, it was less than half again the size of the *AUTUMN MOON*-Class frigate for the Union. If not for the competence of his crew, they would have arrived in this out of the way system with no LSD drive, and as it was told to him by his Chief Engineer, they had perhaps one jump left in the coils and then they would have to resort to sublight drives. The Commander was going to save that one jump for when he knew the fleet was going to jump out of the system.

They had watched as the bull dogged Lycavorian ships had closed with the Coven picket line, their missiles slamming into Union ships at long range, doing damage but only knocking two of the cruisers out of the fight. When the Lycavorian fleet had closed to their weapons range, the Commander watched as the superior

armor and shields on the heavier Union warships quickly began to take their toll on the stressed and short on supplies Coven fleet. He knew this to be the Lycavorian Home Guard Fleet, and like many Coven Commanders; he dreaded ever having to face this particular fleet in battle. The Union HGF fleet had never lost an engagement it had participated in. They had been battered and beaten down, but they had never lost, and seeing them arrive in the system had sent shivers of fear down the commander's spine. His ship was no match for any of the Union ships now in the system, and he knew from experience this was only half the HGF Fleet. Where was the other half he wondered as he had positioned his frigate to begin bombarding the city on the surface?

"How long until the Plasma batteries are recharged?" He turned asking his weapons officer.

"Ninety Seconds sir," The man answered. "Stay with the polar targeting sweep sir?"

The Commander nodded. "That shield may have gone back up with a Lycavorian LSD coil as its power source, but it wasn't meant to withstand a planetary bombardment. A few more hits should bring it back down. We..."

"Commander I have one contact, bearing eight three nine five mark one!" Another voice shouted from across the bridge, "Closing fast off our port quarter!"

"Identify!" The Commander snapped.

"It's a Lycavorian *AUTUMN MOON*-Class Heavy Frigate sir!" The man answered almost immediately.

"Range!" The Commander barked as he came to his feet.

"It is half a million kilometers and closing fast sir!" The man replied. "Do you wish to evade sir?"

"Shields! Shields!"

"Commander our shields won't hold against an Attack Frigate! We must evade!" The second man stepped into the picture now.

"Then evade! Hard to port and take us out of orbit! Full power to the sublight drives!"

"Commander the ship is firing!" The sensor operator screamed. "Three T14 Venom Missiles inbound on a high trajectory!"

"Starboard thrusters to full," The Commander snapped. "Take us out of the atmosphere now damn it!"

The *INFILTRATOR*-Class frigate was setting the atmosphere on fire as its sublight drives flared and pushed the ship out earth's gravitational field. At least it tried to.

The T14 Venom Anti-Ship missile was the newest in the Lycavorian inventory, a very fast and very powerful missile. It was designed primarily for hunting larger ships, but Ambassador Legsim saw no reason not to blow the High Coven Frigate into oblivion.

The three missiles struck almost with a hair's breath of each other, the first explosion exploded against the smaller ship's shields and overloaded them. The second missile drove straight into the mid section of the light frigate and detonated with a ferocious power, snapping the small frigate in two like a child's toy. The third missile struck the now free floating aft section of the ship which contained the propulsion and drive units. This explosion was larger and caused a mini sun to be born as the still powered LSD exploded with the warhead and added to its destruction power. The entire light frigate vanished in a single blast of incredible power and when the flash cleared the only pieces left were those that would burn up in the atmosphere upon re-entry.

LU *AUTUMN MOON*-CLASS HEAVY ATTACK FRIGATE *VALIANT STAR*

"Excellent shooting Commander," Legsim exclaimed as they watched the destruction of the Coven frigate.

"Thank you Ambassador." The Spartan Commander replied with a smile. "Helm... you will configure the ship for atmospheric entry and drop to one half sublight speed. Your course is already locked in! Take us to our landing coordinates!"

"As you order Commander,"

"Give me a report on the others!" Legsim demanded moving to the map chart.

The *VALIANT STAR*'s Commanding officer moved to the chart with him as it came alive with twenty-four blue dots. "Our two ships in the north are already setting down Ambassador!" The Commander spoke pointing to the two solid blue dots. "The elf Queen Tarifa has directed the others to these locations and they will begin setting down within moments. This is a first you know Ambassador."

Legsim looked at him. "What do you mean?"

"We've never used our Frigates like this before; as troop carriers I mean. Not is this number. This is going to end up being the largest ground invasion from orbit that we have ever conducted."

Legsim smiled. "There is a first time for everything Commander. And perhaps a tactic such as this is something we should look at more in depth."

"Sensors detected Xerxes Immortal transports landing here, three kilometers from the main defensive line in the south." The commander spoke. "Reports from the surface are only now beginning to come in, but it appears these cloned vampire soldiers have hit the King's defensive line and he is now fully engaged."

Legsim nodded quickly and pointed to the position of the vampire transports. "Xerxes will most likely force march the Immortals through this timber here and come at the King from directly south!" Legsim pointed to a large spot directly behind Eden City's defensive perimeter, and only two hundred meters from the trench line. "Land us here Commander, right on top of them. We can off load and directly join the battle and your gunners can switch to manual targeting and provide support."

The Commander looked at the elf ambassador. He had heard the when he was a fighter pilot he liked to take chances. Apparently that was not untrue. "I will make it so Ambassador."

"With all possible speed Commander, we must arrive before Xerxes hits the King's lines or we will need to walk two kilometers." Legsim spoke. "I am an old elf... and I would prefer not to have to cover that much distance on foot."

The Spartan Commander smiled.

EDEN CITY NORTHERN DEFENSIVE LINE

The arrival of Walter and his five thousand Spartans had brought a much needed jolt of hope to the men manning the northern line of Eden City. The northern perimeter was manned by a combination of mainly Tareif's elite Dragoons and regular elf soldiers from across the High Elf cities and thousands of humans that had joined Eden City with the hope of a promising future.

Many of the human men and women had come to Eden City thinking they would be the inferior race, but wanting the safety that Eden City and the settlements provided. What they found was completely different than what they had expected. In just under a year, Martin had brought all races, colors and creeds together in Eden City and forged a united front of those willing to lay down their lives for what they wanted and believed in. It was these defenders that three divisions of Alliance human troops slammed into. In the terrain all along the northern front, gunfire ripped the midday sky, the explosions of grenades and ground support rockets from the orbiting *STRIKERS* causing the ground to shudder for miles all around. The screams of the wounded and dying filled the momentary lapses in fighting as both sides regrouped and reloaded.

The Eden City defenders were well stocked and protected within their trenches, but the Alliance soldiers, mainly human vermin made up of slavers and mercenaries from across the planet didn't relent. The promise that they could have whatever booty they came across if they won was a powerful driving force, and these men were led by humans who had received training from the many Alliance warfare schools. They were the very same vampire schools that were at this moment, being burnt to the ground in every Alliance city across North America.

Casualties were beginning to mount quickly, and Tareif could no longer use his artillery so close to his own lines. When Walter's force of five thousand Spartans arrived it was like a tidal wave of raw power as they swept in from the north, chopping down mercenary and slaver scum as if they were harvesting wheat. The order had been sent out long ago by their King.

No prisoners were to be taken.

Walter led his Spartans from the front as he always had, flanking the Alliance scum and hitting them all up and down the northern line. He and his personal *Mora* fought like demons as they made their way to Tareif's location. They found Tarifa's father and his squad of Dragoons in hand to hand combat with what appeared to be almost a platoon of mercenaries. Walter's *Mora* fell upon them like the wolves they were and slaughtered them in seconds. It had taken the Elf General only minutes to reassemble his unit and get a picture of what was happening along his now seven mile long front, and as Walter watched with pride one of the elves he had created issued orders that human commanders responded to without question.

They were kneeling together now, along the trench line, blood spotting their uniforms, dirt and caked mud driven into skin and sweat streaked skin, and they stood ready. They both turned as the huge deafening roar had filled the area behind them on the other side of the ridge of trees. Smoke from explosions, fires and artillery still obscured much of the terrain behind them and they waited with trepidation wondering if the Alliance had gotten troops in behind them.

Tareif looked at Walter after several minutes of waiting in silence, "Holy One?" He asked.

Walter shook his head. "I don't know Tareif. Aletya and her aircraft are hitting targets further east as you directed. I don't know what this is."

The wind shifted slightly and blew a good amount of the smoke from their view and both Walter and Tareif gasped at what they saw. The black body armor and crimson cloaks of Spartan Centurions were gliding easily through the trees directly for them. Walter couldn't help the huge smile that crossed his face.

"Tareif..." He spoke as he got to his feet. "I believe this day just got a whole lot better."

They watched the deeply tanned Spartan spot them and jog over to them at a good clip. The matte black helmet hid most of his features except for his cool dark eyes and thin lips. He stepped up to them and stopped smartly.

"Senior Polemarch Dymas?" He asked meeting Walter's eyes.

"That would be me boy." Walter spoke.

The Spartan officer smiled at this. No one had ever called him boy before... but he was standing in the presence of a living legend and he knew the term was used without derogatory meaning. He looked at Tareif's sweat stained face. "You are War Master Tareif sir?"

Tareif nodded. "I am Spartan. Who might you be?"

The officer smiled, his eyes changing and his fangs extending. "I am Polemarch Farota; Third *Mora* of the Lycavorian Union Ninth Spartan Expeditionary Division sir!" He announced proudly. "I was told you had a vampire problem that needed to be cleaned out sir! I have eight hundred Spartans moving in along this line sir, and another eight hundred just over the ridge. Point us in the direction of this scum so that we can send them back to their home world in pieces!"

Tareif roared with laughter at this and pounded his hand down on the Spartan's shoulder. It was the first laugh he had been able to express in nearly a week, and it felt oh so very good. "We destroyed the vampire division earlier today son." Tareif spoke. "The enemies we are facing now are mercenary and slaver units employed by the vampires."

Farota smiled. "Even better War Master. We need to work out the kinks from all that time traveling in space to reach our King." He looked at Walter. "It would be an honor above all others Senior Polemarch if you would allow me to attach my *Mora* with yours and give command to you. To fight beside the Guardian of the Line of King Leonidas *and* an Elfin War Master is something I can pass on to my children."

Walter smiled broadly. "It is good to see that our people have adopted the many of the Spartan ways Polemarch Farota. That is something I did not expect."

"We may have been separated by thousands of light years sir, but the lessons that were taught by you and King Leonidas and others are required as part of our Agoge as well. It is a tradition our people have adopted from the Spartans of this planet and merged with our own."

Walter nodded. "We must make our way south young Spartan. I believe Xerxes has begun landing his troops and I wish to stand beside our King as I did his father when we send his black heart back to the pits of Hades."

Farota's grin was wide. "We stand ready to defeat all comers."

"Then let us do just that young Spartan!" Tareif said with a smile. "Let us do just that."

EDEN CITY COMMAND CENTER

“Then open the store rooms and begin distributing the damned supplies!” Tarifa snapped at the monitor. “The artillery will not breach the shield now, and Martin’s people have destroyed the ship firing at us! We need those medicines in storage before Anja completely runs out and resorts to using herbs! Now do it Captain!”

“As you order Milady,” The male elf on the screen answered. “I will order it immediately and see to the delivery myself.”

“Has there been any word from Chief Secretary Torcrum?” Tarifa asked.

“She is right here?” The female voice spoke from the back of the room, causing heads to turn.

Selene walked into the command center, her body armor saturated with a layer of concrete dust and her skin stained from the black smoke and soot billowing into the sky from the multiply fires burning out of control within the city. Her dark red hair had grown much longer over the months and was pulled tightly into a pony tail, and wrapped in fine Drow silk much like Tarifa’s raven mane. Gorgo and Isabella stood to one side of the room with the half dozen Spartans as they had for the last four hours, helping as much as they could but remaining out of the way. This was Martin’s city, and the elfin females he had in charge obviously knew what they were doing. Gorgo had never seen a female elf more in control than Tarifa was. Her commands were crisp and followed without question. The humans and elves in the center responded to her instantly, and those she had spoken in communications took her orders as if they came from Martin himself. She had known there were three female elves that were charged with the day to day running and protection of this city as well as millions more elves and humans across this continent, that information having been in the memories passed on to her from her son. She also knew that one was a half vampire Drow, whom she had already met, and the other had begun life as half elf and half human, and she was now a full vampire.

Selene Torcrum was this last elf, of that Gorgo had little doubt. She felt Isabella tense when Selene entered the Command Center, detecting the smell of pure vampire blood running through her. Gorgo could detect her vampire blood as well, only not as strongly as Isabella. They both watched stunned as Tarifa moved to this red hair vampire elf and they embraced like sisters.

“Tarifa they have brought ruin to our city!” Selene exclaimed holding Tarifa’s arms tightly.

Tarifa nodded. “We have lost much Selene, and we could still lose it all. Martin is now fully engaged along the entire southern front. My father and the Holy One have begun driving south with several units of Martin’s Spartans, fighting to reach him. Leland is re-orienting his forces and sending as much help as he can without leaving his position.” Tarifa shook her head slowly. “We have lost so many.”

Selene’s eyes grew a little wider. “Tarifa... my... have you heard from Lynwe?”

Tarifa met Selene’s eyes. “She was seriously injured, but she will survive Selene. She is at the airfield with Anja recovering. I do not know what her condition is at the moment but...”

“But you can ask Lynwe herself.” Anja’s voice filled the Command Center.

Once more heads turned and they watched as Atropos led Anja, Lynwe and a dozen other blood spattered Spartans into the control room. And once more Gorgo and Isabella were stunned as the vampire elf rushed into the arms of the vampire Drow and they embraced not as friends do, but as lovers would. They also noticed the identical silk wraps in Lynwe’s dirty white hair.

