

THE CONQUERED

QUADROMOLAN SERIES BOOK 1

John T. Buckley

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If they were only stars
and people just an unsung song

CONTENTS

Cover

Chapters

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

The End

List of titles

7 days from now...

It was hot like morning coffee and wet like summer grass. The storm had ravaged the fields and filled the reservoir. Dramkick stood at the G2 gathering depot, poised to inspect a new crop of Vor Me soldiers. Would they know the depths of respect, Dramkick wondered. What was it Emasip had said? Yes, weakness is a corrosive virus caught unknowingly by the weak. He would grant them death. He owed them that much at least.

Dramkick's head is long, narrow, and has all the scars of a violent manhood. He has 2 stripes of dark blue hair that run in a semi circle to the back of his head. His skin is faded white from years of a dying sun's demise. He has one large milky gray eyeball, devious at best, that relieves you of every ounce of confidence. If he ever looked you in the eye you hated him for life. His left eye socket is covered in a coarse piece of bone. A birth defect his mother called lucky. She knew it would layer him ruthless before the world unraveled him. This gave Dramkick a certain glee he refused to apologize for. He also has no nose to speak of (a trait he is more than a little bit proud of). Instead there are 2 slits above his small narrow crooked mouth-and no lips to speak of. The top of his head has large round bumps with the largest of which protruding from his forehead. His shoulders and chest are immense, rigid, and triangular (and suggest tremendous physical strength). His fingers have been broken, every digit, and are large enough to crush anyone's skull. He has on a pair of dark blue lace pants and a white sweater. The sweater illustrates 3 stages of Dom-which are the first 3 segments of a Talz existence (that all Talz spend the rest of their lives unraveling).

Dramkick stands at the doorway of the G2 gathering depot with mercy on his mind.

The Vor Me are the elite class of soldier. They spend 5 years perfecting their destructive powers. Upon conclusion of their demanding and unforgiving training, Dramkick makes a point of perusing every new crop of Vor Me personally. He can spot weakness with ease and you will know it when he does.

The door opened and Dramkick walked in. The G2 is vast and perfectly symmetrical in shape. It has mint green walls and a domed roof. It is over a quarter mile in diameter and high enough to cough from. At its apex there is a purple crystal the size of a blue whale. It hangs down from the ceiling with a force field surrounding it-this gives it the appearance of floating in mid-air. The Vor Me are lined up in circular rows that get gradually smaller nearest the center. They are split into 4 rows that lead from the center to the 4 large silver doors on the walls of the G2. All the soldiers are wearing navy blue army fatigues and dark blue helmets-each helmet is cast in Dramkick's likeness with the eyes and mouth cut out. Each of them has on spiked dark blue boots (that are anything but casual). They have a square, glowing orange pendant on the toe of each boot that has the seal of Dramkick emblazoned on it.

Dramkick walked down the aisle and started randomly bumping into the Vor Me. He punched and slapped them hard enough to jolt them awake. None of the Vor Me looked over or even moved slightly. And the ones being attacked gave no reaction. They simply took it and got back into line. It wasn't like seeing a body on the highway. In this case if you looked, *you were the body on the highway*. Needless to say, everyone's eyes drilled holes in the wall in front of them.

Dramkick stopped in front of one Vor Me named Ritrick and gave him a good hard looking over. Dramkick said softly, "Go ahead, Son, take a look. I give you every assurance there will be no recourse, feel free."

Ritrick started to sweat and his breath fell heavy. He glanced over at Dramkick (and regretted it the second he did). Dramkick grabbed him by the neck and pulled his head clean off his body. The soldier's body fell violently to the ground (like a 50 pound bag of potatoes knocked off a grocery aisle).

"How dare you look UPON ME!" Dramkick shouted and then said plainly, "You were a handsome boy, a lover of jokes no doubt. Go ahead, tell me one now," Dramkick said as he smiled at the dead soldier's head and awaited his response. "Ha ha he hee he that's a fine joke, so true and so telling."

Dramkick grinned slightly and threw the Vor Me's bloody head into the wall at such speed it exploded upon impact. Dramkick danced playfully down the aisle and stopped in the center of the room. "Children, oh glorious Ilk, I am your Quadromolan. Not your king per se, a thousand times more powerful!" Dramkick bellowed as he got into an athletic stance with his hands spread. "You are my new crop of killing machines and let there be no mistake, you will murder for me. Or you'll end up splattered on a WALL somewhere ha he he ha! All's I ask of the is this...the exact moment you question me will be the last moment of your lives. You are all Talz by birth, and as such you are familiar with our curse," Dramkick flexed his muscles so hard it scared everyone in attendance. He loved the dramatic and scaring people just felt right to him. "But be that as it may we were born with backs that won't bow or break, and rightfully so," Dramkick said coldly as he gazed up to the rafters for a moment. He thought of his father Emasip delivering the same speech years earlier. The power of the old man was still alive in him. "We are in the habit of being besieged by our friends with Deception! I am 1,033 years old and there have been 3,452 attempts on my life. Your mission, your heart's true purpose...is to shield my

pure pumping vision from the tyranny of our enemies!” Dramkick thundered as his eyes became demonic. “We trained you with unyielding precision. Now repay that enormous faith with your lives and the full breadth of your SANCTITY! Be us Talz...The rest we can't remember!"

Dramkick thundered as his eyes welled up. He scowled at the Vor Me (and they knew enough not to scowl back).

The Vor Me raised their right fist, gave it a simple pump, and let out a single hum. They filed out of the G2 with laser like precision. Dramkick put his left hand to his chin and scanned the Vor Me for weak links. He refused to be the ruler of an army of fools.

A Quadromolan (a term that Dramkick created for himself) is the ruler of 4 solar systems. There is the Talz system which has 9 planets, the Tremur which is 12 planets strong, the Messi counts 15 planets, and the Kull which has but 2, Devix and Tortum. Each planet has a ruler or caretaker known as a Benbre (but they all bow to Dramkick). Still they all lust for power and are in a constant state of scheming to do away with Dramkick. More than this, they want the location of the Rala fountains.

The Rala fountains pump a bright yellow liquid known as Praem. When Praem is ingested through the eyes or mouth the taker is thrust into an alternate reality known as Twosqu. Twosqu is a vivid specific detailed world on top of the current reality. For the takers of Praem they see their senses no longer react or interact with any negative energy. And if something was blue in real life, then in Twosqu it is a living blue-carrying with it a wave of emotion and texture you can feel. Physical motion in Twosqu is what you want it to be, it is *your choice*. You can float, dance, soar or stand outside yourself and watch your body in movement. Meals are no longer eaten and forgotten, a single bite brings hours of satisfaction and fills the belly to maximum. A

sip of wine flushes the body from head to toe with an immaculate inebriation (devoid of the obligatory crippling hangover). The sensation of touch is so refined in Twosqu you can feel a fleck of dust as it rests on your skin. There are also the conversation tracers. Small portions of other people's conversations that continue to resonate and float in and out of your mind's eye as you need them to. And of course the Danbridgo, 4 inch tall miniature beings with purple skin and green freckles. Clad in white trousers and jackets they are at your command inside Twosqu. Each Danbridgo has a furry head and a face like a kitten. Their affectionate nature is legendary. The sun in Twosqu is only red light and has no apparent shape or symmetry. It is easy inside Twosqu to see who has taken the Praem. They are the ones with vibrant colored masks while the others are draped in shadows. To many, the real world is the dream and Praem is all they'll ever want.

Dramkick sees it his birthright to live every moment in Twosqu and only gives the populous 2 hours a day. This infuriates most, though they dare not speak of it for fear of reprisals. There are some known as the Gopas, who steal Praem from everyone and anyone they can. Their leader Coats Ren has been trying to find the Rala fountains for 3 years.

"If it's in the Danviers cavern, then it's beyond finding. Those caves stretch for thousands of miles. It would be a fool's errand to try and map them," Coats said as he sucked on a Praem tube inside his art studio on the planet O-in the Messi system.

Coats Ren is 4 feet wide and 6 feet tall with abnormally large forearms. He is tan skinned and has a bald head with a line of red diamonds across his brow. His face is smooth and rounded like a new bowling pin. He is draped in a grey and white checkered jumpsuit and white leather slippers. His studio is quant only 20 x 20 (with eye blasting yellow walls). There is a pair of picture windows made of lightly tinted green glass that face the setting sun. In front of the

windows there is a brown leather couch with the insignia PR. Situated behind it is an easel with a partially completed painting of Poeragard.

Poeragard is the Benbre of Tortum. He is the only person brave enough to put pressure on Dramkick to increase the Praem distribution. The Gopas see him as a hero and saint.

"Then forget Danviers, let's organize a scout mission into Dramkick's inner sanctum," Pleu Mas said quickly as he looked at Coats.

Pleu Mas stands 5'6" and 180 pounds, with grayish black hair and a soft round belly (too many Porntap ears for dinner and lunch). His eyes are orange in color and have a look of serious intent. He has a large arching nose whose tip touches his upper lip when he smiles. His lips are purple in color and have the word Saimvic tattooed on them-Saimvic is the name of the last man to see the Rala fountains before Dramkick hid them away for good. Pleu is wearing a robe dripping with gold and has a multi-colored beaded necklace around his neck. On his feet he only wears a single pair of ankle high black socks.

"Shatcore, you honestly think we're going to get 2 steps into Shatcore, are you serious? Here's how that'll play out, you and I will wind up a garnish at Dramkick's nightly feast," Coats said in exasperation as he continued to suck on his Praem tube and then said angrily, "Damn it this thing's empty again. Well whatever we do it needs to get done, I can't live like this!"

"Calm down, there's a way forward," Pleu said softly as he wiped the sweat from his brow with his sleeve. "I paid one of Dramkick's servants to find out if there was any way past his

security. Turns out his swimming pool connects to the Clar lagoon," Pleu explained and then he walked over to the computer module followed by Coats and said gleefully, "Right there, that's our entry point."

Coats looked at the lagoon on the monitor and then at Pleu and said excitedly, "This is our shot, this is exactly the break we needed! Tonight we'll pay Dramkick a visit. I'll ready my ship and make the necessary preparations. Tonight we drink again."

"This is a chance, but not without risks," Pleu said calmly as he grinned and put his hand on Coat's shoulder and then continued, "If we're found inside Shatcore we will be destroyed. That said, the payoff will be worth the risk."

Meanwhile Dramkick plays the violin in his study. He makes a point of playing for at least an hour a day (he is vicious to anyone who disturbs him). He sits facing out the window as he plays with tears streaming down his face. It's a cold walk to a man's heart. Even further to Dramkick's. The music touches his heart the way nothing or no one else ever could.

He finishes playing and sets down the violin on a rack. He grabs his Praem tube off the shelf and starts sucking on it. He is instantly thrust into Twosqu and feels a blinding euphoria. Unlike most people he prefers enjoying it alone (and finds it distasteful to see anyone inside Twosqu). Suddenly he dances around the room. He gets rushes from the vibrant colors. His arms and legs move like a spider with 6 legs. He lays down on the floor and start humming to himself.

After several hours the Praem has worn off and Dramkick gathers himself up. He makes his way to the planetarium. When he steps on the moving sidewalk his former lover Bree Sa steps on as well.

Bree is 5 foot 5 with brown curly hair. She has large breasts and a shapely bottom (as good looking as she is no one's dumb enough to look at her for long). Her face is stunning, with a button nose and sensual blue eyes that can open anyone's emotional wounds. She is wearing an orange flowing dress and a gold pendant around her neck. Dangling from the pendant is a large Praem tube. It was a gift from Dramkick for a week's worth of not glaring at him. She is also wearing a gold bracelet on both arms and brown lace sandals.

The sidewalk they are on stretches through the Gimly green shrubbery tunnel (Dramkick's favorite place to relax).

"Bree, you're still a stunner. Just when will you return the part of my heart you've stolen?" Dramkick asked as he nudged Bree with his arm.

"Dramkick, we tried us, it just couldn't be a larger love," Bree said sadly. "We're both too hard headed for our own good. It's nice to see you though, you're looking handsome as ever," Bree said playfully as she smiled up at Dramkick lovingly.

"Thank you for the kind words, Bree," Dramkick said warmly and then continued, "It's a terrible shame our stars couldn't align. When I look at you now, I find it hard to remember the

bad times. But this is life and oh how it throws me," Dramkick said as he ran his fingers through her hair.

Bree smiled and asserted, "Don't start something that can't be finished. We both know where casual sex will lead regardless of how hot it is."

"True, but it still satisfies even if only for a short while," Dramkick agreed. "But you're right we mustn't fool ourselves, still great to see you though, Bree, it always is," Dramkick said smoothly as his hands fell into his pockets.

"I always love seeing you as well, Dramkick, that box of Praem was an absolute godsend. I thank you."

"Think nothing of it they'll be another before long. It makes me happy to know you're taken care of," Dramkick said sincerely as he looked at Bree.

"This is my stop, Handsome, feel free to stop and visit someday. I'm usually around on the week's ending," Bree admitted as she stepped off the sidewalk into a corridor.

"I just might, bye, my Love," Dramkick said brightly as he continued onward down the sidewalk, wrenching his neck for one last look at Bree.

Dramkick rides another quarter mile and steps off at the entryway to the planetarium. The

structure is gigantic and in the shape of a golf ball with 2 pencils piercing the sides. It is dark purple in color and has a pair of large circular windows that are tinted cobalt blue. The walkway leading up to the large circular front door is lined with various statues of Dramkick (from his bloody early youth to the present day).

Dramkick walked past the statues with a wry smile on his face. He is very fond of his depictions (especially the one of him taking a bite from a Lizva bird).

The Lizva bird itself has a large round head with multi-colored feathers covering it. Its body is long and thin like a straw, with 4 sets of large wings along the sides. It also has one large yellow claw on the rear end that has 2 sets of steel cutting talons.

As he neared the front door it opened and a tan skinned Glom-which are from the Tremur system and have bright yellow tattoos covering their faces-came walking out. The Glom is slightly shorter than Dramkick and has on a hat with a dark blue spire stretching 2 feet up to the sky on the round brim. He is wearing a red cape and black open toed shoes. His eyes are shielded by blue tinted sunglasses with the center cut out-revealing his red eyes.

The Glom got closer to Dramkick and then stopped suddenly. He pulled out a pair of Dreme blades from under his cape-Dreme blades are a foot and half long with a rounded half moon blade and a black leather handles. They are also known to be sharp enough to cut through metal.

Dramkick sees this and lets out a sigh as he motions with his hand for his would be attacker to

get on with it. The Glom thrusts forward at Dramkick with his Dreme blades whirling in front of him. His right hand slashes at Dramkick. Dramkick simply slips it and grabs the Glom by the elbow and breaks his arm in two. The Glom screams out in agony, gathers himself, and slashes with the Dreme blade. Whereby Dramkick in one motion dodges the blow and grabs the Glom by the shoulder. Dramkick viciously pulls his arm clean out of its socket. He pummels him over the head with his own arm and then said snidely, "He he he he ha, you should have thought this through me thinks ha ha Haw."

Dramkick grabs him around the waist with his free hand and lifts him up into the air. He throws the Glom violently into the statue of the young Dramkick eating the Lizva bird. The Glom crashes into the statue sideways and breaks his back, causing a fountain's worth of blood to shoot high in the air. He lets out a loud squeal and drops to the ground (like so many others before him). Dramkick knew it so well he could almost time it to the second when they'd take their last breath. The Glom quickly dies with the last of his life fading into oblivion.

"A real art lover I can see He ha ha. Pity you tempted fate so foolishly, I could've used your courage on the battlefield," Dramkick said snidely as he entered the planetarium.

Inside the planetarium there are thousands of robot re-creations of every creature large and small on Membra. The robots walk freely around the planetarium and interact with the guests. There are also life size androids of all famous Talz (including Dramkick). Dramkick makes a point of harassing the androids every time he visits. They have gotten in the habit of avoiding him at all costs (especially on his birthday). Dramkick's android on his last visit had his arms

torn off because Dramkick felt they were too scrawny.

The ceiling is domed in shape and is covered end to end with a hologram of molten lava. The lava appears to be falling down upon the visitor's heads. This is not lost upon Dramkick as it is his favorite part. He loves seeing the horror on the faces of first time guests and loves screaming, " IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!!" The floor of the planetarium is an ever changing series of terrains. It ranges from jagged rocks to thick gooey mud (that fools most into a state of panic and makes them physically tired). The walls are covered with a live feed from over 100 different locations on Membra (everything from caverns to operating rooms, a full spectrum of humanity).

Today Dramkick isn't here for pleasure. He has arranged a meeting with the Benbre of the planet Tortum, Poeragard. The two haven't seen eye to eye on some things and Dramkick wants to clear the air. Certainly because of this Poeragard has requested a public place for their meeting. Poeragard knows that Dramkick thinks lost limbs are an indication he's losing patience with you.

Poeragard stands 5 foot 10 inches tall and carries a lean 170 pounds of muscle on his frame. He has long bright orange hair that cascades back from a pronounced widow's peak in the center of his forehead. He has blue eyes that are like a cat's (a steely glare you can never make sense of). His nose is smooth, attractive, and thick like a sausage. His lips are purple and he has a clef in the shape of a 4 leaf clover in the center of his chin. He always wears the same thing, a black corduroy jacket that has interchangeable parts and a pair of white pants made of Pemavon cotton.

The Pemavon is a genetically engineered sheep that grows a full coat seconds after being shaven. The Pemavon cotton is extremely soft to the touch and favored among the Torsle-who are natives of Tortum.

Poeragard also wears a clip-on levitation device on his feet-known as a Jacour ring. It has the ability to lift the body 3 inches above the ground at anytime. It also allows the wearer to travel without resistance.

Dramkick scans the room for Poeragard and spots him on the far side. He starts walking briskly towards him. When he gets within a few feet Poeragard turns to face him, bows, and said softly, "I am at your service, Quadromolan." Poeragard stands up and said warmly, "Let us be friends, Dramkick."

"Friends for me are an unwise luxury, Poeragard, but I can make certain exceptions," Dramkick replied as he balled his hand up into a fist and then asked sternly, "What is all this talk of increasing the Praem supply? I would have thought you smarter than this," Dramkick said as he put his giant hand on Poeragard's shoulder.

"I apologize if I was out of line, but the populous has built up a tolerance. And what was once enough, is now too little," Poeragard explained nervously as he looked wide eyed at Dramkick.

"They always want MORE, it never seems *less* they scream of!" Dramkick thundered as his

chest heaved. "What they fail to realize is that those bountiful Rala fountains won't pump forever, but some of us will. And when they run dry we'll be left to SUFFER," Dramkick said sternly as he squeezed Poeragard's shoulder tightly.

"I know, Dramkick, your wisdom is not the issue," Poeragard assured as he gently smiled to himself. "We know you're thinking ahead, but many, including myself, are having a hard time enjoying Twosqu knowing that our time is brief. If no more can be given, then that is it and we will make due. But if a little more is possible, then I had to ask," Poeragard said anxiously as he winced in pain.

Dramkick looked him over and then released his grip and said, "Fine, Poeragard, a little more is fine. But let there be no more talk of this for a long stretch of time, or my grip will once again tighten."

"Not a word, Dramkick, our thanks is never-ending," Poeragard said quickly as he tried to contain his glee. More Praem was just what the doctor ordered, he thought. "We are fortunate to have such a wise and generous Quadromolan, this is something not forgotten soon," Poeragard said hollowly as he bowed his head and did his best to hide his shaking hand.

"Now, Poeragard, what do you hear from the other Benbres and be forthcoming?" Dramkick asked suspiciously as he gently tapped his index finger to his temple. "Is there any talk of assassination, please tell of whispers no harm will come your way?" Dramkick asked coyly as he put his hands nonchalantly in his pockets. He knew there was a plot afoot.

Poeragard looked at Dramkick anxiously and then said quietly, "Benbre Khalex of the planet Drear...in the Kull system has made inquiries. He may be hatching a plot against you, but I don't know when. I did hear he was bringing in a Sepex bounty hunter named Doe Sides."

"Interesting, where is this Doe Sides now?" Dramkick asked as he looked down at Poeragard with suspicion.

Poeragard looked around nervously and then said, "He is here...on Membra, he arrived this morning. His shuttle set down in the desert city of Whonee Dgra. He could be anywhere now."

"Exactly what does he look like, Poeragard?" Dramkick asked calmly as he produced a chocolate candy from his pocket, tossed it into his mouth, and started chewing loudly.

"He is your height and very thin. He has bright orange skin with the word Amak on each of his fingers," Poeragard explained nervously as sweat saturated the tips of his bangs. Poeragard coughed and continued, "When I saw him he was wearing a black helmet that was tight to his skin and bore the visage of Trasom. He is also part machine, his hands and feet I mean. If I were you are I'd be careful with this one, Dramkick," Poeragard said as he rubbed his hands together.

Trasom is an ancient emperor who killed all of his followers shortly before death, leaving only a small boy and girl behind. The 2 children repopulated the planet of Fars and created a breed of genetic misfits known as Permings.

"If you were me you'd wonder why I let you live for withholding this information," Dramkick replied sternly as he took his hands out of his pockets and glared at Poeragard.

"I am sorry, my Lord, I was sworn to secrecy by Khalex. Please be merciful I only ask for my simple life," Poeragard pleaded as he got down on his knees and kissed Dramkick's hand. He knew this sort of emotion would confuse Dramkick and save his life.

"You may live, Poeragard, please stand. In the future, Poeragard, only tell me lies when I'm asleep," Dramkick said slyly as he rubbed Poeragard's head.

"Of course, there will be no secrets between us, I will honor my Quadromolan with ferocity," Poeragard answered hollowly as he kissed his hand and stood up quickly. He wished he could kill Dramkick himself, but he knew he didn't have the power to do it.

Dramkick shot a glance at Poeragard and motioned for him to leave. Dramkick saw a family of 3 looking up at the ceiling and he shouted, "We're all going to die! Run for the exits!"

The family of 3 started running frantically in every direction and Dramkick laughed like a 12-year-old with a new prank.

Chapter 2

Coats Ren and Pleu Mas landed their ship at the Clar lagoon. Inside the shuttle they gathered up their necessary equipment. The shuttle itself is: black, smooth, and in the shape of a large mouth bass without the eyes. It has 3 windows in the front which are also tinted black. It also has a dorsal fin on top and in the rear of the ship. Inside everything is pale white-including the nuts and bolts. There are 12 Capt's chairs in a semi-circle and a control consul in the front of the ship. In the middle there are supply shelves and a cooking apparatus. In the rear there are sleeping quarters for 12 (they are modest to say the least but comfortable).

Outside the Clar lagoon there is an ocean blue oasis. It is surrounded by red rocks on 2 sides and a dense forest on the other. With a small patch of blue grass in between the forest and the red rocks (like the last piece of pie on a silver plate). The rocks stretch 150 feet in the air and there is a lone Pasil tree on top.

The Pasil tree has an almost human form to it. And if you didn't know better you could be fooled into thinking it was a person. Its bark is dark brown in color and has feet shaped roots.

"Alright then, it's Praem or our heads. God I hope we've got the luck with us tonight," Coats said anxiously as he attached his gun belt.

Coats pauses and looks at his Paniflu laser machine gun. The gun itself is red in color and resembles a Beretta-only slightly larger and with a scope.

"Well if we haven't got it, these babies will even the score," Pleu said as he showed Coats some Tridney sound grenades he had in each hand.

The Tridney can shatter the skull of anyone within 30 feet-it does this by rattling the inside of their skull with sound waves. It has a reddish hue and looks like a metal softball. It has a green grip that you held as you threw it and would detach releasing the firing pin.

"That looks like it could do a lot of damage. If we get cornered that may be our last resort," Coats said gleefully and then he took a chug of whiskey. Coats wondered if he was about to do something incredibly stupid.

"Let's hope it doesn't come to that," Plea replied nervously as he took in 3 quick breaths. He thought about ditching Coats and never looking back. "We need to be invisible and be smart enough not to get greedy," Pleu said sternly in a voice that seemed to almost convince both of them he was right. "Trust me seeing all that Praem in front of us will be a shocker. We load up our packs and we get out of there quick," Pleu said as he rubbed the back of his head to the point Coats stared at him.

"First things first, we've got to get inside, which means we've got a swim ahead of us," Coats explained as he stretched out his arms and then continued, "When we come out inside

Dramkick's pool we have to be cautious. Before we surface we had better be deadly sure there's no one around," Coats said sternly as he put the Cous breathing device in his mouth.

The Cous is banana yellow in color and in the shape of a plunger-with the wide piece placed in the rear of the mouth. The Cous filters the oxygen out of the water and allows the user to breathe underwater indefinitely.

Pleu inserts his Cous and the 2 wade into the Clar lagoon. Coats nods at Pleu and they submerge. They felt dangerous and confident with a quicker breath. Under the surface there are several species of fish-none of which have a predatory nature. The Ustin fish are yellow in color and have see through stomachs. They have cat like faces and a long skinny neck that leads to a bowling ball size body-that is perfectly round. There is a small fin on their backs that moves back and forth at blinding speed. Near to them are the Rummon fish (which have black and red stripes like a tacky suit your odd uncle might wear). They resemble a pair of trousers that are being pulled through the water. They have one small eye and 2 large ones on their perfectly flat faces. As well as a large gaping mouth with a black hairy tongue that licks its own eyes every 2 seconds.

The walls lining of the lagoon are covered with a light green crystal. Its bottom has a thick red grass that has bubbles coming out of it every few feet. The bubbles are caused by Homly bugs which nest on the lagoon's sea bed-and are bright red specs no more than the size of a penny.

Coats and Pleu swim along and marvel at how beautiful it is. Coats can't help but think too

himself that he wishes he'd been here before (and under different circumstances). Why isn't this *his* favorite place to swim, he wonders. Pleu wishes his daughter Rouela could have come with him and seen this incredible sight.

They swim for a minute and then Coats abruptly stopped. He put his hand on Pleu's chest and pointed to the side of the lagoon. There lingers a pair of hairy tan legs standing in the shallow water. The 2 slowly swim away from the legs, but keep their eyes locked on them (just in case things get heavy). Their hearts are pumping through their chests and they try not to panic. Slowly but surely they continue onward (and thank God they weren't noticed).

They swim another hundred yards and enter Dramkick's swimming pool (nicknamed the master bedroom, because Dramkick brought hundreds of women there to have sex and ingest Praem). The floor of the pool has a portrait of Dramkick seared onto the marble. The pool itself is 40 feet by 40 feet and has an opening in the ceiling above it to let in sunshine. Lucky for them no one is using it Pleu thought. Pleu pops his head slightly above the surface. He can see a man in white shorts lying on a blue foldout chair poolside. The fat hairy man is fast asleep and snoring very loudly. Pleu looks around and sees no one else is there. He slowly climbs out of the pool with Coats close behind.

The 2 of them cautiously moved past the snoring man and peek out into the next room. There they see 2 guards on the far end of this enormous Peneme gym.

Peneme is a game between 2 teams of 2 involving the capture of a Quwoo-a Quwoo being a

furry animal that looks like a flashlight, but with 3 legs and a wing on one side. It darts in every direction and is terrified by all living things. The Quwoo are known for their uncontrollable flatulence. In Peneme obstacles are placed around the gym and the first team to catch the Quwoo twice is the victor. The winning team usually takes great pride in dining on the Quwoo after the match.

"We're gonna have to find a way past those guards," Pleu said as he looked around and then continued, "There are no other doorways anywhere that I can see."

"I've got an idea, see that cage over there with that Quwoo?" Coats asked quickly as he pointed with both hands.

"I see it, wow what a great idea. It will take some doing to get over there but-"

"But it's our only shot. Let's break for it!" Coats interrupted as he started moving towards the Quwoo cage in a bent over walk.

Pleu was just behind and keeping a close eye on the guards as he and Coats moved from obstacle to obstacle.

"So does she still say she loves you every single day or has she grown up yet?" Henrit asked- the thinner of the 2 guards-as he smoked a long cigarette.

"Oh yeah she's grown up, she knows I love her and she knows that I know she loves me, everything's great," answered Pictick-the auburn haired guard-as he stretches out his arms.

Coats and Pleu carefully work their way over to the Quwoo cage. Once there, they take a look at the guards and Coats whispered as he unlocked the cage, "Let's hope those two are sporting fools 'cause it's about to get interesting."

Coats and Pleu hid behind a barricade and waited. The Quwoo shot out of the cage like a bullet out of a gun. It darted all over the gym. It just missed hitting Pictick in the head.

"How in the...", Pictick said suspiciously as he ducked the Quwoo and then said frantically, "If we don't catch him, we're in serious trouble!"

"Let's get after him then, quick!" Henrit said nervously as he ran after the Quwoo.

The 2 guards chased after the Quwoo, while Pleu and Coats hurried to the door. They opened it, moved inside, and their jaws dropped as they saw the Rala fountains in front of them.

"Can you believe it, Pleu, we found it!" Coats said in utter disbelief and shock as his shoulders dropped.

"They're immense, what a miracle," Pleu responded as his eyes opened as wide as they possibly could. Wider than any birthday gift he had ever opened.

There before them are three 500 foot tall fountains in a 2 mile long cave. The fountains have geysers of bright yellow Praem gushing from them. The cave is filled with that all too familiar smell. Each fountain is unique. The first has a black marble statue of Dramkick holding a man's head-with the Praem gushing from the severed head's mouth. The 2nd is of a small child-the boy Prince Mailk Hillgo who perished only days into his reign. The Praem gushes from his ear as his head tilts towards the ground.

The Mailk Hillgo fountain shows what a muscular child he was, with large calves and forearms. He is only wearing a loin cloth in this depiction. His face is handsome and belies his actual age. This gives him the appearance of being much older and wiser than his years would suggest. The 3rd fountain is of Emasip Teas Reign-Dramkick's father and the former emperor of the Talz system. Emasip has an almost square head with a round peak in the center. His eyes are far too large for his face and are looking in different directions. This caused his enemies to call him crazy eye (but never to his face for fear of his fury). His nose is also nonexistent like Dramkick's. His mouth is wide and filled with 2 rows of circular teeth. In life he was a head shorter than Dramkick, but he is the only man he was ever afraid of. He had long fat fingers that could squeeze the life out of anyone. And he has 7 toes on each foot. He ruled over Talz for 2,671 years before he was assassinated at a gala at his home-by the next in line Leach Culle. Leach was subsequently beaten to death by Dramkick shortly after he heard the news. It was done right in the middle the Barnes Hall-which is where Leach and his friends were celebrating the death of Emasip. Dramkick always loved a party.

Pleu and Coats gazed at the Rala fountains in bewilderment and walked over to them gleefully. There was a certain uncanny spring in their step they couldn't explain. Coats looked at his reflection in the Praem and ran his hand through it slowly and said, "We found the fuel for an entire civilization. It's so beautiful it defies description."

"It's what our lives are about," Pleu said and as he drank from the Praem-he fashioned his hands into a cup.

"I've waited a long time for exactly this," Coats said in disbelief and then he quickly dunked his face under the surface. Ingesting the Praem like this made his body feel as if it were made of warm Wams. Coats knew this was the greatest moment of his life.

The 2 of them looked around the cave and Coats said excitedly, "Its beyond comprehension, the pure Praem gives you infinite faculties! I can see that ant eating a seed in the crack on the far wall, Pleu."

"I can see it too, how is this possible?" Pleu asked as he looked at Coats.

"I don't know...but we mustn't be careless. Let's fill our packs with Praem and find a way out of here. Someone will be along before *too long*," Coats said calmly as he pulled a hose from his pack and dropped it into the fountain. The Praem didn't splash or shift very much at all as it devoured the hose.

Pleu put his own hose into the fountain and said boldly, "Just wait 'til people hear, they won't believe it."

"They will and everything will change because of it," Coats said sternly as his eyes filled with Praem. "We've been duped by Dramkick for the last time. I knew he was diluting the Praem, I knew it!" Coats said angrily as his eyes met Pleu's. A second later he put his hose back into his pack and scanned the outer reaches of the cave.

Pleu did the same and then took another sip from the fountain. Coats pulled him out by the shoulder and they started looking for a way out. They walked around the back of the Emasip fountain and discovered a staircase leading up into the walls.

"This will do," Coats said happily as he smiled to himself.

"It's better than dealing with those guards, that's for sure," Pleu replied as he glanced over at Coats.

"Anything's better than that," Coats said as he started up the staircase with Pleu a few steps behind.

They ascended the staircase and it led to a darkened stone hallway. There was an opening on the right side 20 feet ahead of them. They could see a doorway at the end of the hallway. It smelled of old clothes and burnt pancakes.

"This looks promising," Coats said as he walked down the hallway.

Coats slowed and peeked around the corner only to see a Vor Me battalion doing training exercises 30 feet below.

"Wow that's bad luck, from 2 guards to two thousand," Coats said sadly as he looked down at the Vor Me. Where's my luck, he thought.

"Well we came this far, that door is only 20 feet away. If we were careful enough they might not notice us," Pleu explained as he looked down at the Vor Me.

"Granted, but with our luck Dramkick himself could be waiting for us behind that door," Coats answered as his right hand noticeably shook and then continued, "What we know...behind us there are 2 soldiers who will kill us on sight. There is a chance we could overpower them, but it's a slim chance. That door could be certain doom or a viable escape route," Coats said sternly as he looked over at Pleu.

"Are you asking *me*?" Pleu asked as he smirked at Coats.

"Yes!"

"The door, chances are for the taking. Let's be ready and agile for anything we face on the

other side of that door," Pleu said as he pulled out a Tridney.

"Agreed," Coats answered as he raised his Paniflu and started slowly walking towards the door.

They each took a few steps as they keenly watched the Vor Me below. One of the Vor Me looked up and saw them. He reached for his weapon and as he did Coats blasted him with his Paniflu. Suddenly Coats and Pleu were making a mad dash for the door. The Vor Me soldiers below started firing at Coats and Pleu. One shot grazed Pleu's calf causing him to shout, "Whoa Vevin, that was close!"

Vevin Be was a man who narrowly escaped the gallows 47 times before his eventual demise (hence the expression Whoa Vevin).

Coats grabbed the door handle and flung the door open violently. It revealed the Jarret marketplace (it had everything and was constantly buzzing with activity). It consisted of a large cluster of store fronts. And all the store fronts had the identical tan clay walls and round windows. Store clusters were in identical sections that met at Uvaly fountain-it is a 60 foot pair of pyramids with water running down the sides.

Coats and Pleu waded into the crowd of people and Coats said stunned, "If they only knew what was beneath them, they'd lose it."

"If these people knew the Rala fountains were so close there'd be a riot in seconds," Pleu said gleefully as he looked behind him for the Vor Me and continued, "And they'd all be killed."

Coats looked around for transportation and said firmly, "Let's rent an Airso and get some distance between us and here."

The Airso is a simple blue and red crotch rocket motorcycle that can hover above the ground using reverse magnetic force. It is ideal for the titanium rich soil of Membra.

"My wage stick is almost empty," Pleu admitted sadly as he pulled out his red wage stick.

A wage stick is a red plastic cigar shaped device. It can be used to access all of your available money and credit, even advance wages.

"Don't worry about it, I've got plenty. Let's take those 2 and speed out of here," Coats said sternly as he swiped his wage stick over the 2 locks holding the Airsos in place.

They mounted the Airsos and raced at full speed away from Jarret marketplace. Coats glanced over his shoulder and saw the place where they had just been get swarmed with Vor Me soldiers. Coats was relieved that they had escaped, but he knew they'd be looking for him and Pleu before long. He knew Dramkick would never let this stand.

Chapter 3

Dramkick received the news that there had been intruders at the Rala fountains and laughed and said in his usual way, "I hope there's more, it's high time for another crushed revolution. The men who broke in though, I'll need to feel their craniums crushing in my hands. Appearances and all," Dramkick said snidely and then Vor Me soldiers were dispatched door to door to find the culprits (and told to look for the pure Praem and ingest none of it). Government Praem was much thinner for a reason.

Tonight begins the annual meeting of the Caspear-it is comprised of Dramkick and all of his assorted Benbres. The Benbre Khalex-of the planet Drear-is unable to attend due to an unfortunate meeting with a trash compactor. The other Benbres fear it was less accident and more Dramkick, but none dared even a whisper.

The meeting is to take place at the Rerich Manor (long known to be a favorite getaway retreat for Dramkick). It is an enormous castle made entirely from mahogany logs. It was built on Lake Maas and has a large deck that stretches a half mile into the water. Dramkick commissioned the castle be built after the mysterious disappearance of his first wife Olexis Reign. She had fallen asleep beside Dramkick and when he awoke there wasn't a trace of her anywhere.

Dramkick is sitting on the deck at Rerich shooting Silby skeet. The Silby are a duck like bird which can only fly a few feet at a time. The Silby would be launched into the air with a slingshot.

And then Dramkick would blow it into oblivion with his laser rifle-he relied upon his Hapman laser rifle for all skeet shooting.

"Pull, Infidel, pull!" Dramkick shouted angrily as he steadied his Hapman.

The Silby launched high into the air and a moment later Dramkick sent a shot through its body. It exploded into a ball of feathers and blue blood. Dramkick stood up and shouted, "Two at ah time, make haste you fools!"

His servants loaded up 2 Silbys and slung them high into the air. Dramkick fired his Hapman and hit both Silbys with a single shot and said proudly, "A keener shot does not exist, nor a wiser soul. That's enough for today bring me a drink! Make it stiffer than Dormaline or it's your skull's last breaths."

Dormaline being a toxic fuel used in the Talz warships. It is highly combustibile and would burn through skin and bones.

His two servants hurried away while Dramkick sat down on his deck chair with his Hapman across his left leg. It was nearing night and lights started popping up all over the shoreline. Dramkick loved this time of day and his thoughts were on his father Emasip. Many a day he thought of those summer nights the 2 had sat on the deck and told wild unbelievable stories to amuse themselves. His heart still ached for his father and he missed him dearly. He sat there and his thoughts of Emasip caused a tear to run down his cheek.

