

Guardian Chronicles

The Great Divide

Prologue by Matt

Etan was about to be promoted and given his first real command. Will our hero get a chance to relax for awhile? Not a chance. Etan will have to help four dying races, deal with another war, and a mysterious new enemy. If that wasn't bad enough how: how about Etan being best man at Reapers wedding? Yeah, I thought that would get your interest. Read on and see if we can fix the great Divide.

Older and wiser but not perfect

Etan's view

He can be aggravating at times, but Reaper threw me a huge 200th birthday party. This time he didn't shoot me in the back with a dart but he drugged me when I slept. I woke up trapped in a small box. I could see outside the box through a peep hole but I couldn't change form, teleport out or even move. I asked Matt for help but he couldn't do anything either. I knew I was either already in trouble or I was about to be. I was in a coffin being carried to a meeting hall at a funeral home. I had been so busy the last few weeks with diplomatic conferences that I had actually forgotten that it was my birthday. I learned later that Selar had given Reaper something to paralyze me temporarily. But I didn't know that right then and there. All I knew was I was confined and paralyzed lying in a coffin. I was forced to watch the whole ceremony.

After some thought I figured either I had been attacked by some dark Guardian while I slept, and they had made it look like I had died, or else this was a surprise birthday party. Selar probably wouldn't have made such a mistake on someone faking my death, so I didn't freak out. But they made me sit through the whole ceremony. Several people got up and said nice things about me. The kind of things said at a real funeral. If this had been real I would have been touched. Even Reaper got up and shed a few fake tears for show. While this was going on I decided to plan my own surprise for him. I'd give him something to cry about.

They even went so far as to take the coffin to the grave site and bury it. When the whole thing was over, suddenly I felt my powers come back. When I got out I decided to do a little mischief of my own. I came out of the coffin and quickly formed into storm cloud. I got to rain on everyone before Celestial and Vortex teamed up against me to stop my drenching. After that I solidified and joined the festivities. The party lasted all day and the night. Different people came and went throughout that time. But I was expected to meet and greet them all.

At the same time I was getting my birthday party Selar had decided to promote me. Sixty three years ago I had been promoted to corporal. Now I was going to be a sergeant. I had hoped to avoid a command, but this was not to be. I was perfectly fine with just continuing to be a silver Guardian, going about business, but Selar said he wouldn't let me waste my real potential. I couldn't complain too much though, ever since the end of the war, I had, had it easy. It was the day after my birthday and promotion that I was to get the real shock. I still had a room on Selar's place ship, to stay in when I wasn't on a mission. I had just woken up and was getting ready for the day when the whole ship began to shake. But it wasn't just us; the whole planet had been shaken too. Then I found out every planet in the galaxy had been experienced the same event at the same time. What was going on?

Before I found out the answer to that question Master Selar had something for me. As expected after the promotion, I was assigned a group of three younger Guardian trainees to teach and lead. I was to be their mentor, and help them continue to develop their abilities. They were fresh out of Guardian school. Selar wanted me to get used to leading a group. I had a feeling these three were just the tip of the iceberg as to what was coming. Little did I know how true that would be.

The first was called Justice, who was good at creating positive traits in others, like courage and or kindness. The second was known as Mouth. He had a funny ability to communicate with almost any non living matter. He could talk to stars, the ground or almost anything made of matter or energy. He said that, to him they all had a personality. That they could tell him anything that had happened to them in their existence. His ability was an extension of object knowledge, which was a very difficult skill to master. The third was called Terrestrial. He could change almost any kind of matter into another kind. Matter transference was a skill I could do, but hadn't yet mastered. In some ways it was like my form change ability. I could change myself and he could change almost anything else.

Every Guardian had to pass the same test for silver, but every Guardian had their own specialties they liked to do best. My three young trainees weren't silvers yet, but I hoped to help them get there. Since there wasn't a major war going on right now, I didn't have to direct a battle or even take charge of whole platoon, so for that I was grateful. Not to say there wasn't always smaller skirmishes to put out, but at least we weren't in a galactic war. The Mistles had proven themselves very useful in helping to prevent any major battles from happening. Their numbers in this galaxy had dwindled much in the last few years as Selar began sending them out to explore new galaxies that had never explored. There were over 600 billion galaxies known to exist, it was a big universe.

Selar gave me my first mission to lead right away. When he decided to do something, he didn't wait any time. But before I could go, he had to teach me another secret of how the universe works. I had thought that by knowing about the IntraVerse, that I knew the universes biggest secret. Somehow, no matter what I learned there was always another surprise waiting for me down the road. The best way I can explain it is using an example of a tomato. Take a tomato and slice it from one side to the other into several pieces. Take the middle slice out. That is what we see in our universe, which includes the billions of galaxies and everything in them. Now take a look at the other slices. The universe contains them too. There are layers to the universe that are linked to ours. The shaking that all the planets experienced had come from the part of the life stream that connects these layers.

It wasn't immediately apparent what the cause was but many Guardians and Mistles were being sent to these layer for scouting missions. Selar had explained that the life stream that flowed through the layers was a lot like the Jet stream and the Gulf Stream on earth. They helped keep temperature balance. The streams on earth worked like a conveyor belt redistributing heat and cold. The life stream helped keep the same kind of balance with energy among all the connected layers of the universe. If damage happened in one of the layers it had an effect on all the layers.

You would think that such a big event, like the shaking of all the planets would have to come from an equally big event in another layer. But that wasn't the case. Even a small tear in the fabric of reality could cause big trouble. Each universal layer was a different size and had its own unique set of natural laws. I was sent to such a layer. The unit I was to lead, I called Caldera, after the dormant Yellowstone volcano. I had always been associated with volcanoes so I thought it would be appropriate. I had gotten over my fear of them long ago.

For this mission Selar sent Reaper, MisteeK and I with me. Sometimes MisteeK spent time with her children but other times she liked to go with me on missions. This scouting mission was to an area neither one of us had been before so she was excited to go. Selar didn't let us take Reapers battle ship this time; he said it was needed elsewhere. Reaper gave him a mean look, but didn't argue. Selar had a lot of patience but he didn't put up with Reaper rebelling against his authority. This didn't stop Reaper from trying of course but he had learned most of the time when to shut up around Selar. I still remember one time Reaper smarted off something to Selar and he punished Reaper by making him a statue for the week. He could see and hear but not move or even talk. When I got close I could hear his thoughts, it was driving him crazy. He had a hard time being still for a few minutes

much less stuck as a statue for a week. To add to his punishment Selar had him moved to a peaceful animal sanctuary. He was the center piece of a waterfall display. It was meditation spot for many.

I was the unfortunate one to have to return him to human form after the weeks end. He came out fighting. He knew I didn't do it to him, but he wanted to hit somebody, anybody. I let him hit me hard a few times. I turned into rock. After pummeling my rock body to dust, he calmed down, a little. I wasn't hurt, I just reformed. He was calmer but still livid. I brought him a new sword I had picked up recently on an ancient world that cheered him up.

The trip to the new part of the universe was interesting. We were told to go a specific system where three stars orbited each other closely. The gravitational center point of the three stars was our exit location from this layer of the universe. The science vessel we were on was specifically designed to go to other layers. It was about twice as big as a shuttle but a similar design. It had a few basic weapons but was certainly was no battle ship. That didn't stop Reaper from trying to find a way to upgrade them anyway. He used his tech arm to alter several systems. Between that and playing with his new sword he was happy for a few minutes. Sometimes I felt like a father driving a Suv back on earth trying to keep all the kids preoccupied in the back on along trip. Especially since Reaper had bad habit of asking are we there yet? Although I think he did that just to annoy me.

The vessel formed a vortex like aperture in the center point of the orbiting stars. A normal hyper window was like the fabled worm holes in earth sci-fi. It was a red colored fold of space time fabric. But this aperture was not just an open hole like a hyper window was this one was spinning like a tornado, and there was energy being exchanged all around on the inside of the funnel. We entered and were thrown about from side to side. I became air and told my silver trainees change to what they could. Reaper just used his arm to float in the middle of the tumbling effect. Maybe I should get one of those arms; it seemed to come in very handy. The last thing I remember was seeing a large solid object at the end of the funnel that we were about to hit. I thought, so far this mission doesn't seem to be going to well, little did I know it was about to get much worse before it got better.

Into the flames

Reapers view

I got up swinging. I didn't know where I was, or why I was here but no one was going to get away with knocking me out. My eyes were blurry and I was a bit off balance for a moment but that wouldn't stop me from lobbing off a head or two if needed. The room was dark but my eyes adjusted after a few moments. The room was made of rock and was lighted by a small flame. I used my eyes scanners to see that I was in some old lava tunnels far underground. I tried to mentally contact Etan or the others but I didn't get an answer. Great, the others probably got captured and it was going to be up to me to rescue them. I'd get Etan, and the young trainees, but there was no way that I was going to save that iron skirted fem fatale 1. If 1 couldn't get herself out of trouble, to bad for her. I darted out the room and down the hall when I saw a light coming. I cloaked and waited. The light turned out to be formed into a human sized figure. It was shaped like a candle flame. It moved without feet. It glided into the room I occupied and looked for me.

"Hello" it said" We studied the device you carry and learned enough of your language to communicate." It didn't seem aggressive to bad to I was hoping for a fight.

I uncloaked and asked who it was. "I am luster, the chief advisor to king ash fall." he said.

"I am Reaper" I responded" And if you think you are going to keep me prisoner, you have got a big surprise coming to you." he smiled in a Guardian like way.

"We saved you from the storms; we just brought you here to keep you safe. We would never hold anyone against thier will. It's not our way." Ugh, I'm in a far part of the universe and I keep running into pacifists. Now I know how Etan feels about the whole volcano thing.

"Take me to your leader." I demanded.

"Of course" he said "this way please." His niceness just made my stomach turn. I got enough of that from the Guardians. I went on missions for the action and to get away from all that sweetness. Now I had to put up with it here too. This wasn't as bad as the statue thing, but still pretty bad. What I wouldn't give for a few terrorist right now.

Apparently they had only put the light in the first room for my benefit, because there was no other lights anywhere. But the creatures themselves glowed, so I guess they never needed them. I was led through a series of old tunnels that was practically a maze. Hmm, some fire traps, poison darts and a few monsters and this place could be livable. After an eternity of walking I arrived at the king's chamber. It was a large audience chamber reminiscent of many I had seen before. There was a small hole that leads to a pool of lava far bellow. Most of the people looked like they were made of pure fire, but not the king. He was just a smoking coal. He looked old and weak.

"Welcome stranger, you come in our time of need." The king said. "My name is king ash fall the third, Leader of this dying people."

Terrific I thought, I get stranded in far part of the universe deep underground with a bunch of loser pacifist that need my help. I wondered if I had died and gone to hell. No I couldn't be there was not enough lava here for that. Though seeing some lava would have been more interesting.

"What's your problem?"

I said, not even trying to be diplomatic. The few times Selar gave me a diplomatic mission, I at least had to put on a show of politeness before I kicked thier butts. But this time I didn't even try to pretend to be nice, He,He

"Our people are called the Embers. We are made of fire, as you can see."

The king began." Yeah well, you don't look to fiery to me. You just look like a burnt out coal." I said hoping to provoke him. Sadly he wasn't provoked as I feared would be the case. But what he said next got my attention.

"We are being attacked by an enemy greater than us. It seems we are being exterminated little by little. The ice lings will be the death of us all." he stated. Hmm, here was a powerful enemy to defend a helpless people against maybe that could prove interesting.

He went on to explain how the Ice lings as he called them had started the war just over a hundred years ago. There were actually four elemental races that lived happily on one planet together. Then the Ice lings got greedy and wanted all the land for themselves. They formed an army and ran off the other races. To make matters worse, the Embers had lost a fire orb that allowed them to control the magma flow of a planet with it; they could ensure boundless energy for them. The orb had come up missing some time ago. The final nail in thier coffin was that somehow the ice lings were keeping the Ember females from becoming fertile. So thier numbers were dwindling down each year. Eventually they would all be gone, if nothing could be done to reverse the effect. This small sanctuary with its ever shrinking energy reserve was one of the last refuges left for thier people.

The king gave me some kind of pendent to show my allegiance to the fire people, in case I ran into any other small remaining groups. He had a guide show to the edge of thier land and directed me to where the Ice lings were. I was hoping they would be gigantic, monsters with ice claws. Or even ravenous beasts that had icy tentacles and loved the taste of human blood. That might be a good warm up. Warming up on an ice creature, Etan would laugh at the irony of that. On the way there I used my arm to replicate a few food rations, my arm wasn't a very good replicator but it would do in a pinch. After the wimpy fire guy left, I used my arm to power run north. I didn't want them to know my abilities just yet. I had a feeling more was going on here than he was letting on.

Eventually I saw a huge glacier. Something told me it probably was the right place. I scanned the area and found a few tunnels projecting from the sides of this colossal ice mass. I was hoping to meet a great defensive force but only one guard was standing in the tunnel. It was roughly human looking but by no surprise made of ice. It made screeching noises at me. After a few seconds my tech arm was able to translate its language.

"Come this way" it growled.

"Our leaders are waiting on you." I followed behind it, interested to see what I would find. I was led down the tunnels to a large meeting chamber similar to what the fire guys had.

An ice man who was obviously not the king approached me. "I'm glad your here, we've been expecting you. You're just in time to help us plan our invasion of the evil fire nation." he said.

"Actually I'm here stop you from that invasion." I told him.

This should get me some action now. "Did they tell you some sob story how bad we are, and that they are the victims? Well the truth is not like that at all. It is they who have caused all the trouble and have nearly wiped out the other three races altogether. We must stop them before they are the death of us all. They are using some kind of elemental weapon against us to make us die off. Our people were once intelligent and skilled. Now few of us are still bright enough to even run our own technology. They were trying to trick you into aligning with the wrong side." After that he showed me some historical recordings of the fire guy's evil deeds. Well this changed everything. I don't like being tricked. I would make those stupid fire people pay for thier trickery.

Icy Reception

Etans veiw

When I woke up my eyes were a bit blurry for a second and my head was still spinning and the room was freezing. I could feel Matt was a bit shaken up over the incident too. I mentally called out to the others but I got no answer. My eyes began to clear a moment later and I saw I was a room made entirely of ice. It looked like I was inside a hollowed out glacier. I had a moment to look around before a man also made of ice walked through the door. He was over seven foot tall with broad shoulders and huge arms. If he had been human he would have made a great bouncer for some club or bar back on earth.

Fantasy books on earth had talked about elementals. Creatures made of the elements but I never thought I would see one in real life. Just one more observation to make of I ever got to tell people of earth what I had seen. He attempted to communicate with me, but his sounds came out sounding like breaking glass. I touched him on the shoulder and changed to his form so I could understand his speech. "What are you, strange creature." the ice man asked in a growl.

"I am a biological life form from another part of the universe." I answered back.

He obviously didn't get the reference. "Come with me was his response."

I been normal water and ice before, but this was different. There were other chemicals in the water creating complex interactions. Instead of a carbon based life form, like humans. This life form was based on nitrogen and the hydrogen in the water. I didn't have a reason to not cooperate so I followed him out the door.

The corridors led to many other rooms as we passed down the hall. This reminded me in some ways of an ant mound. Crystalline rocks that matched the ice, was being used for power and lighting. The furniture, walls, floors, everything here was made of ice. In this form I felt right at home. Since we were both ice, we sort of skated along the floor instead of actually walking. I was led to a audience chamber to see this communities leader. It was a large chamber with high ceilings. They must have gone up at least 100 feet. Six pillars were spaced out throughout the room supposedly holding up the roof. The crystalline lights shining off the flowing water fountain in the middle gave it the whole room a magical effect. The leader was an older looking ice man with ice shards

for a beard. I had to stop myself from laughing at that, it might have been taken as rude. He was wearing a grayish robe made of a bark looking material. In this environment, it was probably a hard material to come by so only the local elder got to wear it, as a sign of status.

