

Guardian Core Chronicles

The Reckoning

Prologue by Matt

It was the beginning of one of the most complex wars in Guardian history. They were bombarded from two different enemies, and their ability to predict future events had been hindered. Now you know it can never be easy for the Guardians. It's a tough job being one of the good guys.

Goodbye old world.

The next few years were a wild ride of galactic proportions. The palace ship lifted off, headed for Argaria. That way we would be safer from future attacks. It was the last time I got to see Selar's planet for many years. We were just leaving orbit when 100 of the mysterious battle ships just appeared out of nowhere and fired. The shields mostly held but the palace ship still sustained considerable damage. Selar created a shield around us. The palace ship could no longer hyper jump so Selar created a hyper window for the ship to use. We took one more bombardment before we got away. The school grounds had been decimated and the dorms were no better but no one was killed in that attack. The ship limped along and finally got to Argaria. The armada of strange ships followed us, but we were able to make it before we took any more damage. The armada's weapons were no match for Argaria's Neutronium shell.

Selar landed the palace safely then left to face this new enemy. As soon as he appeared outside the shell they simply disappeared. They didn't warp out or jump into hyper space they simply disappeared as if they had been illusion. For some reason Master Selar was unable to track them. Whoever this new enemy was they knew Guardian abilities well enough to hide from Selar. They were compensating for Guardians attacks, defense and sensing.

Tech wars Part one

Planet Setal

Jade's view

Jade had to hurry to work. More Argarians were around these days, and her tea shop was doing well. Setal was already a popular vacation spot for many travelers but the war had increased the number of people looking for refuge. Until this war had begun, the three main countries on her planet had always gotten along well. But political pressures had caused her country to begin arming itself. There was talk about production of atomic based missiles and bio-weapons. Her country Teran was afraid that if the dark Guardians attacked them then one of the other countries could come in afterward, taking advantage of their moment of weakness. Her country had the most mineral rich territory on her planet and would be a great prize to obtain by either side. Normally such issues would be discussed in many meetings and voted on by the population, but with recent events they were now under military ruling. Military guards filled every corner now but she hoped it wouldn't stay this way long. She missed the old more relaxed way of life that usually came with the Guardians protection. Her planets Guardian had recently come up missing, and only his silvers were left to keep order. It was only after Guardian Plato disappeared that her country began taking such drastic measures.

She had just arrived at her shop when three silvery fighters flew in. They weren't any designed she recognized. People began screaming and running not knowing what to do or where to go. The military fired its weapons on them but to no effect. They hovered in place over the largest military building in her countries capital. From the bottom of the craft five small round disks flew out. One of them hovered in place near the fighter and the others entered the military facility. Neither the fighters nor the hovering disks attacked the population; however they did fire on the facilities outside power supply, and communications tower adjoining it.

A few minutes later the hover disks reentered the fighters and were gone, but the worst wasn't over yet. I saw several silver Guardians give chase to the fighters. While they were gone a familiar enemy dropped by in their wake. A dark Guardian battleship entered the atmosphere and teleported away people one by one from the streets. It was later reported that the capital city had lost over 500 residents in the dark Guardian raid. She heard some military personnel had also disappeared but the government wasn't giving details as to how many.

Internal security officer, for the chancellor Lieutenant La-rue's Report

First we get a report that three silvery fighters dropped in over this compound, and then we get invaded by these flying disks. None of our weapons had any effect on the disks, and they flew through walls and doors as if they were holograms. I was just outside the conference room where the chancellor was meeting with his top military advisers. One of the disks flew through the door. I opened the door and fired my weapon, but to no effect. It ignored me completely and shot the chancellor and his advisers with some kind of metal tag. A few seconds later they were all teleported out before I could get the tag off the chancellor. The count later was over 200 of our top political and military leaders were now missing. The highest ranking leader left was a senator who had taken a temporary leave of absence. I guess his break was over now. It will take awhile before we can refill the missing ranks.

Dark commander's report

Terran incursion successful. New slaves will arrive at mining colony in three days. Battleships from red battalion are ready for the next raid.

Kanes orders

Ten of the silvery ships are heading toward our ore production facilities. Alert all battleships within range to change course and defend at all cost.

Planet Retan 1 week in the war

Planetary Shipment depot manager's report

I had heard rumors that some other planets had had a problem with dead soldiers coming back to life and attacking the living. But until it happened here I didn't believe it. Just over a week ago is when the galactic chaos started. Supposedly all Guardian ships and systems went down on the same day. Rumor is that it was the dark Guardians. Then the same day a few silvery ships came swooping down and captured our top military and political leaders. Now we were defenseless. Our closest neighbor Marana, decided to attack at this time. I'm not sure what kind of weapon they used but nearly everyone in the capital was instantly killed. I was checking in shipments on a secondary platform many miles outside the capital, when the attack occurred. These dead-lings as they have come to be called are a real menace. They are alive enough to move and attack but not enough to talk or reason. Somehow they are able to band together and corral the living population into groups. I've heard folk lore stories about half dead people eating the living, but these didn't. They just attack anyone who tries to fight back. As long as you keep your head down and don't raise a weapon, they leave you alone. Only those who fight back are killed and shortly thereafter become one of them.

Enlightenment

3 months into the war

Etan's view

It was now three months into the present conflict and things weren't getting any better. These mysterious new enemies were still taking out military installations throughout the galaxy; ground based facilities as well as some Guardian ships. None of the enemies' ships had been captured for study or one of its occupants seen. We were losing battles to an enemy we knew nothing about. According to master Selar some of the ships we were fighting were solid projections. They were like advanced holograms. But a few were real, so far though there wasn't a noticeable difference. I was assigned to help a group of silvers protect the population on a highly populated world. This planet hadn't been hit by the dark Guardians yet, but this seemed like a likely target. They seem to be following this new enemy around the galaxy, taking hostages in their wake. To make matters worse we still had the zombies to deal with. I had seen zombie movies on earth but I never thought I would ever see one in real life. My prior experience with science fiction and horror has come in handy a few times as a Guardian.

One of the smaller countries had launched some type of advanced weapon at one of the larger countries. The weapon was too advanced for their level of technology. After a few mind probes we learned the leaders of the smaller country and been dealing with the dark Guardians in secret. The weapon made the zombies but then the zombies attacked the country that created them. So by conspiring with one country, the dark Guardians got two on return. After the initial attacks nearly half the population of the planet was now a zombie. We told the population not to fight them and they wouldn't be killed. The Guardians would either find a way to revive the zombies or take them out ourselves when the time was right. A few days after my arrival two silvery fighters showed up and destroyed the military buildings. Shortly behind them was a dark cruiser ready to take slaves for their production. Unfortunately the cruiser wasn't alone three dark Guardians were with it. One of the Silvers went after the cruiser while the others teamed up against the dark Guardians. I was ordered by the senior silver to stay with the local population and create a shield around them so they couldn't be transported away.

Master Selar was allowing me to tap into life stream now, but I had to promise not to open it all the way, I wasn't ready for that yet. If it wasn't for the war I could probably pass the silver test now. I seemed to be just as powerful as the younger silvers were. The problem was holding back. Now that I could tap the life stream I had to make sure I didn't take too much at a time. It was like being really thirsty but only taking a few sips of an ice cold drink. When tapping into the life stream, you feel invincible, it's intoxicating. The sense of euphoria is almost like a drug at times. The silvers were winning against the dark Guardians when a fourth one appeared just outside my shield. He looked at me and smiled in a creepy way, much like Reaper. This one wasn't wearing the usual black cloak. Instead he wore black leather with studs and he had spiky hair. He looked like a 90's punk teen. He even had the punk swagger in his voice. "Not bad, not bad at all, for a trainee. In a few decades you might have been able to hold up against me but not today." He powered up and depleted my shield easily. He struck me down with a powerful blast and I fell unconscious. I woke up chained to a wall with my head swirling. Back on earth I had a surgical procedure done once and when I woke up in the recovery room, my eyes were blurry and I felt like I had a hang over. This was much the same.

The one who knocked me out was sitting in a chair on the opposite side of the room reading a fashion magazine. That was odd. Who knew they had an interest in such things. He turned around and said "Good you're finally awake. Well be at your new home soon. The queen has taken an interest in you. You are powerful for your age and level of experience." In my normal state of mind I might have popped off a better smart aleck remark but I wasn't clear headed. I just moaned and said "Good for her." "She had decided to make you a dark Guardian." That snapped me out of my haze "Yeah that could happen." I said with more emphasis this time. "We've done it before; she'll drain you of your light energy and exact the Argarian DNA. Then she'll give you our DNA and energy, soon you will join our ranks fighting your former brothers." I wasn't sure how much of a treat this was. He could be just trying to poison my mind and make me afraid. What if he can actually make good on his statement? I needed to get out of here, now.

An alarm went off and he rushed out the room. The ship shook. I was betting we were under attack. I looked at my cuffs; they had a tech lock on them that required a code. Uhh, to bad Matt wasn't here he could fly over to the terminal and download the code for me. I wish I hadn't run him off now. I wish he were here. "I am" Matt voice came to me. "and got the codes an hour ago when Mr highly fashionable wasn't looking" "What?" I asked. "When did you get back?" "I never left. I've been with you the whole time. You just needed to grow up a little." Matt responded. "I'm sorry for what I said, I'll never take you for granted again, now can we get out of here." Without hesitation he zapped the lock with the code and I was free. I went to the nearest terminal and filled up on energy. It wasn't the same as light energy but it would do. Even with that I was still a little light headed but I could manage.

Unexpectedly, a commotion began in the next room. I turned to air and waited to see what would happen. The door opened and three silvery beings walked in. I could see the dark Guardian in the next room. He was either dead or unconscious, I couldn't tell which. They scanned the room and I was revealed, then they performed a maneuver that forced me back human. I thought well this is it. This is how I die. I never made it to a silver Guardian. This time I was scanned again. They all looked at each other conferring. The nearest one walked over and wrapped himself around me like a cocoon, with just my face free. I tried to fight him off but to no avail. The other two blasted the ship apart. Now we were floating in empty space. The two remaining silver men joined together forming a ship. It matched the design of the silver ships we had seen before. So they were the ships, that why no pilots have been seen. They must be some kind of technological life form, like living robots.

The one cocooning me slide inside the others and they took off. I tried talking to them but they never responded. Matt informed me when they jumped out of our universe into another and when they time jumped. He couldn't tell by how much but just that they did. I used this opportunity to try to learn something about them. I had Matt attempt a link. He couldn't link but the one cocooning me was touching me so we were able to learn a few things. It was made of a type of liquid metal. It contained silicon bacteria inhabiting the metal. It wasn't technically a machine but it was machine like in many ways. Now it made sense how they could combine. It was like pouring a glass of water into a pond. It becomes part of the pond. How did a life form like this come to be? Besides the metal and bacteria they also contained some light energy which they seemed to thrive on. That's why Guardian light energy wouldn't work on them, it just makes them stronger. That's also why they attack dark Guardians in large numbers, to counteract the dark energy working against them.

They came to rest on a barren planet. They took a moment to scan the sight then came back together and took off without ever saying anything to me. Why did they bother bringing me here? If they saw me as a threat they should have killed me if I wasn't then why bother with me at all? After a few minutes of sitting in the sun I had enough energy to try to tap into the life stream, but apparently the life stream worked on different frequency in this universe. The landscape reminded me of Arizona. Just dirt and rock everywhere you looked. Matt and I scanned as I flew around a few hundred feet in the air. There was one faint energy signature present. I dropped down to investigate.

Lying before me was a puddle of silvery liquid. There were puddles like it all around. "This substance is similar to the silver life forms that brought us here, though not as complex." Matt said. "The bacteria here communicate only in the most basic way. More like instinct than actual intelligence." Yes that made sense. "If those creatures are made of the same kind of stuff, could we somehow use this to get off this barren rock. Maybe we could create a machine or vessel." I thought. "Perhaps" Matt thought back. "I scanned the entire trip here. I even tracked the silver creatures leaving. We are somewhere in the past on a universe that is not far from our own." "Ok but how does that help us?" I asked. "If we could enhance this life form a little, we might be able to use it like a Mech suit. With me tracking our universal signature, you could use this life form to open the life stream here and open the Intraversal door." "We don't know how to do that remember?" I reminded him. "Actually I do at the moment, Selar gave me the knowledge secretly some time ago, and he said we would need it soon." "That man never ceases to amaze me, and neither do you." "Thank you" Matt said complimented.

