



Dune Saga

by

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It is my hypothesis that the Fremen were black.

Using the experience of Planet Earth – evolution has shown that populations that reside in tropical settings as in Africa and South America were dark skinned as manifested by original peoples of these continents. On the other hand populations that found themselves closer to the Polar Regions as with the Nordic tribes tended to be white.

Hence, for this FF, the Fremen are black.

## Chapter 1

*If;  
You don't like the Rules of the Game.  
Play it.  
Win it.  
Change it.*

*Emperor Dax Atreides*

It was late. It was hot. It was humid.

This was Dune – Desert Planet – Sole provider of the Spice Melange; thus the center of the Universe.

*[V] A Reverend Mother in Commando Uniform walked into the compound, unchallenged. She snorted in disgust, so much for security on a planet that housed House Corrino.*

*She headed for the desert exhibit and stared, it was a true attempt at reconstructing the desert of Arakkis.*

She checked her pack and entered...[V]

Dax Atreides sat up suddenly and looked around wildly. As he settled his heart rate he realized that it had been a dream. This one, however, was different. It felt real. Almost like déjà vu. Of late things around him were changing. He corrected the thought. No, he was changing, which was why he had returned to the Sietch, he was searching for normalcy. Dax was a member of Mick'N Sietch, located near Arakkis City. Of course “near” was a relative term. It normally took a worm ride to get just to the edge of the city. Dune was a desert planet and pulsated to the laws of nature, intensely hot days and extremely cold nights.

Of late that seemed to be changing – like him, like tonight. It was hot and Dax couldn't sleep and the dream now had him wide-awake. He finally got off his sleeping mat and removed the soaking wet shirt that he had been wearing and replaced it with a dry one. With the remnants of the dream lingering in his mind he left his sleeping quarters.

Dax loved his people, his home world and desert life but he was also Atreides, descended from Paul Maud'Dib. Every now and then, though some radical would remind him that he was not native. It was sad that after twenty two thousand years of living, breathing, loving and breeding on Arakkis that some people still didn't accept his family. It really didn't matter. He was Fremen and that was all Shai-Hulud had ordained.

Unprotected by a still-suit, [*Dad would have a fit*] he thought; he stepped outside. It was silent as only the desert could be. Everyone was asleep, but for the camouflaged security and the night creatures of the wilderness. He walked through the Sietch, but for some concessions to

technology like communicators, AVU and computers an Ancient One could have walked the compound and felt right at home. The Sietch was a semi permanent sanctuary as the Fremen prided themselves on their ability to pick up, relocate and continue life as if nothing had interrupted their routine.

Drawn to the desert and fascinated by the Giant Worms that lived there – as was any Fremen worth his water; he headed for a lookout just outside of the perimeter of the Sietch and climbed the highest peak in the area. Offering a prayer he sat and watched the handiwork of God.

Suddenly a vision popped into his head – Amasso, his twin, was in UNIFORM!!! Where in the name of Maud'Dib had that come from? Amasso was no longer in the armed forces or so he claimed, but who knew with him? He was a bundle of energy with no outlet. At least none that Dax found constructive. The two were identical in physical appearance only. It would not be unlike Amasso to lie about his decommission or actually be decommissioned and be out on some black ops.

The vision persisted.

*[V] A woman was with him, in full attack mode. She was grabbed from behind, and automatically knelt dragging her assailant over her shoulder, landing him on the ground; she positioned herself to plunge her knife into him.*

*Just as it quickly as it had cranked up, her adrenaline rush slowed down and the blood lust receded. She whipped round "M'ram! Oh God M'ram! I could have killed you! What is the matter with you?!" She yelled. [V]*

Dax didn't like this. Not one bit. His brow furrowed as he concentrated on the vision, but the more he focused the fuzzier the image became. His thoughts were interrupted as a nighthawk swooped before him and soon emerged with a meal.

As he watched the hawk he observed worm sign. A worm! The Great Maker! Shai-Hulud! All names uttered in awe of the Leviathan that controlled the Planet. Humans depended on Spice but the Worm controlled the spice. The Spice existed because of the Worm. If the Worm were to cease to exist, then so would the spice. To Fremen Shai-Hulud controlled their world – It was God! It was a magnificent creature to behold. Only the small ones approximately twenty meters long could be found near civilization, but the deep desert – that is where the mammoths lived.

Fiercely territorial there was only one time that anyone could recall when they had come together; that was the night Paul Maud'Dib took the water of life. It was said that every worm carried a pearl of conscience of Leto Atreides II, son of Maud'Dib, also known as The Tyrant.

And there it was in the pale moonlight of the first moon – worm sign. This was not the first time. Recently, it seemed that each occasion he ventured out there was worm sign. This night proved to be different as one actually revealed itself. It was all at once terrifying and mystifying. The Giant of the Desert reared up and roared, blasting him with the essence of the spice. It was

truly an awesome sight. In the grey of the night the moonlight danced on the rings of the Worm as it appeared to the young man.

At first panicked, worms were known to devour humans; Dax eventually calmed down and studied the magnificent creature before him.

He stood and paid homage to the desert being. “Your servant always, Shai-Hulud.” He said. The worm nodded and left. That was it, the worm appeared – he bowed and the encounter was over. He settled back and breathed deeply the scent of the spice, which lingered in its wake. There was more to this he was sure but he let it be – for now. He smiled, all was right in his world. Maud'Dib would reveal all in time.

Shai-Hulud -- Blessed be his name.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

#### LANDSAARD FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE The Convention and its Kaitian Protocol

This Convention was opened for signature at the Landsraad Conference on Environment and Development held in Kaitian, and has been ratified by over one hundred and seventy (170) Planets. The Convention's principal policy-making body is the Conference of the Parties, which is supported by a number of subsidiary bodies and working groups and which often calls on the Interplanetary Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for scientific and technical advice. The Convention is supported by the Climate Change Secretariat, which is based on Salusa Secundus.

The Convention has the objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations at a safe level within an acceptable time frame. It contains a series of commitments; requiring all Parties to develop inventories of greenhouse gas emissions; to formulate programmes to mitigate climate change; and to promote technologies, practices and processes that control, reduce or prevent emissions in all relevant sectors, including transport. The Convention also requires that members, individually or jointly, return greenhouse gas emissions to their pre Butleran Jihad levels by the end of the next century, although this is expressed as a general aim rather than a binding commitment.

A solitary silhouette occupied the Official Business Chambers of the Empress. This latest report from the Conference of the Parties of the Landsraad would have far reaching repercussions IF they proved correct. She placed the report down and wondered at the implications for Dune and its worms.

Duncan Idaho popped his head into the Office. “Arista! You cannot do all in one day! Come to bed!”

The Empress stood and did as her husband ordered.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Spice Wine was a potent intoxicant and Amasso Atreides liked it. With a goblet in one hand and a woman in another he and his friends celebrated life.

Drunk and disorderly  
 Always in custody  
 Me friends and me family  
 All man fed up with me  
 ‘Cause I’m drunk and disorderly  
 Every weekend I in de jail  
 Drunk and disorderly  
 Nobody to stand me bail.

His mother liked Dax and he liked wine, women and song.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

It was late. It was hot. It was humid.

Arista Atreides: Mother, Wife, Empress, couldn’t sleep and she tossed and turned. Finally she got out of the bed and stood at the window to look out at the desert – just looked.

Duncan felt her move. He watched her for a moment at the window. “Arista, what’s wrong?”

She sighed and turned to answer him. “The naming of the Heir to the Throne is not a trivial matter ... but somehow I sense the naming of my heir carries more importance than normal.”

“Having twins doesn’t help either.” He joined her at the window. “Listen. You are not going to pick one of them tonight... are you?”

She chuckled. “No.”

“Oh good.” He joked. “You have time. Let events unfold; the boys will tell you who it is to be.”

“Duncan.” She admonished, “Do you not think that they have already spoken?”

“May be. May be not.” He replied. “They are young. Let them become men before you choose. Let them sow their wild oats.”

“You think that is all it is?” She clung to the hope “Wild oats?”

“Yes I do.” He insisted. “Now come back to bed.”

“It’s too hot to sleep.” She complained.



“Who said anything about sleep?” He retorted.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Lady Alexi - Bene Gesserit had been bred for one purpose. She knew the purpose as did all around her. She was to be the Kwisatz Haderach the one who is supposed to be able to be "everywhere at once". From the day of her birth this had been her destiny. She was at the stage where her tutors were preparing her to take 'the water of life' the toxic by product of a drowned Sand Worm of Dune. The 'agony' as it was unofficially referred to would awaken her to dull conscience.

Caladan was a beautiful Planet even if it was under the occupation of the Tleilaxu. She was usually given two days in every six months to herself, this time she headed south. Her contacts in the tropical zone had been well forged and she arrived on one of the tiny islands, jumped into the transport that was waiting for her and headed North-East towards a six hundred and five acre property located near the community of Aux Lyon: population one thousand two hundred. The estate had been part of a large sugar estate about one thousand years before, and the ruins of the sugar era still present were to provide a base camp for her.

She arrived, set up camp and then perched herself on a cliff and let the crashing waves hypnotize her. Her thoughts drifted as it usually did to her future.

Alexi had never questioned her place in the Universe or her role in the plans of the GB. But every now and then the weight of the designation scared her. Kwisatz Haderach was no small destiny!

The closer the 'agony' got, the more the small voice inside was telling her that something was wrong. That she was not The One. She had no basis in fact and not having taken the water of life yet she had no inner voices to consult. But nevertheless she had that nagging feeling.

The setting was hypnotic and time passed in a gentle flow relaxing her. Her patience was rewarded with nature's evening ritual of sunset and it was spectacular as is everything in nature. In the tropics twilight is none existent and the setting sun gave way to night abruptly.

Alexi just sat in the warm night listening to the sounds of the darkness. Eventually, remembering the warnings that this was snake country she got up and headed back to camp. Finally, falling asleep to the lullaby that nature sang.

She went exploring.

She found a number of natural attributes such as a waterfall she judged to be one hundred meters high, two rivers, a collapsed blowhole, a wetland area, a variety of geological formations and of course the beach she had seen on her way in. In her explorations she discovered that the beach was also a nesting site for birds, iguanas and the infamous Caladan Viper, which she spied once slithering along the under growth.

The two days went swiftly and finally the day came to leave - she closed down the camp, jumped into the transport and headed for civilization.

Rejuvenated and determined, she needed to review the records on the Kwisatz program. She had a suspicion that needed to be investigated.



## Chapter 2

*"An eye for an eye will make us all blind."  
Mohandas Gandhi – Ancient Peacemaker*

Personal Journal: Arista Atreides, Empress of the known world.

*[Caladan is the ancestral home of House Atreides, as Earth is the ancestral home of the human race. Yet our water has mingled with that of Fremen. Does this make me Fremen? Or a hybrid? Is Caladan even home? Is Caladan part of the Atreides jurisdiction by virtue of the fact that it is of our House? Or is the planet mine because I rule.*

*One may doubt that I am Atreides. Though I am; if not by birth, then certainly by the genetic manipulation of The Tyrant.*

*With a sign the most powerful female in the known universe shut the image ring and looked out the window. Dune – Desert Planet – Home.]*

Her thoughts wandered.

*[Now this! Yet another appeal.*

*When the migration had begun one thousand years after the death of the God Emperor not one thought it was possible. Zensunni and Zenshite live on the same planet? The Universe held it's collective breath.*

*Amazingly peace had been the result.*

*First, because the then Emperor had let the ancestral home be annexed by the religious fanatics.*

*Second, because the Buddislamics had split the planet down the middle and for the first time since the human race had left Earth there was not a single planetary rule, but a primitive sharing of that power. Left to their own devices they had thrived.]*

She turned before her aide could politely cough. Some things had become genetic and the ability to foretell aspects of the future was now ingrained into the DNA of the Atreides bloodlines.

“Yes, Annan.” Arista prompted, knowing full well the reason for the interruption but wanting the aide to vocalize it.

“Highness. The Ambassador is here.”

“Which one?”

“Both, Highness.”

[*Of course both.*] she thought. Stifling a sigh Arista swept past the young woman and headed for the Hall where she held Court.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Reverend Mother assigned to the Court of Arista Atreides watched as the brown skinned woman entered the Throne Room.

Even as the Atreides had brought Dune from Desert Planet to Tropical Paradise and back to Desert Planet; the Planet itself had affected the family too. No longer were they blue in blue eyed blond and Arian but with the effects of both the Fremmen gene pool and the hot desert sun the Atreides now were as brown skinned as any native.

The change had only served to enhance their mystic, beauty and power.

Arista was true to all three qualities.

The Reverend Mother listened bored by the latest appeal of the joint petition of the Ambassadors of the Planet Caladan. As they had done for the last five visits they appealed for assistance from the Throne to fight the strangle hold the Tleilaxu had on them.

Once again they presented their case: “For over twenty thousand years, Highness we have not only co-existed with each other but did so in peace. We are a threat to no one. We did not deserve this.”

The riddle that the Reverend Mother was focusing on was – why was the Throne entertaining the submissions? Like clockwork on every centennial anniversary of the invasion and subsequent occupation, the latest Ambassador would submit to the latest ruler and the result was the same;

We are in negotiations.

It was obvious that House Atreides had cut the historic ties to the planet and its people, but if they had why the charade? It was a minor mystery, but one that entertained.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

As with any Royal protégé worth their weight in water, Ammaso and Dax Atreides had observed the proceedings. Tall dark and handsome the twins were the most eligible bachelors not only on Dune, but through out the Empire. Though it was tradition that the elder become heir to the throne – many suspected that the younger Atreides would ascend.

Ammaso was the hot head of the two and today was no exception. “This is ridiculous!” He raged back in their quarters.

Dax watched. He was used to his brother’s ranting.

“The Tleilaxu cannot be allowed to continue to squat on Caladan!” He raged. “I can’t understand mother’s reluctance to intervene. After all it is our ancestral home.”

“And as the Prince of Caladan you cannot allow this to happen.” Dax teased. “What is your stake in this Amasso? I thought that you had stopped going there.”

His brother mumbled a response.

“Amasso.” Dax drawled. “Come on cough up.”

“I maintain a residence there.”

Dax was confused. “Residence?”

“A summer home.” Amasso snapped.

“... and that’s enough for you to go off like this?” He snorted. “For God’s sake. We have been Fremmen longer than Caladanian.”

Amasso sighed. “Focus, Dax! It’s the principal of the matter. Caladan is the Ancestral Home of House Atreides. That alone should have been enough at the time of the invasion to get involved!”

“I never thought I’d hear about ‘the principal of the matter’ from you.” Dax got more comfortable in the chair. “Next you’ll be proposing that you should go over there and do something about it.” He teased.

Ammaso stopped pacing. “Now there little brother is an idea!” Older by one minute he usually teased his brother about being the younger.

Dax sat up straight at the comment. “Ammaso, don’t.”

“We’ll see.” The elder did not commit and poured himself a spice wine.

Dax in turn walked out.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The younger Atreides found himself outside. He tightened the abacus around himself, adjusted the still suit that he wore and headed out. He didn’t like it when Amasso got into this moods.

Reverend Mother Mo'Hadin had been at the window thinking when Dax crossed her line of vision. She watched him adjust his clothing and head out.

An inner perception told her to watch the young man, and her inner voices concurred. There was no reason to. He was a young man like any other, true he was royalty second in line to the throne but covered up this way he was winding his way and no one had noticed him – yet.

Using the network of CCAVUs she watched the young man. The palace was located on the edge of the metropolis and it did not take a long walk for one to find ones self on the edge of the desert.

Every step he took brought him closer to the desert and further away from the city. He was expecting something and there it was – worm sign.

*[Why was it every time I approach the wilderness that the Guardian of the Desert appears?]* He wondered. *[Do they not want me there?]* He changed his direction. The worm sign matched him. The colossus did not break the sand line but there was no mistaking its bulk below the surface.

Dax finally gave up and returned to the palace.

*[Did the worms of Arakkis have a unique link to this youth?]* Mo'Hadin contemplated what she had just witnessed. *[It had been the aim and claim of the Tyrant that there would be a gem of his consciousness in each worm – had he achieved this?]* The woman's mind raced. *[She had been hearing murmurs that one of the Twins seemed to be manifesting powers with the worms, was it Dax? This bore investigation.]*

## Chapter 3

*Memory never recaptures reality. Memory reconstructs.  
All reconstructions change the original,  
becoming external frames of reference that inevitably fall short.  
Mentat Handbook*

The Kwisatz Mother Farrah swept down the hall of the Ancestral Home of House Atreides. She was on a mission. One would think that after eons of this jihad being in place on Caladan that the Sisterhood would have found a way to get her and the new Kwisatz Haderach project off the planet.

Since the emergence of the “new” sisterhood that had evolved from the merging of the Bene Gesserit and the Honoured Matres things just were not the same or so her memories kept telling her.

She entered the training room and watched silently. It never failed to amaze her though she kept the wonder to herself, at how this child seemed to be a clone of The Lady Jessica Atreides. At twenty years of age, this young woman carried the hope of the Bene Gesserit on her shoulders.

Could she be the one? Could Acolyte Alexi be the re-engineered Kwisatz Haderach?

Having lost complete control of the program by the one act of Lady Jessica, and the millennia and a half that followed under the control of the God Emperor, the Sisterhood decided to try again. This time with a fundamental difference – a female.

Men had proved to be unpredictable and uncontrollable. Hence – Alexi.

Farrah sensed the exact moment that the Acolyte stopped concentrating on the lesson. [*She’s watching me.*] She thought.

Alexi noticed the moment that the Reverend Mother had walked into the room, as had her tutors. With the discipline instilled in all, they had ignored Farrah. She had come to observe not interrupt.

But Alexi was still in training and her mind wandered. They thought that she didn’t know, but she did. They thought that she was The One, but she was not. What they had yet to compute was that she was the Mother to the Kwisatz Haderach and not the Kwisatz Haderach.

In a way it was amusing – well amazing really that the Reverend Mothers had not come to the same conclusion. After all they been at this for Millennia and she a mere slip of a thing and yet she had managed to figured this out. Why not them?

*[I am not the Kwisatz Haderach!]* She thought. She wanted to stop there and then and do a jig. It was a bit much to be considered to be the Kwisatz Haderach.

She dodged the hunter seeker, spun on the spot the neutralized it with lightening speed and accuracy. Her train of thought continued, *[Having seen what a super being could do. Kwisatz Haderach – the one who could be in more than one place why oh why are we doing this again?]*

The battle machine was next. The evil tower was a collection of swords, darts, needles and any other item of destruction that could be attached. She moved in. *[What we need is new Atreides DNA. They have always been the key to the program.]* Her attention sharpened when a dart hit her on her forearm.

The instructor clucked. “Focus, Alexi!”

She grimaced and continued both her line of thought and the exercise. *[We have plenty of samples of the Great Houses in stock – but the Atreides batch is no longer viable. Even I know that. Of course this is assuming that the genetics classes were accurate.]*

She moved in on the battle apparatus, her thoughts still elsewhere.

*[Do I tell them that I know?]* She sneaked a glance at Farrah. *[Naaaah! This one I keep to myself. Let’s see how long it takes them to catch up with me.]* She sniggered.

*[Even as I carry a strong resemblance to the Lady Jessica I am just as capable; may be even more so of keeping to the mission this time – produce a girl! I can do that. I would give them the daughter that Lady Jessica did not.]*

She disarmed the device.

As she bowed in the ancient martial arts manner of respect she thought, enough waiting – the time had come for action.

Farrah watched the young woman and heard the giggle. Under their tutorlage she was mature for her age, but she still slipped now and then. The program was at a crucial juncture – they needed to get off this planet! Alexi needed to be on Dune, she needed to be exposed to Palace culture as well as Planet itself. She turned on her heel and glided out with one thought on her mind. Enough waiting – the time had come for action.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Baron Vlad Harkonnen was the latest Baron in a long line of Barons, the fourth to be named Vladimir and like all before him, sadistic. Nicknamed Vlad by his mother as he reminded her of their ancestor Vlad the Impalor, he ruled his planet with absolute power and as any mentat could point out the inevitable happened. The absolute power corrupted absolutely.

Vlad was the perfect killing instrument. He was charming even seductive at times, abilities that soothed potential victims allowing him to strike with deadly accuracy. Now he sat facing the Prince Rammen Corrino, descendant of Shaddam IV former Emperor of the Universe, over an AVU.

Both men were tall but, Vlad out weighed Rammen by a minimum of twenty kilos. That was not the only area where he out matched the Prince. Rammen had one burning ambition, which gave him tunnel vision. The aspiration was not much different to all who had gone before: The re-ascension of House Corrino to the Throne. He would lie with the Devil to get it.

What Rammen did not realize was that he had done just that.

Vlad did not like communicating over scrambled channels. Anything that could be scrambled could be unscrambled, but in this he had no choice: the stakes were high. He was about to play the game of his life and he would need all his patience and savoir-faire to succeed.

“Then we are in agreement.” Rammen replied.

“Indeed. My liaison shall approach Ammaso and we shall fund his war effort...”

“Liberation.” Rammen chuckled the correction.

“Of course... Liberation.” Vlad grinned.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The resident representative of the Bene Gesserit Reverend Mother Mo’Hadin now found herself before the Empress of the Known Universe.

Arista Atreides had all senses on high alert; she had no need of Truthsayers; this she could handle. It was not often that the Bene Gesserit came forward with a request much less in the open like this.

“Highness.” Mo’Handin addressed the Throne. “The Bene Gesserit repeats its request for an evacuation of the Sisterhood from the Planet Caladan.”

Repeats? Arista gave a mental chuckle the last request was two thousand and twenty nine years ago. What had changed? She gave the standard reply. “We are in negotiations. Of course space may be found at the table for one more interested party.” She studied Mo’Hadin but perceived no change. “To ease the arrival of your negotiator – how many are involved?”

Mo’Hadin had expected the standard “negotiations” response but the question was not part of the rhythm. She in turn repeated Gesserit propaganda. “One Million, Highness.”

Arista did the math as the Hall gasped. The last count by Tleilaxu revealed a population of two hundred and thirty million inhabitants. Of course the numbers were wrong every census ever



taken of humanity had never been accurate. But using the official numbers Arista projected that the Sisterhood numbers were more like ten million. Again, why now?

Mo'Hadin watched as the Empress scratched an itch. To the untrained that is what it seemed like to her it read... You may evacuate the Ten Million of your Sisters but to Wallach IX and nowhere else.

Arista watched as the hand signaled message registered. Now with ten million Bene Gesserit on an attempted secret exodus, she would watch to see what secret floated to light

Mo'Hadin's bowed in reply to both the public statement and the private order.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The place was a dump and Amasso liked it like that. It was filled with people that society had no use for and they in turn didn't care. It was the last place anyone would look for, for him and frankly he did not want to be found. Not just yet. He was still stinging over the lack of action regarding Caladan.

He was drinking alone. [*Not the thing to do.*] He admitted to himself but if he had to wait for company he'd never get a drink.

"I still say that Caladan has been occupied and not liberated!" He stated to the waiter who was attending to him.

"Yes, my Lord." The man said and fled. So much for anonymity.

"Well it is!" Amasso insisted to the vacated space. "The Tleilaxu went in there saying that there was need to save the souls and ... what a thousand? Two thousand years later they are still there?!" He downed the wine and signaled for more.

"I say liberate the homeland!... Barkeep!"

A stranger walked up to the table. "May I join you, M'Lord?"

Amasso squinted at the man. "I'm not Dax." He stated.

"I know, Major." The man sat next to him.

Now that he didn't have to look up, Amasso studied the man. "You look familiar." The second glass of Spice Wine arrived, but he didn't touch it. He liked wine, but he knew the when and where of it.

The man smiled. "I have that kind of face."

"You have me at a disadvantage." Amasso said. "You know my name..."

“Oh how remiss of me! I’m Al Samoud.”

Amasso waited. “No last name?”

“No last name.”

“Huh.” Was the Atreides response, “What can I do for you?”

“No, no, no... It is what I can do for you.” Al Samoud replied. Then his voice dropped, “I am planning a mission to Caladan. As part of an assignment to assist the Caladan Army.”

Amasso was skeptical “The Army you say.”

“I do say... I am putting together a Special Operations Force to assist the embattled Military Forces there.” He monitored Amasso. “I’m looking for experienced Military Men.”

“Interesting.” Was all Amasso would say.

“Surely that outburst earlier was not only talk?” Al Samoud jeered.

The jibe hit home. “OK, I’m in... on one condition.”

“OK.”

“Your last name.”

“Rabban.” Al Samoud grinned using the name of his reviled ancestor.

## Chapter 4

*For GOD so loved the world he didn't send a committee.  
Fremen Axiom*

Alexi had taken the Water of Life. A poison extracted from the Sand Worms of Dune. It was a dangerous ritual that had claimed a number of lives. It was necessary that Alexi endure what was commonly called The Agony. The agony for that is what was endured.

Farrah was about to conclude that Alexi would die from the Water of Life ritual, when the young woman awoke from her coma like state. Taking the Water of Life was a draining experience and once she was assured that Alexi had come through she left the new Reverend Mother to recuperate.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

High up in the Dellecian Mountains of Caladan a small band of Special Ops personnel moved up the towards a cave. There seemed to have been only three guards outside, but on the off chance there were more on the inside the team moved cautiously. First Ammaso, followed by Andresa, then Alex and bringing in the rear was A'Ran.

They were teased mercilessly as Team A. "Imagine..." The Commander had observed, "...every member's name begins with A"

The group was soon under attack. Ammaso in the lead was the first to be assaulted. A'Ran leaped in to aid in the struggle.

As the two dealt with the attacker, Andresa was grabbed from behind, she automatically knelt dragging her assailant over her shoulder, landing him on the ground and she positioned herself to plunge her knife into him.

"Andresa! No! It's me M'ram!" He shouted and squirmed.

Her adrenaline was pumping, she was in battle mode and the kill action was in full motion. Her arm went up and the knife flashed as the descent motion began until Alex kicked the knife from her hand. Andresa looked at Alex with blood in her eyes.

Just as it quickly as it had cranked up, the adrenaline rush slowed down and the blood lust receded. She whipped round "M'ram! Oh God, M'ram! I could have killed you! What is the matter with you?!" She yelled.

They had come to rescue him and she'd nearly killed him.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Once the Water of Life had been taken the Sisterhood knew when another had joined. No matter where in the Universe it happened - it was one of the miracles of the transmutation of the water.

They all knew when Paul Atreides had gone through the agony, they had gone with him on that ride. He had occupied a place where none of them could look.

Once the faux pas of that program that had produced Paul Maud'Dib was over and the rule of his son the Tyrant concluded, they had reviewed the Kwisatz program and concluded that there were areas for improvement. So the Sisterhood had continued the program that had given them Alexi, but she was not the one. Now Farrah had to tell the young woman who had been raised to be the Kwisatz Haderach that she was not the one.

"I knew before I endured the agony." Alexi comforted Farrah once she told her.

Farrah was shocked at the response and Bene Gesserit's didn't shock easily. "How?" Farrah asked.

"I just did." The teen explained. "I am Bene Gesserit. I just knew."

[*And there you have it.*] Farrah thought. "Now we must go one generation forward."

"With an Atreides male." Alexi volunteered.

"Yes." Farrah confirmed. "I must assimilate the present data and make a projection."

"Either way Reverend Mother we need to go to Dune."

"Indeed we do."

On that note the two parted. Farrah shivered, Alexi seemed to be more than a Jessica look alike. The Kwisatz program seemed to be entering a key phase.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Valcyn was a forager and a hermit. He was middle aged as the spice extended life expectancy that made him about two hundred and fifty years old. To look at he was a typical Fremen: Tall, slim, fit: there was not water fat on this man, with the standard blue in blue eyes set against a smooth ebony skin.

He just happened to take Fremen independence to the logical conclusion and he had become a hermit. Fremen respected that and left Valcyn to his own devices.

As evening turned into night he emerged to see what treasures the Desert had left for him. Wrapped in his abacas and with still suit firmly in place he set out.

Even through the nose piece he could smell it: Something was dead. He climbed the dune to find out what and the closer to the crest he got the worse the smell became.

Finally he reached the top. It was a Giant Sand Worm, and it was not dead - yet. Valcyn stood transfixed as the Worm groaned in agony.

What had caused this? A sick worm? Who had ever heard of such? The skin looked cancerous all puffed and oozing a thick sticky liquid. The puss is what stank up the surrounds. As Valcyn stood there helpless, the worm died.

Relieved that the creature's agony was over he turned and headed the way he had come.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

In the privacy of her chambers Mo'Hadin reviewed the data crystal.

"I have double checked the findings myself." Farrah reported. "There can be no doubt. Alexi is not The One and must now be mated to an Atreides." She changed topic. "As all the Universe knows, the 'negotiations' will go no where. The time has come to relocate the breeding program."

Mo'Hadin had no doubt of the findings. Farrah was not only a Bene Gesserit Reverend Mother; she was the Coordinator of the Kwisatz Program and a formidable Mentat. No, she had no doubt that the conclusions were accurate. What gave the Ambassador pause was the proposed strategy - introduce the Atreides bloodline, again. A wild card at anytime.

She shut down the crystal, opened a new one and began her report to the Mother Superior. The mass movement of the Sisterhood would be a dangerous mission.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

## THE DELLECIAN MOUNTAIN RANGE

"Where is Zor?" Alex demanded.

"Here." Ammaso picked up what looked like the remains of a rag doll.

"Zor?" Alex asked.

"Yeah, it's me."

"Why'd you attack us?!" Ammaso demanded.

"Why not!" M'ram demanded. "We didn't know what was going on out there and it was a chance of maybe escaping!"

“So much for that thought.” Alex said.

“Before life gets complicated... I think we should leave.” Andresa said.

M’ram winked at her. “Oh, my goodness. The High Command sent Andresa.”

“You nervous already?” She countered.

“And why would I be nervous?”

“Cause I nearly killed you!”

“But you didn’t, you wouldn’t, you couldn’t.” He grinned at her as they moved out of the cave toward the point where they had hidden their vehicle.

Then the earthquake struck...

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Mentat logic dictates that to successfully hide anything; it must be done in the open. Based on that premise Reverend Mothers Farrah and Alexi disguised as Budislamic Pilgrims boarded a Highliner. Their destination was New Mecca via Arakkis.

Five thousand years ago a planet that fitted the description of Earth had been discovered. Not caring if it really was the Historic Planet the Peoples of the Universe had embraced the concept that the Ancestral Home had been found. There had been a ground swell to call it Terra Firma and so it became. The places on the Planet carried the names of Ancient Earth but some how “New” kept popping in. And so it was that Farrah and Alexi tickets indicated that they were headed for New Mecca on Terra Firma.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

## THE DELLECIAN MOUNTAIN RANGE

“Here’s another one!!” A man shouted in Dellecian, the dialect native to the Zensunni people of the mountains, to anyone who could hear.

“Praises be to Allah.” A woman replied. A group of people made their way through the rubble. As the woman approached the spot she marveled. “Ahmed, does he live?”

“If it is the will of Allah.” Ahmed replied as he joined the chain of hands that began to move the rubble. “Many have died in this war and now with this earthquake many more may die, Sophia. As for this one?” he left the thought hanging.

There was a gasp. “Tell me!” Sophia demanded.

“He is an infidel!” Someone announced. “He is not Zensunni - he has blue in blue eyes!” The crowd stood back as if burned.

“And that is reason enough to stop?” She asked, “Has THE ONE taught you nothing? Show mercy to the man; besides, being an Off Worlder does not automatically make him an infidel. Many have seen the way and converted.”

They reverently placed the corpses of Team A to a side and continued the rescue.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The latest Baron Harkonnen, opened the encoded message. AMASSO ATREIDES OF DUNE IS MISSING IN ACTION.

No sooner had he read the lines than the message burst into flames, self-destructing, almost burning his hands in the process.

“Damn it.” He cursed. The last time the Harkonnen’s and gotten mixed up with House Corrino there was a shift in the power base the likes of which was not seen until the God Emperor. Now here they were back at square one.

Conspiring!

This time with an Atreides, Vladimir must have rolled in his grave. What a trinity: Harkonnen – Corrino – Atreides.

Now the damn fool had gone missing. He needed to be found and fast if their plan was to unfold on schedule.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Ahmed approached the tent that now acted as a hospital for the victims of the earthquake, they had buried the dead, including the ‘A’ Team. He spotted Sophia and approached her. “How is he?”

She didn’t have to ask of whom he spoke. “Alive by the will of Allah.”

“Has he spoken?”

“All he will say is Dax. He has many injuries but they will heal.” She replied. “As to whether his heart and soul will do the same...”

“Dax? What is a Dax?”

She shrugged, she had no idea.



“All in the hands of Allah.” He said.

“All in the hands of Allah.” She echoed.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Alexi stood at the window to their quarters and idly watched the boarding of other passengers and the loading of cargo. Just standing there she could make out her reflection in the Plexiglas and her mind wondered.

*[I look like the Lady Jessica and I am Bene Gesserit who must mate with an Atreides male. There is a pattern here. Will I do as she did? Will I love this man choose for me and disobey my orders to have a female? Do I have a say in this or is it all pre ordained?]*

She rested her head against the cool window. Her thoughts burned.

*[Great Mother I hope I'm not to be the Bound Concubine to some six year old that I must wait upon! Or worse a one hundred year old! Reverend Mother Farrah has not told me the details only that it must be and that I am to produce a girl child.]*

She was beginning to become agitated at the thought of the unforeseen future. She recited the Literary Against Fear, when that didn't seem to achieve the calm she sought she tried an even more Ancient entreaty.