He asked me where I came from. I explained the best I could. He seemed to understand me, unlike the ogerish looking man that had first approached me.

"My name is elder melt water. I am the local leader of the tribe of Aquarians."

I bowed slightly to show respect for his position

"I am Etan of the Guardians. We are protectors of all life. "I went on to explain why I had been sent here. About the universal shaking and how we were trying to find the cause. I also asked him about the others but they had only found me alone. I was found just outside thier city, on top of the ice. Then the elder made a few comments about the other nations.

"Well I imagine" melt water began "the shaking was caused by the hot heads or maybe the blowhards did it, they got good tech, I hear."

He explained that there were four races in thier part of the universe. They were the Aquarians, and then there were the hotheads, made of fire, the blowhards made of air and the stoners made of rock. I doubted that was there real names given his tone. It sounded more like a slang term to me.

The elder seemed intelligent enough but most of the other ice people seemed to be kind of brutish and stupid. He looked at me silently for a moment and then said

"Let me show you something." He took me to his private library. He had books on law and history there. He showed me the history of his people. The strange this was all the historical files only went back to just over 100 years ago. It seems that there was an elemental falling out. Before 100 years ago everything they had was just legend and hearsay, there was no recorded evidence. According to them, their legend states that for thousands of years the four elementals lived in unison with each other. Then the fire and air nations tried to take over the other four. They created some kind of weapon that is causing more and more of the Aquarians to become unintelligent. They were planning to make a major offensive against the fire nation soon to force them to undo thier meddling.

The Regent showed me the few remnants of thier past culture, Music, literature and art. They used to be an intelligent and peaceful people. Now all that was left was cold hatred toward the fire and air nations. This was a bad situation all around. I explained that just like I could take the Aquarians form, I could also take the fire nations form and find out what was going on. If there was a weapon being used against them I would find it, and set things right. The elder had a guide to show me to the edge of Aquarian land. The fire nation lived much further south, a place they didn't like to go, unless they had too. The king gave me a pendent with the Aquarians symbol as his blessing in case I ran into other Aquarians later. Hopefully some or all of the others would be near the fire nation's borders. I tried to mentally contact them again, but no luck. When the ice guide left me, I turned into a bird and flew south toward a warmer climate. Before long I saw a doormat volcano, I bet that's where a nation of fire people would live. Volcanoes, I can't seem to get away from them.

Matts comments

You got that so far. Reaper met with the Embers and then went to the Aquarians. While Etan meet the Aquarians and went looking for the Embers.

Rocky determination--Gemanites

Misteeks view

I woke up a daze. That had been one rough ride. I had been able to activate the emergency transport on the shuttle just after exiting the dimensional aperture. I hoped everyone had made it out safe. I was alone on a barren planet. It had no grass or any living animal that I could see. I did sense some faint energy signatures in the distance so I followed it. A small mountain lay before me. I could scan a few tunnels leading into them. At the entrance to the nearest tunnel was a strange creature. A roughly humanoid sized being made of rock and gemstones. It was formed like a triangular shard of granite cut off a cliff. It tried talking to me, but the sound came out like the noise of an avalanche. I changed form to match and now I could understand its speech.

"Let me guess" the man said. "You here to finish us off?" what?

"I just got stranded here on this planet and saw an energy signature so I followed it." I told him. He looked at me for a moment and shrugged.

"Follow me I'll take you to see some of our elders then." he stated. "Whatever you say rocky, I said with cheerfully." This was better than being alone on a barren planet. That would be awful.

The series of tunnels led to a large audience chamber far bellow the surface. The guard told some of the others what I had said. They determined I wasn't a threat and the local king entered the chamber.

"I am Dantee Topas the fourth. I am king of the Gemanites. Who are you? And what do you want?" I spent the next few minutes explaining about the Guardians and the Mistle's and why we were here.

"Well then maybe your not here to destroy us after all, although I doubt there is anything you can do to help either." he said. I talked to him and a few others for awhile. Everything they said sounded depressing. I was naturally and upbeat person. Who liked to have fun and make jokes but these guys were really cramping my style. He explained that their people were called the Gemanites. That once they had been a great and powerful race until the blowhards as they called them had all but destroyed them. The air nation had advanced technology that was causing nearly all the gemanite eggs to die before hatching. In a matter of years all of them would be gone. "I'm sure it's not that bad. My creator Etan will be able to help you get fixed. Either him or one of the other Guardians, they can do almost anything. Cheer up why don't you." I said helpfully.

"Maybe you're right, but I'm not going to get my hopes up over It." he said.

He showed me the historical files. It seems that long ago, all four races lived in harmony, and then the air nation got greedy and wanted to destroy the others. They created technology to run off or destroy the other three. They haven't heard from any of the fire or ice nations in years. There used to be some kind of tectonic orb that allowed thier people to control the land, but the air nation stole it, so now the Geminaites were doomed no matter what they did. Worse yet, the air nation had superior tech and had used it to open some kind of dimensional rift.

Their guess was they were using it, to try to wipe out the other elementals also, assuming any were still left. The air nation was a race of ruthless and evil people bent on the destruction of all other races. I vowed right there that I would help them set things right. They seemed thankful for my offer but they didn't believe anything could be done to help them. If the air nation thought they were going to keep tormenting this innocent and peaceful people they had a surprise coming. I set out to find these air guys and show them a thing or two. I was Misteek, Queen of the Mistles. I could do almost anything a fully realized silver guardian could do. They would pay for thier treachery. I was shown a map of the planet, showing where the air guys were. I didn't take long for me to reach thier territory. A huge dry dusty plain lay ahead of me. Small tornado like forms darted back and forth like racing shuttles. In the distance I saw a familiar sight; it was our shuttle. Several beings in mechanical suits were inspecting it. First they were trying to wipe out the Geminites now they were trying to steal our tech; I wasn't going to put up with this at all.

Stratos fear

1's view

The shuttle was barreling toward some sort of physical barrier. Fortunately I was used to keeping aware of everything going on around me. It came from being a woman as well as a military commander. While I was piloting the craft, Etan created a shield to protect us. We hit the barrier with a great force and the shuttle began to break up in space. Misteek freaked out and hit the emergency transport. I blocked the transporter from me so I could try to save the ship. I had scanned four solar systems that were within transporter range. As the transport sequence activated some kind of spatial anomaly opened up and threw off the targeting beams. I saw that everyone ended up in different places but they were alive.

I continued to guide the shuttle to the nearest planet. I hoped I could save enough of it to be repairable. As I was coming in, I was hoping I could aim the decent close to a city, but there weren't any. The whole planet was bleak, a dry rocky waste land. I managed to slow the shuttle down as I descended but I knew it would still be a crash landing. My thoughts flashed to the others just before I hit the ground. I woke up a few hours later, surrounded by people in mechanical suits. The suits were small, sleek and sophisticated looking. They were made of some kind of polymer or high tech plastic.

My first thought was they were foreign to this planet and couldn't breathe its atmosphere. But then I noticed it had exhaust and intake ports. It was channeling air into the suits, how strange. One of them took off his helmet when he stepped on an air exhaust port in the floor. When he spoke it sounded like the whistling of wind, which was not shocking since he looked like a living dust devil. He was made of swirling air. I wasn't as good as Etan on form changes. I hadn't done air in a long time, but I figured I could manage. I change to swirling air to match them. They looked very surprised. We spent the next hour exchanging names and places of origin. They were called the Stratos.

There were four elemental races. Long ago they all had lived in harmony. Then a new ice king came along and upset the balance. He stole the four elemental orbs that help keep balance. He was now a massing a great army to control all the other races. Of course the stoners, also called Gemanaites were the Stratos greatest problem. The dust they stirred up constantly messed up the Stratos air flow. Somehow the stoners had a weapon that was causing the Stratos to become weak, that's why they needed turbine suits now.

The Stratos had tried to open a dimensional rift to another part of the universe to find a place they could prosper but the rift became unstable. Later on it began to appear and disappear randomly. At least now I knew what we had run into. They knew by way of spy drones that the other races were in trouble too. They had thought for along time the stoners had taken thier orb, but after a few years of monitoring they had come to the conclusion the new ice king was behind most of the trouble. They were a very skittish race; afraid of everything but other wise they seemed ok. They had one last hope for survival. They planned to work with the embers to take out the Aquarians.

A communications drone had been sent to the Embers main city. It would arrive in a matter of days. The Ember city was on another planet, but if they agreed to help they might be able to stop the Ice lings coming attack. It seemed that these Stratos were very well organized, considering thier situation. They liked to keep records on everything.

Since they seemed to have decent tech, I asked them to take a look at the shuttle and see if they might be able to repair it. If nothing else I might could take spare parts and with thier help assemble a dimensional communications relay to send for another transport. While they were taking a look, I decided to survey the surrounding land. The shuttle had crashed on a windy plain; they apparently needed extra support for thier bodies. As I was leaving, I saw a familiar sight on the horizon. Misteek was obviously surprised to see me.

"I guess you are here, to bring down the air heads too, huh?" That caught me by surprise.

"What do you mean?" I asked. She began telling me all the things the Gemanites had told her. I shared with her the things I had learned.

"So I guess we don't have all the information here." Misteeek concluded.

"I suppose not." I agreed.

"Maybe we should go try to find the boys; they always seem to get themselves into trouble." I mused.

"Yeah maybe they'll be the male damsels in distress and we can go save them."

"That would be funny." Misteeek agreed.

We went with the Stratos and conferred where the last location that both Reaper and Etan were seen. No drones had spotted the three trainees yet, but when the rest of us got back together hopefully we would be able to track them down. The Stratos gave us a communications device for each of us to have. The rules of how waves acted apparently were different in this universal layer than our own. They also gave us a tracking device to follow Reaper and Etans movement. A few drones had spotted each of them on the move, probably looking for us. Misteeek turned into a small ship and we flew up and off the planet. We agreed to get our parties and meet back here with the Stratos. As odd as things were, they were about to get odder.

Odds and ends.

Misteeeks veiw

1 and I agreed to split up and look for the boys. Naturally I would seek master Etan and she would find Reaper. All of us ended up in different places. Four solar systems had been close enough to transport too. A few minutes passed and I was at the targeted planet. Wandering around on a lonely plain was Etan. But he looked strange. He could take most any form, but he usually looked human when he didn't need to copy something. For some reason, he had brown bark skin and yellow eyes. I knew it was him from his energy signature. No matter what form he takes I can feel him. He made me from some of his own body, so we are linked.

"Master Etan, what are you doing? You look like a walking tree?" I said. He seemed confused by my statement.

"I should hope so, I am from the volcanic conifers you know." he said and kept walking. Upon closer inspection I realized this wasn't Etan. His signature was nearly identical but there were some slight variances. Just then **1** called

"You not going to believe this but I just found Reaper or some version of him anyway. He is a type of tentacle plant." "Yeah I just found Etan" I responded "He is some kind of plant too."

Just when I didn't think things could get stranger, they did. A tree form of **1** appeared. I called to **1** to see if she would answer.

"Are you still there?" I asked.

"Certainly, should I not be?" she asked back.

"I'm not sure" I responded, confused.

"A plant version of you just appeared in front of me. And now she is talking with this Etan."

"Stay there" she stated "I'll come to you."

In a few moments she appeared in the sky carrying the plant version of Reaper. She set him down and they started talking between themselves but pretty much ignored us altogether. I studied them for a moment. I can see in their minds. They are sentient but not very intelligent, they won't be of much help, I'm afraid. The scanner the Stratos gave me shows this was Etan. Did they lie to us?" I asked.

"No I doubt it. The scanner was tracking them from their last known energy signatures. The drones are probably just a basic spy drone, not capable of complex scans."

After we talked more we both agreed the dimensional fissure was to blame for this. But we were still left with the original problem of how to find the boys. Well we were here now; we might as well check this planet.

**For every action part one
wind and water
commentary**

King Icy abyss had heard that new life forms had entered his space. According to his spies all four races had been visited lately. He knew about the Stratos drones that had been spying on him for some time, now it was time to turn that to his advantage. Using one of the drones he contacted the Stratos and asked to meet with their leader.

"This is most unusual" king Gust of the Stratos, stated with surprise.

"I am here to help both our peoples" king abyss stated.

"I know what is hurting both our races. You need our moisture and we need your air to oxygenate our Aquarian cells." Gust considered this. "How did you come to this conclusion and how do I know it's true?" Gust responded.

"Allow one of our members to enter your realm and we can show you. He can add our water to your air to make you strong again. Then you can reciprocate by oxygenating him. You will see it works." Abyss stated diplomatically.

"We agree, but only send one representative and he or she will be watched very closely." Gust said. We have a member of our race on your planet already; he is unarmed and will not attack you." Abyss said again.

"Very well" Gust responded. "But one wrong move and he will be dead before you can get any report from him."

A few minutes later, an Aquarian walked into the Stratos camp and created a mist. The nearby Stratos grew strong right away. They were able to remove their suits completely. After that it was only a matter of hours before a large group of Aquarians and Stratos met and healed each others infirmities. Now the Stratos were strong and all the Aquarians regained their lost intelligence.

"Now that we're allies of a sort, we want our air orb back, we know you have it." Gust demanded of king Abyss. "Of course, just know by studying the orbs is what allowed me to solve both our problems. I just wanted to help." Abyss explained. King Abyss brought the air orb himself to show his good will.

"Now my friend, let's get rid of our other problems. You have the Gemanites as a problem as we have the Embers. We will send them off our planets for good. We are strong, they are weak. We are many, while they are few. There is no way we can lose." Abyss explained. "We don't like the Gemanites, but we have no wish to wipe any one out. We do not seek excessive violence."

Gust said. "Neither do we"

Abyss "Responded "We will make them leave. After that they can do what they wish, as long as they are away from us.

Gust nodded "We agree. What's your plan?"

Rock and fire Commentary

While this meeting was taking place a similar meeting was taking place. The rock king Dantee Topaz decided to contact the fire king Ash fall through a small network they had. He explained that thier spies had reported that the air and ice nations were combing. The only reason for this would be for an attack. The Embers could join the Gemanites in Their Mountain for better safety. Through working together, they might be able to mount a formable defense against the coming attack. The fire king reluctantly agreed. He quickly gathered his people and they went to meet with the Gemanites. In the last 100 years the Gemanites hadn't really been friends but had never been enemies either. They just tended to mind thier own business.

There were only three remaining cities in the fire nation, so moving the entire population turned out to be fairly swift. The Embers met at a central location then proceeded as one people to the largest secured location of the Gemanites. As the embers drew near the Gemanite lair they could feel energy in the air. A low rumble and shaking began throughout the Mountain. The Embers felt a fresh lava vein near. They were weak from the trip and asked to use this vein to renew thier strength. The vein turned out to be a completely new one that just appeared. This had to be more than just simple coincidence. Some of the Gemanites guided the embers down to the lowest parts of the complex. One of the Gemanite leaders explained

"This flow was not here yesterday. This was simply a dead end tunnel." The embers quickly absorbed the precious energy.

They began to glow bright with health. The lava responded in turn, by growing to encompass the rest of the room. New minerals were added to the mix. Suddenly the female Embers glowed blue, showing they were fertile and ready to lay eggs. The Gemanite women too began to change color. The gems imbedded into them sparkled with life. Ash fall and Dantee confirmed on this occurrence. The fire and rock people were missing the heat and minerals they both needed for reproduction. Without each other they were both dying, but working together they could be strong again. But now they had a more serious problem, the eggs for both Gemanites and Embers could not be moved for several weeks while in the early stages of growth or they would die. They would have to defend this mountain at all cost.

Matt's comments.

We didn't know it at the time but each race affected thier own elements. They had lost this knowledge some time ago. The lava responded to the presence of the embers. When some of the minerals in the rock were heated up enough it had an effect of both races.