Now down to business. It took some trial and error. I wasn't sure how to go about this so I dug a small hole in the ground and took a sample of the silver metal and placed it in the hole separating it from the rest. I spent the next two days experimenting with the substance to get the right effect. I added some of my own light energy, after that a small spec from Matt so it could be programmed. Lastly I mentally linked to it to create a template for it to form a basic intelligence. After all of this there was an unexpected outcome, it copied my subconscious form of Aria.

It arose from the puddle into a female form. It must have gotten more than a basic template because now it could speak and understand. It looked down at its hands and feet "What am I?" it said in Arias voice. I explained how I got here and why I had created her. She took it surprisingly well. "You are my creator. I would like a name of what or who I am." she stated. After some thought on the matter I came up with a name for what she was, I called her a Mistle. That name stood for Microscopic, intelligent, silicon, transcendent, life, echo. The last word was just because he thought the word Mistle looked better with an e than without one. It was really necessary, but she wanted a name so it was the best he could come up with on the spot. When I told her this, she stated then her name should be Misteek since she was a Mistle. After talking awhile she said she was tired and she needed to rest. She became the puddle again while I continued to ponder. I wondered if we could take this substance and make our own silver warriors to combat this new threat. I made food, water and a bed from the dirt and rested for the night. It took several days of practice to teach her how to make different changes. In some ways she was a form changer like me. Eventually she was able to hold a form that Matt could use to open the Intraversal door. This time I copied her energy signature and reached out for the life stream. Now I could feel it. I channeled the energy to Matt and Misteek and they opened the rift out of this universe. We were on our way home.

First born's thoughts

Day one

I had just come into being; I was an off shoot of my mother. Some of her enhanced cells now took over the rest of my substance to create me. I will call myself steel. I was almost formed enough to understand speech when she left with another creature. I determined right there to find my mother and the one who had taken her away from me.

Day 30

I've now assimilated most of the memories that were left behind by the one called Etan. It has taken this long become sentient enough for complex thought and memory. When my mother rested in this puddle she unknowing left behind her memory imprint and design. I will go to other puddles and create more like me. We will become our own race. The Guardians want to keep order; I will grow a great society and return to help them. I am without anger, hate, jealousy or any emotion. Only one as perfect as I am, can understand true order. The Mistle's will help create the perfect order.

Day 120

I am now the leader of a quickly growing population. Our calculations show that in 30 years we should have assimilated all the raw material on this planet. We will have to leave here to continue to grow and mature.

Etan thoughts

I reported in to master Selar all that I had learned. He said it would be a big help down the road, whenever we could capture one of these silver life forms. Misteek has given a few samples of her substance to Argarian scientist to study.

Reaper comments

I can kick butt in a thousand languages and Selar gives me ferry duty, using my ship to ferry people back and forth throughout the galaxy. This is a battle ship not a cruise liner.

1's comments

Master Selar assigned me to teach Etan some battle tactics while he and the others of the council are guiding events on a galactic scale. The remaining mother ships have been hidden inside Argaria until we can come up with counter measures. Many people also have been moved to Argaria for thier own safety. There are refugees from almost every planet in the galaxy now. Though with the events surrounding the broken link they are being watched carefully. I showed Etan how that this new enemy was trying to divide our forces.

A star is born.

1's past

“Andrea I am your father, and I'm telling you to get out there and get to it.” She was tired of having this argument. Her mother and father were both full Argarian but her father was a rouge. He didn't follow the true Argarian way of life. He was brilliant but all he wanted to do was fight, he went from one war to another. She was skilled at combat tactics, but that wasn't the point. Wasn't there more to life than just war? She was a grown woman now, but obeying parents even as an adult was emphasized as a true Argarian. This put her in a personal conflict. Obey her father and become someone she wasn't or disobey and not follow the Argarian way. Occasionally she has thought about becoming a healer but her father would have no such a daughter.

Today she was supposed to lead a group of soldiers in a raid on an enemy strong hold. Normally she would have taken the time to scope out the enemy's strength and weaknesses but this time she didn't care. She just wanted to get this over and done with. She directed the unit to the hill overlooking the valley that lead to the walled city. She ordered the men to charge around the side where the animal's gate was. They were able to weaken the cities defenses but an hour later her unit had to retreat. Her father was furious. “I've never been so ashamed in my life.” he said. Her mother, destiny, didn't want to hear anymore. She packed up their belongings and left. On their way out, the transport was hit by a stray shot during a local battle. It broke down near a neighboring city. The city was a small farming village that many other cities traded with. Suddenly a cry went out. Her fathers unit was on its way. He had no reason to attack this city. They had little defenses and have never been a threat. Most likely he just wanted to get free food and supplies. She could see around a hundred of her father's men coming this way. They didn't look in to big of a hurry though. They weren't expecting any resistance.

She hurried over to the lead guard and told him she would help. He recognized her as the daughter of the one coming to attack them. She explained that her father and mother had a falling out and that she would help them against his forces. If they had any other choices they would have said no but they accepted anyway. First she had to delay her father as much as possible. She took command of the guards and explained that they gather food and supplies quickly. They were to carry it out to her father explaining that they would give the soldiers' all they asked, if they didn't kill anyone or destroy the city. They convinced her father that there wasn't room enough to house everyone in the city. They would bring everything out to her father in the field. That evening she had the cooks spike the food with sleeping drugs. The people from the city had to eat with them or they would be suspicious, so they got drugged too but it was ok. They could easily tell who was who.

While they were doing this the people of the city made cages from logs. They loaded the cages up on carts and put the sleeping soldiers in them. The next morning when he awoke her father got a big surprise. They were kept in the cages until her father met her demands. She made her father sign a contract with the city to never come back there again, and he cannot do the people harm. She kept all the soldiers there for a week while the signed contract was copied and passed around to all the local cities for witness. If he broke his contract with this city no one in this country would do business with him again. She had made the city safe from his future attacks. It was after that day she realized it wasn't the fact of fighting, but you were fighting for that really mattered. After interviews and schooling several years later she began working for the Guardians. After many years of her successes her father came to realize she was right. He asked for her forgiveness and went to become an upstanding Argarian. Had she not stood her ground that day, things could have turned out much different in her life.

Misteeks thoughts

Assimilating information from my creator's memories was the easy part, but truly understanding them is much harder. Biologically I understand what I am, but I don't understand why I feel strange. I am much like a machine in some ways. I'm made of similar material and workings as some of thier robotic workers. But I am different than any of them in that I have the ability to think and feel in a way that opposes logic. My creator said I have something called a conscience. A few short weeks ago I was no more than a semi-aware puddle of bacteria and metal and now I am aware of the universe around me. I feel excited but also scared.

8 months into the war

Etan's comments

Creepy crawlies

As suddenly as they began, the hit and runs stopped. For the next five months all was calm. Even Chaos agents hadn't been seen for a while. I got some practice in preparing for the silver test. Then one morning without warning chaos broke out once again. Nearly every planet was being attacked from bug like creatures. They just started coming out of the ground, all at the same time and were swarming every city. They didn't kill people instead they burrowed inside them. When a person was taken over they would walk to a designated sight and sit down as if they were waiting on something. Ironically enough, we had to use dark weapons to fight these creatures. Many weapons had been confiscated over time from the chaos Guardians, now we could put them to good use. We fired a small blast of dark energy on an infected person then teleported out the now dormant life form. Within seconds of its extraction it would detonate. Any we killed would detonate on contact. The detonation would vaporize its matter down to the atomic level. We tried many different methods of capturing one but each time it would vaporize itself rather than be captured. Master Selar tried stopping time around one and the collective created an anti time field. Whatever force was behind this, knew Guardians very well. At one point on some planets it was the dark Guardians zombie population against the Sil's human drones. I called them that for silicon, intelligent life form since they were similar to MisteeK. I couldn't help wondering where they actually came from. Watching a fight between a zombie and a Mech controlled drone was like something out of a sci fi. The Mechanical bugs, we called Tb's for tech bugs, seemed to have a slighter advantage of regeneration. When defeated, the zombies would get a TB and become fully alive but now controlled by the drone inside it. Slowly it looked like the zombies were being converted to tech drones. Strangely the council was not interfering with that part.

Kanes report

At first this new Guardian enemy was a help to us, but now they have become a nuisance. At least we know from the Guardians battles that our weapons work well on them. The problem is a matter of numbers. They outnumber us 10,000 to one at least. Ironically it's the same situation we often use against the Guardians themselves.

Silver guardian Vortex's report

We were able to free a few thousand people from the new tech bugs before they adapted to be immune to dark weapons. After communicating with other silvers, I found out that all the other bugs on the various infected planets adapted at almost the same time. This confirms our prior concern that each one is linked to the others and can share information at will. This enemy will be very difficult to beat.

Planet Setal

The last few months have been very strange. My name is Jan-sun I am the assistant director of shipping and supplies for the Delmar agricultural processing plant. We ship unique fruits and vegetables to various planets. Some eight months ago I was working in the office on our latest shipment that was about to be shipped off, when an explosion occurred just outside of town. Those of us in the factory tried to find a safe spot to hide, but the wave eventually got to our location. There wasn't any collateral damage to the buildings but we were all killed by its energy. I revived some time later. It was like a nightmare I couldn't wake up from. I could see and hear just like before but I couldn't control my body. I couldn't talk or tell anyone my consciousness was still inside my now half dead corpse. We were forced to corral the remaining living people into controllable groups. This went on day and night for some time. I would lose consciousness when I got tired. But my body still dragged on somehow. Then one day a new threat emerged. Robotic bugs began attacking and melding with the remaining living people. They used them to fight all of us corpse walkers. I was hoping they would kill me and put me out of my torment. But the bug infested people captured each of us one at a time and infested our bodies with the one of the metal creatures. Then they revived our bodies to their former state. Now we were being controlled by a different force.

When all the people in the city had been converted our bodies were lead to a central meeting place and allowed to rest. After some time, a small silver ship landed and we were made to begin bringing it specific supplies, mostly metallic substances that apparently it needed. Surprisingly our bodies were not abused or over worked. Although this was still forced labor this was not half as bad as being the corpse I had been. The day came when some silver Guardians confronted all the infected people. It took them some time to eradicate all the people in the area who had one of the creatures. I was one of the lucky few freed. A few minutes after they began to rid the population of the bugs whatever the Guardians were using against them no longer worked. I immediately took the first shuttle off planet for headed for Aragaria. They have many shelters for refugees there.

Silver and gold

Etans veiw

The day finally came. Master Selar was going to let me test to be a Silver. Master Leo was going to be the one giving me the test but that was fine with me, we got along well. Reaper just come back from a ferry run and was there to watch. He was still fusing about having to be an escort people instead of being in the fight. Selar had told him when the right time came he would be used in a crucial way but for now what he was doing was more important than he realized. "Well pebbles. You made it. I didn't think you would ever amount to much but you did, with my help of course." That one statement shocked me and brought back some old memories. Suddenly all my buried feeling from when I was getting a divorce came to the surface. My ex wife used to tell me I would never amount to much. I remembered all the anger and hurt I felt when she divorced me because of that belief. I wish she could see me now, she would change her tune. I tried to get it out of my head and focus but for some reason it couldn't. Why couldn't I? Maybe some wounds are harder to heal. This was stupid. I was finally about to become a Guardian. I shouldn't be bother by such a trivial matter now. So what, she thought I was a loser. What did that matter now? But for some reason it did bother me. I talked with Master Leo about it, and he told me to take a trip to earth so I could have closure.

I left out in a shuttle a few minutes later and headed to earth on the day after Master Selar selected me. I tied into the internet from the shuttle. After a some tracking I found out she was living in a nursing home. When Selar found me I was 75 years old. My ex wife Helen had been 77 at the time, but now I was older than her.