Lynwe...” Selene gasped as she saw how weak her Drow Mistress was.

“I am fit my love.” Lynwe spoke the words. “Anja has allowed me to come here and assist in any way I am able.”

“And that damn well better be all you do!” Anja snapped. “I patched you up once; don’t make me have to do it again!”

Lynwe nodded with a weak smile as her arms encircled Selene. “Tarifa where are Aihola and Dekton?” She asked looking around the room. “I have not heard or seen from them, and Anja says they should have come to the airfield when they were done.”

“They went to assist in repairing the damaged control tower and have not returned.” Tarifa replied. “Hold on...”

Nya Istel where are you? Tarifa’s brow furrowed when Aihola did not reply immediately. *Nya Istel?* Lynwe stepped forward when Tarifa’s brow furrowed. *Dekton... where are you husband?* She looked at Lynwe and Selene. “They are not answering me.” She spoke, worry creeping into her voice. “They have never not answered me.”

Selene turned to the Dragoon security teams in the Command Center. “Dragoons... go with Tarifa and find them!” She ordered. She turned back to Tarifa. “Go Tarifa... I am here now and I will take care of things.”

Tarifa’s eyes turned to look at Anja. “We are moving to the southern defensive line Tarifa. Martin was right... that is where we will make our stand. Go... there is almost no activity behind us, and we are already sending everyone we can south.”

Tarifa nodded fighting down the urge to panic. “I will stay in touch.” She spoke before moving to leave the Command Center.

Anja turned to Atropos. “Atropos...”

He nodded without her having to speak the order and he looked at two of his men. “Go with her. Protect her at all costs.” He ordered. They were moving before the words had finished leaving his mouth just as Gorgo leaned to one of her Spartan security troops.

“Go with them.” She ordered. “She is a Queen of elves and a wolf.”

The young Spartan nodded and quickly followed the others.

Selene stepped closer to the large monitor in the main control room, Lynwe moving to the large map chart that showed every Eden City unit in blue and the Alliance forces in red. There was far more red than blue... but that number was quickly disappearing. “I want reports from everyone! Any units that are not tasked to defensive positions in the north and west are to immediately begin moving to the southern line! That is where our future will be decided!”

Gorgo stepped up to Anja. “Isabella and I will go with you Anja.” She spoke. “If we are to die this day, I will die beside my son.”

Anja nodded and looked at Atropos once more. She had grown accustomed to the large Spartan, his sons always at his side. “Atropos it is time we joined with our King.”

Atropos’s smile held a savage glint in it and he nodded.

Thirteen miles south of Moran’s position

“They’re toasted Commander.” The elf artillery commander told Danny as they looked at the holo map chart in the rear of the Command Hopper. “I sent up a drone over this entire ridge. Aside from some light Hoppers that were high tailing it out of the area, not a single gun position is still active. I counted nearly three hundred gun positions alone. We dusted them good!”

Danny nodded quickly, his dark eyes scanning the chart. “That armored column is in range?”

The elf nodded. “They’re still bogged down in the minefield though.”

“Let’s not give them a chance to become un-bogged down.” Dan said. “Use the 300 IIs to give them a dose of medicine and target the guns on these idiots running south in front of Tareif.”

The elf commander nodded quickly. “It will be done.”

Dan turned and stepped out of the Hopper, his eyes seeing Anuk and Nayeca dragging the vampire pilot he had sent them to check on between them. They had seen the escape pod come burning in about a mile away, and Dan hadn’t thought twice about sending the two of them to check it. Part of that was his Spartan blood he knew, no one was so invaluable that they could not be used in this fight. The second part was that he was very comfortable with both of them and their skills. Anuk was his mate... and Danny knew he would never take another as long as she was beside him. Anuk had grown since their first day together, and she was just as deadly if not more so than Julie ever was. He had not realized just how much she would make his blood burn for her. He had known that from the moment he had smelled her scent on the scarf so long ago that she would be his mate, yet now after nearly six months together, they still could not get enough of each other. He had asked

Walter once during an off day in Sparta why she would affect him so much when Julie, Anja and others had not. Walter had just smiled and shrugged his shoulders, saying that perhaps Anuk should have been born a wolf and not an elf. Walter had told him to treasure every moment with her, and never disrespect her, something his father had told him countless times. It was the reason he and Daniel's mother had been together for so many centuries, and in all that time had only had one fight. Respect your mate and all that she does for you and for others his father had told him.

When Nayeca had come into their lives it had all fallen together like pieces in a puzzle. Danny knew that he would have been happy having no one but Anuk for the rest of his years, especially now that she was wolf and would live as long as him. His relationship with Julie and Anja had prepared him for this, and seeing them walk side-by-side dragging the pilot between them he knew it was right. They complimented each other out of bed even more than they did in bed.

Nayeca was a Drow, and he knew Anuk was her "slave" sexually, and in the brief hours they had had together, he had played that part as well quite willingly. Danny knew though that Nayeca wanted Anuk as much as she wanted Nayeca, and while that might be a role they would play together he knew Nayeca was deeply in love with Anuk, and perhaps even him, and the relationship between the three of them would only grow stronger and more secure as time passed and they stayed together. He would never chose Nayeca over Anuk... but Danny had no doubts the longer they stayed together, the stronger they all would become and nothing would pull them apart.

The gun crews on the end of their firing line began launching their rounds downrange and snapped him out of his thoughts as Nayeca and Anuk dumped the pilot on the ground at his feet.

"Well what do we have here?" Danny asked as they stepped up to either side of him. Anuk pressed close to him nuzzling his arm while Nayeca squeezed his hand tightly. The pilot's arms hung useless at his sides and it was obvious he was in pain. He saw the jagged teeth marks on his right shoulder and looked at Anuk, blood drops still staining the corner of her soft lips. "I take it he was not happy to see you."

Anuk smiled brilliantly and took the canteen he offered to her to wash her mouth out of the foul taste. "He thought to trick us." She said before gulping a long drink of water.

Dan looked at the pilot and squatted down in front of him. "Man... you're dumber than the blood suckers that come from this planet. You tried to trick a female wolf *and* a Drow. Don't they teach you anything in your blood sucker schools?"

The Coven Flight Commander glanced up at the hulking black giant, the scent of pure Lycavorian blood filling his nostrils. The sun glistened off Danny's bald head and he saw the possessive way the two females stood close to him.

"I will tell you nothing!" The Coven pilot spat.

"Oh I think you will." Dan spoke.

"I... I am a Pureblood!" The pilot spoke. "You will get no information from me Lycavorian dog!"

Dan smiled. "You keep thinking that." He said. "You've already met Nayeca here, and she is a Drow elf. You do know what a Drow is right?"

The Coven pilot looked at Nayeca and her glittering amber eyes. He shook his head. "There... there are no elves like her in the Union."

Dan's eyebrow lifted, "Really? That's interesting. I'll give you a short history lesson. Your kind butchered her kind here on earth. You almost wiped them out. Needless to say that does not give vampires a whole lot of breathing space when it comes to the Drow. You tried to kill her Queen, on more than one occasion over the years, another fact that does not ingratiate your kind to the Drow elves. So you see... this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you too Nayeca... and trust me when I tell you pal... you'll be singing in no time. And it won't be because you're happy."

The pilot looked at Nayeca as she pulled the R4 Hybrid from her belt and spun it expertly in her hand, her eyes glittering points of rage and hatred. The pilot remembered the sharpness of that blade as it had sliced through his shoulder, and it flashed across his mind that even uninjured he may not have been able to defeat this female elf. She was darker skinned than any elf he had ever seen and had told the truth when he said there were none of her kind in the Union. Her dark skin and amber eyes gave her a very savage look and suddenly he didn't doubt she would gladly gut him like a fish. He watched as she squatted down next to Daniel.

“I will begin just below your jaw.” Nayeca spoke reaching out with the R4 and pointing at him. “I will remove your skin strip by strip and let it dry in the sun. You will scream for me have no doubt. Your kind is very hard to kill, so after I have stripped your body of your protective skin, I will begin removing your fingers and other digits, to include your disgusting vampire cock. When I grow tired of your screams I will cut out your tongue and remove all of your teeth as well. When I have done that... your organs will be next. It is delightful to watch as your kind squirms when I begin removing your internal organs and you do not die. I...”

“Xerxes,” The pilot screamed, “Kill Xerxes!”

Dan smiled. “We’re going to do that anyway pal! That doesn’t help me a bit!”

“No... we were briefed that if Xerxes fell we were to retreat!” The Coven pilot nearly shouted, real fear gripping his chest now. “The High Lord is not... he no longer wants this vile planet. His orders... his orders were to take the Princess and retreat if Xerxes fell. He will not sacrifice both his children!”

Dan stood up to his full height and looked at Nayeca and Anuk. “Make sure he doesn’t go anywhere.” Dan spoke before heading for the Command Hopper.

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA ISLAND

“They have shattered our defensive picket line Princess!” Malachi reported. “I’ve lost a third of my ships destroyed or crippled.”

“What about them?” Yuri snapped.

“They have taken heavy casualties Princess, but as you know their ships are built to take more damage and remain in a fight.” Malachi was speaking calmly, even though Yuri could detect the worry in his voice. “They are just now reforming their attack line and I expect they will come right for me once they have conducted minor repairs and rearmed their fighters.”

“Can you hold Admiral?” Yuri asked.

Malachi shook his head. “No.” He answered quickly. “I have barely enough defensive missiles now. And the only fighters that remain are flying fleet patrol. The pilots are recruits and their ships forty years old. Xerxes left most of our advanced fighters with the remainder of my Task Force.”

Yuri was thinking quickly. “My brother landed the remainder of his Immortals to Leonidas’s south. They are marching through the timber as we speak.”

Malachi nodded. “Yes... and our sensor sweeps of this city are indicating that they are sending every available fighter to man that southern line. The Coven cities are in flames Princess. The humans have thrown off the few Coven garrisons that you left in place. It is the same across the planet Princess. We are receiving reports from all of our positions, not just in North America. Elves and humans have banded together across the planet Milady. They are attacking and burning our outposts as we speak. Their losses are massive but they are continuing to fight! Your father...”

“All of you be silent!” Yuri snapped viciously turning away from the large monitor and bringing all activity to a halt in the Coven Command Center.

You are the Coven High Guard Commander daughter. The voice reached across thousands of light years to touch her mind. I will not sacrifice you as well as your idiot brother. You know what you must do. Veldruk’s voice was calm but firm and Yuri let out a long sigh. He must have been using a Neurobooster to reach this far and touch her.

I have failed you father.

You have accomplished what I sent you there for Yuri. Veldruk answered her thoughts. The plans for our cloned soldiers must be protected at all costs, and to execute a strategic withdrawal is not defeat. It is a sign of a wise commander. You have not failed me. You have been away from your home for too long. The son of Leonidas may win earth... but our war is far from over. There will be other battles. And in the end we will be victorious.

I failed in killing that pig Leonidas.

I would have failed in that daughter. His family is blessed with exceptional luck and a determined will to survive. Once the Union discovered he was still alive it was only a matter of time before they reached him.

I will one day kill that vile man! Yuri spat.

Perhaps you will daughter, but you must respect him as a leader. A Lycavorian dog he may be, but even dogs have superior leaders.

You... you sound like you admire him father. Yuri spoke.

I admire what he has been able to accomplish Yuri, as should you. You are not your brother Xerxes. He has allowed his hate to cloud his reason simply because the father marked him. Do not make the same mistake. The son of Leonidas has spurred them to victory... this time, and given us valuable insight as to their capabilities that we did not have before. There will be others I assure you.

Why did you not tell me of my... my brother father?

Your mother requested I say nothing. She wanted to surprise you. And within the year you will have another brother or sister.

Yuri couldn't help the chuckle that escaped her lips. You are insatiable father.

Leave that hunk of rock Yuri. Bring what you have gained and returned home for a time. Your skills will be needed more here now that the grandson of Resumar has surfaced.

Yuri took a deep breath and let it out slowly. Very well father, I will do as you ask.

You will do it because you are a superior commander and far better than your brother ever was Yuri.

Yuri turned back to the monitor. "Admiral... I want you to prepare to blast my frigate a path from this wretched planet. I am recalling all of our forces to the spaceport and we will depart in one hour!" Yuri spoke. "If they are not here... they will be left behind! Send the recall signal planet wide. One hour!"

Yuri reached out once more. *Robert... it is time to go!*

SOUTHERN DEFENSIVE LINE

They began their attack with grenades, throwing them as far as they could toward the trench lines now filled with Spartans, elves and humans. Explosions and shrapnel filled the mid day air all around them whizzing past the crouched down troops manning the trenches. They did not return fire.

Three complete Cloned vampire infantry brigades moved from the cover of the trees, using their vampire speed to cross the open terrain, using the craters created by the hundreds of mines that had been set off. More grenades were thrown, some of them reaching beyond the trench lines, shredding flesh and ground as they exploded. Another three brigades broke form the trees and followed their first attacking units. Nearly two complete divisions of cloned vampire troops had marched through the timber from where the air laid minefield and stranded their armor. In the distance behind them they could hear the deep explosions as artillery from somewhere was directed on the vehicles they once had occupied.

Still they advanced without effort.

Dozens of snipers were sitting back among the remaining tall buildings and using massive rifles to strike down their number. Bodies began to fall within their ranks as they moved, but they were not deterred. Joining the snipers a minute later were small caliber mortars set up only half a mile behind the trench, and they began dropping anti-personnel rounds among the advancing cloned soldiers as fast as they could drop them down the tubes of their guns. And the elves manning the mortars were very fast. New explosions rocked their ranks, clone bodies beginning to fly through the air, many missing arms and legs.