Emptiness or empty nest. Commentary

Etan scanned the dormant volcano as he approached the rim but he didn't sense any life signs here. Maybe the fire people weren't scan able by normal means. He proceeded down just to make sure. Sure enough the tunnels were completely empty, but there was some kind of life here recently. There were sediment containers and various things that were vaguely similar to human items. What happened here? Where had they all gone? Some items were just scattered around forming a line down the halls. It looked like items that were accidentally dropped. If he had to guess he would say that the people that lived here, left in a big hurry. He decided to leave this dead place and go look for Reaper. Maybe he would have better luck with that. Etan had a secret way to track him, but Reaper didn't know he even knew about it.

Reapers view

I returned to the sight that the Embers had been at, and found that they were all gone. That figures, I knew they were cowards. Oh well. Maybe I could look at what was left behind and track them. As I was entering the mountain, I got a blip on my tech arm. It had found Etan. Many years ago I had secretly injected him with a special one of kind tracker that I made on my arm. It had a signal, only I could track. They didn't know it, but I had set about putting tracking signals on all the Guardians I came across. My knowledge was my power. That little thing they didn't know wouldn't hurt them, unless I needed it too of course. It showed Etan on a nearby planet. Probably in trouble as usual. It was fun hanging around Etan, where he went trouble usually followed, which meant fun for me.

I had my tech arm form a space suit and I quickly made for Etans position. It seems he was flying around the planet looking me. "Hey there you are, I finally found you." he said. "Correction" I found you.

"Whatever, I'm glad to see you regardless." Etan responded diplomatically. We exchanged stories. I didn't care which side was right or wrong. If the fire guys were the bad guys I could freeze them, and if the ice guys were, I could torch them. I was good either way. Maybe I would get lucky and have the opportunity to do both at the same time, that'd be nice.

We decided to track down the fire guys first. If they weren't on this planet maybe they found a place to hide on another planet. I had been able to do enough scans before to narrow down our search. As it turned out the entire population was with a group of rock monsters. That situation made me think back on when Etan and I first spared together at school. He turned into a rock and I busted him up. Ahhh, those were the good ole days.

I made sure I was in front. I was hoping these dirt heads would give me an excuse to literally knock their block off. He He, knock thier block off, that was a good one.

"Hey block head, take me to your leader or I'll make dust of you." I said diplomatically to the first one I saw. It looked at me, considering. Come on, I thought. Please I'm begging you strike me first, give me a reason to kill you. Then one of the female fire wimps walked up and recognized me.

"Let him in, he's a friend." She said.

"Friend?" why I should." I began. Etan quickly jumped in front of me.

"She didn't mean it that way. She doesn't know you. It's ok."

"Well take us to your leader, fry brain." I said hoping she would mouth something back.

"Thank you," she said complemented. She led us down the hall and kept looking back at me with sparkly eyes, which I guess made sense she was fire and all. The old fire guy in charge was there, looking better this time, and some dirt pile named Danty or something.

"Welcome, welcome, you've come back at most fortuitous time, great one." Ash fall said. Etan smiled "It seems you made quite an impression." He whispered to me. I turned around to leave. Etan was obviously gong to have some long boring talk about avoiding needless combat, if I knew him, and I did. While he did this, I scouted the lay of the land. For some reason a few of the fire and stone females were following me. They offered to show me around. I kept declining but they kept coming anyway. I wondered if I could justify unwanted flirting as an attack. I only needed to take out one or two, and then the rest would go away.

"Listen light bulb, I got nothing for you. Go away before I blow out your candle." I stated. One giggled and blushed. How I could tell a blush on a fire lady? I don't know. Apparently that meant something different to them.

"Well" the nearest one said.' I've already laid my eggs but I guess I'd be up for some more fun."

Oh no! That's definitely not what I meant at all.

"Leave some for us" one of the stone women said.

"You can go stick your head in the mud sister." If you insist." she said. She grabbed me and laid a dirty, gravelly kiss on my lips. By no coincidence she had an iron grip. I was just about free when the fire women wanted a turn and gave me hot kisses all over.

I wasn't worried about the pain, though it was giving me first degree burns. I've never run from an enemy in my life. But today I was about to make a quick exist. I phased out of there. I hurried up a few levels up to gain my composure. Some how the rock women could phase through the rock too, that figures. After a moment the fire gals caught up too. I don't know why I said this except out of desperation.

"Look ladies, I'm already taken." I said.

"No your not we can tell." a fire lady responded. We can sense strong feeling. So they could sense strong feeling but not read minds huh. Well I could trick them.

I couldn't believe I was doing this, but sometime you had to lose the battle to win the war.

"I'm not married yet, but engaged to be married. I have strong feelings for 1" I lied. Though it wasn't a complete lie I did have strong feelings, bad ones. I hated her with passion. The lady looked at me. He is telling the truth, he does have strong feelings for this female. It must be true. Well then, if you help save our people, we will host your wedding here. You'll have a party like you've never seen before.

"She said. "Yeah whatever." I responded, keeping my distance. They walked off giggling to each other. Good riddance. I didn't know it at the time but one of the ladies had said to the others

"Well ladies, it seems we have a wedding to plan."

Current events

1's view

We looked on several planets but we didn't find the boys. In the end we decided to go back to where the Stratos were. When we got back, we were in for yet again another surprise. This had certainly been the day for them. The Aquarians had come and joined with the Stratos, and apparently had found a way to make both of them strong and intellegent again. The ice king saw us and quickly asked us to leave. He said that thier alliance was none of our business. We left, cloaked and went back to keep an eye on them. My years of military training were telling me that something more was going on than a simple alliance. We watched the both kings for a few minutes. We noticed some of the Aquarians giving the ice king a strange look, as if they didn't trust him. This was going to require some tact. I found an Aquarian who had been looking and waited until he was off by himself. I grabbed on to him and teled both of us out. When I questioned him he justified my suspicions.

He said the king had been acting different. He told me about the way both the Aquarians and Stratos had healed each other. No research into that had been done. So where did he gets this information? Under normal conditions both the Stratos and Aquarians reproduced every 40 years. So neither they nor thier parents had been alive before the races split up, so no one knew the cause of thier problem. The king used to be very quiet and reserved. Now he was talkative and aggressive. He had changed years ago, but why? "The king even changed his name. He used to be known as Rain maker now he is called the Icy Abyss." I had heard enough. It was time for action.

I was ready to question the king face to face. I would demand he come clean with his people. He was up to something though I still didn't know what. Misteeek and I teled into the throne room.

"I told you to leave; this is not your business." The ice King said.

"We know you are different than you used to be. I demand you tell your people what you're really up too." I stated.

"Let's take this in my private meeting room shall we?" he responded.

I suddenly had a bad feeling about this. He saw I was hesitant to go, so he simply dismissed everyone else in the room, leaving only him and us. As I looked over to MisteeK, a bright light enveloped her and she was gone.

"What happened? Bring her back or I will melt you to droplets." I told him. The king walked over and his voice went from the screeching noise that the Aquarians make to a low growl.

"Well, well, well" came a familiar sounding voice. Oh! No! It couldn't be. Not here.

"You should have listened to me before and kept out of our business. Now you must die." the king said. "The king changed to the all too familiar look of Kane. I should have caught on before. The Aquarian said the king had changed his name to Icy abyss. Kane was also often called the Abyss. Three full dark guardians appeared in the room. I was hit by a powerful dark blast from behind and lost consciousness.

MisteeK's comments

Four Dark soldiers transported me somewhere, far away. I could see by their energy signatures, they were only about as powerful as young silvers. I could take these guys. In an ironic way my children were much older than me by a thousand years. It was because of the time difference between our universes. In spite of that I was still much more powerful than any of them, even my first born Steel. I had two advantages they didn't. One is I was taught by master Etan, and the other is since I had a small part of the matrix I had emotions and a human consciousness. This allowed me to eventually acquire the ability to open the life stream a small amount. I would never have the ability a full Guardian has but even a little life stream was very powerful. I concentrated for a moment. One of the dark guys asked

"What is she doing?" I told him to hold on for a second and he would find out.

He said " She pretending to open the life stream but she bluffing." another responded. I thought to myself, just wait and see. I did in fact open the life stream and directed an energy blast at them. I scored on the first two and the other two quickly teled out. Now it was time to go find 1 or Master Etan, whoever I could find first.

Don't take me for granite

Reapers view

A short time after Etan got through talking to the dirt head and fire punk; he wanted my help with something. At this point anything to get away from those annoying females was fine. He was down in the room the where the females had laid their eggs. There were only a few older ones there to watch over the eggs. Thankfully they paid no attention to me .

"Hey bud, I need your help for a second. I need you to inject me with a large dose of your construction Nanites." He said.

"Why, what you doing?" I asked. He told me to change my eyes scanners for a mineral survey. He asked me what I saw.

"I see various minerals and rocks including granite I told him."

“Don't take it for granite.” he said with a smile. Grrr he was just waiting to use that one. After sifting through the layers I could see a whole array of power conduits and gem laden equipment. This whole mountain must be a single elemental machine. I gave him the dose he needed as he explained what he was doing.

Etan said “I had not seen any familiar technology, but I was guessing thier tech was probably elemental based like they are. After this hatchery room activated, that was the confirmation I needed. This tech has been sitting dormant for several decades. I need your Nanites to clear out and help reactivate this mountain ship.” A mountain ship, I thought, that's pretty cool. He found a small rock covered panel, near the entrance. When it opened it revealed a grid layout of various gems, and a small screen. This was obviously some type of monitoring system. Etan began using it to go through the system and figure out how it works. In a few minutes Misteeek came walking though the door as spry as ever. We got along pretty well, she liked stuff from earth same as me. And she shared my unbeatable ego and enthusiasm.

“Great timing my dear.” Etan said, "You can help me with this elemental computer. I need you to link with it and decipher all its systems for me." She was made of silicon bacteria suspended in metallic fluid so was like a computer herself, so it should be fairly easy for her. This looked like my queue to go find a comfortable spot and take a nap. I had seen a pile of dirt in an unused room that should do nicely. Before I could get away, Etan stopped me.

Etan's view

I saw Reaper trying to slip away, but I still needed him to do one more task. While on the battle ship Reaper outranked me as concerning its operation and battle maneuvers. However as concerning, a mission, I outranked him. If I gave Reaper an order he was supposed to follow it. If he absolutely refused orders, he knows it will get back to Selar. Though if necessary, I can enforce an order myself. I can tap into the life stream and he cannot. Without the life stream we are fairly even, but with the life stream I can out power him. But Reaper was my friend and I didn't like to use the, I'm more powerful than you tactic. Most of the time I could convince him that what I was asking was in his best interest in the long run, anyway. Besides that, Mr dark and scary had lightened up some over the years, though he wouldn't admit it. He still likes to put on a show that he doesn't care about anyone.

“Hey bud, while Misteeek and I are figuring this out, I need you to go find my three trainees.” He turned around and began to leave and said

“Ahh, they are your problem not mine.”

I had expected this response. “So you're telling me you don't want three future silvers to owe you a favor? Something you can hold over thier head, if you ever need something from them? I think you must be slipping. The Reaper I know would never have passed up that kind of opportunity.” I told him.

He shook his head and smiled “Your devious, you know that. I must have taught you too well.” He said.

Even in a compromise he uses every opportunity to boast his own ego. But he agreed to go find them. While Misteeek was interfacing with the systems, I went to have a talk with both leaders. I explained to them about the mountain being a ship, and that in a few days I might be able to get it working. They would be able to move it to a safer location, far away from thier enemies. But strangely they refused to go. The Gemanite leader, Dantee said there was a prophecy in thier legends about Thier Mountain. The legend said a powerful being would come along and would become infernos child, and would save them in a time of crisis. Before I could inquire further, Misteeek let me know she needed my help. Hopefully if we got the mountain fully restored they would be willing to change thier minds. If the Aquarians attacked, that would be further motivation to leave.

Hide and Seek Commentary

Reaper hoped the little twerps weren't too far away; he didn't want to spend too much time having to find them. He had tagged them earlier, like he had with Etan, but they weren't showing up on his scanners. Fortunately he had a way to narrow down his search. He used his tech arm to replicate 3000 mini probes, using the mass of the ground. They could fly around, increasing his scanning range. After half an hour they were spread across half the planet scanning away. He didn't see any Argarian energy, but there was a life signal of some kind. This in itself was unusual. The rest of this planet was just barren rock and dust, no life at all. Maybe it would be a clue to where the three trainees' were.

He came to the base of a cliff, a waterfall descended into a ravine that formed a river and several small side pools of water. Growing in the water and along the edges was a small green mass. It looked like a type of fungi. Reaper started to take a small amount to bring back for Etan, but when Reaper grabbed for it, the fungi moved. It literally picked itself up and moved to a new spot. Well that was odd. When he went to grab for another one, it also moved aside. Was this a plant or an animal? This piqued his curiosity for a moment.

He bent over to get a good look at it without trying to touch it. The whole patch uprooted itself and leapt in the water. He had tracked multi headed tiger beasts, lava eels, and a myriad of dangerous and unusual animals, He certainly wasn't going to be eluded by some ornery fungus. Reaper leapt in the water after it. Three other patches joined it and became a solid mass. It lurched itself into the bottom of the waterfall. Ok little green lump, I got you now, he thought. Reaper lurched himself after it to the spot where the mass had gone. Instead of a solid rock face there was a cave behind the water fall. The cave was small. It was only about six foot wide and just slightly taller. His eye scanners showed a long tunnel, with several offshoots. Dang! He wanted to catch this thing, but he needed to keep trying to find the trainee's. This time luck intervened, he got a faint blimp on his tech arm. It could be one of the trainee's signatures.

Threes company and fours a crowd

Justice, mouth and Terrestrial, woke up in a fog, both literal and figurative. The three trainees had an odd mix of personalities. Justice was gloomy, while mouth was hyper and out going. Terrestrial most of the time showed no emotions at all.

"Just great" Justice began. " We try to go on a routine scouting mission and we end up stranded in some dreary swamp."

Mouth always at the ready for a quick answer said "Yea matches your mood."

Terrestrial, the practical one asked "Can you sense the others, because I can't." No the other two responded.

"Why don't we look around and see what's all here. We might find something useful." Terrestrial continued. Justice had been right; they were in some kind of swamp.

They were sitting on a dirt pile, covered in think moss. In the water next to them a Variety of plants covered nearly the entire pool. There didn't see any bugs to speak off but there seemed to be amphibians and fish in the water. The trees had long, thin vine like branches that created a canopy hanging down to the ground. The fog coming from the water gave the over all affect an eerie look. Reaper probably would have loved this place, Justice thought.

They looked around and realized there were stone walls circling the area but no ceiling. Mouth ventured out first. He flew up through the open space and looked around. The place where they were at was a small round enclosure. Everything out side of it was bleak.

“All I saw was sand, dirt and a harsh, cold wind. It looked like this had been a cave system and the ceiling collapsed leaving this spot protected from any harsh winds or hurtful weather. Even though there wasn't any evidence of sentient life, the cave tunnels look like they had been sculpted.”

“I suggest” Terrestrial began. “We set up camp here and search this planet for the others. Come back here and rest as needed.” The others agreed. Mouth set about gathering some fire wood. He hadn't been on a camping trip in many years. Even Justice got into the spirit of things. He set about taking stray logs and brush to form a tent.

Justice ran out of large branches from the ground before he finished making the tent. Then he spied a large branch that would do nicely. As he broke of the limb the whole place shook. He looked around but the cave walls had not changed through all the greenery had. All the vines launched themselves toward the three. The entire mini ecosystem seemed to be acting as one. The three figured they could easily break the vines but the greenery turned itself into a very dense material. It wrapped around them very quickly.

“Well” mouth stated “I guess we could burn through this stuff.”

That is just what Terrestrial did not want to do. “This may be the last remnant of all the life forms that used to inhabit this planet. We need to free ourselves without doing damage if possible.” He said.

Neither one of them could become intangible yet but terrestrial could change other substances. He concentrated and changed his vines to a green mush. After that, getting out was simple. He was about to change the other vines when the whole mass enclosed in on them and created a shell. Suddenly they were submerged in some kind of life draining liquid. Justice took this time to use his ability. He didn't know if this bio- mass had any intelligence but he figured it was worth a shot. He sent out a mental projection of peace. The mass retreated around thier heads but still confined thier bodies. It seemed to be acting with intelligence.