*[Great Mother]* She prayed...

...make me an instrument of Thy peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me so love,  
Where there is injury, pardon,  
Where there is doubt, faith,  
Where there is despair, hope,  
Where there is darkness, light,  
Where there is sadness, joy...

Farrah rejoined her and found a clam, cool and collected Reverend Mother.

## Chapter 5

*Life is short, art long, opportunity fleeting, experience treacherous, judgment difficult.  
Hippocrates (460-370 BC) Greek physician*

He'd had another vivid dream. This time he remembered every detail in colour.

*[V] The Baron Harkonnen had declared a holiday and all were expected to attend the unveiling, Noble and Slave alike. Positioned in an advantageous point, the statue of the Old Baron would keep an eye on all. Six hours of speeches later, all vaulting the Baron, the statue was exposed for the world to see. [V]*

While he still remembered, he needed to record it. He reached for his PDA.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The planning of an Exodus of any scale is a daunting affair. The planning in secret borders on the impossible. As plans proceeded the first to have been plucked were The Kwisatz Mother Farrah and the New Reverend Mother Alexi.

They arrived on Arakkis despite the orders of the Empress and prepared to pay the price for the disobedience.

Leaving Alexi to another Reverend Mother, Farrah met with Mo'Hadin.

"You are sure of the reincarnation theory?" Farrah questioned and then answered her own question. "Of course you are sure."

"How sure can one be of a theory that has not been tested?" Mo'Hadin responded. "A hypothesis that states one day the genetic reincarnation of Paul Atreides will be produced?"

"Sounds more like the ramblings of a religious zealot to me." Farrah was skeptical.

"There are indications of out of the ordinary ability in the younger." Mo'Hadin related what she had observed between Dax and the Sand Worm.

"We will need to investigate this more." Farrah stated.

"Undoubtedly." Mo'Hadin agreed. "You have the latest database on the Kwisatz program?"

Farrah handed over the data disc. "Mother Superior concurs. She must mate with an Atreides male."

“Amasso?” Mo’Hadin inquired. “Who has not been seen in weeks?”

“Assuming that the theory proves to be proven, then Dax.” Farrah stated. “What do you mean – not seen in week?”

“Just that. He’s gone on a pilgrimage into the desert to dry out.” Mo’Hadin explained. Seeing Farrah’s puzzlement she elaborated, “The Spice is not his only addiction. He likes the byproducts too – in particular the Wine.”

“Ah.”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Yousif approached his wife Sophia. “It has been two days; does he still says nothing?”

“Still only Dax.”

“Dax?” he echoed.

“Dax.” She repeated.

He took a deep breath and exhaled heavily. “What are we to do with him?”

“We keep him until Allah shows the way.”

“Then in the mean time he must learn Dellecian. This one word vocabulary will not work.” He pronounced. “What is this word again?”

“Dax.” She reminded her husband.

He snorted. “Dax indeed. What is a Dax?”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Finally, Alexi was left to her own devises and she used to opportunity to explore her new world. The Palace was huge and it would take more than one occasion to fully explore. So she focused this time on the Throne Room and the attendant offices.

[*So this is where THE power in the Universe is whiled from.*] She thought. Suddenly she whistled no particular tune. She just made a noise and as she expected there was an echo. She didn’t know the style of the hall, except that it was ancient.

She moved towards one of the portraits on the wall. “Duke Leto I” she read. Then she moved to the next and the next and the next. The walls were lined with the Rulers of the Empire. She could see the family resemblance from one to the next. She could even spot the darkening of the

skin. It was difficult to spot as you went down the line, but looking at Leto I and then comparing him to Arista II, there was a definite change; the family had certainly gone from pale to dark.

[*So you are the latest in the long line.*] Alexi addressed the portrait. [*You are indeed beautiful.*] She heard a noise and she pressed herself against the wall.

There was no need; Dax was not interested in anything going on in the hall below. [*Not bad. Not bad.*] Alexi observed the passing of young man. [*I don't suppose that my luck would allow you to be the Atreides I must mate with.*]

She watched him disappear round the corner and she went back to studying the hall of portraits.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Baron Vlad Harkonnen met with his two sons; Al Samoud and Samir

“Your mission is a simple one.” Vlad explained. “Go to Caladan, find Amasso Atreides ...”

“... and kill him.” Samir finished.

“Lord no.” Vlad chuckled. “We need him for other things.”

“We’ll need a cover.” Al Samoud stated.

“YOU will need a cover.” His brother said. “You are the one who approached him at the bar.”

“Speaking of cover. What of Thalmas?” Al Samoud asked.

“Your brother is on schedule and his cover is intact, he is a trusted member of House Atreides. The next phase is due to take place soon at the Mojave Power Station.” Vlad replied.

“Will these people never learn?” Samir said.

“Apparently not, but that is not your concern.” Vlad said. “Your concern is to maintain the charade that you are just keeping in touch with your people.”

Al Samoud gave his brother a smug look. “I suggest that we use the story of The Great Flood.”

“The Great Flood.” Samir jeered.

“You have a better idea?”

Vlad stopped the sibling rivalry before it got too far. “You are going into a community that contains religious fanatics.”

“You can not be serious!” Samir told his father.

“I am.” Vlad’s tone stopped the debate. “Go in as researchers for the Great Flood. The communities of Caladan even with generations of Budislamics are Anglo with clear eyes. Amasso is black with blue in blue eyes. He will stand out.”

The statement ended the debate.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Dax was distracted; he was obsessing over his dreams. They alone were bad enough but the verification of his latest was un-nerving. He’d had a vision showing him a message from Amasso saying that he had gone to Caladan. He’d just about forgotten the dream when, lo and behold, a message from Amasso had arrived telling him that he had gone off to Calandan. Which unnerved him more he did not know: The dream or the message. The fact remained though he was distracted.

Farrah watched him go by. One did not have to be a Reverend Mother to realize that the Prince was preoccupied. She nodded at Alexi, who was across from her, the young woman nodded back in acknowledgement.

Dax was functioning on autopilot, his mind moving from one topic to another. He knew the corridors and as such he let his mind wander. Just how long was he going to cover for Amasso? The official story was that Amasso had gone into the Desert on a pilgrimage. But the reality was that he had gone to Caladan. Somehow he’d got secret sponsorship and now he Dax was left to deal with the fall out when it came, not if.

Functioning on autopilot was not the way of Fremmen – such actions got one killed. It was no different in the Palace. Except that today Shai-Hulud spared his with a mere collision.

Alexi was sent sprawling as the two collided round the corner.

Dax returned to reality immediately “Are you alright?”

“Yes, my Lord.” She replied.

“You know who I am?” He held out his hand to assist her.

“All know who you are, Lord Dax.” She took it and stood.

He stared at the beauty before him and was smitten. “And your name?”

“Alexi, My Lord.” She stared him straight in the eye.

“Where are you off to?” He inquired.

“The hour of Lud is upon us and I was on my way to the Chapel.” She explained.

“You are correct.” He realized and thought to himself [*...and the longer I stay here the more water fat and slack I become.*]

She continued to observe him. “Most Courtiers women do not look at people so directly.” He observed, a unique experience for him.

“I venture to say, My Lord that I am not like most women.”

Farrah watched the interplay as Dax escorted Alexi to the Chapel. Even with Mo’Hadin investigating strange theories the time had come to test the young Atrides. They would get to the older soon enough.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

In the end the cover story concocted by the Harkonnens was not needed.

The leaders of the village were gathered. For the first time since they had settled on this Mountain modern man was walking into their village. A group of infidels had arrived with all the trappings of their world in search of rest. They were military and had been on the move for weeks.

They were part of the Caladan Army 10th Mountain Division under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Serena Reltub. They had lost a Team in the Mountains and now that the rehabilitation was well underway from the earthquake, they were out searching.

Ahmed told the translator of the man they had found after the earthquake and baptized as Ossama, for he had amnesia and they had to call him something, but he wasn’t there at the moment. They were granted rest until he returned.

Of course the village was a buzz. The women tightened their robes about them; the children despite warnings followed the men everywhere.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

FROM: HOUSE HARKONNEN, GIEDI PRIME

TO: INTERPLANETIERIAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE, CLIMATE CHANGE SECRETARIAT, SALUSA SECUNDUS.

THIS IS TO INFORM YOU THAT AFTER REVIEWING THE DATA, HOUSE HARKONNEN HAS CONCLUDED THAT WE SHALL NOT RATIFY THE TREATY FOR THE FOLLOWING: THE ECONOMY OF GIEDI PRIME WOULD BE DAMAGED BY THE PROPOSED CUTS IN THE EMISSIONS AS RATIFICATION OF THE PROTOCOL WOULD COST US JOBS AND DAMAGE OUR INDUSTRY.

MAY WE ALSO POINT OUT THAT IT IS UNFAIR THAT NONE WERE BEING MADE BY THE MINOR HOUSES SUCH AS HOUSE RICH'ARD.

XAVIER MEHDA'IN - MENTAT  
HOUSE HARKONNEN

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

When Amasso had finally spoken, it had been in the Standard English Language of the Imperial Court, while the Mountain People spoke Dellecian. The frustration did not last long as the call to prayer revealed that the Villagers also spoke the Ancient Arabic Language, as did Amasso. After that communication was not a problem. If only his memory would return.

He'd made friends with the villagers but with nowhere to go or a remembered place to go, he just stayed put. And so it was that day, that unaware that the Caladan Army 10th Mountain Division was camped in the village, Amasso had gone off with his newfound friend, Said, who had been called to deliver a baby. It was a chance for Amasso to see the sights.

Amasso watched the drama unfold. The husband jumped to his feet as Said approached the group of men.

“YES!” He was eager, his wife had gone into labour that morning and he was excited about starting a family. Then he noticed his demeanor. “WHAT!” He demanded.

Said hated this, but the only way to say it is to say it. So he did. “Your wife and your son did not survive.” He gulped, “There is nothing that we could do... I am so sorry.”

“Nooooo!” The man wailed and sank to his knees as the other men of the village crowded around him. Amasso had never felt so helpless in his life.

The two men left soon after and made their way back. As they walked away, Amasso said: “Shar’Leem and I had wanted children.”

“Yes?” Said was still distraught over the loss. “... and who is Shar’Leem? Your wife?”

Amasso thought for a moment. “I don’t know!” Now it was his turn to become distressed.

Said soothed him, “It’s a sign. Be patient all will return.”

The two lapsed into silence all the way back. They entered their village as the third call to prayer was in progress and into the custody of the Lt. Colonel.

Al Samoud and Samir who had used forged papers to be assigned to the command watched as the Colonel spoke with the Atreides.



## Chapter 6

*Be sincere; be brief; be seated.  
Franklin Delano Roosevelt - Politician*

Dax Atreides stood silently as he watched his mother.

Arista stopped pacing and turned to her Chief of Staff. “Find him.”

The man bowed and left.

She turned on her son. “Is it not enough that I have given you life?! That your brother goes off on his own personal Jihad?” Arista demanded of him. “And the Royal Court wonders as why I do not name my heir!”

“Mother...”

“SILENCE!” She threw the voice at him and despite his training the fury with which she whiled the tool shut him up completely. “You were raised in Desert and Palace and yet you and your brother do not know the ways of survival of either World!”

He broke the command. “I am not my brother and never make that mistake mother. We may look alike but we are not.”

The tone in his voice gave her a moment of pause. “May be.” She conceded. “Maybe.”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Rammen ensured that the message was completely brunt. The statement from Vlad had been simple.

AMMASO FOUND. PHASE TWO MUST START: CHARGE HIM WITH DERELICTION OF DUTY, ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE AND ANYTHING ELSE THAT THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL CAN COME UP WITH. JUST KEEP THE PRESSURE ON ARISTA.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Amasso hugged Sophia and then Yousif there were no words to express his emotional state. He tried.

Yousif stopped him. “Go. It is the will of Allah. You came to us and now you must go.”

“Even if it is to find Dax.” Sophia grinned.

“Even if it is to find Dax.” Yousif echoed his wife. “Allah be with you, my brother.”

“Think of us.” Sophia requested.

“I will NEVER forget you.” He promised yet still he hesitated.

“You do not wish to go?” Sophia probed.

“I had planned to go to New Mecca.” He explained. “It is time.”

Yousif nodded his understanding “Patience brother. It is not time yet. If it were then these men would not have found you. Now it is time for you to reclaim your life. It is the will of Allah. Go. You will see New Mecca when it is time.”

“And when you do bring this Dax to see us.” Sophia suggested suddenly.

Amasso’s face lit up. “Yes!” He nodded “Yes!”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Reverend Mother Mo’Hadin stared at the data disc. She had the advantage of past lives to guide her even if there was the risk of insanity. What she held in her hand was new even to them.

The message from Chapter House was indisputable. There was reason to believe that Salusa Secundus may have Sand Worms. A Sister was being sent to verify.

In the mean time the sisterhood was informing her in the event that the information may be of use to her. One thing was clear – the monopoly of Spice production on Dune had to be broken. As far as Mo’Hadin was concerned someone/anyone breaking the spice monopoly would weaken the Atreides Empire and strengthen the Bene Gesserit position and that could only be a good thing.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Lady Alexi stood before the Reverend Mother Farrah. Farrah was not happy. “Alexi there has been no progress with The Prince Dax Atreides?!”

“Reverend Mother, The Prince has been keeping his distance and since our initial encounter we have met once or twice. Neither occasion lent itself to the furtherance of the mission.” Alexi explained.

Farrah stood to look out the window. Alexi continued. “What is required is a situation that requires our constant contact. I understand that The Empress is in need of a Cabinet Secretary.”

Farrah turned and faced the young Reverend Mother. "... and the sons attend the Cabinet Meetings..."

"The situation remains less than ideal but it will provide an opportunity for constant contact." Alexi forwarded her case.

"Agreed. I shall have Ambassador Mo'Hadin speak with the Empress." She said and then added. "It may not be an easy assignment to have allocated or to execute for you are young."

"But able." Alexi assured the Reverend Mother.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Tleilaxu had seen the Team head up the mountain and had had the patience to await their return.

On the trip back to the Command Post they struck. There were explosions everywhere. Amasso Atreides together with a number of others was thrown from the transport. Once again he survived, where many did not.

His memory returned.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

FROM: TERRAN GROWTH INC

TO: PRINCE RAMMEN CORRINO

MESSAGE:

ALL IS ON SCHEDULE.

WE RESPECTFULLY REQUEST THE SECOND INSTALLMENT OF PAYMENT.

J'TU

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The rag tag team from the Mountains finally entered the Command Post.

The JAG Officer scrutinized them as they walked by. "That him?"

"Yes, sir." The Sergeant replied.

The Lt. Colonel impeded the passage of Amasso. "Major Amasso Atreides?"

Amasso glanced at the man before him, "...and who wants to know?"

The man ignored the statement and continued. "Major Amasso Atreides, the Judge Advocate General hereby charges you with the following under the UCMJ." He proceeded to rattle off the list to a stunned Major,

Article 97. - Unlawful detention.

Article 86. - Absence without leave.

Article 87. - Missing movement.

Article 88. - Contempt toward officials.

Article 89. - Disrespect toward superior commissioned officer.

Article 90. - Assaulting or willfully disobeying superior commissioned officer.

Article 92. - Failure to obey order or regulation.

Article 98. - Noncompliance with procedural rules.

Article 108. - Military property of Fedaykin -- Loss, damage, destruction, or wrongful disposition.

Article 111. - Drunken or reckless driving.

Article 112. - Drunk on duty.

Article 112a. - Wrongful use, possession, etc., of controlled substances.

Article 116. - Breach of peace.

Article 117. - Provoking speeches or gestures. (Contemptuous words)

Article 123a. - Making, drawing, or uttering check, draft, or order without sufficient funds.

Article 133. - Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

"... and any other charge that the Judge Advocate may wish to add." The Colonel finally ended the litany. "Sergeant!"

"Aye, Sir!"

"Place this man in custody till he can be transported."

"Aye, Sir!"

"Should have stayed in the damned mountains." Amasso grumbled as he was taken away.

## Chapter 7

*All that is gold, does not glitter  
All those who wonder, are not lost  
Magician Gandalf of Middle Earth*

Despite the agreement that there would be no talk of work in the Chambers of the Empress and her Consort there were times that it could not be helped. This was such a time.

As they lay in bed arms and legs entangled in each other the topic was broached. “Amasso has been accused of a laundry list of crimes including working for the enemy.” Arista replied in an unemotional tone to Duncan, who wasn’t fooled in the slightest.

He took a deep breath and sighed. “They look like two peas in a pod and yet are so different.” He said in description of his sons.

“So Dax informs me. Did you even know he was off world?” She asked.

“Not a clue! You?”

“None. But in typical twin manner Dax knew.”

“Now what?” Duncan was worried as a soldier he knew what such accusations meant.

She snorted, adjusted her body to look at him. “Now, my love, I must decide. Follow Alia, of The Knife and do as I please? Or follow Leto Atreides the First and do the just thing.”

He swallowed hard. “Do the right thing. If only for the reason that it is right.”

“And lose a son?” She wailed.

“And lose a son.” He echoed and drew close to comfort her.

In the safety of his arms she confessed. “My concern is – how can I control an Empire when I can’t even control my sons?”

“An Empire is simpler, my love.” Idaho assured her. “Believe me I know.”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Tho’Ma Kynes loved presenting to children. They were such sponges. They are curious about everything and not afraid to ask any question that happened to pop into their heads.

Kynes was the latest in a long line of Planetologists first started by Pardot Kynes and later by his son Liet and like his forefathers he was passionately protective of the Planet Arakkis. Like House Atreides he too had gone native to the point of being as brown skinned and blue in blue eyed as any Fremen.

Today he would get his usual satisfaction plus a lesson to set him down a new path.

Having been introduced he set about establishing the parameters on Climate Change. "There is a layer of gas around most planets that acts like a blanket. These gases called greenhouse gasses keep the temperature underneath stable."

He got his first interruption, when a little hand flew up. "Yes?" He encouraged.

"Does Arakkis have this gas?" A little boy asked.

"Indeed we do. In fact in recent decades the chemical balance has changed and temperatures have risen."

Second interruption. This was going to be an interactive class - the kind he liked. "My mommy says it's called global warming."

"... and she is very correct." Kynes was almost joyous. "Global Warming is not a good thing and as such action by all is needed to reduce the risk of climate change caused by global warming."

"Not a good thing?" One asked.

"No!" A voice from a corner replied, "It's hot!... Isn't it Dr. Kynes?... Isn't it hot?"

Thirty trusting faces looked up to him for the reply. "Yes it is hot... and it could get hotter?"

"Why?" A little girl asked.

"Didn't you listen?" Her friend poked her in the ribs. "Its Global Warming."

Kynes watched the little girl deflate at the reprimand he came to her rescue. "I know what you mean. Global Warming is caused because of the increasing use of coal, oil and natural gas for heating and energy, especially for transport, and clearing of forests around worlds, which has caused a large increase in greenhouse gas emissions."

Frowns appeared on some faces. A hand flew up. "Sir?"

Kynes nodded for her to speak. "But we don't have forests to cut."

"No but Giedie Prime does and so does Kaitian and a number of other planets." He continued, "But we do have the vehicle emissions of off-worlders that create carbon dioxide, which is a

major greenhouse gas, and remember on agricultural planets there too is an important source of our greenhouse gas emissions as Methane is produced in the stomachs of grass-eating animals such as sheep and cattle, then belched into the atmosphere."

He added one last point. "Also the seat of the Empire is here on Arrakis. We have a large city population here that use a lot of imported fuels, etc., to keep us going."

"Like the Mojave Power plant." The teacher added. "Remember? We visited it."

"Exactly" He agreed.

"Are we going to die?" They were getting scared, time to change strategy.

"Not today." He chuckled, "One of the ways to fight Climate Change is to plant trees. Can you think of any others?"

"Stop burning!"

"Don't use ground transport!"

"Ride a worm!"

"Don't have animals!"

"Kick the foreigners out!"

The list was lusty and endless.

Finally the teacher calmed them down.

Then the break through as a bright spark asked. "Is that why we use everything?"

"Well spotted!" Kynes enthused "All good Fremmen know that burning isn't a solution - it pollutes the air and may release toxic substances. That is why for generations we compost and recycle. It is a healthier option for you, our neighbours and the environment. And remember that Shai-Hulud shares the environment with us too!"

Keynes lesson for the day was now turned on him. "Sir..." The child hesitated. It took some coaxing but he finally got the story out.

"We... that is my sister and I..." Horror flashed across his sister's face. "We were out in the open desert." He got rapid "I know we weren't supposed to but there was this smell..."

"Smell?" Kynes wondered where this was going.

"YES!" The sister took up the story. "It was awful! Like rotting spice!"

"Only worse!" The brother expanded.

"It was worse." The sister confirmed. "It was Shai-Hulud." There - revelation. The class gasped. So did Kynes.

"Go on." He encouraged.

"It was sick... very sick." The boy said.

"It cried a lot..." The girl continued sadly "... and then it died."

Under his dark skin Kyens turned pale.

The teacher interjected "Why did you not say something before!"

Tears threatened as the girl replied, "Because we thought we'd get in trouble we were not supposed to be out there." She sniffed.

"Can you show me? Is it still there?"

They came to life "Yes! But we don't know if it is still there." Left to Kyens alone he the teacher together with thirty Fremen children would have headed out into the desert.

But the teacher intervened. The lesson was allowed to end and a few hours later, two chastened children an impatient Paleontologist along with a group of worried Fremen authorities headed out into the desert.

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FROM: TERRAN GROWTH INC

TO: PRINCE RAMMEN CORRINO

MESSAGE:

WE ARE IN RECEIPT OF THE SECOND INSTALLMENT AS PER OUR AGREEMENT.

ATTACHED HEREIN IS THE MONTHLY REPORT. AS YOU WILL SEE ALL IS IN ORDER AND ON SCHEDULE.

AS AGREED WE AWAIT YOUR ENVOY FOR THE LATEST SCHEDULED INSPECTION.

J'TU  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



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Security was on the verge of total collapse as the Fedaykin struggled to execute their duties in the face of the wave after wave of people who camped daily outside the Court House compound, awaiting the trial of the Millennium.

Eventually Arista opened the proceedings to the press and the images were beamed to large screens located throughout the Empire. This indulgence of hers to allow Amasso to be tried may prove to be her undoing yet. She watched from the privacy of her Chambers, as did most of the Landsraad.

“Commander For’resten are you ready to call your first witness of the day?” The Judge asked.

“Yes, Sir, we call Lieutenant Colonel Serena Reltub.”

She was sworn in and instructed, “State your name rank and duty station.”

“Lieutenant Colonel Serena Reltub, stationed with the Caladan Army 10th Mountain Division, Special Operations Forces/Marine Expeditionary Units, Delleician Mountains Caladan.”

For’resten stood. “Colonel, what is the mission of your Marine Expeditionary Units in the Delleician Mountains?”

“To provide the Commander-In-Chief an operational maneuver capability from the Air.” She replied.

“Were you stationed in Delleician Mountains when Major Ammaso Atreides was caught?”

“Yes.”

And so it went.

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Such was the obsession with the trial that the arrival of Reverent Mother Shakira was one that passed with no special notice.

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Arista had had no choice. The CHOAM reception had been planned for months and court-martial or no – the function had to go on.

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The meeting was convened and the hall was packed with members of the Sietch. Mick’N spoke. “Fremen, Har’man has grave news for us. News that must be verified and then taken to Arista! Speak Har’man!”

The Fremen stood, tall dark skinned with the trademark blue in blue eyes. “I have returned from Salusa Secundus. Where a new Museum was opened. ‘Rakis World it is called, an imitation of the Desert Planet Arakkis. It is said to be home to a Maker.”

Sand Worm? Off Dune? Impossible! The three thousand attending the meeting were too stunned to speak.

“As we contemplate this there is more. Mick’N added. Tho’Ma has heard rumours that the worms of Arakkis are dying.” He held up his had for silence and got it. “As yet there is no proof, but if it is true then Tho’Ma will find it and then we will have greater problems on our hands!”

The future of the Fremen had just become unsure. Where was Maud’Dib when needed?

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Alexi was bored. This CHOAM reception had gone on for hours and as sophisticated as she was, being a Reverend Mother and all – she was bored. She must have interacted with every male here, not that she had a choice. She was new to the Court, tall and beautiful, with clear blue eyes yet to show the spice addiction that was sure to come.

The young Reverend Mother began to wind her way towards an exit. It took her an our of taking two steps, holding a conversation and taking another two steps only to be stopped again. Eventually she got to the door and slipped out.

She wound her way up the stairs that let to the mezzanine that over looked the grand hall. Relieved at her eventual escape Alexi too in her surrounds. The mezzanine was a library. The shelves lined the walls with a scattering of lounge chairs and sofas.

Alexi sauntered past the shelves and was able to read each as she went... The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, La géométrie par René Descartes, El señor de los anillos por JRR Tolkien, Империализм и мировая экономика мимо Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Düne durch Frank Herbert and Catholici Naranchies Antiquum et Novum Testamenti!

All in their original language! These books were priceless antiques! So engrossed was she that she failed to notices that she was not alone.

“It has been a long time since those books got such attention.” The man said.

She whirled around. “My Lord... I didn’t realize...”

Dax remained sprawled on a chaise lounge and raised a hand to silence her. “It’s all right.”

“She nodded with relief.

“Fed up with the reception?” He asked.

“I’m new, My Lord, and not used to such.”

He grinned widely “Now there is a diplomatic answer if ever there was one!”

She chuckled.

“Come... sit... talk with me.” Dax invited. Alexi took a comfortable chair opposite him. “So! Which one of us are you here for?” The smile never left his face.

“Sire?”

He chuckled and leaned forward. “Oh don’t ‘Sire’ me. It is obvious that you are here to be with either Amasso or me. Now which of us is it?”

“I don’t know.” She confessed.

He leaned back. “Ah the truth – so refreshing.”

“You are a truth sayer?”

“I am.” He confirmed.

*[He can discern the truth!]* She thought. *[Is he the one I am to mate with? If he is a truth sayer what else is he?]* “Sorry. Sire, my mind wandered.” She blushed with embarrassment.

“I said... I like you.” He announced, *[But I wonder are you worthy of House Atreides or a snake that’ll end up biting us in the butt?]*

She accepted the compliment, “Thank you.”

“I think the whole Court likes you!” He snorted.

“I’m new that’s all. It’s the novelty of new blood.” She explained.

“May be... May be not.”

“Now what?” She asked.

“Now” He contemplated the question. “Now... I Prince Dax Atreides, Major in the Fedaykin, Sultan of Arakkis...” he digressed, “My brother is Prince of Caladan” then he continued, “Grand Duke Las Carris, Sheik Qabus ibn Sa’id and Lord of all I survey...” Alexi giggled. “Now! Now... I intend to escape this everlasting reception and leave. You interested?”

“Oh Yes!” She replied with no hesitation.

As they left Alexi contemplated [*I wonder what the point of the Title Listing of his and his brother's was all about? Was it for me to decide which brother is worthy? Which one I want? One problem there - It's not up to me.*]

“That listing of titles thing?” Dax answered, “It’s a thing my Grand Dame liked to do when she wanted to stress a point. I kind of picked up the habit – there was no intent there.”

Alexi missed a step [*Great Mother! He had read her mind! HE HAD HEARD HER!*]

Dax caught her. “You Ok?”

She could only nod. He righted her and continued to lead.

Farrah watched as the two made their great escape unaware that they had been observed.

## Chapter 8

*Resistance is futile – The Borg Collective.*

Regular rhythms attracted sand worms. All Fremen knew this and so the team slipped, dragged, crawled and walked up to the crest of the sand dune. Finally they got to the top... Kynes stepped forward from the rest of the entourage and found nothing. His disappointment was almost tangible. The desert had been efficient in reclaiming any remains, which might have been.

"It was there!" The boy protested the truth of his story.

"It was!" His sister backed him up.

"You bring us out here on some pretense!" N'Gia the Naib was annoyed.

"It's true!" The children looked around wildly for a trace of belief from anyone. They got it from Kynes. "I believe them." He said calmly. He targeted the boy, Mo'hal "Can you draw what you saw?"

Mo'Hal nodded. Kynes continued "The carcass may not be here, but it is only a matter of time before the evidence becomes commonplace."

"What evidence!" N'Gia demanded.

"The dead bodies of sand worms killed by the increased warming of the planet." He replied.

"Global Warming!" The girl announced.

"Global Warming." Keynes echoed and on that note they all turned and went back the way they had come.

Unknown to them, they had been observed. Valcyn placed his binoculars down and continued on his own business. If they had come to see the carcass of Shai-Hulud there was none to be seen and he had no intention of interacting with anyone.

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Reverened Mothers Shakira who had arrived to test Dax, Farrah the Kwisatz Mother and Mo'Hadin the Ambassador to the Court of Atreides met in chambers.

"The Bio sample you sent is confirmed" Shakira reported.

Farrah's eyes bored through her sister.

“He is the genetic reincarnation of Paul Atreides?” Mo’Hadin felt the need to say it out loud.  
 “The rumour was true?”

“What of Amasso?” Farrah demanded.

“He is not.” Shakira stated. “Where is Dax. I must test him.”

“At the trial of Amasso.” Farrah replied.

“Summon him.” Shakira ordered.

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It was another sweltering night. A shadowy figure of a man dressed in black made its way towards the nerve centre of the electric power grid. His intension was simple – to see if it could be done. The Mojave Power Station as a massive metropolis of a system, it provided power to a third of Arakkis. This was a practice run, later he’d tackle the Command and Control Room.

As he approached, two things happened: first he spotted. Mar’Cel the courier sent by Mick’N to inform Arista of the news of Worms on Salusa Secundus came round the corner. The shadowy figure ducked for cover.

There are times when shortcuts are longer than they seem. It was the fate of Mar’Cel that he took the shortcut to the Place via the PowerStation. Mick’N had said that the message was urgent and such a command from a Naib was to be executed in the most efficient manner possible: hence, the shortcut.

The Spy watched as a gang of seven thugs accosted the Fremen. He hadn’t noticed them before and now he just watched and waited for an opportunity to leave. There were too many people out this night.

Mar’Cel saw the men saw they were Fremen, he grinned in acknowledgment. “As salaam waleikum.” He gave the traditional greeting.

“Wa aleikum as-salaam.” They responded.

“Aren’t you far from your usual haunts?” the leader demanded as the rest surrounded Mar’Cel.

Mar’Cel assessed his situation – The men were dressed in black, all were armed – he did not like this. His wyes narrowed, “Really? I thought Dune was every Freman haunt as you put it.”

They had had enough of talk. The longer they stayed the more likely that a Patrol would spot them. One man simply pulled out a knife and sliced his throat. Mar’Cel fell dead.

They stripped the lifeless body. The Leader of the Pack ordered, "Take him into the desert. Let the elements deal with him, no one will know what had really happened."

The Spy watched as they did just that. Once gone he stepped out and returned the way he had come.

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Over the weeks of the unusually intense heat everything was either melting, had melted or was at boiling point. It was no different at the Power Plant and the insulation for the various components had reached the limits of their endurance. Added to this was the increased demand on the system for power to operate the coolants. The strain on the system was severe. On this hot night all the elements finally came to a head: melted insulation and an overloaded grid.

Two elements touched and one third of the planet was plunged into darkness.

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The Fremen called it 'phantom moons' which was a way of describing the rare moment when Dune's moons did not ascend. This was such a night thus making the black out total.

With the mission a complete failure, the man in black fished out his night vision goggles and continued on his return trip.

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The Atrides who walked into Mo'Hadin's Chambers was not the expected one.

"Normally the conniving of the Royal Court is just that. Conniving." Arista stated and sat. "The workings of the Bene Gesserit, however, have never been 'just' anything."

The four women watched each other. "My sons are not for your scheming." Arista finally declared.

"The sisterhood feels that Alexi shall make the perfect Consort." Farrah said.

"Indeed?" Alexi replied.

"We were to present her at the next sitting of the Landsraad." Mo'Hadin imparted.

"And for that you need the presence of a Truthsayer?" Arista indicated Shakira.

Shakira took control. "It is time."

Arista knew what she meant. "You imply that my sons are animals?"

“We embrace the premise that they may be human.” Shakira replied.

Farrah expounded. “We are the custodians of the heritage of the Great Houses. It is only fit that there be measures for quality control in place.” Mo’Hadin nodded her agreement.

“You are reviving the Breeding Program?” Arista demanded.

“No Highness.” Farrah replied accurately. One could not revive what had not died. Shakira and Arista sensed the truth of the answer.

Arista eyes narrowed to slits. She was familiar with the ways of the order. “Ammaso is not available.”

“Then Dax?” Shakira suggested.

Arista pondered for a moment. These three were up to something. It was the nature of the Sisterhood. It thrived and survived on being manipulative. Apparently the Breeding Program though not revived had metamorphosed into something else – but what? Surely they were not after yet another Kwisatz Haderach!

They were all Bene Gesserit, which meant they would get the DNA they needed by any means necessary. The rape of Mohiam by The Baron Harkonnen still haunted all with her memories. The question that faced House Atreides was how to maneuver this to their advantage. Tricky -- difficult even but not impossible.