One could just make out the immense *AUTUM MOON* frigate in the white and black smoke that littered the battlefield. It appeared to sit nearly on top of the trench line but actually was resting several hundred meters away, its plasma cannons joining the fray now, the red and blue plasma bolts tearing through flesh and bone as the gunners had switched to manual mode and were gleefully blasting anything they could to stem the tide of clone troops advancing toward their King.

Still they advanced.

The first cloned vampire troop to get within a hundred meters of the actual trench was a senior officer. His mind registered the small mounds of black helmets that he saw crouching down in the trench and he briefly

wondered why they had received no return fire from the trench. He wondered this thought for all of three seconds before he died.

NOW!

Martin's telepathic command sounded like a scream in the heads of every Spartan within the trench as if with one mind they all stood up and shoved their weapons forward.

Twenty-two frigates had landed exactly where Tarifa had directed them, and the eight hundred Spartans from each frigate had unloaded their ships in record time, many of them shifting to wolf form to sprint the three quarters of a mile to the trench where their King waited. Nearly seventeen thousand Lycavorian Spartans had joined their brother Spartans from earth within the trench, filling it to overflowing, crammed nearly four deep as they were. Many tried to catch a glimpse of their King, and when they saw the four colored crest upon their matt black helmet they felt the pride sweep through them. And then they saw the platinum colored crested helmet, and then the raven colored crest among the Spartans, and they understood. Not only would they fight beside their King this day, but they would fight beside his Queens as well.

Martin wore an expression of evil joy as he watched the thousands of new Spartans join him and the others in the trenches. He could see the look of determination on Vengal's face, and how he gripped his weapon tighter. These were his people... his soldiers.

Many of the cloned vampire troopers came skidding to halts as nearly forty thousand Spartans stood up within the four mile long trench and the gates of hell truly opened. The hail of lead that hit them was as solid as if they had hit a wall. The surprised joy they had experienced at finding they received no return fire from the trench turned to surprised death. Cloned vampire troops they may have been, engineered to be superior in every way and almost impossible to kill, yet they died that day in southern Utah. The barrage lasted for one full magazine from each Spartan trooper and then Martin's next command exploded into their minds and almost all of them smiled in joy.

SPARTANS! CHARGE!

Gorgo, Anja and Isabella as well as the dozens that had joined them in their sprint to the southern defensive line came to abrupt halts at the mass surge of crimson and black from the trench line stretched in front of them. Smoke obscured much of the battle field, mortars still landing in the distance, plasma gunners picking their targets carefully. The battle cry rolled across the landscape like thunder, deafening all around them.

Gorgo and Isabella had fought before, countless times... yet what they were witnessing was unlike either of them had ever seen, and they would carry this image in their minds for many years to come. Even in the mass of crimson and black it was easy enough to pick out the three crested Spartan helmets as they waded into the mass of bodies, *Nehtes* and K12s smiting out death and destruction wherever they turned.

"By the gods," Gorgo gasped.

It was Anja who acted first, turning to the elves and human who had made the sprint with them.

"Behind them," She screamed out from behind her helmet. The Persian red crest waved in the wind as her head moved. "Fall in behind them! Finish any that survive and begin to pull our wounded back! Now we go!"

Atropos could only smile at his two sons as they followed their Queen into the fray, Gorgo and Isabella matching their strides without thinking.

MOON BASE EDEN

"Where are those fucking Spartans?" Mical screamed as he unleashed another burst of fire from his HK down the corridor.

The internal alarms they had set up to warn them of someone trying to breach their section had saved their lives. The sealed hatch melted under the combined heat from their torches, but it had allowed them to get into position to defend themselves.

One of the humans had slid across the floor and manned the lone heavy machine gun they had liberated from a secondary weapons locker. The moment his hands touched the weapon he began to send hot lead bouncing down the corridor. Mical and Anari stood to either side of the hatch, their HK's sending controlled burst after controlled sizzling down the dimly lit corridor. Grenades followed from both sides but Wallace had set up equipment in the corridor to guard against this, and while their grenades shredded flesh, Marcus's grenades slammed into metal and steel desks and lockers protecting Wallace and his tiny team.

"They will be here!" Anari screamed back as she slammed a fresh magazine.

"Now would be good!" Mical screamed as he unleashed another burst.

"They will..." Anari's amber eyes flew open wide her words lost as Mical's body staggered back violently, the impacts of dozens of rounds hitting him happening almost in slow motion. "NO!" Anari screamed as he fell back against the computer consoles.

With a savage snarl on her face she turned her HK down the corridor and unleashed a sustained burst, emptying her magazine in only five seconds. Her amber eyes watched as six attacking vampires fell under the fusillade, and as she reached for another magazine she saw the vampire step into the smoking corridor, a rocket launcher on his shoulder.

Anari turned quickly as Wallace made his way to the edge of the door trying to pull Mical's body from the opening.

"Admiral no!" She screamed launching her body at his just as the vampire fired.

Wallace flew back as Anari's body hit his, the rocket impacting the bulkhead just outside the door, red hot shrapnel filling the air all around him. His head slammed against the unyielding bulkhead and he felt pain lancing up his legs and the left side of his arm as jagged metal fragments ripped into his body. He could vaguely feel thuds against his chest and briefly wondered why these impacts weren't killing him and then blackness washed over him.

Laughter echoed in his head as his vision returned and he opened his eyes. He squinted against the bright light, smoke clouding his vision, but he felt the weight on his chest and looked down, shaking his head to clear his vision. This movement caused pain to lance through him, clearing his foggy mind and causing his eyes to focus clearly.

Anari's blood soaked hair was splayed across his chest, the back of her body armor punctured in almost a dozen places from where the shrapnel had slashed into her, one piece punching into the back of her unprotected skull and exiting out the front just above her amber eye, her blood and bone fragments splashed across his chest.

"NO!" Wallace screamed still hearing the laughter in his head, but unable to move due to his injuries and Anari's dead weight on his chest.

"Admiral Wallace!" Marcus's voice carried through the smoke. "I should have guessed it would be you!" Wallace watched as Marcus came from the smoke, the automatic in his hand. He lifted the weapon and pointed it at his head. "I have wanted to kill you since I first saw you. Now it seems I will get the chance."

"Fuck you!" Wallace snapped his arm wrapping around Anari's body as if shielding her from further harm.

"Ah... I see I finally caught up with one of my former soldiers." Marcus spoke. "A pity it had to be Anari. I preferred her over Lynwe. No matter... I will kill you now and escape on a Raptor. I..."

Marcus's eyes bulged open and blood spilled from his lips as the pointed shaft of the *Nehtes* burst from his chest nearly a foot. The sidearm fell from suddenly limp fingers, his amber eyes filled with agony as the helmet of the grizzled Spartan appeared over his shoulder.

"You will kill no more Spartans this day vampire elf!" The man's growled viciously.

Wallace watched as the *Nehtes* was ripped from his chest and plunged into his back once more, bursting out his abdomen this time, the bloody intestines dangling from the broad spear point. Wallace watched as once more the *Nehtes* disappeared and the new Spartan shoved Marcus's body forward into the bulkhead. He lifted his P190 and held it one handed as he pulled the trigger, the gout of flame almost blinding as more than twenty rounds slammed into Marcus's chest, blood fountaining from each devastating projectile.

Wallace's shifted his eyes as more of the strange Spartans rushed into the room, their weapons out and covering the entire control room. He heard voices shouting, and then the face of the scarred elf appeared in front of him.

"Rest easy now Spartan, you have won." The Captain of the *DESTINY'S BLADE* gripped Wallace's uninjured hand tightly. "Get the Hadarian medic in here now!"

"Anari... Anari is to..." Wallace tried to croak out the words but they failed him.

The elf Captain squeezed Wallace's hand. "Do not worry my friend. We will honor your comrades, to include the she-elf who saved your life."

Wallace closed his eyes once more as those words were the last he would hear for some time. The Captain of the *DESTINY'S BLADE* got to his feet and turned to the *Mora* Polemarch who had skewered Marcus.

"Be mindful of the bodies Polemarch. They were this Spartan's comrades. They had to be treated with respect and honor." He spoke.

The Polemarch nodded quickly. "It will be done Captain. I will take care of the half vampire she-elf myself."

"Good. Deploy your *Mora* throughout the station; sweep every corridor, every room. Leave the civilians where they are for now, but insure they have food and water." The Captain spoke. "I will move to the control room with a Lochi and contact the she-elf in the King's city to report we have the station." The Captain looked at Wallace. "Move him to the *DESTINY'S BLADE* and insure he has the finest medical attention we can provide. He has accomplished his mission against all odds and he will be honored." The Captain looked around the room at the bodies. "They all will be."

EDEN CITY

NEAR THE EDEN CITY AIRFIELD

Background Music; Now We Are Free; Gladiator ST

Tarifa scrambled over the jagged pile of concrete and steel, her wolf nose searching for the scents she so wanted to taste. She had been calling them telepathically since leaving the Command Center, and the longer she got no reply, the more fear gripped her heart and her stomach.

The three Spartans and two Dragoons who had accompanied her were spread out in a loose formation as they approached the site of the control tower, their eyes and weapons alert and sweeping the area around them for any sign of danger. They had heard the massive eruption of small arms fire only a short while ago, combined with the mortars and plasma cannons. Tarifa spotted the tower that was one of four generating the shield and she saw the body of Isabella's soldier leaning against the damaged wall, clutching the control box in his dead hand.

"Gods no," Tarifa gasped loudly scrambling forward. "*Nya Istel!*" She screamed, "Dekton!" Tarifa sprinted forward disregarding everything around her.

"Milady wait!" One of the Spartans exclaimed following her without question.

Tarifa scrambled to the top of the rubble, ignoring the slivers of concrete that dug into her skin, her sapphire eyes wide and frightened. The wind shifted then and she caught Aihola's scent in the wind, her head snapping around. Tarifa's eyes went wide and the pain came then as she saw them. "NO!" She screamed. "NO!"

Aihola still lay across Dekton's unmoving and broken body as Tarifa fell painfully to her knees beside them, "Dekton!!" Tarifa's hands were shaking terribly as she reached out to touch Aihola's bloody hair and shoulder. "*Nya Istel!*"

Tarifa sobbed uncontrollably and drew back terrified as Aihola's body rolled away at her touch and she saw the massive plasma cannons wounds in Dekton's body. She knew without question he was dead, and she felt the knife tearing into her guts as she put her hands out slowly, reaching once more for Aihola and visibly shaking as if she was convulsing in agonizing pain. "*Nya Istel!*" Tarifa wept; her voice a moan of agony that the Spartans and Dragoons near her had never heard before.

Tarifa gathered Aihola's limp body into her arms as she sat next to Dekton, softly rocking her Drow Mistress in her arms, burying her face in Aihola's dusty and blood stained hair and shoulder. "I told... I told you to be careful *Nya Istel*." Tarifa wept gently pulling her bloody hair from her face. "Why... why didn't you listen to me?" Tarifa looked at Dekton's body. "Neither of you listened to me! Why?"

The Spartans and Dragoons stayed at a respectful distance, unable to comfort someone who had lost not one but two loved ones. Gorgo's Spartan felt the wind shift again and the faint smell of fresh orchids flirted with his nose. He turned and looked at where the dead vampire from Isabella's command sat and his keen eyes saw something else. He began to move to that location, as the elf Queen screamed out her pain.

Tarifa cradled Aihola's body, her fingers tracing her cheek and lips softly, her tears falling onto Aihola's cheeks. She had never imagined herself being in love with a woman, a Drow female no less, but the moment Aihola had stepped into her life, she knew they were fated to be together. She had experienced more love and pleasure in this woman's arms in the last year than all of her hundred and twenty-five years behind her combined. Even their time with Dekton in their lives could not compare to what they had been through and experienced together.

"I... I will never... I will never love another as I love you *Nya Istel*." Tarifa wept. "Neither man nor woman will ever hold me again. I... I don't know how I will go on my love! You are my... you are my strength... my soul... I..."

Aihola's chest heaved; Tarifa's tear clouded eyes going wide as small bits of blood spilled from her lips, "My... Tarifa." Aihola croaked out.

"*Nya Istel*?" Tarifa spoke, pulling her tighter, her eyes wide. "Aihola..."

Aihola's amber eyes opened slowly, her head turning to gaze up into Tarifa's beautiful eyes. A smile spread across her face slowly. "I... I knew you would... I knew you would come for me my love."

"I will never leave you Aihola." Tarifa exclaimed, "Never!" Tarifa looked up. "Call for a medic from the airfield now!" She screamed.

"Dek... Delton my love... he..."

Tarifa shook her head slowly, fresh tears rolling down her cheeks. "He... he has passed on *Nya Istel*." She said. "He... he will not be coming home with us."

Tears blossomed from Aihola's eyes as they closed and shook her head. "He saved me my love." She said softly, the pain in her voice a palpable thing. "He... he did not want me to leave... to leave you."

"Hold on Aihola." Tarifa spoke pulling her closer and pulling at the body armor on her arm. "You need blood to heal *Nya Istel*." Tarifa got her armor pulled up and placed her arm in front of Aihola's face. "Take it Aihola. Please my love."

Aihola groaned and reached up to take Tarifa's arm in her bloody hands. "Tarifa... you won't... you won't leave me?"

Tarifa shook her head vigorously. "I... I could not live without you Mistress. Please my love, please... take it."