For me it had been nine years since I was in that hospital so I was actually 84 now. It was kind of strange to think about. Matt had been surprisingly quiet this whole time. "Well, what do you think?" I asked him. "You need to face her so you can let these feelings go and move on. It's time to let go of the past so you can move forward." "Ok, Then let's do this."

I cloaked the shuttle and left it in orbit and teleported myself to the parking lot of the nursing home. I changed my appearance to how I looked like when I was 75, so she would recognize me. I had almost forgotten what these old wrinkled hands looked like. I walked in and asked where Helen was and got her room number. I could have just read someone's mind from a distance and teleported there but I wasn't in a hurry. She was in her room reading an old mystery novel. She always loved reading. Mysteries, romance or even historical, most anything she could get her hands on. Maybe if I had been a writer instead of a carpenter she would have loved me more. She looked up and had a very shocked look on her face. Then her expression changed to annoyance. "What are you doing here? Not causing another disaster somewhere I hope." She always knew how to cut me hard. Matt guided me back on track "Don't get caught up in self-pity; get on with what you came to do."

I decided to pull a Selar move. I causally walked over to her and put my hand on her shoulder and said "Let's take a walk." I flew us up and out the ceiling, through the sky into the edge of space. She was screaming the whole time. When we stopped and looked back at the earth below, she caught her breath and said "Great, either I'm hallucinating or I'm dead. It figures you would be the one to escort me to hell." she exclaimed. For some reason Matt thought that was really funny. "You know" I said "I had the same reaction, nine years ago." She shook her head. "Well, maybe this isn't real and I guess I've gone completely nuts, and have some sort of dementia or something." I linked with her mind and allowed her to understand that this was all real. She slowly took it in and after a moment she understood. "So which are you demon of angel?" I teleported us to the shuttle so we could sit and relax. Keeping a shield in space took concentration.

I linked with her deeply this time and shared my memories I began with the robbery and Selar's hospital visit. I narrated the scenes as we went through the memories. By the time we made it to the end of my first year of school she needed a momentary break. She was so shocked she didn't know what to say. Nine years ago I might have popped off something sarcastic but now I just waited silently for her to absorb what she just saw. "Now you're learning" Matt said. "I'm very proud of you." That meant a lot coming from him. "Never in a thousand lifetimes could I have guessed any of that." she finally said. "Neither could I" I replied. "Yeah I'll bet." she laughed. "Why are you here? Why are you showing me this?" she asked. "Let's continue on and when we catch up to the present you'll understand."

It took a few hours, a little at a time I showed her my memories of the last nine years. She got a good laugh when I got stuck as a woman. She just couldn't help getting a jab or two in. "You should have come here, we could have taken a quilting class together." When we caught up to the present she understood why I was here. "You want to hear me say, you not a looser and your life amounted to more than I thought it would. You don't need to hear that from me. The people's lives you helped, say that already." she stated. "Look I don't know why this was important it just is." I said. "That because you're thinking like a man, become a woman and look at It." she said. I hadn't turned into Aria for a long time now. My friends Mia and Samaria were several years ahead of me, and when they graduated I didn't really have a reason too anymore. I became Aria for a moment. Helen tilted her head smirking. "Interesting, you've got my cheek bones and Etan's eyes. You look like what our daughter could have looked like if we had been able to have one." I had never realized that, but she was right Aria was like the daughter of Etan and Helen, Weird.

I took a moment to think on how I felt. The problem was I often still thought of myself the same as when I first got divorced. In a way emotionally I was stuck in time. It was always strange how much more about emotions I could understand as a female than as a male. Now that I was female, Helen had an easier time relating to me. She hugged me and said "Let it go, let it all go." I always thought it was stupid before how that many women cried so much about everything, now I understood all too well. Now I couldn't help but to cry. I could feel years of buried resentment and anger coming to the surface. After a few moments I cried myself out and I felt better. "See too bad you weren't a woman before, we could have been friends." Helen said. "We still can be" I said. "You know I might be able to do for you similar to what Selar did for me."

“Ha” she laughed “I saw what you've been through, I wouldn't want to be a Guardian.” I shook my head “No not a Guardian, but young again. And you could come back with me. You always liked studying plants. You said you always regretted not going to school to be a botanist. Now is your chance. The memories I showed you are only a small bit of what I've seen. There are trees on Argarian that sing to you and fish that glows like the rainbow.” I could tell she was tempted by my offer, but I think her resentment for me was just as strong.

She slept in the shuttle for the night. I wanted her to have time to think about it. By now the nurses were probably freaking over where she was. If she said no, I could return her and time would reset anyway so it wouldn't matter. In the morning we ate a good meal and she decided she would do it. First things first, I wanted to give her back her youth. I touched her face lightly and channeled light energy to her. It was cool being on this side of the fence in this situation. After a moment she was youthful and completely healthy. I even enhanced a few things she would like. I had the perspective of both male and female on my side for this so I did I pretty good job if I do say so myself. She looked in the mirror and smiled. She liked what I had done. “I don't remember being this curvy in all the right places.” she commented “well”, I said with a smile. “Aria wanted me to give you her best.” Helen nodded again “She has good taste, I must say.”

I teleported her back to her room just long enough for her to pick up a few important things she wanted to bring. We headed out after that. I returned to a few moments after I had left Master Leo. This time there was a crowd present. Master Selar was there and apparently he had brought of them with him. Mia, Samaria, Alsea, 1, and reaper was present for this occasion too. I saw a number of silver and planetary Guardians scattered around. Misteeek was the first one to greet me. Selar must have brought everyone to see me pass the test. Now I wasn't nervous anymore he wouldn't have done that if I were going to fail. The test was made of four parts. The first three I could do fairly well, it was the last one that would be a challenge. The first one was to tap the life stream and move a mountain. I wouldn't try opening the life stream all the way this time, but just enough to perform the act. I sat down on the ground and cleared my mind.

Now that my emotional issues was out of the way there was nothing interfering with me this time. “Ok Matt, help me keep this in balance.” I thought. “Already on it.” he responded. Once again I felt the raw power of the life stream. It would be too easy to get giddy and lose focus but I had a test to pass here. I took three slow breaths and channeled the energy through me toward the mountain. The energy acted as a bridge between me and it. When the whole mountain was surrounded, I created an anti gravity field, to essentially take away its weight completely. While doing this I had to make a power slice under the bottom to separate it from the ground. I kept my breathing even and ignored everything else around me. As it arose from the ground, I heard oohs from the crowd. The two masters had seen this done before of course but everyone else was amazed.

I caused it to rise a few hundred feet in the air and held it there. Master Leo held out his hand. He held some kind of crystal. Master Leo spoke to me “come and take this object from my hand without letting the mountain fall. What!! That wasn't supposed to be part of the test. I cautiously got up, the mountain shook a little but then it steadied. I carefully walked over and grabbed the crystal from Master Leo. “Very well” he said “You pass the first test.” I got a round of applause for this. But I couldn't let it distract me now. The next part was easy. I set the mountain down and then disintegrated it. Ok it wasn't that easy. I had to vaporize it, leaving no trace of it behind. I focused again and discharged a high energy beam at the mountain. The beam hit the mountain and it began to glow hot then it exploded in a cloud of smoke. Master Selar and Leo nodded their heads in approval. “Now put it back together.” master Selar said. Uhh, seriously? I've never done that before. I closed my eyes and concentrated. I could see some of the atoms from the material in the air around where the mountain had been. After a moment a sorry lump of dirt about the size of a house appeared. Selar shook his head “Now I know you can do better than that.” This wasn't supposed to be part of the test, Grrr. I tried again. “Don't look for the material, reach out in the air and the ground and feel for it instead.” Matt offered. In a few minutes I had a much bigger lump. It was only about half the size the mountain had been and it was a bit unshapely but it got both Masters approval.

One younger silver came up to me and said “Better you than me, I couldn't have done it.” Next was the mind test. I had to look at various peoples spirits and tell what their feeling and what they believe. What people believed and what people were feeling was often two different things. Selar brought a few humans out for me to peer at. I looked and stated what I saw. This part they let me get by with no further add-ons, since it was a difficult skill unto itself.

The last one was the real challenge. I had to fly into the sun. Not as an energy being but as myself. It not only takes a great shield but you must combat the gravity forces and pressure changes, while avoiding the magnetic loops. Selar made a window for every on to watch my progress. It only took only a few moments for me to reach the sun. I increased my shield. I could still feel the heat as I got closer. "Adjust your shield in opposition to the energy you feel. You making a general shield you need to refine it some." Matt offered. After a moment's trial and error, I had it. "What would I do with you Matt." I thought. I had practiced on a dying sun before but not a young healthy sun. "Don't worry you won't have to find out." He said back. I knew something else was coming. Sure enough Selar said in my mind. "Now grab a magnetic loop, concentrate it, and bring it back to me." Just great, I had been trying to avoid them, not lasso one." Don't worry I know the secret" Matt said. "Match its energy and let it come to you. Then shrink it like you would shrink part of yourself." Well that made sense. I burned my hands the first few times. It reminded me of when I was trying to become fire for the first time, but of course eventually I did get it. There was this tiny magnetic loop in my hands. They're normally huge, in fact many times a larger than the earth, and here I was with one in my hands. It was like a ball of energetic string.

I quickly flew back down and handed it to Selar for inspection. Master Leo and Selar nodded to each other. Master Selar held out the silver cape. "I hereby award you full silver Guardian status. I put on the cape, it felt great. "And for outstanding service in the past nine years I award you your first silver Guardian stripe." Matt was gleeful. Normally a Silver starts out with no stripe and are called a runger, as in the lowest rung on a ladder. It usually takes at least a few years to get thier first stripe. A one strip is called a slicer. "That's what you'll be now." Matt explained. The crowd cheered again. All the Silvers present were shocked. "They all had to start as a runger. Selar has just given you a great honor. That's why he gave you the extra tests, to show everyone but especially the Guardians present, that you deserve it."

I was greeted by all present, one at a time. There was hand shaking and pats on the back for awhile. Afterwards Master Selar presented me with one more item, my silver Guardian orb. Matt melded with it and they become one. Now I had access to experience from around 600 people, which included the ones I had gathered myself on Argaria. The party afterwards reminded me of the first Silver award party I had, but I watched my drink carefully this time so Reaper couldn't spike it again. Later on one of the Silvers told me the next time they played solar tag that he wanted me on his team. It was some type of game where teams would compete to see who could capture and collect the most magnetic loops. Some strategy was involved in keeping the other team from getting more. There wasn't any competition going on right now because of the war. But hopefully one day, things will settle down some. Little did I know this respite would not last for very long.

Guardian Tarus's report

The guardian over Aragara

We are getting more and more refugees each day here. All has gone fairly smooth up till now. Most are helping to maintain the planet since the Argarian population had dropped considerably. Two days ago we got our first swarm attack on Argaria itself. So far we have been able to use gravity felids to pull away the swarming techno bugs but each attack seems to get worse. I'm not sure what would happen if they are able to get through the doorway, but I don't intend to find out.

9 months in the war

Tarus update report a month later.

I am requesting back up probes and runner ships be sent to Argaria. We can no longer track the techo bugs by sensors. We have to see them physically to track them. Since Argaria is so large, a number of them could be working to weaken the shell anywhere on the surface. So far none of them have been able to damage the shell itself, but they seem to adapt quickly to difficulties. I'm sure it's only a matter of time, before they figure out a way to eat a hole in the shell and attack it from all sides.

The dark queen's orders

We are ordering all bases and ships to meet in the Havana galaxy. All forward bases have been over run by the Mech bugs. Before entering the alternate armada site make sure all ships and bases are clear of enemy drones. I'm sending the coordinates for ships to stop and be inspected for bug infestation before joining fleet or alliance bases. All communication relay spots must be swept clean of all information before shut down procedures are complete.

1 year into war

Emergency transmission received.

“This is Tarus, I need back up right away. We are being swarmed by billions of these bugs. I'm not sure what thier doing but...” End of transmission.