As the wheels in her brain continued to churn she realized that she needed to bring Dax closer into her Cabinet. For Naib Mick’N was correct Ammaso would not be heir, to the Throne, he had shown no interest or potential. The decision now thrust upon her she needed to find out exactly what the twenty year old was made of.

She stood. “Summon him.”

Suddenly the room went black – they had lost power. All four women froze in place, closed their eyes adjusted their bodies and when they opened their eyes, they looked from one to another.

Arista repeated, “Summon him.” And left to find out what was wrong now.

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It was late but life in Metropolitan Arakkis never stopped even for a power failure. Traffic lights were out throughout downtown, creating havoc but civilians stepped in to direct traffic. They stood at intersections with flasks of burning spice oil until the Fedaykin could arrive

The University Hospital was on back up generators and had power. So patients were safe.



Those not caught in elevators had to walk down thousands of steps in downtown office buildings.

Despite the outage bars were filled with stranded travelers who desperately ordered drinks, water was too expensive.

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With the techs working non-stop power was restored within four hours and the incident became a story to tell ones children and grandchildren.

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The power failure had no impact on the case.

The trial was a stressful one. It seemed to go on forever. Ammaso's advocate Victrin was performing very well, even against the Neutral Guild Advocate, but there was no way to tell which case had the edge.

Besides the stress of the case itself, the Empress and Mother of the accused in an effort to bring the trial to a quick and satisfactory close was pressuring Victrin. A constant request of "When will this be over!?" Was the incessant inquiry from the Throne.

What helped Ammaso keep his sanity was being able to look out in the gallery and seeing Dax there to support him. But who was that fine female next to him?

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Ma'a lot, Mentat to House Atreides, reached for the latest report on his desk. After reading it he would summaries and to forward to the Empress. This one however seemed to have been summarized already.

## AN EXPLANATORY OVERVIEW OF THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE INTERPLANETARY COURT OF JUSTICE

### Executive Summary

Challenges of Capacity Development: Towards Sustainable Reforms of Landsraad Justice Sectors, Volume I: Policy Document has been prepared at the request of representatives of the Landsraad. Its goal is to provide a framework to guide efforts aimed at making the justice sector more effective, efficient and reliable. It presents a summary of the main issues, dilemmas and policy options. This document seeks to stimulate and support the debate about justice sector reforms within the region and with external development partners.

Two other documents provide background information. Consultants prepared the documents and they are published in two volumes for wider dissemination. Both documents assess justice sectors in the Landsraad. Volume II, A Diagnostic Assessment of Interplanetary Justice Sectors,

provides an assessment of Interplanetary justice sectors and includes reform activities at planetary. Volume III, A Preliminary Report on a Survey of Users and Providers of Justice Sector Service, contains the results of a survey of households, domestic and off-world businesses, private law practitioners, and judges, who offer their opinions and perceptions based on their experience of their country's justice sector.

This document required none of his attention it could go straight through.

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It had been too dark to see anything so the sense of hearing had gone into over drive. Valcyn heard when the man had gone up the hill. By his walk he was not Fremmen but he knew enough of Desert way not to walk with a rhythmic beat. That would surely call a Worm.

It was a man Valcyn was sure and he carried a load, a heavy one at that. He didn't challenge the Phantom. Why should he? His one aim as a hermit was to avoid people and anyone out on a night like this was up to no good on that he would bet his water.

It was now hours later and the sun was out and so was Valcyn.

He ventured out to see what had occurred. He may not want to be among people but that didn't mean he wasn't curious. He stood and watched the body of a dead Fremmen. The body was already giving up its water to the intense sun.

His curiosity satisfied, the hermit turned and left the corpse to the scavengers that were sure to come.

## Chapter 9

*“... you are dust and to dust you shall return.”  
Genesis Chpt. 1 Vs 19 Revised Orange Catholic Bible*

Stealth Mission Expert Sister Dwanna arrived on Salusa Secundus and headed for the Chambers of the resident Bene Gesserit representative.

If worms are to be found on this Planet then there was much that they had to discuss.

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Arista was tired. She entered her bedchamber and saw her consort lying there. Just lying. Suddenly she didn't feel all that tired. “Had a good day?” She sat on the bed next to him, leaned over and kissed him. He reached up and slid his hand around her neck to bring her closer. She adjusted her body and the kiss deepened.

Finally they came up for air. “I go into the deep desert on a routine inspection and return to find my first born on trial and the numbers of Bene Gesserit has increased four fold.” He replied. “I think I'll return to the Desert. It's safer; even with wild sand worm foraging about.”

“I think I'll join you.” She curled up next to him.

“Oh no you don't.” he poked her in the ribs.

“Whaaat?” She had been about to get comfortable next to him.

“Don't get too relaxed.” He said.

She got serious. “You dare speak to me in that way?”

She had misunderstood his motivations but he was man enough for that. He chuckled, “Arista, my darling, do not try the attitude, or the voice on me. More Atreides than you have tried and failed.” He leaned over and kissed her on the forehead. “We agreed that out there I am Commander In Chief to the Empress Arista Atreides – Ruler of All She Surveys.”

He paused for dramatic effect. “In here we are man and woman.”

She sighed. He was right and that is what she loved about him. He was man to her woman. She stood, “What can I say, Duncan. When you are right, you are right.”

“Good.” He grinned. “Now listen up, young woman.” She raised an eyebrow at the description. “You are going to have a bath...”

“In water!” She cut across him.

“In water.” He confirmed. “My mate not to mention the mother of my children works hard and deserves a treat now and then. So to the bath with you. When you return I have some Oil Of Melange from Mick’N, I will massage you from head to toe. When you awake from the sleep this is bound to induce then you will have the strength to welcome your mate home in the manner I deserve.”

“Yes, sire.” She replied sarcastically.

As she prepared to follow his instructions she posed a question to him. “Duncan, do you ever wish that we Atreides would let you and your Gholas rest in peace?”

He stood behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist. Planting a kiss on her exposed neck he replied, “Some revivals are better than others. I never know what an Atreides calls me up for. There was one incarnation where the Tleilaxu did imprint me with their whistling language, so that they could control me. Then there was the sexual imprint; with a command to kill the first Bene Gesserit who would try to mark me via seduction a talent I may I have embraced completely up to this incarnation. Let us not forget that there is also my improved prana-bindu reflexes that has been an asset to my military career. But I must confess that my time with you has been one I have most enjoyed.”

“Truly?”

“I promise to show you later.” Was his answer, “If having made love to you at Dawn tomorrow you are not assured of either my love, my loyalty or my total enjoyment of this incarnation – then feed me to a sand worm for the night of a thousand deaths.”

He survived the self-imposed challenge.

She on the other hand needed time to recuperate. All morning appointments were postponed.

Among the inconvenienced was the Representative of the Spacing Guild.

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The Reverend Mothers had sent Alexi to get Dax. They were determined that she should hover in his orbit until he became used to her. The only problem was that Alexi’s timing had been bad, Dax had had a waking dream...

*[V]The Reverend Mother was fast “Hold!” She ordered. “If you know all that then you know I hold the Gom Jabbar at your throat. You will also know that you are to place your*

*hand in that little black box there. So indulge an old woman.” The purr hardened. “Put your hand in.”[V]*

Alexi’s voice brought him back “Please, My Lord.” She had had to put all her training to use as she asked Dax to meet with the Reverend Mother Shakira.

For himself Dax had inherited the Fremmen suspicion of the Bene Gesserit. The irony that he was trained in their ways made no difference and the vision didn’t help.

His fascination with Alexi was morphing into something deeper but yet he resisted. He stood. “Enough! Leave me!” He ordered.

She bowed. “As you wish, my Lord.” And with that she was gone.

## Chapter 10

*Never fear the event.  
Horatio, Lord Nelson – Warrior (1801)*

Arista had received the report of Alexi's failure to bring her son to Shakira. There would be no repeat with her. She sent for her son and together they headed for the Chambers of the tester. There would be no resistance to this summons.

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Dax followed.

As he followed he thought to himself, [*Which carries the greater weight in my life? Arista my Mother? Or Arista the Empress?*] He gave a mental shrug. Which ever it was it really didn't matter for he obeyed – to the best of his ability. Even to leaving his brother behind. [*Amasso's trail was nearing the end and yet mother has summoned me.*]

Still he followed.

They entered the Chamber of a Reverend Mother.

"Dax." Arista said. He turned to face his mother. "This is the Reverend Mother Shakira... Do as she asks." On that note she turned walked out, but paused at the door. "Dax..." he turned to look at her, "It's important." Then she left.

Dax refocused on the woman and waited.

She in turned eyed him from head to toe. "Come."

He remained where he was. She used the voice on him. "Come here."

Eventually he moved. [*I really needed to work on my resistance to the Voice.*] He thought as he moved forward and found himself before the woman.

"You are about to test me?" He asked calmly.

"What do you know of it?" She covered her surprise.

"That you use it to separate humans from animals; that you tested Paul Atreides. That then as now you hardly ever test males."

“You know much.” She replied.

“I know much.” He echoed. “I know that you will not test me today.” He turned to leave.

But she was swift. “Hold!” She ordered. “If you know all that then you know I hold the Gom Jabbar at your throat. You will also know that you are to place your hand in that little black box there. So indulge an old woman.” The purr hardened. “Put your hand in.”

There was no choice now. He reluctantly put his hand in the box, and simultaneously he recited the litany against fear...

I must not fear.  
Fear is the mind-killer.  
Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration.  
I will face my fear.  
I will allow my fear to pass over me and through me.  
And when it has gone I will turn my inner eye to see its path.  
And where the fear has gone there will be nothing.  
Only I will remain.

As had happened in the beginning so it unfolded now. The nerve-induced pain began as a twitch; it grew to an itch then a burning and finally a peeling of the shin.

The Reverend Mother held onto him as a praying mantis did to her prey. Through him she felt every phase of the test. It was easy to endure the itch at the start, then the burning, the sensation of skin peeling then falling off by the end of the trial Dax screamed from the effort. Drenched with sweat from the effort, he almost collapsed taking Sharika with him.

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When Commander For’resten stood to deliver his closing argument, the atmosphere of the courtroom changed. He cleared his throat and walked to a position in front of the jury box. His major points were recounted, and then he said something that surprised Alexi and the other observers in the room.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Major Amasso Leto Atredies is an Officer and a Gentleman of the Fedaykin. We do not dispute that once upon a time he had a drinking problem. A problem addressed with the assistance of his family in particular his father Swords Master Duncan Idaho."

"He holds the horary title of Prince of Caladan. He is a young man trained for action with a strong sense of what is right and wrong. Planet Caladan is the Ancestral home of his Royal House - He perceived a call from his Home and responded. Would any of us have done different?"

The crowd murmured.

"The prosecution has failed to bring forth a case for any of the counts. Much of the testimony was hearsay and you were instructed to ignore this. A difficult instruction to follow... but follow it you must. This is a Court Martial not a fish market where all innuendo becomes truth. You yourselves are Officers and Gentlemen of the Fedaykin and as such you are under oath to be impartial."

He had the entire room straining to hear his every word.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the Planet Caladan is in a turmoil the likes we've not seen in recent history. We all need to be hyper-vigilant against the possibility of tyranny in our midst, and understandably so. But there is a difference between being aware of that possibility and being paranoid. Major Atreides is being singled out because of his zeal and need to come to the rescue of his fellow man and historic brothers."

"I charge you to keep yourself from being paranoid. Don't let another witch hunt begin. You must acquit Major Atreides; he's done nothing wrong. He is not a terrorist and he certainly has committed no crime and certainly not this laundry list that has been paraded here."

Amasso was acquitted and as abruptly as the case had started it was over.

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Kynes was sequestered up in his lab. He had not been out in days. Once he entered such a phase his assistants usually left him alone. So there he was with an emerging beard over his usually clean-shaven face, plates of untouched food and an array of reports for company.

Global Outgoing Longwave Heat Radiation: KERES instrument team  
 Global Reflected Shortwave Solar Radiation: KERES instrument team  
 Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide Records from Giedi Prime (39,124 – 39,164):  
 Global Average Near-Surface Temperature Anomalies, Arakkis Met Office 39,101 – 39,163  
 Global Stratospheric and Tropospheric Temperature Anomalies: Global Hydrology and Climate Center - Salusa Secundus

The evidence was there before him. The ozone was eroding at a faster rate than thought; there was nothing unique in that. It had happened before and undoubtedly it would happen again. What was unique... he grabbed a paper and scanned it.

What was unique was that it seemed to be happening on different planets at the same time! This had to be un-presedented. He needed to speak with other scientists to discuss his theory, multi planetary degradation did not happen every day.

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Dax was fearful of the state of his hand maybe it was a stub. [*I'll be turned out for the desert to judge me!*]



Shakira instructed him, “Look at it.” He hesitated. She repeated the instruction. He eventually pulled out his hand and looked at it. There it was intact. He heaved a mental sigh of relief.

“Nerve-induced.” She explained as she removed the Gom Jabbar from her finger and boxed it. “Can’t go round maiming all and sundry.”

“I sense the truth of it.” He was regaining control of his rampaging pulse.

She looked up sharply. “You can sense truth?”

“I can.” Was all he would say on the topic, just how developed his abilities were no one had a clue ... yet. “Now what?” Dax changed the topic.

She let the change pass. “Now, young human.” She placed the box with the Gom Jabbar into a fold of her robe. “Now you go fulfill your destiny. Whatever it may be.”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Amasso walked out of the courtroom with the assistance of Fedaykin. He had been famous before as the default heir to the Atreides Throne, but now he was also infamous and the combination of the two meant that there was nowhere to go where he was not known for one or the other.

But he needed to celebrate. He was free!

Again with Fedaykin assistance he eventually got away from the madding crowd. He headed for Burdel’s there he was able to do justice to his freedom with the usual flair of Wine, Women and Song.

Not having learnt a single lesson from the trial, he eventually fell asleep in the arms of a prostitute.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

All over the Planet 'thopters hovered low and moved across Cities, Towns and Villages. Gently as a mid summer drizzle that brings out the smell of the daffodils the aircraft showered the population with a one-page flyer. But unlike the gentle rains of Caladan what the Tleilaxu delivered that day was fire and brimstone.

It read simply...

The Tleilaxu Government finds it necessary at this juncture to remind citizens that six years ago the Tleilaxu Parlamento overwhelmingly passed The Marriage Separatist Act.

The law forbids Budislamics who marry Caladanians from obtaining Caladan citizenship or permits them to live with their spouses and children. Those who have married are in

contravention of this law and will have to live apart. The Act also states that from the age of twelve, your children will be denied citizenship and may be forced to move out off Caladan.

All "family reunification," applications have been frozen with immediate effect.

This law only applies to Budislamics. Citizens of the Empire who marry Caladanians are entitled to become citizens.

This law is to take immediate effect.

Signed  
Ali Ben Kneset  
Tleilaxu Governor of Caladan

## Chapter 11

*A man in love has no logic.  
Fremen saying*

Amasso woke up with a hangover and alone in the bed, the woman he'd picked up had not dared not rob him – well not completely, she'd left him some Solaris. He took the currency and ordered a concoction to clear his head something called Hangover Stew – it was awful, but he downed it and soon headed out to Mick'N Sietch. God alone knew where Dax and the other had got to, he'd call later to find out.

Once there the namesake of the Sietch, Mick'N approached him. “You cannot hide here forever. The trial is over. Face your mother.”

“I know. I know. But Arista is a formidable woman and I need to fortify myself.” He grinned. “I'd rather ride Shai-Hulud than face my own mother. What kind of man am I?”

“One like any other. We all answer to a higher authority.” Mick'N philosophized. “... and there is none higher than mother. Even Naibs must answer to them.”

Amasso grinned. “You are right, my friend, but not yet. Soon.”

“Then you are summoned as are all to a meeting seven days hence after the Hour of Lud.” The Leader ordered. “Your mother is expected.”

“For?”

“A matter of great import.” Was all the answer he received.

“Are not all Fremen meetings of great import?”

All he got for an answer was an arched eyebrow.

So Amasso had took the hard advice and prepared to return to Arakkis City.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The two Reverend Mothers took a walk in the garden. “I like it here.” Kardon said. “Salusa Secundus has managed to finally capture the glory of its past... In some aspects.”

“I can see why.” Dwanna admired the surroundings “It is soothing.”

“Yes, and in these times a calm surrounding can assist in many an endeavor.”

“By their very nature some breed more discontent than calm.” Dwanna replied.

“I hear that deserts are like that. They pose as areas of calm yet beneath ... ah beneath.” Kardon sighed.

“There are deserts here on Salusa Secundus?” Dwanna acted surprised.

“Historically, no.” Kardon replied, “But with all the craze of Museums you would be surprised what can be conjured up.”

“I’d be grateful if you’d recommend one such to visit while on my short stay here.” Dwanna continued the dance.

“Then that would be ‘Rakis World, an imitation of the Desert Planet Arrakis. Very detailed, I’m told.”

"Sounds delightful. I must make sure to take a look at it before my vacation ends."

“Oh, yes!” Kardon encouraged. “If you visit only one place while you are here then ‘Rakis World is definitely the place.” The two proceeded to walk the garden trails discussing various aspects of horticulture.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Rumour had it that when Duke Leto I had first arrived on Arakkis, there came with him a member of the house hold who had lived near the sea. Missing it so, he had opened a bar and called it "The Captain's Cellar" as a way to remind him of home. It was a respectable place - even Arista in her youth had been known to frequent the establishment. This night her sons did the frequenting.

Amasso had returned and gone in search of Dax first. His mother he’d face in the morning. He was trying out the roulette table. Having been unlucky with women logic dictated that he should be lucky with gambling. Somehow it didn’t seem to be working out that way.

“Any luck?” Major T'Sao asked over the noise in the bar.

He shook his head. “Lady Luck is playing hard to get tonight.”

“Come and join us you can try again later.” She encouraged. T'Sao had met the twins at boot camp and had taken a liking to Amasso. He was a swinger - unlike Dax.

“You go ahead. I’ll join you in a minute.” He turned his back on her to try the table again.

She looked at his back for a few seconds and left to join Savan and Dax. “What is it with him and this roulette?!” She demanded.

Savan chuckled, he rounded off the quartet that had started at boot camp, though he knew the siblings from the Sietch – they had grown up together. “I don’t understand it and I’ve known them all my life; one serious and one not. I’m not calling names - mind you, I’m just saying. So roll with it or get out of the way.”

“I choose to ignore that statement on the grounds that my mother can’t afford to have another son on trail.” Dax replied and downed a beer.

Savan changed the subject. “I see the Royal House hold has a new addition in the shape of the ‘oh so shapely’ Lady Alexi.”

Dax was about to reply when Amasso joined them. “Oh, for God’s sake! Get a grip. You can’t win every night!” Dax teased.

“I know.” Amasso replied but still looked glum. “But I was hoping to catch a break. Ah well” he dropped onto the seat next to his brother.

“Can we please change the subject?!” T'Sao snapped.

“With pleasure.” Savan replied. “Suggestions?”

“Fedaykin game tomorrow!” Dax started. “I tell you solemnly. There shall be much wailing and gnashing of teeth and I don’t mean the players!”

“Tell them!” Savanr shouted but made no difference over the din.

“The son of the preacher man predicts!” Amasso chuckled.

“You doubt?” Savan challenged.

“With you on the team NEVER! Go Fedaykin!” Amasso held up his Spice beer in a bottle.

“GO FEDAYKIN!” The rest joined and clinked their drinks.

“GO FEDAYKIN!” The bar echoed the chorus.

Amasso grinned. He loved this life. “Mad at me for the Caladan Affair?” He winked at Dax.

“Never for long.” Dax replied and clinked his drink to that of his twin. “Still mad at me for being named Heir?” His brother had taken the announcement badly and had ranted and raved in his usual manner for days.

“Never for long.” Amasso echoed. They both drank deeply all was well in the world.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Dax was running behind schedule... that would teach him to go carousing. He was late for a Cabinet Meeting no less. His mother had finally --- FINALLY named an heir to the Throne. She had picked him and here he was late! She'd have his water scattered to the desert.

He just managed to slide into the elevator as the doors closed. He jammed the button repeatedly for the Cabinet Room and leaned back against the wall. The elevator began its climb when suddenly it lurched, shook then stopped.

“Damn it!” he swore, he grabbed the communicator only to be informed that it would take at least thirty minutes for a tech to arrive.

“Damn it!” he repeated. This was not turning out to be a good day. He groaned. Murphy’s Law was in full effect today. He’d forgotten his personal communicator in his Chambers where he had placed it to charge.

He took a deep breath. Control yourself Atreides getting a coronary is not going to help. He wondered which floors he was stuck between and if Alexi would figure out what had happened. After all she was the Cabinet Secretary and usually had her finger on the pulse of the Palace.

He sat to await a rescue.

## Chapter 12

*Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from Evil*

Jesus Christ – Founder of the First Golden Path

It was obvious that the Empress was not in a mood to be played with. Alexi took a chance. “M’Lady, with your permission, I go in search of Lord Dax.”

“You do that.” Arista growled.

Alexi left the rest of the Cabinet and went to find out what had happened to Dax.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The plaza was packed to capacity and then some. There was not room enough for an extra sand trout; much less more people. Still they came.

All were invited - this was not an event the natives of Giedi Prime could miss. They HAD to be there. The day had been declared a holiday and all were expected to attend the unveiling, Noble and Slave alike. No excuse was acceptable save that of death – your own. The invitation had been a mere formality.

Vlad sat above the crowd, resplendent in the robes of his rank; the Baron Harkonen was a proud man. After eight years of unceasing work finally the statue of his ancestor and namesake Vladimir Harkonnen would be unveiled.

The labour of love on Vlad’s part had become a burden to his sons. Al Samoud and Samir were not enamored of their ancestry as their farther was. They secretly referred to the “The Tower of Strength” as “Give Me Strength.” The secret title had been too artful to remain the province of the two brothers. Somehow by the time of the unveiling the population had adopted the unofficial title. Strangely, Vlad didn’t know about the “new” designation. This was the only occasion that the Harkonnen sons and their subjects agreed on anything – Vlad was never to know of the new name.

Positioned in an advantageous point, the statue of the Baron could keep an eye on all, and so the plaza was packed with humans all waiting the unveiling of the colossus. Six hours of speeches later, all vaulting the Baron, the statue was exposed for the world to see.

There it stood...

Made from bonded white carrara marble with a black marble base, imported from the family mines at Hagal. The master sculptor D’Auvergne had created a masterful depiction of a biblical Vladimir Harkonnen contemplating his battle with House Atreides. Stoic against impossible odds

and faithful to his beliefs it was a masterful representation of the essence of civic virtue. He had molded the hard stone as though it were putty; creating a combination of smooth adoration combined with openly active and dynamic contours. The muscles and the tendons were developed only to the point where they could be interpreted, as the perfect instrument for the strong Harkonnen will. The portrait was youthful with an outstretched foot that led the eye in a perfect line all the way up to his disheveled hair.

Truly romantic.

Noble women sighed and the crowd clapped, but the true reaction came from the usual source. “Dad... I thought that the old Baron was fat?” The child demanded. His father clamped his hand over the curious mouth, quickly looked around to see if the comment had been heard and then. “Are you insane?!” The father demanded as he bundled the child away from the throng.

“Sorry.” The child apologized. The man made no comment but just dragged the child away through a crowd that screamed its approval. Then they all went home thinking: “Give Me Strength.”

Vlad was happy. The population had made sure of that.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Alexi was still searching for the missing heir. Amasso spied her.

“Finished already?” He was surprised, having decided not to return to the desert until the meeting, he was still debating if to attend Cabinet and here it was over already?

“Dax never arrived and The Empress is furious.” She was worried. “When did you return? Does Lord Dax know that you are back, Sir?”

Amasso grimaced. Arista on the warpath was an event to avoid. “Got back this morning. No one knows – but I remembered the meeting.”

“Well as I said there is no meeting today.” She responded to his scowl. “... and I see that the elevators are stuck again.”

“One more time.” Amasso replied.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

It was late.

Dwanna walked into the compound, unchallenged, as there was no one to confront her. She snorted in disgust, so much for security on a planet that housed House Corrino.



She headed for the desert exhibit and stared. Impressive, she thought, massive too, a true attempt at reconstructing the desert of Arakkis.

She stopped for a moment to read the plaque.

*Prince Rammen Corrino officially unveiled this plaque, declaring  
‘Rakkis World open.  
On a miniature scale ‘Rakkis World is an accurate representation of the  
desert planet Arakkis, also known as Dune  
The museum replicates the flora, fauna and environmental conditions of  
Dune  
and is the largest artificial desert in the known Universe  
occupying approximately ten percent of Salusa Secundus.  
WELCOME!*

Dwanna contemplated the desert. A thought occurred, [*This exhibit is huge shouldn't there be at least some barrier to prevent the public wandering in on their own and dying?*]

She approached the edge of the desert. She spotted the shimmer – there was a force field. It made sense, or else all and sundry would be wandering in and getting lost not to mention that no gate fees would be possible.

She studied the pulse of the shield. Every shield had a frequency and a cycle rate, add to that the law of physics that allowed a slow moving projectile to penetrate she would have no problem in gaining entrance – it was all in the timing.

The problem of entry solved she turned to the mission. She checked her pack. Once in she needed to get in deep and set up a search pattern. She hadn't realized that the desert was so large, that meant the hunt would take a little longer than anticipated, but it could not be helped she needed to confirm her findings no matter what they were.

## Chapter 13

*Exodus! Movement of Jah people.  
Send us another Brother Moses!  
Robert Marley – Fremmen Minstrel*

Dax had resigned himself to a crucifixion by his mother. It was just a matter of who got to him first the Tech or the Empress. He sat on the floor, pulled out the data crystal and decided to review the agenda for the meeting.

As he pulled out the crystal and an item fell out. He looked at it. How did that get in there? It was a holo-image carrier an image had popped up of a christening at Mike’N Steitch that the Royal House Hold had attended. Then it occurred to him – he’d placed it in the case intending to place it in his office. He obviously had not got round to executing that intent.

The image showed his mother holding the baby of the hour. At the four second mark the image changed, this time it was an image of Amasso and himself... then the image changed and this time it was Alexi, the latest Bene Gesserit to arrive on Arakkis. For some reason his mother had allowed her to stay. He didn't remember her at the christening though.

He hit the pause button and studied the image. He turned it left then right. There was something familiar about her; he just couldn't put his finger on it. "... and why should you?"

Dax's head whipped round. Still sitting he completed a circle. He confirmed - he was alone. "...are you?" The voice said again.

He groaned now his visions were eroding his sanity. "Please, Dax control yourself." The voice snorted. "You are as sane as any man. Now focus."

"On what?" He asked. [*Now, I'm speaking to images.*]

"The image before you." Came the reply.

Instantly he looked at Alexi. The image waved at him. "Oh, God!" He shut his eyes and rubbed them. When he reopened them a woman sat before him.

"Fear not." The apparition comforted. "I am not here to harm you... Do you not recognize me?"

He gulped and stared hard. Slowly a thought germinated in his mind. "The Lady Jessica?" [*There he'd said it; now take me to the mad house now!*] He thought.

"You are not mad, Dax." She assured him. "Just... gifted. Yes, I am the Lady Jessica. It seems that Lady Alexi has more of me than the physical."

He frowned. "Why..."

"... am I here?" he nodded. She got serious. "House Atreides is heading full tilt towards an abyss. The members - your ancestors can feel it. We needed to warn you."

He got alert. "What abyss!"

"We cannot see. We do not know." She confessed. "We do know this, you are part of the puzzle. The House will fall and you must ensure that like the Phoenix we rise again."

"But I am the younger of two... why me?"

"By a mere minute." She reminded him. "One's fate is set before one is even born. Amasso's destiny lies elsewhere. Yours is to ensure the survival of this Great House."

He got curious. "... and Lady Alexi?"

"She too will have her role... but not yet. As you will be father to the epoch to come - so she will be mother."

He absorbed the information, "You are telling me that she..."

"... is to be your wife."

"WIFE!" he squealed.

"Wife... life partner... bound concubine... label it what you will." Jessica replied. "But know this... your fate and hers are intertwined." Dax just looked at her, "The Bene Gesserit is a society dedicated to the preservation of the genetics that will continue the human race. The irony being that every now and then a human is expended to achieve the goal. You are right to be suspicious of the order."

"Are you not Bene Gesserit?"

"I was. But I am Atreides." She explained.

"Not Harkonnen?" He needed to know.

"The blood flowed in my veins and so it is in yours. Are you Harkonnen?" She saw his reaction. "I thought so. Even as you look the Bene Gesserit gift horse in the mouth - accept it. Alexi will be your foundation in the times to come... and like you she is Bene Gesserit trained. As all Atreides are."

"The threat..." He prompted.

"...Will be upon you soon enough." Jessica warned. "Take this time to be with your family and to know Alexi. We are all products of our time and so will be this threat. This is all I can tell you young Atrides." On that note the vision disappeared and Dax was left with the image of Alexi that changed after four seconds even though he had not released the pause.

The next image was that of his father and Mick'N sharing a joke.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

INTERNAL MEMO

FROM: KWISATZ MOTHER

TO: MOTHER SUPERIOR

AS PER THE LAST REPORT THE LADY ALEXI HAS BEEN MADE CABINET SECRETARY. AS ANTICIPATED THE INITIAL OVERTURE WAS NOT APPRECIATED BECAUSE OF HER YOUTH, THE EMPRESS WAS FINALLY CONVINCED, HOWEVER AND THE LADY ALEXI IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO EXPLOIT HER CONSTANT ENCOUNTERS WITH THE LORD DAX.

I MUST EXPRESS MY IMPATIENCE AT THE APPARENT SLOW PROGRESS WITH WHICH THE TWO HAVE PROGRESSED. THE FUTURE OF THE BREEDING PROGRAM NOW RESTS ON THE SHOULDERS OF A TWENTY YEAR OLD AND A TWENTY FOUR YEAR OLD.

EVEN AS I CHANT THE PATIENCE KOMBULI I AM AWARE OF THE NEED TO BREAK THE STALEMATE THAT SEEMS TO BE SETTLING.

KWISATZ MOTHER

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The doors finally slid open and Dax looked up and saw Alexi looking down at him. His heart skipped a beat. He heard Jessica's voice echo in his mind. [*Your fate and hers are intertwined. As you will be father to the epoch to come - so she will be mother.*]

Alexi looked down at Dax sitting cross-legged on the floor head in hand. Then he looked up and their eyes locked. She sensed that something had changed. She didn't need to be Bene Gesserit trained to sense it, any woman would know. And she did.

Dax reached up and the rescuers pulled him out.

"Nice of you to join us, Dax!" Amasso said.

"Nice to be back." Dax replied and kept staring at Alexi.

"I shall inform the Empress that you are safe." Alexi turned to leave. Just before she rounded the corner she looked back - Dax was still watching her. She resumed her route and smiled to herself.

Amasso finally poked his brother in the ribs. "Hey!" Dax faced him.

"Something I should know?" Amasso indicated the way that Alexi had gone.

"Oh... I'm THAT stupid!" Dax grinned.

"Yeah, you are!" Amasso replied.

"I need a drink." Dax walked off leaving an amazed twin behind. Amasso snapped out of the shock and called "Hey! Wait for me!"

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Disaster Manager Reverend Mother Zelron had been handed the assignment of the undetected movement of ten million Bene Gesserit Sisters off the war ripped Caladan. When she had been given the duty of the Exodus, it had seemed a daunting one. Having studied the requirements she now KNEW it was nigh impossible.

The continued war would prove an asset as they could move under the cover of that. Also to be factored into the equation were recruits and reproduction after all the work of the Sisterhood never stopped, even under the Tyrant. The corollary of this also had to be factored: defection and death.

Even then she estimated that if she were able to move a minimum of one hundred and twenty five thousand sisters per annum it would take at least forty years if all went well; a more realistic estimate would be fifty years.

The decision was made, however, and the Exodus was a go. So she activated the standing committee on Disaster Management. They were all there – Logistics, Finance, Operations, and Planning.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Amasso and Dax returned to the Sietch in time for the meeting.

Fremen were a people molded by the elements. Living the desert life meant hard decisions were taken quickly. Debate was for the Imperium.

So it was at the assembly.

The problem was simple. Were there or were there not sand worms on Salusa Secundus?

The Hall of Maud'Dib held too many to count yet there was not a mummer of conversation. Finally Naib Mike'N spoke. "We go to Salusa Secundus. It is the only way. The spice is of Dune and Dune alone. We must know what grows below the surface of Salusa Secundus."

"All I can say is 'You ought never to take anything that don't belong to you -- if you cannot carry it off.'" Lee announced, "... and I'm quoting some one I forget who."

"I know I didn't just hear that." A voice sailed out.

"Hey. If the cap fits..." before he could turn the peaceful meeting into a riot his friends quickly escorted him out to prevent him continuing to embarrass himself and them. Not before the Naibs had committed Lee's face to memory.

"Is Dune some garden where Shai-Hulud can be plucked at will?" Savan demanded.

Now there was a rumble from the multitude. With one voice it said "Salusa Secundus. Salusa Secundus. Salusa Secundus."

Amasso closed his eyes and smiled inwardly. He was going to war again!

## Chapter 14

*Until the philosophy, which holds one race superior and another inferior  
Is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned...*

*...There will be WAR.*

*Excerpt from Address to the Landsraad  
By the representative of the people of Caladan  
H. I. M. Haile Selassie I, The Conquering Lion of Judah  
-- Bene Gesserit Archives --*

Having just finished their early morning run, Amasso and Dax were walking back and chatting about the upcoming mission to Salusa Secundus when they saw the Onithopeter land and a Regal looking Arista disembark.