Aihola bit down into Tarifa's arm, feeling Tarifa pull her closer, protecting her, shielding her as any female wolf would shield her mate. She did not see Tarifa look at Dekton's body next to them and weep softly... she could feel her shuddering as she held her.

The Spartan knelt next to Diego's body, his eyes and nose working overtime. He saw the impression in the dirt next to Diego and then the splotches of blood where no blood should have been. He had flown enough with her to know what Commander For'mya smelled like as he and many of the other Spartans had commented on her sweet orchid scent. He also knew a live vampire when he smelled one.

General Vistr. He projected with his mind. *What is your location sir?*

I am at the airfield directing the northern defensive perimeter and coordinating with Admiral Riall to bring the remainder of our forces to the surface. What is it Spartan!

General... *I'm not completely sure sir, but I believe Star Commander For'mya has been taken.* He did not see Vistr look up from the map chart he was looking at.

Taken? Taken by whom? Where are you?

Lady Gorgo ordered me to accompany the she-elf Tarifa in the search for her mates. We have found them near the western control tower from your location.

Yes I know. I sent For'mya there with an LSD coil to assist in repairing the tower. That was hours ago.

General... we have found Tarifa's mates. The unit that came and repaired the tower are all dead except for the half vampire she-elf Queen. And Commander For'mya is missing. Her scent is weak and it is mixed in with the scent of one of these cloned Coven troops.

Remain there; I am on my way with a medical and forensic team. Vistr ordered.

**ALLIANCE RAPTOR
PROCEEDING WEST
ALTITUDE SIXTY FEET**

“Do not go above a hundred feet if you want to live!” Moran instructed the Clone pilot. “They blow us out of the sky and end this trip quick.”

“The terrain is pretty much desert from here to the coast sir! We should be alright!” The pilot replied.

“Tell me that when we are down again!” Moran snapped turning and moving into the back of the Raptor and settling into the ground monitoring station.

He and Cha'talla had made it to one of the light Hoppers on the far ridge as the third volley of artillery decimated what remained of his command. They had gone north at breakneck speed to where the temporary Raptor airfield was hidden and discovered only one ship left. The others had pulled out already after receiving the recall code. Moran and Cha'talla hadn't hesitated in the least. They had made one stop as they flew at a hundred feet or less the entire way, scraping the tree tops and even flying between them.

He flipped the control switch and Yuri's face appeared on the screen.

“Robert! Where are you?” She demanded, keeping the relief she felt out of her voice.

“We're thirteen minutes from your location.” He spoke. “We got our asses handed to us by artillery that was able to sneak in behind us. I'm sorry Yuri.”

“The Lycavorian fleet has done far more than that!” Yuri snapped. “You are not at fault. They were able to land nearly twenty thousand Spartans in and around Eden City. They engaged our cloned troops minutes ago.”

“And...” Moran asked.

Yuri shook her head. “Leonidas is slaughtering them as we speak! Events have changed quickly Robert.” Yuri spoke more calmly than he expected. “Leonidas and the elves have gained the upper hand. The whole planet has revolted and it is time we cut our losses and left. Come in from the north Robert. That is the only pad we have secured.”

“Yuri what are you going to do about Xerxes?” Moran asked. “He flew off with the rest of the Immortals to the south of Eden City.”

“My brother is lost Robert! I can not raise him on any channel we have, and he will not reply to my thoughts.” Yuri replied. “He has sealed his own fate.”

Moran heard the groan from his left. “I may have gotten us a conciliation prize Yuri.”

“What do you mean?”

Moran looked at For'mya's inert form on the deck of the Raptor. She was glaring at him with her dark brown eyes and he smiled. “Cha'talla tells me that we have captured the senior *STRIKER AT* pilot in the Lycavorian Union, a female elf by the name of For'mya.”

Yuri's eyes grew a little wider, “Truly?” She asked. “Well that is a prize.” Yuri leaned forward in the monitor. “Hurry husband! We don't have much time.”

Moran nodded. “We'll be there.” He watched the monitor fade out and he turned his head to look at For'mya again.

“I will tell you nothing!” She barked at him. “You should kill me now!”

Moran grinned and got up from his chair and squatted next to her. He lashed out with a closed fist hitting her in the face. The blow rocked her head back and he heard her perfect elfin nose crunch under the blow. He snatched her golden hair in his fist and yanked her head up viciously hearing her cry out in pain.

“Kill you?” Moran asked casually. “I'm not going to kill you she-elf. You're too important for that. Why do you think I killed that cloned asshole that captured you? No... we're going to feed on you bitch, a little each

time. You're going to be our personal blood bank. Cha'talla tells me elf blood like yours is the sweetest of all. I'll enjoy finding out. And when we aren't feeding on you, you'll be entertaining as many males as I can find that would like to pork you. When I'm done with you bitch... you'll be begging to tell me everything I want to know. Count on that."

Moran rammed her head down into the deck and For'mya dropped into blackness. Cha'talla stepped up to him as he rose back up.

"We must move quickly my friend. If what Princess Yuri says is true the Lycavorians will close the gaps quickly." Cha'talla spoke. "They are animals, but they are very efficient animals. The odds were not in our favor."

Moran looked at him. "I hate to lose Cha'talla." He spoke.

Cha'talla nodded. "As do I. But like you... I know when it is time to conduct a withdrawal against superior forces. At the moment, as much as it burns me to say, the Lycavorian dogs have the superior forces."

"And Xerxes?" Moran asked.

Cha'talla shrugged. "The Immortals have their instructions." He spoke.

EDEN CITY SOUTHERN DEFENSIVE LINE

The Vampire Coven High Guard Commander had been right. It was a slaughter.

The moment the Spartans had cleared the trench it became a slaughter.

Cloned vampire troopers littered the battlefield like grains of sand. It was a ghastly sight to behold. Martin and his Spartans took no prisoners and they offered no mercy. The lines of soldiers came together like the plates of earthquake vault, and the screaming began. The battle was the same as that of the Eden City airfield, only ten times larger. Everyone ran out of ammunition within the first ten seconds, and the battle descended into a melee. And as before, the cloned troops were not prepared for hand-to-hand combat, having to resort to swinging the empty weapons as clubs.

The Spartans were not so limited.

Shi Viskas flashed every few seconds removing a head, an arm or a leg. *Nehtes* swung wildly and with precision loping off limbs or impaling bodies. The Spartans quickly out distanced their human and elf comrades and took the fight to the cloned troopers.

In the thick of the battle three colorful Spartan helmet crests became four, and around those four were a pile of bodies stacked three high. To those who witnessed this and would relate it to others, the tale grew bolder with each telling. Blood ran across the ground like a river around them, the screams of the dying filling the air. The flash of a silver Shi Viska, the thrust of a Royal *Nehtes*, it mattered not, for wherever one of them struck a cloned vampire soldier fell dead or crippled.

The humans and elves swept across the field behind their Spartan comrades and they took no prisoners per their orders. The wounded were dragged from the battlefield screaming out their pain and anger.

Martin's body armor was splashed with blood and more joined that when he stabbed his *Nehtes* through the throat of the cloned soldier in front of him and wrenched it free, watching him fall. He spun around searching for more targets, only to discover there were none. His yellow/gold eyes darted to find his Queens, looking for Aricia first. She was stretched out on the ground like a wolf ready to pounce, her Shi Viska humming on her arm, her bloody *Nehtes* extended out in front of her poised for attack, azure blue wolf eyes seeking more targets. Anja was directly to her left and slightly behind, in much the same position, her jade green wolf eyes wide in the rush of battle, Dysea standing behind them, bloodier than both of them, but just as ready. The Spartans all around them were doing the same, seeking new targets and finding none. Bodies lay scattered behind them as if a massive wave had come through this area and flattened everything.

In essence that is exactly what had happened.

Martin stretched to his full height rubbing his helmet where a cloned soldier had connected and put a dent in the side of his cheek plate cutting his skin. He surveyed the huge field seeing the Spartans beginning to move back along the field and assisting the elves and humans in killing any cloned soldiers that survived.

They were his Spartans, his people.

He felt Aricia reach for him first and her aura washed over him with love and warmth followed immediately by Dysea and Anja as all three of them came up to encircle him, pressing close, nuzzling him as he returned the attention.

My son! The voice burst into his thoughts and he looked up to see his mother standing a hundred meters away.

Martin felt his pulse quicken as he stared at her, so beautiful and proud. He took a step toward her and froze when the words erupted within the minds of all the Spartans.

SPARTAN DOGS!

Martin did not turn as did every Spartan on the field. He simply stared at his mother in the distance as his men closed in around their King and began forming a line without question.

He looked at Aricia and then Anja and Dysea, the vibration of thousands of booted feet trembling through the ground beneath him.

I must do this alone. He spoke softly within their minds. *If they are not Lycavorian, get them off this field and back into the trenches. Perform this quickly, all of you.*

Martin... Aricia started squeezing his hand in hers.

Instantly Martin erected shields around their two minds and she looked at him. *You are all Queens Aricia... but only you are Lycavorian Little Wolf.*

Aricia met his long gaze and nodded her head this time and the three of them turned to move back towards the trenches. Martin saw that his mother and Isabella had already begun pulling the elf and human soldiers off the battlefield ordering them into the trenches. Motion from the corner caught his attention and he saw Walter approaching in a confident gait, his body armor stained with blood, his *Nehtes* in his hand.

“Senior Polemarch,” Martin spoke as Walter stopped beside him, “Nice of you to join me.” Martin sensed Andreus step up next to him as was his station as his Captain.

“I have waited over three thousand years for this day sire.” Walter spoke.

Martin turned his head slowly, his yellow/gold wolf eyes filled with undisguised hatred and rage.
“Yes... so have I.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

EDEN CITY

SOUTHERN DEFENSIVE LINE

The Southern defensive line stretched from the edge of the Tushar Mountain range, angling slightly south and then back northeast to Kingston, Utah, ending a mile and a half east of Kingston at the base of the Piute Mountain range north of Old Route 62. A six mile long stretch of nothing but burned and barren earth, with a six foot deep trench that was three pairs of shoulders in width across, with a heavily fortified bunker equipped with two heavy machine guns spaced every hundred meters. Ben had mentioned to Martin one day many months ago how Eden City’s defensive line looked much like the German defensive line of World War II so long ago.

The expanse in front of this trench had been sowed with thousands of land mines stretching for a complete mile outward from the trench line. The twelve previous hours had seen nothing but artillery raining down in this expanse of land, mostly airburst rounds that were used to detonate land mines. The earth in front of the trench all along the front was now nothing but a pocked marked landscape of small and medium sized craters where the mines had been detonated by the artillery.

As one drew closer to the intersection of where Highway 89 moving north and Old Route 62 heading west met hundreds of bodies could now be seen strewn across the land in every pose of macabre death one could possibly imagine. The nearly two complete divisions of cloned Vampire Coven troops had rammed headlong into this area without regard, and here is where they died. They were designed to be superior fighters than

normal vampire troops, considerably harder to kill and much more adaptable to the sometimes unorthodox tactics that their Lycavorian Spartan enemies employed.

This day had not gone well for them in the least.

Told they would be facing perhaps ten thousand Lycavorian Spartans combined with elf and human allies, they had dashed across this wide expanse of land hoping to catch their enemies by surprise with their superior numbers and skill. What they found waiting for them were nearly forty thousand Lycavorian Spartans and thousands more elves and humans manning the trench line. They had been unprepared for hand-to-hand combat, considering themselves above such demeaning activity. Nearly thirty thousand of them paid the price for that foolhardy mentality as the Spartans had expended nearly a million rounds of ammunition in the first minute, and then leaped from the trench line. In a crazed rush across the body strewn battlefield the Lycavorian Spartans fell upon them with their ritual *Nehtes* and small handguns, and it turned into a slaughter field. In twenty-six minutes of slashing and stabbing combat, blood soaking the earth around them, it was over and the vampire's clone army was decimated.

Now they stood once more, prepared for battle.

The line of Lycavorian Spartans stretched for half a mile, between two rolling hills south of Old Route 62. They stood three deep, the front row in a combat crouch, their Shi Viskas humming on their arms and forming a wall of gold and silver shields. *Nehtes* were extended over the tops of the shields, all of them dripping with the fresh blood of the vampire cloned troops, or the barrels of P190s, freshly reloaded waited to hand out more death. Their matte black body armor was stained with dust, soot and the blood of their lifelong enemies. Their black steel helmets covering everything on their heads except for their glittering wolf eyes and the fangs that protruded from beneath their grim lips.

They had fought for centuries like this, beating back the charges of vampires across the world and across the universe, exchanging bullets and grenades, artillery and missiles, plasma beams and Proton torpedoes, dating back to the time of the one man who had started it all and brought them together across the universe. Over three thousand years had passed since the death of the only King many of them had ever known, and though they had never met him they worshiped him. They had fought in his name since that time, hoping beyond hope that one day his descendant would return and lead them once more. On this day... all their hopes and visions for the future had become so much more brighter, for they were not being led by the descendant of this King...

They were being led by his very own son.

Stretched across the landscape in front of them were thirty-nine thousand of the Vampire High Covens most dreaded and skilled troops; troops that had butchered more of their people than there were stars in the night sky. They were troops that did not fear death, nor injury and they were beasts that fed on the blood of the fallen. They had served the Vampire High Coven since their inception nearly twelve thousand years ago. They were known by only one name, and that name had struck fear in the hearts of many until one man over three thousand years ago had shown they could be killed. That man's son now stood viewing the same sight his father had seen in a different location and a different time.