Behind him he heard a board creek that could only be a person's step. He grabbed the Hapman, dove, and rolled at an angle. And as he did a gun blast demolished the chair where he had just been sitting. Dramkick spun around and saw his attacker. It was a thin man with orange skin wearing a white robe and a black helmet. He had in his hand a Morneck-a small hand canon that could blow through a man leaving only specs of flesh and blood behind. It is a pistol with 4 barrels that can fire simultaneously. It also has a laser scope, but it is rarely used because of its wide spray.

Dramkick knew instantly it was Doe Sides. He fired his Hapman piercing Doe's chest and knocking him backwards. A second later Doe fired his Morneck, but stumbled as did, causing the shot to barely miss Dramkick. Instead the shot blew a gaping hole in the deck. Dramkick meanwhile took dead aim and blasted Doe right between the eyes. It shattered his black helmet of Trasom and created a stream of blood pouring out of his forehead. Doe wasn't dead yet, he staggered back and forth and raised his Morneck. Dramkick fired a 2nd shot into his throat. This caused more blood to gush from Doe, but he still wouldn't die. Dramkick respected this. Dramkick walked over to him and said snidely, "This death will be your last I assure you dear, Doe Sides, he ha."

Dramkick put his hands on either side of Doe's head and popped it like a balloon. Doe's lifeless body fell to the deck and Dramkick adjusted his shirt.

"GET off my deck!" Dramkick yelled as he kicked Doe's leg. And then he said jokingly,

"Don't dally I can't have you basking in the sun he Haw hee hee. Look at the mess you've made you insolent child! Don't you look at me that way, WHAT!" Dramkick shouted as he started to kick the dead body even harder now.

He tossed Doe into the hole in the deck and waved both his hands over the hole like a magician. He calmly watched the body float away and then made for the castle with great haste.

Meanwhile in the ocean community of Vanic Bay the Gopas were gathered at a beach house to discuss the findings of Coats and Pleu. The house they were meeting at is in the shape of a piece of pie tilted at a 45° angle. It is covered in an array of gold solar panels and has one large continuous blue tinted window-the window runs along all 3 sides. The tip of the pie piece has a sun shielding black curtain draped over it that extends to the beach below. Behind the curtain there is a sectional circular set of white couches. In the center of the couches there is a black table that houses a hologram projector. The 7 Gopas are seated around the hologram projector including Coats and Pleu. Coats stood up and said strongly, "Brothers, there has been a deception that is beyond forgiveness. Pleu and I were successful in finding the Rala fountains, but that is not all we found, here try this," Coats said cautiously as he passed around the pure Praem tubes and then smiled and said, "This is what we've been missing, Brothers."

Everyone ingested the Praem and they were thrust instantly into Twosqu. Scraft Tams said gleefully, "This is beyond exquisite my dear, Coats. This is heaven beyond my dreams."

Scraft is all of 5 feet 8 and 203 pounds of pure raging muscle. He has long thick blonde hair

with blue streaks that tie into 3 pony tails-each ponytail has silver balls attached at the ends. Above each eye and in the center of his head are 3 circles filled with Rosmin-Rosmin is an 89th century shaman notorious for his sexual exploits. Scraft is missing 2 fingers on his left hand that he lost in a bar fight when he insulted a woman he had groped. He has on a blue and light blue striped T-shirt with a 1/16 inch thick monitor over his chest-it scrolls through his favorite jokes. He also has on a pair of black pants with one pant leg shorter than the other and also a pair of ankle high silver Meakers-Meakers are a dress shoe with rubber soles like a sneaker.

Coats and Pleu looked around at everyone's smiling faces and Pleu said starkly, "We've been duped my fellow Gopas...Dramkick's diluting our shipments and we think he's hoarding the rest for himself!"

"That's an outrage!" Scraft shouted as he stood up and then said sternly, "This Dramkick has got retribution coming his way. There is no answer other than death on the stick for dear...Lovely...Dramkick!"

"You are right, Scraft, but this is an easy thing to dream for but a harder thing to hold in your hand," Coats explained as his mind cast a line through different memories of Dramkick killing people. "Trust me Dramkick has fended off many an assassin and his will is powerful, but he is not infallible. Now we can't out fight him, but we are wise and we can *out think him*," Coats said as he turned on the hologram then continued, "This is his personal transport, pretty isn't she. What we are proposing is sabotage. If we could get an explosive charge attached to the fuel cell. And then detonate it at the opportune time. Then dear...Lovely...Dramkick would end up in

pieces and be a distant memory for us all," Coats said as he sat back down.

"Then, we could take control of the Praem supply. And we could feel like we do now forever," Pleu replied as he spun his fingers into a ball front of his mouth.

"This is our mission, but preparation will be the key," Scraft walked among the Gopas and spoke softly. "We'll only get one shot at him like this, and a thousand things will have to go right to pull it off. It's certainly doable. And even old Dramkick could appreciate our courage in trying, and hopefully succeeding, where others have failed," Scraft said boldly as he sucked on his Praem tube in between sentences.

Back at Rerich castle the Caspear had gathered around a long smooth white dining room table. They were just beginning to eat their split Wistle bloods stew. The Whistle is a 2 headed fish that looks like an Aardvark and smells of death. And when you split its head down the middle it oozes a dark green blood that is delicious to eat with boiled eyeballs.

The dining room has walls that are royal blue and specifically shaped with pockets for each person's chair. In the corner sits a large hat rack with a collection of over 100 old chapeaus that Dramkick has collected over the years. One has a triangular brim with a hand pointed at the wearer on top of it. Another displays random messages on a 14 inch monitor that covers the entire hat.

Each chair at the table is white in color and has built in computers. These computers are

capable of relaying messages from chair to chair without speaking. Each chair is also capable of escape as it has escape pod functions-this is where at the press of a button the chair would morph and launch in the atmosphere. Although no one knew of the Caspear's secret meetings, they still took every precaution. Dramkick was meticulous to the end. He even went to such lengths as hiring assassins to trail his rivals on the day the meetings. And if anything happened to them at the meeting, then the assassins were instructed to do away with their rivals as well as their entire families. Dramkick took it another step unbeknownst to anyone. He had secretly been adding a drug known as Gament to the Praem supply. He had given strict orders that upon his death the Gament should no longer be included in the Praem. The outcome of such a thing is in a few days everyone would begin to get violently ill and perish shortly thereafter (which unknowingly their bodies had become seriously dependent upon it to properly function). Dramkick's reasoning was, "if I'm not here to enjoy life, then here will no longer exist."

Dramkick dipped a large piece of bread into the Whistle bloods stew and took a large bite. He grunted with satisfaction. He took a sip of Inso white wine and then surveyed everyone at the table. They were wildly enjoying their soup and paid no attention to Dramkick.

Inso wine is named after Inso words-from the Kull system-and he makes each bottle of wine himself. He does this by crushing each individual grape with his own hands. He sells only a few hundred bottles a year, but they are very expensive and considered the height of luxury to have even just one.

Dramkick dips his bread again in the soup and asked gregariously as he ate, "What lessons

will we teach this year? What concessions will be made? And where will our loyalties reside?"

"I think the people of Tortum should endure financial hardship and a food shortage," Poeragard said bluntly as he rubbed his belly. "I feel this will teach them the lesson of prudence and to not be greedy for sustenance. They've gotten fat and filled with laziness and a swift hand is required, I yield," Poeragard said boldly as he held his spoon facing forward in front of him.

"Your yield is acknowledged and your requests are accepted," Dramkick retorted as soup dripped down his chin and then continued, "Your wage sticks will encounter a glitch and the populous will lose monies for 2 months. As far as the food shortage, the meat supply will be tainted causing a rash of deaths and thusly inciting a panic. This should in due time inspire your populous for movement and curb their lack of motivation. Next speaker be heard!" Dramkick demanded in a serious tone as he continued eating his soup.

"I call for an across the board action on all of our home worlds. The people of gotten too overjoyed with their lives, a reality check is in order, I yield," Benbre Larbell Starke said as he coughed-he was from the planet Tanslem of the Tremur system.

Larbell stalk stands a shaky 6 foot 3 and barely 184 pounds. His shoulders are broad and his hips narrow. His hair is off pink, down to his butt, and so thick it never appears to move. He loves bar room fights (especially the ones where obvious laws are broken). And his face is covered in scars and gashes, some old some new. His nose has been badly broken 3 times across the bridge. It looks like a ski slope with a jump at the end-as the tip of his nose turns slightly

upward. He has 5 fingers on his left hand and 6 on his right. The 6th finger being twice as long as the others and his fingernails are naturally blue. His feet, covered by black leather boots, hide the fact that he has all big toes and the word Dravex scorched into each.

Dravex is an all male bar fighting club that he was proud to be a member of. He also has on a yellow T-shirt with triangles for sleeves and burgundy pants with a pair of black stripes down the sides.

"Agreed, the suffrage will begin post haste. Speak up, children, let's keep this meeting moving," Dramkick said condescendingly as he put his large feet on the table.

"I miss war, I admit it. I think we should fuel a planet too planet war between Vexus a Membra, with Membra the obvious victor," Benbre Vield Pas robustly said as he sat back in his chair and put his feet on the table.

Vield Pas is a speck of a man at 5 foot 3 and 112 pounds with narrow shoulders and a small pot belly. His checkered purple and gold hair has a small wooden chair fastened to the top of his head. His eyes are dull purple and have a panicked look to them. His mouth looks perpetually like he is beginning a sentence. And he was blessed with beautiful perfectly straight vibrant white teeth. His gold mustache covers only two thirds of his upper lip and stretches into his bushy purple sideburns. He walks at 30° angles because of an injury suffered during the Zaco Au war 2 years prior. He always wears black wool sweaters and black dress pants. And his black slippers have the number 8 stitched into the heels because of his father's passing on the 8th day

of Month 5 years earlier.

"Obviously, a war could be good," Dramkick replied as if no one could hear what he had said. Dramkick leaned forward and said greedily, "I get an enormous thrill out of these epic battles and we all love to see our armies mature and excel. Not to mention another generation gets the power and the ache of war stories he he ha," Dramkick joked as he flexed his massive chest. "O.K. then, we'll set in motion an unforgivable scandal which will have every Talz up in arms with the Vexidians. Something heinous, a baby's death or a senator being sexually violated then murdered. Every war needs a spark and the bigger the spark the hotter the flame. Yes, I've missed my captain's seat on the Debrist Morou. And, the war machine always needs its father for guidance and direction he hee hee," Dramkick said happily as he hit the table hard again and again. Dramkick drank an entire glass of wine then said, "I decree Aovaba war will take place in 37 days and I commend Benbre Vield for his foresight in this matter. I also knowledge Benbre Poeragard and Benbre Larbell, for their contributions and they were small by no measure. I deem that enough life reconstructing has happened and I end this council for one year. Be pure and be vivid, my friends," Dramkick said warmly and he started sucking on a Praem cigarette. He leaned back in his chair and thought what a lovely war it would be.

The Benbres touched their index fingers to the center of their brows, closed their eyes, and said in unison, "For Dramkick, for life, "and the meeting adjourned.

Chapter 4

9 days after the meeting of the Caspear a female Sen. from Vexus was raped and then brutally murdered by a Talz diplomat (in front of her small child Anbo no less). Esic Lester-a Talz diplomat-fled to Membra causing the people of Vexus to scream for justice. When justice wasn't granted by Dramkick (who refused to release Esic into the care of the Vexus police for some reason) a Vexidian general stole a battleship and attacked the Talz capital of Altan. The Aovaba war started 37 days exactly after Dramkick decreed it would.

The Talz retaliated with an all out assault on the planet of Vexus-killing 600,000 the first 2 days alone. The Pavre-the Vexidian art Museum-had all of its priceless works of art removed only minutes before it was laid to waste (this was done oddly enough and timely enough by Benbre Vield Pas).

A bombing campaign by the Vexidian Army destroyed every castle in the hills of Orne except for Dramkick Château Gadileap. Nor was his villa lay siege to on a similar bombing run in the wine region of Pisl (much to Dramkick's surprise is what told the populous). A month into the

Aovaba war, found Dramkick boarding the Debrist Morou for a trip to the front lines. He needed to gage his Vor Me and their readiness to fight (and also to feel the rush of a battlefield again).

"If it isn't here then I don't want it! Clear off that table and bring me the Smaus WITH VIGOR!!" Dramkick shouted as he kicked a crew member in the butt and slid into his captain's chair-which was in the rear the war room.

The war room is exactly 30' x 50' and oval in shape. Its walls are covered with computer screens and control panels, as well as a painting of Emasip, Dramkick, and Snatsy Reign-Dramkick's late mother. The image of the Reign family sits beside an enormous monitor.

Snatsy had fallen from the crest of Mt. Calby accidentally after a long day of climbing with Emasip- this happened when Dramkick was in his military conditioning term at Vonkf. When he found out he punched through the Dean's passenger door hitting his wife in the leg.

The Vonkef is a brutal training facility that every boy of 15 is forced to attend for 3 years-as per the government's request. How o I do this was the first day, how can I do this was the 50th, but a soldier on the 100th day by God had better be saying I'll always do this.

There is a large captain's chair in the center and 2 smaller chairs in front of it. The painting near the captain's chair depicts Emasip and Snatsy locked in a kiss, while Dramkick has his arms around them. Snatsy was a handsome woman of Talz descent. Who had grayish shortly cut blue hair with a ponytail the top. She was blessed with "Take no prisoner eyes" that were bright

green. Her thick upper lip overpowered her thin lower lip. Her figure was womanly and very curvaceous. She also had large powerful hands and wide feet.

"Quadromolan, the Smaus is here just as you requested," Lieutenant Gigg Jeaf answered nervously as he placed the Smaus on the table.

Lieutenant Gigg Jeaf is a thin 5'9" and extremely muscular, yet he has a thin frame. His eyes are grey in the retina and have the words, "to trample," written in a star shape inside them hundreds of times. His fingers are long and thin, but his thumbs are short and very wide-after an incident at a chemical plant his fingernails were a crazed red ever since. His nose looks like a catcher's mitt in that it turns inward creating a pocket. He is wearing a grey and orange long sleeved shirt that has Dramkick's family crest on it-of a half skull being held up by 50 silver bayonets. His many accommodations are on the back stitched in rows of 5 perfect squares. He is a busy boy and Dramkick has noticed. Dramkick thinks Gigg could run the empire in the future.

"Finally, I needed this undeniably now," Dramkick said fiercely as he stared at the Smaus standing on the plate in his lap.

A Smaus is a 19 inch tall sentient being indigenous to Membra. The Smaus have the ability to lock eyes with someone for a matter of seconds and then free their minds of: anger, worry, stress, and self pity-they use yellow lasers made of endorphins. Their heads are twice the size of their entire body. And they have gigantic eyes that stretch across the front half of their heads. Their eyes appear to always be a moment away from crying, yet they never shed a single tear. It is

known as the Smaus careless stare by the Talz. They have tiny cat like noses that are black in color and tiny mouths with only 8 crooked teeth combined. They also have a tuft of thin black hair on top of their heads and a few strands dangling from their chins. They possess square ears that have a green hue to them. Their skin is dark blue with tiny red spots. Their arms and legs are very thin with their hands and feet being very large proportionately. They all wear gold skin tight necklaces around their waists with their specialty engraved on it (like pity or shame for example).

"How far do we need to go, Quadromolan?" Smaus asked as she gazed up at Dramkick.

"It's worse than before, I require a new perspective and please be bold," Dramkick said plainly as he locked eyes with the Smaus.

The 2 stared at each other for a moment and then a yellow laser beam came out of the Smaus's eyes. It hit Dramkick in the center of his brow and eyes causing him to lean back slightly.

"That's it, that is always it!" Dramkick exclaimed as a smile crept across his face. "My mind is no longer cloudy and the tension is slowly evaporating. Yes yes, it is exquisite you're cleansing my palate of fear and shame and most of all worry. Yes, Smaus, I am free again," Dramkick said slowly and then he let out a long sigh as he relaxed his shoulders.

"We've all had pain, we are more than our pain," Smaus said warmly as he continued to look at Dramkick. "Great things can and will be yours, Quadromolan, it is not by chance but by

destiny," Smaus said warmly as she stared at Dramkick and waved her hands gently from side to side.

"You were born a miracle, Smaus, all of you were," Dramkick said happily as if the words brought him joy to say them. Dramkick continued, "God gave you a calling, an amazing gift he hee hee. I feel it now, the euphoria high in my shoulders washing over me hee hee. Okay, Smaus, I feel great...ease away, our session is over," Dramkick said joyously as he pressed his right hand on his chest and rubbed the Smaus's shoulder gently.

"As you wish, Quadromolan, we emptied out a month's worth of unwanted emotions. I think we should not wait so long for our next session together," Smaus said anxiously as she stopped the laser beam and gave Dramkick's head a quick rub.

"I believe you are right, but I have other commitments that are unavoidable," Dramkick assured as his eyes glazed over. "Yes yes we must okay. Then we will meet in a short while and I will make a point of it," Dramkick said with a slight smile as he stretched his neck.

"If it suits you," Smaus said as she laid flat on her back and closed her eyes.

Lieutenant Gigg took her from the room and returned a minute later with a glass of warm Wams.

Wams is a milk-like substance taken from the breast of the Polkaba bird. The bird is a 2

headed land dweller that looks like a squirrel in the face. It has 4 large red teeth that pop out the sides of his mouth. It also has 3 large pink breasts and one very small wing on its left side. Its feet are like chicken nuggets in that they are gold in color and have hardly a hint of a toe.

"Wams, this is all a man should require for sustenance," Dramkick boasted as he danced with that glass of Wams. Dramkick shrugged and then said, "Fills the heart with wonderment and purpose. What distance are we from the illusive Vor Me, Lieutenant?" Dramkick asked as he slowly sipped the Wams.

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"We're nearing the war zone presently, Quadromolan. Only a peek over the ridge and we will be there," Gigg said confidently as he sat down in his chair-it faced a large monitor in front of Dramkick.

"Righteous!" Dramkick shuffled his feet and his eyes perked up. "Let's see their valor, their pure vicious hearts in action! I hope they don't dishonor me or it would be their undoing for certain," Dramkick said boldly as he shifted in his chair like a lion in its pen.

The Debrist Morou came over the large stone covered peak with a smooth power. Below them they could see hundreds of thousands of Vor Me and Vexidian soldiers engaged in a fierce battle-it was taking place in a large green grass field. It sat between 2 hilltops with several large trees at the far end. Dramkick saw the Rota hover tanks blasting holes in the Vexidian squadrons and bristled.

The Rota tanks are 100' x 70' and shaped like a large flashlight. They each have 20 foot cannons where the front of a normal tank would be. They are dark red in color with the cannon painted seal black. The tank commanders control the Rota in a trio of seats hanging off the back of it-that are encased in 16 inch bulletproof steel and known as the Living Grave. The Rota use anti-gravity thrusts to propel them up and forward. In the front above the cannon is a lone gunner who has total discretion to fire at will-these men are known as the Leavum and are protected by a 30 inch thick see through polymer. They did have the last resort of an escape capsule (but few ever used it). These soldiers are known as Hell's Lunatics by the Vor Me.

The Flattener Flee is a giant circular ship that they use to crush large numbers of troops in one swift crash to the ground. It is over a half mile long as well as a half mile wide. The Flattener Flee is similar to a hamburger patty only it is made of solid iron and spikes. It has large windows on its belly so the skeleton crew of only 5 can line up the attack with precision. The Flattener Flees are covered in green spackle and thousands of multi color lights. It also has the Reign family crest adorned on its roof in gold and silver.

The Vor Me themselves are equipped with Trask 11 assault rifles-which can blast through solid metal with quick laser bursts and also anyone in their path. The Trask 11 is grey in color with white markings of its production number on the side. It has a 3 foot barrel and lightning fast trigger that is also black in color. The Trask 11 has an air suction device called the Wheezy, that can create a pocket in front of the weapon where there is absolutely no breathable air to speak of. The Wheezy sits affixed to the front of the gun barrel and is only 6 inches around and 12 inches long. It is rectangular in shape with a blue orb on top of it that pulses red when fired.

Dramkick's watched greedily as his Vor Me battalions devastated the Vexidian soldiers on the battlefield.

"The Vor Me look stunning. They are *rare vintage* this crop," Dramkick said snidely as he watched a Vor Me behead a Vexidian soldier and then he said gleefully, "Oh yes they are delightful to watch. Such valor and ruthlessness, it makes my heart sing sad tunes with a touch of hope. Lieutenant Gigg, I'm desperate to see the new Flattener Flees. Please fly us in close so as to not miss their TRUE POWER!"

"Most assuredly, Quadromolan, there are 17 in action on this battlefield. There should be one beyond those trees," Gigg said happily as he typed in the coordinates with one hand and tapped his temple with the other.

They cleared the tree tops and saw a fierce ground battle taking place on a gradually sloping valley. There were Rotas blasting away at the Vexidian tanks and small aircraft. A good 50,000 Vor Me and Vexidian soldiers engaged in a bloody battle. A pair of Flattener Flees circled overhead. Then all of a sudden one fell sharply to the ground crushing 30,000 Vexidian soldiers who were in the holding area.

"That's what I came here to see!" Dramkick thundered as his feet subconsciously kicked the floor. "Now that's progress, the sheer beauty and mercy of such a device. It thrills my soul and lights my burning heart anew," Dramkick said boldly as he stood up and walked closer to the

monitor and then asked, "And what is that one doing?"

"That one is engaging the target by swooping in several times until the enemy fails to scatter," Gigg said calmly as he watched the Flattener Flee drop and then rise several times then he continued, "Now she's got her target!"

The Flattener Flee dropped suddenly and gave Dramkick the feeling of an impending car crash. It dropped so fast the Vexidian troops could not scatter or escape leveling 25,000. Dramkick suddenly smiled and said snidely, "These Vexidian soldiers are an embarrassment. How dare they take the battlefield! These troops are nothing more than walking caskets. There is a stench of incompetence filling my nostrils. Where is my Praem tube? I detest weakness and these are not men, they are nothing!"

Lieutenant Gigg handed Dramkick a Praem tube and Dramkick poured into his eyes and let out a sigh of relief.

"Is it to your liking, Quadromolan?" Gigg asked as his left pinky twitched from adrenaline.

"Fine, Gigg, fine enough for a swing by Benbre Vield Pas' Lakeside home. I must thank him for this glorious battlefield and get his true feelings on the of Aovaba war," Dramkick said as he plopped down in his captain's chair.

The Praem kicked in and once Dramkick was inside Twosqu he started sending mental

images to the Danbridgo. Dramkick told them to dance and sing as he watched in total unbridled happiness. He ordered them to build a human pyramid and as they did he burst into laughter. It was a laughter seldom heard by others. He watched as the final Danbridgo climbed to the top of the pyramid, raised his right hand, and lifted his chin triumphantly. This caused Dramkick to keel over in laughter and then whispered, "Danbridgo can raise the impossible smile in me."

"In all of us!" said Gigg with confidence (which had started to rise) then sank back down again. He sucked helplessly on the Praem tube for help.

"Yes, Gigg, this much a man can deduce, but their gift is without explanation," Dramkick said quietly as he watched Danbridgo doing flips off each other's backs.

Several minutes evaporated and they arrived at Vield's lakeside home and landed along the side of the house. It is a beautiful and vast red brick home that has two 100 foot high towers on either side. There are 50 or so round windows wrapped around the towers like railroad tracks. In the middle, there is a 70 foot high white crystal dome with Vield's smiling face adorned on it. There is a small deck on the peak with 2 wooden chairs and a black 3 legged table-in the shape of a Z-in between them. Clinging to the base of the tower there are several thick brown leaf bushes and a series of Baimes statues.

Baimes is a beloved figure among children has a week each year in celebration of his birth and remembrance of his passing. Baimes was a child prodigy painter who could paint anyone or anything in perfect detail with only a glance. His works were celebrated as masterpieces (while

he was still alive) and considered priceless artifacts. He once painted 154 people in perfect detail after only one seconds worth of seeing them. He also happened to be a brilliant musician and master of Maovick-Maovick is a musical device that produces sound from a person's brain waves. The Maovick is black in color and the size of a pack of cigarettes. It is completely smooth and rounded. It has the capacity to produce over 1 million musical notes and endless vibrato. It also has the ability to turn sounds only animals can hear into actual music. Baimes was known to lay on the roof of his home completely naked at night and hum endlessly in search of the perfect melody. He died as the result of a slip one evening from that very roof. Baimes had square red curls that covered his head like an umbrella. His eyes were silver in color and lacked even a hint of emotion. He stood 5'8" tall and weighed 159 pounds with large forearms and bulbous calves. His nose was his defining feature because of the fact it had a 3rd nostril in the center. It literally allowed people to see through to the back of his throat (and it scared children). It gave him the ability to produce certain tones as he sang that no one had ever heard before.

"Ah Vield, it will be extraordinary to share breaths again with dear Vield. I hope we find him in good cheer, well...I think we shall," Dramkick said softly as he checked his sweater in the mirror for tears.

"I'm sure of it, Quadromolan," Gigg said brightly as he hesitated slightly to lead the way out of the Debrist Morou.

"As am I."

Once they were clear of the Debrist Morou a large opening appeared in the front of the crystal dome. Vield came walking out with a pair of crystal glasses in one hand and a bottle of Touc wine in the other.

Touc is made from 10,000 year old preserved grapes. It has exceptional body, density, and flavor.

Vield is wearing a flowing white robe and a square black cap that has an array of flashing lights on it from front to back. On his feet he is wearing his black slippers-they have the Benbre insignia on each.

"Dramkick, I pray you haven't eaten and your thirst needs quenching. Because I have a bottle of Touc. *And yes it is chilled,*" Vield spoke softly as he walked up to Dramkick and Gigg.

"Vield, you embrace with one hand and tempt with the other," Dramkick replied warmly as his body language said nothing at all to Vield. "I can't remember my last bottle of Touc, must have been...the devastation conference yes, that was it," said Dramkick as he gave Vield an embrace.

"I remember that conference and I remember you drinking 2 bottle of Touc if memory serves me well," Vield replied slyly as he handed Dramkick a glass.

"He Hee one invariably leads to 2 and as it should be he hee hee," Dramkick joked as his hand

stroked his hair. "You have a fine home here, Vield, it suits your many palates," Dramkick said as he watched Vield pour the Touc.

"Thank you, Dramkick, it thrills my senses and allows me to dream anew," Vield said as he looked at his home and then asked, "And who might you be?"

"Lieutenant Gigg Jeffs I'm the Quadromolan's liaison on this mission. It's an honor to meet you, Benbre Pas," Gigg answered politely and then bowed.

Vield looked at Gigg bowing and then looked at Dramkick and said as he grinned, "You're in good hands, Dramkick. I won't worry about you any further."

"Nor I you," Dramkick said quickly and then he took a drink and continued, "Well let's see this glorious wonder of a home. My hope is that you've gotten around to finishing it, for my back needs a respite."

Vield smiled and then said politely, "Follow me and find out."

Dramkick and Gigg followed Vield up the stone pathway and through the opening into the crystal dome. Inside, there was a brief hallway lined with living pictures of Vield-they recounted his many triumphs like his victory at Percuk in the Zaco Au war. That was where he lead an array of Rota tank assaults. On the left wall there is also a living portrait of his late wife Bacos on the day they each had each other's name imprinted on their DNA. The hallway ceiling has a

series of blue lights that move from one side to the other and then disappear into the wall.

Dramkick took a deep breath and entered the living room. He prayed it wasn't tacky. The living room has a 30 foot ceiling with a collage of images painted on it reminiscent of the Sistine Chapel. There is a portrait of Dramkick with his late father in opposite facing thrones. There is a picture of 2 Wees thrashing their heads together violently (Vield's hobbies included violence and drugs. And *lots* of both.)

The Wees resemble a ram like animal with 3 sets of spiral horns that stick out on either side of its head. They also have 5 legs, 2 per side, with an extra one in the middle. There are also several paintings of Vield's 2 sons Kraleb and Drench throughout their childhood. Affixed to the top of the ceiling in the center, is the Caspear seal displayed prominently (Vield knew that would catch Dramkick's eye.)

The 2 fountains on either side of the room have red water running upwards and downwards. They travel through a series of glowing green and red levels into pools of fire. The centerpiece of the room is a 10 person black reclining sofa that has foldout computer keyboards, monitors, and built in refrigerators extending out from the left wall. There is also a yellow energy coat rack (known as a smelly Rimto for obvious reasons) that has an assortment of unwashed formal and casual jackets hanging from it. One of which being a seal black jacket with red pinstripes and a turn up collar (Vield's favorite.) Not to mention his purple dinner jacket and his favorite silk white scarf. There are massage robots, known as H.M.R., waiting to the side of the room like nervous children at a middle school dance. The H.M.R. are silver with beige eyes and look

slightly human all said-except for a hole in their stomachs that has a crystal bottle of Brandy and 5 square shaped shot glasses inside. Vield knew Dramkick didn't like robots and could destroy the H.M.R. in an instant, he thought. Behind the H.M.R. there is a collection of massage tools on a white partition.

The living room consists of several levels with small staircases leading up or down to each of them-with a bed on one level and a bath on another. There is a hologram projector on another still. The Pressin walls-which you attach your hands to and they can move your hands in accordance to your specified workout routine-look like a fiery inferno to impress Dramkick. On the last level there is Vield's Heibu room-which is a place where if you were under attack or a natural disaster hit you could be totally safe inside a powerful force field generator-all of the Benbres had their own Heibu inside their residences (as did Dramkick). Vield's Heibu is lavish: it has a sitting room with 4 leather chairs, a blue marble table, an oil painting by Baimes of the river Zie, a pure platinum statue of a sword in a naked woman's mouth with diamond eyes, and a 17 inch thick glass safe filled was Vexidian currency for all to see (not to mention Vield's prized stuffed Ditt.)

The Ditt is a bulbous fish with gold eyes and a tiny 1 inch mouth. It has a giant round belly with orange scales and a 1 foot fin attached to its nose.

There is also an elongated window that overlooks Lake Unanu, with a long bed beneath it that has several white pillows and blankets on top. Beside it there is a 3 level nightstand with the Paniflu, a good cigar, and notepad with his errands for the day on it-that included a swim in Lake

Unanu and a laughter session at dusk.

"You've outdone us all, Vield, this home is truly stunning," Dramkick said as he looked around the living room. Dramkick enjoyed Vield's indulgences more than he let on. He kept his Benbres fat and happy.

"That's a fine thing to say, Dramkick," Vield gushed as he brushed off his hands on the side of his shirt and continued, "I have something here want to show you, I got on a trip to the Messi system," Vield said happily as he pulled out a round black box-with the word Tonyx written on it in gold letters-and handed it to Dramkick.

"What have you got here?" Dramkick asked slyly as he opened the box revealing 3 perfectly smooth black stones with a smooth white push button on each.

"Take one out and press the button, and see something wonderful."

Dramkick pulled out the center stone and held it in his right hand for a second. He knew something was different but what he thought? He smiled slightly and slowly pressed the button. The stone started to glow from the sides and change its shape as it sat in Dramkick's hand. This caused him to giggle. The stone was morphing into a face as it creaked and popped loudly. It built itself into a black helmet with gold eyes. On the front of the helmet there is: a face with a prominent brow, long nose with a crooked tip, old lifeless eyes, a scar under its left eye, and a black mouth guard over the bottom third of the face. The forehead has 3 perpendicular lines on

it-6 inches high-that lead to an outline of a mane of long curly hair that stretches down the back of the helmet.

"Remarkable, Vield, a true wonder I'm sure," Dramkick remarked as he looked over the helmet

"There's more, try it on," Vield said with a smirk and a wink.

Dramkick was stupefied by this, but only for a moment. *Know the outcome*, he told himself, *know the outcome*. Dramkick rolled his eyes and then looked at Vield. He calmly placed it on his head and winked. Instantly as he looked through the eyes of the helmet he could tell he was able to see the world through someone else's eyes. This caused Dramkick to say boldly, "This is madness, it's as if I'm looking at you for the first time, Vield! And you, Gigg, I see your face now and it is unfamiliar to me," Dramkick said in disbelief as he flapped his arms as if they were wings. "And suddenly I have a lifetime's worth of memories that aren't my own. Different likes and dislikes God...I can vividly recall seeing worlds from galaxies I've never been to he he ha. Outstanding, Vield, truly outstanding!"

Vield smiled and said proudly, "I thought you might like it. It's known as a Tonyx Preserver and it was created as a way to preserve a person's life, their passions, their family memories and their triumphs. The man's life you're experiencing was Dape Davonic. He was a scientist and explorer who died half a century ago," Vield explained as he breezed around the room and then continued, "He created the Tonyx Preserver on a lark. Just to see if he could. And now his life,

his wife's life, and his son's life are here in these helmets."

"The question I have for you, Vield, is this. It feels as though I'm thinking like him and when I look at you and Gigg, my mindset is who are these people? So my question is *how* can this be harnessed?" Dramkick asked as his eyes squinted at Vield.

"That is exactly the question," Vield replied as his voice sounded excited on every other word. "We now have the will and the intellect of an extraordinary scientist at our disposal. It begs the question can we make more of these Tonyx Preservers from all of our brilliant minds? Because if so, our power would expand a thousand fold," Vield spoke as if he had discovered the universe's most important secret (and Dramkick knew he had.)

"Yes, Vield, this is one puzzle worth unraveling. I can see now our purpose must be this and this it shall," Dramkick said coldly with his hands looking as if they could crush the world.

Chapter 5

3 months after Dramkick was shown the Tonyx Preserver he was still consumed with discovering its secrets. He had 170 of his finest scientists examining every molecule the helmets. They had to find a way to create more firstly, and fill them with brilliant minds lastly and most importantly. Dramkick was housing the 170 scientists in a château on the far end of the Bior Waveless Sea (it was a place he often went for solitude and where no one lived within 150 miles.) The château's large dining hall had been converted into a makeshift lab. The long dining table was littered with parts, tools, and helmets in all stages of production.

"What do you think he'll say when mine works?" Dr. Edmo Ugen asked snidely as he held a red helmet in his hands.

Dr. Edmo Ugen is a slight 5 foot 9 and 130 pounds, with graying black shortly cut hair that is combed straight back. He has a gently curving nose and deep set eyes that lack any hint of humor. He is clean shaven with high cheekbones and a prominent chin. He also has a barrel chest and a short torso, with long arms and legs. His hands are large with long thick fingers. And his feet are extremely wide (they bulged out the sides of his shoes.) He is wearing a silver framed set of glasses and a gold necklace with the inscription, "I'll always love her," written in diamonds. He also has on a grey cardigan sweater and a white collared shirt (fitted perfectly for him). His

black leather patent shoes have a Jackull sewn into them.

The Jackull is an animal similar to a hyena with black and red fur and a long mouth with huge snarling teeth. It has 6 legs with huge feet that have thick claws. Along its spine is a river of yellow fur that stands straight up. The Jackull has white eyes and a blank stare like a newborn baby. The Jackull has the ability to run at blinding speed and are notorious for being vicious to anyone who comes near.

"He won't say anything cause it won't work," Dr. Atse Ullin growled as she worked on her mask and then said, "Then he'll see mine and realize that I'm on the right path."

Edmo laughed and thought to himself how beautiful Dr. Atse was (and how fond he was *of her*).

Dr. Atse Ullin is 5 foot 4 and weighs 180 pounds. Her flowing brown hair is straight and shoulder length-with bangs that are cut to different lengths on each side of her face. She has a nose like a bird's beak that is gently sloping from top to bottom. Her face is heavily wrinkled by age and by smoking, but her smile and laugh are very youthful. Her body is thin and she has a womanly figure. She has very small hands and feet, with the fingers on her hands noticeably shorter than the palm of her hands. She is wearing a loose fitting black dress that stops just above her knees with a black clasp that has the words, "I knew it was him," written on it in pink crystals. She also has on black lace leggings and black leather 2 inch heels. Around her neck a simple blue Pearl necklace-given to her by her sister as a joke.

"Path no, ravine yes and you'll both be falling helplessly towards it before mine doesn't work properly," Edmo said jokingly as he nudged Atse's shoulder and smiled.

"Oh really, a coy boy like yourself making predictions. Here's a prediction, I see Dramkick tossing you and your ego into the fiery sun if your precious helmet doesn't work," Atse looked at him with streaming, reddened eyes (and she wished she could give him a good slap).

"If that be the case I just wish Dramkick would be kind enough to let me take a friend along. And you know just who I'd pick, go ahead and see if you can guess," Edmo said jokingly as he put the rear plate of his helmet together.

"Oh, Lover, you get me so hot and bothered with your considerate gestures. But when Dramkick throws you in, and its coming for sure, I think I'll do nothing. *A whole days worth of nothing I'll have planned.* But thanks for thinking of me, *Lover*," Atse said sarcastically as she gave Edmo a long wink.

"Boy, you are some kind of woman," Edmo fought back laughter as he spoke and continued assembling his helmet. "The kind of woman I like to see dangling from a rope somewhere. I mean that, you turn my wheels and you set my heart ablaze. Atse, I've fallen head over heels in love with the idea of your early demise. I've never felt feelings so strong for woman. It's you, Atse, it's you who brought this out in me," Edmo said sarcastically as he threw Atse a seductive gaze.

"I feel the same way about you too, Edmo, I mean that," Atse curled her wrists and pouted her lips at Edmo. "When I think of the times we'll never share and all the memories of air. It's hard to control my glee and I know that men like you do come along every day. So it gives me hope for us and nothing but, Lover," Atse said sarcastically with a smile that told Edmo it was never gonna happen. "Can't you feel it, there it is, *its us.*"

Edmo smiled and said sarcastically, "I do feel it, I really do. This time with you has made me long for a briefer life and a long afterlife for a diamond in the ruff like yourself, Atse beautiful."

Just then the air shifted and Dramkick walked into the far end of the makeshift lab. This caused everyone to stop talking and focus on their work. They all knew too well the stories of Dramkick and the vicious deaths that had and could happen. Atse threw a cold stare at Edmo and whispered, "Make sure he hears about your work of art and how great it works, Lover."

Edmo shot a fierce stare back at Atse and started working diligently on his helmet. Dramkick climbed up onto the table, then jumped up and grabbed onto the chandelier. He looked at the scientists and shouted, "Who's wasting my time! Who's going through the motions! I will find you and you will be rid of appendages!"