Now it's was mouths turn to act. He opened his mind to speak to the mass. “We are sorry to have offended you. Can we agree to a peace?” He said.

A voice boomed in thier heads. “A long time has it been since anyone has reached out to me.” It said.

The shell around them retreated completely and some of the mass formed into a humanoid. When it spoke they got the indication that it identified its self as both I and we. As if it was both a single entity and many at the same time.

“You caused I-We great pain when you tore us apart.” The three explained that it was an accidental attack on thier part. After a few minutes, the being agreed to let them go in peace. “My-our name is Tellus Polder We- I are ancient.” Terrestrial the most studious of the three vaguely recognized those terms. Tellus was a very old term from earth that meant earth or planet. The second polder meant a swamp or bog. But how did a multi-form being or creature like this get a name from thier universe? Tellus told them an amazing tale.

Little annoying things

Reapers view

I find it strange that a thing can be both helpful and annoying. If Etan were here he would probably pop off something like, Yea reaper you can be those things too. Of course I'd have to slug him, for that comment. As a matter of fact I'll slug him good anyway, for making me think that. That will teach him to have an affect on me when he isn't around. This time it was the annoying beep of the scanner on my arm. I needed it to follow the bio signal and the possible Argarian signal up ahead. But I didn't like beeping and screechy things.

I didn't need to keep such an annoying sound if I didn't want too, what was I thinking? I changed the beep to a low thrum. Now it had an almost musical quality to it. As if I was following the beat of a drum. Nice! He he. I had entered the cave behind the waterfall and now I was following unknown signals to who knows where. This was my idea of fun. I came to a junction, a three way split. These tunnels were perfectly formed. This was

definitely artificially constructed. I replicated a few tracker beacons for me to place as I went. They were only visible with certain kinds of scanning equipment. My probes emitted a small amount of Tetrion radiation. This was a rare and little known particle, produced in small amounts only by a few stellar phenomena. It could be used to alter matter on the quantum scale, so knowledge of this particle was kept to a minimum. The chance of anyone else having an instrument to detect it was unlikely. A few scientist maybe, but even that was rare.

There were a few sparse traces of fungi life down the far left tunnel so I took that one to start with. After a moment I came upon a strange sight. To the right side of the tunnel was a large plant. It had a large main stem coming out of the ground and vine like extensions that were attached to it on both sides as if they were arms. Growing at the end on top was a large green melon.

It had a few smaller melons coming from vines that extended out of the main stem. Two things struck me as odd here, first that any plant like this would be this deep in a cave. There were breaks in the ceiling in some parts, but not enough to grow a sizable plant of this type. Even had it grown here it surely would have grown directly under the open part of the ceiling and not a dark and narrow path. The second thing that was odd was the melon itself looked like a snout. There was a noticeable break where the top and bottom of the melon meet. As well as a bit of small white matter in between that looked like concealed teeth. This whole situation looked very suspicious.

Most people thought I was great only because of my fighting skills and great tech. But what gave me the edge over anyone who had great weapons or fighting skills was my cunning. I was good at noticing details that others missed and using those details to my advantage. This melon head wasn't fooling me. I was getting hungry; perhaps I should chop it up and cook it. But after I scanned it I discovered some of the chemicals inside, would make it taste bad, so I changed my mind on that part. I tapped the nearest small melon on the ground but the thing didn't move at all. I walked up to it and thumped it on its ugly melon snout. The darn thing still didn't react. I decided to just walk on and let that be one more mystery in my bag of wonderings.

As I arrived a few feet past it, something smacked me in the back of the head. When I turned around the plant looked just the same as before. Maybe I had an invisible follower. I scanned the common cloaking ranges but found nothing. Just in case I determined to pull that confounded plant up from the roots. I grabbed the main stem and pulled. But to my surprise the whole thing turned into a green mush and slide out of my hands. If this smart aleck thing thought it could get away from me, it was wrong. I am Reaper. I dosed the whole area with a bio poison. Some of it slipped through the crack in the floor anyway but I got enough of it to satisfy my need for revenge. I turned around to leave and there it was again.

It spit a huge loogie all over me and then disappeared through the floor. Whatever this thing was it had to have a central core, I would find it, and take it out. I stormed down the cave tunnel at full speed now. Twice it tried to trip me with stray melons in my path but I avoided them. What I didn't avoid was the vine that caught me in the neck, when I was looking for the melons. I finally made it to the end chamber. I saw a sparkly segment on the far end. As soon as I touched one of the gems, a wall of ice cold water came crashing down on my head. I was about to set a small bomb to blow this whole place, when I saw a small creature running down the tunnel that I just came from. I managed to shoot it with a tracker before it could disappear. Now I had something to track.

I've had enough of these annoyances; I was an animal on the hunt now. I dashed down the middle tunnel. The crazy plant got me in the face one more time, as I was chasing the creature. But I'm proud to say that none of the darts coming out of the wall scored at all. This tunnel like the first ended in a circular room. At least there were no sparkly gems in this one to set off a trap. However there was an interesting looking small mound in the middle of the room. I kicked it to see what would happen. As if the other annoyances hadn't been enough the kind of thing I hated the most appeared. I despise any kind of bug or insect. Ever since Etan played that joke on me, they follow me wherever I go. A few hundred scorpions emerged. The room began to fill with the things.

If they were going to be annoyance at least I could get some target practice out of it. I let loose barrage of energy blasts at them. Each one I blasted turned into mush and reformed. I guess I'd just have to incinerate them all at the same time. Just as I was planting the bomb, all the creatures retreated and began to amass together. They formed

into one large creature. Well this was more like it. This time it had the scorpion body but it also had two snake like heads on the front. It took up most of the space in the room, being about the size of an average shuttle craft.

This was my kind of fight, taking on a heavily armored, lethal foe. I didn't need an invitation to do what I do best, kill. I formed my tech arm into the scythe and dashed toward it. Instead of meeting resistance I went through it as if it were a hologram. I landed face first in a big pile of its waste. I swear I could hear a high pitched laugh in the background. I might not have my dignity right now, but I swear I'll have my revenge. I might as well at least check out the third tunnel and see what horrors waited for me there. I casually strolled down the third tunnel as if I didn't have a care in the world. The tunnel ended in a crystalline chamber. It was very similar in appearance to Selars chamber on his ship. The room was lined with crystals all around. There was a podium in the middle of the room that contained some kind of darker colored crystalline stone inside. Smashing through the podium turned out to be relatively easy. I grabbed the stone and decided to just take it as a prize and leave. I've had enough of these little annoyances.

Terrestrials comments

We stayed a few days and kept looking for the others. One the fourth day Mouth spotted Argarian energy far off. We meet together and were able to meet up with Master Etan. Apparently Reaper left to find us, but somehow we had missed each other.

Time for the truth

Commentary

The story the three had for Etan was quite amazing. It seems that just over a thousand years ago the Gemanites found a crystalline sphere. The sphere was discovered to have the ability to control the elements. They called the sphere the elemental bridge. At this time all four elemental nations lived in peace. It was agreed the sphere would only be used to enhanced the planet and not as a weapon of war. They incorporated it into thier present technology. By the time its negative effects were noticed it was too late. The planet had shifted out of alignment and would soon be unlivable. They tried for several years to destroy the sphere, but nothing worked. Finally in desperation the crystal chamber was constructed to try to contain the spheres effect. This dampened it only slightly; just enough they could hang on, waiting for a miracle. This is where the bio- form came in. It used to cover the entire planet, but when the plant began to die, it had no choice but to find a place where it could survive. A chance meeting gave the four nations and the bio- mass some glimmer of hope. A slightly insane man from anther realm appeared one day. He predicted that in the future, a man would take the sphere away and the planet could then be healed. They would know that day had come when infernos child appeared. But no one knew what that meant. He said they would know it, when it appeared. The last part of this mystery was that just over a hundred years ago. A new ice king appeared, and for some reason tried to destroy all known records of the four nations past.

Etans comments

What my trainees learned was quite a story. I immediately met with the leaders and shared what I knew. They were just as amazed as I was, but they would not budge. I had gotten over half the mountain ship reactivated. I decided to keep working toward that goal. Hopefully when the time came, they would see reason.

Terrestrials comments

I was glad that we had all found each other again. Although I had been told that **1** was still missing. Master Etan wanted to finish getting the mountain ship operational before he went out to find her. While he was doing that, he had us prepare a few defenses around the mountain. Given the situation, the ice and air nations would most likely attack within the next few days. We were just finishing up when a large quake shot through the ground all around us.

Reapers comments

I can't believe somehow I missed finding Etan's Trainees. Oh well I guess they got themselves out of trouble, anyway. At least I got an interesting prize for my trouble. My tech arm showed it was contained great energy, and was connected to all the elements. Maybe if I got lucky I could turn it into a new elemental weapon. As soon as I re-entered the mountain, the whole place shook. Hopefully we were under attack, all this waiting around was getting boring.

Justice's comments

I knew better than to get my hopes up. Every time I try to be optimistic, something goes wrong. As soon as Reaper showed up, there was a massive earthquake. With my luck the whole planet was probably tearing itself apart. After the earthquake, the underground, magma flow, was diverted in another direction. Now, how was Etan going to finish getting the mountain fully repaired and powered? I knew it, this kind of thing always happens to me.

Calm before the storm

First general of the Aquarian's

The king has ordered us to begin our attack. He predicted a few hours ago there would be a massive earthquake that would further hinder the enemies' progress and aid in ours. A few moments ago, this happened. We had been preparing the glacial ship for some time for this offensive.

1 view

Kane decided the best use for me was attaching me up to the glacial ship. It would greatly enhance its weapons effectiveness. I was tied into a least half a dozen siphon hoses. My hands and feet were tied to the wall with strong dark powered cables. Three ice guards were in the room to keep an eye on me; but if I could get loose they should be easy to take down. I felt the ship begin to move. I would have to figure a way to get free soon, or my energy would be used for a lot of destruction.

Commentary

Reaper and Etan were on the top of the mountain ship surveying the layout of the land. "I'd be willing to bet the attack will come from the east. That large plain would make a good sight for thier troops to land and get set up." Reaper commented. Etan agreed. "You know, I hate to say it but this would have been the perfect time for a volcano to be around. We could have used its energy and topographical layout as defense. The one time I do need one, and there's not one in sight. How's that for cruel irony." Etan mused. "What good would that have done anyway?" Reaper asked. "Well, I could have initiated and directed a pyroclastic flow toward the armies. The heat would have taken care of the Aquarians and the ash would stop the Stratos. And I could have directed just enough to weaken them to the point of paralysis without actually killing them." Etan responded. "But like I said we don't have one anyway."

Reaper had a quirky grin on his face. It was an odd look for him. "Well then Mr expert form changer, since you don't have a volcano here, then why don't you become one instead." Reaper said. "Great, I've spent my whole life trying to avoid the darn things. Now you expect me to become one." Etan said with annoyance. Reaper started to defend the point but Etan stopped him mid thought.

"I agree with your suggestion, it's the only reasonable course of action."

Misteeks view

Though I am a queen in my own right, I chose to follow Master Etan. He is my creator, and father. He has also been my mentor and friend. If I had gone my own way and not submitted myself to his leadership I would not be the person I am today. He is my master as Selar is his. I in turn command any Mistle. Power balanced with humility, I think that must be the key. Though Master Etan has a long way to go to become a true leader among Guardians, I believe he will get there. In this instant he took on the mantle of leadership well.

Master Etan and I had finished with all of the repairs to the mountain ship, but it still wasn't fully charged. It normally would have been ready by now but the magma chamber had been redirected after the quake. He called all of us outside for a briefing, away from where the locals could hear what we were discussing. Master Etan explained his plan.

“The glacial ship is on the other side of the planet and is preparing to lift off. It contains a large number of ice and air troupes ready for deployment. Terrestrial you’re going to be inside the mountain at the power distribution center. I will be sending you plenty of energy via a magma flow. Keep everything balanced until the ship is fully charged. Justice and mouth it will be your task to stop the Stratos warriors.”

“Don't kill them just slow them down and keep them busy, until I give the word to get out of the way. Misteek I need you to keep the glacial ship busy. Try to keep it firing at you and not the mountain.” Reaper looked impatient as he waited to hear his part.

“Don't worry Reaper I saved the fun part for you. I Need you make a few Holo-clones of yourself with your tech arm. Jump in the midst of the ice army and keep them busy. Don't let them attack the mountain head on.” Reaper commented.

“My tech arm can control ten clones at the same time. Ten of me fighting an entire army, I like those odds; though that will be a little too easy. Not much to brag about later, really. But we all must make sacrifices, I suppose.” I laughed for a second, and then I thought. I'm not entirely sure he was being funny. Knowing him he could have meant that literally. Sometimes with Reaper it was hard to tell.

Sleeper agents report

This is sleeper agent Gemstone reporting. I Just obtained the information you sought I'm sending you Etan's battle plan to you via our link.

The anticipation is killing me Commentary

With the report from his spy, Kane knew how to combat Etan's battle plan. He had grown more powerful over the years. Kane wasn't going to let Etan get old enough to fulfill one of the timelines where he defeats and drains him. In this universe Etan didn't have Selar watching his back. Kane had come here to take control of the four races and use them for his new army. Let the races get to the brink of destruction, and then they would be desperate enough to follow him no matter what. Getting to kill Etan in this way was like a free bonus. Actually he was getting three free bonuses. That annoying female **1**, was going to help give extra power to the ships shields and weapons. And when the battle was over, he could kill her and Etan's long standing side kick Reaper. This one battle would give him a new army, kill three strong agents of the Guardians, and give the chaos guardians several new planets to build bases on. All in all, things were going quite well.

Etan and the others had just got in place and were making preparations when the ship came into view. The ship landed in the exact area Reaper had said. And just as suspected thousands of troops were being unloaded. By no surprise the Stratos were not in the ranks of the ice army. They were forming a line outside the ice armies ranks.

Etan was hoping they would do that. Etan himself was already underground beginning to re-channel the magma. Most of the time, Etan and Matt worked as one mind. Etan could still conversant back and forth with him but usually he didn't need too unless he learning a new skill.

But just for the sake of saying it he commented "I might need a little mental boost on this one. Help me keep focused, so I don't lose control. A lot of lives are riding on it. One momentary slip up might be all it took to jeopardize the whole plan. I want to stop the other nations, without killing them if possible." Matt agreed

"Why don't you focus on the form change and I'll direct the necessary magma flow to the ship." Matt commented back. "I still cant believe I'm doing this. I'm about to become a volcano." Etan thought.

Matt hummed happily "I told you, that one day you would become a powerful Guardian: though you are still nowhere near your peak yet." Etan had never lost his sarcastic sense of humor.

"I'm about to become a peak in a moment."

Just picking the right size volcano to become was a matter of precision. The smallest volcano on earth for example is Taal in the Philippines and was just over 1,300 feet. About the same height as the empire state building but the tallest is Mauna Loa in Hawaii, Its over 56,000 feet high. The more mass Etan gathered the more over destruction that would occur when he created an explosion. He concluded that a volcano 4,000 feet high should suffice for this battle. If the situation changed and less was needed then he could simply unbind from a portion of the mass and explode less in the event. At least he didn't have to match Mount Saint Helens back on earth at just less than 10,000 feet high.

Etan set up some distance in front of the mountain ship to block the oncoming armies advance. First he spread his essence out as a gas and then attached himself to the ground in a circular pattern 1,000 feet in diameter and 10 feet down. The ground he attached to became part of him. Then used his new dirt flesh to spread out and grab onto more. He grew in circumference as he began to jolt upward. The advancing armies even stopped for a moment in amazement to watch him grow. Unfortunately it did not keep their attention very long.