They were known as the Immortals, and once more they were poised to meet a Leonidas in battle.

Martin Leonidas and Walter Carson stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the center of the half mile long line of Spartans. Three thousand and twenty-five years old, and until a little more than a month ago he had not known who or what he truly was. He had been born in the earth year of 479 B.C. on board a Lycavorian cruiser in deep space, placed in suspended animation at only three months of age, never knowing who his parents were or even what he was. The thirty-three years of life he had known had been full of questions for him, questions of where he had come from, who he was and why he could change as he did. To say those answers were unbelievable was an understatement, but the answers had made his wolf blood sing and staring at the line of men and women on either side of him as he did now, he knew it was right.

Martin's yellow/gold wolf eyes looked across the plain at the ranks of Immortals and he could feel the hatred fueling him. Somewhere across this plain within the ranks of Immortals was the man who had robbed him of his father, robbed him of his heritage, and until recently robbed him of his mother. He intended to make him pay for those crimes... in spades.

"How many do you think?" Martin asked not looking at Walter, whose own wolf eyes gazed across the plain.

“I would say thirty thousand at least Milord.” Walter replied evenly, “More than enough for all of us.” He finished with a grin.

Martin heard the soft chuckle from his opposite side and he looked at his Royal Captain and brother to his youngest Queen. He matched Andreus’s smile and looked back forward. “So why don’t they use their ray guns or some shit on us? Don’t they have like ray guns, or laser rifles or laser swords? What was that old movie that had them cool laser swords Walter? The one you made us watch as kids.”

“If I’m not mistaken, you are referring to the movie Star Warriors... or Star Wars... yes that was it sire. And I believe they were called lightswords or something of that nature.” Walter replied.

“Yeah... a lightsword,” Martin spoke. “I want one of those.”

The Spartans squatting in front of them heard their King’s comment and one turned his head slightly back as they chuckled. He was a Lycavorian like his King, yet he had been born on Apo Prime; thousands of light years from this rock of a planet. The laconic bravery of King Leonidas was well documented in their history scrolls, and it appeared his son had inherited this trait many times over.

“Their weapons are similar to our P190s sire.” He spoke in reply, “Projectile weapons. No one has yet perfected the technology to make plasma rifles due to power cell restraints. They would be far too cumbersome. We have small hand blaster weapons and similar small rifles, but they are ineffective past a few dozen meters and useless for long range fighting.”

Martin nodded. “Ok... I guess that explains that. So why aren’t they shooting *them* at us?”

“I do not know Milord.” The Spartan replied with another grin. “This is not normal for them either.”

Martin looked at Walter. “Seems like not normal has become the normal thing for me nowadays.”

Walter and Andreus both smiled at that. “Sire we should...”

Leonidas! Xerxes voice echoed in the heads of all the Spartans and Immortals on the field, reaching back even to where Gorgo stood with Aricia, Anja and Dysea.

Martin looked across the field and saw the ranks of Immortals part like a wave and the tall figure of Xerxes appeared. They stood six hundred meters apart, but he was easy to pick out with their wolf eyes.

“He has not changed a bit sire.” Walter spoke softly, his eyes narrowing in hatred. “Not in over three thousand years. He still considers himself to be a godlike figure.”

What do you want cockbreath? Martin projected the thought clearly across the field. He could hear the chuckling from those Spartans closest to him. *I have a date tonight with four beautiful women and my mother and I don’t want to be late, so could we hurry this up?*

Gorgo, Isabella and the others heard Martin’s words in the open link and she gasped in surprise, looking at the three females her son had chosen as his Queens. All of them stood there calm and serene with barely a hint of emotion, yet their bodies were poised for action, as if waiting to pounce at some pre-arranged signal.

Aricia she knew from Martin’s memories was the Pureblood Lycavorian female that had taken his heart, and looking at her she could see why. Her long raven black hair, while now soaked with sweat and blood in some spots was thick and shiny and her stunning azure blue eyes could bring any male wolf to a screeching stop with their gaze. Her long legs and lush muscular young body promised physical pleasures beyond imagination and would have made her one of the most sought after female wolves on Apo Prime. Male wolves would have been nipping at her heels until someone had claimed her, especially due to her pure blood and exceptional beauty. Gorgo also knew that had they not been devoted to her son, Anja and Dysea, two obvious Alpha females who Martin had turned would be nearly as sought after by single Alpha males searching for mates. She had watched them fighting at her son’s side, and it had been nothing short of spectacular to witness. Aricia stood in the middle now, only slightly taller than Anja and Dysea, but there was no mistaking the connection between the women as far as Gorgo could see. That they were lovers of each other as well as her son was obvious in the way they stood so close together, their bodies touching, and the power of the combined aura they projected to Martin was staggering. The three tendrils of their auras were interwoven together in a way that made it impossible to tell them apart.

Gorgo watched as Dysea the she-elf glanced back quickly, her emerald green eyes settling on Isabella standing next to her. While Isabella might not be wolf and therefore could not smell the attraction and desire

wafting from the green eyed she-elf for her, Gorgo certainly could. Dysea turned slightly and saw Gorgo looking at her intently and she lowered her eyes quickly and shyly before turning back to look across the field.

So you are the son of Leonidas. Xerxes spoke from across the expanse of plains and bodies. *I see you are your father's son, and it is fate that we have come here this day.*

[Shielded] *Bella... I didn't think your kind were telepathic?* Martin said reaching out with his mind to one person.

Martin didn't see her step forward and move next to Dysea, her eyes slightly wide at the power of his voice in her head.

[Shielded] *Like your people Martin Leonidas... vampires are... telepathic as you describe... your people and mine use the term Mindvoice and most of my people, as with yours, do not advance this skill beyond the basics. Most can not speak as we are now speaking.* Isabella answered.

[Shielded] *I'm guessing that does not include your brother here?*

[Shielded] *That animal is not my brother! He was never my brother! He is an abomination! The sooner you kill you the better we all will be. My... my father and Yuri are the most powerful of the mindvoicers that I know of but there are several thousand among my people who are considered very dangerous. I have not seen Xerxes in nearly a thousand years and I was not aware he had developed this level of skill.*

[Shielded] *Any recommendations on how I should proceed.*

[Shielded] *Yes... kill him.* Isabella heard Martin chuckle within her mind and for some reason it was soothing and pleasant and filled her with warmth.

[Shielded] *Yeah... well I'll get to that part.*

Surrender Xerxes and I might spare your life. Martin spoke now, his thoughts projecting openly for all to hear.

Xerxes's laughter in their heads was arrogant and demeaning. *Surrender to you. A Lycavorian animal! I think not. I will crush the life from you as I crushed the life from your father. And when I present your head I will be proclaimed as a hero of the Coven.*

You must not have been watching the news lately scar face. Martin quipped his reply right back at him. *Your people can't get off this planet fast enough Xerxes. Yuri has deserted you. My fleet ripped yours a new asshole. My Spartans have wiped the planet with your cloned pals, and the elves and humans are bringing down your little empire here on earth even as we speak. You gave us a run for the money I'll give you that... but the desire to be free will always win out.*

Do you think your little rebellion here will spread beyond the reaches of this vile planet? Xerxes countered. *The Immortals that serve me now are stronger and even more powerful than those your father faced. You do not have a chance.*

From what I'm hearing they're uglier too. Martin said.

Shall we do this as your father did Martin Leonidas? Xerxes spoke. *Blade upon blade, spear upon spear. Or will you use your new found toys?*

Martin's eyes detected a Spartan to his right suddenly throw his P190 to the ground in front of him; a show of defiance perhaps or a show of trust. Another followed... then another... then along the entire line of Lycavorians, weapons were tossed to the ground. Martin smiled and reached down to remove his K12 from its holster. He tossed it to the side where Andreus and Walter had already thrown their weapons.

Martin spun his *Nehtes* gracefully in his hands. *Ok Xerxes. Let's do this.*

Xerxes stared across the field and could barely contain his laughter at the actions of the Lycavorians. He looked at his Immortal Guards Captain.

"You see Captain!" Xerxes spoke. "They are stupid animals! They have tossed aside their weapons. Who would do such a thing except an animal?"

The Immortal looked at Xerxes. "Even an animal has honor Prince Xerxes. Something you have forgotten in your arrogance." The Captain spoke the words evenly. He took a step away from the High Coven

Prince he had served for nearly two millennia. {We will face the Lycavorian dogs as our fathers did on this very planet! Throw aside your modern weapons and take up the sword! Let us give these Spartans a battle they will not forget!} He bellowed in his native language.

Xerxes eyes grew wide as if on cue the Immortals tossed aside their equivalent of the Spartan P190. The Spartans were not the only fighting force that had stayed true to their past and each Immortal reached over their shoulders and drew the sword that was strapped to their backs.

“What are you doing fools!” Xerxes screamed his eyes darting back and forth. “I gave you an order Captain!”

The Immortal Captain turned his cruel eyes on Xerxes and smiled revealing his vampire fangs. “I am following my orders Prince Xerxes.” He spoke in a voice that froze Xerxes in his spot. “My orders come from your father, the Vampire High Lord! And his orders will be followed.”

“His... his orders? What are you talking about?” Xerxes gasped.

“His orders were very clear Prince Xerxes.” The Captain spoke. {Take him!}

Xerxes’s head snapped from side to side as two Immortals stepped up to him without question and seized his arms, lifting him several inches off the ground in their powerful grasps. Xerxes was tall and powerfully built, some would say muscular, but his body was mainly for show alone, while the Immortals had been forged in one savage battle after another. He struggled in the grip of the two Immortals his eyes glaring hate at the Captain. “What are you doing?” He screamed.

“Your father’s orders were simple Prince Xerxes. You are to lead us into battle against King Leonidas’s son, not watch from afar. You will lead your Immortals into battle by whatever means necessary. My men will release you Prince Xerxes... they will release you when we have engaged the enemy, and not before. Prepare yourself sire.”

“For the High Lord Immortals,” The Captain bellowed, “Charge!”

That one command sent thirty nine thousand Immortals forward in a mad dash across the plain cratered earth before them directly for the line of silver and gold shields.

Martin stood as still as a rock watching the line of Immortals close on them at a dead run. His father’s memories came rushing to him then, clear, pure and unbroken, as if they were his very own memories. The rush of adrenalin surged in the wind from every Lycavorian Spartan on the line and it swept through Martin’s head like a wave of power and control unlike anything he had ever felt before in his life. The countless missions he had led his team on, the hundreds of battles they had fought in, this is what Martin Leonidas had denied himself all of those times. This is what he had not known for so many years. These were the emotions that burned so deeply in his blood; the commitment to good, the purpose, the love of those to his left and right.

No retreat. No surrender.

This is what had burned in his father’s blood. This is what his father had felt all those thousands of years ago.

Walter stood beside the son of the King he had served without question and felt the power of his aura rising from him like the burning of the sun at mid day. He watched as Martin’s yellow/gold eyes grew wider and shone with the brilliance of that same sun; his wolf blood pulsing in power and needed release that Walter had not felt in over three thousand years. He felt that aura sweep over him now, extending outward as Martin touched all those around him, energizing them, enveloping them within that blanket of power. No Lycavorian wolf of Pureblood went untouched by this sweeping, almost touchable power.

Fight with your head, but lead with your heart.

His father’s words echoed through Martin Leonidas’s body like the tolling of a huge bell sounding the beginning of a new day.

And a new day it was.

SPARTANS!

The command resounded in every Lycavorian Spartan’s thoughts along that half mile long line and with one mind thirty-one thousand Shi Viskas came up to the ready.

ATTACK!

The elves and humans who witnessed this action would swear that you could have walked down the line of Shi Viskas that launched across the field that day, so thick and close together that it appeared as if they were guided by one mind.

It was followed four seconds later by thirty-one thousand Spartans wearing black and crimson, and in a single massive wall of wolves in the form of men, they met the line of Vampire Immortals screaming out their rage.

LU LIBERTY

The two fleets circled the planet earth, each wary of the other.

The Lycavorian Home Guard Fleet had given more than they had received, but still fourteen Lycavorian warships were adrift, their surviving crews scrambling to save whatever they could. Another nine had been destroyed outright. The M4 heavy fighters had returned to their ships and reloaded their missiles and now they stood ready for the order to launch once more. Damage crews were working frantically, the First Elf Engineer Corp spread out among the LU warships working miracles at every turn.

Riall stood on the bridge of his Attack Cruiser and like every soul within the fleet they had been watching their monitors all over the ship. A live feed had been patched up to them from one of the *AUTUMN MOON* Frigates, and what they were witnessing was unlike any of them had ever seen. There were no strangers to combat in this fleet, all of them having seen hundreds of battles, yet they were witnessing a first for all but a very few.

They were witnessing the King they thought lost thousands of years ago standing on the field of battle with over thirty thousand of his people to his right and left. The black and crimson of the Spartans was all they cared about. There was no sound in the transmission, yet when Riall's eyes spotted the first Spartan to toss aside his P190 his body tensed. Then it began all up and down the line they saw, and gasps filled the bridge as wide eyed bridge crew came out of their chairs to watch in stunned shock. Riall sensed it... he knew what was coming, he knew too much about Leonidas and his tactics from Gorgo, who was once his mate. He had studied everything about the King they had lost on this very planet more than three millennia ago. He thought it would bring him closer to the woman who shared his life now and had so taken his soul.

What it allowed him to see now was what that King's son had in his mind.

"Admiral Ceneu! Get me Ceneu now!" He barked.

It took only seconds and then the holo image of the reptilian Admiral filled the holo disc on the floor.