Dramkick was convinced if he put a shock through all the scientists they would focus all their energies appropriately. He knew they were tired and it gave him great joy to see them squirm. He also knew people loved to think he was a bully and a baboon (he approved of both.) He felt this

gave him a decided advantage in keeping his people under his thumb. As he scowled at the scientists one by one, he fought desperately not to break into laughter as he swayed back and forth on the chandelier. He locked eyes with the head scientist Dr. Pone Witterkez-a renowned genius in the scientific community-and squinted at him.

Dr. Pone Witterkez is all of 6 foot one and four 50 pound bags of potatoes. He has an enormous head on top of narrow shoulders. His hair is mint colored green, curly, and gets gradually longer towards the top. He has a goofy toothy smile that doesn't look quite at home. His eyes are half covered by his brown eyelids and look like he is always in the middle of a thought. His right hand has 2 thumbs and 3 index fingers, while his left hand is completely normal. His feet are abnormally wide and turn inward then outward as he walks. It's the type of walk that draws in the eye whether you want it to or not. He is wearing a black surgical mask around his neck with the Eye of Bim seal on the front of it.

The Eye of Bim is a secret order of doctors who have made several attempts at wiping out the population of Membra. They've used super flu's and blood diseases that create death and destruction everywhere. They also have sabotaged several hospitals during the periods after natural disasters. They did this by cutting off power, supplies, and contaminating antibiotics. The Eye of Bim's hope is that they and their families will inherit Membra and create a new society.

Pone also has on a black lab coat with 10 pockets that have: notepads, tools, chocolate cookies, Praem tubes and various other things that he might need in them. He has on white dress pants and a pair of rubber soled dress shoes that have no laces.

"Things are going swimmingly, Quadromolan. We are making real progress I assure you,"
Pone said nervously as he fidgeted with his hands.

Dramkick jumped down off the table and slammed his feet. This caused the scientists to gasp and breathe a little heavier. Then Dramkick danced over to pone and asked, "Pone, my patience is a small candle that was lit a month ago. Where do you think it is now?"

"I apologize for the delay, Quadromolan, but there have been breakthroughs," Pone said anxiously as he motioned with his hand for Dramkick to follow him.

The 2 men walked 10 feet to the end of the table and stopped at a place where 3 helmets were laid out beside one another. Pone grabbed the red one and handed it to Dramkick and said hopefully, "This one is almost perfect!"

"Hmm, we will see," Dramkick replied as he put on the helmet and released just a slight laugh and then said, "This is very good, this is farther than I thought you were. I can feel this Sanfe and his strengths. I'm capable of using his intelligence. What is *missing* is his secrets and that is something we must strive for. I want the whole the man's secrets, and men are always their secrets you know."

"Of course, Quadromolan, we will bridge that gap and I suspect soon," Pone fought to hold it together, but he felt Dramkick's agitation. He simply nodded and grinned at the other scientists.

"Soon is a term I have grown to dislike, but I will forgive it in the light of your strides toward completion," Dramkick spoke in a regal tone that he only used to dismiss people. Dramkick took the red helmet off and laid it back down on the table in a meticulous fashion.

"I'm already there," Edmo said loudly as he lifted his helmet high in the air and waved to Dramkick.

Dramkick walked briskly over to Edmo and asked snidely, "If your helmet doesn't work which arm of yours will I take with me?"

"It will work," Edmo answered calmly as he handed Dramkick the red helmet.

Atse looked at Edmo terrified and thought to herself what a fool he was. Dramkick looked at Edmo and felt giddy at the prospect of tearing his arm from its socket, but admired his courage and resolve at the same time. Dramkick put on the blue helmet and said coldly, "This is absolutely devious, a horrific mindset. This person tells an endless array of lies and lives his whole life on the edge of deception. He hee hee YES...yes indeed you have unlocked the mind of a monster. All the layers of the man are at my disposal, how titillating."

"Edmo, I thought we were sharing our breakthroughs as a group. What have you been-" Pone started to ask angrily as he scowled at Edmo.

"Please do not speak to him, Pone," Dramkick said irritably and spread the fingers on his right hand like it was a weapon. "This man is a genius and he has done what had eluded you, with grandeur and style. Edmo, I'm making you my most trusted and revered scientist and giving you total control of mass production of these helmets. Which we will call Kranduccis," Dramkick spoke matter-of-factly as he wrapped his hand around Edmo's shoulder and chest. Dramkick leaned in and said boisterously, "I want the galaxies' logic, Edmo, and without their permission we will take it!"

Edmo beamed and said quickly, "You will have it, Quadromolan, and more."

"Please, Edmo, let us be friends. You'll excuse me for a moment," Dramkick said sharply as he started walking towards Pone and continued, "Pone, your lack of vision INFURIATES ME!"

Dramkick suddenly kicked Pone in the shin and this sent the lower half of his leg flying over the heads of the other scientists. Pone fell to the floor and screamed out in pain as blood gushed from the top half of his leg onto the floor. Dramkick and Edmo walked out of the makeshift lab and onto Dramkick's shuttle. Edmo was excited by his new opportunity, but also slightly scared given his employer. Dramkick's thoughts were racing as his plans were finally coming to fruition. He was filled with the greedy thoughts of power and *more power*.

Chapter 6

In the year that followed Edmo's invention of the working helmet, Dramkick had 103 million of them made. At first a person's participation in the "Share your journey" experiment (as it was christened by Dramkick) was at the individual's choosing. Soon, when Dramkick saw how few people chose to participate, he gave them no choice and suddenly made it law. At this point if someone refused, their journey came to an abrupt end with their heads put on display on pikes in front of the Caskpe Revolving Library. Very few took that option, but some did, as they were unwilling to give up their secrets.

Dramkick had all government buildings converted into intake centers. One by one people waited in line until it was their turn. Then their brains were connected to an interface and tuned to the correct frequency. After that their every thought was downloaded into the computer and uploaded into a helmet. The helmet was then marked, packaged, and promptly shipped to Dramkick's country home of Beauda. Dramkick sat there eagerly awaiting all the millions of helmets in the hopes of finding a genius mind. Those were the helmets Dramkick was really after. He got an incredible rush from feeling their brilliance and found their minds lifted his to unbelievable heights.

After Dramkick had sifted through all the: poets, artists, doctors, and scientists he threw his gaze elsewhere (His very own Benbres, and least of all Vield, his treasured friend.) This caused

the Benbres to auspiciously disappear from their home worlds without a trace. They knew that if Dramkick had any idea what they really thought of him (or how they had deceived him) they'd be dead for sure. They decided instead to make a run for it and catch Dramkick off guard. This infuriated him beyond belief.

"How did this transpire, Gigg, how?!" Dramkick shouted as he stared out the window of his bedroom in Beauda.

The bedroom is draped in Royal blue carpet on all 6 walls and floors. There are 9 paintings whose frames were sewn into the carpet thousands of years ago. The paintings are of Doga-a brilliant prophet who invented his own religion known as The Bloodless Wound. His religion centered primarily on the idea that there are stages to be gotten too in this life. And to get to the more evolved stages it took effort (and some stages are gotten to prior to this one (life) to enrich and find the soul happy was his theory). The technique he used to get to the next reality was for a person to ask themselves 5 questions that they couldn't, or didn't want to answer-known as the Alive 5. The first question was the same for everyone, "Why do I believe in God?" If you couldn't believe in God, or refused, then there was no need to ask the other 4 questions because you wouldn't be passing to the next reality anyway. These people were known as the Shadowless Mo and Doga believed they were put in the world to inspire the other people's 5 questions. The next 4 questions were meant to be different for every person and center around an individual's hypocrisy with themselves. The period of time to ask the Alive 5 could be moments, or decades depending on a person's bravery. Once a person had asked their Alive 5-and reckoned their fears-the rest of their lives was meant to be lived with endless passion for their dreams and the people

that loved them and who they loved. Doga wrote in the Soa letters, "Of all the people that have shared their lives, very few will share the next. A life span of mortal success is not a molecule of eternity. Give yourself a chance at forever, it's worth the wait." In life, as in the painting, Doga was shown with his dark green skin and long crimson hair. His head was an enormous, unusually large, and sat atop a thin muscular neck. His forehead is large and bulbous with 3 square lumps protruding from the sides and the center. While circular wrinkles wrap around his face like Halloween paint. His eyes are gold in color and one eye is larger than the other and star shaped-they always appear perfectly calm. He has a long thin chin-like a crescent moon-and it has a tuft of crimson hair at the tip of his triangle shaped chin. And there is a dark blue glass ball attached to the hair that has red one word messages that pop up inside every few seconds like, "Yes, certain, we believe." His eyebrows are black and in the shape of a plus sign. He has a long and thick perfectly straight nose that has no lump in it-and has a computer outlet at the top between his eyebrows. He is 6'3" tall and had ballooned up to 299 pounds before he was feared dead-4 years ago-in an apparent shuttle crash.

"They will be tracked down, Quadromolan, it is an eventuality I assure you," Gigg said hopefully as he sat down a tray of sugary delights and a flask of red Toffy coffee.

Toffy coffee is made from genetically altered coffee beans. They have a piercing flavor and give you a tremendous jolt upon drinking it. The beans give you a day's nutrients and the perfect amount of fiber.

"Hmm this could not have been deduced," Dramkick espoused as he played in invisible piano.

"The Benbres are all wise men and if they don't want to be found they assuredly will not. Having said that...some of them will be found and they will pay the tally for the rest! This is not a promise, but a certainty, Gigg!" Dramkick said sternly as he grabbed a strawberry cookie and started chewing quickly like a chicken.

"You are absolutely right, Quadromolan, their cowardly act will be reconciled," Gigg answered as he looked directly Dramkick.

"It's Vield that scorns me so," Dramkick whispered as if the words were a song. "I fear our friendship has perished and I am sickened by it, but...Vield knew the cost of progress and he will pay his own debt," Dramkick said sternly as he poured a cup of Toffy and took a sip. Then Dramkick said coldly, "Poeragard, he knew my love and now he will know my wrath."

"What would you like me to do?" Gigg asked as he put on a pair of silver rimmed sunglasses with gold lenses.

"That idiot son of his, Brahm, feed him to the Ponquirt herd, his wife as well," Dramkick said snidely as he sipped his Toffy like there wasn't any left.

"Done!" Gigg said quickly as he called in the order on the radio channel in his cheek.

"Hee hee I have a thought."

"Yes, Quadromolan," Gigg said curiously.

"Why should I wait for them to be found by scouts when I can personally seek them out with my army?" Dramkick asked as his fingers twitched like an old piano player. "Yes, a trip is in order, a nice get away from it all. And a chance to look up some old friends. I want every soldier, vessel, and able body ready in 10 hours!" Dramkick ordered with his eyes glaring at Gigg.

"Those worthless Benbres will be abolished one...by...one hee hee ha," Dramkick said snidely and then he drank the rest of his Toffy.

The entire fleet of Maox battleships, Owel destroyers, and Sleaa fighter ships are quickly assembled and filled with the necessary supplies. Every soldier at every rank is called upon to help in the search for the elusive Benbres. With a small number left behind to guard each world (and of course, the Rala fountains). Dramkick sent 1,000 Vor Me there alone.

"With this ridiculous crusade of Dramkick's to catch the Benbres. It has afforded us an opportunity to take what is rightfully ours. The Vor Me are powerful, but we outnumber them 10 to 1," Coats explained as his thoughts were of Praem and Praem alone. Coats continued, "With one Swift blow we could get enough Praem to last us 100 years. Our time is now and our cause needs to breathe in the open air to be realized. Pleu and I know the layout of the cave the Rala fountains are in," Coats tucked his shirt in. "And we have weighed the risks of attacking the Vor Me. We believe we can destroy them and take what is OURS!!" Coats said boldly as he stood there on a wooden crate in front of 10,000 Gopas. They were in a long empty carpeted warehouse with thousands of old carpets lying everywhere and piled on top of each other.

The warehouse is 150 feet high and a half mile long and wide. Its walls are painted white and have posters of Dramkick with the words, "A fool has come," written on them in red paint. There is a pair of large stained glass windows at either end that depict the childhood of Doga in red, blue, and yellow glass. There are thousands of couches and chairs littered about the floor. The ceiling has 3 large square lights that burn brightly-each of which hanging down from the ceiling a considerable distance. There are also half a dozen Hovacycles-which are anti-gravity motorcycles.

The Hovacycles are similar to crotch rockets, but have a long body that has a gold jet accelerator at the end. The handle bars are gray and you extend your arms into them to steer them with brain waves. The seats are black, tan leather, and move in correspondence with your movements-this is to keep perfectly balanced at all times. On the front is a large circular nose cannon that has an automatic sight for moving targets. On the side of each is the word Dazel in white-this is the inventor Dr. Itchwe Vams daughter's name. They are all red or dark green in color-except for the control panel which is dark blue.

"Yes we could attempt this, but in all fairness some of us will lose our lives," Downer Frier responded in a voice only a mother could love. He burped loudly and then continued, "That's not to say anything for the slim chance of getting the Praem out in any significant quantity," Downer explained as he stood up and sucked on a Praem tube.

Downer Frier is 5 foot 7 and a lazy 170 pounds. His hair is dark brown and he has thick

eyebrows. He has a large gently sloping nose and piercing brown eyes. His teeth are large and when he smiles he looks like a dog growling. He has a green and purple star tattoo in the center of his forehead that is the size of a silver dollar. He has large trophy like ears that have a silver sword earring in each. His body is very flabby and his shoulders permanently thrown back. His hands are well proportioned and his feet are long and wide. He is wearing a blue velvet shirt and a pair of black leather pants (that he bought when he was thin.) He also has on bright orange boots with a skull burnt into leather.

"Look, Downer, Pleu and I have been there and the distance from the Rala fountains to the street is almost nothing. If we set up a supply chain we can get thousands of gallons out of there with only a minimal risk," Coats replied sharply as his breathing became heavy with annoyance. "The key is distraction, our plan is this... We send a couple hundred of us through the swimming pool entrance to engage the Vor Me. While that's happening we take out the guards at the other entrance. Then we make a mad dash to line our pockets with a lifetime's worth of Praem," Coats's was feeling the moment and he loved it. "In life there are risks, but here I see no risk. I'd rather die trying for freedom, than breathe 100 years as Dramkick's slave!" Coats, ordinarily quite good at controlling his temper, felt it suddenly fraying. Against his every inkling Coats offered Downer his wrist. Downer looked at it for second, then grabbed onto it and smiled. "Then it's Praem and a 1000 Twosqu weeks for us all!" Coats shouted as he lifted his and Downer's hands above their heads and smiled. This caused the crowd of Gopas to cheer.

"I'm surprised Dramkick has us wasting our time guarding a pool. I was trained to fight not babysit a couple of pool chairs and some towels," Rench Sepo said angrily as he looked vacantly

around Dramkick's pool inside Danviers cavern.

Rench Sepo is 5'8" tall and 182 pounds of donuts for breakfast donuts for lunch. He has long blonde hair and a thick red mustache with a triangular shaped chin beard. His eyes of black honor his boyish good looks. He is wearing standard issue Vor Me attire.

"Calm down, we'll see plenty of action before too long," Itchi Hurchil spoke with an undeniable calm. "You know what the Admiral says, if you've got a murderous and savage heart Dramkick will see your talent. Then you'll find your way to battle right quick," Itchi said confidently as he pulled out a silver flask and then asked slyly, "How bout a sip for dinner of the pure Praem?"

Itchi Hurchil is 5'10" tall and 140 pounds of fast lean muscle. He has dark brown hair that is tied into a ponytail with the hair at the ends woven into a square. He has hazel eyes and thick bushy eyebrows that have knots sewn into them. His teeth, large and goofy are slightly rotting because of too many soda and Praem mixed drinks. His hands are bony and almost always curled into a fist. He is wearing a standard Vor Me uniform except for a gold watch with 10 clock faces of varying sizes on it.

"Well...I don't know, that stuff's so strong it can make protecting this fine pool an incredibly difficult task. I'd hate to see it stolen out from under us," Rench confessed sarcastically and then he took the flask and took a long chug.

"Drankick will manage, he's got other pools. It's those chairs being stolen that will haunt me in my dreams," Itchi laughed and took the flask from Rench. It quickly made a trip to his lips and the contents to the back of his throat.

Meanwhile 300 Gopas were entering the pool through the Clar lagoon entrance. On the other end, in Jarret marketplace at the Uuvaly fountains, the rest of the Gopas-all 10,000-were preparing for the signal to blow the door and flood into the cavern. All of them dressed as normal patrons and pretending to shop. The door itself has only one Vor Me soldier guarding it and he is sitting in a chair nodding off.

Pleu looked down at the mini monitor in the palm of his hand and said quietly, "They've made it too the pool. Let's wake up our sleepy Vor Me."

Coats motioned with his hand to a Gopas in a tan shirt and pants. The man walked briskly over to the Vor Me and shouted, "She was my little sister!!!" When the Vor Me looked up he punched him 3 times in the head knocking him unconscious.

2 women stopped and stared for a second, but then shrugged their shoulders and walked away. Pleu quickly moved a brown square push carriage-that had 3 wheels, a series baked goods on top of it, and an affixed umbrella-quickly over to the unconscious Vor Me. He and the Gopas threw the Vor Me onto the carriage and quickly grabbed his clearance stick-Pleu was taken aback as it had black velvety trim. They threw the Vor Me into a secret compartment and quickly whisked him away.

"I just sent the strike force in the pool a message letting them know we've got a way in!" Pleu said happily as he strolled past Coats-who was pushing the carriage in the opposite direction.

Coats nodded and tapped the microchip in his thumb. This quickly sent an electric pulse to every Gopas letting them know it was time.

"Twosqu never looked so brilliant and the Danbridgo are moving at incredible speed," Rench said excitedly as he ordered the Danbridgo to slither like snakes.

"It's unbelievable! I had no idea it could be like this," Itchi said as he looked at his fingers in astonishment as they appeared to be made of water.

The Gopas watched the Vor Me from beneath the water. Strike leader Asole Maib blasts himself out of the water-with a nitrous jetpack-and opened fire on the two of them with his Paniflu.

Asole Maib is covered head to toe in a dark blue bulletproof wet suit and orange skin tight goggles-and has his weapons fastened tightly around his waist.

His first 3 shots hit Itchi in the chest, neck, and through his left eye sending him to his maker. Asole's next 2 shots caught Rench just under the chin and blew a softball size hole in his throat. He fell awkwardly to the ground as he gasped for air. Asole and the rest of the Gopas quickly

exited the pool and started putting explosive gel on the door to the Peneme gym. After the green gel hardened it started smoking. And in one quick flash blew the door into a million pieces.

The 300 Gopas flooded into the Peneme gym with guns blazing. They were quickly met by 900 Vor Me who were milling about and caught off guard. The Vor Me closest to the door were mowed down before they could even draw their weapons. What was left of the Vor Me took cover behind the many obstacles and returned fire. Asole sent word to Pleu that they had engaged the enemy.

"We're go!" Pleu said gleefully as she smiled at Coats and counted the bottles of Praem in his mind.

Coats felt a rush of adrenaline and shouted, "Set up the supply chain I've got the door!"

Coats waved the Vor Me's security clearance stick in front of the lock and the door popped open. They ran down the hallway and soon down the stairs led by Coats and Pleu. 2,000 Gopas swarmed into the cave where the Rala fountains were. Coats went to the fountain of Emasip and turned his head like a bird and shouted, "Fill a container and pass it down the line! We must be swift, Men! Remember your brothers, who are risking their lives for us!"

A line of men formed from each fountain: that went down the hallway, up the stairs, and out to the Jarret marketplace-there were 50 large Hover trucks there waiting. The Hover trucks had Dramkick's seal on the sides of them. And the Gopas driving and loading them were dressed as

Vor Me.

"Now this is the dream I awoke in last night and pray I never dream again," Pleu said boldly as he filled and then passed a full see through plastic container of Praem to the next man in line.

"I've never had a dream this rewarding. Let's just pray they can buy us enough time to fill the trucks," Coats said quickly as he filled another container.

"At this place we'll only need an hour and we should have it," Pleu said hopefully as his Praem stained hands made him smile. "Asole's wise, he'll keep them guessing. Plus we've got enough extra troops on this side to fight them off," Pleu said as he rested for a second and wiped the sweat from his brow.

The Gopas in the Peneme gym had been engaged in fighting for 45 minutes and only lost 50 men. The Vor Me had taken losses of 250 men and had another hundred wounded.

"How long do we stay and fight?" Enkins Py asked as he hid behind a barrel and shots exploded all around him.

"As long as we can," Asole replied as he scanned the room for a better vantage point. "Every minute we fight, we buy the rest of us another month of Praem. That adds up quickly. Remember, all's we are is a distraction, this isn't a battle we need to win," Asole explained as he tried to catch his breath. "The key is to get home safe, so watch your head, Enkins," Asole said

sternly as he shot a Vor Me in the shoulder.

"Nice shot! I just wish we knew how soon to run for it," Enkins confessed just a second before he got shot in the eye. His body fell to the ground and he died a moment later.

Asole shouted, "No, not you, Enkins, ah I...I just can't," and he reached down and lifted Enkins up and embraced his lifeless body tightly. Shots buzzed over his head looking almost like lightning strikes.

Back at the Rala fountains everyone was moving the Praem out as fast as they could. They had filled 48 trucks, but were beginning to get tired. Just then the Vor Me Sgt. Caip Lah said, "Let's fall back, there's no winning this one. Send out the signal that we're going to make our stand at the fountains."

"Done, Sgt.," Vor Me Anie Vams answered as she started signaling the other Vor Me to fall back.

Caip turned and opened the door to the Rala fountains. He smiled when he saw the Gopas. He knew then they had been had. The Gopas paused for second in shock as they looked at Caip curiously. Coats drew his Paniflu and blasted Caip 4 times in the abdomen. This sent him reeling onto his back in a colossal thud. Coats pressed the microchip in his hand that signaled for everyone to make a break for it. All the Gopas made a mad dash for the exit like someone had run the dinner bell. They had the containers of Praem in their hands and were smart enough to

not lose any.

The Vor Me flooded the fountain's cave fast on the heels of the Gopas. In the Peneme gym, what was left of the Gopas made their way back to the pool entrance and swam for it. When Coats and Pleu got outside they jumped onto waiting Hovacycles and sped away. Pleu had his calf grazed by a laser blast just before he was safely out of Jarret marketplace. For some reason, he didn't mind a bit at that point.

Chapter 7

6 weeks into space and Dramkick had yet to track down even one Benbre. Individual planets were being tossed over like a messy room and the inhabitants given "Help or Die" orders. The military's grasp was squeezing the life out of every world they randomly selected. Dramkick's feeling was that even sprinters legs get tired if they're kicked hard enough. All of the Benbre's families and friends had been killed or captured (with the news of such made public knowledge, and yet they still ran). Dramkick was devising new methods for capture, least of which a lifetime's worth of pure Praem for information leading to their whereabouts. This created a rash of first time bounty hunters with a thirst for Praem and knowledge of the best mousetraps. When the Benbres heard of the bounty on their heads they collectively felt a chill go down their backs.

"We're dead, we are DEAD!" Poeragard paced back and forth slapping the air in front of them. "There isn't a scumbag alive who wouldn't tear us to pieces for all that Praem. I didn't sign up for this, Vield, no way no how!" Poeragard said frantically as he kept checking the monitors on the sides and on back of the ship. He coughed and said nervously, "If they find out were on this ship, they will descend on us like a fist full of maggots."

The ship they are riding in is a Brainbere freighter-it's off-white in color and looks like the mane of a lion's hair in shape. It has a glass cockpit where the lion's face would of been. It also

has 8 pairs of descending jet thrusters on the rear of the ship. On the sides are 6 short range missiles and 10 laser cannons per side. On the front it has one large gun that hangs independently from the cockpit. It also has an array of multi-colored lights that flash periodically and melt together to form large pictures of flower pedals, war scenes, and old Dramkick himself juggling with different planets over which he ruled. The Brainbere generates a hologram 20 feet in front of it of a giant outstretched hand-it signifies that it is in need of cargo. It is 4 1/2 football fields long and 2 wide, and over 5 stories high.

Inside the cockpit there are 2 black leather Capt.'s chairs and a green 3 person couch on the left wall. The couch snakes around the corner and has a silver statue of a hand crushing a beating heart-it sits on a large red marble table. The walls are covered with control panels and there is a refrigerator unit that hangs down from the ceiling. The stove folds out of the right wall with just the press of a button. The floor has a map of every known star system painted on it. And there are 2 white beds that come out of the floor upon of simple voice command of "Up."

"Please, Poeragard, Dramkick's a fool and a swindler," Vield begged as he motioned with his hands for Poeragard to calm down. "Nobody's dumb enough to think he'll pay such an outrageous sum. And if someone did, they would be a fool themselves and no one we need to concern ourselves with," Vield said hollowly as he sipped a cup of Toffy and fought his own panic attacks.

"Look, Vield, you're stronger than I, you at least can reason with Dramkick. If I am caught, I'll end up splattered on a wall somewhere," Poeragard replied as he clutched his shaking left arm

tightly.

"Poeragard, he doesn't want you dead for it, he did, you've certainly given him enough reason in the past to do just that," Vield said and then he put up his hands as an apology. "No, it's our secrets he wants and those very secrets are the only thing I hold dear. And if I die protecting the summation of me then...then a man and his fate can't be separated for more than a lifetime," Vield said sadly as he put his arm around Poeragard.

Poeragard nodded and said softly, "You're right my friend, I would rather be dead and my secrets dead with me, then be a politician's parlor game," Poeragard sucked on a Praem tube he had in his left hand and then said, "We should have seen this coming, *Fools* the lot of us."

"No, not fools, if you dine with the devil the last course is always your heart. Dramkick like his father will find his end," Vield said coldly as he sat down in the Capt.'s chair.

"It would seem so, but I just can't allow myself to believe it. After that debacle with Doe Sides, I knew a Sepex bounty Hunter was a dumb choice, but we were *so* desperate," Poeragard said tearfully as he sits down on the 3 person couch and slowly closes his eyes with a sigh in his heart.

"Don't concern yourself with that, he was the best choice at the time," Vield replied with a tear in his own heart. "Now that's what I'm talking about. Imagine if Dramkick knew that was our idea. Imagine the horrors he'd put us through no, no it's better to fight this and run 'til the

stars run out," Vield said sadly as he looked back at Poeragard.

"You're right, I'll not go through his revenge fantasies," Poeragard snorted as he threw a feeble punch through the air. "Not under these or any other circumstances. A man that petty would break your mind and then destroy your body slowly. Oh God, to think of it," Poeragard lay back on the couch lodging his head between a cushion and the armrest.

"Poeragard, calm down...what's this? There are 2 ships 3 miles back that just came on the ship's rear sensors," Vield said quickly as he stared at the monitors.

Poeragard jumped up and hurried to Vield's side and asked frantically, "Who the hell would be out here?"

"I don't know what or who it is. This trade route was supposed to be abandoned years ago! Oh God don't be Dramkick, don't be just don't," Vield pleaded sternly as he grabbed hold of the weapon's controls.

"Good idea, even if it's Dramkick we can still hold them off with our firepower," Poeragard said hopefully as he kicked a pedal with his foot and a pair of black steel guns controls rose out of the computer panel. He grabbed them and shouted, "They're my secrets you Tyrant!"

"Only a fool would be this far off course. Let's catch up to them and ascertain their destination," Vor Me Sgt. Lianis Alleher said firmly as she looked at the Brainbere on the

monitor in front of her.

Lianis is purple skinned with dark green hair that is braided into triangles. Her lips are thick and full and her eyes are no-nonsense. She is 5'7" tall and a svelte hundred and 10 pounds. She is wearing a checkered black and orange flight suit with a yellow donut shaped helmet and a tan visor on her head-the word Quadromolan is written an angle on either side of the helmet. She also has on black leather gloves and white rubber soled shoes. She is sitting inside a Sleaa fighter which is in the shape of a baseball cap with a lone jet thruster-the jet thruster is on its undercarriage and can tilt in any direction and slice space-time. It also has Ikoot blasters that fire laser pulses with high tension wire inside that can attach to a person's ship. It can send waves of electric current through their ship and destroy their communications and render their weapons useless. They also have Goome bombs which would attach to a foe's ship, then explode, and cover it in a purple ooze that would then implode on top of them. The Goome bombs ended battles real quick and Dramkick loved them. The shell of the Sleaa is dark blue and has 4 bright yellow lights in the front and back. It also has a pair of 6 sided star shaped windows on forward and aft. The Sleaas are one person ships that are only the size of a small truck, but extremely fast. Inside the ship there is only a pilot's chair-that can rotate back for sleep-and a control stick surrounded by holograms showing every aircraft within 10 miles.

"We're being hailed, Vield, I can't take you'll have to," Poeragard said quickly as he looked at Vield for approval.

"Remain calm, I can handle it, Poeragard. This ship has all the necessary zone clearances in

case they get frisky," Vield said sternly as he moved his lips closer to the cockpit communicator and then spoke into it, "Hello there, nice to see someone out this far. Can we help you with anything?"

"Nothing serious, hi my name is Lianis and we're scanning the region for a pair of fugitives. Is it just you uh-" Lianis started to ask before being cut off.

"Corto, yes I am alone," Vield replied hollowly as his eyes grew wide. "You're welcome to come aboard for a drink and some dinner if you'd like, Beautiful," Vield's voice ebbed and flowed with nervousness. He looked at Poeragard coldly and held his forearm tightly.

"That sounds entertaining maybe some other time though. If you run across any of these men," Lianis said as she uploaded holograms of all the Benbres-including Vield and Poeragard. And then she said brightly, "Then send me a priority channel message on the Alvo wavelength okay."

"Absolutely, I will not hesitate. What did these scoundrels do if you don't mind me asking?" Vield asked hollowly as he shot a glance to Poeragard.

"Well I'm not supposed to divulge that information. Let's just say that they were involved in a series of child murders and what they did, was disgusting and truly *unspeakable*," Lianis said hollowly as she rolled her eyes and tried not to laugh while looking at the other Vor Me pilots.

"Those monsters!" Vield answered quickly. "I hope to God you catch them and that death is the least of their worries! No child should ever be harmed or have their innocence taken away. Trust me, Lianis, if I see any of these scumbags I will stop everything and contact you immediately," Vield said fiercely as he looked at a wide eyed Poeragard and slowly took a sip from his Toffy.

"Thank you, Corto, we're just trying to help keep the children safe. And if you do help in their capture there is a sizable reward, so keep that in mind. Bye for now, Corto," Lianis said as she smiled and shook her head as she sped away from the Brainbere.

"Bye, Beautiful," Vield said and then he let out a sigh and sat as far back in his chair as it would go.

"That was too close, Vield, yes we were careful though," Poeragard said as he watched the Sleaa fighters fly away.

"It wasn't as close as you think," Vield spoke softer now as he felt around his chest. "A woman like that is easily deceived she's just too trusting. The good news is we won't see another one of Dramkick's errand boys for the rest of our trip," Vield said with a wry smile that failed to put Poeragard at ease.

Inside the Sleaa fighter Lianis turned on her hologram communicator and spoke, "I have a positive voice identification on Vield and I am tracking him from an untraceable distance as was

the directive."

"Are you positive it was him?" Dispatch Officer Braggs asked as he typed Lianis' coordinates from inside Debrist Monroe.

"100% identification of all 5 points of his speech patterns were spiked on the computer. He seemed to be in good spirits as well. Am I required to engage and apprehend?" Lianis asked as she looked at the hologram of Braggs.

"Negative on that, do not engage," Officer Braggs ordered sharply. "Keep a safe distance from his vessel and follow him until he reaches his destination. Dramkick wants them *all*, he thinks their taking different routes to the same place," Officer Braggs gave her brisk orders as a map of the solar system appeared to his right.

"Affirmative, we will see where they've decided to spend some R&R Lianis out."

Oso Braggs-descendent of Ramkill Braggs an ancient serial killer-stands 5'10" tall and weighs all of 200 pounds. His hair is thick brown, greasy, and shaved on the left side of his head. He has a large handsome nose and large round lips. His face is boyish and he has low cheekbones with puffy cheeks like a kid from a comic book. He has the word Ruckin tattooed under his left eye. Ruckin is a form of fight to the death hand to hand combat. It involves 2 martial arts Masters locked in a large room until only one is left alive. If you are successful you're given the tattoo of a lifetime membership in the O8 society-which gives each member use

of over 1000 lavish homes and every kind of sport vehicle imaginable. You were also given *all* of their life, as you took all of their possessions. This included: his wealth, homes, friendships, lovers, and any and all offspring if you desired-the summation of the person was yours for the keeping. He has large powerful shoulders like a rhino and wide hands and feet like a star football player. On his neck, just below the ear, is a slow dissolving Praem patch attached to a gold necklace with the inscription, "Death is life." He's wearing a black long sleeved sweater, black dress pants with red pinstripes, and a pair of black sneakers with black soles and the see through tinted toes on each side.

Osot stood up quickly and grabbed a square communicator device-it was the size of a matchbook-off the wall and spoke into it, "We've got Vield and are following at a safe distance. They are unaware and have been unprovoked, Quadromolan."

The small room he was sitting in was 8' x 8' and had only an egg shaped white chair, a computer Consol on a small black table, and a pair of shelves with 3 dozen communicator devices that have direct links to all of the high ranking officials-they are an array of different vibrant colors with the official's crest on each. The walls are covered in a paint known as Plaba-that acts as a pliable television screen and can be set to different environments. The floor is covered in one large area rug that has word Quadromolan sewn into it.

"Vield, the ultimate prize," Dramkick said greedily as he tapped his index fingers together. "Where there's Vield there is always darling Poeragard close behind. This a fine day, Osot, fine day indeed," Dramkick remarked greedily as his fingers violently played a piano that wasn't

there. "Contact me immediately when they land. I'll need to ask them about their adventures together," Dramkick said brightly as he lay in his bedroom.

"Without a second's hesitation, Quadromolan, it will be done," Osot said quickly as he put the communicator back on the shelf.

Dramkick's bedroom is 25' x 25' with 20 foot high arching ceilings that have several Baimes paintings fashioned securely to them. The walls are burgundy in color and entirely bare. There is a large brown mahogany bed that fills two thirds of the room with a small maple nightstand beside it. There are several empty Praem tubes littered about the nightstand and the floor beside it. There is a pair of windows beside the bed that open into a complete replica of the countryside including a fake sunrise and sunset. Dramkick has a cushy blue blanket and a pair of white pillows.

Bree lay in bed staring at Dramkick and then asked, "Poor Vield and poorer Poeragard, will they live much longer or is it their last breaths?"

"I haven't decided it will depend on how effectively they grovel, and how terrible their secrets are. It is their running that worries me," Dramkick said as he ran his fingers through Bree's hair.

"They were scared of your wrath," Bree said softly as she rubbed Dramkick's muscles. "Poor Poeragard he couldn't hurt a fly. And Vield has been your closest friend for over 20 years. Whatever their secrets are just give them a little leeway, Dramkick," Bree begged as she kissed

Dramkick's chest and rubbed his shoulder.

Dramkick looked at Bree warmly and said, "I will try to be forgiving with them, Bree. My fear is that their sins may be unforgivable. If only I could trust them like I trust you."

"Thank you for that, Dramkick, at least there's still us," Bree said warmly as she rested her head on Dramkick's shoulder.

"Thanks for that indeed he ha," Dramkick said sternly as he stared at the painting on the ceiling.

He thought about how much he loved Bree and how happy he was that he had gotten back together with her. His thoughts soon turned to Vield and Poeragard. He started wondering if he could let them live. His gut told him no, not this time, but he valued their friendships. The more he thought the closer to sleep he came until it grabbed him tightly.

Dramkick dreamt of a lush green world of which he had never seen before. He found himself being worshiped by the inhabitants and having all his whims and wants taken care of. As he lay on the beach, lakeside in a small cove, he saw the lake suddenly drain itself. It revealed a long stone passageway that went deep into the ground. Soon he came to a torch lit room with 8 statues of the late great Cra family arranged in a circle.

The Cra family were a family of theorists and mathematicians who laid the groundwork for

virtually every important technological discovery over the last 2,000 years. The eldest boy, Pitro, came up with the pushy numbers theory-that stated there is no number given value by man that can't be gotten to in one mathematical step. Dab the oldest girl, and 3rd from the top, theorized that rational thoughts exist in one dimension while the irrational ran the gamut of all 12. It was believed that the Cra family's gene pool would eventually bear fruit again, but no descendent of the original 8 in the last hundred years had amounted to very much of anything.

Dramkick walked up to the first statue of Pitro and read the inscription, "There is a Cra hybrid Dramkick. And you must find him and rule the universe together. Start your search with Doga, he will have a clue."

When Dramkick awoke in the morning his memory of the dream was extremely vivid. He actually felt he'd traveled a great distance as his body was sore. He didn't speak of it to Bree, but it was omnipresent in his mind.

Chapter 8

Dramkick violently worked out with 20,000 pounds-on the Fulltobody press-inside his personal gym. He typically spent 2 hours every morning doing strength and speed training. The Fulltobody press is a machine that you lift with your legs, then press and twist with your arms and torso. This one machine accounted for Dramkick's unbelievable physical strength and blinding speed. The only other exercise he did was to run two 300 meter runs every other day at top speed and up a slight incline. After every workout he consumed 22,000 calories over the course of an hour (without interruption.) He believed that no conversation should take place while he was eating. And he was less than cordial to anyone who tried to speak to him at a meal. After he finished eating, a Praem tube was soon in his hands.

Bree did her normal workout inside the Beyo apparatus-which consisted of a harness you strapped your body into that is attached to resistance coils. You simply laid down inside and spun your entire body in one direction, and then the other, until total exhaustion occurred. She finished her workout and watched Dramkick as he finished his. The gym is a mile long and there is a track in the shape of a figure 8 in the middle-it is surrounded by lush vegetation. The Fulltobody press sits on a raised platform as well as the Beyo apparatus-with an L-shaped black leather couch and refrigerator next to it on the platform. Inside the refrigerator there is a chilled Mosa-a sugary sweet drink high in caffeine and preferred by Dramkick. There is also an Andle

pie, which is filled with Hummy berries and topped with never melt ice cream. It tastes like strawberries, blueberries, and apples have been mixed together into one. It also has a delectable aroma and finger lickin' good taste. There are also 4 small plates with mini steaks surrounded by whipped mashed potatoes and blue Sawt carrots-as well as a honey-like substance in the center.