"Figures" They said in unison. Too far to call out or even join their mother the two continued the saunter back.

"Ever looked at Mum as a woman?" Amasso asked.

"Yeah." Dax drawled and blushed slightly. "She's gorgeous. I can see why Dad fell for her."

"Yeah." was all Amasso added. As they walked Dax said, "Listen... about before."

"What do you mean?" Amasso asked.

Dax explained "This thing with Alexi and I... we're just friends. So don't let it bother you all right?"

"OK" Amasso replied. He was confused, why did Dax suddenly out of the blue start this discussion? Something was up.

"It's bothering you." Dax insisted.

"I don't even know what you're talking about." Amasso lied.

"Well you were sensing something"

Amasso, admitted "Well yes."

"There you go." Dax was triumphant.

Amasso informed his twin “I don’t think about your relationships - any of them they don’t mean anything to me. Never have.”

Dax sobered up “Right just don't assume anything all right.”

”Like what!” This was getting maddening.

”Like nothing.” Dax replied, “Whatever you're thinking you're probably wrong.”

Amasso sighed in resignation “If you say so.” But thought [*But I know better!*]

“...Cause Alexi and I are just friends.”

Amasso defended himself “Now I didn't say you weren't.”

“I know.”

“Is there some reason to believe otherwise?” Amasso was burning with curiosity. [*Dax, you don't have a clue!*]

”No”

He continued “Cause you seem to be suggesting.”

“I’m not suggesting anything.” Dax defended.

They continued walking. Then Amasso asked, “... Dax are you involved with her?”

”I'm not.” Came the instant reply.

But Amasso knew Dax and pressed, “You sure?”

Dax didn’t reply. Amasso stopped and Dax automatically stopped too. “This woman intimidates you! Since when do women scare you, Dax? I don’t know this Dax Atredies - what have you done with my brother?!” He teased.

“We work together...” Dax stammered.

“Please.” Amasso turned and walked away, then changed his mind and returned “Damn it if you're interested in her do something! It’s obvious that she likes you.”

Dax snorted. Amasso continued. “Hey... I was there when you climbed out of that elevator.”

Dax stared at him.



Amasso chuckled “Dax the lady killer... felled by a Bene Gesserit. Savan said she looked formidable but he tends to exaggerate so I dismissed him. I was wrong.”

“Savan told you what?!”

“Hey! Any time that Dax gets intimidated by a beautiful woman is news buddy!”

“I’m not intimidated!” Dax protested.

“Please, lie to me but not to yourself.” Amasso said and walked off, leaving Dax to once again consider Alexi in a different light. He still had not completely accepted the veracity of the encounter in the elevator. Alexi was beautiful – true, smart – true but Bene Gesserit! He shrugged his shoulders and increased his pace to catch up to Amasso.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Unannounced Arista arrived at the Sietch and was welcomed by the Naib.

“Highness.” Mick’N greeted her. “I would have come to you!”

“One does not summon one’s Naib.” She replied.

“Empress.” He continued.

“Naib.” She teased.

He sighed. “Sit.” He waived at the seating area. “You call me Naib, Arista?”

“Well you started it!” She teased. “Mick’N you have known me all my life. You knew my mother before me and my sons after me and I will bet a litre of water that you will know their children too.”

“If it is the will of Shai-Hulud.” He offered her coffee. She accepted.

She closed her eyes in pure pleasure as she sipped the potent concoction and sank deeper into the cushions that were scattered on the floor. “Mick’N...” She said.

“Ah we get to it.”

“Indeed.” She agreed. “There is unrest in the wind.” She opened her eyes and looked at the man. “Why was I not informed of the gathering?”

The eyes of the Older Fremmen flashed. “Slackness the like of which is unacceptable and paid for. In his hurry to reach you with the message the courier forgot the ways of the desert. We found his bones yesterday.”

“A waste of water.” Arista complained.

“A damn waste of water!” Mick’N was still enraged.

Shrugging off the loss that could not be corrected Arista continued. “What required the gathering not to mention my presence?”

“We have received word of a worm bed on Salusa Secundus.”

The congenial atmosphere in the room changed and static electricity crackled around the two. She spoke quietly and deadly. “Worm bed – on Salusa Secundus.”

“Yes.” He was just as grim.

“Since the days of Maud’Dib; House Corrino has been trying to break the spice production of Dune.” She growled.

“And before.” Mick’N stated.

Arista placed the empty coffee cup on the floor. “How many Fedaykin Cohorts are you taking?”

“One.”

“You will take five.” She ordered. She saw Mick’N’s eyes open wider. “This is not just a hunt for worm bed my old friend. This is a sign to the entire Landsraad that the spice monopoly of Dune will not be broken!”

“Atomics?” There he had said it.

She pondered. “One planet killer. If you find worm sign - not worm bed – worm sign. Give the Planet one week to evacuate and melt the Planet. The first atomic attack on the Planet did not seem to have imparted much of a lesson. Alright then we will give a lesson that will not soon be forgotten.”

“What of the Great Convention?” Mick’N reminded her. “No house may use atomics against another, or else all other houses will retaliate against the aggressor.” He quoted.

Arista agreed. “You are so correct.” Her demeanor didn’t change nor did her decision. She just watched him and waited.

“I am too old for this.” He announced. She snorted in disagreement. “Send Amasso.”

“Amasso?” she had not expected the suggestion. “He has no control of himself and he has a drinking problem.” She was skeptical.

“He is not the Heir to the throne. Yet as first-born he needs to find his place in this world. He has grown much since the trial. Send him.”

She hesitated but the Naib held her gaze and would not waiver in his recommendation. “You have yet to steer me wrong. All right, assign Amasso the mission.” She stood.

“You leave already?” He was disappointed, but he understood the demands of leadership.

“Me? I just got here old man. I’m off to see your wife and mother!”

He just grinned like a five year old at her reply. “Who you calling old?!”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

*[V] He stirred. "What happened?"*

*"Traffic jam from hell." She informed him, reached over and switched on the radio for an insight into what was happening. They soon found out. Two forty-foot spice haulers had jack knifed. There was a twenty-vehicular pile up behind that and they were stuck. She switched off the engine. There was bound to be worm sign and soon.*

*"Well looks like it's you and me, Highness." Alexi teased. [V]*

Dax snapped out of the dream in a cold sweat. It had been a while since he had had his last vision and he had convinced himself that it over. As he considered the lastest vision, calmed his racing heart, it was the Hour of Lud – he’d fallen asleep in the dusty archives.

He headed for the chapel. As he traversed the hall to the place of prayer his mind’s eye he thought about the young Bene Gesserit. Tall, well toned undoubtedly deadly and beautiful. What had him curious was – Assuming that this vision was prophetic: what were they doing together in the desert?

Again the forewarning of Jessica came to him. “As you will be father to the epoch to come - so she will be mother.”

Fate or no he needed to deal with this.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Amasso was ecstatic he was off to war again!

He drank another beer in one gulp flung the empty bottle at the wall, and shouted for another. As the woman placed the potent spice beer before him, he reached for her. Used to the attempts at groping from patrons she expertly dodged him.

“Hey!” He protested, “I’m off to war will no one kiss me!” Then fell flat on his face out cold. He awoke next day at barracks with no idea how he got there.

## Chapter 15

*"The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws"*  
*Cornelius Tacitus Roman historian*

Humans tended to obsess about the Planet of their origin – Earth. There tended to be romanticism about anything Terrestrial, among them was a plethora of legends. One such Legend was about the Marabunta.

The Marabunta was a Soldier Ant said to inhabit the jungles of the Southern Continent of Earth. When their war-like instincts were triggered they would go on a rampage. Once the ants were on the march, man and beast faced only two options: Get out of the way or die. Seen approaching for kilometers the insects would consume and destroy everything in its path, leaving a desert in their wake.

Marabunta did not make social visits. Once the war impulse is triggered, neither did Fremen.

The Highliners of the Spacing Guild arrived and blackened the sky to the point that the sun was eclipsed. They delivered the deadly cargo and were gone. They would return when called upon as per the agreement of the contract.

Five cohorts of Battle Hardened, Desert Tempered, Shai-Hulud Fanatical Fedaykin prepared for deployment. If there were Worm Bed on Salusa Secundus, they the faithful would find it and eliminate the abomination.

Alerted to the situation by the eclipse the planetary government declared their innocence, called for negotiations and begged for mercy. The Fremen had one reply “We are Fedaykin. We have come to stop the incarceration of Shai-Hulud.” There was no other announcement and no negotiations.

Looking like a spatial tornado linking Salusa Secundus to the space transport, the Arakeen transports hovered over the planet to disgorge their deadly cargo. The troops swarmed out. As with the Legend of the Marabunta the Fedaykin could be seen approaching for kilometers across the sky and as with the insects they would consume and destroy everything in its path.

The leading edge of the invasion was already two days on the ground and conducting searches when the last of the soldiers landed.

Salusa Secundus faced only two options - get out of the way or die. The planetary government called upon the Landsraad for assistance.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Dwanna watched impassively as the Fremen ground troops had taken control of the Planet. She had emerged from the Tourist Attraction just the week before and was still conferencing with Reverend Mother Kardon when the swarm had arrived; apparently they too had heard the rumour of worms on Salusa Secundus and had come to find out for themselves.

The arrival had been impressive. In no time the Planet had been shut down. No transport – no communications. That meant she was marooned here.

Teams had finally gone into the mock Dune and were due back soon. She knew what they would find.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

In an effort to intervene at the risk of the wrath of the Empress, the Landsraad sent a negotiator to broker a peace between Salusa Secundus and the Fremen.

The negotiator had had his skills tested to limit of his training, experience and patience, but finally; FINALLY! An agreement had been hammered out.

The Fremen would be allowed to search for worm sign on Salusa Secundus with an observer from the Planetary Government. Once satisfied that there were no worms, they would leave within two solar days.

In the privacy of his quarters he sent a message to the Landsraad Liaison. That done he collapsed onto his bunk and instructed all that he was to be called only when the Fremen had returned and were ready to report.

He fell into an exhausted sleep.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

“TERRAN GROWTH INC.” The plaque declared its existence to all as far as the eye could see. That day it was declaring to the latest version of Xavier Mehda'in, Mentat Ghola of the Prince Corinno. He was conducting the latest inspection of the facilities.

He and the cloning scientist; Doctor Chanson watched the latest batch being ‘cooked’.

“Since our last report.” She droned, “We have reached capacity with the first order. We now have the first batch of one million Sardaukar ready.”

Mehda'in grunted his approval.

The Doctor sensed the Ghola’s doubt; it was the age-old competition of Ghola vs Clone. “As we have stated in our bid documents. Cloning is more efficient and lends itself to mass production

as well as genetic engineering.” Chanson continued. “These new Sardaukar will make their ancestors though formidable seem tame.”

The troops continued to go through their various military training paces.

“Will you be able to meet the delivery date?” Mehda'in asked, though he knew the answer.

“Of course.” She bowed slightly.

“Can the growth rate be increased?”

“At the moment no. It still will take ten years to grow an adult... but our scientists are working on the prob... challenge every day.”

Mehda'in continued to watch the army that his Prince had built in secret. “And the schedule for the balance?”

“This way.” The scientist led him to the lab section.

Every visit was the same. Samples at different stages of growth; from test tube to baby, to toddler, teenager and adult -- the assembly line was in full production.

“Satisfactory.” He pronounced as he did every quarter. “I shall inform the Prince.”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Rammen Corinno read the coded message. When he came to the part where the first batch of Sardaukar was ready for delivery he stretched back and declared the work “Satisfactory.”

Then the Fremmen had struck.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The team of Fremmen had presented their findings and reported that there was no worm bed on the planet. They had found ‘Rakis World and gone in amass. What they had detected was human sign – nothing of import. It had taken the experienced Fremmen a fortnight to cross the exhibit, more than enough time to investigate. The whole planetwide search had taken eight weeks in total.

Amasso pronounced the report as “Satisfactory.” The ‘war’ on the other hand had left much to be desired. His emotions raged [*Such a tame little military exercise, no wonder mother had sent me and not Dax. This is not a campaign that one received promotions on. I suppose this is her statement on my trial.*]

“Pack – we leave this Maud'Dib forsaken place and go home.” Amasso ordered barely hiding his scorn.

The junior officer left to execute the order. Now alone Amasso vented his frustration in a more extroverted manner. He trashed the room.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Mehda'in who had been stuck on the Planet too, let out the breath he had been holding. So intent had been the Fremens to find worm sign on Salusa that they focused on that to the exclusion of all else. As such the Prince's project remained secret.

"Satisfactory." He whispered to himself.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Amasso had sent a preliminary statement to his mother, the Empress. "Impressive achievement." Duncan stated. Amasso's full report would follow later.

"Satisfactory." Arista replied and kissed him. He didn't complain or resist.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Amasso continued to seethe. It was an unrealistic reaction he knew, but the thought that his mother had purposefully sent him on this deadened assignment had sent him seething like a volcano ready to erupt.

He managed to control his boiling rage as he ensured that his troops boarded safely. The process entailed his driving between the shuttle craft, the route he took this time required a quick detour as he had promised himself a case of Secundus Ale before he left.

As he approached the Central Business District, he spotted a child - a little girl - waiting to cross the road.

He stopped.

The child began to cross.

It happened all so fast. The vehicle behind Amasso with a driver too impatient to wait, pulled passed him and ploughed head on into the child.

Amasso's blood curdling shout shattered the sleepy atmosphere of the community. Both drivers were out of their transports in a flash. A crowd soon gathered.

"Oh, God!" The man moaned. Amasso ignored him and went straight to the child and cradled her in his lap. There was blood everywhere and soon he too was covered in the sticky liquid. She was dead.



"Someone get a Doctor!" Some one shouted.

"Is she..." The culprit couldn't say the words.

Amasso stood. His pent up frustrations had found an outlet. "WHAT - THE - HELL - IS - WRONG - WITH - YOU!" He raged. He grabbed the man and shook him. "Did you think I stopped for the fun of it?" Still he shook. "You couldn't wait?" Inevitably he swung and his right fist made a solid connection with the man's jaw, sending him flying.

The crowd watched and didn't interfere as the man landed, rolled and came back fighting. Just what Amasso needed. He didn't waste his para-bindu training on the weasel. He wanted to feel every contact. Using the man as his personal punching bag he swung with a series of right hooks then a left upper cut and a combination flurry that ended with a satisfactory crunch of bones.

No one could tell if the blood on Amasso was his or the child's. He took a menacing step forward. "I should break every bone in you God forsaken body." He returned to the lifeless body of the child, picked her up tenderly and said in a drained voice, "Where do I take her?"

He was shown where. Amasso left the beaten driver on the ground... no one approached him. The authorities would deal with him soon enough.

Amasso's didn't feel angry anymore, just beaten and sad. There was nothing satisfactory about this.

## Chapter 16

*The Fremmen attitude of the knife required the chopping off what's incomplete and saying:  
"Now, it's complete because it's ended here."*

*Xavier Mehda'in*

*Mentat Doctoral Thesis*

*The Examination of the Influence of the Environment on the Decision Making Process:  
The Fremmen Model*

A Cabinet Meeting had been convened as soon as Amasso had returned from the mission on Salusa Secundus. As they had waited for the arrival of the members Arista observed coolness in her son. It didn't take much probing to find out the root of his sulking. She soon assured him that there was no ulterior motive to the assignment and that both Mick'N and she had had full faith in him. That taken care of they got down to work.

The meeting was one to craft a reply to the latest challenge to Atrides authority. In attendance were: Arista, Dax, Amasso, Duncan, Mick'N, Dr. Thalmas Sanchez – Suk Doctor to the Royal Household, Ma'a lot, Mentat to the House Atrides and the Cabinet Secretary The Lady Alexi.

The threat itself was of little significance the act and the motivation however was something else.

"It is the principle of the matter." Dax pointed out.

"Indeed." Duncan concurred. He read the communiqué again. "The Landsraad is in no position to declare or enforce an embargo."

"Then why announce it?" Dax wondered. "They will suffer for it if spice production is stopped."

Arista stood at the window looking at the soothing desert while she listened to the debate. Alexi diligently recorded the discussion.

"An impotent gesture led by the Spacing Guild no doubt." Amasso suggested.

"Is it possible that there are worms on Salusa Secundus? That would explain this move." Mick'N concluded.

Amasso shook his head firmly. "No. I was there. Not on Salusa Secundus." He stood to refill his wine glass. Arista tracked him from her vantage point, but said nothing.

"Elsewhere?" Duncan prompted.

"That brother is the question." Mick'N replied.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

FROM: SPACING GUILD

TO: BARON VLAD HARKONNEN

MESSAGE:

WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT REPERCUSSIONS OF YOUR PRESENT PATH.

BE WARNED - THE SPICE MUST FLOW!

SPACING GUILD

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Dax tossed and turned as yet another dream gripped him.

*[V] "I'm going to call a worm." Dax explained.*

*"You have no thumper." Alexi pointed out.*

*"I don't need one." [V]*

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

FROM: TERRAN GROWTH INC.

TO: PRINCE RAMMEN CORRINO

MESSAGE:

WE ARE IN RECEIPT OF YOUR REQUEST FOR URBAN WARFARE AND GUERRILLA TACTICS TO BE ADDED TO THE CURRICULUM.

WE AT TERRAN GROWTH INC. WISH TO KNOW IF YOU WISH FOR THIS MODULE TO BE INCORPORATED FOR ALL COHORTS OR IS THIS A ONE TIME REQUEST?

AS YOU CAN APPRECIATE YOUR NEW INSTRUCTIONS WILL HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR COSTING, AS THIS WAS NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL PROJECT BRIEF.

REFERENCE YOUR REQUEST FOR US TO HOST THE COHORTS UNTIL REQUIRED. PLEASE FIND ATTACHED A BUDGET FOR COMPLIANCE.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR RESPONSE.

JTU  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

## Chapter 17

*Progress is a slow process.  
Destruction on the other hand...  
Piter Vitres - Mentant*

Repercussions had come both the expected and unexpected.

First, House Atreides had retaliated with an embargo of its own. While Spice production on Dune would continue, the trade in Spice would halt with immediate effect.

That brought on the second repercussion. The price of Melange on the open market and the stock exchange increased by one hundred fold on the day of the announcement and by two hundred fold on the black market. Spice hoards were broken open and panic threatened to engulf the Empire.

The third was the arrival of a Guild Navigator on Giedi Prime, complete with entourage.

Vlad was uncomfortable. The Guild was known for its ability to “see” and now here was a Navigator sent to meet with him.

“Baron Harkonnen.” The translator breathed. “We repeat our concern for the repercussions of your present path. Be warned - the spice must flow!”

Vlad chuckled nervously. “I have no idea of what you speak of.”

The Navigator would not play the game. “ARE YOU STUPID?!! The spice must flow... the spice has given Navigators accelerated evolution for twenty thousand years... it has enabled you to live four hundred years, maybe more... the spice helps make the sapho juice, which gives the red-lipped mentats the ability to be living computers... the secret side of spice... the water of life!” The Navigator was incensed.

“We see patterns. We see a building of a repetition. The Atreides heir...”

“Dax?” Vlad was confused. “What of him?”

“The Atreides Heir is the genetic reincarnation of Paul Maud'Dib. If he is to take the water of life... You have been warned.” With that the hulking tank that carried him and his melange saturated environment left.

Vlad hated any encounter with the Guild; they could never have a simple conversation. He pondered the latest meeting. [*As usual the Guild was its usual ambiguous self. Does the Navigator want Dax left alone or killed? Warned about what? My plans?*] He shrugged and did

what he always did: Ignored the Guild until they stopped speaking in riddles. He was a busy man he didn't have time for this.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

There was no disputing the fact that the Lady Alexi was a stunning beauty enhanced by the slow but sure change of her eyes to the blue in blue of the spice addiction. She was no one's fool either with an intelligence tapered with a sense of humour. Even the old curmudgeons who frequented the Court were under her spell.

Forewarned by the vision in the elevator, driven by curiosity and eventually simply caught in the trap of Alexi's persona Dax had submitted to her charm, as had others in the Court. Increasingly they were to found in each other's company.

It was his turn to check the shields, a simple task that required only time. The Reverend Mother Farrah knew this and so when she proposed that Dax take the opportunity to show Alexi the sights along the way he had agreed, knowing full well what the true intension was.

As anticipated the tour was a boring one, the check done they were on the return trip home. The journey there had been interesting to Alex who had not ventured into this area – yet. They had first past through the markets, seeing and smelling the exotic produce on sale with every last one laced with spice. Then they had traversed some seedy brush and finally desert. Not deep desert but an indication of what lay beyond.

As had the Lady Jessica before her, Alexi had fallen in love with her assignment, she hadn't planned it; it just happened. It was so easy! As such she had been thinking of him and not focusing on the road ahead.

She relaxed as she sensed that he had fallen asleep and her thoughts rambled, [*Does he really think he's fooling me? His attentions to me have changed, yet he does nothing.*] She snorted mentally, [*In fact the whole of the Imperial Court had noticed, his transformation. I must change this stalemate.*]

Dax in turn dreamt of Alexi as the vehicle bounded along... but not for long. He was awakened from the dream by a jolt and a curse.

He shuddered as he recognized his dream. Yet even as he was faced with the reality of the dream unfolding before him; another revealed itself.

[V] “Dax?” Vlad was confused. “What of him?”

“If he is to take the water of life... You have been warned.” With that the hulking tank that carried him and his melange saturated environment left. [V]

The Baron! His head hurt. Would the clash of the Great Houses never end? The water of life? The thought triggered the memory of a conversation, but how could that be? He'd never had that conversation!

*[V] A Reverend Mother was speaking with a young Paul Atreides. Every Fremen knew what Maud'Dib looked like at any stage of his life. She asked him, "Do you know of the Water of Life?... the Truthsayer drug?"*

*Paul replied, "I have heard of it."*

*The crone had warned, It is very dangerous... very painful. The Bene Gesserit sisterhood drink it to see within.... There is a place terrifying to us... to women. It is said a man will come... the Kwisatz Haderach... he will go where we cannot... Many men have tried..."*

*"Did they try and fail?" Paul asked.*

*The reply was chilling. "They tried and died..." [V]*

His headache didn't get any better, now he was seeing history replay itself. His visions were exerting themselves with increasing frequency and force. They had him in more than one place: Past, Present and Future - and confused was a mild description of what he was feeling.

*[Oh for a normal life.]* He prayed and retreated into himself to ponder the latest piece in the mystery. This was how he perceived the events that had been happening to him as a puzzle to be solved. He admitted to himself that at times he was a bit too preoccupied with the challenge hence the crashed 'Thopters. But he'd solve the conundrum yet.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Having settled himself in a chamber where he was assured of privacy Piter Vitres, Gholia Mentat to every Baron Harkonnen since 10,049 was preparing to project the outcome of the present situation.

He chanted the mantra.

It is by will alone I set my mind in motion.  
It is by the juice of Sapho that thoughts acquire speed -  
The lips acquire stains -  
The stains become a warning -  
It is by will alone I set my mind in motion.

He commenced his calculations.

Four hours later his projections gelled. Evidence to date pointed at a continuation of the present cycle of climatic events. There was not enough data to conclusively state that it was as a result of Climate Change. The data, however, did indicate unusual weather patterns, the threat of

famine due to droughts, and an increase in Cancers on planets with powerful suns, such as Arakkis.

The data output flowed unabated.

Assuming that data was not flawed but was indeed correct. Then there was a link between The Ozone Erosion and Climate Change. With an increase Ultra Violet rays in the equation there could be an expected increase in the mortality of the Giant Worms of Arakkis meaning an interruption if not the eventual loss of the Spice.

Piter emerged from the Calculation Trance and concluded that this was not information he was about to share too soon with the Baron. Like all Harkonnens, Vlad did not take bad news well. To survive to tell the tale Piter would have to time the delivery just right.

Of course he could always just keep silent and take the projection to his grave.



## Chapter 18

*"For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction."  
Newton's Third Law of Motion  
A Child's Book on Physics*

The communicator buzzed. Amasso snapped it up.

"Amasso!" A voice came through the line. "Turn on your AVU! Any channel will do!"

"Who is this?" He slurred even as he did as instructed. His head hurt. He'd been out the night before – in fact the entertainment had come back with him.

"Savan, now just do it!" He hung up.

The AVU was already on and Amasso stood transfixed. The Sardaukar Headquarters on Kaitian was on fire! What the hell had happened? Even as he tried to absorb the picture for his brain refused to accept the commentary, he watched as another bomb exploded or was it an after shock. It didn't matter the resulting chaos was the same, he collapsed on the bed, nearly squashing the body on the bed. She rolled out of the way in time.

Over the next hour and a half Amasso and the Known Universe watched their AVUs transfixed as first the Sardaukar Headquarters on Kaitian and then the Tower of Strength on Giedi Prime were annihilated. What the hell was going on?!

He did a quick calculation ... that had to be at least four thousand persons guaranteed dead. That section of the Headquarters was under renovation thank Maud'Dib, but that was still a possible one million casualties. Then there was The Tower of Strength – he snorted so much for the strength of that. It was located in the center of Giedi City for maximum view by the populace; the potential death count boggled the mind.

After scanning all the Channels he switched off the AVU and headed for his Mother's Quarters. Leaving the entertainment to find her way home.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Protected by the shield the worms didn't come close but they were out there – they always were when Dax was near.

It may not have been 'true desert' in the Fremmen sense, but it was hot, humid and dusty. Desert enough for Alexi. They had taken turns at driving and as the vehicle bumped along Dax was lulled to sleep - until the sudden stop jarred him awake and he heard Alexi mutter the expletive.

"What happened?" He demanded.

"Traffic jam from hell." Alexi informed him, reached over and switched on the radio for an insight into what was happening. They soon found out. Two forty-foot spice haulers had jack knifed. There was a twenty-vehicular pile up behind that and they were stuck. She switched off the engine.

With such a shudder from the crash, there was bound to be worm sign.

"Are you alright, highness?" An Officer from the entourage came running. Dax waived him away, "Yes – yes."

"I'll go forward to try to expedite matters." The Office announced.

"You do that." Dax agreed.

"Well looks like it's you and me, Highness." Alexi teased.

Silence descended, as Dax continued to try to mull over the various anomalies in his life the most potent sitting next to him. He finally decided that he'd just let fate lead him – to a point, but he'd stop analyzing and let life unfold.

The silence was more than Alexi could bear. She couldn't take it anymore, "Sir, excuse my forwardness but I consider myself your friend. There are times when a friend has to know when to talk and when to shut up. I've tried keeping quiet. It did not work so now I speak up. What's wrong?"

"Wrong?" He echoed.

"Yes... wrong. You have not been yourself for weeks! Talk to me maybe I can help."

Dax hadn't expected her to tackle him. After all he was Dax, Heir to the Imperial Throne, but then as she had warned him on day one that they met she was not like other women.

Before he could reply his communicator crackled to life.

"Yes?" he responded

Amasso's voice came through "Dax, you ok?"

"Yes, I'm fine, why?"

"You are not aware of the situation?"

"What situation?!"

Amasso informed him. "Where ever you are I want you on the first transport back here. Got that?"

"Aye, sir!" Dax replied sarcastically. Turning to Alexi he said, "I need a worm."

"Sorry?" she was confused.

"I need to get to the Palace and we are stuck here in this."

"Well with the amount of vibrations around one is bound to come soon." She replied, hiding her trepidation at the possibility of coming face to face with the legendary Giant of the Desert.

"No the shields keep them at bay." He explained. He adjusted his still suit. "You coming?"

"Where!" She demanded.

"I'm going to call a worm." He explained.

"You have no thumper." She pointed out.

"I don't need one." He had a hunch and was about to test it.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Budislamics Minority Rights Association and the Fellowship of the ZenChristians issued a joint message.

"We extend our heart felt sympathies to the families of the victims of this terrible attack. Nothing can justify the murder of the victims in these terrorist attacks, and nothing justifies the slaughter of innocent people in the name of retribution. We urge the Landsraad to look into its collective heart and not start a spiral of violence that can lead to genocide."

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Arista lay on the sofa in her office. There was no incentive to return to her private quarters; Duncan was out with the Fedaykin and the work of the Empire never ended so she just stayed in her office.

Today and the weeks and days leading up to this day had been a stressful time. The attacks today just seemed to be the climax.

The Butleran Jihad and subsequent regimes were born in the hope that survived wars — the hope of a race moving toward justice, escaping old patterns of conflict and fear and now this -- The Dawn of a new age. What will this bring?

## Chapter 19

*War.  
What is it good for?  
Absolutely nothing.  
Standard Lecture to First Year Sword Master Students*

FROM: PRINCE RAMMEN CORRINO

TO: TERRAN GROWTH INC.

MESSAGE:

BOTH BUDGETS HAVE PROVED ACCEPTABLE.

COMMENCE WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.

HEAD  
HOUSE CORRINO

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The door swung open and Piter entered. "Apologies, Baron, but I think you may want to see this." He strode over to the AVU, and switched it on.

Vlad was not Baron by mere inheritance he was an experienced soldier and crafty politician, but nothing he had done had prepared him for what he saw that morning on his AVU screen.

Had he been told he that this would happen he would have said that so early in the morning that the person had been drinking. He himself was stone cold sober and yet he could not believe what he had witnessed.

Two Guild crafts had slammed into the Tower of Strength!

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

FROM: BARON VLADIMIR HARKONNEN II

TO: EMPRESS ARISTA ATREIDES V

MESSAGE:

LET ME INFORM YOU THAT VENDETTA -- AS IN ANCIENT TONGUE, THE ART OF KANLY -- IS STILL ALIVE. THIS WILL NOT GO UN-AVENGED.

HEAD  
HOUSE HARKONNEN

Arista passed the communiqué to Duncan who read it as she said, "He blames us."

I remember a lecture that I attended when I was training to become a Swords Master. It said - War. What is it good for? Absolutely nothing." He returned to the panel that was feeding him reports.

"Amasso has gone to collect Mick'N and Dax is on his way." She informed him. He nodded in acknowledgement.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Reverend Mother Zelron's buzzer sounded. "Yes!"

The Acolyte's voice came through "Reverend Mother I have the Mother Superior Sasha on the line."

"Put her through."

The Mother Superior's raspy voice came through. "Zelron, you've seen the horror on the AVU?"

"Yes, and I have been in contact with various people and the picture looks grim indeed." Zelron acknowledged.

"Your services will be required. As soon as you appoint someone to continue to monitor the exodus I want you to report to my office."

"Yes, Sasha." Zelron cut the communication and considered the candidates to replace her.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Ali Ben Knesset the Tleilaxu Governor of Caladan tightened the screw again. He was tired of this constant appealing to the Atreides for assistance. He would break this resistance once and for all.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Arista read the communiqué for a third time - just to be sure.

In true Tleilaxu form it was simple and straight to the point – "All persons of Caladanian or Budislamic extract arriving on Caladan will be taken aside, questioned, have their image taken and will be fingerprinted."

The public howl had been instant: A'khil El Vikram of The Budislamics Minority Rights Association stated that this latest action must be seen as a new form of racial discrimination and contrary to the principle that one is innocent until proven guilty.

Now Arista was receiving reports that even before the new regulations were in place, that some ten thousand had been detained for questioning.

With the silent consent of the Landsraad, Atreides rulers, had for carefully considered reasons, tolerated the situation on Caladan, and had done so for generations. Maybe Amasso had been right - It was time that this generation dealt with the state of affairs on the Ancestral Home of House Atreides.

Now the Tleilaxu no longer seemed content to rule but were now tightening the screws of oppression. After analyzing the situation and weighing the advantages and disadvantages, Arista made her decision. She now had to decide just how to achieved the decision.

## Chapter 20

*Que Sera Sera  
What ever will be will be.  
The future's not ours to see.*

*Que Sera Sera  
What will be will be.  
Favourite Lullaby of Grand Dame Atreides  
Grand Mother to the Emperor Dax*

Dax stood on the outcrop and said simply. "Shai-Hulud – It is I, Dax. I need you. Come to me – your humble servant." There were no thumping, no regular noises just his voice on the wind.

Silence descended as Dax and Alexi waited.

He was about to test a theory. If he was right ... IF HE WAS RIGHT! Then he was about to drag humanity into an era to challenge that of Maud'Dib and the Tyrant.

He contemplated his place in the Universe. He was either about to make history or a fool of himself in front of Alexi no less. Alexi, his thoughts drifted to her again. There was no doubt that she had been brought to Dune to be the consort of the Emperor – him. With every passing day he realized the wisdom in having the right partner. The role was a weighty one – the right partner could make it easier. His mother had his father and he wanted that. If he were to survive the future – he NEEDED that.

Dax confessed softly "Alexi, I dream of you and call your name for one reason only."

"I know."

He turned "You do?"

She nodded. "You hit your head when the elevator malfunctioned."

He chuckled. "You have no idea."

"It is nice for friends to appreciate each other." She baited him.

"No! No! No!" He wasn't getting through to her.

"Why?" She wanted to make sure that she had not misunderstood this conversation.

He watched her closely as he uttered the prophetic vision, "As I am to be father to a new epoch and you are to be mother."

“Is that all?” She taunted. “Parents to a new epoch? Oh well why didn’t you say so from the beginning?” Then she got serious. “This is a serious commission, M’Lord – are you sure?”