"Riall..." Ceneu gasped from the bridge of the *LEONIDAS I*. "Riall... what is..."

"I am watching as well Ceneu." Riall spoke quickly. "Ceneu we must attack the moment they launch their shields!"

The reddish yellow eyes of his good friend and fellow Admiral turned to look at him. "What? Why?"

"Ceneu my friend... you can not feel it... but I can. Every Lycavorian of pureblood can feel it surging through them, the power... the burning of our blood. It radiates from him Ceneu! It burns within him like the sun of this very system. And it is affecting every wolf in this system my friend." Riall was speaking like a young lieutenant with the excitement in his voice and the expression on his face. Ceneu had never seen him so animated.

On the bridge of the *LEONIDAS I* Ceneu turned to look at his bridge crew since most of them were pureblood Lycavorians. He didn't see it at first but he looked harder and then it came to him. They moved faster, their wolf eyes in full bloom, their fangs extending out further than he had ever seen. They bounced on the balls of their feet as if wanting... needing to act out in some way.

Riall nodded as he saw the recognition come over the Algolian Admiral's face. "Now you see my friend." Riall spoke, "The moment they launch their shields Ceneu! We attack with everything we have! And we do not stop until they are gone or we are dead."

Ceneu looked at Riall and nodded, "As you order." He spoke.

“Admiral!” The voice called snapping Riall’s head around and he saw the most beautiful sight his eyes had ever lain upon with the exception of his beloved Gorgo. That was the sparkling sight of so many Shi Viskas launching at the same precise moment.

“Now!” Riall barked out, “Full power to the sublights! Enemy suppression barrage! All weapons, full payloads! We’re going in and we are not coming out until every Coven ship is in ruin! Now my friends, now we go to victory!”

Fifty-four Lycavorian Union warships surged across the polar orbit of earth at the same time, driving directly for the heart of the Coven fleet. As the sun lit up the stars behind them, the space above the planet earth became filled with missiles, plasma beam arrays and Proton torpedoes as the Lycavorian Home Guard Fleet fired all of their weapons with one single mind and purpose.

EDEN CITY COMMAND CENTER

No one spoke at what they saw on the monitor, it was too gruesome, yet too inspiring to tear their eyes from the large screen. Lynwe stood next to Selene, their hands laced together, their eyes and the eyes of everyone in the control room frozen to one monitor, one event that was taking place only a few miles away.

The lone alert elf heard the small chirp from his console and he ducked his head down to see an approaching aircraft. His eyes flew open as the ship had already crossed the 50 mile limit and was bearing down on the airfield. Its radar signature kept flicking in and out, but it was there, very low and moving fast.

“Chief Secretary!” He shouted waiting until Selene turned to him. “Chief Secretary we have an inbound aircraft! Unknown IFF! All of our ships are to the northeast or on the ground! This is not one of ours!”

Selene rushed over to the elf operator. “Show me!” She snapped.

The monitor switched to the view of the lone gray dot intermittently coming and going from their scopes, but bearing down very quickly.

“It’s already inside the 50 mile limit Chief Secretary, and it’s flying so low we can’t sustain a lock on it to launch missiles!”

“Contact one of the Spartan ships to shoot it down!”

The elf shook his head. “Even they wouldn’t get here before it attacks the airfield.”

“Damn! Alert the airfield that an attack is inbound to their location! I want every able body human and elf that can hold a weapon to be ready! I don’t care if they have to hobble on one limb, we can not lose the airfield!”

MH-60 NIGHTHAWK

Ben corrected the pitch of the helicopter quickly to keep from smashing into the trees below them once more. It had been a harrowing flight, never more than a hundred feet off the deck at nearly two hundred knots. Ben had been sweating buckets thirty minutes into the flight.

“Major!” Yuriko screamed looking out the side window of her co-pilot’s seat.

Ben’s head snapped around and he saw the approaching tree, “Oh... sorry!” He yanked back on the pitch and the wheels of the NIGHTHAWK brushed the tops of the hundred and fifty foot tree.

Yuriko turned to look at Filrian and then back to Ben. “Major... I thought you said you could fly this infernal machine!” She snapped.

Ben didn’t look at her. “What do you think I’m doing?” He snapped back at her. “No back seat flying dammit!”

“You told me you could fly us to...”

“I told you I could fly it!” Ben grouched. “I’m flying it aren’t I? It’s irrelevant that I didn’t mention that I’ve never flown this model before!”

“What!” Yuriko screamed against the rush of wind through the side doors. “You’re crazier than Martin said you always were!”

Ben laughed as he fought the pull of the MH60 at this altitude, the rotors having to work much harder to keep the ship in the air, yet he had no intention of setting this bird down anywhere except on his airfield. The images of Endith’s red hair and Tina’s slim curves were all that filled his thoughts now. He just wanted to hold the two most precious things in his life again. Nothing else mattered to him in the least. Marty’s friends had given him a new lease on life and he’d be damned if he was going to waste it. His helmeted head came up and he saw the familiar white lights on the end of the Eden City airfield.

“Hold on this last part could get tricky!” he shouted.

“What do you mean tricky?” Yuriko screamed as she cinched her shoulder straps tighter, seeing Filrian do the same.

“It’s probably better if I didn’t tell you.” Ben spoke yanking back on the control yoke and sending the MH60 into a vertical climb. He slammed the stick over to the right causing the MH60 to stand on its side and Yuriko was suddenly looking directly at the ground two hundred feet beneath her. With a vicious jerk the NIGHTHAWK righted itself once more and Ben cranked the control stick and collective to the right, spinning the NIGHTHAWK on its nose a hundred and eighty degrees in only two seconds until they were facing the way they had come.

As the roar of the engines became even once more Ben turned and looked at Yuri with a grin. “It’s over.” He spoke calmly, holding the ship steady as she opened her vampire eyes.

“You fucking maniac!” She screamed.

Ben chuckled and eased the throttles forward while turning the MH60 towards the base. He could see that a huge battle had taken place and his first thoughts were for the two women that he loved.

Ben quickly switched on the radio. “Eden City Center this is Major Benjamin O’Connell, authenticate Victor Victor seven red yellow. Respond please.”

The elf technician looked at Selene his grey eyes wide. “The code... the code matches.” He gasped.

Selene looked at him. “I... I thought Benjamin was shot down early this morning and declared lost.”

The elf nodded. “Yes ma’am. The air rescue team we sent in found only his co-pilot’s remains and the prints of some very large animals. They assumed he was dragged off into the timber.”

Selene stabbed the console. “Unidentified aircraft you have violated our airspace in a hostile manner. You...”

“Selene is that you? Where’s Tarifa... I thought she was in the CIC today.” Ben’s voice boomed from the speakers.

Selene’s eyes narrowed and she looked at Lynwe next to her. “Pilot... you should know that Major O’Connell and I were taking flight lessons together. He was teaching me to fly one of our...”

“Selene... I wouldn’t teach you how to fly because you threw up on the very first trip to one of the settlements. It took me an hour to clean out the back of the Raptor.” Ben’s voice boomed.

Selene’s smile was huge and she hugged Lynwe tightly. “Oh Benjamin it is so very good to hear your voice.”

Ben’s laughter could be heard as well. “Well it’s good to be home Selene. I’m going to set her down in the northeast corner near the storage hanger so I don’t cause a bigger stir than I already have. Selene...”

“They were already moving that way to help with defenses Ben.” Selene spoke knowing what his question was going to be.

“Defenses? What god damned defenses! I just brought a six hundred year old trash heap through our bloody fucking defenses! What the hell is going on? I take a powder for a few hours and everything goes to shit! Where are my air crews? Where’s Marty?”

Selene shook her head as Ben continued to rant over the radio. “Benjamin... the Southern Defensive line, that... that is where everything will be decided. And it has already begun.” She told him her eyes going back to the monitor.

Ben didn't hear her as he looked in the distance and saw the red haired female elf and the blond haired human running across the tarmac toward where he was landing the ancient NIGHTHAWK helicopter. They were holding hands as they ran and Ben thought for sure he could see Endith's smile shining in the sun.

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT CALIFORNIA ISLAND

Yuri watched the Raptor settled to the landing pad as the ramp came down and the large doors closed back up over the top of them. She felt a sigh of relief course through her as Moran's tall figure strode quickly down the ramp. She wanted to rush to him and throw herself into his arms, but this she could not do as Princess of the High Coven. She saw Cha'talla follow down the ramp as well as several other cloned soldiers. Cha'talla carried the limp figure of a female elf over his shoulder, and she wore the dark gray flight suit of a STRIKER AT pilot. They walked up to her quickly, Cha'talla bowing his head as Moran simply stared at her.

"What's the situation?" Moran asked as any competent commander would.

Yuri looked at him, his question causing her anger to spike a little bit. "The situation is we are abandoning earth!" She replied more testily than she intended. "Xerxes is engaging Leonidas as we speak! Our fortresses across the planet are falling one after the other. The Spartan Panos was left in charge of Sparta and two hours ago he released twenty-five thousand Spartans from that city to sweep across lower Europe with hundreds of thousands of elves and humans. The remaining garrisons report they have united and once the Spartans arrive they *will* fall. It's time to go."

"What about Xerxes?" Moran asked.

"Fuck that block headed fool!" Yuri snapped. "He will die of that I have little doubt. He thought to engage the Lycavorians head on south of Eden City. The fool believes the son of Leonidas fights as one dimensional as his father did. Our ground sensors have detected nearly a hundred thousand elves and humans sweeping in from the west and south directly towards them. We were wrong Robert. He has done something I never believed he could do. He has mobilized nearly every elf faction on this planet and they are all rising up against us." Yuri stepped closer to him. "All this time we thought he was building more Raptors, he has been building those transports. I was informed by Admiral Malachi just before I came up here that their ship board sensors have detected nearly two hundred of them lifting off from seven different countries. All of them headed here."

"Jesus Christ that's half a million troops!" Moran spoke.

Yuri nodded. "Yes... now you see why we have to leave."

"Can't our ships bomb the planet?" Moran asked.

Yuri shook her head. "They are barely surviving the attack by the Lycavorian fleet as it is. They are maintaining station above us in case they need to blast a path for my frigate to leave the planet, and they won't last much longer. And the rest of their Home Guard Fleet entered the system thirty minutes ago. They will be here in thirteen hours."

"Yuri... I'm sorry." He spoke. "If... if he hadn't hit us with that artillery he snuck in... we would..."

Yuri stepped even closer to him now, and even though Cha'talla stood in full view as well as several Coven security forces Yuri took his hand. "This is not your fault Robert." She spoke softly. "My father was right. Once the Union discovered he was alive we lost this planet. We can only hope that perhaps Xerxes gets lucky and they kill him before his allies arrive."

Moran took a deep breath and nodded. "A strategic withdrawal is not a defeat." He said. "That's what they told us in the War College."

Yuri nodded slowly and her eyes fell to the elf Cha'talla still held. Those dark orbs grew a little wider and she moved around behind them grasping the thick golden blond mane of hair and pulling For'mya's head up viciously drawing a groan of pain from the unconscious elf.

"Star Commander For'mya!" Yuri exclaimed looking at Moran and Cha'talla, "Robert do you know who you have captured?"

“I gathered she was important considering her uniform.” Moran replied. “That’s why I killed the fool who was feeding on her.”

“This is Star Commander For’mya. She is the most senior *STRIKER AT* pilot in the Lycavorian Union, and one of the people responsible for building those killing machines.” Yuri turned her head in her grasp, none to gently and another groan came from For’mya’s lips. “She is also the last of the elfin royal blood.”

“Say again?” Moran asked.

This news caused Cha’talla to become interested as well. “Royal blood you say Princess?”

Yuri nodded. “She is the daughter of L’tian, the great grandson of the elfin King my father slaughtered when he conquered their home world. She is the only one of his children that still survives. And his wife can have no more children. When he dies... his daughter will be the only remaining elf of the original royal blood line my father sought to destroy. Her capture will throw L’tian into a fit of rage.” Yuri laughed heartily as she let For’mya’s head drop down unceremoniously. “Oh this is very good Robert.” She said turning to look at him. “We are retreating and we throw a last dagger at Leonidas. Cha’talla, place her in the holding cell off my personal quarters. She is not to be touched by anyone but Robert or myself. I understand elves of royal lineage have very sweet tasting blood. Something I will look forward to experiencing myself.”

“As you order Princess,” He spoke and headed down the ramp to the interior of the building.

“We should get going.” Yuri spoke looking at Moran. She turned to the remaining security forces. “Have my Captain prepare to depart. We will be along shortly.”

The three men nodded and sprinted after Cha’talla. The moment they were out of sight Yuri threw her arms around Moran and hugged him tightly. “You... you had me worried husband.” She spoke softly.

“I had myself worried.” He spoke squeezing her in his arms.

“We must go quickly.” Yuri spoke. “But when we are free of this disaster I intend to show you just how grateful I am you are still in my life.”

“What about the elf?” Moran asked. “I know Leonidas Yuri... if she’s as important as you say... he’ll come after her.”

Yuri’s dark eyes twinkled, “Perhaps... but I intend to feast on her blood and inflict as much pain and humiliation on her as I can before we give her to the torture chambers on our prison planet.” She spoke with a smile, “Whatever information she has in that blond head of hers will be ours sooner or later.”

Moran’s smile was just as evil. “Her blood tastes that good huh?”

Yuri took his hand and began pulling him down the ramp. “I will let you discover just how good when we get off this rock Robert.”