Dramkick and Bree sat beside each other on the L-shaped couch for a moment as they gathered their breath. Bree gave Dramkick a poke in the arm and said slyly, "Enough rest for you, I want to know what's on your mind and don't say nothing, because I know what nothing looks like."

"Alright, Bree, I will share what is that has grabbed hold of me," Dramkick seemed very serious all of the sudden. "I had a dream last night of the Cra family, have you heard of them?" Dramkick asked as he looked at Bree.

"Of course the family of geniuses, I've heard all about their theories and travails," Bree replied as she rubbed above her eye in a circle with her index finger. "What happened in your dream, Dramkick?" Bree asked to she reached over and rubbed Dramkick's bicep.

"Okay, I must start by saying this was more than just a dream it appears in my mind as a memory, not a dream first off," Dramkick started as his eyes traced the window sill. "I was in a large torch lit room that had statues of the Cra family. I walked up to one and it had a sign on its base that said I needed to find Doga. It said he would have a clue for me," Dramkick said as he looked straight ahead now.

"Clue for what?" Bree asked anxiously as she crossed her legs Indian style and turned to face Dramkick.

"It said there was a Cra hybrid, and that I need to find him and we would then rule the universe together," Dramkick explained as his mind focused on the dream. "Bree, I've had a feeling for some time that there was someone out there that my fate was aligned with. I know now this Doga holds the key to finding him," Dramkick said as he turned and nodded at Bree with a face devoid of history.

"I knew it had to be lonely, friends are hard to come by for someone like you, but I thought Doga had died?"

"Disappeared, *not died* he just vanished and no one knows where," Dramkick said sternly as his face grew harder with every word. "Bree, I have to find him. To have no one, Bree, no one in the world who is you, is an ache beyond loneliness. And ache beyond remedy and without resolution," Dramkick said as a single tear blinked in and out of his left eye for only a moment before disappearing. "If Doga is alive then I will use all my powers to find him. This Cra hybrid is not a pipe dream. I suspected this for a long time. The hope is, that they are searching this very moment for me and we are hurling ourselves towards each other. It could be a violent fate line," Dramkick disappeared into his hopes and sat in front of Bree as a person she had never seen before.

"You have to find this Cra hybrid, Dramkick, it's your destiny. The question now is where is this Doga?"

"Exactly!" Dramkick came to life slapping his hands together. "And all's I can do is wait for a sign and hope. Obviously if a man doesn't want to be found, then you're bottling sun beams. I don't know, Bree, what else can I do? Then there's the matter of Vield and Poeragard, my focus is going in different directions," Dramkick said as he stood up and squinted his eye at a Vor Me soldier coming towards them from the other side of the gym.

The Vor Me walked briskly up to Bree and Dramkick and said quickly, "Vield's ship has just entered the atmosphere of Eyeso, Quadromolan, and is preparing to land."

"Excellent, let's hope it's a big party. You're dismissed, soldier," Dramkick rubbed his fists together and smiled. He had old friends to see again.

"There is more news, Quadromolan."

"Yes?"

"There were 3 tons of explosives found attached to our fuel cell. The detonator was faulty and prevented it from exploding. We believe it was put there before we left Membra, because it would have been impossible to do so in flight, Quadromolan," the Vor Me tightened his muscles and stood ready.

"Really, that is troubling, but not worth worry at this point. Set the explosives adrift in an escape pod as there could be a sound detonator as well. Good work, Soldier," Dramkick motioned with his hands for him to leave and then said, "Bree, I have business to attend to, but I would love to see you after and continue our conversation."

"I would love to, Dramkick."

"For later, Bree," Dramkick said and then quickly made for the War room.

When he arrived he immediately sat down in the Capt.'s chair and watched on the monitor as Vield's ship landed. He laughed to himself and said firmly, "Let's give him a couple minutes to get cozy then we'll drop by for a snack."

"You got it, Quadromolan, I'll take care of it," Gigg said smoothly as he gave the fleet the order to hold the positions.

Dramkick sat and smiled a sinister, satisfying, and devious smile as he watched Vield and Poeragard exit their ship and greet Benbre Larbell with an embrace. The 3 men went into a blue stone castle that is all of 3 miles long and a half mile high and wide. There are 4 large crows nests in the front with gun turrets on each. There is also a crystal cube that stretches high out of the center of the castle-it stands 500 feet around with a round table, 2 dozen chairs on the roof, and a full armament of guards. The walls are draped in murals of sunsets and sunrises without

even the slightest mention of people or wildlife. There is an unbroken line of large trees that encircle the castle and have tree houses in each-with wooden steps leading up to them. On the left side, is a meandering stream that disappears into a mountain cave behind the castle. There are no other structures for 30 miles in every direction except a small stone hut on top of the mountain.

"It feels like now, Gigg, let's steal some champagne," Dramkick said snidely as he nodded firmly Gigg. "They tell us it isn't sunny when we feel the sun in our eyes."

"Done, Quadromolan, sending in the ground siege now," Gigg replied plainly as he electronically keyed in the assault orders.

50 Lando fighters descended upon the Castle. The Lando has the shape of a C lying flat with a glass domed center. It is 70 feet high and 100 feet long and 80 feet wide. It has 2 large Jets that burn completely flameless-only producing a dull red glow. They are black in color and have 6 tinted red windows across the front. Inside there is enough storage capacity for 800 soldiers and several ground assault vehicles-as well as ammunition and supplies for lengthy occupations.

The Landos land and the Vor Me soldiers come flooding out securing the perimeter of the castle. Two Vor Me place an explosive charge on the front door and quickly move back from it. The explosives vaporize the door by scrambling its molecules and left only a puff of smoke in its stead. The Vor Me throw in a Rian grenade-which would cause anyone within 30 feet to have their muscles go completely numb.

Dramkick watched all the action from retinal implants in the Vor Me. He sat and smiled as the action unfolded and felt a surge of revenge inside him. The Vor Me burst into the castle and could see 3 guards and Poeragard lying helpless on the floor. Dramkick saw this and said sarcastically, "Someone help that dear friend of mine he's lost his balance he he ha."

The lead Vor Me continued onward by throwing Rian grenades into each room before they entered. The next room they encountered is a huge lavish living room with 5 large brown leather couches in the center situated back to back. And on the walls are leather chairs every 5 feet with helpless Benbres sitting motionless in each-including Vield and Larbell.

"Don't get up, really, we hate to intrude," Dramkick says sarcastically as he started laughing at the mere sight of Vield in his chair.

"They sure look cozy," Gigg said proudly as he glanced down at the monitor.

"They do indeed, Gigg, almost tranquil yet bordering on PA-thetic," Dramkick said as he sat forward in his seat and smiled.

The Vor Me continued securing all the Benbres and carting them back to the Landos in energy shackles. One by one they were carried out of the castle. One of the Vor Me-a Novice Blade as he was called for his lack of experience-named Dragto noticed this sunken crease in the carpet. Dragto grabbed hold of it and pulled it up. Beneath there is a solid silver door with a gold

latch causing the soldier to ask, "Quadromolan, do you wish me to pry it up, or just focus on the Benbres?"

"By all means let's see what lies beneath," Dramkick said as he pretended to kick the door with the heel of his boot.

Dragto grabbed the latch and pulled it up. The door swung open revealing a spiral staircase that disappeared into darkness. Dramkick saw this and said sternly, "I can't do it myself, Dragto, so get me down those stairs."

Dragto hesitated for a second and then said quickly, "Absolutely, Quadromolan."

Dragto walked down the stairs and soon he was covered in blackness. He pressed the luminescent disc on his chest plate and could see stairs in front of them, but not much else. He neared the bottom and could see there was a dim light. He continued towards it. At the bottom of the stairs there was a room lit by torches and filled with hundreds of old and new robots. Some were humanoid, others animal-like, and they ranged from very large to the size of a penny. In the middle of the room there was a man wearing a silky tan robe that covered his entire body. He was sitting with his back to Dragto humming.

"Identify yourself!" Dragto ordered as he raised his weapon.

The man sat, didn't move for several seconds, then he whispered as he stood and turned to

Dragto, "I'm an old friend of your father's."

"Identify yourself or I will kill you as you stand!" Dragto shouted as he inched closer to the man.

"I am Doga and my life isn't worth a lunatic's opinion. So feel free to disperse my molecules," Doga said nonchalantly as he threw off his robe and revealed he was wearing black shorts and sandals underneath-as well as a spade shaped red emerald pendent.

"The Vor Me dropped his weapon and lost his equilibrium for a moment. He started breathing heavy upon seeing Doga in the flesh. This was not something you could understand. Not something he ever would.

Dramkick felt his heart skip a beat and he stood up and walked closer to the monitor. He whispered, "It is not a dream, my path is assured."

Doga walked slowly over to Dragto and put his hand on the shoulder and said softly, "Don't feel overcome, Son, there are too many joyful things in the world."

"But you were feared dead my...there are so many questions I have. So much thanks I want to give you-"

"The answers are in your silence and thanks is not desired by me. I give what I know for the

future's sake, and never wanted more than that," Doga replied and then he walked over and put on a pair of black dress pants, a black sweater, and a wrap around his shoulders and chest with the number 11 sewn onto the shoulder sleeve.

"We're not here to disturb you we're here-"

"No matter, you are here nonetheless. Whatever your business here I would like an audience with your leader. I feel we need speak to one another," Doga slipped on a pair of black dress shoes with a yellow flower emblazoned on each toe.

Dramkick watched and listened with an overwhelming excitement. He hadn't felt a thrill like this since his youth when he first found his spiritual self and discovered Doga. He sat and remembered those days as he looked upon Doga with a soft glee.

"Of course, I'll take you there immediately, Doga," Dragto said nervously as he looked at Doga like a brilliant shimmering light.

Doga smiled, nodded, and then the 2 climbed the staircase. When they got to the top everyone stopped what they were doing when they saw Doga. Even the Benbres were speechless and their jaws dropped to the floor. Poeragard swallowed hard and closed his eyes as he started muttering to himself.

Doga looked at each of them for a moment and gave them a slight smile and a nod as he

walked by. Dramkick watched this carefully and said smoothly, "I am on my way to the study, see that they find me there, Gigg."

"Yes, Quadromolan, they will be there by God," Gigg answered as he stood up and headed for the docking bay.

"I know they will, Gigg," Dramkick answered as he hurried out the door and slapped the side of his leg with his right palm.

The remaining Benbres were transported up from the surface and put into holding cells. Doga was greeted by Gigg at the docking bay and brought immediately to Dramkick's study. Just before they entered Dramkick sucked down a Praem tube and got down on one knee and waited. The doors opened, and in walked Doga with Gigg and Doga said hopefully, "You must be Dramkick the Quadromolan if I am correct."

"Yes, Doga," Dramkick stood and walked over to meet Doga and said firmly, "I need to speak with you most urgently about a pressing matter of supreme importance. Please leave us, Gigg."

Gigg exited the room and the door closed behind them. Dramkick led Doga over to a silk covered pair of tan chairs that faced out into space and the two sat down beside each other. The oval shaped windows are in front of them and the walls of the room are off white-with a full accompaniment of 12 racks of books built into them. There is also a Penchi warrior's suit of armor on either side of the window. The Penchi warriors are a long extinct race that shunned

modern technology and their history consisted of only one age. Their civilization was eventually destroyed by an asteroid leaving their world of Tae Pos a lifeless ruin. The floor of the room is covered in memory carpet that adjusts to each individual's feet as they walk.

"Tell me what you require, Dramkick, and it will be given without hesitation, " Doga said sincerely as he gazed out the window.

"I had a dream that carried with it a message and that message is this... I was told to seek you out, and you would be able to help me find this Cra Hybrid. And then he and I would rule the universe together," Dramkick explained as his hands trembled. "Doga, do you know of what I speak?" Dramkick asked as he rubbed the top of his head.

Doga stared out the window for several seconds and then turned to Dramkick and spoke softly, "Yes, here is what I must tell you and it is all I can say. There is a world that lives under the T sun called Sras Oblique. The ruler of Sras Oblique is named Peastro. And he has enormous powers beyond anything you are very seen in your galaxies. This man, this Peastro, he is ruthless as well as kind. You ask Cra Hybrid? He is IT, Dramkick!"

"Peastro yes...there is a poetry and a power to his name. The T sun?" Dramkick spoke with a hope in his voice it had never known before. "I have never heard of this T sun, how far is it from here?" Dramkick asked in a dry tone as he looked out the window. He thought of lonely days on the lake as a child.

"It is very far, a year's journey at full speed and through many hostile galaxies," Doga said as he thought of the T sun's oppressive heat. "I would dissuade you from going, but I see in your eyes you have already left. When you go, Dramkick, bring more than supplies, bring the breadth of your armies for you will need them for certain," Doga said coldly as he looked Dramkick dead in the eyes.

Dramkick smiled and said, "I would never go anywhere without my armies these days," He paused and tapped his temple. "I am only planning now I still have many things to do before I leave. This situation with the Benbres will take looking after. Before too long I'll seek out my brother and hope he greets me with a smile."

Chapter 9

Mardevar Porgtan was an 86th century fiction writer who wrote a series of 5 books called The Segments of Srapla. The books center on the lead character Loac Four and his journey deep into the cave community of Samma-on his home world of Ation. The books were a huge success and had garnered great praise and great wealth for Mardevar. Dramkick has infinity for the books and never travels without them. So much so is his love for Srapla he decreed all children of 14 years of age spend 16 months studying and dissecting the text. The descendents of Mardevar-and there are hundreds living on Membra-were all given cushy government jobs that require very little actual work. Mastof Porgtan is Dramkick's head of Supreme Festivities (which means he oversees and takes care of Dramkick's yearly birthday party). Today is Dramkick's birthday and it involves massive celebrations in every city under Dramkick's control. There are enormous scripted plays, with gaudy light shows put on by the inhabitants, and beamed into Dramkick's living room. He sits alone and enjoys the spectacle inside Château Quesm.

Château Quesm was built with a mile high bust of Dramkick as its shape. Where his mouth is, there is a 600 yard wide patio that has 500 tables and a cedar dance floor set up. There is also a Punche set up for the guests.

A Punche is an android that will verbally assault the guests until they pummel him (much to their satisfaction).

The room has a Penibody set up as well-which is a winding tunnel you enter at the bottom and are sucked upward through the tube, only to pop out safely at the top. Dramkick loves games, so there are always hundreds of them set up at his château. There is also a banner that reads, "I'll outlive the sun," written in large black letters and displayed prominently.

Mastof walked into the living room and set down a tray of Praem tubes on the table in front of Dramkick. Mastof is barely 5 foot 7 and 160 pounds. He is top heavy with very thin legs like a moose. He has long dark blue hair that is naturally curly. He is 20 years old, but looks like a teenager in the face. His eyes are bulging and round (brilliantly lime green in color). His nose turns up at the end and his mouth is large and crooked like a stick. He is wearing a dark green corduroy suit and has a white scarf dangling from his neck. He also has on a white T-shirt and a pair of brown boots with matching laces.

The living room is 25' x 25' and has gold leaf wallpaper in a Paisley design. There is a pair of red adjoining couches and a small maple table in front of each. There is also a 10 foot monitor hanging down from the ceiling in front of the couches. There is one wall that is entirely a window and faces Dramkick's flower garden outside. The floor is white and red marble and has area rugs under the furniture. There is also a small green tube that extends out from the middle wall and has a dull glow to it.

"Will you need anything else?" Mastof asked as he stood beside the couch.

"Yes, I want to speak to you for a few minutes, Mastof. There are a few questions I need answered," Dramkick said as he tapped the seat cushion next to him and motioned for Mastof to sit down beside him.

"Anything, you can ask me anything," Mastof replied nervously as he sat down beside Dramkick.

"Why are you such a failure? Well, not just you, but your whole family?" Dramkick asked snidely as he leaned forward in his seat. "You see not a one of you was ever written a great book or song or even developed much as an artist. So let's have it," Dramkick said honestly as he put his arm around Mastof.

"Ah I ah...it's hard to say, I guess-"

"No, no guesses, I need to know why your whole family is such a bunch of screwups. Do your brains think anything interesting at all?" Dramkick asked and then he put his hand tightly on Mastof shoulder.

Mastof looked around in shock then said anxiously, "I ah well, it's not entirely our fault we just didn't get the talent. And I would say that we are intently lazy and we didn't get the genius genes."

"That's what I suspected, you go ahead and run along and take your mediocrity with you. Try

not to sniffle on my good rugs though," Dramkick said snidely as he pushed Mastof off the couch and then said firmly, "Actually why don't you stay a while and help me enjoy the festivities."

Mastof picked himself up and said brightly as he sat down, "Of course, it would be my honor, Quadromolan."

Secretly Mastof was feeling terrible that Dramkick wanted him to stay. He knew if he said one wrong thing it would be his head *literally*. He sat there and waited for Dramkick to say something. He lived 100 years in those few seconds. Several minutes went by and then Dramkick started staring at Mastof with a fierce glare. Mastof tried not to panic, but his hands and forehead started to sweat. Dramkick put his hand around Mastof's neck and said sternly, "Mardevar keeps you alive you little weasel. It's his gift and my fondness for it that keeps me from punching a hole in your neck. Then again maybe you've worn out your welcome."

"Oh my God, don't kill me please, please don't kill me I'm just a fool. A fleck of dust, let me live please," Mastof pleaded as a river of tears raced down his cheeks.

Dramkick started laughing and messed up Mastof's hair and said hopefully, "I mighta thought you'd crack sooner being as weak his you are. Maybe there is some backbone in there after all."

Mastof didn't know what to think as his eyes looked around the room frantically and his brain fumbled for the right thing to say. Dramkick watched him in dismay and smiled as he sucked down a Praem tube (and put his feet in Mastof's lap).

"Do you mind if I have some Praem?" Mastof asked sheepishly as he peeked over at Dramkick and looked away quickly when their eyes met.

"Sure, Mastof, you are my guest, but I want to show you something after you're finished."

Mastof swallowed the Praem and as he did Dramkick stood up and walked over to the window. Mastof got up and followed Dramkick over. His mind was racing, the Praem wasn't enough he thought. He stood beside Dramkick looking out at the beautiful flower garden.

"This garden is a testament to the generations of Reign's and our dynasty," Dramkick said warmly as he gave Mastof's ear a good yank. "A man like yourself can certainly appreciate the passion it takes to succeed. Hey, let's play game I know you're gonna love it," Dramkick said hollowly as he stretched out his arms. "Stand back from the window a few feet and let me grab your ankles this'll be a hoot," Dramkick said hollowly as he grabbed onto Mastof's ankles and then said joyfully, "Boy we're going to have fun watch this!"

Dramkick started to lift Mastof up in the air and swing him around in a circle. First slowly and then faster and faster like a rollercoaster. Mastof shouted, "I feel sick, slow down please it hurts!"

Dramkick spun around even faster than before and was spinning like an Olympic discus thrower. Dramkick squeezed Mastof's ankles so tight that they snapped off from his legs and his

body went flying through the window. It sent glass crashing into the stone walls below. Mastof died upon impact and his crumpled body lay 40 stories down in a rose.

"Isn't this fun Old Pal!" Dramkick shouted sarcastically as he started to dance around in a circle.

He looked out the window at Mastof's body and shook his head with a wry smile. He walked over and lay down on the couch. A moment later Gigg came rushing into the room, out of breath, and said quickly, "Benbres Vield and Poeragard have been sprung from the containment by their combined armies. They've taken Bree and Doga hostage. They said that if you chase them they will kill them both!"

"WHAT?!" The sound of Dramkick's voice was beyond irritated, it was sinister. "Those derelicts think they can take me ON! I will personally assure you they will suffer and I will destroy them without reservation!" Dramkick shouted as he stood, started to pace back and forth, and then asked, "Please tell me their masks were completed, Gigg."

"I'm sorry we didn't have time. They were to be the next ones in line," Gigg said nervously as he looked at Dramkick with hopeless eyes.

Dramkick grabbed the small table in front of the couch and threw it through the wall and said boldly, "Forget my birthday IT'S CANCELED! I want every ship to track them down and bring their *lying* souls to my feet. And if they harm Bree or Doga...there are levels of pain, Gigg,

levels and they will experience them all."

"Yes, Quadromolan, we have every soldier trying to track them down now as we speak."

"Good, very good let's hope there were a few holes in their escape plan. Was there anything else, Gigg?" Dramkick asked knowingly as he frowned at Gigg.

Gigg hesitated, fussed with a shirt and then said, "This month's Praem shipment was stolen on route and it appears to be a separate incident. The men used Vor Me uniforms to steal the Praem at the changeover station. I need to know what you want me to do about this month's Praem?"

Gigg asked as he folded his arms.

"We can't encourage these thieves or others like them," barked Dramkick as he stretched out his fists. "I want only an 8th of the monthly supply to go out. When the natives get restless, let them know that one of their own caused them this hardship. That will ferret out the guilty party faster than we certainly could. I need to take a journey now and see about an old friend, walk with me to the shuttle bay," Dramkick said as he walked towards the door.

Gigg nodded yes and walked out into the courtyard-it was 50 yards long. It had Gusgo's statues lining either side. The Gusgo are a half man half bird like creature that has one vacant eye on the right side of its face. It also has a huge sloping nose with a bulb at the end. Its hands are jointless and it's fingers numbered 3 per hand. It's body is hairless and has a thin torso with outstretched wings from the shoulders. It's legs are long and bulbous and very muscular with

toeless feet.

There are also bushes in between each of the hulking statues. The walkway is covered with marble murals of the Densiden 8.

The Densiden 8 were a group of 8 friends who made a pact to only speak with and interact with each other for the length of their lives. They used their combined wealth to build a lavish compound with: 3 large houses, 2 swimming pools, a garden and a field for livestock, as well as a large art studio. After 10 years 2 groups of 4 formed and had months of spirited arguments to give their lives excitement. Those initial play arguments led to a rift between the 2 groups. For the next 2 years they avoided each other. Then it was decided that the 2 sides would have a fight to the death war and the victor would get all their possessions. The 2 sides armed themselves and took opposite sides of the compound. A 6 hour gun battle ensued. After the battle only 2 people remained alive, a man and a woman from opposite sides. They lived the rest of their days as man and wife and spawned 9 children (and never left the walls of the compound). The youngest child-Vaim-left the compound on the 16th birthday and shared the story of the Densiden 8 with the people of Membra only this past year.

"Now, Gigg, will we find these thieves and I want public executions for all," Dramkick said angrily as his eyes drifted from side to side. "Should also be enough of a deterrent for any others who try the same. Now, they are going to need a place to house the stolen Praem. You can't just put it in a closet, Gigg. So I want all the old factories checked and also any large homes in the area," Dramkick ordered as he walked briskly along.

"I'll take care of it trust me, Quadromolan, they will be brought to justice," Gigg said as he sent a message to the Vor Me Sgt. Dracs with the orders from Dramkick-using his hand communicator.

"Yes, I feel a meal's worth of vengeance is soon to be mine. Vield and Poeragard will come to know that very fact," Dramkick spoke in a voice more sinister than anything Gigg had experienced before. Dramkick clenched fist and then blew into it as he quickly spread his fingers.

The 2 came to the end of the courtyard and stepped into the elevator-it rose upwards at a 45° angle. They stepped out of the elevator and into the shuttle bay at the top. Two shuttles sat beside one another with their massive noses pointing out a large opening.

The shuttles are egg shaped and have a blue circular wall that runs completely around them. They also have a pair of braces extending down to the ground holding them in place. They are light green in color and 30 feet high and 35 feet wide at their base. Inside there is a modest kitchen area and sleeping quarters on the first level. On the 2nd there is a pair of laser cannons that can deploy if they are attacked. On the 3rd level there is a cockpit and it has 8 leather recliners in a circle facing out the window (with instrumentation in front of each).

The shuttle Bay itself is 60 feet tall and has smooth black walls that have rounded corners and black floors-with jet pits below each shuttle.

"Gigg, stay on top of this I will be back in a few days and I expect progress. You won't be able to contact me so use your devious heart if need be," Dramkick said as he walked through the shuttle wall-its molecules were scattered by the mechanism inside the wall.

"I will, Quadromolan," Gigg replied boldly then he watched the shuttle take off into the air.

Inside the shuttle Dramkick took his seat in the cockpit. While the pilot and a Vor Me handled the navigation. Dramkick started to type in his security clearance on the keyboard in front of him. He typed A6b7go and a small drawer popped out. Inside there was a Hormaro tongue compressor.

The Hormaro is placed on the tip of your tongue and all you have to do is hum your words and the message will be sent to the other person.

Dramkick's started to hum, "Poida, I am coming your way. The situation is serious and I will need all the help you can give me. Be assured dearest Poida, that it will require the Rue and Taliop. Meet me at the East entrance and do not speak of my coming, Dramkick."

Dramkick removed the Hormaro and placed it back in the drawer and closed it quickly. He stared out the window and thought of Poida the last time he had seen her. He remembered their fierce argument, and could still feel her anger even now. He hoped she'd forgiven him and she could help. He thought of her beauty and her beautiful violet eyes.

The shuttle passed over the last of the city, soaring over the lush farmland of Pinc Township. The rolling hills covered in 20 foot high Okam stalks. The Okam is a purple vegetable that has a fish shape and tastes extraordinarily sweet. So much so it is wise to only take small bites (but few did).

There are giant windmills and Y shaped farm houses on every hill. In the valleys, there are livestock and crystal blue ponds. They traveled far and fast until they came over a hilltop. Dramkick said as he saw a large home, "There she is, how magnificent."

To the left was the Gobe bridge-it was a bridge that was formed when 2 Gobes crashed their horned heads into each other's, killing them both instantly. Their lifeless bodies fell into a giant gorge beside them. And their dead bodies formed a bridge, with the top their heads as the path.

The bridge led up to a giant H shaped home made from maple. It has 4 stories with large and small square windows placed randomly throughout. Each level is painted a different color with the first being black, the 2nd red, and the 3rd blue with the top level white. The front door is shaped like a plus sign and has a silver door knocker in the shape of a Whyzi.

Whyzis are a half man half cow like creature that has large legs and bulging torsos. They also have disproportionately large heads compared to their bodies, with a long human nose on a cow's face. Whyzis are notorious for eating large quantities of Okam stalks and snoring very loudly when they sleep.

The walkway leading up to the house has thick Pummy trees that grew over it-creating a tunnel of trees up to the front steps. The Pummy tree has large leaves and yellow bark as well as small lavender flower pedals at the tips shaped like shamrocks.

"I'll put us down at the end of the Gobe Bridge, Quadromolan," Tiotio said plainly as he pressed the landing control's engage switch.

"Excellent, I hope she's home," Dramkick said vacantly as he stared out the window.

The shuttle landed on the Gobe Bridge and Dramkick exited quickly. He started across the bridge when he heard, "Just in time I made Kookyes," Poida announced as she walked down the walkway towards Dramkick. She was carrying a bright red square pie with tan flaky crust. Dramkick noticed.

Kookyes is a meat pie that is often served in the afternoon as a pre-dinner snack. It tastes similar to filet mignon and blueberry pie combined.

Poida is 5 foot 8 inches tall and very curvaceous. She has long wavy dirty blonde hair that has a silver hair clasp on top. She has violet carefree eyes and pouty red lips as well as a button nose. She has on a silver teardrop earring and a silver rope necklace. She is also wearing a dark blue tight fitting velvet dress and silk black slippers (the slippers have the crest of Lies Eventu on each).

Lies Eventu is the radical psychiatrist who invented the Totalk scream therapy. This is a process where you scream at your patients about all their problems for hours of the time. Then you forced them to go out in public and shout their faults and problems to total strangers. It was meant to shame them into recovery. He had a 50% recovery rate, but was banned from practicing in urban areas, because he was deemed a nuisance.

Dramkick walked up to Poida and grabbed her around the waist and gave her a kiss, dipping her slightly and said boldly, "All my dreams end in you."

Poida smiled a mischievous smile and asked, "What do they start with?"

Dramkick laughed and said, "Us, always us."

"My darling Dramkick, it is always a joy to see you. Let us go to the house and talk in earnest."

Dramkick nodded politely and walked hand-in-hand with her up to the house. They walked through the doorway and came into a room with 3 levels: a den on one level with 2 shelves of books in the armrest of the snake shaped couch with various clippings on the wall, the 2nd level has a living room with a sunken brown leather couch and a glass table in front of 20 or so photographs of Poida-the photographs of Poida were strewn across the table and stuffed inside a Whyzi's heads on the wall, on the 3rd level there are mirrors and several different colored lights

being refracted into different shapes on the walls-there is a large waterfall in the center of it all.

"Let's grab a seat in the living room, I need to know what is troubling you," Poida said as she grabbed Dramkick's bicep.

They sat on the couch and Dramkick said honestly, "I've got a million problems right now and the horrible truth is, I don't care about any of them."

"Really?" Poida was puzzled and her brow quickly furrowed.

"Yes, my mind is on different things than it should be. But there nonetheless."

"What sort of things?" Poida asked as she lit up a cigarette and offered Dramkick one (Dramkick refused the cigarette, but accepted the gesture).

"It has come to my attention that there is another like me. His name Peastro and I'm convinced that if he knew of my existence he would find his way here," Dramkick explained as his voice nearly cracked. "This Peastro and I are brothers, and friends already, but we had never met, Poida," Dramkick explained as he allowed Poida to see him vulnerable for the first time. "I need your guidance on this matter."

"What do *you* want to do?" asked Poida as she took a drag from her cigarette and then set it down in the crystal ashtray built into the table.

"What I want to do is leave tomorrow with the bulk of my army and seek out this Peastro," Dramkick confessed as he rubbed his sore shoulder "The problem is...it is a long journey and my empire *could* and probably *would* be in pieces upon my return. But...I know that this man would seek me out if he could do so. I am torn, what advice can you give me considering you know how long I've waited for a true friend?" Dramkick asked sincerely as he looked Poida in the eye. He picked up her cigarette, took a drag and then said, "An equal to converse with, what I wouldn't give for a moment of that."

"What I can tell you is this, if he is like you, Dramkick, then he would want you to take care of your problems and your empire first. Then when you've finished leave with a full heart and a clear mind," Poida caressed the back of Dramkick's head. "In the meantime, a messenger could be sent to let Peastro. Then he would know of you and your wishes to speak with him," Poida said warmly and she took her cigarette back from Dramkick and took a long pronounced drag.

"You are wise, Poida, that is a right path to take," Dramkick said softly as he put his hands on his knees. "Sending a messenger would be a sufficient solution and then possibly he would seek me out. At least he would know of my existence. Yes that it would be enough for now," Dramkick said as he glared over at Poida with humanity in eyes.

"Exactly, it starts a dialogue and possibly he would travel here. While the messenger is sent you're taking care of more pressing concerns," Poida felt the air get heavy. "You've got to keep positive momentum going forward or it's another dark building time," Poida spoke in a way that

always made Dramkick feel inspired and alive. It softened his ruthless heart just a bit see her. She took his hand in hers.

"Then that is it, I thank you for seeing me, Poida. You were always a treasured love of mine and never far from my memories," Dramkick said honestly as he gave her a kiss.

"That means a lot to me, Dramkick, we were a supernova together we just ran out of air," Poida said as she started to tear up and covered her mouth with her hand.

"The truth is what destroys us all, lies are only pauses in a longer conversation. Love, Poida, love is what we always were," Dramkick said passionately as he brushed across her lips with his hand and then her cheeks with his thumb.

Chapter 10

It had been 4 months since Dramkick had seen Poida and he had taken her advice and focused on his affairs. After Dramkick cut the Praem supply to an 8th, the natives became infuriated and one of them ratted out the Gopas. Coats and Pleu were taken to into custody, as well as the rest. And the missing Praem was returned. Poeragard and Vield had yet to be apprehended or their hostages returned. But recently Dramkick had cut the supply of Praem to their home worlds and refused to return it to normal until their location was revealed.

Babsetron Putor Miug sat in the information room going over potential leads in the missing Benbres case. A Babsetron is the title given to the head of Dramkick's secret service-he holds authority over 50,000 agents that are known as Prags. The public is unaware of their existence and they carry out most of the missions the Vor Me couldn't *or wouldn't for obvious reasons do*. Whenever people turned up missing you could bet it was at the hands of the Prag.

Putor's information room is a 30' x 30' circular office where only important information (or leads that are supremely focused on by the Prags) ever end up. It has one large window on the ceiling that is half the circumference of the floor. The walls are colored seal black with 2 paintings in triangular frames across one another that are of absolutely nothing but empty white space. There is a red J shaped desk in the center with smooth edges and a pilot's chair that swings into it. There are 2 hologram projectors inside the desk as well as a keypad and movable red

monitor. The desk has 8 large drawers that have voice operated security locks that can only be operated by Putor. The floors are black and grey marble with the large letters DR carved into the center-in white and red cursive letters at the base of the wall.

Putor is a giant at 6'10" tall and 590 pounds (built like a Greek God). He has an enormous chest and back, with broad shoulders that are harder than steel. His feet and hands are 3 times the size of a normal man's. His face is hard and sinister with high cheekbones and wide set eyes (and a scowling crooked mouth that never fully closes). His nose looks like a baby's arm and it has 8 diamond studs in the left nostril and a blue stud through his upper lip. His hair is tan in color and so long he tucks it into his pants. He is wearing a white silk vest and a necklace made from human teeth-as well as a pair of black and green checkered pants and red boots that have his favorite saying, "The afterlife starts today friend," written in Whyzi's skin.

A message comes over the monitor that Poeragard and Vield are in the Lashno mountain range and Putor shouted, "Your destiny is at hand!"

He pressed the button for his next in command to come into the office and he waited for him. Camtrid Tash immediately jumped up and hurried down the all black hallway.

Camtrid is diminutive at 4 feet tall and a slight 76 pounds. He has thick curly short blue hair and a yellow beard that covers his face. He is wearing a green and yellow striped shirt and a pair of light blue denim jeans with a tan dress shoe.

The door to the information room opens and Camtrid walks in. He stands in front of Putor's desk.

"Camtrid, the cowards Vield and Poeragard are hiding out in the Lashno mountain range. I need to put a strike force together and go up there and apprehend them. I'll be heading up the mission and I'd like you to be a part of it," Putor said as he extended his hand out with his pointed index finger stretching even further.

"It would be a blessing, Babsetron," Camtrid said proudly as he touched Putor's fingers with his thumb.

"Glad to hear it, Camtrid, now I want you to go get me 20 of the finest Prags you know," Putor ordered as his cocky grin took over his face. "Have them ready to leave this evening and do not tell them the nature of the mission. You can't screw something up if no one knows you're doing it. And we both know the value a surprise like this would be worth to Dramkick," Putor's voice was thick with intensity and unforgettable sternness. He sat back in his chair and waited for Camtrid to take the leap.

"I'll tell them nothing, Babsetron, and I will have them ready in an hour's time."

"Outstanding, Camtrid, outstanding let's see some fire in those engines!" Putor replied loudly as he smiled ear to ear.

Camtrid smiled slightly and hurried out of the room. On the Greaps Promenade Coats and Pleu-as well as the other captured Gopas-were being fitted for execution by amputation. They were all locked into a standing position in large steel braces-each brace has hoops that are attached around each of their joints and they are all lined up in a row.

"Pleu, we screwed up our lives for nothing. It was so foolish of us," Coats started to cry.

"I'm sorry, Coats, we just lost our heads. We could have had great lives. I blame myself I'm really sorry I dragged you into this, Coats," Pleu said honestly as he looked down at the restraints.

A large crowd had formed and was milling about in front of the 10 foot high wooden stage. Greaps Promenade is a walking area only and has: a dozen shops, 2 fountains, abundant trees, bushes, and green grass to sprawl out on. There is also a 20 foot crystal statue of Dramkick, behind the crowd, facing the stage. Dramkick had chosen this spot to give the Praem thieves a reminder of who they had messed with. Coats looked at the statue and felt incredible anger well up inside of him. He wished he could strangle Dramkick to death with his bare hands. Pleu looked at the people who had gathered and felt embarrassed and ashamed. He knew that things were going to end badly.

"Coats, if by some miracle one of us gets out a here, promise me something," Pleu said calmly as he furrowed his brow like a worried Labrador.

"What, Pleu, what is it?"

"Kill Dramkick, kill that Whyzi dead. No one should be able to do this to anyone, never!" Pleu said fiercely as he gave Coats a look that implied the threshold of murder had been crossed in his mind. This was a leap Coats didn't care to see and it made his throat dry instantly.

"Pleu, if I get that chance I will do it in a second, but it's not going to happen. We're going to die a horrible death and that is for certain," Coats replied with the sadness of a widowed wife.

"I know-I know, Coats, how stupid we were. We should just accept our lot in life and been happy and now-" Pleu stopped himself just as he realized what he had just said was true and not just words.

The Gopas who are first in line have the bottom of their legs amputated with a lightning quick blow. The 2 ton steel block-attached to a pendulum-would swing like a giant hand of death causing them to scream, "OH GOD SAVE ME!" Then blood gushed from their shins like a spilt pot of pea soup. The next 2 were slid into place as the crowd looked on in a "Thank God it's not me" horror. In a flash their legs were split in half and they screamed like butchered pigs.

"Oh no, Coats, were next, do something," Pleu pleaded as he watched the steel block slide in front of them and he felt a sudden unexplained pain in his shoulder. Coats gritted his teeth and looked quickly over the crowd for someone who could help. Suddenly his mind was on fire with thoughts of bread, beer, sex, and of course Praem. He wanted that most of all to numb the pain.

He started to laugh hysterically and talk in an indiscernible language. He violently shook his head from side to side in a pathetic gesture to somehow dodge the steel block.