“When my mother sat Amasso and I down for THAT conversation, you know the one – the one that explained the differences between the sexes. She told us that, regardless of the age it happens, we would only become men when we know the woman that we wanted. Till then we would remain mere boys. I have come to realize that to become the man I desire to be I will need you.”

A tear rolled down Alexi’s cheek at the honesty of his statement. He would never understand women. What was wrong now! He wiped her cheek with a caress. "I'm sorry, Alexi. The last few months have been a revelation to me. Being locked up in the elevator I had time to review aspects of my life and the results were life changing to say the least."

"I have wondered about that day." She revealed. “I would be honoured. M’Lord.”

“Dax.” He corrected. “My name is Dax.”

She tried out the name. “Dax.” Then she sort clarification, just to be sure. “... and what exactly will this new role entail?”

He nodded as he realized that he had to clarify his position a bit more. “In one word ‘Consort’ I am offering nothing less than for you to become my partner.” He was about to hold her and seal the shift in the relationship with a kiss when the ground rumbled.

He fell to his knees weak from the implications of what was about to unfold.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

A somber Baron Vladimir arrived at the site of the disaster as he made his first trip to view the crumpled remains of The Tower of Strength. He arrived in the morning not wanting to be caught in the midday sun.

The Baron donned a personal shield configured for construction sites and toured the disaster location. Actually seeing the devastation wrought on the statue was too much; he was inconsolable - not for the loss of the lives of the citizens of Giedi Prime, but for the loss of the tribute to his ancestor.

He vowed to his ancestor and not coincidentally the press corps following him. "We will rebuild this tribute..." Deep within his heart he completed the vow [...and then the rest of the Universe will hear from House Harkonnen.]

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

“Daaaax!” Alexi screamed. She’d never seen a wild worm before and certainly never been this close to one. She struggled to regain control by repeating the litany against fear...



I must not fear.  
 Fear is the mind-killer.  
 Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration.  
 I will face my fear. I will allow my fear to pass over me and through me.  
 And when it has gone I will turn my inner eye to see its path.  
 And where the fear has gone there will be nothing.  
 Only I will remain.

Lost in the unfolding events Dax didn't respond to her call. Remaining on his knees he felt the fast approach of the Goliath. Racing towards the man as if with no intension of stopping the worm zoomed along displacing mountains of sand as it approached. Finally with two meters to spare the Leviathan stopped before the man who had summoned it.

The sand worm reared up slightly and paused before the genuflecting man.

Alexi stared in amazement at the tableau of the kneeling man before the giant.

Realizing that first, the worm had no intension of devouring him or his Consort and second that it seemed to be waiting. Dax ventured to continue the test.

He stood "Oh, Great One. I am in need of assistance. I need to get to Arakkis City as we approach the brink of genocide. Will you consent to let me and my Consort ride the sands with you as our guide?" A double dose of presumption he knew, Alexi had not answered and the worm may yet devour him.

In response the worm lay down.

There was the proof. The Great Sand Worms of Dune responded to him! He was right! He was about to drag humanity into an era to challenge that of Maud'Dib and the Tyrant!

As he and Alexi mounted the waiting worm he said to her. "You must now decide where your loyalties lie. You cannot serve two masters."

On that note the worm rose and headed for Arakkis City.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

PETITION

TO: CHIEF JUSTICE - ICJ

FROM: THE BUDISLAMICS MINORITY RIGHTS ASSOCIATION OF KAITIAN

WE HEREBY FILE A PETITION TO CHALLENGE THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE TLEILAXU MARRIAGE SEPARATIST ACT.

A'KHIL EL VIKRAM  
CHIEF LITIGATOR

## Chapter 21

*A beginning is the time for taking the most delicate care that the balances are correct.*  
*"Manual of Muad'Dib" by the Princess Irulan*  
*Wife of Emperor Paul Muad'Dib*

Across the Planet special services were held by families to mourn the dead and pray for the missing. Vlad's visit had finished an Official Day of mourning and prayer on Giedi Prime, a mood that tended to lighten considerably when people returned to the relative privacy of their homes, as "The Give Me Strength" was no more.

Out on the site, however, the mood tended to be grim as the difficult weather of Giedi Prime combined with the occasional heavy rain slowed efforts to find survivors in the wreckage.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Duncan continued to coordinate the responses from his Arakkis base. "The Guild has grounded all flights both intra and inter planetary. Nothing is to move for the next twenty six hours that includes military."

"Dax arrive yet?" Amasso walked in with Mick'N.

"No." Arista replied. "I will need to address the Empire."

"You will need to visit the sites." Mick'N added.

"If the Guild maintains the grounding then we are going no where." Arista replied. "Amasso, Your father is mobilizing the Military I need you to coordinate with him with the Emergency Services. I need an investigation started. I NEED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED!"

She turned to Mick'N, "Mick'N, I need you – I need to compose my thoughts and what to say. Not to mention the formation of a policy on this – there is about to be significant fall out."

"I can just hear Vladimir." Amasso snorted.

Mick'N followed Arista and added. "We will need to convene the Landsraad." He paused long enough to grab Amasso and growl "And no spice wine for you."

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The buzzer sounded. "Yes!"

The Acolyte's voice came through "Excuse me, Mother Superior Sasha, but I have Ambassador Olaf of Caladan requesting an audience."

Zelron glanced at Sasha. "You were expecting him?"

"No. But he is not unexpected." She then instructed the Acolyte, "Send him in."

The tall lean man walked into the room with great confidence. "Mother Superior." He greeted her.

"Ambassador..." She replied, this is Reverend Mother Zelron." The man bowed to Zelron. "How may the Sisterhood be of assistance to you?"

"I shall be blunt. The Empress has again refused you permission to evacuate your sisterhood from Caladan. Caladan remains in the grip of the Tleilaxu yet. Fremmen have landed on Selusa Secundus, attacks are now launched against Kiatian and Giedi Prime. I suggest Superior that the Bene Gesserit leaves en mass. While we use the opportunity with a combined force of Buddislam and Bene Gesserit to send the Tleilaxu back to whence they came."

There was silence.

Sasha's next words surprised the Ambassador. "How did you get here? There is an embargo on all flights."

The man blinked at the change of topic. As she scratched an itch he answered. "What goes up must come down and as we were near our destination we were allowed to land. The flight will not continue; so many are stranded here."

Zelron answered Sasha's inquiry via the same hand signal language. "Though we may want to examine this proposed alliance with the Buddislamics he is, however correct the opportunity presented by this present chaos cannot be allowed to pass."

Sasha replied to the Ambassador. "This is an offer that must be discussed. As you are stranded here for an unknown period of time we shall have a chance again to speak of this."

Taking the cue he stood to leave. "Of course. I look forward to meeting with you again."

## Chapter 22

*Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead.  
Fremen Lesson*

With the inspection tour cut short, and a Sand Worm at his command, a ride that would have taken Dax three days, now took three hours.

Alexi took the time to reflect on Dax's words. [*You must now decide where your loyalties lie. You cannot serve two masters.*] She hid her smile [*But I \*can\* I am Bene Gesserit.*]

No sooner had the journey began than Dax had made himself comfortable on the surface of the worm confident that he would come to no harm. He then opened his arms to her inviting her to lean against him and she did.

Her reason for being on Arakkis had been to mate with this man. The Reverend Mother Farrah was impatient that time was wasting and they were no closer to that aim -- Then suddenly this.

She felt his strong arms around her, keeping her safe and secure. There was really no choice, she loved him and she now understood the Atrides ability to bind people to them. The voices within urged caution but not flight and so she placed her foot on the path to follow that of her predecessor The Lady Jessica Atrides.

Her decision made she relaxed against Dax and she prepared to enjoy the ride.

Feeling the moment that her decision was made Dax tighten his arms around the woman he considered his Consort.

His reference to her earlier seeped in. "Consort?" she asked.

"Consort." He confirmed.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

### OFFICIAL MEMO

THE CABINET HAS INSTRUCTED ALL PLANETS TO OBSERVE THREE MINUTES OF SILENCE IN HONOUR OF THE VICTIMS OF THE TERRORIST ATTACKS ON KAITAN AND GIEDI PRIME.

THE HONOUR IS TO TAKE PLACE THE 15TH DAY OF THE MONTH OF MAUD'DIB IN THIS THE YEAR 39,176 AT THE HOUR OF LUD.

THE EMPRESS HAS ALSO DIRECTED THAT ALL FLAGS ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS BE FLOWN AT HALF-MAST THAT DAY.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Tho'Ma Kynes finally got his window of opportunity to present his theory when he was invited to be a key note speaker at "*The Universal Summit on Sustainable Development and Climate Change: From Kaitian to Salusa Secundus. - A Lost Decade*", to be hosted by the Climate Change Secretariat and sponsored by the Humanitarian Assistance Program of the Military.

The Conference was being held at the Climate Change Secretariat Headquarters on Salusa Secundus and by all accounts it was a resounding success and it was not even completed yet. Then the attacks had occurred. Now, understandably every thing was in the air and running late.

It was agreed by the delegates that the conference would continue. What else could be done? But all were warned that there would be mass disruptions to flight schedules as the Spacing Guild had locked down all travel for the first time ever.

Kynes had presented the paper; dealt with questions and all in all had defended his theory flawlessly and successfully. A draft resolution was passed by a majority of only sixty percent based on his findings, but he had his proviso and that was what mattered. Measures needed to be taken to mitigate the problem and this was a first step.

The draft resolution also made a call for Giedi Prime to reconsider their position of non-compliance. The resolution would eventually be delivered to Empress Arista, when the document was finalized.

As a true Kynes, fanatical in his crusade, Tho'Ma had all intension in speaking with the Empress, finished document or not. For now though he was stuck on Salusa Secundus.

He walked into the Command and Control room. "Major!" he addressed the Soldier.

"Sir."

"Where is Colonel Clarke?"

"Not here, Sir, I'm in charge may I assist?"

"I seriously doubt that you are in charge, Major. Where - is - Colonel Clarke!"

The Major regarded her "Mr. Kynes..." He said placatingly.

He pulled out his ID. "Dr. Kynes, Imperial Planetologist."

The Major read the card and handed it back.

"Now, Major, I say again. Where - is - Colonel Clarke!"

"Packing, Sir. The Guild has conceded to exception for Military only. He has orders to return ASAP to the Kaitina. Transport is on its way as we speak to collect the Colonel."

"Book me on that transport Major. For I have to reach the Empress in quick time."

"No can do, Sir. This is for Military only. All civilians have to remain put." The Major would not be budged and so Kynes was stranded on Kaitian.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The rhythm of the worm as it glided along was hypnotic and it wasn't long before Alexi had dropped off to sleep.

Dax himself found the whole experience electrifying. He had summoned a worm at will and it was complying with his request! He had mounted and now rode the Giant with no need of tools and to top it all he had Alexi with him for the ride – literally. As these thoughts and feelings coursed through him his eyes looked at everything and he drank in the sights. Instinctively his hold on Alexi tightened, she adjusted herself in response.

As the ride continued he noticed the growth on the worm. Trying not to awaken Alexi he reached out and gently touched what looked like a tumor. The worm reacted violently and almost threw them off.

"What!" Alexi awoke.

"Nothing..." Dax assured her as he filed the information away in his mind. "My fault. Nothing." He lightly kissed the top of her head to reassure her.

## Chapter 23

### *Quod Erat Demonstrandum*

“Where is Dax!” Amasso looked out the window in frustration for the millionth time. This time he saw something that required witnesses. “Mother! Father!”

The squeal that they had not heard from their son since he was six brought them running. All he could do was point.

Before their eyes and that of Arakkis City, Dax Atreides lowered the shield and rode the worm up to the doorstep of the Palace. The worm was obviously under his control and when he and Alexi stepped down and he spoke to the worm, it nodded, turned and left – there was no doubt.

“Great Maker. He controls the worms!” Arista shuddered.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Lady Alexi reported to the Reverend Mother Farrah as ordered. It would be the last time. She had just ridden a sand worm and lived to tell the tale, she was the Cabinet Secretary but most important she was Consort to the NaEmperor.

Farrah sensed the change. “What was the result of that walkabout in the desert?”

“He has named me Consort.” Alexi reported.

“Indeed?” This was beyond Farrah’s expectations. “Then we expect the female offspring soon.” She noted Alexi’s hesitancy and probed. “Alexi?”

“I have reason to suspect that the breeding program may face a set back.” She replied.

“Explain.” Farrah ordered.

“He may be the Kwisatz Haderach.”

“Dax?” Farrah stated the obvious to be sure. “Great Mother.”

Alexi nodded. “Be warned Moth...”

“Warned!” Farrah cut across her.

“Warned.” Alexi confirmed. “It is not the *modus opperdani* for an Atreides male to marry his Consort. I expect the same here, but as the bound concubine of the NaEmperor it is my duty to ensure to best of my ability, his safety.”



She turned to leave but not before adding. "In future you will come to me."

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Alexi entered her quarters; she rounded her desk and there it was.

A single long stemmed red rose.

She involuntarily looked up to see if anyone was observing her. They were not. She picked up the rose to sniff. There was something about the scent of a rose. She smiled to herself; apparently Dax was wasting no time. She was convinced it was him who else could it be? She spotted the card and read it.

*My mother will have my water for raiding the arboretum,  
but only the best for the best.  
Love Dax.*

She went in search of a vase before heading for the latest Cabinet Meeting.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Dr. Thalmas Sanchez was the physician to House Atreides. As with all Doctors to the Royal Houses he was trained in the Suk way, guaranteeing his conditioning for not being capable of harming the clients he was assigned to. That promise being manifest by the diamond tattoo that all Suk graduates carried on their forehead.

The Suk Medical Society had taken a thousand years to recover from the treachery shown by Dr. Wellington Yueh who had been assigned to House Atreides in the time of Maud'Dib. The Harkonnens had broken Yueh's conditioning and the fact that a Suk Doctor's training could be broken had been a shock to the Suk Medical Society and the entire Landsraad.

With five years of service to House Atreides, Thalmas still thought of as the new Physician, the previous one having died of Spice Addiction. He was a tall man with spider-black eyes and full, pouting lips. At certain angles he called to mind Al Samoud Harkonnen, but a background check had cleared him for service. He carried his long, black hair in a "Suk School" silver ring down the center of his back.

Having been quickly briefed by Lord Dax, the Doctor was now in search of the Lady Alexi. He finally caught up with the Cabinet Secretary. "My Lady!"

Alexi turned vase still in hand. "Yes, Dr. Sanchez?"

"May I speak with you privately?"

"Of course this way." She led him into her office. "Now, how may I assist?"

“My lady, Lord Dax has informed me of your change in designation and before the household move you into his quarters I must conduct a physical.” He wasn’t the least uncomfortable with the topic. Seemed that Suk training prepared one for anything, well Bene Gesserit training was good as any, if not better.

“Will now suit you, Doctor?” She prepared to strip.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

As Giedi Prime sought to resume its normal pace, the Guild reopened the Spaceports.

## Chapter 24

*"The single biggest problem in communication  
...is the illusion that it has taken place"*  
George Bernard Shaw – Ancient Terran Philosopher

FROM: BARON VLADIMIR HARKONNEN IV

TO: EMPRESS ARISTA ATREIDES V

MESSAGE:

NOW THAT THE GUILD IS ALLOWING INTER AND INTRA PLANETARY MOVEMENT, WE REQUEST AN IMMEDIATE CONVENING OF THE GREAT HOUSES OF THE LANDSRAAD BOTH MAJOR AND MINOR TO DISCUSS THIS ACT OF TERRORISM.

HEAD  
HOUSE HARKONNEN

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

INTERNAL MEMO

FROM: KWISATZ MOTHER

TO: MOTHER SUPERIOR

AS YOU ARE AWARE DAX ATREIDES HAS DEMONSTRATED PUBLICLY HIS ABILITY TO CONTROL THE WORMS OF ARAKKIS.

THE LADY ALEXI HAS BEEN MADE CONSORT TO THE NAEMPEROR.

WE ARE INVESTIGATING THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE MAY BE A KWISATZ HADERACH. GREAT MOTHER HELP US, FOR IF HE TAKES THE WATER OF LIFE WE MAY HAVE A REOCCURRENCE OF THE ERA OF MAUD'DIB.

KWISATZ MOTHER

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

INTERNAL MEMO

FROM: MOTHER SUPERIOR

TO: REVEREND MOTHER MO'HADIN

BE ADVISED OF THE FOLLOWING:

THE GUILD IS ONCE AGAIN ALLOWING INTER AND INTRA PLANETARY MOVEMENT, AS SUCH THE EXODUS OF THE BENE GESSERIT SHALL COMMENCE FORTHWITH.

WE HAVE ACCEPTED THE OFFER OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE AMBASSADOR OLAF OF CALADAN.

YOU ARE TO ATTEND THE MEETING OF THE LANDSRAAD, WHENEVER CONVENED.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

FROM: PRINCE RAMMEN CORRINO

TO: TERRAN GROWTH INC

I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT I SHALL SOON HAVE NEED OF MY TROOPS.

PLEASE STAND BY FOR DEPLOYMENT AT SHORT NOTICE.

HEAD  
HOUSE CORRINO

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

FROM: EMPRESS ARISTA ATREIDES V

TO: ALL MAJOR AND MINOR HOUSES OF THE LANDSRAAD

MESSAGE:

YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUIRED AT AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE LANDSRAAD TO BE CONVENED AT THE GRAND PLACE, ARAKKIS ON THE 21ST DAY OF THE MONTH OF MAUD'DIB AT THE NINETH HOUR IN THIS THE YEAR 39,176.

THERE WILL BE ONE AGENDA ITEM – THE RECENT TERRORIST ATTACKS ON KAITIAN AND GIEDI PRIME.

HEAD  
EMPRESS ARISTA ATREIDES V

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

CONFIDENTIAL MEMO

FROM: THIRD STAGE GUILD NAVIGATOR

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE SPACING GUILD

MESSAGE:

THE SPICE MUST FLOW.

THIRD STAGE NAVIGATOR  
THE SPACING GUILD

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

MEMO

FROM: IMPERIAL PLANETOLOGIST

TO: HRH ARISTA

MESSAGE:

HIGHNESS, I HUMBLY REQUEST AN AUDIENCE WITH YOU ON A MATTER OF  
GREAT URGENCY.

THO'AM KEYENS  
IMPERIAL PLANETOLOGIST

## Chapter 25

*The cloning of humans is on most of the lists of things to worry about from Science, along with behaviour control, genetic engineering, transplanted heads, computer poetry and the unrestrained growth of plastic flowers.*  
*Lewis Thomas (1913 - 1993)*

It was not often that Family Atreides gathered as Family. They could usually be found in a variety of combinations but it was becoming rare to see all gathered together except for formal occasions. The worm ride changed the status quo.

The four gathered in the living quarters of Arista and Duncan. They were set up in the Ancient Roman style of a circle of chaise longues. Each member was perched on one and the family was profiting the opportunity to have dinner at the same time. Once the provisions had been laid out and the wine poured, the assistants were dismissed.

“THAT was some ride.” Amasso teased his sibling then sipped his wine.

Dax didn’t know where to start so he said nothing.

Duncan frowned at Amasso’s action but he too remained silent.

Arista cleared her throat and gently encouraged her son. “Dax, what happened out there?”

“As you well know there is always worm sign around me, but I never get attacked. There has to be something going on between me and the worms.”

“Something?” Duncan prompted one son as he eyed the other.

“Well, I really can’t explain it more than that.” He continued, “I had an insight that if I called; that one would come and more than that do my bidding.”

Arista sat up. “Your bidding?” she exchanged glances with Duncan.

Dax nodded.

Amasso refilled his glass. “You are trying to tell us that you are controlling the Sand Worms of Dune?”

“I’m telling you that the Worms did my bidding beyond that I don’t know WHAT is happening!” He was getting distraught.

“Enough!” Duncan ordered; would these two ever settle down? “...anything else to add, Son?”

“Well. I think the worms may be falling ill.” He proceeded to tell them of the growth he had seen on the worm that he had ridden.

Arista became quiet as she remembered the memo from Kyens. She mentally groaned [*This is a year designed to test me. Will it never end? Is that what Keynes wants to see me about?*]

She put on her ‘family’ face and returned to the present to enjoy the infrequent pleasure of dining with her family. She needed the semblance of this normality to give her the breathing space. Despite her best efforts her mind churned. [*I need to analyse the possibilities this situation presents. The power potential here is astronomical. This meal will have to be over with soon. With Dax making that display in public the Bene Gesserit and Landsraad reactions to a possible repeat of history is sure to come.*]

She barely heard the chatter about her. [*If I was them I'd be plotting the assassination of Dax. I need to be plan how to protect this House and my sons!*]

She gave up the charade of family time. She was about to end the dinnertime, when Dax dropped the bombshell. "I have named the Lady Alexi as my Consort." He was standing behind his mother where there was a wider range of drinks were available.

"WHAT!" Amasso demanded. "Just who the hell do you think you are?! You just walk in and claim as you see fit? Give me a break?"

Arista paused in midaction. She had been about to reach for an olive when her para-bindu reflexes kicked in. In a blur she rolled over and landed on the floor as Amasso flung his goblet at Dax. Despite his having been drinking he moved with lightening speed but not great accuracy. The goblet missed his mother and imbedded itself in the wall behind her.

The crash brought staff running into the room. Duncan spotted them and they looked to him for guidance him. He waved them away. When the guards hesitated he glared at them. At that point they left the room but remained within earshot.

Meanwhile Dax was dodging Amasso’s every move, an action that was only serving to infuriate his brother, a fact that Dax knew all too well and used constantly to great effect. Though Dax was emerging unscathed the same could not be said for the furniture. There was no telling what now had Amasso so angry: Dax’s announcement or his bobbing and weaving.

“Stay still!” Amasso ordered.

“I’m younger, not more stupid!” Dax replied.

Leaving the Guards to Duncan Arista dealt with her sons; she was not in the mood for a battle of the Twins. She was already distracted by thoughts of Empire and nightmares of an assassinated son. She hurled the voice at them "ENOUGH!" She roared shattering the mirror that hung in the room. It froze the two, before they could do any damage.

Duncan took over. He strode up to the two men “Gentlemen! And I use the term loosely what the hell were you thinking!” he roared. “Fedeykin! ...and Majors at that! Both of whom should KNOW better!”

“I would like to hear the answer to that myself!” Arista added. "Since when do Atreides men brawl over bound concubines?!" They stood facing their parents, while Arista decided to moved away and stand to the side to watch the proceedings. This had been too much. The imbedded mug caught her eye. She growled softly.

“Answer your Mother’s question, gentlemen!” Duncan demanded.

Both were silent

“Mmm” Their father muttered. “I need to cool down before I deal with you two. In the meantime you will be getting a bill for the collateral damage.”

“Understood, sir!” they responded.

“I doubt that you do.” Duncan snarled. “Fedeykin! ... Officers no less! ... My own sons brawling like some trainee Officer!” He paused. “The evening and the meal is shot. Go home report tomorrow ... I’ll tell you my decision then... DISMISSED!”

“Aye, sir!” They snapped to attention and left.

Duncan looked at Arista who just shrugged her shoulders.

"Has she even agreed?" Duncan sighed.

"More important has the Bene Gesserit agreed." Arista slid onto the sofa, exhausted.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Prince Rammen Corrino strolled through the gardens of the Palace of House Corrino. They really were spectacular. He had seen vidpics of the pre-Butleran gardens of Versailles on Earth and that was a mud patch compared to what lay outstretched before him. Every colour ever conceived by God and Man was represented here.

He glanced at Xavier Mehda'in his Mentat. He had presented the walking computer with a projection to formulate. Who was behind the attacks on Kaitain and Giedi Prime? Once the result was pronounced the Prince then wanted to know the likelihood of a Military Force of the nature and scale of the Sardaukar being needed.

As the Mentat computed, Rammen attended to the important matter of the moment and proceeded to stroll around... and encountered the Reverend Mother Kardon.



“Kardon!” He called. “Walk with me.”

“Highness.” She fell into step with him.

“Spectacular Flora – no?” They walked along.

“Indeed, in nature however, Highness the more spectacular the creature the more deadly the bite.”

“Sound’s like a description of the Bene Gesserit.”

“As all are aware we monitor power: pure, corrupt, absolute. Once manifest we monitor and maintain the progress in the archives of authority.” She replied.

He burst out laughing. “Oh Kardon! That was priceless, the Bene Gesserit observers or power! When was that?” He chuckled. Then he spotted that his Mentat was ready. “If you will excuse me.”

She bowed as he walked away.

He got sober and then serious as he approached Mehda'in. “Well?”

“There is a ninety percent probability that House Atreides will be accused of the act of terrorism at the convening of the Landsraad and a sixty percent probability that Military Force will be required at some point.”

“It should make for an interesting Convocation.”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Mother Superior Sasha had yet another representative on her doorstep. This time she faced a Novice Guild Navigator.

The guttural grunts and whistles were translated for her to understand. “The Landsraad has been convened, we foresee problems. We foresee a threat to spice production.”

“This cannot be allowed to happen.” She agreed. “We suspect that idiot the Baron has set in motion a plan that can have serious implications.”

“We concur.” The translating machine wheezed. “This Convocation of the Landsraad cannot be allowed to jeopardize spice production.”

“Our Mentats project that there is an ninety three point one percent probability that House Atredies will be accused of Terrorism.” She revealed.

The navigator took a sharp breath. “The Spice MUST flow! With out it space travel will cease!”

“We concur.”

“The path is cloudy.” He admitted.

“Thus making it a dangerous one.” She replied.

“Then we understand each other.”

“Indeed we do.”

## Chapter 26

*"Govern a family as you would cook a small fish - very gently."  
Pre Butleran Chinese Proverb*

Dax opened the door in response to the knock to find Amasso standing there. "Mas!" he used the childhood nickname.

"May I come in?" he asked.

"Sure." He stood aside to allow his brother to enter. "You OK?"

"The fight has been running through my mind like a recording." he said.

"I know. What a mess." Dax agreed. "What do you think the Dad will do?"

Amasso shrugged. "He was REALLY angry. After he's cooled down I think we'll be lucky to get a punitive letter of reprimand, one month's forfeiture of pay and a bill for damages to the room. That would be my recommendation if asked. We should consider ourselves damn lucky if there's no Article 32, Sword Master's mast or demotion."

"I know, I know." Dax groaned. "Amasso, do you want Alexi?"

"Me? No." Amasso confessed.

Dax was shocked. "Then what... why?"

Amasso shrugged his shoulders. "It's the principal little brother. You can't waltz in and just announce that 'Oh by the way I'm claiming the most beautiful woman in the Court' its just not done. Besides... it was a good fight, wasn't it."

Dax grinned. "One of our best."

"Mad at me?" Amasso grinned back.

"Never for long." Dax confessed.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Baron Vladimir Harkonnen examined the documents. He had commissioned the forgeries and yet he could not tell the difference. He dropped the report on the table. "Excellent!"

The report fell face up. It read:

*Transplanetary Threats From the Planet Arakkis: Crying Wolf or Crying Havoc? Under the leadership of House Atredies*

"Excellent!" The Baron repeated and subtly signaled to Piter. "Then to the author. You wish now to be paid, is that right?"

"This was the agreement."

Vlad smiled and said "Piter, pay the man!"

Piter moved in on the academic the needle glistening in his hand for a split second before he buried it in the man's back.

A silent gasp escaped the victim, and then he fell unconscious.

"Is he alive, Piter?"

"Yes, my Baron."

"Then take him away, Piter." The Baron ordered with much scorn.

Piter signaled to the slaves who came in to take the man on a lengthy visit at the Baron's expense... in his private dungeons.

As he watched idly he informed his Mentat. "It would have been a shame to lose a great artist like that. Never know when you might need him again."

"Yes, M'Lord." Piter replied, failing to point out that he was the one who had recommended the dungeon over the knife. Death had been the Baron's first choice.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Arista groaned. The weight of the Throne felt extra heavy recently, the latest between Amasso and Dax wasn't helping either.

She stood at a window with a document in her hand and observed the water sellers going by. She actually envied them. Their one concern was selling water. She on the other hand had crisis after crisis to deal with. She read again the latest that had cropped up. A communiqué from Planet Kaitan had arrived to inform her that due to the attack on the Sardaukar Headquarters there was need to enhance the security of Kaitian. As such House Remus of Kaitian had responded by passing the Bio Terrorism Preparedness and Response Act, which had already been signed into law.

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Duncan stood on one of the parapet walls. It was his favourite spot as it faced the setting sun. Inevitably he ended up there when his mind was troubled. This evening he was distressed.

He had finally to face the fact that Amasso had relapsed. He had received the reports but had refused to accept the fact. After all that they had been through as a father he had not wanted to believe. Even when charges had been laid against Amasso, Duncan had held fast. He had been vindicated when Amasso had been acquitted. But not anymore, now there was no escaping that actuality. The unreasonable outburst had been the proof.

Years before when times were more tranquil he had had the luxury of being more father to his troubled teen than Master Swordsman/Commander in Chief to the Fedeykin.

He looked at the setting sun but never saw it as he relived the moment when he and Amasso had gone into the hills to face his demon and through the effort they had become closer.

#### EIGHT YEARS EARLIER SAHARA MESA - ARAKKIS

Duncan had warned his sixteen-year-old son that he was about face the bowel of hell, the bottom of the pit as it were. That this was the end of the road. If he did not stop his alcohol consumption he'd become mentally ill or die a slow, painful death.

Amasso didn't need to be told twice. Faced with his friend's recent death from alcohol poisoning, he was ready to change. It had been the wake up call that he had required.

Duncan had not exaggerated the fact that the next two months would make or break Amasso. He'd either walk out of the Mesa under his own steam or die with the effort. By the time Duncan got him up into the mountains and settled into a cave the battle was already raging. Amasso had been drinking on and off for over six years and constantly for the last three. His dependence on the liquid was complete and without the crutch he was collapsing. He was in no condition to appreciate the result of three hundred and fifty million years of tireless erosion that had produced the dramatic rock formations of canyons, buttes and spires that towered at almost one thousand feet above desert level. He was barely aware of the world around him.

Amasso had entered what was called the stabilization period of recovery where he was detoxifying brought on by the abstinence. As painful as it was Duncan drove his son. "You need to eat Mas."

He shook his head, licked his lips. "I need a drink, Dad!"

"Why?!" His heart went out to him. "Think Amasso focus why do you need that drink? Go past the need of your body. Why do you need that prop?"

The bead of sweat on his brow intensified. He swallowed hard. "I need it!"

"WHY, AMASSO?!"

“BECAUSE!”

“NOT GOOD ENOUGH!” He roared then more gently “Not good enough, son. Now why do you need that drink?”

“I just do.” He sobbed. The crying turned into a wail “You prefer Dax!”

“If I did I wouldn’t be here. I am here for you son and I’m not leaving. When I do walk out you will march out with me. Come you need to eat.” And so it continued with Duncan holding up a mirror to Amasso’s soul and he having to face it.

+ + +

The day finally came that he was able to keep food down. He’d been vomiting everything that he had swallowed.

“There has to be a better way.” Amasso groaned.

“You think?” Duncan asked. “That was only the first hurdle.”

Amasso was sitting on the floor of the cave with his back against the wall. “Dad?”

“Yeah?”

“I’m an alcoholic.” he confessed simply.

“Yes, you are.” Came his just as simple response.

“Thanks for bringing me here.”

“You are welcome. I love you, Mas, you are my son and I’d do it all again.” He assured the teen.

“I think I can do this.”

“I know you can.”

+ + +

Duncan returned from gathering firewood and knew something was wrong. Amasso was out cold on the cave floor.

He kneeled by his side “Mas?” He used the childhood nickname. “Mas!!!”

He groaned as the whiff of alcohol came though. Duncan groaned then checked his bag. “Damn it!!” He cursed. He’d brought rubbing alcohol as part of the first aid kit and Amasso had drunk it!

He held his son close and rocked him. “Oh, Mas!” He sighed “How bad you were I didn’t realize!”

They had to start all over again.

+ + +

Over the weeks the two had struggled with Amasso’s demons and he was finally human enough to be aware of the grandeur that surrounded them. This day the two were at Cathedral Rock.

“Makes you think doesn’t it.” Amasso said as he watched the works of God.

“About?”

“That there is life out there. That for every action there is a reaction that I must accept that from this time forward I can no longer drink... That sort of stuff.”

“Profound.”

“Well when faced with the handiwork of God.” He waived her hand outward at the desert. “That tends to happen.”

“I’m proud of you, Son.” His father praised him.

He smiled with embarrassment. “I realized what you have been saying is true. I heard you but it really hit home when I drank the rubbing alcohol. The consequences of my continued drinking will become more severe until I accepted that my drinking is not normal. After that episode I couldn’t hide anymore.”

“That’s my boy. Duncan put his arm around him and they sat still enjoying the simple pleasure of being together.

+ + +

The drying out was almost complete. Duncan had one more item on his agenda. As a true Swords Master he tackled it head on. “Come sit with me, Son.”

“Sure what’s up?”

“We’ll be leaving soon.” He informed Amasso.

“Already? We’re done?” he was shocked.

“It’s been almost two months and you’ll never be done.” He corrected.

“I know.” He sighed.

“What are your plans, Mas?” He asked.

The question took him by surprise. “Plans?”

“Yes.” He grinned. “Now that your be all and end all is no longer in a bottle you will be seventeen soon what are you going to do with the rest of your life?”