At 500 feet, Etan had to take a momentary break. He considered opening the life stream. It would make this go faster and easier but with the space fissure making it unstable there was no telling what could happen. He could gather energy from the magma and in turn use it to amass the size he needed but it was still tiring.

Misteeks view

When the Army was fully unloaded they began to march our direction. I waited until I got the signal from Master Etan to advance on the glacial ship. The longer it took them to unload the more time he had to become the volcano. Reaper and the others were set to go also. I hated tense moments like this. I'd rather be in the action, than waiting on it.

Mouths comments

I and the others had recently graduated from school. We had seen minor skirmishes in that time but we had never been involved in a real war before. Master Etan just reminded me to keep my mind on my task, let him worry about the bigger picture. Etan seems to be a competent mentor for us. I just hope I won't let him down.

Terrestrial's comments

We had gotten all the Embers and Gemanites to take refuge in the inner chambers for thier safety. I was ready at the power distribution center; I just hope my two friends could handle the battle outside. I wish I could have been there with them, but I know what I'm doing is necessary too. He could have taught one of the Gemanites how to maintain this system but I know his real reason I'm here. I'm here in case someone on the attacking side makes it

inside the mountain. The mountain ship had its shields up to prevent teleporting but I'm sure someone would figure out how to get around them eventually.

King Abyss (Kane's) orders to the fleet

Aquarian squads begin your approach to the mountain. Stratos soldiers wait on my orders to use the specialized weapons you were given and take out the two young guardians. Battleship commander begin siphoning procedure. I'll take care of Etan myself.

First strike Commentary Justice and mouth

Mouth was a bit nervous about this. Just remember keep calm, and focused, he thought to himself. Justice gave him a look that said he was thinking the same thing. The Stratos warriors came in at frightening speed. Thier first maneuver was fairly predictable. They used the power of air to toss small stones from the ground at high speed. These were easy to deflect. It didn't take but just a moment for them to abandon this tactic and try another. Instead of using thier air power to smash rocks they combined and grabbed on to the trainee's tossing them around. Mouth and justice linked minds and decided to try a little air power of thier own. They weren't full Guardians yet, but that didn't mean they were powerless either. They powered up and preformed an air push in the opposite direction. It worked better than they expected. The Stratos were knocked back and stunned for a moment. They got back up and struck with a hurricane force.

“Any suggestions?” Justice asked Etan mentally.

“According to Mistek the Stratos need moisture to be strong, see if you can pull there's out.” Etan advised. Pulling moisture out of the air should be a fairly simple maneuver. As Mouth and Justice began to focus they knew they were on the right track, because of the stunned reactions on the part of the Stratos. After a moment most of the Stratos looked ready to collapse.

Mistek

As soon as the ship had finished unloading the troops Etan told me to begin attacking. He didn't want me taking it down when fully loaded, because if anything went wrong there would be more casualties. As well as, it would buy him more time to complete his volcano maneuver. While I waited I had been scanning the vessel for weaknesses. In particular I knew where the exhaust and weapons ports were. As soon as it lifted off, it was time to attack. Now with the drain on its systems from keeping the Vessel aloft, it would have less power for weapons or shields. That was another reason why Etan wanted me to wait. He was getting exceedingly wise for his age. He was 200 years old now, still young in Guardian terms.

I was unfamiliar with this technology but even if my first strike didn't do much good, I was a Mistle I could adapt. The ship fired several rounds at me, but I easily avoided them. I was tiny and maneuverable in comparison to thier huge, slow bulk of the ship. They had three disrupter style cannons on the front and several smaller unknown apertures. It took a few minutes to alter my firing energy resonance to adapt to thier type of shields. But they didn't know I had released a thousand tiny shield probes to attach themselves to the shields and try out different frequencies. They would not avoid me for long. This time I couldn't open the life stream at all. Etan had told me the dangers. Fortunately I had only opened it for a spilt second last time. So no apparent damage was done.

Selar had allowed me to down load nearly all technological knowledge the Guardians had. I have never encountered any tech I could not link or adapt too. Finally my probes cracked the right frequency. I let loose a barrage of hits, making sure I didn't damage any of the power conduits. Etan was very specific I was to avoid damaging those at all costs. The three main cannons were quickly dispatched. Just then master Etan asked me to send him all the knowledge I had gained from the ships scans. I took a moment to survey the overall situation. The two trainees were extracting the moisture from the Stratos. Reaper seemed like he was having fun, and

Master Etan was already over 2000 feet tall. He was half way to his goal, so things looked like they were going well.

Terrestrial

So far, everything seemed to be going to plan. I've been monitoring the whole situation from the ship. Even before Master Etan stopped to rest a moment at the half way mark, the mountain ship was powered up and ready to go. He directed me to get to the control room now, and be ready. I needed to enhance the ships shields, to make sure no one could get through. My two friends were keeping the Stratos in check while Misteeek kept the battle ship busy. Reapers movements were a blur, but I'm guessing his part was going well. The only strange thing was an odd order that Etan gave me. He wanted me to take the mountain's ship one weapon and change it to match Guardian light energy. I was to get a lock on a certain power conduit on the enemy ship but that's all, nothing else. I didn't get it, but I'm sure he has his reasons.

Reaper

While all the others were just a distraction, I was ready to do the real damage. I'll have to compliment the Aquarians on one thing. They were well organized. I scanned over 5000 ground troops in organized formation. I made ten Holo-copies of me and gave them the prep talk.

"Now look clones, here is the game plan." I began.

The one just to my left responded "We know everything you do, old man, remember?" I wasn't taking that kind of sass. "I didn't ask you, half Witt", I told him. How dare he insult me like that?

The nearest one on my right spoke up. "Yeah don't get to comfortable I'm taking over this show when were done. I'll be the new Reaper around here."

Maybe he was a defective clone if he thought that would work.

"Don't you know my tech arm prevents clones from taking control?" He changed to the scythe and cloak appearance.

"It usually does, but I just disabled the cloning tracking ability on your tech arm. Now were all linked but none of the tech arms can tell the clones from the original." He bragged. That dirty little two faced bugger. I'll kill him. He continued

"We all want to live. Not just you. Well solve this problem when this battle is over, for now lets just have some fun." I'll kill them, I thought. I can't believe my own clones would turn on me like that. Where did they learn such treachery?

At least we were all agreed to a take out the ice guys first.

"Just stay out of my way." The trouble maker clone said. That's it, when this is over I'm going to kill him first. We jumped right into the mix and began terrorizing the enemy. I saw all my clones were holding a scythe, so I changed to a long bladed weapon. I refused to copy my copies. A moment later all the others were looking at the rest of us and changing weapons too. I am me. No one not even my own clones are going to show me up. I'll just have to make sure I take out more bad guys than the others. The look of fear in the faces of the Aquarians was almost enough to make me forget how aggravated I was. After I made a path of destruction I got a moment to check on how everyone else was doing. Etan was now a small mountain. The two Guardians were holding there own with the air guys and Misteeek had already taken out the main weapons on the battle ship.

"What's the matter old man? Need to stop and take a break. I could bring you a blanket so you can take a nap." the same trouble maker clone popped off. I strolled up to him.

“When this is over, I will kill you first and I will kill you slowly.” I told him. For some reason he did not seem intimidated. Everyone is afraid of me, even most Guardians are wary of me. I wondered why he wasn't scared.

Etan

This was quite a workout. I would pause for a few seconds every three or four minutes to check on everyone. So far everything seemed to be going to plan. But I was sure that would not last indefinitely. Once the mountain ship was fully powered I asked Matt to take control of my body for a moment and keep growing. That would give me a moment to scan the area. Mouth, Justice, Misteeq, and Reaper were holding their own for the moment. Mouth and Justice called for guidance, now I'm glad I had a moment to offer advice. What I really wanted to see was inside the glacial ship. I hadn't had a chance to scan it up till now. Just as I suspected they had **1**. She seemed to be tied in to their systems. I kept using my far sight to look around, when I came upon a familiar signature. The Ice king had the energy signature of a chaos guardian, and a strong one at that.

Just perfect, as if the situation wasn't bad enough, now I have a dark guardian to deal with. Fortunately at that second he was busy directing the battle, so I don't think he sensed my probing. I went back to **1**. The siphon system was a similar design to ones I had seen before, so I had an idea of how to help **1** escape. As with so many things in life, timing would be the key. After looking around I sent a message to Terrestrial, on what I needed him to do to. I was now at the half way point. I was getting a little strained already. Fortunately all those matches with Reaper over the years taught me to push my limits though.

Revenge is a dish best served cold Kanes order

To all units, perform your specialized tasks now.

Justice

We had the Stratos beaten. Etan might not even have to pull off his volcano move. No doubt Reaper could handle himself, and Misteeq seemed to have things well in hand. We might be able to call it a day without any deaths at all. Before I could complete my thoughts all of the Stratos pulled out a weapon and fired on us at the same time. We expected an elemental attack but it was dark energy weapons instead. A few hits we could block but this was too many. Why hadn't they used these at first, what were they waiting on? I saw Mouth hit the ground almost at the same time I did. I hoped the others were having better luck.

Misteeq

Now that the main weapons were gone, I decided to go after the engines. This would take a precise hit, to damage it, without causing a chain reaction in others systems. I heard the ship power up, I tried to move in time, but I got side swiped anyway. My right arm was incinerated. This was no normal heat beam, whatever they were using was as hot as the inner core of a planet. How could they have heat beams on a glacial ship, that doesn't make sense? If I got hit by a direct beam, even once I could be vaporized permanently. I got out of there, to rethink my approach. It would also take a few minutes for me to recover some strength, that hit took a lot out of me.

Terrestrial

Everything was fine one minute, and then the whole battle seemed to go crazy. My two friends were knocked out, Misteeq disappeared and Reaper was no longer fighting. I was about to Ask Etan if he wanted me to go help. Then the door to the control room opened revealing ten ice soldiers and one Gemanite. I briefly sent a mental message to Etan before I knocked out.

Reaper

It would be funny if Etan didn't even need his volcano move after all. We already had more than a fourth of the army neutralized. Maybe I'd have time to take on a few of the air guys before all was said and done. Suddenly my tech arm went crazy. Several systems came online by themselves. When I looked up, my clones had all disappeared. Hey, I was going to kill them. Someone took away my fun. Then my body started moving around on its own, like I was a puppet. This can't be happening to me. No one can do this to me. Just then a gut wrenching detonation occurred and I literally exploded from the inside out. A dark Guardian appeared and picked up the Elemental Bridge, then teleported out. I had hid it inside my body. It was emitting power so I decided to use it on me, until I could make it into an actual weapon. My chest and upper body was in one spot and my waist and legs lay a few feet away. My feet were a few feet away; Etan would have appreciated the humor in that. Before I could put myself back together, four dark guardians surrounded me. I finally get the chance to take on these guys again and they pick the one time when I'm falling to pieces.

Etan

Suddenly the whole battle went to pieces. Everyone was in trouble but I couldn't leave now, I hadn't finished my transformation. To make matters worse a dark guardian showed up carrying a large cannon. He was holding a sphere like the elemental bridge. He attached the crystal to the cannon and it began to power up. I only had a few seconds to send **1** a message before it started firing on me. Its blast was like a drill rather than an actual cannon blast. Its solid beam began breaking up my now massive body. If I stopped now I could re-coalesce and save myself but it would undo all the work I've done so far. I had thought I had a pretty good plan, now the whole plan was falling apart.

Timeless moments

Etan's Response

The cannon took down my energy, very quickly. But I needed time to consider the whole situation first. I warned Matt that I was about to perform a timeless moment. It was where a Guardian created chronoton particles to speed themselves up to the point where the world seemed to almost stop completely. Selar had personally taught me this move. I didn't have enough energy to perform the move for long, but it would give me a few minutes to pause and consider.

I focused and suddenly it was like hitting the pause button on a video recording. Of course the nearest danger was the cannon itself drilling through my essence, but it wasn't the only problem. Terrestrial had been captured by a small strike team. There was a Gemanite with them; he didn't seem to be their hostage so I guess we had spy in the mists. One of the dark guardians must have been shielding his thoughts from me. I could see the tunnel under the mountain the strike team must have taken to get there, and there were more soldiers on their way. Whatever could be done needed to be done fast enough to prevent the others from getting inside. The ten inside could be contained but not the hundred or so on their way now.

Misteeq had been hurt by the ship and was now out of weapons range recovering her strength. Mouth and Justice had been knocked out by dark energy weapons. Reaper had somehow gotten himself blown up, and his clones were gone. But the Possible lynch pin in the situation was **1**. If I could help her get free then she could help tip the balance in our favor. I noticed again the crystalline sphere attached to the canon. It was a slightly smaller than the elemental bridge, but the energy signature was the same. I suspected they worked in tandem. After another minute of seeing all the factors I knew what needed to be done. I would have to send several mental messages, and hope that everyone could act quick enough to be successful. I suggested that Matt send the message to the Geminates then continually lead them, since they were not soldiers. I on the other hand needed to contact all the others. I left the timeless moment and sent my messages.

Message to Misteeek

Fly quickly over and get the elemental bridge. It is attached to the cannon. Then go help Reaper. Distract the chaos Guardians so Reaper will have a chance to heal.

Message to Reaper

Pretend to be unconscious until Misteeek distracts the chaos soldiers. When healed take them out and collect the elemental bridge.

Message to 1

This is Etan, when I give the signal, power up as much as you can. In case this is intercepted I can't explain why, but wait for my signal, timing is everything. When you are free, grab the small glowing sphere you see in the crystal container. Engulf it in light energy. If possible disable the ships power core.

To mouth and Justice

Stay down. Pretend to be unconscious until I give the order.

To Terrestrial

Help is on the way. I will give you the signal; fire the light energy at the power distribution nodule on the glacial ship. When the ship's system over loads re-target canon and fire it on me.

Sequence of events

Misteeek dropped down a few feet away from the dark Guardian watching the cannon. She waved and said "Hey Mr bad guy what you doing?" What was she thinking; she was supposed to be getting the sphere not striking up a conversation. But I trusted her to accomplish the task even if she had odd ways of doing it.

As soon as he turned to look at her, an extension of her swiped the sphere from the other side. The cannon stopped firing all together. I got to give it to her it worked well. She flew off and grabbed the sphere. The Chaos guardian gave chase. That was perfect; this would give me a moment to recover my strength. I opened a hole in the ground and dumped the cannon in the magma below. Matt told the Embers to heat up the Gemanites and have them take out the Aquarians in the control room. Ice attack didn't hurt the Gemnaites, and the heat weakened the Aquarians. It only took a few moments for them to re-secure the ship. After defeating the Aquarian team, the Gemanites went to the lower tunnels to close them off before the reinforcements arrived. By this time Misteeek got the attention of the dark Guardians around Reaper. She showed them she had the sphere and all but one gave chase. I gave the command to mouth and Justice to leave the Stratos and keep the last dark Guardian around Reaper busy.

As soon as Mouth and Justice left, the Stratos proceeded to advance on the mountain ship unimpeded. They had recovered most of thier strength by now. Reaper was finally able to pull himself together, though weakened for a moment. I looked and Misteeek was staying just ahead of the chaos Guardians. It reminded me of the event over a hundred years ago when light guardians were trying to catch the Mistles.

By this time, Terrestrial fired his first light volley at the ship. I gave the signal to **1** to power up. That much energy surging in thier system caused it to overload its power distribution network for shields and weapons. With the system overloaded **1** was able to get free. She did grab the tandem sphere and was able to get out of the ships core room unnoticed. By this time Kane was off the ship, so she was also able to damage the power core without causing it to explode. Misteeek's luck couldn't last forever, the chaos guys caught up with her and they struggled for control of the elemental bridge. One of them was about to fire a dark weapon at weapon her, so she threw the sphere down the magma hole. Maybe she figured that would destroy it.