Pleu stared at him in shock and then looked at the steel block. It started for their legs like a mountain suddenly collapsing, but jammed halfway to their shins. Coats and Pleu stared at the block in utter shock, fear, and uncontrolled mania. They wondered, they hoped, they prayed this somehow meant they were free. The seconds ticked by like an eternity as their eyes sat transfixed on the block. A Vor Me walked over to the block and started kicking it as hard as he could. Every kick, *every single kick*, sent a jolt of fear so powerful and so potent their bodies had no choice but to seize up. Coats started muttering incoherently. Pleu started biting his lip (causing nervous blood to trickle down his chin). The Vor Me stopped, kicked the steel block 5 more times as hard as he could and let out a sigh and said apologetically, "I'm sorry, Gentlemen, we can't kill you today. Don't worry it will be soon enough." He turned to the crowd and said sadly, "You can all go home that's the end for today."

Pleu looked at Coats wide eyed and said hopefully, "Coats, it's a second chance can you believe it! We have to make this count."

"We will, Pleu, I am not going through this again. We are going to escape or die trying," Coats said forcefully as he studied the blood stains on the steel block like there was some answer there.

At the foot of the Belos path, at the base of the Lashno mountain range, Camtrid, Putor, and

20 Prags started up the slope. The path was lined with 30 foot high thick green bushes that hugged the sides. The path itself is a red tar and white brick combination. After a bit of planning, the ascent to the Hailmo-which was a Château made famous by its former owner Dr. Aigl Dam a one handed surgeon-was way past the daydreaming as you walk stage.

Dr. Dam had the château built as a summer getaway, but it became famous because of one particular dinner party where Dr. Dam drugged all his guests. He proceeded to kill them all by cutting their chests open and removing their still beating hearts. It got its name Hailmo after the Talz slang term that means, "To dine."

"When you make positive visual identification fire the tranquilizer spread, and do so without hesitation," Putor ordered with the just got laid smile on his face. "We need them alive and for the fear of their fate, they will undoubtedly give us resistance. Needless to say take them down before they know what's happening," Putor said sternly as he and the Prags jogged up the slightly sloping path. They were sure to not even trust the breeze.

"That's right, Boys, and there's a bonus for whoever tags em first," Camtrid spoken in a way that calmed everyone's nerves. He thought of his father, and how used to talk to people, and he mimicked his charisma. "So be prepared to take your shot and keep your aim on the torso and below. If you hit them in the head it could kill them all, and we can't have that, Boys. Unless you want to be the one to tell Dramkick of your blunder," Camtrid looked at Putor and saw he wasn't struggling with fear. This lifted his spirits tremendously.

They came around a corner and there rose Hailmo. It was almost too real to be believed. There is a long wooden tunnel that rises up 20 feet and leads through to the château's courtyard- the courtyard has a swimming pool stretching into the center and 50 feet beyond. Hailmo is a towering structure, all of 50 stories with a botanical garden on the roof, as well as an attic that has a large bed and hot tub made from wooden Indians. The front of it has an enormous mural of Dr. Dam adjusting his glasses- with hundreds of windows throughout the mural in neat rows. The sides of the château are covered in mountain rock stolen from an enemy's home while he was on vacation. The deck surrounding it sticks out like the gaudy tongue of a drunk. With 50 stories, it has a wide variety of themed rooms from a sword room to a stuffed animal's head room, and everything in between.

Putor carefully jogged into the courtyard and took a quick look around. He realized very quickly that their defenses were down. He saw a man in a well lit room sitting in a chair reading a book. The nerve of these people, he thought. He stared at the man and realized it was Vield. His eyes checked the back for holes and he saw a brown door slightly ajar. He and Camtrid, followed by the Prags, hurried over to it. Putor pushed the door completely open with his gun barrel and looked inside. They entered quickly with their rifles raised. They saw a brief hallway with 4 Impressionist paintings of Manalike trees on both sides- they had been painted by Tamel, a 15-year-old prodigy from the Ceers basin.

The Manalike tree is a large green tree that has small men known as Tormocs growing on its branches. The Tormocs only live for 8 days after they form and are separated from the Manalike. They are completely green from head to toe and respond to the commands of whoever planted

the tree.

At the end of the hallway there is a half moon shaped living and dining room. It has a purple couch and 3 red chairs in the center of the room facing a living mural of Dr. Dam smoking a pipe. Poeragard is asleep on the couch while Vield is sitting in the chair on the right reading the Marko coal memoirs-which is a collection of 64th century short stories written for Emperor Valest Pen the 36th.

Valest was notorious for his love of fiction and paid the 50 greatest writers of the age to contribute one 20 page short story to what became the Marko Col memoirs. Valest himself died of a massive heart attack before he could ever read a word and only 30 years into his term as Emperor.

Putor and Camtrid burst into the room and Putor fired his Horsemu at Vield, but the book he was holding shielded him from the tranquilizer dart. Vield sprang to his feet and darted into the next room like a kid at Christmas. While this was happening Camtrid stepped up and shot Poeragard just as he was waking up. The darts caused Poeragard to pass out instantly. Doga came walking into the room and remarked as he looked at a vase, "You've got to see this, Vield, it's really quite astonishing."

Camtrid and Putor were busy reloading and unable to shoot Doga, but a Prag stepped forward and shot Doga, right as he looked up, in the neck. Camtrid and Putor sprinted after Vield and all the Prags joined in-the Prags marking the exits flooded throughout the château. Vield ran

frantically from room to room looking for a hiding place or escape route. He saw the Kast Rig statue and remembered there was a secret passageway beneath it. He might just be able to make it he thought.

The statue was carved by Kast Rig a renowned sculpture. It looks like a 6 foot lava lamp made of green clay and wood.

Vield pulled the light fixture on the wall towards him and the statue spun 90° revealing a staircase. Vield quickly raced down the stairs and pushed the closing mechanism at the bottom. The statue started moving back into place and Vield ran like hell. Putor burst into the room and saw the statue moving. He ran over to it and tried to lift it, but couldn't. Camtrid came rushing in asked, "Need some help with that?"

"Yes." His voice clearly echoed his agitation. "There must be a lever that releases it, start pulling anything that can be pulled," Putor ordered forcefully and started moving all the books on the nearby desk.

"Got it," Camtrid replied as he grabbed a painting off the wall and threw it with a joyful cackle that only a mother could hate.

Putor looks at the light fixture, pulls it, and the statue swings open. Putor shouted, "This way quick!"

Camtrid and Putor flew down the stairs into a darkened furnished cellar-it has various children's games strewn about and feather stuffed balloons. The walls are covered in hand written questions like, "Who stole the soup?" and also, "Where is my laughter?" The room is 300 yards long and has a damp smell to it like a root cellar.

Putor waded through the sea of toys and kept his eyes focused, looking for any movement.

"Babsetron, I can see the far end of the room and it looks like there's no way out of here," Camtrid said implying a question and buying some confidence.

"I see it too, and if that's the case he's in here somewhere hiding. I want you to stay by the stairs while I find him," Putor said sternly as he kicked over a musical robot-the robot started playing a simple 4 note song repeatedly after the angry kick.

Putor walked out into the center of the room and shouted, "WE know you're in here! And you might be afraid!" Putor's eyes never left the room. He was aware of everything. "Do not worry, Vield, we are not here to harm you. We just want to let you do your duty and serve your Quadromolan...if you must hide, then hide, but were not leaving without you, Dear Benbre."

A few seconds went by and Vield stood up from beneath a patch of balloons and said glumly, "I give up, Dramkick can have my mind as his play thing. If we weren't safe here, why bother running at all."

Vield walked over to Putor and Putor tapped him on the shoulder and said, "You shouldn't fear, Vield, Dramkick can be very forgiving if you appeal to his benevolent side."

"It's his friendship I fear the most," Vield replied as they walked up the stairs with his breathing was heavy and gasping.

When they got back to living room Poeragard and Doga were already fashioned to floating gurneys by the Prags. This while Bree was sitting on the couch having a cup of tea with a Prag and said brightly, "Our respite has ended and far too soon. Luckily I can reason with Dramkick so I wouldn't worry, Vield."

"I don't have that luxury, Bree, *I know what I'm hiding*," Vield said honestly as he looked at Poeragard unconscious. And for a moment he saw his own dead face in Poeragard's. His real thoughts were murder and he knew it.

Chapter 11

"Get away for me, Bree, I don't believe you!" Dramkick shouted as he glared at Bree-they were inside Dramkick's trophy room at the château Gaudileap.

The room was comprised of 60 feet tall rows that were filled with hundreds of shelves and thousands of trophies from all of Dramkick's many pursuits-including his "Quadromolan of the century" award and his "Father of the People" trophy which oddly enough he awarded to himself. The floor is made of glass and there are 6 handwritten poems by Dramkick-from his youth-scrawled beneath it in large black letters. There are also 8 leather chairs with sculptures of Dramkick on the backs of each, placed randomly around the room. There is also a large fresh water spring in the center of the room that is used for swimming.

"Dramkick, look I didn't want to go they forced me to. Secondly, I still haven't heard you say you were glad to see me back. I could've been killed or worse!" Bree said boldly as she tapped her right foot on the floor and smoked a government cigarette.

"Of course I'm glad to see you, but something is amiss here," Dramkick sensed deception with her every breath. "I will find out soon enough. And I *won't in good conscience* ask you to make a mask, but Vield and Poeragard will have theirs made shortly. And then I will find out the truth!" Dramkick said as he noticed a Bree's tapping foot and gave her an accusatory look.

"Don't you give me that look," Bree snapped. "I'm more than happy that those masks are being made. I've got nothing to hide, nothing at all...No Sir," Bree replied hollowly as she lit up another cigarette.

Dramkick looked at Bree and she raised her eyebrows and continued smoking quickly. He walked over and took off his sweater and pants, and slipped off his shoes, and jumped in feet first. Dramkick popped his head out of the water and grinned and said, "Don't pout all day, Bree, my shoulders need a rub."

"Ah, oh really, your precious shoulders need my decrepit hands rubbing them do they? Well...fine whatever makes you happy, I hope I don't actually choke you in the process," Bree said sarcastically as she walked over and sat down beside Dramkick. She knew the stakes and she quickly started rubbing his shoulders angrily.

"That's perfect, Bree, just like that. Really put your thumbs into it," Dramkick said smugly as he closed his eyes and sighed.

Bree clenched her teeth and rubbed as hard as she could for a minute and asked snidely, "Is that good enough, Dramkick, is there anything else I can *do*?"

"Actually yes," Dramkick said quickly as he grabbed Bree round the waist. He lifted her into the spring in one motion and kissed her passionately.

Bree fought the kiss at first, yelling into Dramkick's mouth, but gave in after a few seconds. She grabbed both sides of his face and pushed him away and said sternly, "Alright, not mad anymore, but don't think this is a bottle of *Jacour for me*."

Jacour is a red wine that gives the drinker uncontrollable laughter after only one glass. It is often served after a personal tragedy to ease the sense of woe.

"Bree, what good is love if it isn't tart and sweet from one breath to the next? It wasn't the fighting that drove us apart, it was the lies we told ourselves about each other. Let's avoid that trap this time," Dramkick was earnest as he gently pulled Bree's hair from her face.

Bree took off her top, exposing her bra and a tattoo of a bird on her shoulder. They started French kissing with a new passion. Dramkick didn't mine, but wondered how he got so lucky. She started smiling in between kisses and thinking she had the greatest being in the universe in Dramkick. She started kissing all around his face and neck, and Dramkick held her close and smiled at her affections. Still he had to wonder if he could truly trust her with all that he was, this made him grimace slightly. Bree picked up on this immediately and smiled playfully. She put her hands on both sides of his face and kissed his eyes. Dramkick was young again in this moment. He laughed at this and said honestly, "It was always you, Bree, and always still."

Bree rubbed his back and spoke as she caught her breath, "We are what makes us roar, I know this now, and will forever."

Just then a message pulse sounded. Dramkick knew it was important news and a messenger outside his door. He climbed out of the water and threw on his clothes. He pressed the unlocking mechanism on the near wall-it was in the shape of his father head-and stood waiting for the news. In walked his liaison Kapel Imobul, and with him a beautiful middle aged woman with green hair in a silky black dress. Beside her there were 2 tall thin men in red robes. The thin men's faces resembled that of an angry camel. Dramkick was ready for anything.

Kapel has dominating size of 6'4" tall and 231 pounds of sculpted muscle. His lime green hair and light yellow beard (on the left side of his face only) struck Dramkick as trouble. He has on a black suit jacket, blue T-shirt, and a pair of black cargo pants. He is off putting to Dramkick to say the least.

"Quadromolan, this is Queen Mela Vindijan from the planet Sras Oblique. These are sheiks Uaty and Paut from the planet Areap," Kapel explained as he looked at each person and then stepped to the side.

"Sras Oblique...then undoubtedly you are Peastro's wife," Dramkick said brightly as he gave Mela a hug.

"No, I am not his wife, I am married to the former Emperor Coup Vindijan. Which is partly why we are here to speak with you, Quadromolan," Mela said as she looked at Dramkick awkwardly.

"Let us sit and discuss these matters that concern you," Dramkick said as he walked over and sat in the nearest leather chair.

Kapel grabbed the remaining chairs, one by one, and moved them so that they were close to Dramkick and facing him. Mela, Uaty, Paut and Kapel sat down, while Bree stood behind Dramkick with her arms draped around his neck.

"If you don't mind me asking how do you know of Peastro? I mean you're so far from Sras Oblique out here," Mela crossed her legs seductively.

"Doga, a famous prophet told me that Peastro was a wise and powerful ruler," Dramkick explained as he sized up the 3 of them. "That he was the true equal I've been searching for all my life. In a few short months, when all of my affairs are in order, I'm going to travel to his home world of Sras Oblique. And I will meet the friend and brother I never had," Dramkick was more serious now as he held Bree's hands to his chest.

Mela looked at Dramkick concerned and said sternly, "Peastro is not the man you think he is. He is a vindictive, murderous little monster who single handedly destroyed billions of lives on Sras Oblique so that he could take power. If you knew him you would despise him with all of your faculties."

"No, you have just confirmed it to me that *he is* the man I think he is," Dramkick was now

overjoyed and excited in a way he hadn't been in a long time. "It may come to a shock to you that I did those *very same things* to take power a good many years ago. A woman like you can't truly appreciate the resolve it takes to pull something like that off," Dramkick said snidely as he grinned. "And moreover, the devious man is always more likable to me for his total honesty in his search for possessions and power. Now that was not a request, but I feel one is coming on so let's have it," Dramkick said snidely as a smile glided across his face.

Mela looked at Dramkick with a cold stare and then she looked at Uaty and said, "Well, Dramkick Reign, son of Emasip Reign there is a problem. See your father Emasip entered into a Morshan agreement with my great grandfather a few hundred years ago. In exchange for use of our armies and advanced weaponry in the Raska war. A war which your father won. This led to him becoming the ruler of Membra and to the Reign family dynasty in general."

"What is this Morshan agreement and what exactly is your request?" Dramkick asked as he let his hold of Bree's hand lapse.

"I was hoping you'd ask, a Morshan agreement, for lack of a better term, is a life debt redeemable at *any time*," Uaty replied with a boyish glee. "When 2 parties enter into a Morshan, each gets one undeniable request from each other. In this case your father asked for the use of our armies. My great grandfather never made his request and after he died the Morshan was passed to my father. Upon his death, it passed to me and today I've come to make my request and complete the agreement. Guess what I want?" Uaty asked smugly as he smiled a sinister smile.

Dramkick paused for a moment then asked calmly, "What?"

"Great, we want you to capture Peastro, bring him to the Gorgus Syndrome Hospital planet in the Mum system. Whereby we'll slowly slice his body into little pieces. This as he is kept alive and conscious through the entire ordeal. So what do you say?" Uaty asked snidely as he waved his hands in unison like a bird's fluttering wing.

"What happens if I say no firstly, and where is the proof that there is a Morshan agreement at all?" Dramkick asked as he sat forward in his seat.

Paut pulled out a silver mask from under his robe and handed it to Dramkick and said, "Press in the eyes."

Dramkick took a slow breath and pressed in the eyes. He heard Emasip's voice say, "I Emasip take the breadth and scope of this Morshan. And agree that I will, and my family will, for a thousand generations will honor this agreement or our family secret will be revealed. And all my subsequent descendents destroyed. I also agree that all powers and properties will be forfeited by my family if the Morshan is not accepted. If my son or daughter is listening to this I send you our family nickname, Waudu."

Dramkick stood up and quickly said, "OH God no it can't be... Waudu, there is no way you could know that. It was only spoken once."

"You have a decision to make and it is difficult, but is Peastro's life worth giving away everything your family has worked for?" Mela asked as she stood up and reached out her arms palms up.

"What is this?" Dramkick asked defiantly as he looked at Mela's arm. "What does this mean?"

"If you agree to the deal then wave your hand in a circle over my arms," Mela spoke with an unwavering determination. "It's a small thing, Dramkick, that's all it is. One man's life and then you're back to your life as Quadromolan. Your empire is vast and will need your supreme guidance to survive. Steady the ship with this gesture and secure your legacy," Mela said sternly as she continued extending her arms out.

Dramkick stared at her as she spoke and thoughts careened off the inside walls of his skull. He feared that he might have to kill the only person he could truly relate to. He wondered if he could fight off Uaty and Paut and their vast armies if he refused to accept the deal. Then he decided quickly and said boldly, "My father said the end of the world would be caused by a lie, and then an admission followed by violence between friends. He also said carry your feelings in a silver safe that has no door. This Peastro...if his existence threatens mine then a pair of friends we weren't *or ever would be*."

Dramkick waved his hand over Mela's outstretched arms and Mela smiled and said snidely, "You're ridding the universe of its lesser self. This will not be forgotten by Me *or mine*."

Dramkick nodded yes and asked with his full breadth of voice, "What is the timetable for this? I ask because we're in the middle of an interplanetary war as well as several other pressing matters. And I will need a little time."

"Granted we would like to see this remedied as soon as physically possible, but we were aware that there would be loose ends to tie up before you journeyed to Sras Oblique," Mela said warmly as a sense of glee filled her body. This Dramkick would take care of it all she thought. "We are willing to wait and eager to escort you to the outer reaches of the T sun. And then it will be at your discretion how you actually apprehend Peastro. I must warn you in advance that he is wise, he is powerful and he will not yield," Mela said firmly as she stroked his chin.

"I am not concerned with his power he will be broken," Dramkick answered as he looked at his fingers and thought of them killing Peastro. "I would appreciate the escort for my mind to be put at ease, considering I'm venturing to a galaxy I've never seen. As far as how I will capture him, I've got that under control fear not. The question now is, is there anything I can get you for your stay? We have very luxurious accommodations I can assure you," Dramkick walked over to Bree and put his arm around her shoulders. He kissed her on the lips but didn't close his eyes. Not with these men around, he thought.

"Thank you, Dramkick, for that, but we brought all the comforts from home on our ship. I'd like to catch a bath and lie down for a while if I could," Mela said warmly as she rubbed her hands together.

"Kapel, see to it they get everything they require and put them up in the Baumege wing. Mela, Uaty, Paut, don't hesitate to ask for anything, we don't judge here," Dramkick said honestly as his voice descended into almost a whisper.

"Thank you again," Uaty said and then he, Mela, and Paut were escorted out of the room.

As soon as they left Bree asked, "You're not really going through with this are you, Dramkick?"

"Oh most assuredly so, this Peastro will fall under my blade."

"What? That's lunacy I thought this was the person you'd searched for your whole life. How could you even think of killing him?" Bree asked emphatically and then she pulled away from Dramkick's grasp.

"It's not a thought, it's an action and one that needs to be taken if I am to survive and my empire continue, Bree." Dramkick was agitated and his body language showed it. "You've never been in control of another man's fate so you don't appreciate the responsibility involved. I don't enter into this lightly, there are huge things at play here that must not be ignored." Dramkick reached down and touched his toes. The stretching calmed him for a moment. "Trust me, Bree, they'll be another Peastro and I'm strong enough to wait," Dramkick said passionately as he walked over to the wall and grabbed one of his trophies. He walked back over to Bree and said sternly, "This is a physical trophy for a challenge met. It wasn't easy obtaining it and neither will

the trophy of Peastro, but the glory will be of same. Roll your eyes all night long it still doesn't change the fact that Peastro will die a horrible death. And I will live another thousand years as Quadromolan."

Chapter 12

"58 Prangs please?" Downer Frien asked anxiously of Haver-a 12 foot tall android bartender. He looked around Gorelle's bar for Vibrom Teni Pents (who he was waiting to meet with).

Haver is bright red in color and looks humanoid. His eyes seem to trace you even when he wasn't looking in your direction. His head is long and shaped like a Peacock's feather. His face is soft, almost childlike, and can convey emotions. Haver has 8 fingers per hand and long arms with a V shaped torso. His black legs walk with the ease of a rich banker.

"In a Kispo, Downer?" Haver asked as he stood and waited with his arms behind his back.

"Yes, please, Haver," Vibrom responded quickly as he spun around and continued to look for Vibrom.

A Kispo is a 12 inch blue glass that has 3 compartments-the 3 compartments would become one when you pushed the lever on the side. This allowed you to mix your own drinks and have them with the right amounts you wanted. Heavy drinkers loved it, lightweights filled it with beer.

A Prang is an individual flavor of alcohol as well as a degree of intoxication. There are a total of 57,000 different Prangs in the known universe.

Gorelle's is poorly lit and has 4 circular bars in each of the 4 corners of the oval shaped room. There are square bar stools hovering in place that are very sturdy. Behind the bar there are holograms of robots-the patrons control these robots and square off against one another in a fist fight for a nominal fee. The other patrons would place wagers on who would be the winner. Often times this sparking real fist fights when someone didn't want to pay up. This is a frequent occurrence and enjoyed by the bar staff. The floors and countertops are covered in Asup dust- which is a sanitizing cleaner that destroys all the germs that come into contact with it. Because of this fact, it is commonplace to see people lying on pillows and eating off the floor. It doesn't take an evolved sort of person to come in, but it does to stay. The walls are filled with shimmering trapped light balloons. They burst every few minutes causing a kaleidoscope of colors that stretch to the far corners of the bar.

Downer turned to get his drink and heard, "All the drinks here are poisoned!" That was the password he had sent to Vibrom and he instantly turned and said warmly, "But death is only certain."

"Downer, how are you?" Vibrom asked happily as he grabbed Downer's shoulders and gave them a friendly shake.

Vibrom is medium height and build, but has yellow and blue stripped hair that reaches out for the walls. His wild eyes and yellow teeth snarl perpetually at you. He also has the words, "Truth is a lie," tattooed on his chin. He is draped in army fatigues and a pair of white boots-with the

drawing of Perbetain on the sides of each.

Perbetain was a 29th century general who sabotaged his own battalions, because of a severe mental collapse. He is responsible for the death of 3 million of his own troops. And he was only found out to be crazy after a love affair with a Whyzi and he shaved his head bald before running naked through the capital city (whipping pedestrians across the face with a belt as he did).

"Better now, Vibrom, that's for sure. Let's grab a seat and talk," Downer replied warmly as he walked up to the bar and sat down on a stool.

Vibrom sat down beside him and said sternly, "I've got a message and did some research."

"Okay."

"Coats and Pleu are the only Gopas that can be set free," Vibrom admitted as he fumbled in his pocket for a government cigarette. "See, their cells are next to the Sooly restaurant supply warehouse. I know Fermand Sooly personally, he's a scoundrel, but he will allow us to blow a hole in his wall to spring Coats and Pleu," Vibrom said and then he motioned to Haver to get him 34 Prangs.

"That's great news! Then let's get them out right now," Downer said enthusiastically and he grabbed a nervous drink. His ears were flared, his eyes pierced, his heart not quite ready.

"It's complicated, we can't just blow the wall or the guards will come flooding through. Our only shot is at lunch today. You see the guards eat their meals at the same time as the prisoners, and on the other side of the prison. Today is their bi-monthly card game," Vibrom explained carefully (not sure he was ready for all this). He continued, "So an hour from now we blow that wall and grab Coats and Pleu. Otherwise there's no chance," Vibrom said as he tried to hide the fact his hand was shaking.

"Nice, but what happens if they're too close to the wall, they're not in any danger are they?" Downer asked nervously as he casually pulled out his Ovelie cigarettes and lit one up.

Ovelie cigarettes are made from genetically altered tobacco that has been spliced with wild berries (they have a very sweet aftertaste, but are not quite candy).

"Well, that's the Meonk in the room," Vibrom answered as he twisted his sweaty neck to the side. "What if they get blown to pieces, it's a risk we have to take. I saw the look on Coats and Pleu's faces when they were on that stage waiting to be killed, *you did too*," Vibrom said as he looked firmly Downer with no friend in the eyes. The stakes are too high, he thought.

"No, you're right they're not going through that again. That's it then, we just take our chances. I just pray we get lucky," Downer replied sadly as he nearly stared bubbles into his drink.

A Meonk is a 2,000 pound ape like creature that is known for its destructive power. A hundred thousand people per month are ripped to shreds by Meonks. They have small hands that

are covered in blonde fur. Their shoulders and arms make up two thirds of their body weight. Their eyes are ocean blue typically and appear lifeless.

Downer and Vibrom made their way to Sooly's supply warehouse. Fermand Sooly is waiting at the side door with a smile on his face and the control switch in his left hand as they walk up.

"Gentlemen, I have their freedom in my left hand," Fermand declared as he handed it to Downer and then said, "Just squeeze the handle firmly, when you're ready, and press the button on top and it'll be one loud hello."

Downer inspected the switch and replied, "Let's hope for an easy resolution and that Coats and Pleu aren't injured in the blast."

"Let's hope, now we must hurry inside and make the final preparations," Fermand led them through an egg white fist shaped door.

They hurried down a long black hallway with bright red lights every 10 feet (it cast their shadows skyward). They came to a gold door that is slightly ajar and Fermand shook it open. Inside there was an enormous hangar bay with 4 Tetrico fighter ships lined up in a row. Each Tetrico is stacked with 3 large jet engines on each side and an upside down pie shaped fuselage in the middle. They are 40 feet long and pure white in color-with dark blue laser canons on the front and back and can easily rotate 360°. The ceiling of the warehouse has a retractable roof that is wide open. The rest of the room is filled with old memories and old annoyances stacked one on

top of the other (Ferland's signature lasagna Au Moat, is piled up in plastic green containers along the wall). The walls are colored paisley red and green. Downer can see this isn't his life he had entered, but he still didn't want to leave.

The 3 of them walked over to the left wall and Fermand said boldly, "Don't worry about a thing, we've got the Tetrios fueled up and ready go." Fermand shook off a chill. "The explosives are here as you can see. And in about a minute from now we'll stand back from this wall and light the candle. Any questions?"

"None, let's cook it," Vibrom answered as the 3 men moved back from the wall 40 good feet (and wondered if 50 feet was a better distance).

Downer looked at Vibrom and Fermand nervously. We need the luck today, he thought. He squeezed the control stick and remarked as he pushed the button, "I'm sorry my friends."

The explosives blew a gigantic 100 yard long hole through 30 different prison cells. A moment later, each of the inmates poked their heads into the blast cylinder. Downer looked at Fermand and asked sarcastically, "Did you pack enough explosives, Fermand? Were you trying to set a record for the longest blast?"

"I'm sorry I made a mistake, we must hurry and get Coats and Pleu there's no time," Fermand sounded apologetic, but he was more annoyed than anything (They were his friends in their damn it). He ran over to the hole and jumped inside.

Coats and Pleu were covered in rubble, but were still alive. Femand started clearing the rocks off their bodies. Coats asked, "Who are you and why are you trying to kill us?"

"I am your friend, we're here to help. Try to get to your feet, be quick!" Femand barked as he lifted Coats to his feet and they hurried through the hole. The dust made it very difficult to breathe and many of the inmates were coughing themselves to death.

While this was happening Downer was helping Pleu to his feet. They were right behind Coats through the hole. The other inmates came running from their cells with the stunned guards right behind them. They boarded 2 different Tetrios with Vibrom, Pleu, and Downer in one and Femand and Coats in the other.

"Take off quick!" Coats shouted as he sat down in a leather chair and coughed the prison out of his lungs. Femand jumped into the Capt.'s chair and hit the button for the jet thrusters. This caused them to soar through the opening in the roof like an eagle through a mountain pass.

"We're fine now, we'll be out of the atmosphere in a few seconds. Then we'll reenter on the far side of the planet. How do you feel, Coats?" Femand asked as he walked over to Coats.

"A lot better now that's for sure, thank you."

"Femand, I'm a close friend of Downer's. We were friends from a long time ago. It's alright if

you don't remember. Downer here is the one that set this up."

"Downer...oh God I owe him an enormous debt. I almost forgot, how's Pleu, did he make it out?" Coats asked anxiously as he rubbed his hurt shoulder.

"He's fine, he's in the other ship. We're gonna meet them at the rendezvous point in the morning." Fermand reassured Coats as he put his arm around him. "There's nothing to worry about now, we won't allow them to take you again," Fermand said as he walked a few steps, grabbed a Praem tube from the drawer, and then continued by asking, "Thirsty?"

Coats looked at the Praem tube and said quickly, "You can't imagine my thirst. It's like I've been drinking sand with the crap they gave us in there," Coats swallowed the Praem and let out a sigh. He declared snidely, "Not anymore, Dramkick, not ever again you TYRANT!"

Chapter 13

300 million Talz live on the shores of the river Pusdo and have bathed in the light green waters. Pusdo stretched for 7,000 miles and ends in the Gone Sea. The Gone Sea is titled such because of its depressing green water. And the fact that many a lost soul has chosen it as their final resting place in the underwater cemetery known as Traps League. The mighty Emasip and his wife Snatsy Reign were counted among the ones resting there.

Today Dramkick is giving Mela, Uaty, and Paut a tour of the Pusdo and the Gone Sea (including Traps League). Dramkick insisted they travel aboard a Toose ship—a vessel that can travel above and below the water as well as in the air. The Toose is 85 m long and is shaped like a slingshot lying on the ground flat wise. It has 2 steel hands on either side that can smash through other boats or ships if need be. There is a luxurious open air deck on each of the stems, with a complete outdoor kitchen and dining area surrounded by beautiful vegetation. It also has a thin white canopy over half the deck to give people a break from the sun. There are 2 leather couches under the canopy and 2 cloth ones in the open air. Dramkick had seized the couches from assassin the previous year (after breaking his neck in a botched coup attempt). There are also several small tables shaped like the number 8 in front of the couches. They have pop up Praem tubes in the center as well as holographic projectors. There is a group of 4 musicians playing the popular song of the day, "Why ask questions?" on their Vaneck guitars.

The Vaneck is shaped like a regular guitar, but has a microphone on the neck that you sing into. It causes the Vaneck to play the melody you chose, while you manipulate it with a series of 7 strings and an array of 30 buttons. Regardless of how you sang every note, everything was always played with perfect pitch. Each one of the 4 musicians stands 3 inches shorter than the next in the order. They are playing in the semi-circle. They are all wearing black leather flight suits and white helmets with Dramkick's likeness on each. They are from the Conservatory of Rebet-which is 50 miles from the Gone Sea and produces every well known musician on Membra. Like P.H.D. short for Pieces Hurlled Downward for instance. An immensely popular group of 3 identical blonde haired sisters who have 9 octave range. Each of the sisters are 6'2" tall and incredibly beautiful (with make you nervous legs).

Mela and Dramkick are sitting under the canopy in their swimsuits, each enjoying a glass of Wams. Mela said sincerely, "This Wams is extraordinary, it truly is a pleasure. Where I'm from we don't have anything near as good."

"Thank you for that, it happens to be my favorite," Dramkick replied as his eyes looked more in than out. "Ya know, Mela, I would love it if you would try some Praem. It's the life's blood of our civilization and fuels our better selves," Dramkick said as he pressed the red button on the table and a rack of 5 Praem tubes popped up.

"I would love to," Mela answered warmly and then continued, "On Sras we have a pill called Break that thrills our souls. I wish I had brought some to give to you, but I didn't think about a stay of sorts," Mela said apologetically and then she inched closer to the table.

"Don't give it a thought, here," Dramkick said as he handed Mela a Praem tube and then continued, "I hope this suits you."

Mela sucked on the Praem tube for a few seconds and then a smile came across her face. She fell back onto the couch and started to laugh. Dramkick ingested some Praem and joined her in Twosqu. Once inside they were enthralled, and a little scared, at the way the world looked and everything felt. She saw the Danbridgo climbing up her arms and dangling from her fingers. Her skin felt warm and she was filled with sensation. She turned to Dramkick and said sarcastically, "I've officially seen it all. I can see now the Breask was not required. A woman of many years shouldn't get this excited without her husband, but I know he would understand."

Dramkick smiled and stood up and said, "We're nearing the Gone Sea, you must see it with the Praem's embrace."

Mela rose to her feet and walked briskly over to the railing. She saw the mouth of the Gone Sea and said shocked, "Oh my God, all the world's blood is here and *on fire!*"

The Gone Sea is 10,000 miles across and 20 miles deep at its lowest point. The surface is covered with red Bousee algae-it is so thick it allows people to be able to walk on it without falling in. There are also thousands of small homes built on top of the Bousee called Frimel shacks-whose inhabitants are the Derg. The Derg are a close nit group who live their entire lives within 5 miles of the Gone Sea. They dig small holes in the Bousee and spend their nights

fishing by torchlight for the Namis fish.

The Namis fish is up 5 foot long, 4 inch wide, 2 headed fish that is so delicious the second you finished eating one you started to hunger for another. That exact fact led many Derg to spend their entire lives in search of the illusive fish and nothing else.

There are wooden pathways between each of the Derg's small shacks that create a maze of interconnected homes and lives. The main causeway has no homes of any kind on it and leads directly to Traps League.

"Who are these people?" Uaty asked as he slid in beside Dramkick.

"The Derg, they're harmless for the most part. They've been here for eons, long before anyone can remember," Dramkick said as he pointed to the Namis fish hanging from a hook and then continued, "That fish there is the root of their problems."

"Please explain," Mela looked at the Namis fish and then curiously at Dramkick.

"The Namis fish is filled with Coack, which is an addictive toxin," Dramkick explained with his eyes dancing on the Derg. "Because of the high levels of Coack in the Namis fish, anyone who eats one can instantly become severely addicted. So, needless to say, the wise people avoid the Namis and the rest linger here in an inescapable self made prison," Dramkick said as he grinned and watched 2 Derg fight over a Namis.

"That's hilarious, what an odd predicament to find yourself in. All these generations lost to the Gone Sea, what a travesty. I must ask, is there no cure?" Mela asked as she watched an elderly Derg compulsively lick her fingertips to the point of tearing her skin off.

"No known cure, we had several of our Vor Me volunteer for an eating of the Namis," Dramkick looked down and breathed slower now. "We were hoping we could find a way to kick them of it, but we were unsuccessful. And now they live here on the Gone Sea," Dramkick said sadly as he looked at an old man lying face down on the pathway as people walked over him without stopping.

"That's terrifying, to think of the loss they have to deal with each day, it's humbling and troubling at the same time," Mela said she sucked on a Praem tube. She thought of Coup and how he would have really loved this.

"It's beyond my control so it vexes me not. I thought you should see this to get a sense of the lessons I've had to learn. The next place we will come to will reveal something else entirely," Dramkick said coldly as he walked over and took a sip from the Wams sitting on the table. He loved the Gone Sea this time of day. The memories were pale and evaporating.

"And where might that be?" Uaty asked in a concerned voice as he turned to face Dramkick like a hungry turning lion.

"Traps League, it's the final resting place of all the great men and women spanning over 1 million years. Trust me, it will not disappoint. Here it comes now!" Dramkick's voice had a certain spark in it that thrilled everyone. He walked over to the railing and lifted his right hand over his head.

Mela looked at Dramkick with a youthful giddiness and saw a mile high tower rising out of the water-this was the top of Traps League.

It is burgundy in color and has hundreds of thousands of windows-with blinking lights of every color that run from the top to the water's surface. On the top is a mushroom shaped dome. And it has yellow flower shaped decks all around its base. The design was meant to signify greater life after death. In the center of the tower there is a searchlight that rotates in a circle and produces a series of musical notes as it does. The base of the tower has a giant hangar bay with ships going in and out constantly. Around the hangar Bay door there is the inscription, "We were all once the new old hat and now were just laughing," written in gold trim.

As they drew near, a blue solar flare shot through the sky and gave everyone a burst of warmth. Mela thought of Coup's warm breath on her neck in the morning and she was slightly excited by this. The sky itself was a vibrant orange and red with a few thick puffy clouds here and there. Mela felt overwhelmed by the magnificent sight and started to wish for Sras Oblique (and especially the T sun). What she wouldn't give for a dose of that right now, she thought. She thought of Coup and wished he was there with her to see this wondrous sight.

"Was it worth the trip?" Dramkick asked as he put his arm around Mela.

"Oh Builder yes, worth 1,000 trips and a million dreams," Mela announced as she pulled her hair back from her face. "This is the soul's way of reminding us that we should never think we've seen it all. Thank you for this, Dramkick," Mela said warmly and then she kissed Dramkick on the lips.

"No thanks necessary, you are my guests I consider it my pleasure. But the best is next to come wait and see," Dramkick said as a boyish grin came across his face. Who was this Mela he thought.

The Toose pulled into the hangar bay and maneuvered into a landing stall. In a line of 3 there is a pair of men in black long sleeve sweaters and tan corduroy pants (with black sneakers as they were waiting to greet them). The men are similar looking in the face, but not identical twins. Inside the hangar bay there are thousands of ships in similar stalls with 3 men waiting to assist them as well. In the center a tower reached skyward-with 6 black turbo elevators and a Poplam attendant in each.

The Poplams are snow white from their skin, to their hair, to their eyes, and every inch of their bodies. There are only 100,000 of them on Membra (with their 8 foot tall bodies they are easy to find). The high exalted Poplam-Vaskov Eapo-is their living God. He chose to spend his days writing humorous stories and poems for the rest of the Poplam to enjoy. Vaskov had vanished from the public eye 2 years ago, but his writing continued to pop up in the Baravin

times-the Poplam newspaper paper.

They exited the Toose and the 2 men in black sweaters walked up to Dramkick and said, "Quadromolan, we will satisfy your every concern and guide you through your visit here."