“Weeel.” He paused.

“Well?” He prompted.

“I once had a dream to join the Fedaykin, together with Dax.”

“The Military is a good idea I’m in it and I love it. You should pull that idea out of the cobwebs and seriously consider it.”

Amasso shrugged his shoulders.

“If you want I can get you into a program.” Duncan offered.

"No!" came the instant reply. "If I do this I do it as Amasso and not the son of anyone!"

"OK!" Duncan placed his hands up in surrender. "So be it!"

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The boy had been as good as his word. He'd signed up and done all the training rising to the rank of Major on his own merit.

Then he'd met Shar'Leem and fallen in love. They had been like two peas in a pod. Inseparable. Then Shar'Leem had been sent on a mission only to return in a body bag. Amasso had taken it badly and he'd returned to the bottle for comfort. Duncan suspected that had she lived Shar'Leem would have become a member of the family.

But she hadn't and here they all were - back where they started.

What was a man to do? Should he take him up to dry out again? Amasso was no longer a child; he had to make his own decisions.

"DAMN IT!" Duncan said out loud. He had family concerns and affairs of state and both were all tugging at him, now this! He struggled with his need to be a good father and allow Amasso to



make his own decisions, but Amaso was an Atreides and the second heir. At this crucial time, allowing him the luxury of being an alcoholic just wasn't possible. Duncan needed to take action.

"Damn it." He repeated then turned to descend to his quarters.

## Chapter 27

*To put the world in order, we must first put the nation in order;  
to put the nation in order, we must put the family in order;  
to put the family in order, we must cultivate our personal life; and  
to cultivate our personal life, we must first set our heart.*  
Confucius

Dax had never really appreciated the privileges of being Royalty until now. It had always 'just been a part' of his life, until now. As plans progressed for the Convocation, he had the Natural History Museum of Pre Butleran Earth opened so that Alexi and himself could enjoy the exhibits in private.

Alexi was like a child in a candy store. The life of a Bene Gesserit was a stark one. For sure there were eventual benefits. She was well educated, multi-lingual, had the ability to control her body in a manner that many could not and her sexual prowess was matched only by fellow Sisters. The lessons that had been hammered into her had made her even more superior when complimented by her awakening with the water of life. Her indulgencies had been few and today she was given the run of a museum!!! She ooded and ahhed and dragged him from one pile of bones to another.

Dax had never seen this side of her. He didn't even know that she had liked this kind of stuff. They were now standing before a Pterodactyl "Can you imagine that thing taking to the air?" She was in awe.

"As long as I wasn't lunch." He grinned.

"You could very well have been." She replied with laughter in her voice. "Oh look a T-Rex!" and off she went dragging him after her.

Then she spotted Giantgantasorous "Oh my God! Dax they've got it!"

"Got what?" he was lost.

"That!" And she pointed. "It was native to a place called Argentina and so far the largest dinosaur known to man." She began to rattle "The claw of a Velociraptor was a centimeter while the claw of Giantgantasorous was over a meter! And it was just as intelligent as man! When that thing swiped it left a cut off a meter and a half. It disemboweled its victims with one slash. When it walked the planet shook. It was the terror of the neighborhood!"

"Alexi, breathe... breathe!" Dax begged teasingly.

She suddenly launched herself at him and hugged him "Oh thank you Dax this is great!" She released him just as suddenly.

"Uh-oh awkward moment..." Dax grinned. He stood close to her and whispered, "May I?"

Alexi really saw no need to reply verbally. She was on a platform that had her at eye level with him; all she needed to do was turn and grant their wish and she did. She kissed him. It felt like an electric charge was coursing through them.

The kiss finally broke leaving both breathless. "Alexi." He murmured.

All she was able to do was smile. Suddenly he looked sad. "Dax?" She prompted.

"Alexi." He prepared to confess. "I'm having dreams."

"Dreams? I don't understand."

He sat on the ledge of the display case of a large dinosaur skeleton and she stepped down and joined him. "Well... maybe not dreams – visions?"

"They are coming true?" She asked. He nodded. "Often?"

"Of late, yes."

"But something has happened or you would not tell me this now." She may be younger than him but she was shrewd.

He recited to her: WE ARE INVESTIGATING THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE MAY BE A KWISATZ HADERACH. GREAT MOTHER HELP US, FOR IF HE TAKES THE WATER OF LIFE WE MAY HAVE A REOCCURRENCE OF THE ERA OF MAUD'DIB.

Alexi kept a straight face on and filed away the fact that she was correct in her assessment that he could be the Kwisatz Haderach. There were somethings she was not ready to share... not yet. But this man of her's bore close watching, of that she was now convinced more than ever.

"What scares you?" She carved straight to the point. "That your visions are coming true? That you may be a Kwisatz Haderach? That you may drink the water of life? What?"

"It's not only the future. I see the past too." He expanded.

Suddenly he got a blank look on his face as a waking dream came to him: THE DUKE RICHA'ARD STOOD, "HIGHNESS, I AMEND MY RECOMMENDATION. INSTEAD OF WEAPONS INSPECTORS I SUGGEST THAT THE INSPECTORS BE ALLOWED, TO SEARCH FOR THINKING MACHINES."

"Dax!" Alexi called him back. "Did you have a vision?"

All he could do was nod, bury his head in her lap and mumble, “We are in for trying times.”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

It was pure twist of fate that had Al Samoud and Samir Harkonnen disembarking when Samir spotted his father heading for another shuttle that would take him to a Heighliner. Samir poked his brother and then pointed at his father.

Al Samoud grabbed his travel bag and headed after Vlad. “... get over and done with.” He explained.

Shrugging his shoulders in surrender Samir followed.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Dax had had enough revelations through dreams and visions to know that a significant number of them were accurate in what they revealed. He summoned Mick’N and Alexi.

“I need you to take Alexi away from the Palace.” He requested.

“Why.” The old Naib demanded.

“I don’t care for the why of it; I’m not going.” Alexi announced adamantly.

“You will go!” Dax ordered and glared at her. She stared angrily back at him but remained silent for the moment. He turned to Mick’N. “House Atreides is about to be assaulted. My mother and I may be the only ones who can stand against what is to come. I need Alexi far away from the center of conflict.”

The argument had the opposite effect.

“Then that is more reason to be at your side, My Lord.” Alexi surged gently. [*How can you ask me to leave you at a time like this my Love?*] She thought.

“She is right.” Mick’N agreed, “...you do not weaken your House just before an assault.”

Dax explained his position with patience. “It will be a domino effect my friend. If House Atreides is to fall Arakkis will soon follow. The Sietchs are to be prepared and protected. You are Naib – go protect your Sietch. Arista is head of House Atreides she will take care of hers.”

He turned to Alexi. “Before my Naib, I tell you that I love you, Alexi. Go with Mick’N do not weaken me now. If you are here I cannot do what must be done for my mother or my House.”

When the argument was couched in such a manner neither could object.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Vlad may have been elated to see his sons but he was not about to relay that emotion. He raged and demanded an explanation as to their belated appearance and their lack of reporting on Amasso. "... and you appear in time to attend a Convocation of the Landsraad?! Explain yourselves!"

The two exchanged looks; this was not going to be easy. Al Samoud fidgeted and gave a weak smile.

In an effort to steer his father's wrath, Samir posed a question, "Any word from Thalmas?"

"The action at Mojave Electric was a unmitigated disaster. Still a third of the Planet was plunged into darkness through no effort of his. We remain on schedule for the next step. Unlike you!" Vlad replied. "I require a reason not to exile you both or even execute you. SPEAK UP!"

## Chapter 28

*As for the unbelievers, their works are like a mirage in a desert.  
The thirsty traveler thinks it is water, but when he comes near he finds that it is nothing.  
He finds Allah there, who pays him back in full. Swift is Allah's reckoning.  
24:36 Qu'ran*

Arista had convened a meeting of the chief elements of CHOAM: The Combine Honnete Ober Advancer Mercantiles. Controlled by the Empress and Great Houses, with the Spacing Guild and the Bene Gesserit as silent partners. CHOAM as the development corporation was set along the lines of Ancient Chambers of Commerce, and had as its mandate the improvement the fortunes of the Houses both figuratively and literally, of its members.

Today they were all in attendance. She had had enough of the petty plays of the various factions and she was about to exert the force of the Throne upon matters. She really was not in a mood for negotiations or even the suggestion of one. She would eat this delegation, hoof, hide and all if she had too.

"Members this meeting is not convened for your approval. I am here to insist that the SOLIS be enforced." She launched. "Two years ago CHOAM hammered out and presented to me the 'Safety of Life in Space Protocols' and NOT ONE HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED!"

The members around the table remained silent.

"Now here we are. Faced with terrorist activities that clearly could have been avoided had they been enacted as agreed." She looked at each member. "Well enough. With immediate effect I expect members to commence implementation of the protocols to be in place. In particular..."

She read the protocols from the PDA.

"That the automatic identification system be fitted to all ships both passenger and cargo.

That the ID Numbers be permanently marked on the hull and be highly visible.

That the Master/Captain of the vessel be allowed to execute their professional judgment in the areas of security and that the owner is not to intervene.

That all vessels should have security alert systems for ship to shore contact.

That there be increased restriction to Port areas, with the attendant enforcement of ID tags to persons and to vehicles.

That there be confirmation of the security level at which the ship operated in any previous port where it has conducted relevant ship/port interface."

She slammed the PDA on to the table making some members jump. "Questions?"

"Sire." The Landsraad Representative said, "This will take time. We will require a multi-disciplinary task force. There will be Financial Implications."

"You have six months." She replied stone faced.

The Guild Navigation blanched. "That is impossible! We could never meet that deadline."

"You will or I will cut spice production in half." She advised.

"NO! The Spice MUST flow!" The Navigator beseeched.

"Be reasonable, Highness." Reverend Mother Mo'Hadin resident Ambassador to the Court asked.

"Reasonable?" Arista echoed in the same calm tone as the Reverend Mother. "The death toll from the twin attacks is three-quarter million and rising. The protocols will be enforced or the supply of the spice will be stopped." She had upped the stakes, and then stood to leave. "Six months people." She left a stunned CHOAM.

"Six months!" The Landsraad Liaison wailed. "It cannot be done!"

"It can be done in four." The CHOAM President, Nemac spoke for the first time. She looked at the Navigator "And well you know it."

"Indeed I do." He conceded. "But one must always negotiate."

"So you will try to act in accordance with the directive?" The Landsraad representative asked.

"No, we will not try." Mo'Hadin said, "We WILL conform."

"For the Spice must flow." The Navigation ended.

"Why do I feel like saying 'Amen' when he says that?" Nemac asked no one in particular.

"We must report to our people." Mo'Hadin said. "There is much to do." With that observation they disbanded.

A messenger intercepted the Chair of CHOAM; the Empress had summoned her to a private meeting. NOW.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Reverend Mother Zelron had been reassigned to the Exodus. So much for a fifty-year projection, the only place at Chapter House that had the potential to accommodate ten million plus or minus sisters was the southern pole.

And so as the Ships headed off Caladan the Bene Gesserit prepared the cold barren wasteland to receive their own.

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The Lady Alexi was grumpy and had been for the past two weeks. Dax was, 'Maud'Dib knew where' with an Inspection Team. Of late they were living under less than ideal circumstances and she missed him. Added to which she really saw no reason why she could not return to Arakkis City – she was the Cabinet Secretary after all. She supposed that it could have been worse - that is until she looked up and saw Bastagen, the Water Accountant and Sietch Gossip, heading her way. She hid the sigh.

“Good evening, M'Lady.” She was chipper.

“Evening.” She grumbled she had no idea what was good about it. She understood why he was away but she still missed Dax.

“Excuse me, M'Lady, but I'm having trouble with my computer and I need to tabulate the water rings. Could you assist?” She asked sweetly.

Alexi grimaced. “I'm no tech.”

“I realize that, M'Lady, but it's late and I need to finish the work.” She said.

So she conceded, “OK!” anything for peace. Alexi followed her to her quarters, clicked a couple buttons and solved the problem. As she was walking away, Bastagen called after Alexi, "So, what was wrong?"

She replied, "It was an "ID ten T" error."

A puzzled expression ran over Bastagen's face. "An "ID ten T" error? What's that? ... In case I need to fix it again?"

She gave her a grin... "Haven't you ever heard of an "ID ten T" error before Bastagen?"

"No, M'Lady," she assured Alexi.

"Write it down," she said, "and I think you'll figure it out."

Bastagen wrote... I D 1 0 T and produced a weak smile as she read it. “Funny.” She growled softly.

Alexi returned to her quarters. Well, maybe life wasn't that bad after all.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~

It was a morning like any other. Not the way of the ancestors but a day like any other and folks were in the fish market haggling over prices and the weight being claimed on the catch.



Then the morning got dark.

People stopped what they were doing. Some tried to remember if there was an eclipse scheduled. Not really sure some headed out for a better look and froze.

At first it looked like an approaching swarm of locusts. As they got closer it was evident that this was no insect invasion. An invasion yes but not by anything in nature. One by one the aircrafts landed and with similar precision they lifted up loaded.

Loaded with Bene Gesserit. The Bene Gesserit had arrived on Caladan to collect their own.

It was not long before the collective shock of what was happening wore off and bedlam broke loose in the street followed closely by the military, but it was proving to be an exercise in futility. The Bene Gesserit apparently had taken the decision to leave and that that was that.

There was an explosion as some one threw a makeshift bomb at the soldiers. Still the Bene Gesserit loaded wave after wave. Everywhere across the planet the scene was the same. Riots as the Buddislamics fought the Tleilaxu and the Bene Gesserit loaded their people.

In the midst of it all some could only wonder at the blatant violation of the Empress's edict.

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The President of CHOAM reported to Arista as ordered.

Nemac was a charismatic and knowledgeable leader that had made the members of CHOAM even wealthier - if such a thing were possible. The two women had known each other from childhood and the rare business meeting was more class reunion than Commercial Summit. Not this day. There were shifts in the economic sector to be considered.

They were here to discuss the latest announcement on the Bio Terrorism Preparedness and Response Act.

"Arista, this act is a serious threat to the member's exports due to the fact that Kaitain is one of the major export markets." The CHOAM President produced the opening salvo. "Under the act, agriculture and food-related companies who want to export their goods to the Kaitain must register themselves to Kaitain Chamber of Agriculture... the COA. After registering, the exporters are also obliged to give prior notice to the COA over the arrival of their goods, otherwise the products will not be allowed to enter the Planet exporters will bear the cost of storage or re-export."

Arista replied, "I understand that The COA itself has estimated that the twenty six percent of manufacturers exporting seven or fewer line entries to the Kaitain, would stop exporting rather than incur the expense of registering, hiring an agent, and providing prior notice..."

"... and that is not the half of it!" Nemac produced the icing for the cake "Do you KNOW what the transportation costs are with the Spacing Guild? If an item is denied entrance into Kaitain that cost is now doubled if one is to re-export. We have not even factored the cost if the whole consignment is lost due to the produce rotting!"

Arista took a deep breath. "Suggestions Nemac."

"You are the Empress! Overturn the order."

Arista snorted. "You are the President of CHOAM. Kaitain is a member of CHOAM..."

Nemac grimaced.

A thought occurred suddenly "Tell me, has Kaitian formally notified CHOAM about the new ruling?"

"Not yet."

"Is there not a protocol to be followed here?"

"They are to inform CHOAM, and within three months then we would decide whether... the... Bio-Terrorism... Act... complies... with... CHOAM... laws." With every word she uttered Arista's idea germinated in Nemac's mind. She grinned at her friend.

"Now you know why you are President and I am Empress." Arista teased. "I suggest that you ensure that Kaitian submits."

"Indeed. Indeed." Her friend agreed.

## Chapter 29

*“Believe nothing. No matter where you read it,  
Or who said it,  
Even if I have said it,  
Unless it agrees with your own reason  
And your own common sense.”  
Buddha, The Dhammapada*

Dax stood before the full-length mirror and adjusted the collar to his uniform. Like his twin he was a Major and like his twin there was nothing honourary about it. He was Fremmen, son of a Sword Master and an Empress – that alone meant that he had had the best of training.

There was a knock and Ammaso entered.

Dax turned from the reflection in the mirror to the reflection in the room. They really did look alike and had had enough good times fooling all as to who was whom.

Dax took one last look into the mirror as Amasso spoke. “One way or another this is going to be an historic day.”

Not bothering to turn to look his way, Dax replied “And then some.”

“Know something I don’t little brother?” He probed.

This time Dax returned his twin’s gaze. “House Atreides will stand or fall this day.”

Amasso studied Dax. “You know something.”

“I know what can be. I don’t know what will be.”

“And there in lies the difference.” Amasso conceded.

“And there in lies the difference.” Dax echoed. “Time to go.”

Amasso hesitated.

“Mas?” Dax called. “Something wrong?”

“Shar’Lem, liked to see me in my dress uniform.”

Dax got sober too, he had liked the woman, he had been good for his brother and now he was without her, Amasso seemed to have no direction. He stood mute. What could one say?

“I miss her, Dax.” Amasso whispered.

“I know. I know.” He really did, for he missed her too. Oppressed by the feeling of loss the two brothers walked out the door.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

It was the rare occasion that brought every member of the Landsraad to a meeting. Dependant upon the agenda a percentage of the membership was the norm. Not this day - they all were all there, the Major Houses, the Minor Houses and the Houses awaiting admittance and thus only conferred with observer stauts. Also in attendance were: The Bene Gesserit, The Bene Tleilaxu, The Spacing Guild, The Supreme Sword Master of Ecaz and many others, this afterall promised to be a historic meeting.

It had not taken long for the convening of the Landsraad to disintegrate into near chaos. Emotions were running high.

Arista with her Royal Cabinet, less Mick’N and Alexi sat on the elevated stage. As her heir, Dax was the closest to her and by projection; the two were maintaining vocal contact even as speaker after speaker took to the floor and condemned the twin acts of terrorism.

The Tেলাuxu informed them that Urban Warfare had increased and accused the Bene Gesserit Exodus for the groundswell.

House Richa’ard demanded the creation of a weapons inspection team to examine every transport in the Empire.

The Spacing Guild had but one concern: The Spice Must Flow.

So far the gathering had gone through the motions. Speaker after speaker said basically the same thing; Arista could have conducted the meeting in her sleep.

Then the Baron Vladimir Harkonnen stood to address the assembly.

“Mother...” Dax alerted her. “Here it comes.”

Vlad talked for his allocated sixty minutes and as it drew to an end he produced a report entitled *Transplanatorial Threats From the Planet Arakkis: Crying Wolf or Crying Havoc? Under the leadership of House Atreides* and slapped it down for dramatic effect. “Within this report, Highness with all due respect, there are allegations that House Atreides was involved if not responsible for the acts of terror and that it was done with thinking machines!”

The hall went instantly silent. THINKING MACHINES! Delegates reached eagerly for their copy of the report as Aides distributed them. Thinking Machines had enslaved the human race under animalistic conditions. They were unfeeling, uncaring collection of circuits that had nearly eradicated the species. Every one knew that if it were not for the Butlerian Jihad named for

Serina Bulter the human race would have ceased to exist millennia ago. And now House Atrides was breaking cardinal rule number one!!!! Thou Shall Make / Own No Self Aware Machine.

The Duke Richa'ard again stood. "Highness I amend my recommendation. Instead of weapons inspectors I suggest that the inspectors be allowed on Dune, to search for thinking machines." He stopped short of suggesting the Inspectors start with the Atrides holdings.

"House Atrides is not harbouring Thinking Machines." The Empress stated.

"This is a new day." Rammen Corrino took to the floor. "... and you saying so is not good enough... Highness."

"You forget yourself." Dax warned.

The room was on borderline hysteria.

Two roads had opened up before House Atrides. The first; allow the inspectors and weaken the Throne or second resist and lose the Throne. Dax was communicating rapidly with his mother. They had discussed this before. The choice however was hers alone.

Dax was not the only one advising The Empress. Like all Reverend Mothers she too had access to the inner voices and today they were out in full force. Out of the bedlam one came out loud and clear. [*What have you got to loose?*] It was the voice of the old Baron. Arista had always suspected that he lurked in all of them after the experience of Alia.

She stiffened her back. "I will allow the inspectors under the guidance of the NaEmperor... but understand this - any dishonorable action will answer to me." With that threat she left the throne room. She had heard and seen enough, she needed air. Let Dax feel some of the weight of this Empire, she had other work to do.

As she swept by she called "Amasso – walk with me." He fell into step with his mother. "Can you stay sober long enough to prove the Baron's report a forgery?"

He couldn't stop himself "Not Dax? The NaEmperor?"

She stopped and so did he. She just stared at him. He eventually crumbled. It was amazing how Arista's lack of the use of the voice could be just as effective as if she had used it. "Consider it done." He said.

As she walked away he heard her say, "I never had a doubt."

House Atrides would not fall this day.

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Naib N'Gai as had many others had received the news that the Fremmen were to move into deep desert. There were storms approaching and even if House Atreides was to deflect the storm one could not stop one. He gave the order to move out.

The most difficult of the members to move was the usual one. Tho'Ma Kynes. In a similar obsession to his work like his ancestors Pardot and then Liet Kynes, Tho'Ma did not want to leave. He didn't understand the need to.

It took much begging, pleading, beseeching, imploring, entreating and a threat imbedded in ultimatum but what finally moved the scientist was the promise that they would move him to an Ancient Imperial Observatory Station set up in the days of Shaddam IV, where he could be alone to do his work. Even after all these eons the stations were still functional.

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The Hazard Inspectors as Dax called them would not be ready for a few days. Hazard Inspectors was really easier to say than "The Landsraad Inspection Team for Thinking Machines on Arakkis" Yes, Hazard Inspectors would do just fine.

With time on his hands he went to visit Alexi.

On his arrival he made inquiries as to where she was, Bastagen seemed to know the movements of all that occupied the Sietch. Today was no different. Alexi had gone cave exploring. So that's where he headed.

He pulled the transport up to the entrance of the cave and got out. He entered but a quick search revealed that it was empty. He paused for a moment to contemplate his next move. Down a path that led deeper into the cave a light caught his eye. He followed it.

Alexi heard the rustling as someone approached. They were making no attempt to hide their approach. She braced for defense watched, waited and then stared as Dax rounded the corner.

"Dax?" She had not expected him.

"I had some time before the inspections started." He explained.

She snorted. "I saw that farce on the AVU. Thinking Machines indeed."

He changed the topic. "I didn't come here to talk about Imperial matters."

"You didn't?"

"I didn't." He assured her.

She smiled. "Isn't this place just so beautiful? I've been trying to occupy myself by learning the ways and places of your people."

"I've seen more beauty than this." He said.

"Where!" She disputed.

"I'm looking at her."

She looked at him to see if he was teasing her. He was not. He pulled her towards him and laid her down. He initiated a deep kiss and his hands began roaming freely over her body. Suddenly he stopped.

"What?" Alexi asked, confused.

"Any time you want me to stop just say so." He announced.

"Dax. If you stop I guarantee you that I will inflict grievous bodily harm." His reply was to kiss her again. She ran her fingers through his thick hair. The kiss began to lead to more as Dax began to gently caress her body and explore her form, she giggled and broke the kiss. "You're ticklish!" He chortled in delight.

He was just so happy being with her.

"Mmmm" she replied as she too continued to explore his body. With each caress, whisper and kiss Alexi felt her soul sing.

She was torturing him with pleasure and eventually like all victims of torment Dax broke and he begged for mercy. She had pity on him. Dax's intension had been to gently make love to her, but he had miscalculated her skills as well as his need for her or her need for him.

Alexi lay outstretched and happy. She glanced down at her mate who had sprawled out with his head in her lap. "Comfortable, Sir?" She smiled.

He just grinned his contentment and replied with only an "Mmmm".

"Mmmm?" She moved a shapely leg and his head bobbed up in response. "Mmmm?"

"I'm the strong and silent type." He turned and crawled over her.

"Hey!"

With her under him Dax leaned in and nibbled at Alexi's ear he then graduated from her ear to her jaw line and finally found her lips. He had planned butterfly kisses all the way, but when he got to her mouth she changed the mood and deepened the kiss and what began, as a brief kiss became a language of its own.

## Chapter 30

*Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n.  
Milton*

Not satisfied that six weeks of searching the Desert Planet had revealed not one Thinking Machine the Baron Vladimir Harkonnen and the Prince Rammen Corrino continued to push the Landsraad into an increasingly hard line on the Thinking Machine issue.

The Harkonnens accused the Atreides of not complying. While House Atreides countered that the Harkonnen Observer on the team was not making life easy for anyone as he repeatedly trampled on people's rights who he considered were are not complying. Rammen Corrino insisted that the observer was within his rights when the obstructions were deliberate.

The inspectors suggested that there was nothing to be found; yet the team of Harkonnen and Corrino stood firm in the face of no proof. Increasingly House Atreides found itself on the defensive. The Inspector's begged for more time, instead the two Houses got a resolution pushed through by the two Great Houses.

**Landsraad resolution 1441 on Thinking Machines**  
The 20th Day of Lud, in the year 39,177

The Landsraad,  
Recalling all its previous relevant resolutions,

Recognizing the threat Arakkis's noncompliance with Landsraad resolutions  
on Thinking Machines poses,

Recalling its resolution to uphold the premise of the Butleran Jihad  
regarding Thinking Machines,

Deploring the fact that Arakkis has not provided an accurate, full, final, and  
complete disclosure, as required, of all aspects of its programmes to develop  
Thinking Machines, and of all holdings of such Machines, their components  
and production facilities and locations, as well as all other Thinking Machine  
programmes,

Deploring further that Arakkis repeatedly obstructed immediate,  
unconditional, and unrestricted access to sites designated by the Landsraad  
Inspectors,



Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the Landsraad,

1. Decides that Arakkis has been and remains in material breach of its obligations under relevant resolutions,
2. Decides, while acknowledging paragraph 1 above, to afford Arakkis, by this resolution, a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations regarding Thinking Machines,
3. Recalls, in that context, that the Landsraad has repeatedly warned Arakkis that it will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations;
4. Decides to remain resolute on the matter.

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As soon as they arrived in the City, Dax headed for his mother's offices. So far they had found nothing. He was being accused of being obstructionist but he assured the Empress that this was not so.

The Inspectors needed time to assemble their report. He had already given his and so he headed for the Sietch to visit Alexi. Arista gave him the new coordinates as Mick'N had moved them again.

He arrived at the Sietch and was faced with a wedding reception in full swing. There was a massive stage where there was a live band and the hundreds of tables and chairs had been swept aside for the dance floor. It looked as if every Fremen on the Planet was on the floor.

The song finished and without a pause or missing a beat the next song started.

The popular song pumped out and the infectious beat gripped the crowd. In one voice the dancers threatened to start a rock slide. "La La La La Le La La Lal La." The lyric was easy enough to remember as unconsciously Dax began tapping his foot.

Dax's pulse rate had adjusted to match the animated drumbeat. A female Fremen grabbed his hand and commanded, "Dance with me!"

Already under the spell of the beat, the lead singer had the dancers gyrating. Dax followed her. They twirled round and where Dax led she followed. He was a good dancer and they got lost in the rhythm.

The singer had a powerful voice and belted out verse one.

This is a simple calypso  
 The words doh rhyme but sing it so  
 All you really have to know  
 Sing de chorus as you go  
 Good Lord!  
 Just start to jam you feet  
 An you must get de swing just remember to sing

Again in one voice the assembly sang the chorus and the lead singer had a commentary for every line. "That's right! - Stamp you feet - Jam de ting - You looking good you looking nice - Come again - Hey! - I like dat I like dat - Leh we go - Hey! - You know what to do now? - Listen to this."

The singer began issuing instructions and as obedient slaves to the beat they all followed. She called Alexi's name and Dax scanned the crowd and located her with Amasso's friend Savan. He moved to intercept.

He tapped Savan. "Switch?" The young man moved aside and Dax took his place. Alexi turned and came face to face with her mate.

He enveloped her in a bear hug and began to move to the frenetic beat. The singer cranked up the beat. Alexi hugged Dax back and followed every twirl that he executed.

The ritual unfolded and the chorus rang out the chorus.

They sang it again and again and finally Dax guided her off the floor and out the door. In the relatively cooler atmosphere he directed her toward a boulder. She leaned against it breathing heavily. They hadn't really spoken since they'd began the dance. He leaned toward her and kissed her deeply, a kiss she returned in full.

"Hey." He said finally.

"Hey" She replied.

"Who got married?" He asked.

"Ta'Mal." She replied.

His eyebrows flew up. "Really? I never thought he'd marry."

She nodded.

"Want to get away from here?"

Again she nodded.

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CONFIDENTIAL MEMO

FROM: PRINCE RAMMEN

TO: XAVIER MEHDA'IN – MENTAT

MESSAGE:

COMMENCE CLANDESTINE TRANSPORT OF FIRST SARDAUKAR ARMY.

HEAD  
HOUSE CORRINO

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Amasso approached the assignment handed to him by his mother. It may seem obvious but Amasso decided that he'd try the obvious. After all Shar'Lem had always advocated that there was only one way to solve a problem and that was with logic. The Baron Harkonnen of Giedi Prime had presented the report and so that was to be his first stop. He booked a Heighliner for the grim planet.

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Lying in their bed Dax exposed what lay unspoken between them. "The wedding has you wondering, doesn't it?"

Alexi felt her heart stop.

He continued. "Marriage is a political tool. It is a lever by which one consolidates power."

"I..." She coughed to find her voice and tried again. "I know."

"My father is considered Consort in all ways except legally." He expanded. "That leaves my mother free to make a political concord if needed."

"I understand the concept." She assured him.

He lifted himself above her so as to look her in the eye. "So it will be with us. Atreides mate with one person for life. You are bonded to me and me to you. No political treaty will change that. You will be the mother of my children and the one in my bed. She will have only my name." He chuckled "... even that will not be solely hers for already you are referred to as the Lady Alexi Atreides."

“I knew the conditions for this relationship. I love you and my loyalty to House Atreides is unbending.” She assured. “Let not your heart be troubled, my love. I’d rather spend one life time with you than all eternity alone.”

He hugged her close. “I love you.” He declared before they made love again.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Imperium was about to split at the seams; everyone could feel it and the Tleilaxu attempted to profit from a distracted Empress by cracking down on the people of Calanda.

Witnessing their abandonment by the Bene Gesserit a desperate population shifted into a ‘nothing to lose’ position and with no apparent leadership they began a revolt.

The Exodus of the Bene Gesserit continued as they cut down any Tleilaxu who stood in their way.

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True to their word the Fremen had left Kynes to his own devices. They were used to the antics of the Planetologists and every one that gone before. They left food and water at the door and that was the extent of the contact.

It was late but Kynes was still pouring over samples and experiments, when he heard the howl. It was not the sound of the desert and the scientist in him compelled him to investigate.

The second indication that something was wrong was the smell; it came through the nose piece he was wearing. Something was not right. He followed the smell. The closer he got to the source the worse it became. He gagged but forged on, he finally threw up the contents of his stomach, but remembering the story of the student Mo’Hal and his sister he continued on.

Suddenly there it was a Giant Sand Worm, and it was dead. The wail he heard must have been the worm in its dying throes.

He said a silent prayer. “Bless the Maker and his water... Bless the coming and going of him. May his passage cleanse the world.”

Then he moved in closer to conduct an analysis. The quicker, the better, or the stench would surely kill him. He was bursting with questions.

What had caused this?

It was confirmed worms were not only sick, but also dying!

Who had ever heard of a sick worm? This was unheard of!

The skin looked diseased as it oozed a thick foul liquid. The pus was what stank so badly.

On the verge of collapse from the vile odor Kynes crawled away. He then hurried back to collect his tools and sample vials, and to switch his present still suit mask with one equipped with a filter.

## Chapter 31

*It is always disagreeable  
when a person we consider our inferior likes or loathes the same things we do,  
thereby becoming our equal.  
Maxim Gorky - Harkonnen Dramatist*

Valcyn curled up before his AVU. He was a hermit not a masochist - there was no reason for him not to have all the comforts of home.

The spokesperson for House Harkonnen was making a statement on behalf of two Great Houses: Harkonnen and Corrino. "The new Interplanetary Court of Justice should not expect any cooperation from Giedi Prime or Kaitian. The Houses have declared non-compliance and non-extradition. The prosecutors of the ICJ will not be given any information from the Governing Great Houses to help them bring cases against any of its citizens."

"Well there you go." Valcyn muttered. "Harkonnen mentality, why cooperate when conflict is such fun?" He sipped his spiced coffee.

"If the prosecutor of the ICJ seeks to build a case against one of our citizens, then that prosecutor should build the case on his or her own effort and not be dependent or reliant upon Giedi Prime or Kaitian for information or cooperation."

There was more...

"Legal Counsel has indicated that we are not in contravention of any inter-planetary treaties that we are signatory too. This is a matter of National Security and in natural justice this takes precedence."

Valcyn was fascinated by the power play.

"We have issued diplomatic letters to fellow Great Houses soliciting their cooperation for immunity from the ICJ."

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Dax and Arista were the only ones in the Chamber. Amasso was still on the mission for his mother and it had taken him off world. Mick'N was with Alexi and his father Duncan was prepping troops for the inevitable.

Arista switched off the AUV halfway through the statement from House Harkonnen and House Corrino on the ICJ. Then there was the infernal resolution 1441, which she threw down in

disgust. She was getting a glimpse of what was to be, the House had to fall to be built up. She looked at her son as he studied her.