Myth and Mystery

Mistle empire-- Year 100

A virus has swept through the colony. The problem is that up till now we have been joining as one fluid collection. The virus infected all the population before it was discovered. Some of our programming and memories have been affected by it. Many of our first memories are now gone permanently. We will need to try to find the source of our original design. We know it was a young Guardian named Etan. We still have a record of his energy signature. We can only guess about our true directive. We believe it was to eventually replace the Guardian core entirely.

Alesea's comments

Reports came in that the Sils had set up a base on a planet. It's heavily guarded by many ships. By no surprise it is on a mineral rich planet. I was invited by what seemed to be the leader of this new enemy to meet with him. I'd much rather Selar meet with him instead of me, but he asked for me by name. I walked up to a newly formed building. In fact it was still building itself as I walked up. It looked like some kind of crystalline technology, similar to Argarian crystals in some ways. I was allowed to pass through the halls without hindrance. I was lead to a main audience chamber. I had seen Selars crystal chamber once. This was eerily similar. How did they have tech so similar to that of the Guardians?

There was a large silver man on a throne in the chamber. I introduced myself to him. He didn't say a word but he walked right and touched me on the back of the neck. He quickly down loaded all my memories before I could resist. He turned around and sat down in the chair. Without a word he motioned the others to take me back out. I stated why I was here and pleaded to speak with him, that we didn't have to be enemies. He acted like he didn't even hear me. After that I was taken and put in a waiting cage with other humans. After my treatment I figured they would try to stick one of those bugs in me but they didn't. The only thing I could guess was they needed me for a hostage trade. I had no choice but to sit and try to remain calm. I had been under the Guardians protection so long it felt scary to be this alone and vulnerable.

The road not taken--50 years ago

“I'm sorry but I just can't do this anymore.” Alesea told Aries. “I understand” he said. “What do you want to do now?” That caught her by surprise. She had expected him to argue the case with her. She had just separated from her husband. He started off as a good man. His name was Lauran. He was in home construction. They had been married for the last ten years and they had two children together. She found out that he had been cheating on her for years. If it had only been a one time thing, it might have been forgivable but not this. He had cheated on her with several women over the years. She had certainly been faithful to him. She didn't nag him like many wives seem to do to thier husbands. She even liked to cook. So he had no excuse to feel unloved or uncared for. Her job was providing counseling services for quarreling couples. Now that seemed, so hollow. How could she counsel others when her life was such a mess? She was angry and hurt. How could he do such a thing? She had been so good to him. She had tried to be the perfect wife.

Alesea's perspective

I told Aries "I don't know" He typed something on his computer. "You've got some vacation time available. Why don't you use it, take a break and decided afterwards?" I shook my head. "I used up my vacation time last year on our trip to Argaria." I started crying again. It was such a nice trip; little did I know what my husband was doing in secret. "Well it says here you have a month's vacation to anywhere you like, at our expense." Aries stated. I looked and that's what the records showed. Aries must have just typed it in. He wanted me to take the time to gain some perspective before I decided on anything. Of course he was right. He had always been such a good friend. We talked for a little longer, before I left to go home to pack. As much as I loved Argaria, now it would hold bad memories for me, so I went to another popular vacation spot. It had warm beaches and relaxing spas.

It took a few days before I could get the recent events off my mind enough to actually enjoy myself. But by the end of the month, I regretted having to come back to the real world. When I returned Aries wanted to talk with me again. I expected that. "You know, you don't have to leave to try out various types of jobs. Between the mother ship and all the Guardian divisions, we have just about every kind of job available somewhere." Aries said. He handed me a page full of different ones available. "Try these and if you don't like any of these we can come up with more I'm sure." He explained. After dealing with quarreling couples I kept forgetting how easy it was talking to Guardians. The page included a few jobs like Professional sitter, Communications tech, Secretarial work, and a substitute teacher for younger children.

I spent the next two weeks trying each of those jobs. I was pretty good, but I didn't have a passion for them. Aries once again had a meeting with me. "So you didn't like any of those jobs I guess." He asked not sounding at all surprised. He handed me another list of jobs. "Would you like to try these?" he asked. The first one that caught my eye was a position as a school counselor for children 5-10 years old. "I'll try this one" I said pointing to that one. "Yeah I thought you might." Aries said with a smile. A few days later I started the new job. Of course this was a Guardian supported school, so everyone here was a professional. The school was clean and every aspect up to date and well kept. Anything the Guardians were involved with was of the highest caliber. I couldn't imagine a planet that had no Guardian. It would probably be full of wars, famine, disease and misery. Mostly I was there to help students who were having a hard time fitting in or had any kind of emotional problem. I always loved kids so this was fine. I was there for nearly six months before I realized that this was not really for me either. I loved helping kids, but it wasn't the same as counseling deeper issues. The couples counseling had always been an interesting challenge. Every couple was unique, although most of them often shared many of the same kinds of issues. I missed the challenge of being able to discuss the deeper things in relationships. I hated to do this, but I knew I had to go talk to Aries once again.

I found him out directing a group of silvers that were helping to rebuild structures damaged by the dark Guardians. He glanced at me as I approached. "I was wondering how long it would take you to get tired of that job. Not enough of a challenge for you, I'm guessing." he said. I got from his tone he had once again expected this from me. "Don't you Guardians ever get tired of being right all the time?" I asked slightly annoyed. "Now why would we ever get tired of that?" he said with a bit of a grin. "Ok I get it." I told him. "Obviously you have something in mind, but you know I would have said no, so you wanted me to try my ideas first." He patted me on the back. "I knew you were smart." He said while winking at me. Imagine if you had a father that was always kind and was always, and I mean always right. You would love them but also be frustrated that he was always right, this is often what it was like working for a Guardian. "Where do you want me to go?" I asked. "The job doesn't come open for another week. Come see me in five days. Until then just do whatever you want. I ended up volunteering at a local disaster relief center. This group helped people who lost their homes or land because of wars or natural disasters. The people were upset of course so needed comforting. It was very rewarding emotionally for me. I always liked being able to help people with their problems.

A week later Aries sent me on a few tasks for him, before I went to check on this new job. He gave me some new clothes to wear to the job. He still wouldn't tell me what it was. One of the task on my list was a local hospital. He needed me to visit the children there. Aries usually made weekly visits to various places like that to make his presence known and to help heal those who couldn't be cured through normal measures. But right now he had a full schedule to contend with. I had been there for thirty minutes when I heard a commotion down the hall.

By the time I got the end of the hall to see what was going on, a man had several hostages. I stayed in the background and watched. He had a bomb strapped to his body. A few children and nurses were tied up in the corner. I saw him talking to a security camera. He stated that his son was dead and the Guardians didn't do anything to help him. I knew I had to do something. "Excuse me sir. I would like to talk to you." I said. He turned around and put his weapon in my face. He told me to get on the floor. I couldn't let him get control of the situation. When I told him no, I just wanted to talk, he fired on me. It bounced right off. I could tell by the glow the clothes I wore must have a personal shield embedded in them. Aries had done it again. Since he couldn't fire on me, he tried to physically attack me, but I had, had some physical defense training. When he saw that that he couldn't hurt me, he threatened to hurt others if I tried anything. I took awhile but I got him to tell me about his son.

His son was working at a Guardian compound and it was attacked. He wanted the Guardians to go back in time and save his son. That had been his only son. He told me the Guardians said that if they could have gotten there sooner that they might have been able to save his son. Something's couldn't be changed in time without messing up the whole timeline. He didn't believe a word of it, they were Guardians, they could do almost anything. He didn't care if he went to jail or died, he would do anything to save his boy. This was hard for me to share even after all these years. The memories of my mother made me upset all over again. I told him about her, and how she died in a dark Guardian raid. The man knew I was telling him the truth. He said I should understand how he felt.

I did understand how he felt. I had thought some of the same things. Why couldn't the Guardians go back and save my mother? But it wasn't that simple. I didn't understand of the ins and outs of time travel, but from what I understand changing anything can be tricky. Sometimes if timed right something's can be moved or changed, but most things once done have to be left as they are or you mess up the whole time line. If it was really as simple as changing what you don't like they could prevent the dark Guardians from doing anything at all. Guardians were wise and powerful but not all knowing or all powerful. I linked with the man to show him that I had felt exactly like he did. He said he couldn't leave until he got his son back. Security showed up a few minutes later but I told them to stay away. If the man set the bomb off the whole hospital would be destroyed.

I showed him how that I had used my pain to help others with theirs. The man finally broke down and cried on my shoulder. "My son, I can't live without my son." he sobbed. "I know how you feel I felt the same way about my mom." When I looked up Aries was leaned back in a chair. I sent him a mental message about the bomb, but he said he had already disabled the bombs before I had entered the room. I guess I shouldn't be surprised about that. "He told me I did a good job." Then it hit me, I Knew what my real calling was. It was helping people who have gone through trauma and pain. I looked at the man again and realized that his was the road not taken. I could have easily ended up like him, if it wasn't for the kindness of Aries helping me through my troubles. I wanted to return the favor and help others get through theirs. Aries talked to the security forces and explained the situation. The man would have to go through years of therapy and would have to do community services to pay back his debt for what he had done, but in the end the man could be helped too. He ended up being one of my patients for several years to come.

Etans comments

Up until now the war had been mostly reactive on our part. We had spent most of our time putting out political fires and trying to protect the populations, first from the zombies and then later from the techno bugs. At least in the long run the techno bugs did cure the populations of the zombie condition. I'm guessing that's what the counsel had been waiting on in the first place. Most people wanted the Guardians to react to every situation, but they had great patience. More and more I was learning that waiting for the right time to act was just as important as the act itself.

Part two

Tactics

Mecha upgrade part one Reapers view

Selar called Reaper in for a meeting. The first thing Selar did was sever a link Reaper didn't know he had. Selar explained that back when the new link was being established on Aragra that the dark Guardians had used him as sort of a bridge. He was half Argarian, it was enough to subconsciously link with him and see what he sees. The Guardians had known about it, and used it to feed false information to them. As well as get information from the link themselves about what the dark Guardians were doing. Reaper wasn't sure of what to think about this, but if he caused them problems, well that was just fine too. "I have a mission for you; it's the most important mission to date." Selar said. Ohh this sounded good, it was about time he got back into the fight. He was tired of all this ferry duty he had been on. He was a fighter not an escort. "I need you to capture the leader of these new life forms. We know some about them, but not enough." None of them had been captured so far. "How do you expect me to do that? Some of these things are real, some aren't. The ones that are real blow themselves up before being captured." Reaper responded. "The bugs do, but the humanoids don't. We suspect the bugs are not actually sentient; they are more like thier version of a mindless clone, just a tool really." Selar said. Hmm well if these things have some kind of self preservation instinct then that could be something I could use. Selar went on to explain another use for the battleship not listed in its files.

After the meeting, Reaper was on his way to planet Setal to capture the Sil leader. Selar explained the battle ship would be waiting on him there. The ship had an alternate type of cloaking that the sils didn't know about yet, so it was safely hidden. Selar told him that the Silvers would create a distraction by confronting the Sils head on. This should keep them busy long enough for him to sneak in and capture, steel01 the leader. As he approached the planet Reaper could see thousands of Sils fighting one on one with the Guardians. The fighting looked fairly equal on both sides. This new enemy was giving the Guardians a real challenge. His shuttle didn't have the specialty cloaking the battleship did, but hopefully he should be able to slip in unnoticed.

As he approached the planet three Sils entered the shuttle. Oh great! just what he needed. They paralyzed him and began draining his memories. Perhaps he should be complimented by the fact they sent three after him, just in case. Just then the shuttle was incinerated from the outside. Reapers armor had shields so space wasn't a problem, but he still had the three Sils draining him. But they were hit from behind by four silvers. One was Etan. While the other three kept the Sils busy Etan teleported me and him to the planet. "I would love to stay and help, but its all we can do to keep a stalemate much less make progress against these guys. They keep adapting to anything we do to them." With that he was gone. I was still stunned from the mind drain. I remembered who I was and why I was here but I felt empty somehow. According to my computer the battleship was hidden only a short distance from where I was. Etan was probably told about it, I'm sure.