"I know you will," Dramkick responded flatly as he clapped his hands together hard. "What we will require is the Bood room to ourselves. And also a nice bottle of Touc and some aged cheese, preferably white. O.k. great run away now," Dramkick said snidely as he gave the 2 men a push and a kick in the ass.

Mela, Uaty, and Paut saw this and smiled to themselves as they watched the 2 men scurry away. The 4 of them walked over to the Turbo elevators and got in. And as they did the Poplam named Toruss asked, "Do you want a person or year?"

"A person," Dramkick replied sharply and then the Poplam pressed a few keys and Dramkick said, "Emasip Reign."

"Of course, Quadromolan," Toruss said as he brushed down the white coat he was wearing and pressed the correct floor.

Instantly they were in motion and the inside of the elevator appeared to be perfectly still- with several large monitors on each wall that showed a beautiful sunrise (and even had the smell of fresh grass in the elevator). There went a mile downward, a long mile down, into the Hall of

Seven Life Givers-which is where all the elite Talz are housed and kept in pristine condition inside a glass case forever. There are also hundreds of hours of dialogue from each that they recorded while they were still alive. This is to keep their personalities intact for future generations. There are also androids of each Talz that stand in front of each tomb-this gives the visitors a glimpse into the minds of their greatest citizens. The hall itself is 3 miles long and has thousands of large lavish tombs with all their favorite possessions inside.

"Be it as it is, Quadromolan, we are here," Toruss said as he opened the door.

"Whoa builder, what is that?" Mela asked as she was obviously startled when she saw the tomb of Macoos in front of her.

Macoos is tall and bulbous with 6 circles of blue and white hair on the sides of his head that move when he walks (but always went back to its original shape). His skin is blood red and hairless. He's handsome, but also has a devious smile. He is wearing a tan long sleeved shirt and a black leather vest, and also a pair of loose fitting tan pants and black boots.

"It's an old friend of my father, the legendary Macoos," Dramkick announced proudly as he walked over to the android of Macoos and put his arm around him. Then Dramkick said brightly, "Go ahead entertain the lady."

The Macoos android walked a few steps forward and then jumped and did a forward flip. He landed beside Mela and said, "Dear vision, be anyone you want to be right now it's only us."

Mela smiled, rolled her eyes and said, "I'm flattered, but you've got too many sharp objects beneath those clothes."

"You're right about the sharp objects, but let me assure you everything is in working order," Macoos said cooly as he ran his hand up Mela's thigh.

"Oh really, well I would never cheat on my husband even with an android, but thanks for momentary pleasure," Mela grabbed Macoos's crotch and said smoothly, "You must of been something when you were alive."

"I was a raging pleasure chest from sunup to sundown. The last of the great pleasure givers," Macoos said slyly as he did a sideways spinning flip and started dancing awkwardly from side to side.

Mela laughed and then Dramkick said, "There's much more to see and we'll run out of energy if we're not wise. This next one is of special significance to me and all Talz."

In front of them there was a large black rimmed cone, with a white walkway in it, that led to a cross shaped door. They followed Dramkick inside and watched him spit into the saliva lock. The door opened slowly, moving inward like an elderly man near the end. They walked in and could see a large egg shaped case with the mortal remains of Emasip Reign inside. He was standing with his left hand extended. Behind him there is his favorite thrown and a re-creation of

his reading room-including his personal library. There is also his pet Kaco, which is a dog sized reptile that has green and orange scaly skin, an almost bubble like head, and a frowning mouth with purple fangs. There is also his beloved Snatsy sitting on a couch behind him-in a white dress holding a bottle of Touc in her right hand and a Paniflu revolver in the other. There is a Dellow maker hanging from the top of the case.

A Dellow is a green and red swirling colored bubble, filled with holograms. And when you burst one it would cause a hologram to appear for several seconds front of you.

Each of the Dellows has been filled with home movies from their home lives as well as Emasip's public life.

Behind the case is a collection of awards, knickknacks, and salutations that the 2 accumulated during their lives. This includes the petrified Derg statue under which they had shared their first kiss. It depicts a dying Derg wrestling with the Namis fish. There is also Dramkick's graduation sword from his father. Dramkick looked at the sword and could still feel his father's hand on his shoulder.

They walked up to the case and the Emasip android jumped out from behind the Derg statue and shouted, "There's a hole in the roof and they can't keep the water out, run for it!"

"This, Everyone, is what's left of a truly great man, my father...Emasip Reign. Try not to humor him too much or he'll be ridiculous," Dramkick said apologetically as he was locked in a

stare down with the android Emasip.

Emasip walked over to Dramkick and punched him in the stomach as hard as he could. Dramkick didn't even flinch, and he punched the android in the shoulder with a quarter of his power. This sent him onto his backside. Dramkick let out a belly laugh and said, "If it were really him, he'd ah knocked me out if I did that to him."

"He's right, I would have and he'd a known a real man's fury. Enough about that who is this radiant woman?" Emasip asked as he sauntered over to Mela and took her wrists.

"Mela and I thank you for that wonderful coffee. You are a wise and handsome man," Mela said warmly as she leaned in and kissed his cheek.

The Emasip's head started shaking violently and he spit at Mela. And then he head butted her in the chest and she fell like wet laundry to the ground. Dramkick rushed over and grabbed the android, pressed the reset button, and stopped him from shaking. Emasip said apologetically, "I apologize, Mela, I'm due for a tune up. I hope you can forgive me."

Uaty helped Mela to her feet and Paut said, "Its fine, you're only a machine and accidents can happen. I am stronger than I look so please do not be concerned."

"I thank you for that I-"

Emasip suddenly punched Mela in the mouth and shouted, "I'll kill you, you worthless LITTLE-" Dramkick quickly jumped on his back and pummeled him into the ground. Dramkick flattened its head under his foot and put his other foot through his back.

Dramkick said brightly, "Your beauty fired up his circuits. Maybe we should just move on to another part of the exhibit for safety's sake."

Dramkick felt slightly embarrassed by what had just happened, but didn't let it show. Mela on the other hand had already forgotten it entirely. She'd been through worse and seen all sorts of surprises in her day.

Next they exited the Emasip exhibit and continued on to the large red marble tomb of Dustfra Obalink. Dramkick walked over to the entrance and stopped, turned to everyone and said, "This is the tomb of Dustfra Obalink. Who was a famous inventor, writer, general, and ruled over Membra for 600 years. His life did not end, it was taken by an assassin's blade in the middle of a famous speech. It is known as the Unending Word speech," Dramkick casually pointed to Dustfra. "He was feared by his people, but also beloved for his unending mercy and compassion. Many buildings and schools bear the name Obalink, and rightfully so."

"Did you ever meet him?" Paut asked as he ran his hand along the smooth marble wall.

The outside of the tomb is a 100 foot high and 300 foot wide red marble rectangle with Dustfra's visage carved into each side (several hundred times and in several different sizes). The

door is made from Copac ivory.

The Copac is a four-legged pig like creature, but much larger, almost 30 feet tall. It has ivory horns that protrude from above its eyes and twist upwards towards the sky. It has a snout like a pig, but it has human eyes and facial features. It is hairless except for its feet and has soft gooey purple flesh. Each Copac is branded with the government seal-a pair of eyes and a devious smile across their ribs. They are raised for their delicious meat and of course, the ivory is much sought after-especially the red ivory horns of the small ones.

"Yes, once when I was very small and my father was working under his regime," Dramkick thought back to those days and could still feel the ache of being ruled over. "He shook my hand and made a point to laugh at the jokes of a child. That was the depth of his humility. My father told me a story of him being catapulted behind enemy lines so as to inspire bravery in his troops. That was the depth of his courage. You'll get a taste of him today," Dramkick said sincerely and he opened the ivory door with a spit into the saliva lock.

First they walked through a 20 foot round hallway with the walls covered with one enormous TV screen. What was being shown on it was actual battlefield footage of Dustfra during the Massipip War, as he led his troops into the heart of the Astipo Proper-which was the stronghold for the now extinct Foldram people.

Dustfra is 5'9" tall in life with a small belly and broad shoulders. His forehead is long like a ski pole and he has a stunning profile as his nose is enormous. His smile is of a person not quite

at home. He has seal black hair with a greenish hue (and his hair never seems to move). He is wearing a bright red jumpsuit and a pair of brown leather boots (the boots annoyed his wife Goldsty and he wore them often).

The Foldram were a race of warmongers whose unyielding lust for battle eventually led to the destruction of all of them. The cities they built were destroyed as well. Now they are just a punch line in pop culture humor, but nothing more.

They entered the dining hall and saw a 50 foot table with 48 Cedar chairs on either side-with arching cross shaped backs. At the head of the table there is the Dustfra android smoking a Porte leaf cigar. Each cigar is made and then eaten by a Whyzi. Then pulled from its stomach and packed into a Porte cigar. They have an aroma you never forgot and always cherished. The walls are filled with all of his favorite paintings as well as every joke he'd ever told like, "You want to hear something funny, so do I, so tell us what you do for work again." And also, "I don't want to kill you, I just want to crack open your skull and find my missing ship model, honest. I won't disturb a thing."

The android took a few quick drags and jumped onto the table and shouted, "Who wants to die first?! Step forward!"

"Oh not this again," Mela said anxiously and she quickly started to look for a weapon.

Dramkick smiled and said, "It's o.k., it's just his sense of humor, don't be concerned."

The android jumped down off the table and started to sing (horribly off key) the song "Lost Membra I've found you." He walked over to Mela and rubbed her shoulders as he whispered in her ear, "I can see your brilliance and your caring heart. What may I call you?"

"Mela, I am astonished by your lovely song. You were a kind man in life I can see that," Mela said warmly as she ran her fingers through his thick hair.

"Don't be seduced by this imposter, but in all fairness he is a spot on imitation," Dramkick said as he walked over to the wall and opened a secret compartment. He pulled out a bottle of Touc and a plate of cheeses. Dramkick said proudly, "I think we need to lick our wounds a bit."

"Outstanding, just in the nick of time! How thoughtful of you, Dramkick," Mela replied as she watched him walk over with the Touc and cheeses.

"You gave me a very enjoyable day, it was the least I could do. Please, help yourselves," Dramkick said warmly as he set down the Touc and the plate of cheeses on the table. For some reason it looked otherworldly to him sitting there. It signified something else in his mind, but he wasn't quite sure what it was.

They consumed the wine, ate like pigs, and laughed for hours. As the night went on they laughed and joked harder than they ever had. After a few hours they made their way back to the Toose and headed for the Japopet floating city.

They journeyed down a tributary of the Gone Sea heading towards Japopet. Dramkick sat on the front of the ship silently watching the sun slowly disappear below the horizon. He'd seen thousands of sunsets, but he felt this one more beautiful because of his companions. He felt his eyes always saw more when others were looking at the same thing he was. Just being around new people gave him the feeling of belonging that he was longing for. He decided not to try too hard with Mela to get her to like him. He could already tell they were becoming close friends and he knew they needed to just let things flow naturally. Suddenly he realized Mela was looking at him and he turned to catch her. This caused her to smile slightly and say, "I was just admiring your countenance. You appeared to have a nice thought in your mind. I won't ask what it was, I want it to stay with you and not be lessened with words."

"Thank you," Dramkick replied and then he walked over to the refrigerator and started to look for something inside. Mela felt as though she needed Dramkick to find it, whatever it was.

"Can I help you find something?" Mela urged as she walked over to him.

"You could've, but I've found it. What I have here is a dozen Kamast cookies. I was saving them for just now, go ahead and try one," Dramkick said as he handed Mela two cookies.

Kamast cookies are made from brown chocolate and filled with several small pockets of Wams, nuts, powdered sugar, and of course soda pop. They are named after Count Tanob Kamast-a Vexidian refugee who made an enormous fortune with his confectionary creations. He

was known to throw lavish parties at Gregig castle and Dramkick was seen at several. 3 years ago he married a seamstress and fathered identical twin boys-Mat and Pavi. But since he married he hadn't been seen or a single word heard from him. He is in exile from Vexus because of his book, "We only asked," which is a scathing diatribe about the current regime (this had him put on the list of *Enemies of the State*). He feared at the time that he could be assassinated. He decided to escape inside a false bottom in a barrel of Wams (and never looked back).

Mela and Dramkick were chewing the Kamasts and Mela said, "Truly exceptional, I must have some of these to bring back with me."

"I'll see too it personally," Dramkick said brightly with a smile and then asked, "Do you see those lights in the distance?"

"Yes...just," Mela answered as she looked at the large collection of lights.

"That's the floating city of Japopet. We'll be there in a few minutes, it is a wonder to behold," Dramkick announced as he looked at the large cluster of lights.

"Really, is that right?" Mela asked and quickly took another bite from her Kamast.

"Yes it is basically an enormous ship, the difference being they rarely move an inch," Dramkick said as his eyes were wide with Japopet. "Japopet floats, and stays in place with three 4,000 pound anchors. Beyond that though is the labyrinth of rooms, shops, and recreation halls. I

can describe it to you now, but your eyes will have to see to get a grasp of it," Dramkick spoke in a tone of voice only a powerful man could. Mela remembered that voice and she longed for it.

"And then there's the natives, the Cobay, they are some of the sharpest people I've ever come into contact with," Dramkick said softly and he took a large bite from his Kamast.

"That's fascinating, I must meet these Cobay, if for no other reason than to lock minds with them," Mela said as she looked at the lights and then turned to Dramkick and asked, "We're friends now right, I mean *close* friends?"

"Yes we are, Mela, I wouldn't say that lightly. I've really enjoyed spending time with you and I feel we've connected," Dramkick said honestly as he looked at Mela like the first day of summer.

Mela put her arm around Dramkick and laid her head on his shoulder for a minute. Mela said, "I'm very thankful for that, friends haven't always come easy for me."

Dramkick looked down at her and said quietly, "For me either."

They stood there locked in an embrace as they watched the lights of Japopet get closer and closer still. The city is a half mile and a high mile wide. It has 8 silver towers that look like toothbrushes rising from its circular wooden base. It is surrounded by thousands of small and large ships. The base of it is filled with several small communities that include: schools, parks, pools and business sectors wrapped into each-it is known as the Paumbe Low. The towers have

similar communities, but more high scale known as Paumbe High Yest. The residents of each are decidedly different though, with the Paumbe Low people being less cerebral and more into having a good time. The Paumbe High Yest residents are more interested in politics and artistic pursuits. This difference in opinion of how to live life has created a never ending rift between the two.

After they docked the Toose everyone had another glass of Touc before exiting the ship. They walked up the ramp and got into Dramkick's Quadromolan vehicle-the 8B8, which is a 3 wheeled car that has tinted black bulletproof windows and a football shaped body. It is white and has guns on the front, side, and rear. It also has a dome on the top for sightseeing. Dramkick put it there so people would know who was flying past them and be fearful. Inside it has white velvet seats that swivel and also a Pedibet game system.

Pedibet is a holographic video game that 6 people can play. It's where you battle in hand to hand combat and attempt to climb to the top of a mountain in the process. The first one to the top is the victor. You ate a microchip and then your brain became instantly hardwired into the game consol. A few hours later the microchip would dissolve and pass naturally out of the body.

Everyone piled inside and the door closed behind them. They were off into the heart of the city. Dramkick just loved it this time of day. Mela stood up and looked out through the dome and said excitedly, "This is awe-inspiring, Dramkick."

Dramkick stood beside her, smiled, and said, "You haven't seen the meat of it yet. Wait 'til

you see the Lacombe temple, it's a vision from God."

"Then I must see it, let's go there now," Mela said eagerly as she took Dramkick's hand.

Dramkick bent over and said boldly, "Driver, take us directly to Lacombe temple and don't delay."

"You're so forceful, I can tell you know how to get things done. I want to apologize to you for something," Mela said honestly as she looked out the window and then continued in a serious tone, "I'm sorry we had to meet like this, I mean under these conditions."

"What, you don't need to say a word," Dramkick looked at Mela like she was the only woman alive. "It was the universe that brought us together. If it weren't for your situation we may never have met. So we can be thankful for that," Dramkick reassured her as he kissed her hand firmly.

The 8B8 raced through the streets of Japopet, weaving in and between the other cars and pedestrians. They flew rapidly over the bridges and through the tunnels of black lights. They came out of a tunnel and snaked up a driveway. They came into a courtyard in front of Lacombe temple.

Lacombe is 700 feet high and made from black crystal. It is shaped like a tidal wave at its apex. There are red, blue, and green lights all over it and some flashing words and phrases like, "It will," and, "We all knew." There are dozens of Larship trees around the base of the temple.

The Larship tree is a rose red tree that turns downward towards the ground at the top. Its leaves are almost the same as fur from a bear's back in texture and consistency.

There are also 2 stained glass windows in front that depict the rise and fall of Sasiege Tops. He was a renowned spiritual leader and the only man viewed as a Sorcam while he was alive—a Sorcam being the equivalent of a Saint or deity. After 120 years as the spiritual advisor to Dramkick, and seeing his treachery firsthand, he decided to enter a Goulum sleep in protest.

The Goulum sleep is a self-induced coma that can only be lifted by the person themselves. It keeps the body alive with only shallow breaths. The person slowly eats away at self-dissolving food bricks as they sleep—these are swallowed before they enter the Goulum. They also consume pressurized water bricks that ever so slowly melt away. Food becomes an afterthought and a vice becomes a name you can't remember.

He had been sleeping for the past 5 years and is awaiting word of Dramkick's demise. Upon which, he would awaken himself (but not a moment sooner). Dramkick found the whole situation comical and didn't care if he slept for 1,000 years.

Everyone got out of the 8B8 and walked through the courtyard into the Lacombe temple. Inside there was a split hallway, where one side went upward and left and the other went gently downward and right. The left hallway has green floors and paisley green wallpaper. While the right has blue floors and blue Paisley wallpaper—there are several photos of Sasiege every few

feet of wall.

They take the right hallway and Mela looks at a photo of Sasiege and said smoothly, "This is a serious man, I can tell by his eyes."

"A seriously foolish man I am afraid," Dramkick barked as he grinned at Mela.

"You're kidding, what do you mean by that?" Mela asked inquisitively as she smirked gently.

Dramkick sucked on his Praem tube and said, "No, I wish I were. That man is Sasiege my one time spiritual advisor. After a difference of opinion on my attack on his home planet of Trecox, he cast himself into the Goulum sleep. It is where you are the only one who can awaken yourself."

"Wow, that is a foolish act, his anger got the better of him. You are right, I was mistaken," Mela said sternly and she continued down the hallway.

"Very foolish indeed," Dramkick replied quietly under his breath as he followed her down the hallway.

The hallway opened up into a long cathedral with a 2 foot wide stream snaking through the center. There are 30 white wooden couches with thick cushions on either side, each of which facing the stage at the far end. On the left side, beside the wall, there is a weapon's cash and a

glass refrigerator filled with foods and beverages. There is also a large painting of Sasiege kissing a baby's forehead, as well as a statue of Sasiege beneath it running through a meadow. The floors are covered in Kahde grass-which is 3 inch blue grass that is very similar to carpet and never needs to be cut. On the right side of the cathedral there is a Morfranks chamber-which is a bed of pure energy that rejuvenates a person's cells to their most young and vibrant condition. Above it there is a computer monitor hanging down that has the TV show, "Tack Stack," playing on it.

Tack Stack is about a tough as nails Vor Me instructor who quits his job to panhandle full-time after trying it as a lark. In this episode he is given a rare coin by accident and sells it for 10 years pay.

The ceiling of the cathedral has a large truss in the center and a suspended platform beneath it-it has a spiral staircase ascending down from it. The far end of the room has an enormous window in the shape of a cube (it reaches outside and pulls in the sunshine in the morning). Beneath the window is a circular stage that has various planets in suspended spots. There is also a single black leather chair that faces the window.

"Isn't this a lovely setting, who lives here?" Uaty asked as he bent down and swam his hand through the stream like a dolphin.

"This is Sasiege's home last I knew. Could be anyone's now," Dramkick was feeling invigorated and walked over to the refrigerator to grab a block of white cheese.

Dramkick took a large bite and started looking for a beverage. He grabbed a black wine bottle from the rear of the fridge and popped the cork with his fingers. He leaned his head back and let the wine run down his throat. Uaty and Paut made their way up to the stage while Mela made her way to the Morfranks chamber.

"Why don't you make yourselves at Home! *This* is what I wake up and find!" Sasiege shouted from the suspended platform. Then he tossed a Hebal melon at Dramkick hitting him in the back and splattering on him like an egg.

The Hebal melons are bright yellow and shaped like a Frisbee with a gooey red center. They taste like a really strong strawberry.

Sasiege Tops has a barrel chest and a mountain of grayish black hair that is thicker than concrete. The hair covers his head, arms, chest, legs, and most of his face. He has an enormous wine belly that meets people a few seconds before they meet him. His nose being like a softball, gives his face a distinguished character to it. His teeth are very large, so much so that he keeps his mouth perpetually open. His eyes steal the show as they are light red in color and stare right through people. He never was one for wearing many shirts either. He is wearing a 3 diamond, 1 emerald, gold necklace around his neck and that is sitting on top of his chest hair. He also has a large blue diamond pinky ring that bore the Reign family crest. He is wearing a pair of black pajama bottoms and pair of red and white slippers that have Whyzi's racing drawn on them.

Dramkick is startled at first, but then smiled and said snidely, "Nice throw, Old man. Your aim hasn't faltered the way your mind has."

Sasiege climbed down the spiral staircase and said snidely, "Only a fool thinks me foolish, best to embrace the rational, Quadromolan."

Dramkick strolled over to Sasiege. He felt like laughing in his face, but that would've been too much of a gift. Dramkick said sarcastically, "Boy you look rested, but still you may need another few years before you're ready for life again."

"I am ready for life and the likes of you right now, how bout a kiss?" Sasiege asked as he punched Dramkick in the mouth.

Dramkick was uninjured and burst out into laughter. He grabbed Sasiege and threw him by his neck into the stream and asked, "You still punch like a small boy, but your ego is of real man! Where does all this self-pride stem from, your chest hair or your fantasies?"

Sasiege crawled out of the stream with the help of Mela, and then mustered up the strength to speak and said boldly, "That was only half strength! I've still got fire my belly. And I still haven't forgiven you for the death of my brother Teep, so watch it."

"Your brother Teep was an accidental casualty of the war and beyond my control. What was lost that day was our friendship and for that I'm truly sorry, Sasiege," Dramkick said honestly as

he walked over to him and put his finger in the shoulder.

Sasiege looked at him for a second. He thought to himself does Dramkick mean it. "Alright then, I won't carry this grudge any further. But I have a request of grave importance. "

"Yes?"

"I need a Praem tube and I need it before my next breath or I fear collapse," Sasiege said as he sucked in his cheeks and raised his eyebrows in an indulgent way.

Dramkick smiled and reached into his pocket. He fiddled around his pocket for a minute to annoy Sasiege and then produced a Praem tube. He started to hand it to Sasiege, but pulled it back and asked, "I don't give these to just anyone, only friends, are you my friend?"

Sasiege nodded and plucked it out of his hand. He said boldly, "Always and a day I am."

He quickly sucked on the Praem tube, more like a ravenous lion than anything else, and started rubbing his scalp and shaking his arms as he paced back and forth. Mela saw this and started to chuckle, as did Dramkick. Uaty and Paut stared at him quizzically as they couldn't figure out what to make of him.

Sasiege started shaking violently and jumped on one leg. Dramkick started mocking his silliness by mimicking him. Sasiege lay down on his back and shouted, "God don't take me yet

for my happiness has consumed me WHOLE! But if you dare, do my friends the same favor for finding me so comical!"

"It'd be just our luck, he takes us and leaves you here. I'm Mela by the way, you have a certain charm, Sasiege, I must tell you," Mela folded her arms and waited for his friendship. She saw friends in his eyes.

"Oh she's wise so very wise and *beautiful too*. Where did you come upon this vision of grand womankind?" Sasiege asked as he jumped onto his feet and gave Mela a hug (making damn sure to rub her cheeks with the side of his own).

"Sras Oblique, and he didn't find me I found him. Grand womankind, I suspect that line has worked before," Mela said slyly as she pulled her hair from her face and with her left hand twisted it down her forehead playfully.

"A time or 2 I'll admit it," Sasiege said playfully as he stuck out his tongue. "What good is life if you haven't your favorites? Sras Oblique...I've heard of this, that wouldn't be the T sun perhaps?" Sasiege was mildly interested, but wanted to seem more than that. He still hadn't figured Mela out. What is she hiding he wondered.

"It would indeed, how do you come of it?" Mela asked as she surveyed Sasiege. He felt elusive to her, just a hair slow.

"I know from a scoundrel named Totic, who did some dealings with Vindijan Line. I heard the Vindijans possessed tremendous power that they got from the T sun's radiation," Sasiege said brashly as he implied a question. He walked over to the refrigerator and grabbed a triangle of white cheese and bit into it ravenously. He tried to lighten the mood and decrease Mela's defenses.

"Yes, this much is true, but we were deceived and taken over by one of our own not long ago," Mela felt the heavy burden of recalling the collapse of the Vindijan Line in her mind. "Which is why I'm here to ask Dramkick for his aid in some retribution for the Vindijan Line," Mela answered as she purposefully walked up beside Sasiege and reached into the fridge. She grabbed a white chocolate cookie, nothing else.

"From what I heard I would of thought that impossible," Sasiege gently watched Mela for dishonesty. "I thought the Vindijans were beyond close and extremely loyal to each other. Who is the man that did this horrible thing to you?" Sasiege asked as he gently turned to face Dramkick.

"Peastro, he is the *one* they want done away with. In a short period time I will see to his downfall personally," Dramkick said definitively and then he pulled out a black case filled with government cigarettes. He took one out and lit it. He blew smoke triangles straight up into the air.

"Well, Mela, with Dramkick on your side I can assure you this man will perish. I would love

to be a part of this, Dramkick, if you would wish it?" Sasiege asked as he looked around for his glasses. Why must I always feel that shot of panic about my damn glasses Sasiege wondered.

"I would be honored to have you at my side once again," Dramkick replied as his hand felt over his aching shoulder. "I will need your guidance in the years to come. I think we should make our way back to Château Gadileap and begin preparations for Sras Oblique," Dramkick said firmly as he smoked a cigarette.

"Agreed, we have vacationed long enough," Mela said she nodded just a few times more.

"Then WE'RE OFF!" Sasiege exclaimed and he grabbed his red plasma sunglasses, a white T-shirt, and a tan corduroy jacket as they made their way to the 8B8.

Chapter 14

2 months after Sasiege had woken up Dramkick was still tying up loose ends. The Aovaba war is still raging with no end in sight. The politicians want a cease-fire, but the generals are having too much fun to even talk of ending the hostilities. Even Dramkick himself has grown so very fond of his daily casualty count and hearing about his soldier's bravery on the battlefield (so much so he can't even bear to think of ending it). Even in the light of his wanting to leave for Sras Oblique his heart says fight on. He even pondered adding another planet to the war in the hopes of one colossal battle before he leaves. Smoking up one more pig even though his belly is full.

Not to mention the troubles with the Tonyx Preserver helmets, and namely popular figure's helmets being stolen and sold on the black market. This was fueled by the common man's insatiable need to see what the rich and powerful were really thinking (and the desire to know their innermost secrets). This forced Dramkick to decree that anyone caught with one of these masks would be killed on sight. The problem with that was, so many were stolen that he'd end up killing millions of loyal followers. So he was thinking it over.

Then there were the daily thefts from the Praem suppliers and the reluctance of anyone to turn them in. This caused Dramkick to have to tighten up security even further. And, to ration the Praem supply once again. He was losing fans all over, but gaining a slight grin. And there was an

ever growing tension between Bree and Dramkick because of the large chunks of time he was spending with Mela. All of this combined stress had caused Dramkick to up his Praem consumption. And when he got the helmets of Vield and Poeragard, he learned that they were part of several assassination attempts on his life (this nearly sent him over the edge).

Inside Gadileap Dramkick is sitting with Mela in the Energy Circus room. It is filled with animals made of different forms of energy that will do various tricks and maneuvers over obstacles. Dramkick shot them occasionally with a low intensity laser beam when they came in, sending them tumbling over themselves. With one being an 8 foot tall gorilla like animal made from green energy. It tried again and again to climb a ladder with broken rings, but fell over and over again onto its back. Dramkick laughed slightly at this. It was a momentary respite. The 2 red energy birds (that looked like buzzards with Mohawks) pecked constantly at the other animals. The yellow energy bear like animals (nicknamed Unwanted Bastards by Dramkick) are perpetually doing front, back, and side flips. The walls are covered in moving colored segments that change every 10 seconds and give the room many different looks and feels. The ceiling has an upside down racetrack with miniature space ships racing on it continuously. The floor is covered in thick white bendable foam that molds to the contours of each person's foot. There are also 6 yellow chairs arranged in a semi-circle that have small snacks, beverages, and of course government cigarettes and Praem.

Mela is wearing a loose fitting orange dress and black slippers, with a necklace that consists of 9 blocks of crystal with a different picture of Coup in each. Dramkick has on a black silk shirt with a small collar and white loose fitting pants. Not to mention his black sneakers with Memoa

sticks on the side.

Memoa sticks are a powerful hand operated explosive that can be thrown at an attacker or used to blow a door open.

"You look very happy, Dramkick, I was beginning to worry," Mela said as she lit up a cigarette in the side of her mouth. Her hands tended to fumble with her cigarettes when she hadn't entered the conversation the way she had hoped.

"For the moment, but this will not ease all of my struggles so easily. To see something so comical does help, but I have great aching stress right now. I just-"

"Yes," Mela said quickly as she set down her cigarette on the table and gave Dramkick her full attention.

"I can't do more than I am doing and nothing is getting done," Dramkick's eyes were fixed on the wall as he thought of killing Vield and Poeragard. "What I want to do is simply fulfill my obligation to you and be done with it, but I don't want to leave in this state. I am tempted to go on a journey to Hankfur's," Dramkick said as he rubbed his arm in a circle and then gently ran his fingers through his hair. He hoped that Mela hadn't noticed.

"What is this Hankfur's?" Mela asked puzzled.

"It's...it's a vacation spot on the other side of Membra where they cleanse the pathways in the brain, and flush out all the toxins in your body. They also have several entertaining pastimes to relax and enjoy yourself," Dramkick found Mela's interest calming and his breathing changed like the calming of the ocean. "The problem is I can't justify a vacation while you're waiting for me," Dramkick said then he cracked the joints in his back very loudly on the door jam.

"I'll admit I am eager to get my problem taken care of, but I'm getting the sense that this vacation is a necessity for your well being."

"That's entirely correct, I can't physically or mentally even think of leaving in this state," Dramkick admitted as his eyes darted around the room.

Mela gestured with her hand for Dramkick to come closer. And when he didn't she gently touched his wrist and said, "Then you must go, Dramkick, we must be immediately."

"Okay then, but I have another question and that question is this, will you come with me I could use a good friend at my side?" Dramkick asked as he slid his other hand on top of Mela's.

"Of course, Dramkick, I will aid you in any way I can. When shall we leave?" Mela asked as she smiled. She knew how a powerful man's mind worked and how to aid it as well. She needed a confident Dramkick or that little brat Peastro would continue to win.

"We've already left," Dramkick replied as he pressed a blue button in the armrest of the chair

and the entire room started to moving upward (and upward very rapidly).

Mela braced herself as they continued to rise up past floor after floor. The entire room came to a stop inside the hangar bay. The 2 Vor Me soldiers guarding the Debrist Morou looked at Dramkick and Mela in bewilderment. Dramkick stood up and helped Mela to her feet. They walked over to the Debrist Morou and boarded the ship. They made their way to the lounge and each took a seat on a tan leather couch with foldout foot rests. They are sitting next to a round island bar. The lounge is small, but has high ceilings-12 feet high. There is also a chair made from a statue of Emasip and Snatsy Reign. The couches and chairs are facing a large television screen that runs every inch of the room-with snapshots of Dramkick's life popping up here and there. There is also a Mochi machine.

A Mochi is a wage stick operated hand to hand hologram video game (a favorite of Dramkick's). The floors are filled with dozens of small carpets from everywhere the Reign family has traveled.

"I thought we'd have a drink to ease the start of our voyage," Dramkick said joyfully as he poured Mela a glass of Stokas Bourbon.

Stokas was only brewed in the 85th century by Det Stokas and there are only 3000 bottles left in existence (with Dramkick having hoarded away 2,500 for himself).

"You read my mind, how long before we arrive?" Mela asked as she took her glass from

Dramkick. She knew she'd have to handle drinking with Dramkick if she was smart.

"An hour or so tops, but it's a beautiful trip this time a year. And Hankfur's is in a very picturesque spot as you will see," Dramkick said as he slid in beside Mela on the couch.

"I must ask, WHO'S THAT!" Mela shouted as she watched a man burst out of the center of the island bar.

The man has black and orange skin like a leopard, with yellow eyes and red teeth. He has a white tattoo across half of his face of the Messi solar system. His nose is crooked and is bent to the right. His forehead is filled with slashing V shaped wrinkles. He is wearing a white dress shirt with his sleeves rolled up and a pair of tan trousers with the words, "Be broken Be just," written across the front. He is also wearing Poskit brand black sneakers, no socks. His name is Via D.

Via pulls a Chest Shredder flesh grenade out of his pocket and throws it at Dramkick. Dramkick feels the sting of fear as he knows that the Chest Shredder grabs flash as it passes through the body in violent directions. Dramkick sees it coming his way and drops to the floor and twists sideways. The Chest Shredder just clips his right shoulder and tears off a piece of his shirt and flesh. Dramkick's blood gushes from the wound and he lets out a yell, but as he does Dramkick also reaches down to his shoe and grabs a pair of my Memoa sticks.

Via reaches into his pocket for another Chest Shredder, but Dramkick sees this and throws a

Memoa at his feet. This blows him back against the television smashing it to pieces.

"COME ON!!" Dramkick shouted as he jumps to his feet and then jumps on top of Via.

Via puts the soles of his feet on Dramkick's chest and flings him across the room. Dramkick lands awkwardly on the Emasip chair and his adrenaline really starts to flow. It tasted almost better than pure Praem.

Mela meanwhile ran to Dramkick's side and helped him to his feet. She couldn't help but think if Dramkick died so did Coup. Via did a double leg kick and vaulted towards Dramkick. Dramkick was still startled and had lost a lot of blood, but as Via threw his roundhouse punch Dramkick extended his right fist outward (at lightning speed) and he ran face first into it. The blow crushed his cheekbone and Via's punch lost all of its power.

"Get back!" Dramkick ordered as he intertwined his fingers.

"Oh God!" Mela muttered as her body heaved.

Via grabbed the Snatsy chair and slung it into Dramkick's bloody shoulder. This caused Dramkick to scream out in agony. Via tried to hit Dramkick again, but Mela pulled him out of the way just in time. Dramkick mustered up all of his strength as he lunged at Via and grabbed him around the waist. He started squeezing with all of his might. Via gasped for air and tried to free himself, but Dramkick squeezed so hard he started to feel his ribs crush and pop. Dramkick

crushed his torso to half of its normal size and blood gushed from out of Via's mouth. He let out one last gasp and then died in Dramkick's arms. Dramkick dropped Via's body to the floor and fell into Mela's waiting arms.

"You need to sit down, My Love, please," Mela suggested as she helped Dramkick to the couch.

"I need you to go into the next room and get the medical kit, please hurry," Dramkick said breathlessly as he slumped over on the couch and took a deep breath.

"O.K.," Mela answered quickly and then she raced into the next room.

Her eyes darted quickly around the room as she searched for the medical kit. She saw the medical kit on the far wall underneath the red suede coat that was hanging from a steel hook. Mela hurried over and grabbed the medical kit. She quickly ran back into the lounge where Dramkick was now lying down.

"I've got it now, what do you need?" Mela asked quickly as she sat down beside Dramkick.

"Take out the blue vile and dump its contents on my shoulder," Dramkick said calmly as he crossed his fingers.

"O.K.," Mela answered as she emptied the blue vile on his shoulder.

Instantly the blood stopped gushing and the wound started to dull its color.

"Now take out the Larvie medical laser and do a once over the wound," Dramkick said calmly as he inspected what was left of his wound. Dramkick thought of Via getting the jump on him and vowed never again. He looked at his reflection on the TV screen and made a goofy face to amuse himself. Still the greatest he thought.

The Larvie is a silver laser pistol that fires a cauterizing laser beam and extremely potent antibiotic.

Mela took the Larvie and went over the wound twice and then asked, "It seems fine, is there anything else?"

"One more thing, I lost a lot of blood take out that large red vile and affix it to the Larvie. Then inject it into this vein here," Dramkick pointed to the bulging vein in his forearm.

Mela did exactly what he said and soon fresh blood was pumping into the vein. She pulled out the Larvie and removed the red vile. She cauterized the wound by going over it with the laser.

"How do you feel?" Mela asked as she looked into Dramkick's eyes.

"Completely and utterly whole again. That vacation can't come soon enough for me though,"

Dramkick said brightly as he sat up now.

"You need to be relaxing for even another reason, how nice," Mela said jokingly as she looked down at Via and then continued, "It seems he could use a little rest as well."

"Oh I think he'll get rest weather he wants it or not he he ha. Sure was a sharp dresser, but not much of an assassin. It does beg the question, who sent him?" Dramkick asked with the thought of Poeragard and Vield somehow behind this. He sauntered over to Via and grinned. Dramkick grabbed his collar and pulled it back. He read the label and said quietly, "Atumky, that's a Vexidian tailor and a well known one at that. This stinks of Vield and breaks my heart once again. Alright...I've decided."

"Decided what?" Mela asked in puzzlement as she rubbed her chin and gazed at Dramkick.

"I've decided that after the respite we'll immediately leave for Sras Oblique. I can see now that the longer I wait the more reasons there'll be to wait. Then it's settled." Dramkick checked his pockets for a cigarette. "I'll leave Gigg in control of the forces I leave behind. And the bulk of my armies will set off into the blackness of space," Dramkick said nonchalantly as he calmly walked over to the bar and started fixing 2 fresh drinks.