“Was überhaupt ist, seien Sie” he said.

She agreed.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Dax had three days before the leader of the Hazard Inspectors Dr. X'Ilb was due to present his fourth quarterly report to the Landsraad. He did a quick calculation – half a day travel to the Sietch, two days with Alexi, and half a day travel back. That gave him one day to spare.

He eagerly headed for the Sietch.

+ + +

Dax found Alexi in the gymnasium.

He froze for a myriad of reasons. First: She was practically naked and bathed in sweat and sparring with a fighting droid - a glistening prismoid dervish of blinking lights and razor sharp swords spitting out at unexpected moments from unexpected sources, some real, some illusory.

Second: She was beautiful in her athleticism. He could watch all day as she brilliantly parried the droid's thrusts, countering its moves gracefully, expertly. But each time she did... The droid increased speed and maneuverability, with its weapons emerging at a faster tempo.

This was no game. A misstep could be fatal. His grew anxious and edgy as he knew what a wrong move could result in.

The third reason was just as disturbing for as he watched he experienced another genetic memory. [SEVERAL TIMES ALIA WAS DRIVEN BACK...OFF BALANCE... HER DEFENSIVE MOVES BARELY KEEPING PACE WITH THE DROID'S ATTACK...UNTIL SHE FINALLY COUNTERED WITH AN EXTRAORDINARY DISPLAY OF ATHLETICISM AND FINESSE. SHE DODGED THE DROID'S TRUE WEAPONS, SLIPPING THROUGH THE COUNTERFEITS TO TOUCH THE KILL TARGET.

THE DROID'S LIGHTS FLASH WILDLY...AND THEN DIMMED. IT THEN RETREATED INTO PEACEFUL REPOSE. THAT'S WHEN; SHE BECAME AWARE OF PAUL, STANDING IN THE DOORWAY STARING AT HER, HIS EXPRESSION STRAINED AND TENSE.]

Alexi was concerned. “Dax?” she called. No response. She hardened her voice slightly to snap him out of his blank state. “Dax!”

He focused on her. “Alia! Do you know how dangerous that was?” Dax demanded.

“Alia?” She asked. “Who’s Alia?”

Dax gathered his scattered wits about him. In the mean time Alexi continued to heave from the exertion but managed to exclaim. “Twenty one lights! Twenty-one! The finest swordsmen in the Imperium have never gone against more than eleven.”

“Impressive.” He replied sarcastically. “Do you know how dangerous that was?”

“You said that already.” She replied. “Nice to see you too.”

Without warning he reached for her and enveloped her in a bear hug. “Do you know how dangerous that was?” he said for the third time.

She sighed and said, “Is that why you came? To tell me just how dangerous that was?”

“No.” he confessed.

Already in his embrace, she purred. “No?”

He began to relax. He bent his head and kissed her. “Better.” She said.

“Do you know how dangerous that was?” he said.

She growled in frustration and tried to disentangle herself. “I’m not some child, Dax!” He held on tight as she wiggled in his embrace attempting to free herself.

“Alia! Stop!” He said. “Alexi! I was teasing.” He was laughing and having trouble holding on. “Alexi, I swear that last one was a joke!”

She stopped “Not funny.”

“I know. I know.”

“... and just who is Alia.” She insisted then paused. “St Alia of the Knife?”

He got sheepish. “Sorry about that.” Then tried to cover. “But look so much like an Atreides.” He kissed her on the forehead. “Sometimes I get mixed up.” He kissed her eyes. “I do.” He said and then kissed her on the lips.

He was up to something, she knew that, but the kiss was distracting her. She slipped her arms around his neck and responded to her mate.

+ + +



Refreshed physically and emotionally Dax returned to Arakkis City just in time for the Convocation of the Landsraad

Events were occurring at a rapid pace and he didn't have the luxury of dwelling on the implications of visions and memories. The latest one had been intense so much so that he had confused the name of Alexi with Alia. He didn't know if this was good or bad and he didn't have the time to find out.

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Convocation of the Landsraad  
The 15th Day of Lud, in the year 39,178

#### EXTRACT FROM

Oral introduction of the fourth report of "The Landsraad Inspection Team for Thinking Machines on Arakkis"  
Executive Chairman Dr. Sans X'Ilb

Mr. President,

For two months, the team has been coming to the Landsraad presenting updates on the inspection. They have described our many preparations for the inspections on Arakkis. The report was finalized two days ago. Today's statement will supplement the circulated report on these points to bring the Landsraad up-to-date.

Arakkis, with a highly developed administrative system, should be able to provide more documentary evidence about its proscribed Machines programs. Only a few new such documents have come to light so far and been handed over since we began inspections. When proscribed items are deemed unaccounted for it is above all credible accounts that is needed - or the proscribed items, if they exist.

Members of the Landsraad may relate most of what I have said to resolution 1441 (39,177), but The Machine Team is performing work under several resolutions of the Landsraad.

Let me conclude by telling you that The Machine Team is currently drafting the supplementary work programme, which we are required to submit this month. It will obviously contain our proposed list of key remaining inspection

tasks; it will describe the reinforced system of ongoing monitoring and verification that the Landsraad has asked us to implement; it will also describe the various subsystems, which constitute the programme, e.g. for aerial surveillance, for information from governments and suppliers, for sampling, for the checking of road traffic, etc.

Bearing in mind the Arrakeen mindset of being wary of off worlders - How much time would it take to resolve the key remaining tasks? While cooperation can and is to be immediate, dismemberment and at any rate the verification of it cannot be instant. Even with a proactive Arakkis attitude, induced by continued outside pressure, it would still take some time to verify sites and items, analyse documents, interview relevant persons, and draw conclusions. It would not take years, nor weeks, but months. Neither governments nor inspectors would want dismemberment inspection to go on forever. However, it must be remembered that in accordance with the governing resolutions, a sustained inspection and monitoring system is to remain in place after verified dismemberment to give confidence and to strike an alarm, if signs were seen of the revival of any proscribed Thinking Machine programmes.

It should be noted by the Landsraad that after one year of inspections that no evidence of the manufacturing of Thinking Machines have been found, and that if they are to be uncovered the work program will indicate the time lines recommended.

Thank you

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

With another two months of searching the Desert Planet still not revealing a Thinking Machine the Baron Harkonnen and the Prince Rammen Corrino were in no mood to hear the leader of the team ask for more time or even hint at there being nothing to find.

The whole endeavour was proving prohibitive to House Harkonnen and Corrino, with their agitators continually demanding increased payments. They were however seeing successes for with the mood of the Empire decidedly against the making of Thinking Machines, they were able to declare that they would no longer wait upon the Landsraad while House Atreides did as it pleased.

Rammen Corrino announced the build up of his military along the space borders of Arakkis and took the opportunity to unveil the new Sardaukar.

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The Viscount Smyrna was the head of a minor house and the request from House Harkonnen for immunity from the ICJ was causing him sleepless nights.

A decision had to be made. He knew what that decision needed to be, but did he dare make it? He sent for his Mentat.

"Sire." The Mentat reported in.

"Chaz, You are aware of the 'request' of House Harkonnen and House Corrino regarding the ICJ?"

"I am, Sire."

"Compute and project for me the outcome if one - House Smyrna agrees or if two House Smyrna disagrees."

The Mentat moved away slightly and chanted the hymn to induce computation. "It is by will alone I set my mind in motion. It is by the juice of Sapho that thoughts acquire speed - The lips acquire stains - The stains become a warning - It is by will alone I set my mind in motion." After that he fell silent with the effort of the concentration.

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Statement from the Landsraad Commission on Humanitarianism

"The Landsraad Commission has taken note that the Tleilaxu Marriage Separatist Act is about to be enforced and that it establishes a discriminatory regime to the detriment of Budislamics in the highly sensitive area of family rights," The Landsraad special representative read.

"The Commission will examine the compatibility of this legislation with regard to interplanetary law and basic standards of human rights."

## Chapter 32

*Good artists copy, great artists steal*  
*Pablo Picasso*

Life went on and as her world crumbled around her, Arista continued with her duties.

She wiped the tears from her eyes struggled to regain some decorum or Royal control, even managed for a moment to breath normally UNTIL she read the invitation again and lost complete control AGAIN.

It read...

*Tula Belch, a missionary from Planet Rhianon, will be speaking tonight at Monticello Sietch.  
 Come hear Tula Belch all the way from Rhianon.*

It least things were not so bleak that she had lost her sense of humour.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

It had taken time, but finally – finally Amasso had tracked down the author of the Report. Last seen entering Palace Harkonnen, he hadn't been seen again. Rumors abounded, however that he was enjoying the 'hospitality' of the Baron's dungeons.

Now Amasso stood at the Paxtang Grave Yard, looking at the tombstone of the known forger. He didn't know what disgusted him more the waste of the time, the fact that the man was dead or that he had failed to get any closer to proving the fraud.

It had been difficult tracing the man without being caught himself. With the forger dead the quiet, frightened faces who had talked before would all snap shut now. Frustrated he left and headed for the nearest spaceport. He'd return home, regroup and start again.

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Dr. Thalmas Sanchez emerged from the Command and Control room and ran into Amasso who had just returned – not a soul knew the Atreides was back. Thalmas was surprised to see him in fact he seemed uncomfortable.

Amasso's senses sharpened from months of sobriety picked up on the man's discomfort. But his guard remained down this was the Doctor to the Empress he had top security clearance – there was no danger. "Thalmas, what's wrong?"

“Wrong?” The older man squeaked and began to sweat.

The younger spotted the bead of moisture and then realized where the other had emerged. Seeing the pieces of the puzzle fall into place for Amasso, Thalmas suddenly pulled out a hand weapon.

The para-bindu reflexes kicked in and Amasso dodged the shot. Thalmas held the trigger down and just kept shooting. The inevitable finally happened and he shot the Atreides. He stepped over the body and said “Sorry, you’re Bene Gesserit trained – I can’t afford for you to use the Voice on me.”

He could hear running footsteps as the encounter brought security to the spot. They would soon find Amasso’s lifeless body and the others in C and C. Having wasted time with the encounter, Sanchez’s window of opportunity was getting too narrow for comfort. He set off running as the explosive devise he’d set detonated.

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A ripple of energy woke Dax. As he contemplated the emptiness that he suddenly felt; the explosion threw him from his bed, and the warning that the house shields were down sent him running. His route to his mother’s private chambers took him past C and C; there he came across the body of his Twin.

The emptiness now explained Dax knelt to hug the corpse. The moment the two hearts touched the vision of what happened coursed through his psyche like an electric bolt.

Reaching for Amasso’s communicator Dax barked, “All stations this Lord Dax – you are to stop Dr. Thalmas Sanchez at all costs, if he resists shoot to kill. He is not to leave the Palace or the planet!”

He gently laid his brother down, kissed his brow, took one last look and set off running heading for his original destination.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Fedaykin heard the command and needed no second urging. “STOP! Dr. Sanchez or I will shoot!” The officer called.

Thalmas stopped in his tracks and put his hands up in surrender. He turned and said, “Tell your masters to address me by my proper name – that of Lord Thalmas Harkonnen.” He bit on the cyanide tooth and collapsed dead.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Dax entered his mother’s chambers at a dead run. “Amasso is dead! The bastard killed my brother!” he skidded to a halt.

“You are sure, Fedaykin?” Duncan said ignoring Dax for the moment.

Arista had been standing next to Duncan listening to the one sided conversation. Upon Dax’s unceremonious announcement her legs gave way and she sat abruptly on the near by bench.

Duncan turned to report to her. “Sanchez is dead. Announced that he was Harkonnen before he bit on the poison capsule.”

“He killed Amasso!” Dax pronounced.

Duncan’s demeanor hardened and he resolved that Arista would mourn her loss later. He shook her. “Arista! We need to get you out of here.” He looked at Dax. “Take what clothes you need here and get dressed we need to get your mother out of here.”

“But Amasso is off-planet!” She resisted.

Dax assured her. “I saw him myself, Mum... He's dead.” He watched her keenly. His heart broke. His twin was dead and he Dax was in a struggle to avoid the same fate.

Duncan wavered then rallied. “ARISTA!!! We need to get you out of here!” He ordered his Empress. “Dax! Did I not tell you to get dressed?! The shields are down – now MOVE!”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

A Sardaukar Colonel reported, “General, The Palace shields are down.”

Rammen heard. “Deploy you troops, General. Take back that planet and give me back my throne.”

The General nodded and the invasion by one million Sardaukar began.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Duncan went in search of the body of his son while he still had the time. He took a long lingering look then incinerated the body with his weapon. “Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, sand to sand and water to water return in peace.” Duncan chanted and added “Rest assured that though you can get not ceremony now, no Harkonnen will have you.”

On that note Duncan went in search of battle and revenge.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Chaz, the Mentat to House Smyrna emerged from his contemplation. "Sire."

"Your conclusions."

"Nothing less than House Smyrna's access to the spice is at stake. House Harkonnen is the means by which we procure the product. Compared to other markets our purchases are small, yet vital to us, as such we procure through the Harkonnens. Support the request and the market is secured. Deny the request and access to the spice will be cut. Abstain and the result will be the same - lack of spice. The planetary reserves available are for two million persons for one month. Woefully inadequate if House Smyrna is to face a Melange Embargo." The Mentat fell silent.

Faced with the facts of the matter the Vicount knew what had to be done. House Smyrna would endorse the request.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Bene Gesserit Mother Superior was in conference with the Upper Six - a collection of her closest advisors. They gathered when the Mother Superior needed to discuss matters of policy. With the Mother Superior making the final decision after exhaustive debate.

Today there was only one agenda item: The request of Houses Harkonnen and Corrino for immunity from the ICJ. They had discussed the request till they got to the point of repetition...

"They will suspend support of the Bene Gesserit "

"They never cooperated voluntary; always under duress."

"What is at stake is not just an ICJ but the fundamental principles of interplanetary law with Landsraad relations being in jeopardy!"

"The concerns of the two Houses are based in their similar laws on the Military Service Members Protection Act (MSPA), which requires the Head of the Royal House Hold to issue a waiver in order for their citizens to be prosecuted for war crimes."

"This is not the first Royal House to protect its citizens. Look at the arrangements that were required before took control was taken of, for example, the ISAF on Planet Kabul by House Ra'af."

Mother Superior Sasha had heard enough. She raised her hand and silence descended. "As the situation stands, there can be no advantage in this for the Bene Gesserit. We shall abstain." With the decision made all debate on the topic ceased.

"Mother..." A sister called her attention "... may I suggest contingency plans?"

"What did you have in mind?" Sasha inquired.

"That we consolidate our position and guarantee spice flow with our own Sand Worm." Came the suggestion.

Out of the heated discussions that ensued; three themes emerged.

- Remember Salusa Secundus with Princess Wensicia Corrino all those years ago?!
- Look at what happened on Salusa Secundus just recently!
- The Fremen are busy right now and will not notice the kidnapping of a worm.

Again the final decision fell to the Mother Superior. The decision was made - the Bene Gesserit would make the attempt to host two worms on the desert of Wallach IX. That meant that two worms had to be secured. One extra... just in case.

With the decision taken all energies now focused on the task before them.



## Chapter 33

*As scarce as truth is,  
the supply has always been in excess of the demand.  
Josh Billings/Humorist*

TO: HOUSE HARKONNEN

FROM: HOUSE SMYRNA

WE ARE PLEASED TO ENDORSE THE RECOMMENDATION THAT HOUSE HARKONNEN AND HOUSE CORRINO BE GRANTED IMMUNITY FROM THE INTERPLANETARY COURT OF JUSTICE.

HEAD  
HOUSE SMYRNA

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Similar communiqués were received from Salusa Secundus and most of the Landsraad.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

TO: HOUSE HARKONNEN

FROM: HOUSE RICH'ARD

HOUSE RICH'ARD DOES NOT AGREED TO THE REQUEST FOR IMMUNITY FROM THE ICJ.

WE FIND THE REQUEST IMMORAL AS WELL AS ILLEGAL. IT VIOLATES THE OBLIGATIONS OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE LANDSRAAD TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE ACCUSED OF THESE CRIMES, AS THE MOST SERIOUS CRIMES UNDER INTERPLANETERLA LAW, ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE.

THE FACT THAT TWO GREAT HOUSES CAN MAKE SUCH A REQUEST IS DISTURBING TO THIS HOUSE.

HEAD  
HOUSE RICH'ARD

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Similar communiqués were received from House Ha'Gan and the Tleilaxu.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

TO: HOUSE HARKONNEN

FROM: THE SPACING GUILD

REFERENCE YOUR REQUEST FOR IMMUNITY FROM THE INTERPLANETARY COURT OF JUSTICE. THE GUILD AT THIS PRESENT MOMENT, RESERVES COMMENT ON THE MATTER PENDING MORE INFORMATION.

SPACING GUILD

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Similar communiqués were received from Bene Gesserit, and Planet Kaitian.

## Chapter 34

*Anytime things appear to be going better, you have overlooked something.  
Murphy's Law*

Like his father, Dax had braced himself and dealt with the matter at hand. Leaving Duncan with the Fedykin, Dax called a Sand Worm.

Sand Worms reared up obviously lurking just beyond the shield. Dax instructed them. "My mother and I will go with you." He pointed to the middle one. Immediately it bowed to allow them to mount.

His mother safely on the leviathan Dax turned to the remaining worms that were bigger than the one he had chosen. They had to be for the task he had in mind.

"Great Makers. My father remains in there with brave Fedaykin. I need you to be here when they retreat. Carry them to me – you know where to find me."

He then joined his mother. As they sped away the remaining two worms lay in wait and Dax called he father on his communicator to tell him of the Gods awaiting House Atreides.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

It had all boiled down to this. Amasso and the war crimes ploy that had not worked, the terrorists attacks that would never be traced to them, the fake report on the Thinking Machines - it had all brought them to this point. The chess game was soon to be over.

Vlad could barely contain his excitement and confidence. His namesake had lost this Planet and HE would be the one to restore glory to their House. The jockeying for position had been incessant, the slow investment of spies in the right place had been expensive, while the cultivation of cooperation between the two Houses -- never an easy thing had been achieved, together with the inexhaustible patience needed as each piece fell into place had all been for the retaking of Dune.

Now it was so close he could almost taste the victory.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The first wave of Sardaukar landed and the Fedaykin found themselves in an evenly matched battle. Explosions shook the ground and lasers flashed as the forces cut each other down. Personal shields clashed, as the battle got close enough for hand-to-hand combat.

Blood flowed like the rivers of Caladan and Sword Master Duncan was in the thick of it.

Above battle the Houses of the Landsraad hovered.

Then the fifth, sixth and seventh waves of Sardaukar landed and the Fedaykin found themselves beginning to be outmatched.

Duncan called for a retreat and eventually ordered a full pull out. The Fedaykin headed for the awaiting worms; and even with the Sardaukar in pursuit, they hesitated. Catching a ride on passing worm was one thing, climbing onto the back of one that was willing was something else while facing this multitude of Worms was intimidating.

Duncan roared, “Fedaykin! Mount!”

They did as ordered.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The prescience of the Atreides manifested as the mother and son perceived the unfolding events.

[DUNCAN ROARED, “FEDAYKIN! MOUNT!”

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF RAN BETWEEN THE WORMS ENSURING THAT THEY ALL GOT ON BEFORE THE ENEMY FORCES ARRIVED. A LASER TRAINED ON HIM AND A HOLE APPEARED.

THE TWO WORMS REARED UP WITH ALL BUT DUNCAN ON BOARD. ONE OF THEM SCOOPED UP THE BODY OF THE CONSORT SWALLOWED IT WHOLE AND RACED TOWARD DEEP DESERT. THE SARDAUKAR GAVE UP THE CHASE. DENIED THE BODY OF DUNCAN OR ANY PRISONERS OF WAR – THEY RETURNED TO THE PLACE TO OCCUPY THE COMPOUND.]

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

*“If it ain’t broke... don’t fix it.”*  
*Ixian Philosophy*

Using Ixian philosophy as a guide the Bene Gesserit set about procuring themselves the needed worms. The Princess Wensicia Corrino in the time of Maud’Dib had managed to get a worm off planet. Using thumpers a small worm had been summoned to a specific place of the kidnappers choosing. Once at the target site the system of trenches, which had been pre-dug, were flooded with water. The old cliché of “water and worm don’t mix” was a true one and the conspirators had ‘caged’ themselves a Sand Worm of Dune. Once in place it was a matter of airlift and Guild Transport.

It had worked for Wensicia and her cronies. Twenty thousand years later... it worked for the Bene Gesserit.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The High Guard that governed the Spacing Guild convened an extra ordinary meeting. There were no names called here only numbers assigned.

"The erosion of the ozone layer on Planet Arakkis and others in the system is of no direct threat to us." Three said.

"This I concede. It, however, has the potential to be a threat to spice production and anything that threatens spice production threatens us." Said Five.

"When ozone in the ozone layer decreases by one percent, UV-B increases by one to two percent, the sand worms of Arakkis will not be able to withstand an increase over three percent." One pointed out.

Four added, "This increase in rumours of worms dying and tumours being seen on them must be monitored. Skin cancer is caused by radiation damage to the genetic structure of the epidermic cells."

"This is the reason that the Fremen will be the last to feel the effects. The caucasoid off-worlders are more liable to skin cancer than the negroid Fremen, who have more melanin pigment in their skin." One said.

"And what does this have to do with the price of spice!" Three demanded.

"Under the Treaty of Maud'Dib the Fremen have the exclusive rights to mine the spice. If they cannot withstand the changes in conditions no one else will be able to." Five explained.

"Not if the worms of Arakkis die first." One added.

"I do not like this." Three was concerned. They all were - the spice was under threat.

There was a pause in the conversation as the worst-case scenario played out in their minds.

One broke the silence. "We need to monitor the situation closely and act if required." There was a collective shudder as the modus operandi of the Spacing Guild was not one of direct interference. They preferred to negotiate in the background. With the spice in jeopardy extraordinary actions may be called for.

The strategy was agreed.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

An acolyte brought the message to the Mother Superior. It was simple – the most far-reaching messages usually were. Sasha read the one line from the Reverend Mother Mo’Hadin...

“The parcel has been posted.”

## Chapter 35

*Rome did not create a great empire by having meetings,  
they did it by killing all those who opposed them.  
Roman Saying*

Arista reared up like a sand worm that had had its rings opened and exposed to sand. “He’s dead! Duncan is dead!” she sobbed. *[Oh God how can I bare this! First my son and now the Love of my life! Damn this Atreides duty that binds us in a grip more surely than death! If I could have them back I’d renounce my Throne in an instant!]* Arista was inconsolable. Being on the back of a traveling worm gave her the precious moments she needed to be wife, mother, woman, and human. She would have to shed all soon enough to emerge as Empress.

Her initial wave of grief indulged she spoke to Dax in a low throaty grim voice, her eyes had sunken into a pale face and met those of her equally stricken only-remaining son. “Duncan is dead,” she repeated with. “These Harkonnens will pay.” With every vow her resolve hardened. “They MUST pay! Blood will soak the desert for the destruction of my husband and son! I, Empress Arista of the House of Atreides, of the lineage of Maud’hib, swear this!”

Dax reflected his mother’s determination. “I know.”

He pulled out his communicator and called upon Mick’N to relay the news, as they continued to ride the worm. *[Why am I so numb? My father is dead. My brother – my TWIN is dead.]* All he could feel was the rhythm of the Worm that carried them to safety. *[I will avenge the death of my family. This is promise you Amasso. Then, maybe I will weep. Till then I must remain focused and protect our mother... and my mate. This I promise you, Amasso.]*

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Sardaukar Captain saluted. “Emperor, reports indicate that both Lords Amasso and his father Duncan are dead, Lord Dax and the Empress have escaped as have a significant number of their military.

“Damn!” Rammen was not happy.

“Patience.” Vlad cooed. “They too will fall before us.”

“Sire!” A Sardaukar reported, “A Bene Gesserit is requesting an audience.”

The two conspirators exchanged glances. “Send her in.” Vlad ordered.

Reverend Mother Mo'Hadin entered. "M'Lords."

"What do you want, Witch." Rammen demanded.

Vlad was smoother. "Your name, Sister?"

"Mo'Hadin"

"Ah, yes. Reverend Mother Mo'Hadin as you can well understand there is much to be done – this is an auspicious day. We have liberated the people of Arakkis. So – what may we do for you?"

"It is I who have come to serve. To present our Ambassadorial credentials to the New Ruler... and that is?" She slipped in the thin edge of the wedge.

Before Rammen could comment, Vlad replied. "Thank you."

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Paxtang was a Sietch deep in the uncharted territories. Habit, distrust and caution were attributes that Fremmen found hard to give up and the Fremmen had never allowed the Planet to be charted.

That is where Mick'N and his people awaited Dax.

Mick'N announced to the members "House Atreides has fallen, both Lords Amasso and his father Duncan are dead, Lord Dax and the Empress are riding a worm towards us. With the balance of the Fedaykin to follow."

Alexi didn't know if to laugh with relief that Dax was safe or to cry at the loss of Amasso and Duncan.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Vlad insisted on seeing the body of his son Thalmas' where it lay. He had issued instructions that the body not be moved – and it was not.

The older Harkonnen stood looking at the lifeless body of the younger. He was almost catatonic he just stood there and burned the image into his mind and soul.

[*They have killed my son.*] Was the white-hot thought that burned in his brain, [*They have killed my son and they will pay.*]

He stormed out not having uttered one word. The Captain who had brought the news of the discovery of the body to the Baron shuddered involuntary. He had served the House and this Baron for a long time. He had quickly learned the moods of the Head of the House. Some one was going to pay and he was glad that it was not him.



~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The rioters on Caladan continued to run amok. Nothing was sacred. With official Tleilaxu buildings burning the masses turned to other matters.

They targeted Museums and other places of Cultural significance.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Al Samoud and Samir Harkonnen sat. Just sat, observing their father. The Tleilaxu together with House Rich'ard and House Ha'Gan had responded to the request for immunity from the Interplanetary Court of Justice. And while House Ha'Gan had simply said no in their accustomed emphatic manner; House Rich'ard had seen fit to add a few choice words to the communiqué.

Vlad was in no mood to postulate or hypothesize on the course of action. He issued the simple orders with no emotion. It seemed that since the death of Thalmas that he had withdrawn and become even more ruthless. "Cut the supply of spice to House Rich'ard, House Ha'Gan and the Tleilaxu."

The sons stood to execute the order.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

INTERNAL MEMO

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE SPACING GUILD

THE ANNOUNCED EMBARGO IS OF CONCERN TO US. STOCKPILES WILL ONLY GO SO FAR. VLAD IS COURTING ANARCHY! WE MUST MAKE CONTACT WITH DAX ATREIDES.

THE SPICE MUST FLOW!

THE GUILD

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Al Samoud entered his father's chambers and whiped a bloody dagger on the sleeve of a slave.

"Have an accident?" Vlad asked.

"Some one did... Highness" He grinned at his father.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Not one word was uttered. None was needed

Alexi stood she had been expecting him since his message to Mick’N.

Dax had left his mother with the Naib and gone in search of his mate, such was his hurry that he still he his communicator in his hand, he dropped it.

They each took a step forward then Alexi flung herself at Dax, he caught her and held on with all his might. His world was falling apart and she and Arista were his only anchors in this storm. He breathed deeply - yes that was the smell he associated with her. As he held on tight she hugged him with the same intensity, as she knew she could have lost him too. [*Thank you... He's Safe! Great Mother Thank You!*] She prayed.

He leaned in and kissed her unlocking the time they had spent apart. Finally they came up for air. She had to say it. "I heard about Amasso and Lord Duncan."

His grip tightened around her. "Time Alexi, that’s all I need. Once my people are ready I will take back this planet and rid the world of Harkonnens!"

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Kynes finally managed to disentangle himself from the constant interruptions to his quest to get to wherever House Atreides was located. First there was the shut down by the Guild on Space Travel then when he finally landed there seemed to be no one in control as the Houses battled for control, then there was the shift of the entire Sietch into deep desert.

This time there would be no stopping him. He had a resolution to deliver and deliver it he would. It made no sense heading for House Harkonnen they were interested in Solaris and Spice; anything else was a distraction. So House Atreides it would have to be.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Al Samoud Harkonnen made the announcement.

“It is with great sorrow that must announce the assassination of the Head of House Corrino Prince Rammen Corrino. He was the beloved ally of House Harkonnen in particular of Baron Vladimir Harkonnen. The evidence indicates that it was a plot of elements with in House Atreides and we ask that these assassins be handed over for judgment. We realize that the Empress had no hand in this but she is responsible for the actions of her House. In the meantime the Baron will reluctantly assume the throne that Prince Rammen could not. Thank you.”

Truthsayer and Reverend Mother Shakira was far away on Wallach IX and watched the statement on her AVU and still she was able to discern the lie. “Knowing Harkonnens, they probably helped Corrino on his way.” She observed.

## Chapter 36

*If it jams ... force it!  
If it breaks, it needed replacing.  
Lowery's Law*

The first order of the day had been to secure the spice production. That done the next on the agenda was to subjugate the population.

The Harkonnens were masters at subjugation.

Vlad unleashed his sons Al Samoud and Samir onto an unsuspecting population. It wasn't long before they were being compared to the Beast Rabban.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The natives of Caladan were hunting the Tleilaxu like game, while the Imams issued an order to the Budislamic – return the cultural heritage of the planet or be refused at prayers.

The artifacts were returned.

The guerilla warfare being waged against the Tleilaxu Armed Forces was swinging the momentum in favour of the Caladans. The Tleilaxu had been trained for an all out encounter. This was not part of their operating procedure. Of course efforts were made to adjust to the new tactic but the locals were in a desperate battle for freedom, while the Tleilaxu were attempting to maintain a regime.

The motivations were different enough to be a deciding factor in the war.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Alexi, the history connoisseur, had described an ancient race of warrior women called Amazons, to him. Trained in the arts of war, they were fearless and expert warriors, on horseback or as foot soldiers. Of late His mother his mother reminded him of these women.

Arista had thrown herself into the war with grim fury. The formerly beautiful woman withered, dwindling to a shadow of her former self, and still she drove herself on. She was finally killed when Harkonnen forces overran the small battle headquarters where she was directing the Fremen strategy.

The new Emperor was delighted and claimed it as a great victory against the usurper of Harkonnen legacy and the murder of his son.

In the space of three months House Atreides had been reduced to one. Leaving Dax to lead the Fremen.

The Fremen grieved and redoubled their efforts to destroy the invaders and paused only on the day his mother's water was placed into the commune. That dealt with, Dax stepped out into the desert. A worm instantly appeared.

“Shai-Hulud! The pain! What am I to do? Guerrilla warfare can only go so far!” He was in turmoil “...if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

The earth shook so much so that Dax fell to his knees. The Sietch half a kilometer away came tumbling out and bore witness to the awesome scene. There was Dax in the middle of an increasing presence of Sand Worm after Sand Worm after Sand Worm. Worms are highly territorial creatures; only once before had they ever gathered and that had been for Maud'Dib.

Some one whispered “Maud'Dib”

Another picked up the call “Maud'Dib”

Soon the desert trembled under the mantra “Maud'Dib! Maud'Dib! Maud'Dib!” With the chant ricocheting off the desert dunes Dax drank in the sight of the worms around him.

Finally the Worms left, but one stayed behind with him. From now on it would always be so. Like a bodyguard; Dax would always be under the watchful eye of the Great Worms of Arakkis.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

### A Secret Report Within the Spacing Guild

Four Players have come to our attention.

1 - The Bene Gesserit: responsible for the split between the Great Houses of Harkonnen and Corrino.

2 - The House Harkonnen: author of the report: *Transplanetary Threats From the Planet Arakkis: Crying Wolf or Crying Havoc? Under the leadership of House Atreides* now widely suspected to be a work of fiction. Also suspected to be the instigator behind the death of Lord Rammen Corrino.

3 - The Tleilaxu: as a result of the sanctions against them by Vlad Harkonnen for their lack of ratification of his request for immunity from the ICJ, there are indications that their ability to produce a synthetic spice shall be unleashed. This product is untested. There are implications - Scientific, Economic as well as Sociological.

4 - The Lord Dax Atreides: It has been three months since the "Liberation of Dune" and still the Harkonnens cannot produce The Thinking Machines. It is suggested that the present guerilla activities taking place are on the instructions of Lord Dax. Projections are that this will escalate.

It is too quiet.

The spice is in jeopardy.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

"I don't understand it!" Dax confessed to Alexi.

"What?"

"Why I am the one."

"The one." She didn't understand.

"Amasso and I were twins, so why me and not him? I understand that the worms will obey me. But it still does not explain why me."

"You don't know?" She was surprised.

"You know?"

"Even your mother did." Alexi replied.

"Alexi!" He was getting irritated.

"You are the genetic reincarnation of Paul Maud'Dib."

"Genetic reincarnation." He took a deep breath. "... and how is it that you know and I don't?"

"Ce que vous ne savez pas est plus grand que vous." She replied.

He made a face at her, and then said, "That explains much. I must think on this."

“While you think on that – maybe Shai-Hulud will give you a name for our baby?” she left him to his thoughts.

Two seconds later it registered “Baby?”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Some time during the Liberation of Dune War, the Bene Gesserit completed the evacuation of Caladan.