EDEN CITY SOUTHERN DEFENSIVE LINE

When Walter had created the elves he had instilled in all of them a love of history and battles long past. Many of them, regardless of their clan or tribe delighted in reading about human history for the simple fact it might help them to understand how the humans fought and what they could do to counter that. The battles they studied concentrated mainly on the more recent in human history, dating from the late 20th century and after. Not many had studied the battles of old.

Vengal had been one of those that had.

He stood poised on the trench bunker, his eyes as wide as every other elf and human at what they were witnessing. This was not something any of them had ever experienced before. Not one of the thousands who stood along that trench was without combat experience of some sort, but the savagery and brutality of what they were witnessing surpassed anything they could have imagined.

All along that half mile long front before them blood was being spilled and it was being spilled in rivers. Shi Viskas were leaping from arms in a continuous dance, the yellow gold of the shields sparkling in the sun light and now drenched in the color of red from blood. The metal of spears and swords flickered all across the landscape, chopping, hacking, and stabbing. The Lycavorian Spartans would use their shields to block a sword strike and then thrust over the top of that shield with their spears, driving the razor spear heads into heads or

shoulders or chests, ripping flesh out in great swatches, smashing the bodies to the ground. The razor edges of the Shi Viskas shone with red in the sun light, blood splashing wildly through the air like buckets. The plains grew piled with bodies, stacked upon bodies.

And still the Spartans did not stop.

The swords of the Immortals were not silent as they too chopped their way forward. Hundreds of black and crimson had already fallen under those swords, their blood spilling just as easily as the Coven Immortals. The screams of the wounded could be heard careening across the landscape, many staggering back missing an arm or leg, the white/blue flashes of light the telltale signs of their changes as they shifted into wolf form and then back, staunching the flow of blood from gaping wounds or missing limbs. They would shift back just as quickly, search the ground around them for a weapon and plunge back into the fray. Their valor was unlike anything Vengal had ever witnessed, almost to the point of madness.

This was their revenge he understood. This was their retribution for taking from them their king of so long ago. And this was their honor at being able to fight by the son they had thought lost so long ago.

In what seemed like hours, yet was only minutes, it had descended into man against man, sword against shield and spear. They were immortal yes, but Vengal had no doubts they were nearing the point of total exhaustion simply from all the killing. These Spartans wielded their *Nehtes* like extensions of their own body, slashing, slicing into flesh. Their arms and shoulders had to ache. No one could stand like that among the death and not become fatigued.

This was madness beyond imagination.

Gorgo stood along the back of the trench, her heart gripped in her throat. This was what her Leonidas had endured all those times he had gone into battle. She never understood when he came back from battle silent and reclusive for the first day or so, she never understood why Riall would shun her until it was time for him to crawl into the warmth of her arms and cuddle against her naked flesh breathing in her scent to sooth himself and wash the pain and blood of death out of his mind.

Gorgo's eyes darted to the left as she saw her son's three Queens split apart suddenly, Dysea taking Isabella's hand within hers and moving at a run down the trench line. Aricia leaped effortlessly over the thousands of men and elves that crammed the trench below her and moved out in front of the line, the din of battle and death filling the field with its sounds. They stood a hundred meters apart now... across the front of the trench line, thousands of pairs of eyes staring at them wondering... waiting.

Aricia turned her azure blue eyes not to the battle in front of her but to the western treeline.

Dienekes? She reached out with her mind, clear and powerful.

Gorgo's wolf eyes went to the treeline in the distance, and she gasped as the mass of bodies appeared along the edge. Elves and humans combined.

We stand ready my Queen! The Spartan standing out in front of this line spoke proudly.

Daniel? Anja's voice erupted into Gorgo's thoughts.

We're in position!

We didn't think you were going to make it Daniel. Anja's voice spoke.

Gorgo heard the deep chortle.

And miss the biggest party the Skipper has ever thrown? Not a chance. I had to stop and take care of the party favors first.

Gorgo saw Dysea turn back, still holding Isabella's hand and look at the elf General on top of the bunker.

"Vengal! Give the order now!" She screamed.

Gorgo watched as those in the trenches began climbing out in massive waves. Her eyes settled on Aricia.

Aricia... what are you doing?

Gorgo saw those blues eyes turn towards her and Aricia smiled.

Join us Gorgo. You don't honestly think your son planned to fight Xerxes alone do you? He is so much like his father Gorgo... but he is so much more. Join us.

Gorgo felt the surge of power sweep through her and she turned to the Spartan beside her. His eyes were alive with Martin's power and aura. "Let us join my son Denal."

Her guard smiled. "That is the best idea I've heard all day Milady."

Dysea looked at Isabella her emerald eyes staring deeply into those gorgeous hazel/green orbs of the vampire Princess as she extended her *Nehtes*.

[Shielded] *I am so very happy to see you Isabella.* Dysea spoke. *Insure you do not die before I have the opportunity to taste your flesh.*

Isabella stared wide eyed at the stunning she-elf, only her emerald eyes and lips visible beneath the black helmet she wore, the platinum colored crest blowing in the wind.

[Shielded] *You assume much. What makes you think I am even interested in what you offer me she-elf?* Isabella surprised herself with her answer. *I don't share my bed with females.*

Dysea's smile was almost as bright as the sun. [Shielded] *How can you be so sure when you have never attempted it? I can be very persuasive Bella.*

Isabella drew out her twin fighting knives from their thigh sheaths and looked at the field of battle, feeling the surge of power through her. She looked back to Dysea once more and was surprised to find herself appraising this female elf. The way those emerald eyes gazed upon her, it was almost like... it was like hunger.

[Shielded] *You will not succeed she-elf. And stop calling me that.*

[Shielded] *Oh I think I will Bella.*

[Shielded] *We shall see Dysea. We shall see.*

Dysea nodded with another brilliant smile. "Shall we kill our way to our King then Vampire Princess?"

Isabella looked at her and felt the vicious smile cross her face. "Yes... I believe we should she-elf."

"Then we go!"

The second wave of bodies surged forward from the trench, and this time elves and men joined in to decide the fate of their planet and their future.

EDEN CITY

AIRFIELD CONTROL TOWER

Vistr stood near the base of the tower, his wolf eyes looking down on the body of Diego. His words from Apo Prime came back to him and he shook his head. This vampire had died insuring others survived. Lycavorians and elves he did not even know.

Vistr turned as the Spartan approached him quickly. "Diego is to be honored Spartan. Make sure that command is followed."

The Spartan nodded, "As you order General."

"Give me your report." Vistr spoke.

"We swept the immediate area General. Commander For'mya's scent moves all the way to a group of abandoned vehicles five hundred meters west of here. The trail ends there... but there is no question she was in the company of one of these cloned vampires."

"Not willingly I assure you." Vistr spoke. "There are drops of her blood near Diego's body. The forensics team says the clone was injured and caught her by surprise. He apparently fed on her blood enough to heal his wounds and leave this area."

"Why wouldn't he just kill her?"

Vistr looked around. "He must have seen her uniform and determined she was more than just a normal soldier. Damn me to hell... I shouldn't have sent her out here!" He snapped. "Can you track this vehicle?"

"Yes General. It leaves a distinct energy signature."

"Then track it; take a *Lochi* with you and find out where she has been taken." Vistr ordered. "Get her back!"

The Spartan nodded and sprinted off as Vistr turned to look at the raven haired she-elf who still sat next to the body of the dead Spartan that he knew was her mate. She had not wanted them to take the half vampire she-elf from her arms, even fought the medics briefly but he had been able to talk to her and make her see that she needed medical attention.

Tarifa's arm had a loose bandage on it as she knelt next to Dekton's body, her tears long since dried. She didn't look up when Vistr settled next to her on the ground.

"He... he was a Spartan until the very end." Tarifa spoke softly.

Vistr nodded. "And he will be honored as such Milady. I give you my word."

Tarifa turned to look at him, and Vistr had to suppress the gasp of surprise at the brightness of her eyes, "I... I loved him. But... but I didn't love him more than Aihola. I never did. Why is that?"

Vistr shook his head. "I... I do not pretend to know the workings of one's heart Milady. I would say because perhaps you and the Drow Queen are fated to be together."

"Does that mean we are to be always alone? We want children General. Something we can never have together." Tarifa spoke. "I... I think that is why we both loved Dekton as we did. He could give us those children."

Vistr placed his hand on Tarifa's slim shoulder. "You are a Queen of elves Milady, and now you are one of us. The Drow Queen is one of us as well, though half her blood is vampire. Both of you will live many, many years and there should be no reason why you need to rush these things. If it is meant to be... it will happen."

"Do... will your people hate me for what I feel General?" Tarifa asked.

Vistr shook his head quickly. "You and Aihola will not be the first Spartan mates to have lost their husband. And you will not be the last. You are young... and while I can not give you words to ease your pain or hers... I can tell you this. You are a wolf now Tarifa. And while she may be half vampire, the wolf blood in your lover is strong and it runs deep. That is the gift your mate gave to both of you. He would want you to go on. Mourn him for as long as you feel is necessary... and then begin your life anew. In that way you will honor his memory even more."

"How old are you General?" Tarifa asked.

"I have six thousand four hundred and nine years behind me Milady." Vistr replied. "And like you, I lost my first mate when I was very young. I hope you do not wait as long as I did before putting Dekton's death behind you and finding another, as harsh as that may sound to you now."

"You... you found another?" Tarifa asked.

Vistr nodded. "I did... or rather she found me. She is an elf like you... and fully half my age. She pursued me for a century before I finally relented and allowed my own feelings to come forth. I have not looked back since, and she has given me seven fine, strong children that I would not have had if I mourned still. She keeps me, how you say, on my toes." Vistr was not looking to make Tarifa laugh or smile, only to insure she understood that she was still alive and she needed to go on.

Tarifa turned and saw the body of Diego. "For'mya... I did not think to ask. She has been captured?"

Vistr nodded. "It would appear so. And I can tell you... her father will not in any way be happy. Come Queen of elves..." Vistr got to his feet and held out his hand. "Our King is in battle and we must still do our part."

Tarifa nodded and allowed him to help her up. "Yes we do."

EDEN CITY SOUTHERN DEFENSIVE PERIMETER

It was chaos.

Three times Martin had impaled an Immortal and had his *Nehtes* wrenched from his grasp, and three times he had used his Shi Viska to batter and smash his way to another. He could not remember how many Immortals he had killed or bashed aside, his goal single minded. His shoulder was laid open almost to the bone, but he ignored the pain, driving forward, never giving ground. Blood soaked his uniform and his face, sweat mixing in to pour down his skin stinging his flesh. He was almost there... and he would not be denied.

One Immortal charged him, his sword raised high, his face a mask of rage and hate. Martin brought his Shi Viska up just as the Immortal slashed downward with incredible power. The blade of the sword shattered against the silver lined shield, and in his rush the Immortal's forward motion caused him to stumble forward sprawling to the ground. Without pause and with a scream of effort, Martin drove the blunt end of his borrowed *Nehtes* down into the spinal area of the Immortal, hearing a satisfying crunch. He then smashed the Shi Viska down like a ram; the razor like blades extended and they carved into the back of the Immortal's head nearly three inches, blood fountaining upward like a geyser. He heard a shout and looked up just as another Immortal rushed him. He yanked the Shi Viska up just in time, the Immortal's sword smashing down on the edge throwing Martin off balance, but still managing to absorb most of the blow.

The Immortal was quicker to recover and he slashed sideways with his sword, the tip slicing through Martin's body armor directly over his chest deep enough to take his skin with it. The pain lanced through his chest inciting him further and he half spun, lifting his shield to deflect the next blow as he thrust his *Nehtes* upward under the edge of the shield. The *Nehtes* buried so deep in the Immortal's gut that it burst from his back nearly a foot, tearing spine and flesh apart as Martin yanked it back and rose to his full height, sweeping the Shi Viska across in front of him, the edge of the shield clipping the Immortal in the jaw and laying open his face as well as snapping his neck. The force of the blow sent his body flipping through the air to collide with another of his kind. That Immortal staggered back giving Martin time to step up and drive his *Nehtes* straight through the vampire's throat and out the back of his neck. Martin twisted it viciously as he ripped it back out bringing parts of the Immortal's esophagus with it.

These Lycavorians had fought for centuries, some millions of kilometers, billions of kilometers away in another star system, on another planet, yet they were all Spartans. Leonidas had started something within the city of Sparta the day he was born. A military state before he took power, it became so much more when he was crowned King. He raised Sparta to new heights here on earth, and while their ways were brutal and something savage, he knew what they were facing and he allowed it to continue. The Spartan training regime had made its way off earth to the Lycavorians and the rebellion, and they too adopted the name Spartan and adapted their training to be an exact match with the Spartans of old. They took almost nothing out of the training regime, removing only what their people would not accept.

Nothing will burn in a warrior's heart brighter than to see their leaders fighting beside them. These Spartans could see him easily enough with the multi-colored crest atop his Spartan helmet, stabbing and hacking his way forward, even though injured and his blood seeping to the ground around him. They all felt the surge of courage, and with great heaves of their souls they dredged up from within their bowels and guts the added spark, the strength to stab one time more, to launch their Shi Viska and take down another enemy. As this surged swept outward, the Spartans physically moved closer to the young King who fought like a demon possessed. Every blow he landed cowed another enemy, every shout or scream filling the area around him with strength. He was calling them, urging them to go on, to take another step.

This is how the bond was forged. To see a comrade, a king, in this death and chaos with those he had never fought beside, to see him barking out orders, putting his shoulder under a fellow Spartan, a man he had never met before this day of blood, to see all this seared their souls as one for all time.