"That's great news, that really sets my mind at ease," Mela felt invigorated as she knew the Line would rise again. "It had worried me, but now I will not worry, and we can enjoy our vacation free of any stress or pressure. But I must ask will there be any more assassins on this

trip or attacks on my life per se?" Mela asked with a wry smile on her face. She knew she was only half joking and so did Dramkick.

"Probably only a dozen or so, but don't worry I'm very handy and good in a tight spot," Dramkick said as he fiddled with their drinks. "I'd be more concerned that we've only got half a bottle of Stokas left after the other 2 bottles we cracked, *during the excitement*," Dramkick said as he lifted the Stokas bottle and half frowned. He knew that last line could've been a joke in any other time but not this time. Would Peastro have laughed he wondered.

"What a travesty I was counting upon it. That dashes all my hopes for total happiness," Mela said sarcastically as she walked over to Dramkick and grabbed her glass of Stokas. She held it like she'd been to too many dinner parties, with her fingers stretched to the ceiling and a few inches below her mouth (like she was ready to say something). Dramkick noticed this, he'd been to too many as well.

They embraced the next hour by finishing off the bottle of Stokas. The Debrist Morou made its way to Hankfur's (and at maximum damn speed too). They landed in a tightly mowed grass field that is surrounded by an 8 foot stone wall that slants away from the ship. At end of the field, there is a man made waterfall that rises 50 feet in the air and has a sitting deck on top of it. At the base of the waterfall is a swimming pool as well as an elevator. Behind the waterfall there is Hankfur's rising 600 yards into the sky. The majestic rubber gift to all Talz Dramkick thought. It has Hankfur's torso with his arms outstretched on the front of it- and his arms serving as a relaxation deck. The giant head of Hankfur is filled with Dramkick's Quadromolan suite. The

face of Hankfur is part gorilla part man with a thick black beard, as well as thick black hair on top. He has a goofy smile and seal black eyes. In life he was a striking fellow, a towering mountain of man at 7'4" tall and 700 pounds. He always wore perfectly tailored suits and tan shoes with his signature white ties-the ties had his face and crest on them. Hankfur Dellow was one of the only 7 Monipac left in existence. The Monipac are a little known about race of giants that came out of the Heyydue jungle 200 years ago. They instantly started adapting, then thriving on Membra. They have an uncanny ability to learn virtually anything in an instant. Giving them a mastery of every level of education in only a 5th of the time it would take a normal person. They all looked to the world of business and immediately welcomed giant success with their theme parks and vacation spots. 50 years ago inexplicably, they started to each get violently ill and soon after perish. Thousands upon thousands of them died and there was no reason for it. The doctors isolated the illness as a microorganism that was living in their blood. When this organism was exposed to the population of Monipacs in the Metropolitan area, it poisoned them instantly. The remaining Monipac upon hearing this fled to the countryside-including Hankfur and his brother Drevous. For most it was too late, but a lucky few survived. Dramkick quipped at the time "I lost a few too many taxpayers to that one."

They exited the Debrist Morou and a pair of black Hovacycles sat waiting for them.

"I hope we're not too old for this," Mela said warmly as she mounted the Hovacycle.

"I hope I'm not too young," Dramkick said sarcastically as he put on his leather riding gloves and then said smoothly, "You're never too old to love the kid you once were."

"That, Dramkick, should be remembered every second *of every day* woowee," Mela answered and then she sped away towards the waterfall.

Dramkick smiled at this and said to himself, "God what a magnificent woman."

He mounted his Hovacycle and tore after her at break neck speed. He thought of the time he rode his first Hovacycle as a child and nearly ended up a permanent fixture on the side of a tree. He caught up to Mela and gave her a nod and a wink as she looked over. She smiled a wry smile and playfully swerved at his Hovacycle. They rode through a tree lined tunnel and came out the other side in front of the waterfall. Mela stopped and looked Dramkick with a puzzled look on her face and asked, "What do we do now?"

"Well we ah...swim for it," Dramkick said boldly and he floored his Hovacycle into the waterfall and Mela watched in shock.

After he had disappeared into the waterfall Mela sat there for a few seconds and then muttered to herself, "Fine, let's swim."

She questioned her next move for only a second (and no more). And then she gunned it into the waterfall. Her eyes had never opened wider and seen so little. She found herself in an underground banquet hall where dozens of people were sitting at tables eating their dinners. When they saw Mela they all started to cheer. This while she sat on her Hovacycle and looked at

them in bewilderment. She saw Dramkick climb out from under a table and into an elderly woman's lap (much to her delight). Dramkick gave the old woman a kiss on the cheek and danced over to Mela and said, "All great journeys start with a perilous step."

"True, but they're usually not quite so dangerous. How was that old woman's cheek, makeup or soup?" Mela asked jokingly and she ran her fingers through her wet hair (too embarrassed to try and style it).

"A little bit of Dr. Damnabi's strawberry soup. I have to admit, one of my personal favorites," Dramkick replied sarcastically and then said, "That man behind you will get you some dryer clothes." Mela turned and she was handed a Praem tube by the waiter.

Mela went with her male waiter-who was dressed in a gold leaf Hapkin suit-and into a changing stall a few feet away. The changing stall is a good hundred feet long and has been drilled out of solid stone and into a cave. There are little ledges every 5 feet that have lights of different colors on them to illuminate the room. In the center of the room there is a small stage with a lone Mortos player standing there (and he is crying and playing a somber song).

The Mortos is a 70 key half moon shaped piano like instrument. It plays guitar notes and chords with just the press of a key. It also has a blue button that can turn it instantly into a wind instrument (and still be able to be played the same raucous way). While you are playing the Mortos it has its own self generated light show with holograms of ships flying around it.

The left wall is filled with secret passageways where the wait staff (and even a few horny guests) can enter or leave the room without anyone knowing. There is a mist from the waterfall that combines with the ever changing lighting to give it an otherworldly feel.

Dramkick watches as his table is brought in and 2 chairs are placed facing one another. Mela came out of the changing stall a second later in a long form fitting black lace dress. Her hair was completely dry and tied back into a triangular ponytail. She smiled when she saw Dramkick's jaw drop and she said as she walked up, "Careful now, my heart is spoken for."

"It's not your heart I was thinking of. I am only kidding, I'm not trying to steal you from Coup. I value your friendship too much to make you uncomfortable," Dramkick said honestly as he pulled out Mela's chair.

"I appreciate that, I know Coup would appreciate that as well. By the way you look very handsome in that suit," Mela said as she set down. The memory of an old cocktail party jogged loose in her mind as she sat. That's when they were on top, she thought. Why is it a bad memory now, she wondered.

"Thank you," Dramkick said as he pushed in Mela's chair and sat down across from her.

"Well were here and here is absolutely stunning. I hope there's some sort of dinner coming because I am starving for sustenance," Mela said implying a question "Isn't that terrible?"

"I took the liberty of ordering for both of us. I thought you might like to try some of the region's delectable pasta, I swear by it," Dramkick said as he leaned back and sucked on a Praem tube.

"Okay, then I am sure it will be delicious," Mela said as she lifted the length of her dress up over her knee. "You know you seem happier already, you have a certain glow that suits you really well," Mela smiled and pretended to smoke a cigarette.

"I feel invigorated and overjoyed even though we've just arrived. I am certain this is just what I needed, Mela," Dramkick said gleefully as he saw the pasta being brought to their table and then he continued, "And the magic arrives."

The 2 waiters-in black suits and white shirts-put a large tray of white meatball filled pasta and Hankfur shaped rolls down in front of them both-with Whyzi butter spread on everything. They also set down a bottle of Touc and 2 Hankfur shaped glasses. The waiters bowed to Mela and then Dramkick and briskly walked away.

"It looks like something to die for. Do you mind if we eat then talk?"

"I prefer it, hand me your plate and I'll get us started," Dramkick said making Mela chuckle.

Just then a Hovacycle burst through the waterfall followed close behind by 2 more Hovacycles. It was Sasiege, Paut, and Uaty. They waved to Dramkick and Mela as a female

waiter in a blue dress quickly led them to the changing stalls.

"Looks like we're going to have a bit a company," Mela muttered as she laughed at the absurdity of the moment. "Is that alright with you, Dramkick?" Mela asked as she grabbed a roll.

Dramkick filled her plate with pasta and said plainly, "I should hope so, I invited them. I'll need my friends and confidants to truly unwind. Plus, it will be easier when we leave to not have to go pick them up," Dramkick was sitting higher in his seat and exuding calm. He missed being himself. "You know they'd be on some bar room floor or in the gutter. With them here we can head straight for Sras Oblique."

"Thank you," Mela said as Dramkick handed her a plate and then remarked, "I'm glad to see you're thinking this through. I say that because Peastro is a formidable force."

"I understand that, but I have the element of surprise," Dramkick said slyly as his fingers rapt the table gently. "You see right about now he will be receiving my messenger. And after reading my message he will be under the impression that I wish to be his friend," Dramkick fought back his giddy laughter. "What that will give me is the ability to get within arm's reach of him. Then it's just a matter of crushing the life out of him," Dramkick said snidely and he took a big fork full of pasta and put it on the Gayweer.

The Gayweer is a metal device used to spin pasta so that it sits perfectly on the fork. It is silver in color and looks like a soda can with one side cut off. It is attached to a magnetic coil to

spin it.

"You sent a messenger, that is truly devious," Mela felt the old roar of the Vindijan Line pulsing through her once again. "The only thing I worry about is Peastro's mental triggers. He will sense minutes in advance if you wish to do him harm. How will you get around that?" Mela asked and she smiled and took a bite of her roll.

"I did not know this, but it does not concern me," Dramkick was intrigued by the mental triggers and wanted some for himself. "The Talz, and my family especially, have always been in control of our thoughts and emotions. When the time comes I will summon all my faculties *fear not*," Dramkick said smoothly and then he took a large fork full of pasta. He poked a meatball and took a large bite.

"Let's test it, it's not that I don't believe you, but it is very important that he not know you are about to attack him," Mela said sternly putting down her roll like a rusty hammer.

"Okay, then you're implying I kill you," Dramkick replied as he glared at Mela.

"Yes, I want you to think murderous thoughts about me and I will say instantly if I feel anything."

"Done!"

Dramkick started staring at Mela with lifeless eyes. He thought about bashing in her head and tearing her limbs from her body. At the same time he carefully thought about caressing her and kissing her lips. Mela stared back at him for several seconds with a crooked smirk on her face (she desperately tried to sense his murderous intentions). She got an annoyed look on her face and said stunned, "I sensed nothing, nothing at all. How could that be, that's incredible! Peastro will have no idea this is PER-fect!"

"No idea, what's this?" Uaty asked as he and Paut walked up next to Mela.

Uaty and Paut were wearing white robes and large black boots.

"It's o.k., Uaty, we don't have to worry about Peastro," Mela said excitedly as she smiled from ear to ear. "Dramkick can handle him," Mela declared without a hint of reservation. She was already planning the color the drapes after Peastro was killed.

"What is o.k., did I miss something?" Sasiege asked as he walked over to Dramkick.

Sasiege had on a thin burgundy sweater and a pair of black trousers with square black shoes.

"I tested Dramkick to see if Peastro would be able to sense his murderous intent...and *he passed*," Mela could barely control her excitement as her feet went a tappin. "Oh if Coup could have felt or, should I say not felt, when I just did he would be shouting and carrying on like you wouldn't *Believe*," Mela said gleefully as she burst out laughing like an idiot.

"I've seen it all, Madam, I would believe anything, but I'm happy for you just the same. Now who do I have to kill to get a chair and a plate, and hopefully he's smaller than me?" Sasiege asked firmly as he looked around for a waiter. He spotted 3 of them bringing chairs and let out a sigh of relief.

The chairs were brought over and everyone sat down and started to eat. A good time later (after a few more bottles of Touc) they made their way to the Pedalisp section of Hankfur's.

Each Pedalisp is an entirely different world onto itself. They are called Pedalisp because in the ancient text Peda meant unique, and Lisp meant separate, thus Pedalisp.

In the Yast Pedalisp you had only jovial people and the emphasis was on partying and having a good time. It has a nightclub called Rowdy Baudies and several stages with musicians-as well as burlesque plays and raunchy comedians from Tortem.

The 2nd Pedalisp Huhwha is for people looking for a spiritual journey. There are 5 vast temples that have various different religious practices and ideas being taught. It also has a wall filled with people's hopes and dreams written on small pieces of paper (that you could read or add your own words of wisdom). All the food is nutritional in this Pedalisp (and alcohol is banned).

In the Dillduc Pedalisp it is for the nature lover with beautiful vegetation, a man-made lake,

and a gently flowing stream. It feels like summer's past and younger years lost. It also has hundreds of cabins and tree houses that are available to all guests (they are fully stocked with all the comforts of home if you like to imbibe). There are also a dozen waterslides that run around, and in between, as well as through a series of hills. You can also find people friendly wildlife that you can hunt or simply observe.

In the final Pedalisp-known as Egocent-you found self glorification taken to the extreme. You would have paintings and sculptures made of you. You are afforded several dozen servants to shower you with compliments and care to your every whim. Clothing is completely optional and all of your sexual fantasies are attended to. It has 40 small castles in and around the outskirts of the Pedalisp-they face inward towards a small battlefield. You have the ability to be a general of your own army and order soldiers to attack the other guest's armies (this while you sat in your castle and took in the show). Beneath the Pedalisp is a series of underground caverns where you joined a secret society and had wild parties. This is also where you plotted to take over the world (only for fun of course).

Dramkick walked with everyone up to a series of 4 entryways that were side by side. He knew this place, he thought (he knew it all too well). Dramkick turned to everyone and said boldly, "There are different rules for each of these Pedalisp. What I suggest, being that I've been here before, is that we try a bit of each. My question to you, Mela, is how much energy do you have?"

"Well it's been a long day and I must admit I'm a little worn out. So where does that send us?"

"Dillduc would be the right fit, follow me," Dramkick said smoothly and then he extended his forearm out and Mela wrapped her arms around it. They walked in together as friends.

They walked on a wooden bridge over the man-made stream and took in the beautiful setting. They found a cabin they liked and went inside.

The outside of the wooden cabin is golf ball shaped with round windows-each of which having the dimples on a golf ball. There is also a brief wooden walkway that leads up to the star shaped door. A grand deck runs all the way around it.

Inside the cabin there are 3 sections on each of the 3 floors. On the first floor there is a living room, bathroom, and kitchen. The living room has a banana shaped sofa that is checkered red and black-and has 2 white thrash pillows lying on it from the Sheik of Pendahar. In the front of there is a silver oval table that has the game, "To taste Bronk," built into it.

To Taste Bronk is a war game that uses miniature robot tanks and battleships as well as robot soldiers. Each person controls their army using a hand held joystick. The object of the game is to capture the Leavitos warrior-who is a green robot that continually hides on either side of the battlefield until all of your forces are destroyed. Matches often times take several hours to be decided (and several bottles of wine).

The floors are covered in 3 sewn together Loreain quilts. The Loreain is a large yellow fury

pair shaped sheep like creature. The only difference being it is 3 times larger and has a tiny head- the head itself is funnel shaped with a tiny mouth, eyes, and red nose.

The walls are covered in tiny green colored cubes, with 12 paintings depicting Hankfur running placed in between them. There are also 2 large L shaped bean bag chairs lying against the right and left walls. And there is a Tamo massage machine positioned next to the left wall. On the backside of the front door there is a television screen facing the sofa (with every known good movie programmed into its memory circuits).

The kitchen is adjoined to the living room and has 2 refrigerators stocked with every kind of food you could imagine. From Porntap ears (that come from a bat like creature and taste great drunk) to Comman gizzards (which are a furry reptile and taste like Beef Teriyaki). There are also 4 cupboards filled with priceless China, snacks, and cereals like Dr. Moosenecks Tasty Fists (which is worth a 2nd bowl truth be told). An android chef known as Mehemi will lower down from the ceiling if you are ever hungry or thirsty. There is also a large arching kitchen counter that is filled with gold and silver hexagons just beneath its surface. There are 4 chairs that fold out of the counter at the touch of a button.

"Well we've eaten and now we have ourselves a beautiful cabin to relax in. How's a movie sound?" Mela asked as she grabbed the silver and black buttoned TV remote and pressed the power button.

"I'm going to retire," Uaty said and he walked into the elevator without catching anyone's eye.

"I'll go for a walk, I'll catch the second half," Paut said quickly as he headed out the front door.

"I would love a movie and since you're the guest you should choose," Dramkick said as he sat down on the sofa.

Mela stared at the remote and said boldly, "I've found it!" She scrolled through all the titles and movie images from several films and then picked, "Stolen and black waters Bowns."

"Nice choice I love the beginning of this movie," Dramkick amended as he searched for a Praem tube in his pocket. "And the actress Babenth is a true talent and an absolute stunner," Sasiege said as he glanced up only briefly while he was looking for a snack in the refrigerator.

"Babenth yes, she is so sad and somber God how enthralling," Dramkick replied giddily (he enjoyed being around like-minded people). "Nice choice, this will lift our souls," Dramkick said and then he put his feet up on the silver oval table. He really didn't care if anyone minded because he didn't.

"I hope so, I'm dying to see your cinema, and the caliber of your actors," Mela declared and she pulled her shirt up to her navel. "We had an actor, Va Bleem, who perished in an explosion. I wish you could have seen this man's command of his emotions, absolutely stunning," Mela said quietly as she lifted her legs and sat Indian style.

"Va Bleem, fascinating well Babenth is our finest actor and this is her finest work. So you choose very wisely," Dramkick replied as he produced a Praem tube from his pocket and sucked on it for a second.

Sasiege sat down between Mela and Dramkick with a pre-made steak sandwich in his hands. He turned to Mela and offered her a bite, but she nodded no. Then he offered it to Dramkick and he looked at it and said, "Alright, just a nibble I don't want to miss the start."

The TV screen filled with Babenth's profile and the image started to change colors rapidly. Babenth said snidely, "Why did you save your I love you's for some other sucker. I like my man's chest hairless."

The screen filled with a dark haired middle aged man with a thick handlebar mustache named Rothschild. He was facing just left of the camera. He looked fiercely at Babenth and said coldly, "Fine, you like hairless men, the middle school gets out at 2:15, I'll drop you off! You can go ahead and deny my love, but I'll never sleep with another woman as long as I live, Corteah."

The movie showed Babenth walk up to Rothschild, stop for a second, and then punch him in the balls and she said coldly, "You're the biggest fool I ever met, but not a lot of men can stand my will. So because of that, I'll let you live another day, but if your essence comes near my soul again. I'll bash that worthless skull of yours into a pile of broken bones on the GROUND!!"

"O.k. o.k., Corteah, but I already miss you," Rothschild said honestly as his face became a swimming pool of sweat. "In my mind it was all sunshine and that's the truth. So you go ahead and hate me if you want, but I know our love was worth it and you can't tell me different!" Rothschild shouted as he started to cry. The tears hit the occasional drop of sweat and combined to race down to his chin and drop to his shirt collar.

Babenth looked at him fiercely and then put Rothschild's head in her hands and embraced him tightly. She said quietly, "I...I can't blame you for your failings. I admit that I didn't see me with a man like you," Babenth confessed as she looked Rothschild in the eyes like she'd never seen him before. "And that I...I needed to try to change you into my ideal man."

"But-" Rothschild said quickly as he looked at her with envious eyes.

"But nothing I love you and I'm sorry. Can you please forgive me?" Babenth asked as she looked down at him.

Rothschild stood up quickly and put his arms around her waist. He felt her love and her passion. He kissed her passionately on the lips and then said sternly, "I know the real you and I know you've forgiven me 1000 times, probably more than I deserved. So you don't have to ask me that question ever again, alright?"

"Alright," Babenth spoke with crying eyes and a heavy heart. She started to weep and said, "I won't always be a perfect person and I can't always be a normal person, but I'll always love you

and I'll try..."

"I know that, it's o.k. you don't have to be perfect or even normal, I just want you in my life forever. That's all I want," Rothschild confessed as he wiped the tears from her face and kissed her long and deep.

Mela fought back tears as did Dramkick, while Sasiege continued eating his sandwich.

"That scene always gets me," Sasiege said as he took a large bite of his sandwich.

"That was so beautiful, boy that Babenth is a rare gift," Mela said tearfully as she searched for a tissue in her pocket. "The power of her emotions is exceptional," Mela said and then she wiped the corner of her eyes with the back of her hand and smiled.

"She is a master craftsman, this is the 4th film of hers I've seen and every single one is an absolute stunner," Dramkick said as he stretched out his fingers like you would an umbrella. "Does anyone need anything in the kitchen?" Dramkick asked as he stood up.

"I'm fine thank you," Sasiege responded as he devoured his sandwich.

They watched the rest of the movie before retiring for the evening.

Chapter 15

The following morning everyone awoke separately with Dramkick getting up at dawn to get a run and take a look around. Mela awoke and went downstairs. She breezed into the kitchen and activated the android chef. The androids started fixing fried Comman as well as toasted Porntap ears with a Zeya glaze-which is a white sugary glaze that sharpens the natural flavors.

While the android was doing that, Mela started peeling various fruits in the Hoyea machine and putting them in the PW perfect mixer. When she had finished she put the juice into the fridge and added some crushed ice. Sasiege came downstairs and bellowed, "It smells like heaven is cooking again. Oh what a miraculous day to be alive. How are you, Dear?"

"Couldn't be better, I've got the glory the morning filling my lungs. Would you like a bit of breakfast?" Mela asked warmly as she flashed a youthful smile.

"Mela, a bit of breakfast would charge up these old engines and give them youthful glory. So yes, a little juice please?" Sasiege asked as he looked over the android's shoulder at the feast he was making. And then he smiled at Mela when he realized she was watching him.

The androids started frantically filling 2 plates with food and a small garnish of Toldyo-which is the made from the eggs of the Yupfin bird.

The Yupfin is a powder blue bowling ball sized bird, with fish lips, and bulging eyes that look like they're about to fall out of their sockets. It has a black anchor for tail that constantly pulls the Yupfin towards the ground. Its feet are 2 toed, white, and make a whistling sound as it flies.

Just as Mela and Sasiege grabbed their plates Dramkick came in the front door and said cheerily, "It certainly smells like morning in here. You should see that beautiful lake. It has hundreds of small boats dotted all over it."

Mela took a bite of her Porntap ears and said, "Wow, I wouldn't have expected this to taste like that."

"Is that good or bad?" Dramkick asked as he was handed a plate of food by the android.

"Great, absolutely the best thing I've ever eaten. I feel all of my taste buds buzzing with sensation, incredible!" Mela declared as she popped her hips out right and then left. "So what do you have planned for today, or have you thought that far ahead yet?" Mela asked as she continued eating her Porntap ears.

"I had thought we'd spend the morning in Dillduc, then go try out Egocent for a while. And possibly sleep there tonight," Dramkick said as he inspected his Comman. He could still remember the first time his mother gave him Comman and the warm sun on his neck.

"That works for me," Sasiege agreed as he walked over to the sofa and sat down.

"I think that's a fine idea. It would be great to see as much as we can," Mela was feeling overjoyed at such a tremendous day. Just to have plans for the day made her giddy. "The question now is will Paut and Uaty be joining us while there's still daylight?" Mela asked sarcastically as she poured herself a glass of juice. Then she poured 2 more glasses for Dramkick and Sasiege.

"Well I would hope so, but Paut never made it back last night," Dramkick said as he was handed a glass of juice from Mela.

"You're kidding," Mela said anxiously as she set down her juice.

"No, not at all when I got up this morning I saw that his bed had not been slept in," Dramkick had already prepared himself for any eventuality concerning Paut's disappearance. He knew how things worked. "He was not downstairs when I went for my run. Obviously Paut is a grown man and can take care of his own comings and goings, but is a bit odd," Dramkick spoke in a concerned tone and took a long drink from his glass. He thought his way through the whole drink and knew something bad was in the offing.

"Well, it's still early, but if he's not back by mid morning I say we try to find him," Mela said hopefully as she fixated her eyes on Dramkick. "He would do the same for us that is certain. Maybe Uaty will know what we should do, this could be something he's done on occasion," Mela

said hopefully she looked at Dramkick for answers.

"Yes, we'll wait and an answer will come, it always does. Who's up for a game of To Taste Bronk?" Sasiege asked as she hit the power button in the battlefield and the robot armies rose up from inside the table.

Dramkick was lost in thoughts of Paut, but then said quickly, "Yes, yes indeed let's show Mela this wonderful creation."

Mela was worried about Paut and that his appearance might have gotten him into trouble. She stood behind the sofa and watched the game of To Taste Bronk, but was eagerly awaiting Uaty to emerge from the upstairs bedroom.

Sasiege used his ground troops in the game as a diversion as he took aim at Dramkick's battleship. While he was doing that Dramkick was closing in on the Levitios warrior with his tank squadron. Dramkick had him pinned in the wooded area of the battlefield. Sasiege saw this, and instantly came in from behind Dramkick's tanks with his battleship and opened fire. He didn't realize that Dramkick saw this coming and used his ground troops to blast Sasiege's battleship from the side. Suddenly a massive firefight ensued, with both sides taking heavy casualties. Dramkick saw his chance and shot the Levitios warrior in the leg. He had his lead squadron of ground troops throw a rope around his legs and torso to pull him to the ground. The outer edge of the game board exploded with fireworks and a hologram appeared and declared Dramkick's the winner. This caused Dramkick to shout, "And the mighty prevail!"

Sasiege bit his lip and let out a sigh and said, "Nice match, I thought I was going to get you. I still can't believe I didn't, so close."

Just then Uaty came down in the elevator and stepped out and asked brightly, "This looks like a fun day. Hello everyone where's Paut, is he out for another walk?"

Mela walked over to Uaty and said anxiously, "Paut didn't come back last night. We didn't know if this was something he usually did or has done in the past. You look shocked, Uaty," Mela said nervously as she put her hand on his shoulder like a winter scarf.

"I am shocked supremely so, Paut has never not come back after his nightly walk," Uaty looked dazed and his body standing near lifeless. "Something is horribly wrong here. We need to start looking for him immediately. The longer we wait the worse for him I fear," Uaty said sternly as he moved quickly to the front door.

"I'm alerting the Hankfur's security right now that Paut is missing and I'm sending them his specific appearance," Dramkick declared as his sunny demeanor was now completely gone. "O.K. they say they've dispatched their full security detail in all 4 Pedalisps. Let's do what we can to help them out and get out there and look," Dramkick said as he used a palm size computer to send his message.

"Right, let's get out there," Mela said as she followed Uaty out the front door.

Sasiege and Dramkick were close behind. They looked all over the immediate area for any signs of Paut. Dramkick wasn't going to say it but he knew these things always ended badly. He'd seen it too many times before. Uaty went door to door up a long row of cabins, asking if anyone had seen Paut. Dramkick started to jog and scan each person's face for Paut (and for signs of stress firing minds). He knew that if someone had taken him, or even killed him, their face would have tells that Dramkick knew well (facial tics and drooping eyes were some). Frantically he looked at each and every person he saw. And then he took a double take of a green haired man in a purple shirt and orange shorts. There was something off about this man, he thought. He stopped looking and walked right over to him and asked, "Why are you so nervous it's a beautiful day?"

"Nervous no, I am Eastick and I am just enjoying this tremendously exceptional day," Eastick answered hollowly as he softened his face and hands for Dramkick. "I bet I've never seen a finer day in my life, wouldn't you say so, Quadromolan?" Eastick asked with a wide smile.

Eastick has the face of a Basset hound with large fleshy jowls and thick green eyebrows. The type of face you only accidentally drew. His mouth is large and crooked with a slight slant to the right. There are small circles of facial hair in rows on each cheek. He is slightly shorter than Dramkick and very thin except for his forearms. Dramkick noticed the forearms. He knew this man's power.

"What a way to phrase a greeting. Well you sure seem to think so," Dramkick replied boldly as he started to get the picture that Eastick had something to hide. Dramkick felt himself getting

a little cocky. "But it can't be both, is it tremendous or exceptional because now you've peeked my interest? So go ahead, let's have it," Dramkick barked as he glared at Eastick.

Eastick immediately looked away nervously and started to fidget. He said sharply, "I wouldn't know, my description should suffice. I'm amazed a man of your stature had to ask such a thing, seems a bit childish if you ask me."

"Alright, Eastick, where have you hidden my friend?" Dramkick asked bluntly as his fist started to curl. "And pray you haven't harmed him or your fate will be far worse than his," Dramkick said sternly as he put his hand on Eastick's shoulder and squeezed him tightly. It was not a friendly squeeze.

"Look I just...I don't know what you're talking about," Eastick mumbled as he looked wide eyed at Dramkick. "I was just out enjoying this spectacular day. I don't understand why you're holding me so tightly," Eastick said nervously as he grimaced in pain.

"O.K. you little Porntap, I want you to take me to your cabin right now and if my friend is not in the finest of shape, then you will feel more than my grasp. Now let's go!" Dramkick said sharply as he pressed even harder on Eastick's shoulder causing him to scream out in pain.

"Okay okay I'll take you, but you're wasting your time," Eastick said hollowly as he tried to calm his thoughts. He knew if he could just get to that gun he'd hidden in the cabin he could take out Dramkick. "All's you'll find there are my 2 friends having lunch I swear it, but we will go if

WE MUST!" Eastick said hollowly as he started to walk up the sidewalk in front of Dramkick.

They walked past several cabins and then Eastick walked through a brief tunnel, took a right, and went up to a red cabin. He reached in his pocket and pulled out a quarter sized round key. He waved it in front of the lock and said coyly, "You know this is foolish, your friend is probably in one of the other Pedalisps."

"Well, we will certainly find out, but you're right, maybe I should alert the authorities first about you," Dramkick said and then he sent Hankfur's security his address and told them to meet him at Eastick's cabin.

He stood next to Eastick and waited for the security team to arrive. He kept an eye on Eastick and looked around the room casually. He spotted a small piece of Paut's white robe peering out from behind the sofa. Dramkick slowly looked over Eastick and asked, "Wear a lot of robes do you?"

Eastick looked at Dramkick nervously and then his eyes darted over to the robe. He had to be wise and he knew it. He said quickly with a laugh, "Oh that's my roommates he grew up in the desert. Would like a quick drink while we wait? I've got some Wams in the fridge."

"No, I think we'll stay put until the authorities get here," Dramkick replied as a cocky grin came across his face. He knew the likes of Eastick all too well. "Why don't you grab a seat on the sofa and rest your legs," Dramkick said slyly as he grabbed hold of Eastick and threw him onto

the sofa.

"Fine, Quadromolan, but this is a fool's errand I'm telling you," Eastick said hollowly and then he saw his roommate Sepenn-to his left and in the bathroom-out of Dramkick's view and gave him a nod. This was too easy Eastick thought.

Sepenn is a full hand shorter than Dramkick with triangles of blonde hair in a plus sign pattern on the top of his head. His skin has a purple hue and his eyes are lime green with far away white retinas. He is burly like a wild bear. He has on black leather jumpsuit and black motorcycle boots. On his right hand are 2 large silver rings.

Dramkick walked over to the robe behind the sofa and bent over to pick it up. He looked at and asked, "How did blood get on this robe?"

Sepenn came out of the bathroom and hit Dramkick in the head from behind. Eastick jumped off the couch and ran into the kitchen to get a knife. Dramkick was stunned by the blow, but had presence of mind to swing his right arm back at Sepenn. The blow caught him hard in the mouth, knocking out two of his teeth. Eastick rifled through the drawers and found a large carving blade. He raced out of the kitchen. He slashed at Dramkick gashing into his left forearm. Sepenn ran at Dramkick, but Dramkick thrust his knee into his chin and shattered his jaw. This sent Sepenn face first onto the floor and unconscious. Eastick looked at Dramkick coldly and inched nearer to him. Dramkick kept his eye on the blade and kept his right hand extended to tempt him to slash at it. Eastick slashed at Dramkick missing and said coldly, "This isn't going to end well for you.

Your last few breaths are filling your lungs *right now*."

Dramkick smiled and said snidely, "I'd hold that blade tighter because when I get it, I'm going to slice you open like a Namis fish. Go ahead, Eastick, try and take my life with your children's hands."

Eastick gritted his teeth and thundered, "How dare you, you worthless fool! I'm gonna split you down THE CENTER!"

Eastick lunged at Dramkick and Dramkick grabbed onto his wrist just before the blade got to his throat. He crushed the bones in his wrist to powder and the knife fell out of Eastick's hand. Dramkick's grasped the blade and grinned. He thrust the blade into Eastick's stomach and out his back. He pulled the blade up through his innards to the base of his head and then pulled out his arm. Eastick fell lifeless to the floor. Dramkick knew he was ten ways dead now.

Sepenn started to wake up and Dramkick put his foot on the back of his head and shouted, "Where is my friend! You will tell me before I crush the life out of you!"

Sepenn said nervously as he shook like a cherry tree, "He's in the bathroom upstairs. He's still alive, I'm sorry for what we did I mean it. Please don't kill me, I couldn't help it."

"Neither could I," Dramkick said coldly as he crushed his skull under his boot.

The front door swung open and in rushed the security team with Mela, Uaty, and Sasiege just behind.

"What happened?" Mela inquired anxiously as she looked at the bodies.

Dramkick just shook his head and said, "Paut is upstairs in the bathroom."

"Thank you, Dramkick," Uaty said just before he rushed into the elevator.

"Are you are right, Dramkick?" Sasiege asked as he looked at the gash in Dramkick's forearm.

"Never better, it was nice to get in a good workout," Dramkick said sarcastically as he rotated his torso from side to side and smiled. "All's I need now though is a Praem tube to ease this horrible ache and a medical kit," Dramkick muttered as he walked over and put his arms around Mela.

The security team started cleaning up the bodies. The elevator came down like a giant cinderblock on a man's back. Uaty was inside helping Paut stand up and walk. Mela rushed over to them and asked, "What did they do to you, Paut?"

"They beat me viciously and tied me to a chair," Paut spoke with pain shaking every syllable. "They repeatedly slapped me and shouted at me. It was a nightmare that cannot be forgotten, all of it," Paut said quietly and then he embraced Mela and saw the bodies and said, "You've gotten

your justice I hope it was *worth it!*"

Dramkick walked over to Paut and asked, "Why did they do this to you, did they know you?"

"They said this was how they felt about strangers on Membra," Paut replied as he tried to breathe. He continued, "And that it was my mistake for coming here and that I would have to pay with my life. You saved me, Dramkick, I won't ever forget this. I will be forever thankful," Paut said honestly as he breathed heavily and shook off a face full of sweat.

"You don't have to thank me, you are my friends now I will keep you safe," Dramkick said as he held onto the sides of Paut's neck softly. He could see Paut wasn't enough of a warrior these days but had been at one time.

"I've decided something, Dramkick, you don't have to honor our agreement," Uaty said honestly as he bowed to Dramkick. "You saved my brother's life and as far as I'm concerned we're even," Uaty said sincerely as he looked at Mela sternly.

Mela nodded yes and Dramkick said sternly, "Absolutely not, your problems are my problems. I will do what has to be done to help Mela get her life back, and that is final. Peastro will come to the same end as these 2."

"What about your vacation, do you still wish to continue?" Sasiege asked.

"Now more than ever, we need to cleanse ourselves of this ugliness," Dramkick answered as he rid himself of what was left of his adrenaline from the fight. "Let's go back to our cabin and rest for a bit, then make our way to Egocent and fill our hearts with wonder," Dramkick was joyful now and went outside with everyone close behind.

Dramkick got patched up and let out a yawn (he didn't mind the loss of blood, it was commonplace by now). After an hour at the cabin everyone walked over to Egocent. They got cozy in a large castle. Dramkick couldn't help but think he was always in castles these days. The Castle is 3 stories high and has gently sloping blue stone walls that form a perfect rectangle. There are 4 crow's nests on each corner and on top there is a white marble tower-it has a floodlight inside shaped like Hankfur's head. On each of the 4 walls there is a protruding deck for taking in the days battles. On the deck there are 3 large yellow couches and outdoor refrigerators for battle snacks. There is also a 20 person hot tub on the deck facing the battlefield, as well as a Parnig board-which is a 10 foot long polka dotted numbered board used to count casualties. Also, there is a retractable roof for rainy days and also for shade. Each wall has the visage of Hankfur painted on the bottom left and upper right hand corners. There is also a large picture window every few feet shaped like a bursting sun.

Everyone made their way to the battle deck and Mela and Dramkick sat on the couches. Sasiege, Paut, and Uaty got into the hot tub. The 3 servants were all wearing white and standing on the left side of the deck waiting for commands.

"Well, Mela, what do you think our chances are of winning this battle today?" Dramkick

asked as he lit up a government cigarette. He thought to himself who needs cigarettes that aren't made by the government.

"I don't know, but if I had to guess I would say it was a certainty," Mela said calmly as she surveyed the battlefield.

"Why do you think that? If you don't mind me asking," Dramkick asked intently as he took a long drag.

"If you can't win today's battle then I say the fix is in," Mela said proudly as she looked at Dramkick with a wry smile.

"Well put, oh here's our control sticks. This will be a magnificent test of our fortitude," Dramkick said as he watched three servants bring him and Mela their electronic control sticks- the sticks controlled their entire armies.

In front of each castle there are: the residents, troops, Roto tanks, and small battleships of their individual colors. Dramkick's forces are wearing the color blue with gold trim. A red flare is fired into the air and then the battle ensues. Dramkick starts by sending his tanks to the right to engage his nearest enemy.

Dramkick's 4 lead Roto tanks catch them off guard and blow the red army's battleship to pieces. Dramkick shouted, "NO sleeping on the battlefield!"

Mela orders the ground troops to move to the top of a small hill. She has them blast away at the troops on the other side with their backs facing her. She watches eagerly as her troops kill the yellow army's soldiers as they attempt to run up the hill. The yellow army's battleship starts to turn towards Dramkick's tank, but Dramkick sees this before they can fire. He swings his battleship around and starts blasting into the side of it. The blast sends burning troops flying out screaming at the top of their lungs. What's left of their crew is inside looking sheepishly out the gaping hole.

Dramkick swings his Roto tanks around to flank it and uses his battleship to take it head on. All of his firepower centers on the yellow battleship and soon it bursts into a fiery inferno of death. It crashes to the ground in a blazing pile of steel and charred bodies.