I came to the secluded spot where it was hidden. Not only was the cloaking field on but it was concealed in a cave with reflective minerals to hinder any scans. As soon as I entered the cave I was surrounded by crawling bugs. Ever since the forest prank, I keep being harassed by any insect around. Fortunately this time I remembered to bring along some bug spray. There was my ship beautiful as ever. It was set to fighter mode at the moment. I jumped in the cockpit and typed in the specialty code Selar gave me. It began to change shape. Then a beam hit me from the back and everything went black.

Unto the brink part one 1's view

I finally got to get back into action. Reports had shown a large number of Sils around one particular world, planet Setal where their leader had set up base. Nearly one forth of thier army was there. They had pulled out most of thier forces from the smaller planets to protect this one. If Selar's plan went as expected this would give us a slight advantage on the fringe worlds later. But for now we have a major offensive to fight.

Normally with most enemies, they had distinct strengths and weaknesses, but this enemy was different. They could change structure and form at will. So far they had adapted to every weapon or attack we used. We were delighted early on that dark energy seemed to weaken them but the little buggers adapted to that too.

Even though I wasn't always directing a military wing, my rank was colonel. At the moment we had just over 500 Silvers and a few thousand humans that weren't assigned to a particular planet. These normally were used to put out smaller military fires that happened on a regular basis. Even when the galaxy as a whole wasn't at war, there was always one country or another trying to cause trouble. The way our military works is we have a general over the both shield divisions. Under the general were two regular colonels each with their own division of 250 silvers and numerous humans and a few Argarians. Under the two colonels were two majors and under them the captains. They were over the various sergeants. The sergeants commanded the platoons with the help of platoon leaders. In time of need I took the lead position over both Colonels. Right now was such a time. I kept Etan close by help to direct commands to the various flanks that would be at my command this day. This would be a great learning experience for him. We weren't sure of just how effective a direct confrontation would be with this new formidable enemy but we were only the distraction. If we made great progress all the better, but Selar had another plan as the real objective. I've known him for a long time; he makes no decision lightly or quickly. This day I had three flanks of seventy five Silvers each and some 1000 humans in fighters and as well as 50 experienced Argarians as back up. The Argarians would mostly be used to maintain shields around the fighters. The fighters were there to cause a distraction so the Silvers could get in effective attacks.

We gathered at a designated spot and I gave each flank a run down on how they were to proceed. If all went well we might even punch through their defenses. The problem wasn't as much a matter of power as it was that the Sils could adapt to all most any attack. But I had a surprise or two for the little buggers today. When all was prepared I gave the order to depart. When we got to the planet, it wasn't like I expected. We knew from our sensor network that they had gathered a large force near the planet. Some were real, some projections. We could now distinguish between them with about 50 percent or so accuracy. Not perfect but it would have to do now. I had plan for this too. I had a thousand years' experience in war; I had certainly seen my share of battles of all kinds. I would send in 3000 probes to continually scan all life forms around them. We should be able to narrow down the real threats quickly. We exited hyper space and Setal lay before us. It was a beautiful world as planets go, very green with large oceans and packed with minerals. I was in the lead vessel. The three flanks took up position around the planet. But they weren't there. We could see the command center that been set up on the planet with sensors. I sent in a few fighters with a Silver to protect them. There was no reaction from any where. Where were they? We stayed in orbit as I sent 2 Silvers to go investigate the command center. We watched in anticipation as they approached. As they entered the atmosphere there was still no movement from any area. Maybe they pulled out of this planet? I ordered the two silvers to turn around. Suddenly a powerful energy blast came out of the command center. If they had been any closer it would have killed them for sure. They were hit, but distance had dissipated most of the blasts intensity. They were hurt but they would live. Before I could give another command, thousands of Sils appeared behind us in space. Then several thousand more surrounded us from orbit in the planet. Now we were the ones that were surrounded.

Titanium 519 thoughts

They were coming just as expected. We stayed cloaked long enough for them to pass us. We had hoped to fully disable a larger force near the command center. But only two individuals were sent to investigate. This small hindrance does not derail our plans. No matter what they use, we can eventually over come it. We now had them surrounded. Now we can take down their main force. O1 predicted the Guardian core should fall completely in less than 300 days. After our domination is assured, remnant Guardians will be allowed to live as long as they serve our purposes. We will bring the galaxy into true order.

Unto the brink part two

1's view

The Sils forces fired a large volley of dark energy at us. Apparently they had gotten a hold of some dark Guardian tech too. It caused some damage but I had expected this could be the case. They ran off the remaining dark Guardians and taken their bases as their own, so I knew they probably had dark weapons weapons. The first thing I had to do was get our forces out of our boxed in position. "Sils create shields around the cruisers. Fighters are to hang in tight with them until the new position is reached." I commanded. They tried to withdraw but the Sils in front moved with them. The ones in orbit stayed in position for some reason. Now at least we weren't being attacked from both sides. I saw Reapers shuttle enter the field of combat. Three Sils quickly headed to his position. I sent Etan and three others Silvers to help assist. Etan knew where Reaper needed to go but no one else did, the less number of people that knew the real objective the better.

Now was time for a surprise for the Sils. They were powerful and adaptive, but they were still limited to some laws of nature. Many insects for example could adapt to insecticides or poison, but if you stepped on one it couldn't adapt to that. Up until now we have mostly been attacking with various kinds of energy. With most enemies, if one type of energy didn't work another usually would. But the Sils could change their structure to resist most anything we threw at them. What they couldn't change was a few basic laws of their nature. They were made of metallic liquid and filled with silicon bacteria. I gave the key command to selected Silvers to perform a preset act. They grabbed onto a Sils and teleported themselves inside the nearest star. All Guardians from silver up could withstand a star's power but not the Sils. They were metallic, they melted instantly, and the bacteria inside was incinerated. While they were doing this, I ordered the fighters to send out plasmatic charges. This created great heat in the space around the Sils. It might not be enough to melt them right away but it should certainly slow them down. After a few minutes of this, they changed tactics. They suddenly all disappeared and reappeared in front of the planet. We took out nearly 1000 of the humanoid ones out of the eight thousand in matter of minutes. A great many of the techno bugs had been taken out in my first plasmatic volley. I ordered a regrouping of our forces and we turned around and faced the planet once more. The Sils spread out in an evenly distributed grid pattern. Each drone bug and humanoid spread its mass out in a sheet structure. An energy web began to form, then it became a solid mass. Now we were facing a solid structure that looked eerily like the Neutronium armor around Argaria. We fired off a test volley at the shell and sure enough there was no damage.

They had good information on Guardian's and our tech, but they didn't know everything. Normally Guardian energy was used to manipulate Neutronium but I was guessing this wouldn't work. They wouldn't make that kind of mistake. They could alter its signature enough to prevent that, I am sure. A Neutronium drill could be made for this, but it would take time. I had another notion. I made a call to Aries. He had a weapon that was unique, so they shouldn't know about it. I was about to withdraw the fleet a short distance from the planet temporarily, but the Sils took the incentive this time. They created momentary windows in the solid shield to fire at us. They could fire at us but we couldn't fire at them. This situation reminded me of an ancient commander's situation of trying to invade a fortified city. One that had high walls and Siege traps. A siege is a difficult thing for the attacking army to do. This was not a favorable situation for us at the moment. One strategy ancient commanders could employ was to try to starve out the fortified city. Keep them from getting food or water. Since the Sils had a whole planet to use, this would not work here. Also there were no walls to get over here, or tunnels to sneak through. The walls in this case surrounded the entire planet. As if all this wasn't bad enough, I began to get reports of the same thing happening at other planets. Perhaps their plan was to wait us out. Not all the planets were experiencing this but all the ones with high populations were.

Aries showed up a few minutes later. He had a sword made out of the fabric of the universe itself; nothing in this universe could withstand its effects. His armor was made out of the same stuff, no energy or physical attack could damage it. He took his sword and plunged into their shell. Their attacks just bounced right off him harmlessly. Three Sils appeared in front of him and grabbed onto him physically and teleported all of them to another location. After a moment he came back alone. His sword was glowing red hot. He continued his work. Every few moments a few Sils would break through his shield and teleport him away again. Each time he would come back alone. They couldn't stop him but they did manage to slow him down several times.

Aries had, had enough of this. He performed one of his two power moves, the celestial impaler. He held the sword up, though there wasn't really and up in space, and focused all his energy. He channeled a great amount of energy into the sword from the life stream. Areis directed all the energy into one solid beam. He sliced through the planetary shell as if he were peeling a fruit. Soon enough the shell was in two distinct pieces, a top and bottom half. Before they could put the pieces back together he focused more energy and this time made a sweeping motion. He knocked the top half away from the other one. It went flying off practically at warp speed. After that, the silvers were able to continue their direct approach to the Sils. It was slower going this time as the Sils kept moving from place to place making it harder for the Guardians to grab them. In spite of their moving around, we were beginning to win. Every time one was taken out, it made it a little easier to catch the next one. There were still fake Sil projections to worry about, but for the most part we were starting to make headway in this battle. A moment later I saw a small ship head out from the planet. I hoped it was Reaper, but I couldn't be sure.

Mecha upgrade part two commentary

A concentrated beam hit Reaper from the behind. When he woke up, he felt strange. He looked down and he couldn't see himself anymore. He saw the inside of the ship, but it was like he was invisible to himself. Then another form of energy came wafting down from above. It felt like a warm shower but he wasn't getting wet. He felt dizzy for a moment. He looked up and he was back in the cave where he started. The ship was gone, it was just him. Oh great, some plan this turned out to be. But then something odd happened. As he tried to walk forward, his body felt different from before. Up until now his body was still invisible, but now it reappeared as a machine. His body looked like some kind of mechanical fighting suit, Ok this wasn't bad. After a moment's concentration, he was able to access the suits programming. He had been turned into energy and made a part of the fighter. He was now the fighter. It only took a few moments for him to look through all the available files. The Guardians had been holding back on him, this fighter could do much than had been listed in the original manifest. Now he really was a one man army. "I wonder if I can stay linked permanent" Reaper thought.

His new body responded immediately to every thought. No input delays. Very nice indeed, he thought. He didn't want to give away this secret to the enemy so he adjusted the Mech suit to a metallic fluid then changed it to match his natural look. He temporarily shut down all non essential systems, so he wouldn't have a large energy signature. Just as an extra precaution, he re-cloaked completely. Hopefully this would be enough to sneak in undetected. Selar had made it very clear that accomplishing his goal in secrecy would be the key his plan. He had even given Reaper the, don't play around or get side tracked speech. Most of the time Selar spoke in a calm tone but when his tone changed to a serious one, you had better listen. Reaper had no intention of messing up this mission anyway. If he succeeded, and he would, then would have done something none of the Guardians had been able to do yet, capture a Sil. Not just any Sil but the leader. The compound was a good distance from the cave but with this new body he was there within a few minutes. That was odd; the building looked strangely, like Selar's place ship. Apparently these things weren't very good at originality, but liked to copy existing designs. Too bad he had lost some of his memories. He could have used that to his advantage. Reaper remembered the fact that he used to know countless moves and strategies, but couldn't remember any of them right now. He was sure Selar could return his memories to him, but that didn't help him here.

The palace ship was filled with Sils everywhere he looked. Well it was now or never. He found one out patrolling alone. This was a good first test. He walked up to it silently. It either didn't see him, or just refused to acknowledge he was there. He walked around it in a circle and it never reacted. Was it ignoring him or could it actually not see through the cloak? It would be crucial to find out which. He crept back toward a bush and rattled it. The Sil came over to investigate. He took a stick and poked the Sil with the stick. It reacted to the stick but not to him. Interesting but that was not absolute confirmation. Reaper changed his body to form arm into a large cannon and pointed it at the Sil. It never reacted. That was about as much confirmation as he was going to get.