As soon as it hit the magma, I felt a massive shaking throughout my volcanic body. Suddenly, a concentrate beam shot up through the magma reaching the sky. The spatial fissure which had been small began to grow. If this continued this part of the universe could collapse completely and all life here would end. The four dark Guardians obtained the sphere from the magma and tried to suppress it without success. Kane showed up, looked at the fissure then at the sphere and said "It's too late, this can't be reversed now." He looked up at my massive body and said "I didn't get the pleasure of killing you, but at least you won't live long enough to be a bother to me later." And then all the chaos Guardians disappeared. There was another massive earthquake. The planet was beginning to break apart. Well this is not what I planned at all.

With Kane's influence gone the Stratos and Aquarians realized they had no desire to fight. Technically the war was over, but now what? I preformed the timeless moment trick one more time to think this out. Now that I wasn't under attack I could take as long as I needed. I had several aspects to think on this time. For example why did the Elemental Bridge not tear up the planet when it was in the ground all those years before it was found? Why did it elevate to disastrous proportions just now? And how did both spheres relate to each other?

Timeless solutions

I reached down with my mind and grabbed the sphere. I scanned it deeply. At the center was a tiny flat disk. It was separated into four colors, white, blue, red and brown. It looked like a pizza sliced into four pieces. Each slice being a different color. There was a glowing yellow light hovering just above the disk at the junction of the brown and red areas. Under the disk were microscopic indentations that roughly resembled a computer microchip. So this was not natural this was a machine of some sort. That makes sense. Perhaps the elements were being thrown out of whack because it wasn't being used the way it was designed too. "Matt, see if you can link with the mechanism and download its information." I said internally. I half way expected there to be a problem but he accessed it with no problem. After a moment I understood its workings completely. It was amazingly simple, actually.

Interestingly enough it worked by a similar principle as both the earth oceanic conveyer belt and the universal life stream flow. It depended on the flow of elemental energy from one sphere to the other. The sphere contained some information on the ones who built it and why this device was made. Over 5000 years ago the elemental species were primitive and barely sentient. They were animal like in their mannerisms. A race of beings who call themselves the ancient ones made this to keep the planet balanced until the races could mature on their own.

Both sets of spheres need to be in opposite elemental conditions. The bigger part was placed in a under ground magma chamber and the other was placed on the moon around the planet. The one underground had heat and pressure and the one on the moon had no pressure and cold. The Elemental Bridge was out of balance, so was causing trouble instead of fixing it. Whatever medium it was in, it automatically began to shape. With this new insight I knew what I needed to do. The dark guardians had been subjecting the smaller sphere to their tampering and caused the life stream here to unbalance. The balance between light and dark energies needed to be restored. The fissure was an unbalanced section of the flow. I hated to do it, but Reapers assistance in this would be needed. The only thing was, once he got his hands on it again, I would have to force him to give it up.

Timeless actions

I pulled both **1** and Reaper into my timeless moment and explained what I had found out. I needed Reaper to take the bigger sphere and link it with his dark energy, and **1** to take the smaller one and link it with her light energy. The distance between the spheres was not an issue and long as the elemental conditions were different and the energy could flow back and forth between them. In this case I was trying to restore the life stream here. We exited the timeless moment and all linked our energies. The spheres shifted flow. I saw the disk on the sphere reorient to balanced position in the middle. Ok so far so good. Now was the crucial part. I gave a message for everyone, except **1** and Reaper to back away from me as far as possible. I told Reaper and **1** to make a shield and just hold

on. They powered up as much as possible. I told reaper how to active the device and send all its energy toward me. The device glowed like a sun, then continued to expand its radiance until it went supernova. I absorbed all its life giving strength then added my own.

The ground shook again but this time it was me. The earth around me seemed to tremble in fear at the destruction to come. Gee, that was almost a Reaper thing to think. I gathered all I could then blasted the mass of energy in a titanic eruption toward the fissure. The entire top of the volcano was gone completely. Reaper and I were hanging onto a slab of granite that I had made for them. Its roots sank deep down in the ground. The shear power of the wind I created must have been close to 1000 miles an hour. The ground continued to crack as I blasted a colossal eruption that would have put yellow stone caldera to shame.

Slowly the sides of the fissure began to stitch back together. My eruption lasted over five minutes. Considering I was making a volcanic blast that hit an object in space that was a lot of power. I had built up to 3500 feet tall before this. Now the whole volcano was gone and there was a 700 foot deep canyon that encircled about 80 miles. That was twice the radius I had accumulated as the volcano. My essence was eventually ejected too, but I coalesced in space. I was nice enough to tele me down, thankfully because I was exhausted. We had done it. We had stopped this war, saved four races from destruction and healed the life stream here. A nice days work, if I do say so myself. "Selar was right. You are becoming a fine leader." Matt said to me. I would certainly do my best though I was hoping I never had to do something like this again, at least not for along time.

Etan's comments

I didn't have the strength right now to fight Reaper. I was hoping for once he would be reasonable. "Look, I know it's a fun toy. But we've got to put it back for the sake of the planet." I told him. "Yeah its fine, I just want to study it for a few moments I might construct something like it later, a type of elemental weapon." He said casually. That figures. If Reaper was willing to cooperate, that was fine by me. I just needed to rest right now. I didn't have the strength to stand much less fight him over it. "By the way, what you did that was epic." Reaper commented. Wow that didn't take much I only had to destroy half the plant to earn his respect. I let myself slip off into a much needed rest right there. I woke up a few hours later, much refreshed. I still a little was weak but I could walk.

Unexpected events

Commentary

Reaper was a short distance away talking with gusto to an ice guard. He saw Etan and headed his way. He wasn't in his usual black cloak but was wearing just an average looking shirt and pants. Stranger still, Reaper was walking with a peppy step and humming to himself. "Hi ya buddy, glad you're awake. All the elemental guys want to thank you for your help." Reaper declared. "Ok, who are you and what did you do with the real Reaper." Etan replied.

"It's me; can't I be happy for once?" He asked back.

"No, no you can't. You look like the proverbial cat that ate the canary."

Then Etan realized what it was. "What did you do with the sphere?" Etan asked.

"What sphere? There's no sphere, here." Reaper asked trying to sound innocent.

"The Elemental sphere, you said you just wanted to look at it. You promised to give it back." Etan stated sternly.

"That's true, I did say that." Reaper replied evenly.

"Well?" Etan asked. "Well what?" Reaper replied again.

“Give it back to me.” Etan said sternly again.

“I can’t, it’s gone.” Reaper said with a smile.

“What did you do with it?” Etan asked again.

“Oh that, I merged with it, permanently.” Reaper said, as if it were an everyday event.

What? How? Etan thought. Etan scanned him and saw the same energy flux as had come from the sphere, but now it was part of Reaper. Tiny crystal particles flooded his cellular structure.

“You said, you would give it back.” Etan said slightly annoyed now.

“That’s true, I did say that.”

”Well?” Etan asked

“Well what?” Reaper asked back.

“Look, don't start that again.” Etan demanded.

“Oh you mean the fact that I said it, Yeah I lied.”Reaper said proudly.

This was bad, worse than he realized. He thought he was gaining power, but it would have consequences he didn't expect. Reaper obviously didn't bother to read the fine print, so to speak on how the Elemental Bridge actually works. He bonded it to his cells using his dark energy half. Because of this, the other half was permanently bonded to the light energy in **1**.

The smaller one had automatically bonded with its components when Reaper bonded with his. They were linked and worked as a single unit. After studying the situation closer, Etan realized if he tried to extract the particles from them, it would most likely kill both of them. **1** took it better than he expected.

“You selfish little brat, I'll kill you.” she responded.

“Bring it on, old lady.” Reaper replied back.

“I'm sorry to tell you but I got worse news. Each sphere needs to continue to be in contact with each other to work correctly. Since they are apart of you now, the only way they can be correctly linked is through the Argarian Marriage ceremony.” Etan explained.

“What” they both asked.

“Whatever medium the spheres are a part of, is changed by them. In this case you. If you don't link spirits soon, you will both die.” Etan continued.

“I’m not worried about it, I have been blown up before, I can reform.” Reaper said with a yawn. Etan showed him an illustration of what would happen. Every cell would explode at the same time. He couldn't come back from that.

Etans veiw

They both adamantly refused, but a few hours later they both fell ill. They had stomach cramps and shooting pain. I told them to link minds for a moment. This worked as a quick fix.

“Well that worked nicely. We will link for a few seconds once in awhile and that will be that.” Reaper stated.

“Not quit” I told him. “That was a temporary measure. It worked because you are both standing right here. But Reaper you go on missions all the time. And so do you **1**. You can’t physically be together all the time. The Elemental Bridge wasn’t designed to work solo. Both parts were made to work in tandem. If you link spirits, then you can be away from each other on a regular basis, but otherwise you’re stuck together physically all the time.” I told him.

You mean, I’m either stuck with her physically or mentally?” Reaper asked.

“Yes, that’s exactly what I’m saying.” I replied.

Again they both adamantly refused but after a few more times of pain, they reluctantly agreed. **1** said if she was going to be married, it was going to be done right, so wanted to wait until she could get back to Argaria and do it the right way. I could see they were going to have a very rough marriage. But at least things were going well with the elemental races.

The leaders were having a meeting. They talked about how they could help each other prosper. I brought along the bio- mass to join them. If they all combined their efforts they could rebuild the entire eco-sphere, and be beneficial for all parties. This so called routine scouting mission had turned into a complex event.

“Yes ”Matt said “ You lead a successful defense in a war, and saved five races. You also helped to bring about a peace treaty, and an exciting marriage. Selar will be very happy, I believe. ”

Mistees comments

Master Etan was still a little drained from the whole ordeal so on the trip back he rested. **1** and Reaper on the other hand were a different matter. They weren’t actually married yet, but they were fighting like they had married for years.

“No, that is out of the question. We are not raising our children on a battle ship.” **1** yelled.

Reaper sputtered “Ouuuh, I never said I was going to have children with you. In fact let me say this, here and now. I will never, ever have children with you, under any circumstance.”

1 donned a very devilish grin “Oh, but I think you will.”

They went on like this for some time. After an hour of yelling they both went to separate corners of the craft to sulk. **1** just had to get the last word in

“And by the way I want a proper proposal.” Reaper pretended not to hear her.

Mission wrap up

Of course Selar was very pleased with the mission. After reviewing Matt’s recordings he said exactly what Matt had told me that I was becoming a great leader. As far as Reaper is concerned, what he did, he did to himself and that would be his punishment. It serves Reaper right for lying and being greedy. I did get my own shock though. Selar was giving me my own ship to lead. It was a nova class ship. It was a brand new, and contained a great many Guardian tools and weapons. I got to name her. So I called her the shield. That was a type of volcano and it went along with the Guardian theme, so it worked both ways. It was a mid ranged mission vessel. It wasn’t nearly

as big as a mother ship but it came equipped with research gear and weapons alike. It could be used for rescue, defense, or transport. It would need a basic crew of 200 but could hold up to 500 personal if needed.

I would need to choose my officers. Although I was sure Selar had several in mind already. Naturally there was some pomp and ceremony to it, but that was ok. I had been many such events now. In spite of his problems Reaper showed up to see me get my ship. Coming to see me was probably an excuse to get away from **1**.

“Nice slug boat, pebbles” Reaper said. “I got mine first and its better.” I didn't respond to that. He was just irritable because of the coming wedding. The only kind of ceremony he liked was a parade to him.

Two weeks before the end

Life and death

Etan's veiw

Reaper walked into Selar's office dragging his feet and slouching his shoulders. He looked like a man going to the doctor to see how long he has to live. Master Selar asked me to come with him. Selar stared seriously at Reaper.

“What I'm about to say will sound like a punishment but its not. I'm going to act on your behalf though you won't understand it right now. It is for your future betterment. I've nullified all your enhancements and abilities for now, and disabled all the special tools and abilities of your tech arm.”

I expected Reaper to blurt out some curses or go into one of his famous rants. But he surprised me this time. He must have realized what Selar would do and came up with an alternate solution. Instead he maintained a calm demeanor and spoke almost rationally

“I know what I did was wrong. And I'm sorry for what I did. I stole the sphere; I lied to my friend and misrepresented the Guardians. I accept whatever punishment you deem worthy. If you will take the sphere out of me so I don't have to marry **1**, I will do anything you ask.” Omg I couldn't believe he just said he was sorry. I've never once heard him say he was sorry for anything, or even that he was wrong. He must really hate **1** a lot.

Selar did not directly respond to Reapers request. Instead he looked at me and said “From now until the wedding vows are finished you are to stay with Reaper the whole time.” I was to never let him out of my sight. Then he went on to say that the wedding would take place two weeks from now. He, himself would perform the ceremony. Then he sent me a private mental message, explaining a few details.

So basically I was going to have to babysit Reaper from now on until he was married, terrific. Once again Reaper left without argument. I can't believe I was missing the old Reaper. I convinced Reaper to help me pick out my officers since he had, some experience in that department. By that evening he had a list made up over 300 of the best choices. If he thought they were good, I'm sure any of them would do just fine.

He ate his dinner quietly. I tried to get him to debate me on anything, but he wouldn't. I can see the glow of spirits. Right now his was telling me he was in a very dark mood. Not his usual death to all mood, but something more threatening.

I had just laid down to rest in my cabin when I felt a strong dark wave sweeping through me. It was coming from Reaper. He had a small bomb attached to himself, and he was about to detonate it. I moved in at lightening speed and got it away from him. He looked at me with a hollow eyes and a sad face

“Don't waste your time. Even if I don't succeed now, when I get my abilities back, you can't stop me from killing myself then. One way or the other I will not be married to that psycho wench.”

I wasn't Selar, but maybe I could share some wisdom with Reaper "Let me ask you this. Suppose this had never happened? What do you want out of life?" I asked him. "I don't know. To be the strongest fighter ever, to be feared, and respected." he said. "You have all that already." I told him. "What you need is a higher purpose in life. You need a purpose that goes beyond yourself. "He was still staring at the floor when he said "So you win one battle and now you think you're Selar." I could see he was definitely going to be stubborn. "No but that's a good idea." I told him. I teleported us both just outside Selar's room. I was about to knock but I decided to wait a second and see if he called me in. Sure enough he said "Come in Etan."

Selar gave me an approving nod. "Reaper what you are truly looking for can't be found in getting material things. It can't be found in obtaining skills, prizes, rewards or achievements. No matter how rich, famous, or powerful you become these can never bring you happiness."

Reaper was listening though he still didn't say anything. Selar continued "The purpose you seek in your life can only be achieved by spiritual endeavors. You have great potential. Your life could accomplish a lot of good. You have been of great benefit to the Guardian core but now we can be a benefit to you. I am setting you on a path that will be good for you in the end."

Reaper shook his head "I don't want a part of you or any Guardian thing, I quit." he said and then walked out.

I stayed invisible but I never left his side. He packed a few things and took one of the shuttles. It wasn't as fast as his old battle ship, but it would do. I could have teleported him back, but I didn't. I needed a way to get through to him.

Later I made myself visible but I didn't say anything. He looked at me and said, "If you really my friend you won't stop me." I responded with

"I'm not. But if you're going to let yourself die like this, then I want to be there with you." He looked surprised for a second then said

"Thanks. I guess you are a true friend after all. I never would have thought it when we first meet.

"I sat back in a relaxed manner musing " Yeah those were the days. You were beating me up each week in the ring, and me messing up some new power. What's not to miss?"

Reaper slightly chuckled then caught himself. I continued

"Look Reaper, Selar says this is the best for you. I've never known him to be wrong on anything. Don't you think he could be right on this too?"

He argued back "I thought you were just here for me?" I responded with "I am. I won't stop you, but I will try to convince you otherwise." Selar told me some things to say to try to change your mind." I told him. "Don't get your hopes up." he said without sarcasm.

I shared some secrets about the future with him.

"In a few hundred years the chaos Guardians will have a type of weapon that will allow them to convert the whole galaxy at once. As you know some time ago they developed a type of dark cloak that makes it difficult to see the individual actions of any dark agent or Guardian. But we know their planning some kind of massive weapon. You and I have to be there to stop them, just like we stopped the invasion my first year of school."