They rallied, not in frenzy and madness, but with order and self composure and new found courage. They pressed closer to their King, their shouts matching his own now, and then they were together side-by-side, their voices echoing as one. Andreus, never far from Martin's side now joined his King on his right, their *Nehtes* thrusting, their shields shattering bone and flesh.

Walter turned at this sound, the broken and shattered *Nehtes* in his fist, the front of his Shi Viska dented and scarred, blood running from his mouth and jaw, covering his body armor. He saw the mass of Spartans pushing together, reforming the shattered line, and at the center of this line he saw Martin. His chest swelled and he drove forward once more, his three thousand years old limbs finding new fire, and new passion.

They trampled bodies without regard as they pushed forward. Combat boots shattered chests and arms as they pressed on. The line slowly came back into focus and just as it did, the roar filled the air all around them and from the treelines to the west and south a hundred thousands elves and men came charging across the field the fury of their shouts of rage preceding them into the tangle and mass of bodies.

Well trained the Immortals were, they had not used their swords often in such a manner, and this fault in their training was showing through now. Inexorably they began to fall back, pushed by the weight and tangle of

so many Lycavorian bodies being thrown at them. They could not meet the ferocity with which the Spartans fought, the single minded determination that drove them. Unlike the Spartans they could expect no reinforcements, as the elves and men who had descended upon them were slaughtering their wounded like so many sides of beef. None were spared as the elves and humans would sometimes even empty an entire magazine into the wounded Immortal. Almost five hundred years of slavery did not leave these elves and men in very forgiving moods. The Immortals were discovering this first hand.

Throughout all this Xerxes had remained within the protective embrace of a ring of Immortals. He was stabbing and thrusting like the untrained wild fool that he was, often times hurting his own men. When his ring of Immortals was broken he panicked and began swinging madly trying to keep the Lycavorian Spartans at bay, all his mystique brought down. He never even attempted to use what little telepathic power he had to defend himself, not that it would have worked against the Spartans surrounding him. They herded him, jabbing at him only enough to push him where they wanted him to go.

And that was directly toward their King.

Xerxes stopped screaming at them when they stepped back several feet, wildly swinging the Immortal's sword, losing his balance and dropping to his knees.

"Kill me you dogs!" He screamed. "Go on! Kill me! I will take you with me! All of you!"

The Spartans did nothing but keep their *Nehtes* leveled at him from several meters away. Xerxes looked up slowly when he realized the battlefield had grown quiet except for the moaning and screaming of the wounded, and the killing shots from the humans and elves that were far behind in the distance. He looked into the gazes of hate and anger and utter contempt and began to laugh. It had been nearly an hour since the two lines of wolves and vampires had collided, an hour of blood and death.

It had been an eternity.

Xerxes saw their eyes shift behind him and he took a deep breath, knowing he had failed. He turned slowly, the many cuts on his arms and shoulders dripping blood. "So the son of Leonidas lives." He spoke, his voice deep but trembling.

Martin stepped slowly into the circle his Spartans had created. "Hello Xerxes." Martin spoke.

His body armor was slashed in three places now, his blood leaking out down his side and onto the ground beneath him. His Shi Viska hummed on his arm; the broken shaft of the *Nehtes* clutched in his hand tightly, his knuckles white.

"Do you think you have won dog?" Xerxes screamed. "My father will..."

"Your father has abandoned you." Martin snapped. "Get up fool, or are you too much of a coward to die like the rest of your Immortals!" Martin watched Xerxes pull himself to his feet, the sword still clutched in his hand.

Andreas stepped forward. "Sire you..."

Martin held up his hand quickly. "No Captain." Martin spoke quickly. "No one will interfere; no one Spartans!" He shouted louder.

"You think to fight me!" Xerxes snapped his body tensing and preparing. "Are you as big a fool as you appear?"

Martin circled around Xerxes slowly. "I have never wanted to *really* kill a man Xerxes." Martin spoke softly. "But you... you hold no remorse for the people you have killed; MY PEOPLE, my allies!"

"Will you order your Spartans to let me leave if I kill you?" Xerxes growled.

"No. If you kill me Xerxes they'll disembowel you and slice you open from throat to groin and leave you to rot in the field, staked to the ground." Martin spoke. "But you won't kill me."

Martin didn't see Aricia shove her way forward with Anja next to her, their uniforms soaked with blood and sweat. He didn't see Dysea and Isabella push their way forward looking much the same.

He didn't see his mother move up next to Aricia.

"You are not even going to give me a chance?" Xerxes asked with an arrogant tone.

Martin grinned, his wolf fangs fully extended, his yellow/gold eyes wide. "Oh... I'm going to give you a chance Xerxes." He spoke. "I'm going to give you the chance to beat a Leonidas without thousands of men doing your work for you. I'm going to give you the chance you never gave my father."

"Your father could have saved his own life by submitting to me!" Xerxes roared.

“You crucified my father you motherfucker!” Martin screamed, spittle flying from his mouth, his wolf eyes blazing with hate and rage. “You took... you took my father from me! From my brother! From my mother!”

Gorgo’s eyes were wide now, tears running freely and she made to step forward. Walter’s arms stopped her. “No Gorgo!” He spoke softly wrapping his arms around her. “He needs to do this! He needs to free this hate inside or it will destroy him in the end. Only then can he truly be King.”

“You hounded my mother like an animal!” Martin screamed again. “You butchered my brother like an animal! A brother I never had the chance to know!”

The broken shaft of the *Nehtes* slashed forward before anyone could react and Xerxes screamed as his right arm flopped to the ground, blood spurting from the stump, the Immortal’s sword now useless.

“You took my mother from me!” Martin continued as he circled Xerxes in a blood lust unlike anything any of them had ever seen. “You took my life from me!” The *Nehtes* shaft snapped forward again and lopped off Xerxes other arm and he howled again, his blood pumping onto the ground beneath him as he dropped to his knees in agony.

“I changed my mind you bloodsucking vampire sonofabitch! I’m going to give you the same chance you gave my father! None!” Martin stepped forward. “This is for my brother who I will never know!” Martin stabbed Xerxes in the chest, his blood spilling out onto Martin’s hand as he wrenched the broken shaft out. “This is for my mother and everything you ever took from her!”

Martin plunged the shaft into his belly, watching as his eyes bulged out of his head unable to even scream out his agony. Martin twisted the broken shaft savagely before ripping it out of his body tearing pieces of his intestines and stomach with it.

“This is for me, and everything you have taken away from me that I will not get back!” Once more Martin plunged the shaft into Xerxes chest, twisting and sawing it side-to-side as he ripped in back out once more. “This for the soul of every one of my people you have killed in your sick perverted fucking life!”

Martin rammed the shaft into Xerxes neck, the now splinter steel driving through his thick neck and severing muscles and arteries, blood fountaining all over Martin’s uniform and the ground. He stepped back looking at Xerxes’s mangled body the fire in his eyes at their peak. “And this you sick motherfucker is for my father!”

There was a flash of silvery white light and suddenly the massive black wolf was in front of him. So enraged and focused on Xerxes, Martin did not hear the gasps of hundreds of Spartans at his size and majesty. They could only watch in awe as that raven black wolf leaned forward to stare into Xerxes face for a long moment before those massive jaws snapped open and shut with the cold finality of death.

With a growl of the animal surging through his blood, Martin’s jaws crunched down with nearly three thousand pounds per square inch of pressure and he ripped Xerxes’s head from his shoulders with three massive and powerful shrugs of his shoulders and thick neck. The tearing of flesh was easily heard, the crunching of bone and popping cartilage even louder.

The fountain of blood announced the death of the Vampire Prince Xerxes as his body fell away quickly, long lines of blood shooting onto the ground from the shoulders that once held his head. With a mighty shake of his head Martin sent Xerxes head sailing through the air to land on the ground ten meters away, now sightless eyes staring back at him.

ALLIANCE SPACEPORT YURI’S DARKBROOD-CLASS FRIGATE

“Shattered our lines again Princess,” Malachi yelled from the bridge of the *WING OF DEATH*. They could see smoke in the background, bridge crew members running back and forth. “I have never seen them fight like this! A *NOVA*-Class cruiser rammed one an *ORIC*-Class Heavy Cruiser instead of running! They...”

Yuri watched as the monitor flickered and shuddered from Malachi’s end. There was a brilliant flash and then the transmission stopped.

“Princess!” The sensor operator gasped looking at her. “Princess... the *WING OF DEATH* has been destroyed!”

“Take off now!” Yuri snapped. “We’ll take our chances in the...”

[Shielded] **YURI!**

Yuri gasped in pain and grabbed for her head at the power of the connection, doubling over as she did. Moran reached for her.

“Yuri!” He declared openly, not caring who heard him.

[Shielded] **YURI!**

[Shielded] *AH... get out of my head you bastard!*

The pain immediately lessened several degrees and Yuri opened her eyes quickly.

[Shielded] *Your brother is dead Yuri.*

[Shielded] *Do you... do you expect me to mourn him passing Martin? He was just as much an animal as you are.*

[Shielded] *You have known all this time haven't you Yuri? You've known who I was.*

[Shielded] *What does it matter Martin? I hate you. I hate everything you stand for. I hate your people, your stench, everything. I think you are the vilest race in the universe and I will gladly slaughter as many as I can.*

[Shielded] *Why didn't you kill me Yuri? You had two years to kill me. Why didn't you?*

[Shielded] *Does it matter?*

[Shielded] *My people have destroyed your ships Yuri. It matters if you wish to leave this planet alive.*

[Shielded] *You... you fascinated me. Yuri answered. You were so much like your father with your compassion and drive. It fascinated me because I wanted to see what drove you to do the things you did.*

[Shielded] *Tell your father Yuri. Tell your father that one day he will look over his shoulder. Tell him that day... the grandson of Resumar will be standing there, and his rule will end.*

[Shielded] *I will tell him Martin Leonidas.*

Admiral Riall? Martin projected out now, not shielding his thoughts.

I am here sire! My King we have won!

Admiral... a High Coven ship will be lifting off from the surface in the next few minutes! It is to be allowed to leave the system under guard. It is not to be fired upon in any way, is that clear?

Sire... I don't understand.

Escort that ship out of the system Admiral, but do not fire upon it. Are my orders clear?

Yes... yes Milord.

When you have escorted that ship out of the system Admiral please join me and my mother on the surface.

As you order sire.

[Shielded] *When we next meet Yuri... you will receive no mercy from me.*

[Shielded] *And nor will you from I Martin Leonidas, nor will you from I.*

Yuri's eyes focused as her thoughts cleared and she looked up quickly. “Launch now! Do not wait! Launch now!”

“Princess... the Lycavorian fleet will blast us to pieces!” The Captain barked.

“No Captain we will not die! Now do as I order you fool!”

Moran stepped up to her. “Yuri?” He whispered.

Yuri looked at him. “I will explain later.” She spoke just as softly. “Trust me husband.”

EDEN CITY

Martin Leonidas howled then, louder and longer than he had ever howled before and he felt the retribution of his father complete him. His mind felt clear and powerful, no longer filled with shadows and fog. He knew who he was now, what he was. And he embraced that knowledge as tightly as he was able.

Father! I will fight with my head father! And I will lead with my heart! Martin's voice echoed across the plains in the minds of all those who were telepathic and he heard the loudest gasp of all come from his right.

Another flash of silvery white light and Martin staggered as he returned to human form. His Captain was there first, grabbing his exhausted King before he lost his balance. He watched his King snatch the helmet from his head and toss it to the ground as Aricia was beside him and then Dysea and Anja, each of them holding his weight with their own.

"Martin..." Anja gasped.

"I'm... I'm ok." He spoke raggedly. He saw an elf step forward with a canteen, and he smiled as Vengal bowed his head deeply holding the canteen out to him. Martin took it and poured it over his head, letting it wash away the blood and flesh still in his mouth. He spit on the ground several times to rid himself of the taste of Xerxes's blood and looked at his mother.

"I'm ok..." He said softly. "I'm ok."

Aricia released him as did the others and they watched him step up to where Gorgo looked at him, tears flowing from her eyes like a river as she gazed upon the son she thought she had lost all those centuries ago. His eyes had returned to normal now and then he was in front of her, towering over her like his father had so long ago.

Gorgo reached out tentatively her hand shaking badly. She gasped in a mixture of pain and relief as Martin snatched her hand in his and pressed it to his blood stained cheek. Gorgo could barely contain the sobs that wracked her body as the warmth of her son's skin pulsed through her. Martin leaned forward quickly again and inhaled deeply the scent of his mother, sensations sweeping over him that he had never experienced before.

"My... my son," Gorgo was able to force out.

Whether it was from exhaustion, or relief or pain, Martin dropped to his knees in front of his mother, tears spilling from his own eyes now and he leaned forward slowly wrapping his arms around her waist and placing his head against her chest.

"Mother," His voice was barely a whisper, but to Gorgo it was like a shout out of the darkness of oblivion.

She could contain it no longer and she did the one thing she had waited to do for nearly three thousand years. She wrapped her arms around the son she had lost, and then found again. Her face went to his head as she breathed deeply of his mint scent, letting it fill her lungs and her being. The connection to her past was in front of her, and Gorgo embraced it like the love she had for Riall. She could feel her mate's love filling her with his happiness and joy at what she had re-discovered.

"We have... we have so much to do... my King." Gorgo whispered to him.

She felt Martin nod his head against her chest. "At this moment... I just want to be your son." He replied to her. "And try to regain some of what I... what we lost."

Those words made her pull his head tighter, unwilling now to let him go, and she lost herself in the feelings of being reborn and finding peace after so many years.

Peace that would not last for long.

But at least for this moment in time, it was peace she had long been denied.