Reapers comments

I've had enough playing around. It was time to make my move. I decided not to kill this one, as it was probably linked to the others and would let them know I was coming. That's right fear the Reaper, He He. The ship was set up exactly like Selars, I was able to recall some details. I entered what would have been the school grounds on Selars ship. This one was filled with room after room of sedated human and aliens. Most of them wore military uniforms. So this is where they had been taken. I decided not to contact them as it would give me away. Phase cloaked I could slip through almost any substance, except Neutronium, but I didn't scan any of that here. So I should be able to get into any room if need be. There were a number of the Techno buggers scanning the halls. It was hard not to yield to the temptation to just blast them indiscriminately, but I was staying to the plan. I better get a great reward for the mission. This was like the third or fourth time I've helped save the galaxy. I think I'd like a few statues to be remembered by; yeah I'll have to mention that to Selar later.

I finally reached the hall that lead to the command center. Two huge Sils guarded the door. Now it was time for a little distraction. I crept back down the hall and set off a small bomb to attract them. Sure enough they came to investigate. Easily enough now I slipped past them, without having to touch them. The door was no problem either. The leader was easy to pick out from all the others. He was in the middle of the room on a large throne. He was tied in to a crystalline based computer system. Three other Sils were there, going about various tasks. But besides being on the throne, the leader was several times larger than all the other Sils in the room. Perhaps they grow in size over time, or the leader was made up of several normal Sils that joined as one. Just then the two large guard Sils returned to investigate this room. They had found nothing in the hall of course. The leader never looked away from what his terminal. He had several screens that showed various planets. As I approached the one sitting on the throne, I heard one of the Sils refer to him as Steel 01. This was definitely the one I had come to capture. I searched the data base of the suit, searching for an effective weapon against him. I needed to stop him without killing him. Selar said they needed him alive for this plan to succeed.

I decided to go with injecting him with Nano-mites designed to absorb nitrogen. The scans revealed the bacteria inside him were primarily made of silicon but used nitrogen in their biology. If all the nitrogen in the metallic fluid could be neutralized it could weaken him enough to allow me to capture him without having to actually damage him. Before that I needed to create a distraction so the other three would not notice. I decided to set off another bomb when fate intervened instead. A call showed up on their monitors, asking all available Sils to join the ones in orbit. I started to wonder why they would need monitors at all since all of them were linked. Perhaps this was back up system of some sort incase thier main communications was blocked.

Lights flashed in the room and Neutroinuim walls came down from every direction. All four of the room walls were covered by solid Neutronium. I thought what luck, now I could take the three out and no one outside could get in as reinforcements. But Etans luck must be rubbing off on me, because then a smaller Neutroinuim box came down separating the leader from the rest of the room. Now how was I going to get to him now? Well one problem at a time. I could use the three remaining Sils to test my nitrogen theory. Ok, so technically it wasn't all my idea. Etan and I had talked about it a few days ago, but I was here and he wasn't so it was my idea, so there. I Shot the Nano mites at the three Sils and took them out. They fell to the floor lifeless, and then I melted them so they wouldn't be a problem later. What to do about the Neutronium? If the box was completely solid, how was the leader communicating with the others? Nuetroinuim Blocked just about every kind of wave or energy. I scanned for the Sils communications link I had detected before. Sure enough some signal was coming from inside the box. After a more detailed scan I saw tiny holes appearing randomly around the box. This was how he was getting a signal out. After letting the suit scan the holes for a moment the computer calculated that the holes were appearing in a mathematical progression.

The suit had a time alteration device. I could speed up or slow down objects around me or even myself when needed. I sped myself up and made the suit to turn into a fluid again then slipped through one of the holes. With this suit I was like a silver Guardian in many ways. I shoot steel 01 with the Nano-mites but it didn't work on him. He turned to look at me and said "Nothing you can do will help." The Netronuim box disappeared, then he got up from the throne and gestured to the computers and they shut down. "I was going to let you live, but you are a most persistent human. So unfortunately I will have to kill you now." 01 said.

He gestured with his hands and a swarm of dust sized particles came flying out. They began by sticking to the outside of my metallic body. I heated up the surface to try to melt them but to no effect. It only took a moment or two before the first group of them made their way inside. While they were invading me, I was scanning them. They were some kind of metallic dust that was similar to our Nanomites. I quickly changed to a fluid then formed a powerful magnet in my hands. They were immediately sucked to it. I teleported the mass away. "Fascinating" 01 said. "That's what I needed to know about the nature of your tech suit."

Before He could start another attack, I had my own attack. I blasted a high intensity plasma wave at him. It should have been enough to melt him and half the stuff in the room. I knew he would block some, but it should damage him enough to slow him down. The room created a high level shield around him after the first second. I had melted the first inch of his outer surface but that's all. "Not too bad I suppose, but not good enough," steel said. He concentrated and a dimensional door opened up behind me. The other side of the door led to a black hole. He used an energy blast to push me through the door. No way was he getting me that easily. This metal head's going down. I launched a metallic tentacle and lassoed him with it, pulling him along with me. I had him wound tight. Every time he changed form I adapted with him. "Let me go" he said "Or well both die." I gave him my well known creepy smile "I'm not afraid of death, I am death. I am the Reaper." I told him. All the while we were getting disastrously close to the event horizon. I was able to sever one of his hands. It was fun when I launched at the black hole. He tried to recall it, but it was too close. He watched it disappear. He closed his eyes and time reversed and we were back in the Sil's ship. "I had hoped to beat you in a fair fight, but I have to win no matter what. The galaxy is at stake you know" He said "You have been a most challenging opponent. Don't worry, I'll even create a statue for you, like you wanted." That was awfully nice of him, I thought.

He made a sweeping motion with his hands and created something like a magnetic pulse. If I had more time with the suit I could have created shield to block his attack, but I was still new to its abilities. The pulse hit the suit and it was torn apart piece by piece. After the moment the Mecha suit was on the floor and I was back to being me. I still had my normal armor and weapons, but it wasn't a match for this guy. He fired several shots of energy at me but I was able to get out of the way. I may have lost some of my memories but my body still had the instincts to fight. He smiled for a moment seemingly amused by ability to avoid the first shots. Then he teleported right in front of me, and plunged his hand into my chest grabbing my heart. I was hoping he would come close enough for me to touch him. I remembered a few sparing matches with Etan, one in particular where I had to get Etan to come in close for the kill. I made myself look vulnerable to make him over confident. As he plunged his hand in me, I plunged my spikes in him. My armor allowed me to replicate almost any substance. I could use the spikes to inject poisons, acids or whatever was needed. In this case I just need a simple element, Oxygen.

The bacteria he was made up of cannot survive in an oxygen atmosphere. As long as their safe in the liquid metal they thrive. But now I injected a large amount of oxygen into 01's body. He actually looked surprised. "Your numbers up 01", I said. He he, I cracked me up sometimes. Your numbers up. I'd have to remember that quip the next time for that iron plated phyco wench 1. While I had 01 stunned I put more nitrogen steeling Nanomites in him. He fell unconscious. All that tech I had and I ended up beating him with pure cunning. Go me. I didn't waste anytime. I gathered up to the pile of junk that was the Mech suit. Without the 01 there messing things up, I was able to get the suit to reassemble itself. I was satisfied with the fight except for one thing. I didn't get to draw blood. The stupid things didn't have any. I picked up 01 and got out of there quick as I could. The cloak was still off line, but I should be able to out run any pursuers once in space. As I left the system I could still see the Guardians fighting one of one with the Sils.

Mothers day Commentary

Up until now Misteek had mostly stayed out of the way. The Guardians were busy fighting some pointless war. These Sils seemed unbeatable. No matter what the Guardians did, the Sils seemed to adapt. It seemed like the Guardians would eventually run out of new weapons or strategies before they could defeat them. She had spent some time with Etan's master called Selar. He was obviously wise and powerful.

He had her learning a great many things about humans and life. She had down loaded countless files on biology, astronomy, galactic history, and numerous other subjects to boring to mention. She knew some from the scattered memories of Etan himself. But it wasn't until she came across some files on earth that she really got interested. Earth seemed like a lively place, much better than all the dull and boring planets around here. It's not that she liked war, not at all. But she needed excitement; she needed something to do with her time. Earth had great variety in music, art and literature. It was almost like earth had a piece of nearly every culture in the galaxy in one place.

One creature in particular, she found irresistible, the house cat. She practiced taking its form and mannerisms. It seemed to come naturally to her. It was fun walking around snooping into tiny places that other people couldn't go. While Selar was away one day, she decided to go investigate what was going on with the war. There was a smaller battle happening on a local planet. She formed herself into a ship and jumped the short distance. There was a group of Silvers standing off against a group of Sils. The Guardians weren't advancing. They were more or less keeping the Sils in check. They wouldn't say what, but apparently they were expecting something bigger to happen soon. She had seen these Sils on monitors but never up close. It was amazing how similar in design she was to them. From her scans she could tell, they were more sophisticated in design, and more complex, but she had all the same parts and workings. But then, she found one important difference. The little energy matrix that Etan had given her; they didn't have any of it. She was basically like a robotic machine, but the matrix integrated into her systems and made her have a conscious. She could act logically or act in opposition to logic if she chooses too. Not everything in life made logical sense. It's what gave her emotions. After continuing to scan them she realized they had no real emotions, not like her anyway.

She thought maybe if she went over and got to know them, she could somehow convince them to stop what they were doing. The Sils were down on the planet surrounding a mineral rich mine. From what she could tell, more Sils were being made by the minute. The Guardians weren't attacking them right now, so they were docile. The Guardians better have a great plan, because if there were more mines like this on other planets, they would soon be overrun. There were limited number of Guardians, but these Sils seem to be reproducing at astounding rate.

She hopped down to the planet and walked right up to a Sil guarding the entrance to the mine. The moment he saw her, he looked surprised. He approached her cautiously and asked what she was. "My name is Misteek, and we are very similar." She told it. He stood there stunned for a moment. Then the Sil came to a decision, he extended his hand and said. "Link with me."

Misteeks view

I wasn't sure about this, but maybe I could learn something from them that would help the Guardians. They weren't perfect but they were at least trying to keep order in the galaxy. These Sils seemed to think that they could do a better job in the long run. I held out my hand and he linked with me. We shared each others memories. After a few minutes we both realized the strange truth. Even though they were older than me by a thousand years, I was their mother. Etan thought he was creating me in their image. But after he created me some of the bacteria that made me up, continued to thrive in the remaining puddle. The puddle eventually went on to become its own person named Steel 01. Etan created me and I created them by accident. Now it all made sense.

After touching my mind, suddenly the Sil had a seed of emotion. Not much, but enough to react. "Mother, you're our mother." he said. "That's right" I told him. I said it with confidence, but in truth I was just as astounded as he was. He immediately called for the others. Five Sils came rushing out and quickly joined with me. They too came to the same realization. Soon all the Sils at the mine were joined with me. "You are our mother, our progenitor, what do you command us to do?" one of them asked. "What about my first son, steel?" I asked. "You are before him, you supersede his authority." he answered. I was pleased to hear that. After a few minutes of discussion they wanted to download all my memories. It seems sometime back a disease swept through the Sil collective and wiped out some of their communal memories. At the moment there was about 1000 Sils here and their numbers were growing. They pledged their loyalty to me and forswore following steel's plan. They even disregarded the automatic update from the collective a few minutes later. Now they were apart of my little rebellion.

Don't put all your Sils in one basket

Etans comments

Aries had just split the shell, when he teleported into the command ship and handed something to **1** and teled back out. A short time later a Sil that must have been at least 15 feet tall entered the command ship and challenged **1** to a fight. My first instinct was to help her fight him, but she sent me a mental message to get with the major. She said she had a weapon to take care of this intruder. I headed out for the major's ship before the Sil could stop me.

I hope **1** will be ok. That Sil was bigger than the others, and I'm guessing more powerful. I quickly flew to the Major's ship. He was a Silver, but it was said he was as powerful as any planetary Guardian. He had turned down the opportunity to be a planetary guardian twice, he liked what he did. I wondered if I could do that. I really wasn't the leader type. Celestial and vortex once told me that every one of Selars picks had gone on to become a planetary Guardian. I didn't want to disappoint Selar, but that really wasn't for me. I couldn't see myself standing before large groups of people commanding an army. In my early days of schooling I had helped coordinate galactic communications from the mothership, but it wasn't the same. I was more or less acting as an information carrier not a commander. Of course this was all just my private thoughts. It would be a long time before I had to worry about any commands being asked of me. Even the ones Selars picked took hundreds of years before they became planetary Guardians anyway. By the time I had tossed all these things around in my head, I was at the major's ship.