Reaper shrugged "I've saved the galaxy before; someone else can do it next time."

I went on to explain "No one else's can do it. Any timeline you're not there, the chaos Guardians win. That effectively makes you the most important person in the galaxy."

That got his interest but not enough. "I don't know, if I'm dead anyway, what do I care?" Selar had told me Reaper would say that so I continued "Yeah there's something else too. Selar said you would be convinced by this. There is coming a time far in the future when the timelines will be altered by an outside source. It won't be the chaos Guardians this time." He shrugged again and said

"What of it?" This was the crucial part, if this didn't convince him nothing would." I know one of the reasons you hate the Guardians so much is because of the death of your mother. There are a number of timelines coming where she could be saved." This got his interest.

"It happened a long time ago. How could they save her without messing up the whole timeline? He asked. Remember we've talked about this before."

Selar hadn't told me about the whole situation.

"I'm not sure how it will work out. But Selar gave his word he will do everything possible to save your mother."

I could see he was considering it. He had a deep rooted wound because of his mother. Somehow a Guardian was at least partially responsible for her death. I didn't know the whole story just bits and pieces. Almost had him, I just needed a little extra motivation.

"If she can be saved it means that we or someone else goes back to the situation that leads to her death. You might even be able to face the real enemy who caused her death. I know a Guardian was partially responsible but she had been kidnapped by a dark Guardian. If it was me, I know I like to go face that man." Etan said.

"You interest me; in the one way you know I can't resist revenge." I was glad I was finally getting through to him.

"Besides you're making more of the marriage than needs to be. Selar has a lot of missions in mind for you. Just because your married doesn't mean you have to be around her very much, anyway."

That brightened him up a little. He was still thinking about it, but was not dead set on suicide now.

"While your thinking can we at least turn this rust bucket around?" I asked him. "Do whatever you want, I need some rest. This has been a crappy day." After that he turned around and left the room. That was his way of conceding the point without losing face. I turned the shuttle around; glad I was able to divert disaster, for today anyway. The next two weeks it seemed were going to be very trying.

Father of the bride

Reaper's view part one

Can you believe the nerve of these people? I was being forced to marry the mega heifer. Now they had the nerve to say I actually had to ask the fathers permission to do it. Argarian's followed some old traditions. They were a technologically advanced society that still lived in the Stone Age. I was expected to bring a gift that symbolized my love for thier daughter and present it to the family. Further more I had to make a speech sighting my love for her and ask the fathers permission. I was like over a thousand years old.

I mean really that's ridiculous. I hadn't given up my hope of somehow ruining this marriage before it ever began. Maybe if I made a terrible spectacle or annoyance of myself, I would convince Selar to reverse his decision. If there was one thing I was good at, it was being annoying. I would mess up every stage of this process, if one thing didn't get them, something else would. No one could take me forever. I would push the limits of the so called Argarian patience.

If I had to bring a gift, I would bring something so offensive, so outrageous maybe they would throw me out. I had to think of something that would be personally offensive to them, not just offensive as an Argarian. Since I wasn't suicidal right now Etan left me to be alone in my room. I began a background search on 1's family. Lucky for me, Argarians were noted for keeping records of everything. I searched though family lineages, birth records even family outings. But nothing jumped out at me. Then I saw a familiar reference.

The planet Setal had a plague break out on it some years ago. 1's aunt had lived on that planet. She had died from an Aphasic virus. It attacked human, Argarians, animals and plants alike. It killed its host within a few days and was contracted through any physical contact. After death the infected organism would quickly dissolve into infectious goo. They had stopped the spread of the disease but had never found a cure for it. Everyone who contracted it died. After that the whole infected area was cut off with a shield and my battleship incinerated everything inside it. I was there when the plague had broken out. Though I didn't cause it the plaque I did have the only remaining sample.

I had cut off the head of an infected man. I was able to get it before it dissolved. I had it preserved in a simple crystal matrix. It was great he had puss filled sores and discolored teeth and sunken eyes. It was a real night mare to look at. I had gotten it not only for the shock factor but so I could use it threaten someone with the infection.

I like to keep a trophy of all my conquests, which is what got me in this trouble to begin with. If I had known this would happen I would have stayed well away from that elemental sphere. Etan of course pleaded with me to try to be cooperative. This time pretending to be nice first would serve my purpose. I would act like I had acquiesced some, then throw them the loop with the deadhead. I realized I could still gain a little extra benefit from this by using leverage. I told Etan If I played nice at dinner tonight he had to promise not to read my mind at all, until the whole wedding ordeal was over. He reluctantly agreed. Apparently Selar was expecting him to keep me on a short leash. Ha ha little did he know, what I had planned.

Etans comments part one

I just hope Reaper keeps his promise to behave, I know he is up to something. I escorted Reaper to 1's family. Her father, mother and a few other relatives were there for this occasion. Argarians loved an excuse to have a family get together. He politely introduced himself to them and they showed him in. I had half expected him to say some snide comment like " what do you want old man." Instead Reaper took 1's hand and kissed it, in the expected tradition of this custom. 1 looked as shocked as I was, but didn't say anything.

He carried with him the gift in a wrapped box. The box was lined with dark energy wiring to prevent seek peeks. I could have looked anyway but he would have noticed my effort and might have caused a scene. We sat in the living room for the first hour for casual chatting. They asked Reaper about some of his adventures. He told them with his usual gusto. He looked at me.

"Do you remember the time I killed ten guards with a box of donuts?" I let him tell the story his way. He was behaving I didn't want to mess that up. Afterwards though the father looked at me and asked if that was true. I told him it was four guys and one of them had stunned himself out of fear but yes it was basically true. Without missing a beat Reaper said "Ten or four it doesn't matter, I still had plenty of donuts left." We all had a good laugh.

Dinner also went very well. They had prepared earth dishes for us that they knew we liked. 1's father, Scorpio had a jalapeño eating contest with Reaper during dinner. They were red faced, laughing and sweating before all was said and done. 1 looked on curiously. She knew how Reaper was; she didn't trust his actions anymore than I did. I had just begun to relax when after dinner it was time to make this occasion official. He had to ask the parents blessing on thier marriage. He sited the traditional request perfectly. "Thank you great father and mother of this house for your hospitality. May the light of the great God always be upon you and your house. I am here to humbly seek your blessing on marrying your daughter 1"

Both parents looked pleased. I was shocked. I had expected some sarcastic comments. Was this the real Reaper or had Selar made an altered clone for this occasion. That would make more sense than this sudden turn around in his attitude. Destiny and Scorpio looked at thier daughter and asked “Do you accept this man as your future husband?” **1** was giving Reaper a very confused look but simply replied “Yes, I accept.” Scorpio nodded “Then we give our blessing on this union. What gift do you bring?”

Reapers view part two

Ok here goes. It was time for my little surprise. I had lain low the whole evening. Don't get me wrong I enjoyed telling my stories to a new audience, and dinner was good. Winning the jalapeño contest was fun, if painful. The continued shocked and confused looks on **1** and Etan's face almost made this night fun, in of itself. I had made the box out of material that wasn't easy to scan. Just because I didn't have my powers right now doesn't mean I'm helpless, far from it. A wounded animal is often more dangerous than a healthy one.

The diseased head in the crystal had a plaque that stated the planet, region and date it came from. It also had a full explanation of the disease and the name of the man. I didn't want there to be any doubt what this was and what it represented. If I was lucky I might make both parents cry, before they kicked me out.

The man had died from the same disease as **1**'s aunt. Her mother destiny would be crushed by this. Here I was giving Destiny, **1**'s mother the preserved head of a man that died the same horrible way her sister did years ago. Argarians might meditate a lot but they could be emotionally traumatized too. At least that's what I was counting on. Who knows I might even scar her for life. I hated to give up this trophy it was a great decoration, but since they would most likely throw it out, or send me out with it, I probably wouldn't lose it anyway. I turned off the dark energy wiring and let them open the box.

Everyone gasped. Great! Just perfect! The father held it up and read the inscription I had on the plaque. Destiny was in shock and just said “Oh my.” Then she started to cry. Scorpio held her for a moment in silence. She turned her face away from the box and continued to cry on his shoulder. I had victory at Last. Without the families blessing Selar could not of good conscious make me marry her. It would be bad form in Argarian society. Scorpio looked at me silently and then put the head down, his eyes never wavering from me. Then he turned to walk toward me. Ok here we go. Please hit me, I thought. Please, please, please.

Scorpio's comment

I was in utter shock. This changed everything. Our lives would never be the same.

Etans comments part two

I was about ready to faint. I should have seen this coming. I knew he was planning something, but this? I figured he would give them some lame gift not that.

Reapers view part three

As he approached me, I braced for a punch. I wanted him to strike me. I wasn't even going to dodge. He could potentially hurt me at the moment, since I was unenhanced. I didn't care, it was so worth it. He threw his arms around me in a big hug and said “Thank you so much, I don't know how you knew, but thank you.”

This time I was the one stunned into silence. What? He can't possibly like my gift. What's wrong with these people? Were they some kind of Argarian psychos? Although, if they were, that would mean there not half bad. I still wouldn't marry **1**, but her parents might have a dark side. This time Scorpio was crying.

He explained. “Ever since that plague we have been searching for any remains that could be studied. As you know it swept through the planet so fast and killed so quickly that any part of it was incinerated. We aren't scientist ourselves but we are helping a group of them try to gather any data on the aphasic virus we can. We have spent a lot of resources paying researchers to go to the far corners of the galaxy to find the origin of this virus.

“Destiny came up and hugged me next “All this time, my sister’s death has been so hollow. But now you give us hope that we can find a cure and no one else will have to suffer from it. This was the best gift anyone could have ever given us.” She was continued hugging me as she cried.

I tried to pry her off, but I couldn't move, this was Etan's doing. He had frozen me where I could not move or talk for a few moments. Just long enough for them to have thier emotional moment. Friend or not, when I get my powers back I'm going to kill him. After several long tortuous rounds of hugging and crying they both let me go.

Etan interjected. “This may seem abrupt, but Selar has a long list of things Reaper needs to do in the next two weeks. I need to take him back to his ship so he can be ready for tomorrow.”

“Destiny hugged me one more time and cried some more. Will this torment ever end? All these people ever do is cry.

Etan comments part two

I quickly got Reaper out of there before he ruined the moment. I was delighted to see his plan back fired on him. My reaction was genuine; I didn't know that they were involved in that research either. When we returned to his room, he gave me a hateful look.

“Know this, when all is said and done, and I have my abilities back, I will kill you for what you just did. That's not a threat it's a Reaper promise. We had been friends, but now you are my enemy.”

I told him he wasn't my enemy. With all his abilities Reaper was very powerful, but I could channel life stream, and he couldn't. I had been avoiding any direct confrontations with him on this for some time. If it came down to it, I was more powerful than him, now. Hopefully, when all the stress of this situation was over, he would calm down. But knowing Reaper, it would take awhile.

1 week before the end

Etan comments

My ex found out about the event and got with **1**. She told her about a few of earth's wedding traditions. **1** liked the idea of the cake, and throwing rice, as well as some of the more common earth wedding decorations. As a consequence they spent a few days on earth wedding shopping.

4 days before the end

Lady in waiting

1's view

Sadly, part of me was hoping Reaper would try and mess something up with my parents. If he messed it up to bad maybe Selar would undo what Reaper did. I don't see why I should have to suffer because of his mistake. Selar had a long talk with me explaining that in the end this would be good for both of us. I've never known him to be wrong but what if he was wrong on this one thing. He had to be wrong. Now that Reaper had officially asked to marry me in the Argarian tradition, I was committed to take the next step. I had to go and obtain the chalice of purity. It was gained by purifying oneself of all negative thoughts. I really did not like Reaper, he was prideful and selfish. But the negative emotions about Reaper, wasn't the only I needed to be free from. A part of me never

forgave Argyle for what he did. We were set to be married like now and he cheated on me, with a human. Getting married now just brought up those memories too.

What was I going to do? How could I rid myself not only of years of resentment but having a pure conscious toward Reaper. Argarians are not supposed to hold resentments but early on my parents had never been traditional Argarians. Argaria had several major temples. This one was specifically for brides to be. When I showed up they were expecting me and gave the usual greetings and blessings. I was led to a ceremonial washing chamber where I went through the cleansing ritual. It was a large stone cavity underground in the mountain. The water was cold and clear. There were many other ladies there scattered about preparing for their day. They looked happier to be here than I was. After the bath I put on the white linens, symbolizing purity. I kept thinking was all this really necessary? Why does such an advanced civilization keep to such archaic traditions?

After getting dressed I was led to the meditation room. It was a small private chamber that was filled with scented candles. I sat down on the enormous pillow that was set for me. The viewing window was opened. I had never been here before, but supposedly beyond the window was a portal that connected many timelines. According to many, a person can come here and meditate and receive visions of possible futures. You can make decisions and get to see through the portal to other possibilities. In essence you can see how various choices will end up. By seeing the end result of different choices of lifestyles you can avoid needless suffering.

Ok, the obvious first thought was what if Reaper and I never got married in the first place. I closed my eyes and meditated on that thought. I didn't see anything at first but I heard crying. Then I realized it was my voice that was crying. I focused more on that. Then vision eventually came. If we don't get married, Reaper will not be at the right place at the right time, to help save the galaxy. A few people like me will survive but all the humans and Argarians will be converted to be dark agents and citizens. The counsel and all the Guardians will eventually be killed. I was crying in the future because it was my choice not to marry Reaper. It was hard to believe but I knew it was real. I couldn't tell what the weapon was or when it would be built only that it would be devastating. Well I certainly didn't want that future to come to pass.

I tried again, this time imagining that we went ahead with the current plans. We would have some tough years to come, but in the end he and I would both find fulfillment. We would eventually have several beautiful and talented children. In this case Reaper was there to help stop the Chaos Guardians. It would take a long time but eventually Reaper would settle into the idea of being married. Now that I saw that for myself, I knew Selar was right, I just need to clear my emotional state.

By no surprise as I was ending my meditation session, one of the priestesses entered the room. "You're ready for the emotional cleansing now I see." She guided me to a room full of very old and mature ladies. They mentally linked with me. It took over three hours of their grilling me and showing me the error of keeping grudges and hurt feelings. Afterwards I was drained but I did feel better. I was allowed to rest then later I was given the chalice of purity. It was just a gold chalice; it had no power but was symbolic of what I had gone through.

Blood, sweat and pain

Reaper's comments.

Only three days left till I have to marry the she-dragon. How'd I get myself into this mess anyway? Oh Yeah I just had to have a trophy. Now I had to go to some boring temple and perform some ancient and pointless ceremony. The temple was up on some mountain where the God of light is honored or some other nonsense like that. We'll probably have to sit around meditating, hugging, crying and sharing our feelings. I think I'm going to go throw up now.

Etan's comments part one

I'm not sure why, but Selar wanted me to go through the trials with Reaper. I wonder why he would ask me to do that, I'm not the one getting married.

Commentary

The tasks they had to perform were physical not mental. It was meant to show the dedication of the groom to the bride. The temple had a suppression field that prevented any Argarians from using their abilities. The tests were divided into three parts: the first was a physically draining obstacle course. The second part they had to run over a long distance through mountains, marshes and rocky ground. The third was a test of endurance. They had to pass a series of physical endurance training. Like lifting a heavy weight over your head and holding it there till your muscles give out. The whole time they were testing them, they were not allowed to eat or sleep. The idea was to push a person to their absolute limits.

Would the groom be willing to endure all this torment for his beloved? At the end he was presented with the light of El the God of light. There was a flame that the God of light himself created for them. When a man passed the tests, he was honored by being given a torch to take some light from the sacred flame. A regular torch burns red but when lit from the sacred one it burns pure white. It never runs out and cannot be extinguished by normal means. Some Argarian's refuse to go through the trials, but most do. Anyone having the light usually displays it on their front door as a sign of strength and purity. It is placed in the golden chalice of purity from the bride, thus confirming the dedication and character of both.