The population of Wallach IX had now increased significantly.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

#### PUBLIC DECLARATION

WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT ANY NON-HARKONNEN FOUND WITH A WEAPON IN THEIR POSSESSION REGARDLESS OF REASON WILL BE SHOT ON SIGHT.

SIGNED  
EMPEROR OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE.  
VLADIMIR HARKONNEN IV

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The stench of rotting Melange permeated the holding bay. The Spacing Guild had just delivered the contraband.

Reverend Mother Di'ix who had been placed in charge of the arrival gagged. She had not expected such and so had not adjusted her biorhythms. She made the correction and approached the cage.

She stared transfixed at all that remained of the majestic beast. The Sand Worm kidnapped with such precision from Arakkis had not survived the trip. It had died and decomposed in transit.

She walked away. There were two things to be done. One was to dispose of the evidence and the other was to inform the Mother Superior that the fortune they had just spent on the enterprise had been for naught.

## Chapter 37

*I never told my own religion nor scrutinized that of another.  
I never attempted to make a convert, nor wished to change another's creed.  
I am satisfied that yours must be an excellent religion to have produced a life of such exemplary  
virtue and correctness.  
For it is in our lives, and not from our words that our religion must be judged.  
Thomas Jefferson - Politician*

Dax stepped out on to the outcrop and the sand rippled revealing the presence of his protector. Next to him stood Mick’N and Alexi. “I will return.” He promised.

The two nodded in agreement.

Dax reached and touched Alexi’s stomach, “And I will return with a name.”

Her eyes bored into him and he could resist her no more, he bent and kissed her. That done he descended to the sand where he boarded the worm. “Show me.” He said and the worm obeyed.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

A Bene Gesserit Mentat reported to the Mother Superior. “The Spice is in jeopardy. It is projected that these last three months of silence from the Fremen and Empress Arista, is the calm before the storm. Lord Dax controls the Worms of Arakkis of that there is no doubt. Such a force cannot be expected to crawl away and die. A storm is approaching. We must position ourselves to survive it.”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Kynes arrived at the Sietch and stopped the first person he encountered, this happened to be Bastagen.

“Excuse me.” Kynes addressed the young woman. “I’m Dr. Tho’Ma Kynes. I’m looking for Lord Dax Atreides. Can you direct me to his quarters?” Kynes had decided that Dax would have more time to listen than a busy warrior Empress.

Bastagen directed him to where he could find Dax then added, “... but he’s not here.”

Kynes stopped dead in his tracks. “Not here?”

“No... he’s gone on a pilgrimage into the deep desert.”

Kynes felt himself deflate. "Thank you." He said and prepared himself to wait for the return of Dax. He had no intention of addressing the Harkonnens on this matter. They were not interested in long-term planning only short-term gain.

No, Dax was the one he needed to see.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

It had been a five-thumper ride, except that a thumper was not needed. Dax was passed like a baton from Sand Worm to Sand Worm until finally they delivered him wherever it was they needed him to be. They arrived at the post spice blow just as the second moon rose. There was melange all over the place and the raw smell of cinnamon was everywhere.

Dax descended and looked around. He knew this place! He hadn't been here in years but he remembered like it was yesterday. He, Amasso and their father had come here soon after Amasso had come back from the Mesa that time he had gone to face his drinking problem... the pleasant memory soured - now Amasso was dead.

He looked around.

This was Abu Simbel - a set of two temples constructed by Ramesses Atreides II who reigned for two hundred and sixty seven years, approximately four thousand years ago.

Ramesses had seen the data file on the original Abu Simbel and had proceeded to replicate it in the desert. By coincidence he already had the name of the ruler. Why not his Temple?

The work had withstood both the test of time and the onslaught of the desert.

The Great Temple was dedicated to Ramesses II and a statue of him seated could still be seen though severely weathered. He was seated within the innermost part of the rock-cut temple - the sanctuary. Four enormous seated statues of the Emperor dominated the temple's façade, each over twenty meters high.

There was a smaller Temple, which Ramesses' had dedicated to his favourite wife, Alexandria. And should anyone doubt his devotion, at the entrance stood six ten-meter-high rock-cut statues - two of Ramesses and one of Alexandria on either side of the doorway.

The intense proximity of the spice was affecting him. He slid off his last ride and lay down on the warm sand. His consciousness began to expand as new horizons exploded before him. Again Shai-Hulud heard his call and they came. Thousands of Sand Worms surrounded him as the Planet and the Spice exerted their grip over him.

He stretched out on the bare sand and slipped into a coma-like state as the worms of Dune began to congregate and conduct a vigil around him.



Oblivious to what was happening around him, Dax faced his own unique world within. The kaleidoscope of colours swirled to form a tunnel of light and he floated through. He emerged into a white light in what looked like a room – again all in white. The effect was stark yet dramatic. In there he came face to face with Leto Atrides II, God Emperor, The Tyrant in human form.

“Yes.” Leto addressed him. “I am all that and more. I set humans onto the Golden Path and I am your ancestor.”

“What is happening to me?” Dax didn’t even know how to address Leto. Maybe Uncle would do.

“Yes. Uncle will do fine.” Leto replied.

“You can hear my thoughts?” Dax asked.

“You can hear mine if you listen.” Leto assured him. “Just listen.”

Dax did as he was urged and a myriad of images, experiences, emotions and information flowed. It was awe-inspiring. It all happened in a flash. The overwhelming revelation revealed the link. The connection from Leto to the Worms to Dax to Climate Change to Ozone Erosion to Worm Kill to Spice Production to Dax.

“Every worm to follow me has my consciousness in them.” Leto stated. “They – we have waited Millennia for someone to come along to ‘link’ with us. You are that man.”

“Why me?!” Dax demanded. “I’ve a twin, why not him.” He corrected, “Had a twin.”

Leto shrugged “I was a twin too. Looked what happened to me! I found myself turned into a worm.”

“That was your choice you could have turned from it.” Dax said.

“No more than you can turn from your destiny.” Leto snapped. “I heard you pray for the cup to pass, but in true Atrides form – you will not dodge this. Dune is in need of House Atrides, to hell with the Spice – the Worms of Dune are in need of House Atrides. We are the only ones with the Fremen to care for them and see past the by-product. This you must do, Dax.”

“I know.” Dax surrendered. “I had hoped...”

“I know. I know.” Leto empathized. “Be aware that they will call you The Maud’Dib”

“THE Maud’Dib?” Dax was perplexed.

“As in saviour. You are not Maud’Dib, that was my father” Leto explained as Dax chuckled.

“But it will be conferred upon you as a title. Accept it with grace... Now it is time to leave.”

As Dax prepared to leave Leto had one last word. “Dax.”

“Sir?”

“House Atreides is vulnerable right now. Until your daughter is born and grows to stand at your side you ARE House Atreides. I know you will do right by us.”

Dax nodded. “I’ll do my best ... Uncle”

Leto smiled and waved his descendant away.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

House Harkonnen had no interest in restoring schools, museums, or basic infrastructure. As such the basic amenities ravaged by the invasion were allowed to remain in their dilapidated condition.

They were there for one thing and one thing only – The Spice and it would flow!

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Valcyn had been drifting along as he usually did. This night had brought him to a wondrous sight – The birth of The Maud’Dib. Of that Valcyn was sure. Who else caused worms to converge in peace?

He watched as Dax stood.

He listened as in one voice of praise the thousands of Shai-Huluds that had gathered roared their blessing and approval. They had The Maud’Dib – now there would be balance in the Universe or there would be Jihad!

## Chapter 38

*The probability of failure is directly proportional  
to the number and importance of the people watching.  
Zumwalt's Law*

Dax had returned.

He had given all Fremen two days to gather at Sietch Paxtang. Now hundreds of thousands of his people, some would say a million had gathered here. No matter, the fact remained that they had come.

The Naibs were gathered at the front of the throng and Mick'N indicated to Dax that he had the floor.

“Once again we find our home world under the control of the Harkonnens.” His voice carried to all corners. “He who can kill a thing controls it - We must stop spice production. And...” He paused for dramatic effect. “We will kill until no Harkonnen breathes Arrakeen air.”

As had occurred once before they chanted: “Maud'Dib! Maud'Dib! Maud'Dib!” They had The Maud'Dib – now there would be balance in the Universe or there would be Jihad!

He held up his hand and silence descended. “I have no need for the Water of Life. I have been given the Essence of Life by Shai-Hulud and this time the Universe will understand that one does not *go against the will of God!*”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Dax made a simple statement to Shai-Hulud. “Spice production must stop.” It was a mere statement, there was no emotion behind it, just pure resolve, but the worms had come to him and they would do the will of The Maud'Dib.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Any Fremen who had fought two battles with Dax was familiar with the modus operandi. The soldiers would return whether victorious or beaten and Dax would find his way to Alexi. Like a piece of metal to a magnet; there was no turning left or right or pausing or shedding of still suits. He would head for the Command Room where she would be waiting for him.

She never met him out in the open always in the Command and Control Room. If his lifeless body came back to her she wanted a moment's peace. If he came back alive she wanted a modicum of privacy for his return.

This day was no different. The militia arrived – victorious and Dax went in search of Alexi. Kynes had chosen that moment to intercept Dax for his interview. Dax sidestepped him. Kynes kept following. Finally a Fremmen grabbed him from behind. “It will wait.” He was told. He attempted to object. The eyes of the man hardened. “IT WILL WAIT!”

Dax entered the C and C and spotted Alexi with the Naibs N'Gia and Mick'N. “Good.” She said, she had not seen him yet, so intent was her focus. “But we need to adjust the spacing. Make them a meter closer that way the cascading effect will be more effective.”

She turned suddenly. She had sensed his arrival. She moved to meet him halfway. In one motion he slipped his arm around her waist and kissed her. A kiss she returned with equal passion. That done they returned to the maps on the desk. No words were ever exchanged – none were needed. He was home and alive, all further demonstrations were conducted in private.

“It was a victory Maud'Dib.” N'Gia wasn't asking.

“A victory.” Dax confirmed.

“I still say that you should not be out there.” Mick'N “If something happens to you then that is the end of House Atreides.” The old man could not bring himself to express his concerns any more bluntly than that.

“We discussed this.” Alexi reminded him.

“I must be out there.” Dax said gently. “I am the eye around which this tempest swirls.” Mick'N nodded to say ‘I know. I know.’ “If I am not there as the rallying point Arakkis will remain Harkonnen.” Dax ended.

N'Gia came to his friend's defense. “We know... it's just that it is a risk.”

“For the ultimate prize one must take the ultimate risk.” Dax replied.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

A Third Stage Guild Navigator arrived unannounced.

Vlad quickly rallied his sons and they appeared before the Navigator.

The translation device kicked into action as the Navigator spoke. “You have found no Thinking Machines...”

“Time...” Vlad oozed. “These things take time...”

“SILENCE!” The Guild Representative stopped him. “You are clear to us. The throne is yours as long as the Guild's Spice supply is guaranteed.”

“Oh it is! It is!” The former Baron assured the Navigator.

“Do not let me return for this matter.” He was warned. The Navigator left, he had no confidence in the man’s ability to guarantee the flow of the spice. Alternate allegiances were needed.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Finally Dax and Alexi had arrived in their quarters. Unless there was an emergency they would not be disturbed further that night.

By this time they had both clean up, shed their day clothes and never got into their nightclothes. It seemed that with every venture out onto the battlefield that their lovemaking became more intense.

Completely relaxed Alexi sat up with Dax’s head in her lap. Idly she ran her fingers through his hair. “I could stay like this forever.” Dax announced. “Just you and me – no Empire and no family to avenge.”

“A recipe for getting fat.” She teased.

“May be.” He said and fell silent.

The silence hovered for a while then she broke it. “What did Kynes want?”

“You know him?” Dax was intrigued

“One cannot help but know Dr. Tho’am Keyens, Imperial Planetologist.” She replied. “He’s been hovering about try to meet with you - no one else but you. The Fedaykin had been delaying him but I see he caught up with you.”

“Do I detect sarcasm there, M’Lady?” he teased.

“Only love I assure you, M’Lord.” She shook him by moving her legs. “Well?”

Dax got serious. “He may have the answer as to why the worms are sick. Remember I told you?”

“You are not the only one. There are stories everywhere about it.” She said. “...and?”

“He is linking it to the increased heat. He suggests that there is a climate change occurring and that the heat and the sick worms are the indicators of the change.”

She began to scrutinize the hypothesis. “Did this not happen when Dune was green in the time of the God Emperor? Climate Change I mean.”

“In a way... but that time the worms didn’t get sick.” Dax replied.

“No they just died. If it were not for Leto there would be no Dune Revenant.” Alexi pointed out.  
 “So what is his solution? The Convention?”

“He did mention it.” Dax admitted.

“The Landsaard Framework Convention on Climate Change.” She rattled. “Yet to make any difference anywhere – in my humble opinion.”

“Not so humble when you consider that the good Doctor is of the same view.”

“So now what?”

“Now nothing.” He admitted. “I am a Fremmen in the desert with his mate. If I ever ascend the Throne ask me again.”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Bastagen entered the Command Quarters. “Maud'Dib...” She said.

Dax sighed. Would they never stop calling him that? Even if Leto had predicted it, it still felt odd. “Yes, I will meet the Guild Representative, have him wait.”

“And that is why they will continue to call you Maud'Dib” Alexi answered his unspoken question.

He grimaced at her in reply. She stood. “I will meet with him.”

“He came to see me.” He pointed out though he did not object.

“You have much to do. Besides you cannot be expected to meet all who want to see you and I am curious as to how the Guild knows where to find us. Where they go others may yet follow.”

“My thoughts exactly.” He confirmed.

Alexi left to meet the Guild Liaison while Dax headed out on a mission, he and a platoon were going out to hunt some Harkonnen.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

With each Harkonnen defeat the production of the vital melange dwindled and with it the Baron’s power base.

In a desperate attempt at consolidation Vlad gave his sons cart blanche to squeeze the spice out of the planet. The rumours that production had stopped did not help matters. The Universe evolved around the spice, which was now affecting the political stability of the Empire.

In his growing desperation, there were increased cruelties by his sons.

## Chapter 39

*God created Arakkis to train the faithful.  
One cannot go against the word of God.  
Paul Maud'Dib – Coronation Day*

MEMO

FROM: TERRAN GROWTH INC

TO: THE EMPEROR VLADIMIR HARKONNEN I

HIGHNESS.

THE TERRAN GROWTH INC HAS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND SARDAUKAR, WITH A POSSIBLE FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND AVAILABLE EVERY FIVE YEARS FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS, EVEN LONGER SHOULD YOU DESIRE.

SHOULD YOU BE INTERESTED WE ARE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL CONTRACT.

J'TU  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

The Maud'Dib had spoken and the Worms rushed to obey.

Their first priority was to relay the message. An accurate census of humans had proved a constant impossibility. A count of Fremen was equally daunting. A study of the Worms of Arakkis had never been contemplated or attempted. It was universally agreed that there were thousands.

It wasn't long before results were being seen and felt.

Fremen conducted raids on every vulnerable Harkonnen site that they could think of. While in the Desert - the domain of the Sand Worm - nothing was safe.

'Thopters hovered over sand miners constantly on the look out for worm sign so as to signal the carryall that would come and carry the miners and the machinery to safety. Suddenly there was no longer any worm sign. Usually the tell tale sign of shifting sand and miniature bolts of



lightening could be spotted for kilometers - now a worm just emerged from the bowels of the planet and consumed miners, 'thopters, machinery, spice and all.

Mining for spice had always been a hazardous undertaking now it was deadly. It wasn't long before there was no more machinery to mine with. Even if there had been there was no longer anyone prepared to venture into the Desert to mine for it. Except for the people who had always been there - the Fremmen.

In the mean time Spice production came to a grinding halt.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Having returned from his latest foray Dax entered the Command Room and greeted his 'wife'. "We need to talk." He said to her. She followed him to a private corner.

"What did the Guild Representative have to say?" he was anxious to know.

"They are prescient – they had no difficulty finding us." She snorted.

"...and?"

"The Guild have not the time for Religion or Politics together or separate. They have one burning concern..."

"THE SPICE MUST FLOW!" he finished. "And that means what for us."

"Now that manufacturing has stopped the Guild had a most interesting message; they propose a coup. They will pledge the safety of House Atreides if we guarantee spice production."

Weary as he was, Dax got alert. "And your answer?"

"We guarantee spice production." She grinned.

"Have I told you lately that I love you?" He reflected her smirk.

"Yes but a woman can never hear it enough."

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

MEMO

FROM: HOUSE RICHA'ARD

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE LANDSRAAD

SPICE PRODUCTION HAS STOPPED.

HOW MUCH HAVE YOU HOARDED?  
HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

HEAD  
HOUSE RICHA'ARD

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

It had taken an amount of bribery, which only a Fremen could demand, for the Bene Gesserit to obtain the latest coordinates to Dax's site. Even then the person supplying the information had been instructed by Dax to take a Sister hostage to guarantee the safety of the camp. There was no doubt that they would relocate as soon as the representative had been dealt with.

So it was that the Reverend Mother Farrah found herself awaiting an audience with Lord Dax. A warrior entered and announced. "The Lady Alexi Atreides will be with you shortly." Expecting no answer the fighter had left her alone.

Two minutes later Alexi entered. Farrah had been mulling over the confirmation of Alexi's position in the eyes of the Fremen when she had entered.

The change in their relationship was established with the first words. "Farrah. It is good to see you." Alexi greeted her former teacher.

The Reverend Mother bowed her head in respect. "M'Lady."

"How may I be of assistance to the sisterhood?" Alexi asked. Her mind took her back to their last encounter and her parting remark that the next time they would come to her.

Farrah's thoughts were not that different. She looked at the woman who had once been her protégé and now was Consort to the deposed NaEmperor. To date she had fulfilled all the expectations of the Bene Gesserit, now was the time to see just where her main loyalty lay. They all served multiple masters and agendas but which was primary?

"The Emperor." Farrah said.

"Lord Dax?" Alexi played the ignorant.

"Do not play the fool with me." Farrah snapped.

"The same may be said of you." Alexi retorted. "... and so I ask again – What do you want!?"

"The power game is as like a that of Terran Chess. Move and counter move. Strike and counter strike." Farrah parried.

“All with the timeless objective.” Alexi responded. She had a fair idea what it was the Bene Gesserit wanted but they would have to say it.

“The achievement of the objective is based on cooperation.” Farrah continued.

“As is the cycle of life... the cycle of the Spice.” Again Alexi waited.

“The stronger the ally the better the chances of success.” The dance was constant. “The Bene Gesserit have been trained to play the game.”

[*The question is which game?*] Alexi silently contemplated. “You offer to join in this game?”

“We do.” The former mentor replied.

“The fact that you are here indicates that the Bene Gesserit will play on the side of the Fremmen.” Alexi began to focus the discussion.

“A safe assumption.” The Reverent Mother replied.

“This would manifest how?” Now the younger wanted details. The Sisterhood was known for exploiting loopholes in agreements.

“Intelligence when available, but most important – support when needed.” Farrah pledged.

“All necessary to a chess game.” Alexi resumed with the metaphor.

“In any game of power.”

“Then we understand each other.” Alexi wanted this ended.

“We do.” Farrah confirmed. “As in any power game – communication is vital.”

Alexi smiled. “We know where to find you.”

Now they were ready.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Guarantee or no, under the guidance of Dax the Fedaykin had infiltrated the City and the Place for what was about to unfold.

The offers from the Guild and then the Bene Gesserit had been too much to resist and it had brought House Atreides to the Throne Room in Arakkis City. To confirm who controlled the planet Dax had arrived with a token number of Soldiers riding two thousand worms.

Alexi knew that the Throne room was capable of holding one hundred thousand; she estimated that this day they were at capacity.

“Vladmir Harkonnen... there are Guild Heighliners above us containing many Great Houses of the Landsraad.... SEND THEM BACK!”

The Reverend Mother Mo’Hadin recognized the words, even if she had not been there in person.

“I will not!” Vlad had the throne and he’d die before he gave it up.

The Guild Representative stepped forward. “The Spice must flow - Name your conditions.”

“The life of every member of House Harkonnen.” He had not forgotten who had cost him his family.

He spotted the Reverend Mother Mo’Hadin. “It has been many moons since I felt the gom jabber of Shakira and that of Gaius Helen Mohiam; now all will feel mine.”

Mo’Hadin gasped as she realized that he indeed had genetic memory.

He projected his voice to ensure that all heard. “I am called *THE* Maud'Dib. I have come to re-establish balance in the Universe and harmony with the Spice or there will be Jihad!”

No one spoke.

“As a people we have evolved into viruses that feed and feed until we kill what feeds us. This will cease or Spice Production will stop and not by the hand of *THE* Maud'Dib, but by yours!”

“He who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind.” Mick’N quoted.

Dax continued, “My mother the Empress Arista warned that should there be dishonorable behaviour found within the Great Houses you would deal with her. Look at me and see her!”

He glared at the Harkonnens. “House Harkonnen shall not leave this Planet – Dead or Alive! Their water is not to be mixed with ours. They are not fit for their bones to feed Shai-Hulud place their lifeless bodies on a pre-spice blow and leave them.”

Vlad roared in objection as the Fedaykin dragged the household away and no one intervened. No one dared.

The pronouncement was met with the approval of those who mattered as the Fedaykin cheered. Amidst the chanting of Maud'Dib! Maud'Dib! Maud'Dib! Every worm on the Planet, every Guild Member and every Reverend Mother throughout the Universe heard the echo of Alia as clear as the day that she first said it, as clear as if she stood there in person...

“And how can this be? For... he is the Kwisatz Haderach!”

~\*~\*~\*~\*~

Valcyn sat perched on a hill that gave him a bird's eye view of Arakkis City. He didn't need to be in the hall to know what was happening. His angle was just fine.

He watched as millions of Fremmen had assembled in the city to the point that humans eclipsed the cityscape. All one could see from his vantage point were people – and still they came. They would soon spill out into the desert if the worms would move.

Valcyn had witnessed much in his wanderings, recently, but the spectacle unfolding before him would be burned into his mind till the day he died. Shai-Hulud had come. They had not come for Maud'Dib in his day, but they had come for this man. As with the humans they just kept coming.

Then Valcyn heard the chanting. It came like a wave. Far at first as it seemed to have come from the hall. Then the crowd outside picked it up. Soon the entire city as one voice was calling. "Maud'Dib! Maud'Dib! Maud'Dib!"

The Convocation heard the roar of fifty thousand Giant Sand Worms as they gave their approval to the arrival of Dax – The Maud'Dib. Valcyn shuddered.

The Fremmen continued to chant Maud'Dib! Maud'Dib! Maud'Dib! Now there would be balance in the Universe or there would be Jihad!

~\*~ THE END ~\*~

## A

- Arakkis City –Socio Economic and Political center of the Planet Arakkis.
- Atreides, Alia – Sister to Paul. Considered an abomination, when she was born with full knowledge.
- Atreides, Amasso – Older twin of Dax and a Major in the Atreides Military.
- Atreides, Arista – Ruler of the Known Universe and mother to the twins Dax and Amasso.
- Atreides, Dax – Heir to the throne and genetic reincarnation of Paul Atreides/Paul Maud'Dib
- Atreides, Jessica – Mother of Paul, her production of a Son and not a Daughter as ordered by the Bene Gesserit was the catalyst to the eventual fall of House Corrino and the emergence of the Golden Path.
- Atreides, Leto II – Son of Paul and visionary for the Second Golden Path.
- Atreides, Paul – Also known as Paul Maud'Dib. The original Kwisatz Haderach
- Alexi – Consort of Dax Atreides
- AVU – Audio Visual Unit (aka Television)

## B

- Bene Gesserit – An exclusively female order, which monitors power: pure, corrupt, absolute. Once the power manifests it is monitored. They also maintain the archives of authority and the bloodlines of important Royal Houses. They search for the Kwisatz Haderach.
- Bible – See Orange Catholic Bible.
- Buddislamics – See Zenshite and Zensuni.
- Bulter – The name the jihad took when it overthrew the thinking machines.

- Arakkis – Official Name of the Planet Dune

## C

- Caladan – Ancestral Home Planet of House Atreides.
- CCAVU – Closed Circuit Audio Visual Units.
- Chanson, Doctor – Scientist in charge of the growth and training regime of the Shadukar Clone Army.
- Chapter House – The Headquarters of the Bene Gesserit.
- Corrino, Prince Rammen - Direct descendant of the Emperor Shaddam IV, via Gholia Technology. He carries the family's burning desire to regain the throne.

## D

- Dune – Desert Planet and only source of the Spice Melange. Also see Arakkis.

## E

- Earth – The Ancestral Home Planet of all Humanity.

## F

- Fremen – Native people of Dune.
- Feydykin – The Military Force of the Fremen.

## G

- Giedi Prime - Home Planet of House Harkonnen.
- Gholia – A resurrected individual using the dead flesh of the person.
- God Emperor – See Atreides, Leto II
- Golden Path - the path laid out by Leto Atreides II to ensure the continued existence of the human race.

- Gom Jabbar – Combination needle and thimble dipped in a fast acting lethal poison.
- Great House – Reference to the Royal Families.
- Great Maker – See Shi'ulhud.
- Great Mother – Phrase of the Bene Gesserit for their guiding force.
- Guild Navigator – Pilot of the space faring ships. They fold space and exist in a mélange saturated environment. Very few have seen the deformed Navigator.

## H

- Harkonnen, Baron Vlad – Direct descendant and namesake of the original Baron Vladimir Harkonnen.
- Heighliner – The vehicles used by the Spacing Guild to transport people and goods through out the universe.
- Honoured Matres – An exclusively female order, and splinter group of the Bene Gesserit.
- Hour of Lud – Sunset. The time when Fremens are called to prayers. As such the time varies with the movement of the Sun.
- Hunter seeker – Remotely operated poison dart, programmed to kill a specific target.

## I

- Idaho, Duncan – Latest in an endless line of Gholas. Swordmaster, Commander in Chief of the Atrides Military, husband to Arista Atrides and father of the twins.
- Irlan, Princess – Wife of Paul Atrides
- ISAF - Interplanetary Security Assistance Force
- Ix – Planet Ix created forbidden technologies and was eventually shunned by the Landsraad.

## J

- JAG – Judge Advocate General. The authority of Justice in the Military.
- J'Tu – Chairman of the Board of Terran Growth Inc. See Terran Growth Inc.

## K

- Kaitian – Second Home Planet of House Corinno.
- KERES - Kaitian Environmental Resources Evaluation System. KERES is to improve environmental analysis and planning by integrating natural and cultural resource information from multiple contributors and by making it available and useful to a wide variety of users.
- Kombuli – Greek prayer beads
- Kwisatz Haderach – The super being who can see the past, present and future. Thought to be only possible for a male to achieve.

## L

- Landsraad – The collection of the Royal Great Houses, which make up the Known Universe.
- Lud – Short for Shi'hulud.

## M

- Maker – See Shi'hulud
- Mehda'in, Xavier – Mentat of the Prince Rammen Corinno.
- Melange – The addictive spice that the Empire has become dependant on for a myriad of functions.
- Mentat – Human analyzers. Trained to replace thinking machines.
- Maud'Dib – See Atrides, Paul
- Mick'N – Nabib of Mick'N Sietch, friend and advisor to the Atrides Family.

- Mother Superior Sasha – Supreme Leader of the Bene Gesserit.

## N

- Nabib – Leader of a Fremen Village.

## O

- Onithopter – See ‘Thopter
- Orange Catholic Bible – The Guide for the Zenchristian. Its main irretraceable doctrine is that no thinking machine shall ever be constructed.

## Q

- QED - Quod Erat Demonstrandum (proof is demonstrated)
- Quod Erat Demonstrandum – See QED

## R

- Rakis - Also see Arakkis.
- Reverend Mother Dwanna – Commando sent to investigate rumours of Worm Sign on Selusa Secundas.
- Reverend Mother Farrah – Mentat and the Sister in charge of the revised breeding program to produce a female Kwisatz Haderach.
- Reverend Mother Kardon – Resident Ambassador to the Planet Selusa Secundas and the Family Corinno.
- Reverend Mother Mo’Hadin - Resident Ambassador to the Royal Court of the Empress Arista Atrides.
- Reverend Mother Shakira – Truth Sayer and tester of Dax Atrides
- Reverend Mother Sasha – Mother Superior: Head of the Bene Gesserit.
- Reverend Mother Zelron – Disaster Manager and placed in charge of the Exodus of the Bene Gesserit from Caladan.

## S

- Selusa Secundus – Present and former Home Planet of House Corinno.
- Shadukar – The Military of the House Corrino and disbanded by House Atrides. They are being cloned to serve House Corrino once again.
- Shi’hulud – Native giant worm of Arakkis.
- Sietch - Fremen Village.
- Spacing Guild – Powerful association responsible for space travel by folding space.
- Suk – Caste of Medical Doctor. Imprinted with a diamond tattoo they are taken to be safe to administer to the members of the Great Houses.

## T

- Terran Growth Inc. (TGI) – Cloning Company set up to rival the production of Gholas. Hired by House Corrino to mass-produce Shadukar.
- ‘Thopter – Air-transport with the ability to hover. Usual carrying capacity is for four persons.
- Thumper - Device used by desert dwellers to call the worms. They are drawn to the rhythmic sounds it makes.
- Tleilaxu – A secret society. Not much is known except that they are religious fanatic fundamentalists.
- Truth Sayer – A person with the ability to tell the truth from a lie.
- Tyrant – See Atrides, Leto II

## U

- UCMJ - Uniform Code of Military Justice, the code, which is used to administer Justice in the Military.

## V



- Valcyn – A hermit Fremen. He has the unique ability to be in a position to observe pivotal events.
- Vitres, Piter – Mentant to the Baron Harkonen and a Gholia.
- Voice – A vocal tool used to compel people to comply with an order.

## W

- Wallach IX – The Home World of the Bene Gesserit
- Weiriding Way – Battle technique, favored and developed by House Atreides.
- Worm – See Shi'hulud

## Z

- Zenchristian – The largest of the Universe's great religions – Christianity. Followers use the Orange Catholic Bible
- Zenshite – One sect of the second largest of the Universe's great religions - Islam. The name Islam comes from the word for peace.
- Zensunni – The other sect of Islam. The roots of the present Zenislam religion may trace its roots back to the Hebrew Bible, which evolved into the Qu'Ran. Neither sect uses the Orange Catholic Bible.

## **Title: Dune Saga**

Author: Rising Sun

For feedback e-mail me at: [jagrslc@yahoo.com](mailto:jagrslc@yahoo.com)

For updates on my new FF join: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/jagrslc>

For an archive of my FF click: <http://www.geocities.com/jagrslc>

For a Fan Fiction Challenge click: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ffchallenge/>

Rated: PG-13

Summary: For twenty thousand years, Dune has had its power monopoly. With the House Harkonnen's bid for the spice trade, House Corrion's thirst for a lost throne and the Bene Gesserit's genetic meddling, the Atreides Empire seems more like a house of cards. Can one man keep history from repeating itself?

Author's Notes:

- It is my hypothesis that the Fremen were black. Using the experience of Planet Earth – evolution has shown that populations that reside in tropical settings as in Africa and South America were dark skinned as manifested by original peoples of these continents. On the other hand populations that found themselves closer to the Polar Regions as with the Nordic tribes tended to be white. Hence for this FF the Fremen are black.

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- Dune, Children of Dune and Heretics of Dune and the characters portrayed therein belong to the Herbert Family and their Publisher. No copyright infringement intended. All other characters depicted are purely fictional and any similarities to actual people are purely coincidental.
- The opening scene of Chapter 14 is inspired by the JAG episode: JAG-A-THON.
- The gymnasium scene of Chapter 31 is from the Children of Dune.
- Lord of the Rings by JRR Tolkien
- Dune (1983) Script by David Lynch
- Star Trek by Gene Roddenbery
- The Bible
- Exodus by Bob Marley
- Hansard of the United Nations
- Google.com for Cover page.
- The Prayer of St. Francis of Asisi
- Extract from the Executive Summary on the Caribbean Court of Justice
- Drunk and Disorderly by The Mighty Sparrow
- La La by Lord Shorty

Language Translations:

- *La géométrie par René Descartes* (Geometry by René Descartes) - French
- *El señor de los anillos cerca JRR Tolkien* (The Lord of the Rings by JRR Tolkien) - Spanish

- *Империализм и мировая экономика мимо Vladimir Ilyich Lenin* (Imperialism and World Economy by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin) - Russian
- *Düne durch Frank Herbert* (Dune by Frank Herbert) - German
- *Catholici Naranchies Antiquum et Novum Testamenti* (Orange Catholic Bible) – Latin
- *Quod Erat Demonstrandum* (proof is demonstrated) - Latin
- *Ce que vous ne savez pas est plus grand que vous*, (What you don't know is greater than you.) – French
- *Was überhaupt ist, seien Sie* (Que Sera Sera) – German to Spanish
- *Que Sera Sera* (Whatever will be will be) - Spanish
- *As salaam waleikum* (Greeting: Peace be with you) – Arabic
- *Wa aleikum as-salaam* (Response: Peace be with you) – Arabic

My thanks to:

- Caro as Primary Beta Reader for keeping me on track in the Dune World
- Uther Pendragon for the grammar check.
- Jykler for the final beta check.

What can I say? A work of this size needs all the help it can get!

**Feedback: For it is food for the soul so YES! Send it. PLEASE! PLEASE!**

Permission to archive: Ask first. I just need to know where my ‘baby’ is.

Story written: June to September 2003