He had already detected that **1** was tied up with a Sil. He was busy at the moment directing the fighter fleet against a massive bug swarm headed our way. I just wished we had been given the time to create our own army of these tech bugs and Sils. They were hard to beat. He directed me to join the others on the frontline against the Sil attackers. To tell the truth, this war reminded me of the Vietnam War on earth. Sometimes it was like no matter what we did, we weren't making much progress. I zipped out to the front lines. If it wasn't for the fact of the seriousness of the war what I saw might have been funny. Of course Reaper would have thought it was funny anyway. The only method that had proved effective against the Sils was direct physical contact with them and teleing them inside the local star. But catching them was a little like trying to catch a greased pig in a rodeo. They could change form and size just like Silvers could. A Silver would try to wrap his arms around one and the Sil would slip out. Using longer arms or tentacles didn't help much either. If there were more of us, it would have been easier but we were outnumbered by the thousands.

Well I was the local expert on form changes. Better than many much older silvers. Two Sils headed my way. I changed into a gas and surrounded them. Then back into a solid, trapping them for a moment, then I just teled myself with them inside the star. Ha! two at a time, go me, but now I couldn't turn into a gas again to let them melt. They were touching my substance and somehow affecting my ability to change back. One touched my mind. "We aren't trying to kill you, but we don't want to die either. Please tele back out." Well this was a surprise. I had no intention of staying here the whole war so I teled back out. When I was out, I was able to change form again. "How did you do that?" I asked out of habit. "You are our creator, we have some of your energy, memories and DNA encoded into us." it said." I was caught off guard with that statement. "What are you talking about?" I asked. It went on to explain how that after I created Misteek that enough of her cells remained in the puddle to create steel of the first born, and that the Mistle race came from him. I thought I had created her like them, but it was her that created them. Oh great! That means this war was my fault.

Before I could inquire further, they were recalled to the group. All the Sils were retreating to the planet. Maybe that meant we were finally making progress. We had started out with 75 silvers earlier but all but 20 were called out to help other battlegrounds. Now 15 Silvers left to go help take on the millions of techno bugs. That left just five of us in orbit above the planet. They had defended this planet so relentlessly before, like there was something of great value here but now they were retreating. What is going on? Every Sil in orbit was now down on the planet. The Five silvers left were three corporals and one other private like me. I found out later that the other silvers had gotten called to protect Argaria. The buggers had figured out a way to suicide bomb the shell one at a time. They were making progress into the shell. There was a lot of tech on the inside that would make them even more dangerous if they acquired it. Plus we had the population inside to protect, so this was a major priority.

The eldest corporal directed us to go down to the surface and see what the Sils were up too. When we got to the surface, no Sils were anywhere to be seen. Just then a single Sil flew past me in a great hurry. We followed him half way around the planet. Finally we came to a great ship that looked much like Selars. The sil who we were chasing flew into the ship joining its essence. A few other Sils were doing the same. Each time another would join the ship, it would grow bigger. Suddenly it changed shape completely. It turned into a large sphere and then reformed to Neutromium. This time we did not have Aries here to cut it in half. It must have been as tall the empire state building. There was no way any of us could tele a mass like that. Aries could probably have but certainly not me. The others stared at me, looking confused for a moment. Should we attack it, or leave it alone? "Our mission is to stop these things" the corporal said. The thought hit me "In order to stop them now, we would need to be able to gather mass roughly equal to theirs. And I'm not that powerful yet." The lead corporal considered that. "no but you're the local expert on form change." We linked minds. This reminded me of a prior conversation with Reaper. One time he watched some old monster movies from earth. Afterwards he wanted to know if I could turn into a giant fire breathing lizard. We were about to be a Godzilla sized mass when finished. Ill have to show him the recording later, I suppose.

After a few moments it was decided all of us would gather as much mass from the ground as we could and they would join with me. I would guide the change. I was suddenly a little nervous. Matt spoke "You defeated an alternate version of yourself who had the prime matrix, reset the timeline and hardest of all you tamed Reaper, sort of. If you can do all that and more you can handle this." Ok thanks for the pep talk lets do this. I was so tempted to say then let our powers combine, but declined this time. They wouldn't get the reference anyway.

All five of us turned into energy and began assimilating the ground for mass. I came up first creating a square block 100 foot tall. I was better at form change but they were older and had more mature Argarian cells so they gathered more mass than me. Each one added his mass to mine one at a time. By the time we all combined we were close to the mass of the silver sphere. According to Matt we were still 10 percent less than it but it should be enough. What we needed to now was to build up enough heat in our mass and expel it all at once at the sphere. I didn't need to guide us to any particular shape but I couldn't help myself, I had to form us into something like Godzilla. I didn't want to tell Reaper this but I was a fan of the old monster movies too. If only Reaper could see me now. I could feel the other Silvers confusion on why this shape and form until they searched my memory then it got a good laugh from the group. I hated to sound like Reaper but I looked forward to watching this later. It would be epic. The funny part is we were made of the ground heated to a molten state, so basically we were like a living version of a volcano. Great I finally got away from them, and I have to become one instead. I looked down and the trees looked so small. If this wasn't a serious situation it might be fun to stomp around for practice. Then Matt reminded me not to lose focus. He was good at keeping me on track when my mind wandered. Even as a guardian I tended to be a bit ADD at times.

All this time the sphere still hadn't moved or reacted to our efforts. Either they couldn't figure out what we were doing or they weren't worried about it. Now was the real challenge. Could we build up enough heat energy to melt the sphere? I was in the center of the core. I began heating myself up. Then the others added thier energy to me. Our whole mass lit up and glowed red hot. We expelled the heat and energy out of the mouth. The sphere never moved or changed shape. It shielded itself but we burned though the shields in a matter of seconds. Once the shields dropped the sphere was thrown backwards by the shear force of our blast. It sounds corny but that was a blast, He he. After thirty seconds we expelled all the built up energy. The sphere wasn't any smaller but its energy signature was much weaker now. We would have to build up for a second round. Best case scenario this might have worked. But this was not a best case scenario for us. As soon as we had expelled all our energy we were momentary weakened. That's what they were waiting on. Three dark Guardian battle ships uncloaked and fired on us. They must have been ships captured by the Sils. Well I guess I can call them Mistles now that I know I made them. Then I realized I had followed the story of Frankenstein. I made a monster that turned against me. we were weakened, our mass fell apart. We were so drained we could barely move. The ships surrounded us. I guess they came to finish us off.

One plus two equals zero

1s view

This battle was going better than expected. Etan was still helping me to keep all flanks together. We had taken down the Sils shell and were continuing to take out them out one by one. My efforts to keep everyone organized and working as a single unit did not go unnoticed. A rather large Sil appeared in the command center. Up until now we had been able to block them from getting in the ships. We had been able to find a variation to the shields wave modulation that they could not fire or tele through. I sent Etan a message to go to the major, which was the next highest ranking person in the fleet at the moment. Aries gave me a weapon he said I would need to use soon, Selar had told him to bring it to me of course. It was a dagger made from the same material as his special armor.

The Sil sneered at me and said "You've done an adequate job so far I suppose, but your efforts stop right here." That didn't faze me a bit. "So you're starting off with an insult and a minor threat. I haven't encountered those before." I said sarcastically. He seemed to find my defiance amusing. "Your brave I'll give you that. But that won't save you." he said. He didn't even bother to try to blast me or shoot any kind of weapon. He simply strolled up to me, as if he had no worries in the world. His hand clutched my neck and squeezed. I pulled out the dagger and plunged it into his chest. It heated up and began melting him from the inside. He actually looked surprised for a moment. He backed up, pulling away from the dagger. He shot a blast at me, but I think it was mostly for show. He didn't seem surprised that I could defend against those. Then he changed tactics. Suddenly he created a link with my mind. It was if we were standing in an empty, nearly dark room. I could see him and me, but nothing beyond us.

"My name is two, because I was the second born." he said. "Well two" I said "I am 1. And I guess that means I out rank you." He didn't react to my prodding. Instead he said. "In spite of being a constant failure, you do have a meager amount of talent. Why don't you join us and really help to bring order to the galaxy?" he asked. "So were back to insults again are we?" I asked. "Not insult just an observation." he said slyly. He began with my early child hood and started picking out all the things I ever did wrong. "Remember when you first got the title 1? You took all the credit for taking down the three officers. But isn't it true that it was really a team effort. If the others didn't cause a distraction in the first place you would have never gotten close enough to shoot them. You took the credit for others hard work." he said. "Isn't that so?" I responded to his accusations "What I did took great skill, that is what the name 1 means. One shot one kill." "I'm not arguing your skill with a weapon, but that your reputation is based on false bravado. Three soldiers acted as a decoy and got taken out of the contest in order to allow you to sneak past the guards. If that had been a real situation then three people would have died because of you. You are a faker. You strut around speaking like you're the expert in all things military. But your just a scared little girl who has been very lucky." he argued. He was acting like this was some sort of court case and he was trying to convince the jury. "You can think what you want to, even if you take away that day away, I've certainly proved myself since then." I defended.

"Let consider more then." he said. "When you supposedly saved that town from your fathers attack. You did so by cowardly means. By the laws of honor on the planet, you were supposed to have the town officially declare defiance to your fathers wishes publically before engaging in any kind of war tactics. You didn't do that did you? No you lied to your father ,drugged him and had him put in a cage like an animal. Is that how you show respect for your parents? You know when we capture military people on planets we treat them kindly. No one is abused or hurt unnecessarily. We only take the dangerous military and political leaders. And the peaceful planets we have left alone. You criticize our ways but we act honorably. We are more honorable than little you, miss high and mighty 1." Ok this one got to me a bit. I had always doubted myself on the issue of the town I helped save. I wondered if I could have done it differently. I had saved them but I had violated a point of honor. I had justified it in my mind by telling myself that I had done a good thing. He was probably just reading that doubt in my mind and playing on it.

I wasn't about to give him anymore ammunition. I had to let him do the talking and look for a weakness in his argument. He would slip up somewhere. He was too confident in his superiority. He continued his case "The ends do not justify the means. Don't the guardians teach this?" he asked. "You should know that better than anyone. It was one of the reasons you had a falling out with your father, then you violated that very thing the next time you saw him. That makes you a bit of a hypocrite now doesn't it?"

I had gotten good at controlling my temper but this hit a raw nerve. “Let me tell you something you puffed up metal headed jerk. I’ve done more to help people than you have. You can stand here and berate me, but it doesn't change anything, and it won’t make me join you, or feel sorry for you. If the Guardians didn't think I was worthy, they wouldn't have chosen me, now would they.” I defended again.

He paused then asked “Are the guardians perfect? Or do they occasionally make mistakes? How many potential Guardian candidates have failed? How many times have they failed to achieve an objective? Look at us. They cannot stop us, just delay our progress.” This time I had no good come back, the Guardians weren't perfect, and they did make mistakes sometimes. “They will fall. I'm giving you a chance to join the winning side.” He wasn’t getting me with that argument. “No matter what you say I will never side with you.” I told him. “You follow the Guardians because you believe they are the best influence and leaders in the galaxy. But what if there was a better choice?” I could see where he was going with that thought. “And you think you’re the better choice, do you?” I asked. He circled me like a vulture. “Suppose it wasn't us. Suppose there was another group of Guardians who could do it better, would you stay with the old ones or go with the new ones?” “How can I answer that? Such speculation is pointless. There's not. You’re certainly not, that for sure.”