Etan's comment part two

I can't believe how ridiculous this is. Reaper and I started on the obstacle course. He of course was doing them with ease. I remember when I was young going through boot camp. For some reason I don't remember having this much trouble. It contained climbing walls, and obstacles to jump, over around and every which way. There was even something like barbed wire to crawl under in the mud. I was half way through and he was on his second run through just to show me up. I was hoping he would keep going but he decided since he had already passed this test, he would stick round to taunt me.

"What the matter old man. Getting soft? Got used to those cushy Argarian powers? Look at me I'm the very symbol of physical perfection." I gave him the go away look

"Yeah, I'm thrilled for you" I told him. His insults sounded like the military drill sergeants I had known back when I first joined the Army. Fortunately the course wasn't timed. It just mattered you did it, so eventually I got through it, albeit poorly.

Reapers comments

The obstacle course was way too easy. I do more than that on my normal routines. Next was the long distance run. Etan probably forgot I said I would kill him for what he did. That was no joke, I meant it. We had been friends for a long time so I would give him an honorable death. The run was the perfect time to strike. He was already a little tired from the obstacle course. I just hoped he made it long enough to get to the marsh. That's where I wanted to strike. It was a long way from any help. He rested for a few minutes then we started our run. I had to slow down to let him keep up, how pathetic. I had let him live all these years and this was the thanks I get. He used his almighty guardian powers to freeze me. No one crosses me and lives to tell about it.

Commentary

When they got to the marsh, Reaper stopped. Etan had gotten behind again, but was coming.

"Look if you get tired of waiting on me, just go on, I'll get there eventually." Etan said. Reaper just waited and stared at him until he caught up.

“Well old man, your time has come. I told you when we first meet, one day I'd have to kill you, today is that day.” Reaper stated with glee. Etan sat down on a log.

“Well what's stopping you, I'm here.” Etan replied.

“Nothing at all” Reaper said as he swung his fists.

Etan was able to defend himself for a moment, but he was already tired. With his Guardian powers this would not have been a problem but now he was helpless. Reaper laid into him with several quick hitting punches knocking him down. He stood over Etan and then put his knee on his chest, almost exactly like he had in their very first match. But this time Etan did not have his powers to help him. After a moment Etan was a bloody pulp. Reaper pulled out a long knife and held it to Etan's throat, then paused.

“Any last words, old man, and this time make them good ones. What you said at your promotion party was dull.”

Etan had a feeling he knew why Reaper had paused. Reaper was angry but he inwardly wanted a reason not to kill him.

“I'm not afraid to die. When you kill me you'll kill the only true friend you ever had. What I did in freezing you was not a joke or an insult. It was to help you in the long run. I've been your friend from the first but if you're too stupid to see it then, you don't deserve a friend anyway.” Reaper eased up on the knife.

“Part of me still wants to kill you, but prove to me, what you say is true.” Reaper said calmly.

Etan's comments

It was just as I suspected. He may be angry, but he really didn't want to kill me. He needed a reason to save face, even if it was just to himself. I showed him my secret weapon. I pulled out a tiny light orb.

“If I activated this, it would compensate for the suppression field and give me my powers back. As you can see, it's not activated, I haven't used it. Here take it and smash it against that log.”

Reaper always liked destroying stuff, so he did.

“Ok what of it?” Reaper asked.

“You still don't get it. I didn't have to tell you I had it. I could have let you pretend to kill me, or used my powers to hurt you or a hundred other things, but I didn't. I could really die now. I say again I'm not afraid to die. I was a dead man in that hospital when Selar first found me anyway. If you can't take my word as a friend now, then you don't deserve my friendship anyway.” I told him with confidence. He thought it over for a moment.

“I guess if you can stand up to me, then you are brave. And that kind of bravery deserves my friendship.”

Reaper said, slightly amused at himself. I swear that man never changes; even in defeat he claims victory. He picked me up and carried my pounded body through the rest of the course and to the temple. I was put through a little less than Reaper given my state but we were both subjected to grueling tests. Reaper is such a sicko, he enjoyed them. At the end we were both given the light. I told them I didn't need one, but the caretaker said Selar said told them to give me one anyway.

The last stop

Etan's view

“So what kind of trial does an ole iron sides have to go through?” Reaper asked, referring to **1**.

"I'm not allowed to tell you, sorry." I stated.

That of course got his interest.

"Why not?" Reaper asked.

"There is a special portal that only the ladies getting married and Guardians can use." I told him.

"What does it do" he asked. I told him the truth "It lets you see into the future."

"Well now, we can't have that. I'm not going to let some god want to be or the she-devil show me up." Reaper stated matter of factly. "We can do this the easy way or the hard way. You can call and warn them I'm coming, or I show myself in. Which will it be?"

Sometimes there was simply no arguing with him. I called ahead and warned them trouble was coming. They sectioned off a separate corner just for Reaper to go, smart move. I showed him the room. Selar let me use this once, so I knew what to do. I showed Reaper about how to access the portal with meditation. He looked bored but tried it anyway. He got a similar experience as I. He saw several futures, ones where he was married and other where he was not.

After half an hour of trying different scenarios, he opened his eyes and looked at me.

"You set me up; you tricked me into coming here didn't you?"

It was true; I had used simple reverse physiology on him. The more he was told no, the more he wanted to do a thing. I knew him so well. I decided here, that silence was golden. I didn't acknowledge his question.

"Well?" he asked.

"Well what?" I asked back. That was a reverse of our prior exchange in the elemental world. He stated

"I'm leaving" Then he got up and walked out. He was mad again for a moment but I had made my point. He saw enough, of what was coming either way.

1 Day before the marriage Commentary

Since they had one day to go and all the preparations had been done, Etan took Reaper on a bachelor party cruise. He took one of the ideas from earth's craziest recreations. He showed Reaper base jumping, which Reaper had to make more dangerous by doing it blindfolded. Only using a communications link to tell him how many feet to the ground he had to go. Base jumping was where a person jumps off a mountain cliff using a flying suit. It was a suit with bat like wings. Fun but very dangerous. I was hesitant about the next one. He wanted to go black hole skimming. You get a special transport and skim the edge of the event horizon of a black hole. As long as you don't get to the event horizon itself your ok but if you do your as good as dead. After that he just drank something strong until he passed out. Tomorrow he would have a hang over. Great! Not only would he be moody from the wedding but from the hang over too. I'll be glad when this is all over. This had been really nerve racking for me.

The big day

Etan's comments

Finally the day had arrived. As it turns out I didn't have to worry about Reaper having a hangover after all. His Nanites fixed him up. I kept forgetting about those. Any normal man would have been on edge on this occasion but not Reaper. The wedding was scheduled for noon. That was mostly to give time for the bride to be ready. Reaper was kicked back in his usual garb, watching some old earth cartoons eating chips and salsa. Me on the other hand, I was going stir crazy. I knew that Reaper would try to ruin the whole event but what? I tried to get him to change clothes to the standard wedding attire but of course he wouldn't. I even tele-ported the clothes on him a few times, but he kept using a hand tele to change them back. I was considering taking it away from him and making him unable to grasp his clothes but Selar stopped me. He told me it was all right, he will take care of that issue. That was a relief. In the end Reaper thought I gave up trying, so he was happy for the moment.

The time came for his entrance. This wedding was to take place in one of the light temples. Reaper used the teleporter in the shuttle to beam in. Even in this, he just had to make a scene. After he teled in, I realized what Selar had done. To Reaper his clothes looked like his standard black cloak, but to everyone else he had on very classy royal looking robes. He almost looked like an ancient earth king.

The overall abeyance was very classy. The music had a Victorian feel to it. There were harps, flutes and an instrument similar in design to a piano. I still find it amusing how many aspects of ancient earth the Argarians had. I've always wondered whether the Argarian's got it from earth or earth from them.

Everyone was in awe of his clothes but he just shrugged. Hadn't everyone seen him in his usual attire before? He took his place to the right of the stage. He was playing along with that part at least. I found out later Selar had told him if he didn't go along with the proceedings, he would be stripped of his abilities permanently. But if he did, as soon as the ceremony was over all his abilities would be restored. **1** entered and stood to the left side of the stage. She was dressed like a princess from a fairy tale kingdom. Selar walked up the middle isle. He was dressed in glowing yellow robes. He looked like a walking sun, which is what he was symbolizing. Reapers side was filled with all the people from his battleship, that figures. He probably threatened them into being here, knowing him.

The story of unity and light

The lights dimmed in the audience. Selar seemed to shine more brightly now. He began the traditional oration "*Long ago the God of light created the worlds, and then he created the first man.*"

He gestured to Reaper. Reaper came forward and stood in the middle. Then he continued

"But the man was alone. So he created for him the perfect mate, someone to complete him and bring him great joy." He gestured toward **1** who also came forward to stand beside Reaper."

"The man and the woman found they were compatible."

1 turned into energy and Selar turned Reaper into energy. They still had human form but now looked like miniature suns themselves. They touched and thier energies mixed. Then they coalesced back into themselves again. He went on.

"The God of light, called EL commanded them to fill the worlds with children and pass on thier light. In the time to come, some children stayed with the light and others fell into darkness. We that are here continue the tradition of passing down the light."

Reaper now held out his light he got from the Temple. Then **1** brought out her Chalice of purity and showed it to the audience to see.

"This light and this chalice represent the purity and dedication that any two people in the light can have for each other." Reaper Put his light into the chalice and the audience cheered.

"Throughout time the children of the light have sought to share their light with others."

This is always so beautiful Matt said, while crying. He always cried at weddings.

A group of men and women who were the Argarian versions of groomsman and bridesmaids came forward. They encircled the couple, man, woman, man, woman in that order. Each had a candle. Reaper and 1 held the fiery chalice and lit two of the candles. They in turn lit others. Then the whole group proceeded down to light one for each audience member. The audience members flames burned pure white like Reaper and 1's flame, though there's would run out with the candle. Some people like to buy more candles and keep the flame they received after a wedding, burning permanently. It seems some people had a whole collection of them. It was all very nice. Now that the symbolic part was over now came time to make it official.

Selar's marital speech

As Selar continued now, Reapers mind wandered. Selar began.

"We are gathered on this happy occasion" Reaper thoughts *"It's not happy to me"*

"To unite in the bonds of holy marriage this happy couple." he thought "Happy couple, how did he say that with a straight face." Selar continued.

"They are choosing to forsake all others and seek only each other." Reaper thought again "forsake all others that's easy part I don't like anyone anyway."

"As the God of light, gave us his light. They now have shared thier light with you freely"

Reaper thoughts were *Freely my butt, you want to keep my light, you pay for it.* Now was time for thier vows. Again they followed tradition, exactly.

This was Reapers part

"I give up my life of solitude to spend it with you. You are the light that fills my soul and the music that gives my spirit a voice. I will always lead you in the path of righteousness. I will love you above all others and seek no others forever.

And the brides part back was

"You are my strong wall, and place of refuge from the storm, the one who seeks my every care. I trust in you to lead our family into a prosperous future. I will love you above all others and seek no others forever."

"Do you Andrea Crest fall take Drax murky hollow to be your companion in light and husband for life?" Selar asked.

She of course said yes. Reaper was using the Aragarian name of his mother's side.

"Do you Drax Murky Hollow Take Andrea Crest fall to be your companion in the light and wife for life?"

Everyone was on edge now. Would he back out here? He was about to make a smart aleck remark, like do I have choice but Selar gave him a serious look. He simply answered

“I guess.”

That was good enough for all present. That got a roaring applause. The last part was simple instead of rings Argarians used a type of flat jeweled necklace collar. It immediately absorbed into the skin becoming permanently attached to them. They placed one on each other. Selar finished

“Then by the authority of the God of light. I now pronounce you man and wife.”

And a part Selar added, probably from my ex's suggestion.

“You may now kiss your bride.”

“No thanks” was Reapers said.

But **1** wasn't having that. She grabbed a hold of him and gave him a big kiss. The funny thing is he turned red, not from anger but embarrassment. They held hands and turned back into the light form again, glowing brightly. The final part was simply to walk out together and pass by the crowd. Each person in the crowd held out thier light for the couple to see. Apparently My ex wife had convinced **1** that throwing rice was a nice earth tradition for weddings also, so she had a few people do that just outside the temple.

The place where the wedding party would take place was just short distance from the temple. Reaper was planning a quick get away during the party. I had seen this in his mind, early on a few weeks ago. He didn't know that I had a way to counter his plan. Back on the elemental world Misteeek had found one of Reapers toes when he got blown to pieces. She brought it to me. He grew another toe quickly but I kept it. I figured it might come in handy someday; a toe that would come in handy, I always loved a good pun. It was hard work to keep one step ahead of Reaper. With the help of a few Argarian genetic experts I had a fully cognitive Reaper clone made. The Clone's that Reaper makes, are just solid holographic versions of himself, but this one was biological and independently functional. He had all of Reapers memories and personality, except one difference. The clone's negative memories of **1** and the hatred toward Guardians had been erased.

A party and honey moon to remember 1's View

We proceeded to the party room. I could feel troubling thoughts coming from Reaper. Thankfully Etan had told me his plan so I knew the party would not be ruined. We got to the party room and walked up to the cake. Etan's ex-wife suggested a few ideas from earth's wedding for the party. We were about to cut the cake when Reaper pulled his stunt. He loudly announced

“Well good by to all. See you in the next life.”

Then teleported out, and the little devil took all the snacks with him. Fortunately Etan was paying attention and had come prepared. He prepped the waiting clone, and he teleported in. The clone knew what he needed to do to cover for the other Reaper. He teleported in and said

“I'm back, that was a quick life time.”

He got a big laugh and cheers. They all took it as a Reaper joke. Selar was kind enough to return the stolen snacks. We cut the cake and spent time talking with everyone. Etan brought along one earth tradition called a toast. He tapped a spoon on a glass to get everyone's attention. How quaint.

“May I have your attention please? I would like to offer the newly wed couple a blessing. When I first meet **1**, Reaper and I were having a fight. You and Reaper will probably have a few fights over the years. I hope you can do a better job getting him domesticated than I did.”

That got a few chuckles. “Yeah well at least she makes a prettier woman than you did.”

This Reaper said back. That got a bigger laugh. Most people knew about the incident where Etan was a woman for a time. Even the clone had to try to out do him. The rest of the evening went well. Reaper and I danced an Argarian dance called the binary suns. It involved a lot of spinning and twirling of course. I was really enjoying myself. I was afraid Reaper would mess everything up. We even had a nice departing from the party at the end.

Etan had a flying platform for us to leave on. It was an awe inspiring departure. We meet up with a prepared shuttle and flew away to our honey moon. Etan taught me that term. Between him and his ex they added much to my special day. We decided to spend our honey moon on a tropical island paradise. It was another Etan suggestion. Reaper was bored after a few hours but Etan had prepared for that too, and had made some suggestions for me to bring up. I'd have to remember to thank him later for all his help. There was a predatory creature in the ocean here Etan said was like an earth shark. He said Reaper would enjoy catching or riding one. Etan called it, right. Reaper made a lasso and caught one and forced it to tug him around for a while. Then he stood on top of it and rode it through some waves. Later Reaper told Etan he had surfed a shark.

This Reaper was a little easier to get a long with at least, though I couldn't get him in the honey moon mode until I had fought with him. We went a few rounds of hand to hand combat. No powers just skill. He was surprised I was able to keep up with him. He beat me of course but I held my own. After I held him up against a tree, he had a gleam in his eyes.

That night was quite nice. I showed him the softer side of life. He was awkward and clumsily at first, but learned very quickly. It was funny I had to explain it to him in combat terms. “You, my dear are the invading army trying to punch through the enemies fortified defenses.” I told him. He smirked but then took right to things, quite properly. I didn't know where the old Reaper was, but this one would definitely do until he returned. A few years later the old Reaper did show back up and wouldn't you now it, there was trouble. He argued with his clone, got accused of murdering a silver guardian and inadvertently created a new enemy for the Guardians to have to deal with. But that is another story.

The End