“Consider this.” he continued “On every planet we occupy there is peace. No wars, no crime, no violence.” I shook my head “yeah but at what cost, the peoples freedom. You infect the population with your tech bugs.” he shook his head in the same manner “Only temporarily, so they will help get supplies. When we control all planets, they will be set free to live thier life as long as they live peaceably.” He wasn't lying about the way the people were being treated. They weren't being abused or mistreated by the Sils which was why the Guardians had told the populations submit to them until they could be defeated. Maybe if I tried a different tactic here it would help “I admit you have been lenient with the people. That's why we told them to do as you ask and not fight back. But that is a long way from saying your better at keeping peace than the Guardians.” I responded. He was making a strong case here. I needed to find his weakness. “The Guardians have been fighting the dark Guardians for thousands of years. They have the experience, not you.” I explained. “Who ran off the dark Guardians, not you? It was us. He came back “Who cured the people of the undead state? Who took out all the militaries in the galaxy without losing one single human life? It was us. You have killed many of us, but we have yet to kill one human or one Guardian even though we could have. Every time, we stop short of this. All the Guardians could be dead by now. We choose not to kill them. But they have killed us. So which one if us is the real threat here? It is not us. “Doing a few good deeds doesn't make you better” I said, not completely convinced of own side now.

He continued on. “Tell me this” he asked “What would make us better, intentions or effectiveness?” I countered with “Both are important. You haven't been around long enough to prove either one yet.” “Let’s consider something shall we? The Guardians however good, can still be affected by feelings. We cannot. The Guardians have good intentions but not effectiveness as I see it. And we are not trying to rid the galaxy of the Guardians. But we think well can do a better job than the Guardians of keeping order. Let them follow our leadership. Is that so bad?” He could see he was getting to me. “You question our motivation, but you cannot question our effectiveness. Have the Guardians ever freed the galaxy of the dark Guardians before? No they haven't? Think about it. We ran off the dark Guardians while constantly beating the light Guardians at the same time. How's that for effective? We are here to bring order and peace. That is our basic command and reason for being. The one called Etan programmed this into our first mother. She passed it on to the first born the one we call steel, and he passed it to us. We took the Guardian principles and perfected them. Are you sure you’re on the right side?” he asked.

I had thought I could convince him but he was convincing me. Then inspiration hit me. “If you guys are so good and the right choice then why can’t you deal with things diplomatically? Go to the Guardians and work out some kind of deal?” Now I had him. I knew I would find the weakness in his argument. The Guardians often solved problems with diplomacy. “It’s interesting you should ask that. Our leader is on his way to see Selar right now. He allowed himself to be captured so he would be taken to him.” he said. He broke the mental link and pointed to the view screen. He projected the image of the meeting. My whole life was about to change in the next few minutes.

There can be only one.

Reapers view

Selar had me bring Steel to his palace ship, which was still on Argaria. He was in the main audience chamber that was used for special occasions. Steel had woke up on the trip back but didn't put up a fight. I changed the ship back into battleship size so I would have enough room for security measures. I put the Sil in a cell surrounded by force a field and plasma beams. But he didn't look concerned. When we arrived at Selars palace he looked pleased. If I didn't know better I would think that this had been all his idea and it was going according to plan. All four Regents and the Commander were there. The chamber was filled with Guardians and humans alike. By the look there were at least a thousand people present for this occasion. Then steel walked up the middle isle as if he were an invited dignitary on a diplomatic mission. This was not the response I had expected at all. I figured I would be bringing him into some kind of private interrogation. I was hoping for an opportunity to find out how to torture a Sil. Maybe a really big heat lamp would do. Selar who seemed to be the spokesman for the Guardian counsel stood up and welcomed steel. Steel gestured back a slight bow of respect. Ok what was this? Have I lost my mind or am I stuck in some kind of drug induced hallucination? "Just so you know the proceedings today are being broadcast to every telecast station in the galaxy." Selar stated Steel nodded "All the better. I officially offer you a cease fire to all hostilities. All the Mistles have withdrawn and will not fire, unless fired upon first." Selar looked pleased but not surprised "I accept your cease fire. And I hereby command all Guardians throughout the galaxy to cease all hostilities against the Mistle's." This time it was steel that looked pleased but not surprised. I could see already this was going to be a type of verbal match between Selar and steel. This should be good.

"I am here to present my case against the Guardians, being in charge of the galaxy." Steel said with confidence. Considering he was surrounded by a large group of Guardians and as far as I could see and he was alone, that was a bold statement. I liked him already. "Although we don't actually run the galaxy we just protect the people from threats, we will hear your case." Selar said. Why was he even giving this metal head the time of day? Interrogate or incinerate him, either way was fine with me but this was a waste of time. He started out making a list of how they had run off the dark Guardians, stopped the galactic wars and healed the zombies all without losing one human life. Selar just smiled and said "yes, a job well done." Selar said as if he had sent them on a mission. Steel continued his defense "On the planets we occupy there are no major crimes being committed, and as long as we are in charge there won't be. We are the superior leaders." Steel had good points; they had been much more effective than the Guardians lately. Maybe they were getting old and needed to be replaced. Thinking back on our fight I realized, steel could have called for back up but he didn't. Thier ability to wage war was impressive no matter how you looked at it. My tech arm allowed me to read the minds of humans and a few other species. Nearly all the humans present were siding with steel. On one hand I never thought anyone could beat the Guardians but on the other hand I always thought Guardians were a bit over confident. Was this thier time to step down and let a new power rule?

Steel continued on "We have no desire to hurt you or anyone, we just want order, perfect order. We can bring that. If you continue this war, we will eventually win regardless. We do not sleep or rest and we can reproduce very quickly as you have seen. No matter what you use against us, we can adapt. There is simply no way in the long run for you to win. Do the sensible thing, hand over control and you can work for us. You can keep on doing what you have been doing anyway but under our guidance. Now is that so bad?" Now I felt a few fleeting emotions coming from some of the Silver Guardians. They were questioning if letting the Mistles guide things could be the best course. I can't believe he managed to sway a few of them. But it was hard to argue against success. Given the acceptance here, I would imagine a large group of humans would agree with steel now. Maybe that was his real plan anyway. Cause a rift big enough the Guardians had to give him control to prevent a galactic civil war, those for and those against the Guardians. If that were true then they would win by default regardless of what the Guardians decided. It would also explain why they went to such lengths to not harm any humans or Guardians even though they were being killed. Selar stood up out of his throne. He walked to the middle of the open court area. He wasn't just getting ready to address steel he had to address all the doubters now. I was literally on the edge of my seat for this. Seriously I almost fell off. The next few moments would decide the fate of the galaxy.

Selar was his usual calm self. I figured with what the Steel just said that he should be at least a little nervous. “That was a very eloquent argument you’ve made steel. In fact most the humans and Silver Guardians here seem to agree with you. You are correct when you say you have been effective at getting rid of the dark Guardians. And I have to acknowledge that you have stopped crime for the moment. I will also say that I have seen the time lines where the Mistles are in control and you do bring about galactic peace.” Omg!! Was Selar was making a concession? The audience gasped with surprise. “So what is your answer?” Steel asked as if it was a rhetorical question. Just in time for the good stuff, Etan showed up and sat next to me. There was plenty of room since most people tended to give me a wide boundary. “I have listened to your case, now it's your turn to hear me out.” Selar stated. I couldn't imagine what he could say now to salvage this situation.

He began his argument. “First of all your progress thought-out the galaxy was not all of your doing. We allowed it because it would ultimately serve the greater good. We knew that allowing you to proceed would be the best way to cure the half dead state of the affected humans as well as fighting the dark Guardians. What we lack is numbers and you have that. They cannot scare or enslave you so you are the perfect defense against them. Secondly your seeming advantage over us is not as clear cut as you think. I could have gone to any planet you were at and created a metallic disruption wave that only affected only you and nothing else. None of the Guardian counsel got involved for that reason. It was our decision to allow you to make the progress you did.” Selar paused after this letting everyone take in this new perspective. I myself was amazed. It was easy to forget just how powerful the council was. Steel looked at Selar with intensity. He obviously didn't expect that answer. Although neither did I. By the looks of the faces around me, all of us were surprised by his answer. I had thought the counsel was guiding the war I didn't realize they had purposely stayed out of it.

Now it was Steels turn to answer again. “If what you say is true, what now?” Everyone looked at Selar, waiting to see what would happen next. I wasn't good at sitting still for very long but I have to admit this had my full attention. “What was always meant to be?” Selar said. “The Guardians and Mistles will work together to keep peace.” Steel tried to be sly. “You already said that we could keep peace by ourselves why do we need you?” Selar smiled in that Guardian way he has. “You could keep peace but in the long term you cannot help people grow. Struggle is a part of life. Without a choice people become stagnate and die. You cannot understand human emotions like we can. We are not just leading societies in peace but individuals in personal growth. That is peace within.” Steel looked like he was considering this. “You make a logical point but can you prove you help people to grow and change.” Steel asked. Selar nodded “As a matter of fact we can. I can show you how in one move, we can create peace within the populations. The question is what will you do?” Steel took time before he answered “If you prove you can do this, I will confer with the collective about this and we will consider joining you. Even though I have been directing the flow of the war, a decision this big will have to be agreed on by the entire population.”

“Very well” Selar said. He looked at the communications monitor that was broadcasting out to every planet. “This is a priority one command to all Argarians in the galaxy. Perform project encompass, now.” I could monitor several places from my gauntlet and I could scan many Argarians located on several planets. They all closed their eyes and concentrated. The few here in the assembly did the same. A visible wave flowed outward and eventually encompassed the entire planet. The same thing was happening on all the other planets. I felt the effects of the wave. A sensation of peace and tranquility filled me, it was disgusting. I hated feeling peaceful. Now it all made sense. The ferry trips I had been making were all Argarians. Selar said what I was doing was more important than I realized. He was getting them in place to do this. So them leaving Argaria was a ruse, a ruse to set this up. Dang they're good. After conferring with his fellow Mistles, steel said “we will need time to process this. We will let you know what we decide.” After that the meeting was adjured I would like to have had another round with steel but Selar refused. Later steel approached me and said he would like to spar with me. That made me happy. He said he enjoyed the challenge I offered him. Little did he know, how devious I could be, but he would soon learn.

Taurus's report

5 days after the end of the war

More and more Argarians are arriving each day. Great lengths have been made to bring in limited numbers each day to re-assimilate the population to their former jobs and live styles. Things are quite lively here again as each person has many new memories and experiences to share.

Steels comments

The collective agreed to join with the Guardians probationary and see how things go before we make a long term commitment. As a bonus I got to meet our mother, Misteeek and our creator Etan.

1's comments

After we watched the events in Selars palace ship, 02 and I were no longer enemies, but I wanted to make a few points back toward him. He had accused me of being dishonorable with my father and taking all the credit on a mission when I was a child. I didn't dishonor my father, he dishonored himself. He attacked an unarmored village. What we did was not an attack, but really a defense. So honor was not violated. Also I didn't take any credit and being called **1**, that's what others called me. I earned my rank and respect. I am not perfect but I have helped save many lives. I explained all this to 2. He nodded and said that I was a worthy opponent; he hoped to spar physically with me one day. Now I felt better. My honor was restored and I had worked out something in my mind that had always bothered me. Today was a good day after all.

Etans Final comments

After the meeting Selar had with steel. Everything else seemed to go pretty smooth. After a few days the Mistles decided to join the Guardians and see how things went. Mostly there was galactic peace for years to come except for a few areas. Some minor fighting occurred. On one planet, two countries were fighting over some of the resources left behind by the mistles. It was on the land of the one country but had come from a mine of the other one, so both were claiming to have the rights to it. A few other countries were still mad at the neighboring countries that had attacked them with the dark weapons. A Guardians work is never done, I suppose. The Mistles were an immediate help by helping divide the left over resources and stop the fighting.

By the time 50 years had passed after the war, I had been promoted to corporal and had surpassed in power all other Silvers my same rank and down. In fact the next one hundred years after the war were not nearly as stressful or eventful as my first 12 years as a Guardian had been. Mostly it was filled with diplomatic meeting and the normal expected natural disasters. Although I could do many Guardian abilities, form change was always my favorite one. It would serve me greatly in the years to come. It wasn't until just after my two hundredth birthday, when I was promoted to sergeant that a racial war created galactic changes once again. But that is another story.

The End