"Try again, you will fail the same!" Dramkick shouted triumphantly as he gently sucked on his cigarette.

"The green army is cutting across the center of the battlefield, watch out!" Mela shouted as she ordered her troops to turn and face the green army. She knew they'd take a lot of casualties but it had to be done.

"I see them I'm ready for them!" Dramkick thundered as he summoned all his forces to go after the green army.

The 2 armies met on the grassy plain in the middle. Fog was dancing in between the tanks like a gathering of ghostly spirits. Both sides were waging a bloody and last gasp war. By this point the other armies were destroyed or severely crippled. Dramkick knew this was the final battle and he would be victorious.

"Mela, bring the ground troops in from the left we need to flank them," Dramkick ordered and then he steered his battleship to the right and started devastating the green army's tanks as they advanced.

The green army's battleship started doing the same to Dramkick's Roto's. Dramkick whispered, "Imitation is only slightly flattering to the imitated. Try this on for size!"

Dramkick's lead Roto tanks turned their gun barrels skyward and ripped a new jagged hole in the battleship's undercarriage. This caused several of its crew to fall helplessly to the ground and be trampled upon impact. The green battleship still had high energy particle bombs and dropped 10 on the helpless Roto's. They were only the steam from a manhole now. Mela had her ground troops pepper the battleship with laser fire and this set the right side of it ablaze.

"We're making headway, they can't hold on forever," Mela said firmly as she sent orders to her troops.

"I think their battleship is moments away from failing," Dramkick replied as if he'd already said that at some point. "I'm going to use half of the Rotas to shake up their tanks. That'll distract

them, and use the battleship to knock them out of the sky," Dramkick said snidely as he ordered his forces into action.

Dramkick's battleship pulled square to the green army's battleship and shot 50 short range missiles into its nose. The explosions seemed like putting firecrackers in apples, it was catastrophic. The green battleship lost structural integrity and split down the center. The 2 halves fell separately to the ground. And when they hit their fiery crash wasted thousands of their own ground troops.

"Nice landing, you're doing our dirty work for us," Dramkick said as he took in the entirety of the battlefield with childlike joy. "Now let's pour all we've got into the remaining tanks and troops and end this fight Prop-AH," Dramkick sent the rest of his forces to engage what was left of the green army.

Within a few minutes of bloody all out fighting what was left of the green army surrendered and left the battlefield in shame. A huge hologram of Hankfur appeared above the center of the battlefield and said in a booming voice, "The blue army has won the days battle. And as the winner, they will receive a gold statue made in their likeness. As well as have their complete battle restored and kept in the Hall of the Gifted for all time! You were the ultimate warriors today and we bow to your greatness."

Dramkick and Mela looked at each other and smiled. Then they waved to the other bowing castle guests. Dramkick walked up to the edge of the deck and looked out over the carnage on

the battlefield. He thought about how tragic and beautiful a battlefield could be. He remembered his first battle when he was only 15. And how frightening and thrilling it was all at the same time. He could still remember his father's words, "Every war can be won in a moment. So never count your breaths until you can see through the smoke." He remembered his late brother Toamtil and how he had died in the Au Zaco war. That was the only time he ever saw the old man brought to tears.

"What's the matter, Dramkick?" Mela asked as she wrapped her arms around his waist.

Dramkick looked over at her warmly and said, "It's just the glory of war and the pain of it. I've never really been able to come to grips with the uncontrollable power of the battlefield. Even now when I've seen so many, I still feel the fear of a soldier it's... *It just is.*"

Two servants brought 2 trays of Koins-which is a popular brand of donut with meat, jelly, chocolate, glazed and strawberry pudding filled.

H.P. Koins was the founder of Koins donuts. He was the most married man in history having had 70 wives in 15 years. He had also fostered 200 children to his wives and half a dozen more to his mistresses. He was a notorious crooked gambler and had once been caught with a magnetic belt buckle as he sat at a slot machine. He also loved to drink, and tell wild unbelievable stories that always involved him having some incredible triumph. He was also well read having fingered his way through 3,856 books in his 126 years of life. After reading each book he could recant verbatim each and every chapter even in his advanced years. He was known lovingly as the

world's busiest brain, a moniker he had grown to love.

Chapter 16

Dramkick spent 2 weeks on vacation and then everyone went to Gadileap to prepare for the trip to Sras Oblique. Dramkick knew that even if he killed Peastro the escape could get bloody. After all Mela had told him in their talks he knew Peastro's people would want his head on a pike. He put all of his efforts into trying to find a safe pathway back to Membra. He thought to himself about a poem he had read with the line, "The gun is yours but the barrel's still owned."

Dramkick and Mela are leisurely going for a walk through the Ohmayo forest-the Ohmayo forest is 2,000 miles long and filled with Paysgoh trees. While Sasiege, Uaty, and Paut get a deep tissue massage.

Paysgoh trees are shaped like crosses and covered in bright blue grass that is soft to the touch. At the base of each is a house that encircles the tree-known as the Nata hut. There are also Nata huts at the intersection of the Paysgoh trees-which are typically 800 yards tall and 50 feet wide.

The Nata huts themselves are tan in color and have 4 oval windows spaced evenly around them. The people who live in Ohmayo forest are known as the Weasta and number in the millions.

The Weasta have the same even brown skin and long flowing blonde hair on both men and

women. They are a very muscular people because of their devotion to climbing and digging tunnels. They have an entire city beneath the ground known as Pew Domp and it stretches for hundreds of miles. The Weasta have also been collecting and hoarding away trillions worth of priceless artifacts and jewels. No one outside of the Weasta knows of their treasures or of Pew Domp (except for the reign family). The Reign family looks in on them occasionally and gives them protection from thieves. They also love water sports and have a large man-made lake beneath the ground that they race small boats on. They use an underwater spring board and see who could launch themselves the farthest underwater. The winner gets to tell wild stories at the head table.

"It's really beautiful here, truly serene," Mela said as she watched a Weasta child doing one handed cartwheels.

"I always loved it here," Dramkick confessed as his toes tapped gently on the ground. "The Weasta are as friendly and caring a people as you'll ever meet. When my father brought me here as a child it thrilled my soul to no end," Dramkick said as he walked beside Mela.

"I can see why the sheer beauty of their craftsmanship is something truly wonderful to behold. Do you think I could go inside one of their homes?" Mela asked curiously as she flashed a goofy grin. She was taken with this place.

"Of course, I'll take you in this home here. It's an old friend of my father's place," Dramkick said joyfully and then he walked up to the P shaped door and knocked as he yelled, "Finby, our

whole day needs brightening!"

Out came Finby Toerls with a smile on his face. He is a full foot shorter than Dramkick, but has equally wide (and muscular) shoulders. His long blonde hair is tied into a loose ponytail at the bottom. His face is a study in angles, with extremely high cheekbones and a triangle shaped nose. His eyes are warm and friendly-and they are dark blue in color. He is wearing a white knitted kilt that has all 14 of his children's names stitched onto it. He also has on sandals with built-in socks. Around his neck is a gold necklace with several square emeralds attached to it. He has on a black wristband with his wife's name on it-her spiritual name is Flassa.

"My floor needs fixing," Finby said quickly as he opened the door and smiled wide at Dramkick and Mela.

"You kiddin me I thought I already fixed that floor," Dramkick replied sarcastically as he fixed his pants. "You, and Flassa workin on another kid?" Dramkick asked sarcastically as he grabbed Finby shoulders and shook them.

"We're always working on another, sometimes 3 or 4 times daily," Finby said jokingly as he started to laugh.

Dramkick laughed and then asked, "Well there are worse ways to spend your time. When do you think you'll get around to inviting us in?"

"As soon as I find out *who* this beautiful woman is at your side. I would hate for any enemy spies to cross my doorstep," Finby said sarcastically as he looked at Mela with an unending warmth in his eyes.

Mela smiled and said sarcastically, "Alright, you caught me, I'm here to steal your lovemaking secrets. Word is out about you, Finby," Mela joked and then she flashed a brilliant smile and said, "My name is Mela and it is an absolute pleasure to meet you. I would be honored if you allowed us to see your fine home."

"Mela, how beautiful what a name," Finby perked up nearly jumping out of his shoes. "You are more than welcome to share my home and meet my family, please follow me," Finby said as he smiled and nodded his head. He quickly turned and went into his home with Dramkick and Mela close behind.

As you walk into Finby's home there are several family photos hanging prominently on the wall directly in front of you. It shows them doing a group kiss on a beach and wearing beaded hats and swimsuits. Below the photo, on the red rug, are a dozen Bushpa dolls.

Bushpa dolls are hand stitched dolls that have bulbous elderly heads and young fit bodies. The faces of each have a crazy smile and wild staring eyes. They also have on fur coats and tan furry trousers. If you were to squeeze them they would say, "Love me quick before I pass," and release a beautiful scent. The dolls were made personally by Dr. Hoyadoi Wee-a renowned master surgeon. Dr. Wee made the dolls as a hobby and used them in his clinic for years before

he ever thought of selling them. Dr. Wee fashioned the dolls after his great grandparents and created them from scratch.

To the left of Finby's photo gallery there is a small fitness area with: a punching dummy, a duel resistance treadmill, and 4 mats for advanced Weasta martial arts. There is also a bench that runs along the wall and has 2 sides-one facing inward and another facing out the large oval window. There is also a Bustip dispenser on the right wall.

Bustip soda is similar to Dr. Pepper, but has 3 times as many flavors in it. It is beloved by the Weasta and many of them have their own dispensers.

To the right of you is the pantry and it has 7 different carports filled with: snacks, cereals, and canned goods. It has a black and red circular rug in the center with a circular table on top of it-with 5 cushioned orange wooden chairs around it. In between the cupboards the walls are filled with awards and artwork that the Finby children won.

Dramkick saw the fitness room and said gleefully, "It's good to see you've kept up your workouts. I would have thought your 10 children would have made that very difficult."

"10! I wish it was 10 we've got 16 now," Finby answered honestly as he fussed with a hat that was hanging from a painting on the wall. "It's too bad you came today the young ones are at their grandmother's. My 2 oldest are here though and they'll love meeting you, Mela," Finby said as he walked through the fitness room and into the living room.

"I can't wait to meet them it will be a great treat for sure," Mela said warmly as she stepped over the treadmill.

The living room is filled almost entirely with 4 large brown couches and two giant 10 foot tall television screens. The couches line opposite walls and there is a TV at either end. In between the couches there is barely enough room to walk. The wall on the left has the words, "To belie the worriless day," spelled out in vibrant colored beads. The opposite wall has a giant mural of the Tornbread diamond mines painted on it.

The Tornbread mine is an enormous and unheard of diamond find that was so large it made the value of diamonds drop to almost nothing. It forced jewelers around the world to abandon the sale of diamonds and become precious metals salesmen. Before that happened, the Cumpa family-the owners of the mine-became the wealthiest people in the world. This allowed them to buy up huge chunks of choice property and hoard it all to themselves. They became a slang word for greed, "Don't Cumpa the chips," was heard on the sitcom Try Sameness and sparked a phenomenon.

"Flassa, we have visitors, it's Dramkick!" Finby yelled as he walked into the living room.

"I'll be right there I'm fixing a nice lunch," Flassa answered and then she sang a few notes and she continued, "Its homemade pizza and its almost ready, just have a seat." She checked the oven and reapplied the cinnamon butter sauce to the golden brown crust.

"Okay!" Finby shouted and then said, "Please make yourself at home. She will only be a minute."

"I don't think I can wait. I think I need her here right now or it could go bad," Dramkick said sarcastically as he sat down on the nearest couch. He always felt a certain relaxation of sitting in a lived in home.

Mela and Finby sat down as well and then in walked Flassa. She is 5'4" tall and very womanly. She enjoys being a mother more than anything else and it shows. Her curly blonde hair and tan skin show she must've been a looker at one point. Her eyes are bright green and always made you smile. She has on a white T-shirt with the word "Tepit" written in the center. She also has on light blue colored jeans and white sandals that expose her bare feet. The necklace around her neck has all of her children's names engraved on it. She looks flush with humanity.

"Oh really how bad is it gonna get?" Flassa asked sarcastically as she walked over to Finby and gave him a kiss on the cheek.

"We'll never know now, let's just be thankful the winds have blown you here," Dramkick joked as he inspected a blue and red trinket on the table. "Hi, Flassa, you really look beautiful today. How have you been?" Dramkick asked warmly as he flashed a devious smile.

"Busy, just had our 16th child 2 months ago, little Bimby," Flassa replied excitedly as she

wiped the sweat from her forehead with the back of her hand. "She is a terror I must tell you and keeps her parents on their toes constantly. How things been with you and who is your new friend?" Flassa asked as she looked around for her wineglass.

"This is Mela and she is from Sras Oblique. And I just got back from vacation and I am in my best spirits," Dramkick said as he calmly pulled out 4 Praem tubes and continued, "And these are for you, please enjoy."

Finby took the Praem tubes and said quickly, "Thank you so much, Dramkick, you are great friend." Finby felt the same nervousness as you would if you had just won a big pot on a bluff. He grabbed the Praem too quick, Dramkick thought.

"Really, Dramkick, we appreciate it," Flassa said warmly as she grinned at Dramkick and batted her eyes. "And it is truly great to meet you, Mela. Sras Oblique, I've never heard of that is it far from here?" Flassa asked as Finby handed her a Praem tube and she quickly started ingesting the Praem.

"About a year's journey," Mela said before she stopped quickly as she heard someone coming up behind. Startled, she fumbled for a weapon.

It was Tomyte-Finby's eldest son-and he came into the room short of breath.

Tomyte is a dead ringer for his father, but just a hair taller. His long blonde hair seems very

womanly. He is fit like his father with a tiny waist. He has on a black T-shirt, white jeans, and a pair of black Nervetell sneakers.

Nervetell was created by Bovate Tin-a Vexidian aristocrat who used the last of his inheritance to start his own shoe company. The move eventually made him wealthy beyond his wildest dreams.

"It's Salstock, he burnt the Canfe white!" Tomyte said boldly as he walked past Mela and Dramkick.

"What? What is he doing he'll doom us all!" Finby said nervously as he started to sweat profusely.

"What's the trouble, can we help?" Dramkick asked as he rose from his seat and stretched his back. He was in the mood for a good dustup.

"I'm not sure, my idiot brother Salstock has burned through the last of the Canfe. That is the fuel for our security door that protects Pew Domp and all of our riches," Finby explained his hand nearly shaking loose from his wrist. "We would need your incredible strength to help us push the emergency door shut, before anyone gets wise to what's happened. Can you do it?" Finby asked anxiously as he felt a panic attack rising in his mind. Should I have asked Dramkick that, Finby wondered.

"Not can, *will* let's go!" Dramkick said forcefully as his eyes shifted and his adrenaline pumped. His entire body language changed when he was angry and everyone could feel it.

Finby pushed down on the armrest of the couch and the couch sprang open sending a rubber clown into the air. He pulled on a black lever and a passageway opened up behind the TV.

"Follow me, please hurry," Finby begged as he ran into the passageway and down a spiral hallway into the ground.

Dramkick, Mela, Tomyte, and Flassa were quick behind him. Flassa had worry all over her face and all over her thoughts. What terrible things could happen next, she wondered. The passageway went deep into the ground and opened up into a large cave. There is a 500 foot high steel safe at the far end and the door to the safe is slightly ajar-the vast riches could be seen shimmering in the light. There is everything from gold to silver, paintings, and ancient artifacts all hidden inside the safe. The Weasta's whole existence was in that safe and they knew it.

The safe itself is royal red in color and has 2 large statues on either side-there are of the Weasta Gods Akfoid and Doorpeck. Akfoid's statue depicts him flexing his muscles as he represents the strength of the Weasta. Akfoid has the head of a Whyzi and the body of a human. Doorpeck's face is like a Weasta with chiseled features and long blonde hair. He is wearing a kilt and sandals while holding a pair of moons in each hand.

The cave is filled with dozens of Weastas who are frantically trying to get the safe door

closed. Dramkick sees this and his legs run like a perfect athletic machine. As he runs 2 dozen thieves come flooding in through a secret tunnel with guns blazing.

"Mela, go back upstairs I'll take care of this!" Dramkick ordered and then he raced full out towards the thieves.

Mela watched Dramkick run at them and felt an equal courage. Dramkick's powerful legs were terror inducing with every stride. Mela stood there watching him in disbelief and wonder. How does he exist she wondered aloud. A second later she and Flassa raced towards the passageway.

Finby hurried over to the weapons cache on the right wall and grabbed 2 Panifluses (throwing one awkwardly to Dramkick). Dramkick shot two of the thieves, one in the head and one in the shoulder as he shouted, "No one gets out alive! Finby, look out behind you!"

Finby turned to see a thief about to slice him open like a watermelon. He shot him in the throat with the Paniflu and nearly threw up in the process. Dramkick kicked right through one thief's chest sending a mass of organs and blood onto the floor.

A different thief jumped on Dramkick's back and started choking him. Mela and Flassa grabbed 2 Panifluses and took dead aim at Dramkick's attacker. They fired and hit him in the small of his back. The thief fell to the ground, wincing in pain and Dramkick spun around to see Mela holding a Paniflu with a smoking barrel. He mouthed the words, "Thank you," then kicked the

thief's head off like a soccer ball.

Mela and Flassa saw this and watched the head roll by and Mela yelled, "He's a sweetheart, trust me!"

While this was happening Finby was locked in a hand-to-hand struggle with one of the thieves. The man pinned him down and pressed his forearm hard on Finby's throat. Finby tried to gouge his eyes out, but couldn't reach them. He kicked the thief in the balls as hard as he could. This loosened his grasp just long enough for Finby to get a breath and reach for his Paniflu. He grabbed it, but the thief grabbed his wrist as he did and the 2 struggled for the weapon. The thief ripped it out of his hands and was about to kill him, when Flassa raised her weapon and blew a tennis ball sized hole in his head.

"I got your back and your front, here take this," Flassa said smoothly as she picked up the Paniflu and handed it to Finby.

"Boy do I love this woman, God keep her safe," Finby said as he looked skyward. He gave Flassa a quick kiss and started firing at the thieves with a new enthusiasm.

Dramkick ran, jumped, and shot 2 thieves as he flew over their heads. He landed feet first on the head of another next to the safe door. Inside the safe there were already 3 thieves filling their pockets with gold coins and platinum star shaped blocks. Dramkick saw them and instead of shooting them he grabbed hold of the giant safe door. He used all of his muscularity to get the

door to move. Finby, Flassa, Mela and a dozen Weasta were keeping the rest of the thieves at bay.

"This is fun!" Finby yelled as his enthusiasm got the best of him.

Dramkick used all his massive strength to gradually move the door as sweat muddied up his eyes. He let out a loud grunt as he threw the safe door the last few feet. The large door locked shut with the 3 thieves locked inside. The other thieves saw this and decided to make a break for it (leaving their friends behind forever).

The Weasta let out a cheer and waved their weapons in the air triumphantly. Finby walked over to Dramkick and patted on the shoulder and said, "You saved us, Dramkick, we will forever be grateful."

"Think nothing of gratitude, you are my friend," Dramkick answered as he gave Finby a fatherly nod. Dramkick looked at Mela and said, "I can't help it, I lead an exciting life."

"Trust me being Coup's wife, I'm used to it," Mela replied with a smirk.

Chapter 17

One half of the Talz fleet-including a Vexidian accompaniment-filled the morning sky. It was warm day, warm in color and warm with ideas. Dramkick, Sasiege, Mela, Uaty, and Paut were all aboard the Debrist Morou. Dramkick gave the word and they were off for Sras Oblique. Dramkick knew he needed this trip. Not just of body, but also of mind.

After a few weeks in space Dramkick was becoming weary of the cosmos and decided they would take a day to rest on an unknown planet called Guglos. Guglos is a predominantly water planet with only 2 large cities Anteb and Poolem-the rest is consumed by the Faito jungle. The people of Guglos are known as the Goohy. They are pale skinned with large almost polka dotted freckles. They also have purple hair and searing red eyes that rarely ever blink. They are all slight of build, but have extraordinary speed and agility. Their faces are covered in intricate blue and black tattoos-these are unique to each of them. They dress simply in loose fitting blue shirts and pants. Not to mention the white hats they all adore. Some, not the majority, also choose to wear red framed black sunglasses that fit their eye sockets exactly. This is meant to cause confusion and Dramkick doesn't get confused often.

Hand to hand combat is a source of great pride among the Goohy and practiced daily. They are also great lovers of the arts and take great pride in their paintings, sculptures, movies, and of

course music. They have also developed the Gream Institute-which focuses on stimulating the parts of the brain used to read a person's thoughts or tap into the Courtabedy Flow.

The Courtabedy flow is an energy stream that originates in the 9th dimension. It allows people to create balls of condensed energy and hurl them at people using their minds. You can also use it to levitate objects (many times beyond your lifting power) and hurl them several feet. The use of the Courtabedy Flow can also retard the aging process when used correctly.

The Goohy incorporate all of their people into the army regardless of age. The leader of the Goohy is Petimo Kass. It is well known he is convinced that eventually his people will have to fight for their existence. He's taken great measures to get them prepared and to give them every advantage in the coming battle. He also fears disease to such an extent, that he has hundreds of scientists preparing vaccines for diseases that no one has yet contracted. There is even a lab creating new diseases so that they can make new vaccines before they hit (in case Mother Nature gets frisky).

The Debrist Morou flies towards Poolem from the south side of the city. The city is vast and intricate stretching for a thousand miles. It has 3 levels of city known as the 3 levels of Qua. Each level of Qua is 1,500 feet high and the top level stretches almost a mile into the red sky of Guglos. If you live on the first level you are known as a Paft, the 2nd a Dall, and the 3rd a Mons. The 3 peoples keep mostly to themselves for fear of interaction. Each of them fears the other races carry inside them deadly diseases. All of the buildings are either white, black, dark blue, or green-and each have Petimo's face painted on them somewhere.

"What a magnificent city this is," Gigg remarked as he weaved the ship in and around the city.

"It looks like a truly civilized world which bodes well for our respite," Mela said cheerily as she twisted the ends of her hair in her fingers. "And by the looks of it they aren't concerned with our army. These people are refreshingly calm, cool, and collected, I like that," Mela said honestly as she walked closer to the monitor and looked out over the city. It reminded her of the days the Vindijans use to crush new worlds. She longed for those days.

"That worries me slightly, they have a reason to be calm and confident," Dramkick said as his mind thought of Peastro and his eyes undressed the city. "Don't kid yourself there is always a reason. But fear not we've got reason to be calm as well," Dramkick said as he rubbed the bone over his missing eye socket with his fingers.

"Which is?"

"A giant destructive army, moments away and at *my disposal*," Dramkick replied proudly as he watched a man on a floating bicycle crash into a window. He felt nothing, fools came and went. "They can take their calm eyes and watch them disappear right quick, when they're looking at my cannons. Let's hope it doesn't come to that, I really need day to recharge my engines," Dramkick said as he bent down and stretched out his legs.

"You are dead on positive, Dramkick, all this time in space makes my mind beg for nature," Sasiege said sternly as he pulled out a Praem tube and offered it Mela.

"Maybe later, I need to take in this city with all of my dull senses. I still can't get over how intricate it is, and yet everyone is moving with such speed and precision," Mela said as she lifted her chin and admired a sparkling multi-colored ship. Mela coughed and then asked, "Who do you think rules over this splendor?"

"We'll find out post haste, those 2 shuttles are coming our way. Try to get them on the monitor when they hail us, Gigg," Dramkick said nonchalantly as he yawned.

"Good timing, Quadromolan, they're hailing us now. Here comes the feed," Gigg said as he pressed the control button for the monitor with the air from his breath.

Petimo's face appeared in the center of the monitor and was squared off like a painting. He had a nose a turned up at the end, but in all other ways looked like a typical Goohy. He has on a white hat with a long feathery brim (and a Mohawk of red feathers on top). He is also wearing a pair of black round rim glasses. Dramkick takes note of this and files Petimo into the fool barrel. Petimo smiles confidently and then said implying a question, "I welcome you with great spirit and wish to know why you have arrived in our wonderful world."

"We are here to get a day's rest from the vacuum of space," Dramkick replied quickly as he flexed his shoulders. He didn't want Petimo getting any ideas. Dramkick continued, "We have

been traveling for several weeks and hoped to visit your beautiful world if it is not an intrusion."

"You're welcome here, but I might ask you where you and your army are heading?" Petimo asked coyly as he feared invasion. He smiled at Dramkick for 10 seconds (and Dramkick counted).

"You may, we are on a way to Sras Oblique and we pose no danger to you, or your people I assure you," Dramkick said plainly as he glanced over a Mela and smiled.

"Sras Oblique is some distance from here will you be needing fuel or supplies?" Petimo asked as he fought the urge to scratch his itching nose. He refused to show weakness. "If so we would gladly be able to accommodate you for a price." Petimo formed a pyramid with his fingers and leaned back slightly.

"Thank you, we would certainly entertain the idea of exchange," Dramkick replied firmly as he tapped his temple with his forefinger. "What we would need most would be fresh vegetables, as our on board greenhouse has been malfunctioning. Would that be a possibility?" Dramkick asked as he decided to steal the vegetables if the answer was no.

"Certainly, just follow my shuttle's landing area and we will give you all the fresh vegetables you require," Petimo answer brightly as his nerve was beginning to falter. He adjusted his collar and then said, "Now what I would hope to get from you would be a sample of your home world's music. Also, maybe a painting or 2 if you have it, as I am a great lover of art and music. I am

always looking for new and different forms of each. Is that agreeable?" Petimo asked calmly as he raised his eyebrows as high as he could.

"Consider it a certainty, I have over 10,000 songs on board," Dramkick announced happily as he felt the twinge of friendship happening between him and Petimo. "And I can have them uploaded upon landing. I also have a few paintings I would be willing to part with, that you would find to your liking," Dramkick said smoothly and then he chuckled to himself. It dawned on him how childish and juvenile the conversation had gotten. He half expected him to ask for a sleepover at this point.

"I am overjoyed to hear that," Petimo said quickly and he continued, "I wonder if you would join me for dinner at my Jadev Palace this evening. And for politeness sake my name is Petimo Kass, might I ask yours?" Petimo asked sincerely as a light-skinned woman handed him a crystal glass filled with scotch.

"Hi, Petimo, my name is Dramkick Reign and we would be honored to dine with you this evening," Dramkick glanced over at Mela and saw his giddiness was contagious.

"Excellent, my assistants will meet you at the landing area with a vehicle to drive you to Jadev. I will see you soon," Petimo said and his image melted away from the monitor.

Dramkick turned to Mela and walked over to her and said, "Well, we're making friends all over."

"He seemed very nice, a very gracious host. And an art lover to boot, that bodes well for our respite," Mela replied as she looked at Dramkick. Dramkick loved how cut to the chase Mela was. She could enjoy ceremony he could see that, but she never required it.

"Yes I think we'll be fine," Dramkick said as he turned to Gigg and continued, "Gigg, make sure the music and 2 Baimes' paintings are ready for them when we land. I don't want them to have to wait a second."

"It's taken care of, Quadromolan, I've sent word to the assistants in the sitting room to take down 2 of the paintings. And they can download the music immediately when we arrive," Gigg said firmly as he effortlessly continued to steer the ship. He told himself just do your job, that's all.

Dramkick and Mela went to the lounge to check on Sasiege, Uaty, and Paut. A few minutes later the Debrist Morou landed inside a huge hangar bay-it has Petimo's mouth as the entrance. Inside the hangar bay 5,000 of his troops stood in a row-every other one kneeling on one knee and the others standing with their arms stretched above their heads. They wore the traditional orange flight suits and white helmets that are long and smooth. Each of them also has a sword slash laser rifle-known as a Hoke-hanging from a white gun belt. The floor of the hangar bay is pure white and without a single speck of dust on it. There are 50 Pinja fighter jets behind the soldiers hovering just above the floor. The Pinja's are long and sleek like of whooping crane. They have rotating laser cannons on either side, front to back, as well as guided missiles loaded

in turrets on as well.

The hangar bay walls are filled with Roilpe tributes-which are small films of fallen soldiers that play on a continuous loop. They are called Roilpe because of Sgt. General Roilpe Pufts-the first Goohy to die due to enemy hands in a failed invasion in 26,000 S.B.

S.B. stands for seconds before Tot Deprem-the first of the Life Givers 3 children. Tot lived only 46 years, but wrote over 50 volumes of religious text during his lifetime. And not forgetting the Mastuk which is a 2000 page manuscript. It has within its pages every thought that a man has, ever could have, or ever would for all of existence. The Mastuk came with a warning that the latter pages should only be read during advanced years (so as to not take the mystery out of life). The first 30 pages have phrases like, "I hate because it's easy," and, "My life struggles entitle me to have no sympathy for others," as well as, "I'll love anything that loves me." Shortly after Tot's death the world experienced a collective gasp and nervousness later known as the "Last of the free air." A vast 30 story shrine was built to honor Tot. It has every triumph and failing he had ever achieved or suffered through.

The Debrist Morou landed, and as they opened their doors the Goohy soldiers started to sing and dance a choreographed routine. They spun in circles, did front and back flips, and then launched hundreds of them into the air and landed in a synchronized forward roll. Dramkick and Mela saw this and looked on in amazement. Sasiege, Uaty, and Paut were just behind them enjoying the show. Sasiege said excitedly, "This is tremendous, what precision!"

The Goohy soldiers formed a human tower and one of them climbed to the top and sang a high C. He then fell forward into the waiting arms of his fellow soldiers. The lights went out and the soldier's uniforms glowed brightly in the dark. You could see them forming a human sculpture of lights. It looked like a pair of melancholy eyes and a smiling face. Mela saw this and said, "This is outstanding, how do they do that!"

"I don't know, but it really is amazing. Let's join in," Dramkick said slyly as he nudged Mela with the tip of his elbow. This caused Mela to laugh loudly and sigh.

The soldiers disappeared into the floor and the lights turned on. There before them stood a single man in a brown flight jacket and white loose fitting pants (with more pockets than you would ever need) and he was standing 30 feet in front of them. He was also sporting a blue scarf around his head and face. Dramkick worried that he was a burn victim or had been victimized. He has silver sunglasses and a pair of red metallic boots as well. He strolled over to Dramkick and said, "I am Pomazer and I am Petimo's younger brother. I will escort you to his palace and take care of you while you are here. Please follow me."

"Hello, Pomazer, please lead the way," Dramkick said as he happily followed Pomazer to the end of the hangar bay with everyone else doing the same.

They went through a large doorway and inside a snake shaped vehicle-it is dark green in color and pulsing with steam. Once everyone was in Pomazer said sternly, "Please buckle your safety harnesses we'll be going *very fast*. You're about to see something most Goohys never have. It

will be worth your time."

Everyone got strapped in and the ship fell suddenly straight down into the ground and into a pool of water. The windows on either side showed the famous Bigish.

The Bigish is an underwater series of palaces that keep secretive and house a large piece of the Kass family. They are enclosed in plasma bubbles and have the upstairs, the downstairs, and even the basement completely visible to those who pass by. The palaces are unique, but all have the same white marble bust of Petimo shown prominently above their front entryway.

They moved past the first Palace and Dramkick felt almost giddy at this new adventure. He has a certain passion and fondness for the unexpected. He knows he thrives on it and searches it out. Mela is the same as Dramkick and is overjoyed at the underwater world she is now faced with. It reminded her of a summer day just lying in the water doing nothing. Sasiege on the other hand has a fear of water. Just the idea that his entire body is underwater makes his whole body sweat and stink. His nervous sweat has a certain aroma you never cared to be around. This as Uaty and Paut feel nothing at all. They'd seen this sort of thing before.

"This is it, Jadev, in all her splendor. Wait til you get inside, it will not disappoint," Pomazer said proudly as he pointed to Jadev.

Jadev appeared and it was 3 times the size of the other palaces. It is made of a smooth white stone that glistens in the water. Its towers extend from the top and bottom with blowup dolls of

blonde haired women hanging from each. The mass of Jadev is a half mile wide circular body that has thousands of windows-and inlets as well as balconies all over it. It is also adorned with the ears of a Lawam on top of it.

The Lawam is a beloved children's hero and popular toy among all Goohy. It looks like a kitten, but has a huge round head and wide offset eyes. It also has a long black nose and toothy mouth-Petimo is an enormous fan and has 7 rooms filled with every Lawam toy doll and teddy bear ever made.

They near Jadev and a squadron of underwater motorcycles surround the ship. They led them towards the Palace. After they passed through the plasma wall, the ship hovered for a moment and then dove 40 feet into a parking garage.

The parking garage has a white carpet blanketing the entire room. At the far end teams of 2 started lining a pathway to the ship. The ship's front end opens and they see a man running at full speed towards them. He leaps high into the air and does a twisting flip. He landed and said, "Hello my friends, I am Petimo. Did you enjoy the trip?"

"We absolutely loved it thank you for giving us that gift," Mela said warmly as she bowed to Petimo. "I'm Mela by the way and it is an honor to meet you, Petimo," Mela said as she extended her hands out to Petimo.

"Mela, the honor is mine. I must meet everyone, Dramkick, I know already. Who are you,

Fine Gentlemen?" Petimo asked as he looked at Sasiege, Uaty, and Paut.

"I am Sasiege and you have a paradise here, really." He could see that Petimo was a reasonable man.

"I would be Uaty and this is my brother, Paut," Uaty said as he crossed his fingers. It was a way to disarm people as it was a childish gesture that implied weakness.

"We are truly honored, Petimo. We want to thank you for allowing us to come here," Paut said honestly as he waved his right hand in front of his own chest.

"No thanks necessary with the music you gave, which was exquisite by the way. And those remarkable paintings I should be thanking you. I mean that," Petimo said as he tried to think if they would enjoy a cigarette or not. Petimo smiled and said, "The best can't be any better than our native cuisine. Won't you please take my hand beautiful, Mela, as I escort you to the dining area."

"You better believe it, Petimo, let us dine," Mela said robustly as she took Petimo's arm with a bit too much physicality. Dramkick grinned as he saw Petimo feeling awkward and nervous.

Dramkick walked next to Petimo and asked, "How many thousands of years did it take to build all this splendor?"

"Well, it took over a thousand years to quarry the marble and shape it," Petimo explained as he wondered if anyone noticed his nervousness. Petimo said, "They used only the finest marble to build Jadev as well as Pomazer's Palace."

"That's determination, I can respect and admire that. What about the city we landed in?" Dramkick asked as they turned the corner and started down the long hallway. Dramkick felt a sudden urge to punch something. He decided against it but would enjoy the idea of it nonetheless.

The hallway has a curved ceiling and the floor is covered in a thick red and black rug—the design of the rug depicts the rise and fall of Owe Songa.

Owe Songa was a woman found in a mountain cave at age 9 living all by herself. She had been abandoned and spent her time collecting cotton from the nearby fields and weaving it into beautiful tapestries. The cave where she was living had dozens of these tapestries lining the walls. She didn't know how to speak at first, but over time learned and eventually she became an unheard of songstress. When she was asked in her later years why she wove those tapestries she said, "I had no beauty in my life, so I made some." The Songa tapestries are still regarded as the most beautiful ever created among the Goohy.

"Oh many eons went into that and many a Goohy died in its construction," Petimo explained as his eyes bounced along the ground below him. "We only have 2 cities Anteb and Poolem, and they are each vast and the height of ingenuity. They each pale in comparison to what I'm about to

show you," Petimo said proudly as he stopped at the end of the hallway and pulled out of his pocket a blue capsule.

Petimo threw it at a large green door in front of him. It made the door evaporate into fragrant green smoke that formed the face of Petimo and then quickly disappeared. Behind the door there is a slowly descending golden staircase. It leads into a pumpkin shaped room that smells of pie and cake. There are thousands of gold and emerald statues of soldiers that depict the battle of Poctis.

The battle of Poctis was a fierce battle in 13,601 S.B. that was between the Goohy and Dergego Hoard. The Dergego Hoard came from the planet Pista (they are nothing more than space pirates). They simply went from planet to planet stealing everything they could (and raping all the women they could get their hands on). They came to Guglos in the hopes of doing that very same thing, but the Goohy were not having any of it. After a 37 day bloody battle there were only 17 Dergego left alive. The Goohy threw them into the Deadfre prison-outside of Poolem-and kept them there until their deaths.

In the center of the room there is a 20 foot dining table that has a beautiful red table spread-with a large garden scene depicted on it. There are 12 chairs around the table that are each mini thrones made from solid gold. Above the table is a 30 headed dragon that has different colored lights in each of its mouths (it gives the room an incredibly eerie atmosphere).

Petimo walked up to the far end of the table and said politely, "Won't you please have a seat.

The food is on its way with the first of 9 courses. So don't feel you have to eat everything on your plate."

Mela sat to his right and Dramkick to his left, with Uaty and Paut on Mela's side and Sasiege on Dramkick's. Pomazer sat at the other end of the table. Everyone was seated and a dozen servants came hurrying in with silver serving dishes in their hands. They set down the food in foldout mini tables and then started putting a little of each dish on everyone's plate.

There were Porback meatballs in a honey glaze-which have a taste similar to a sweet beef. Tenefedy eyes were also served and they are deep fried eyeballs of a Tenefedy-which is a lumbering cow like creature. There is also Kaki sweet pie, which has an indescribable flavor (but you'd love it if you tasted it).

"Thank you," Dramkick said to the server as he looked over the food and then turned to Petimo and nodded. Dramkick was well aware that anything could happen in any situation, but he had a good feeling the food was alright. A year ago Dramkick had a capsule inserted into his tongue to tell if there was poison in any food he was eating. He was already prepared to rip Petimo's head off if he tasted the slightest hint of poison.

Mela took a bite of the Tenefedy eye and said, "This is scrumptious, I absolutely love the flavor."

Petimo smiled and then Sasiege tried the Kaki sweet pie and said as he chewed, "Now this is

a slice of perfection. My senses are alive again!"

Petimo laughed and said, "That makes me very happy, please try the meatballs they are very fresh."

Dramkick grabbed one of the meatballs with his 16 prong fork and bit into it. He let out a long sigh and said, "Exceptional truly, we'll have to get the recipe."

"Of course, I'll make sure you have it before you leave," Petimo replied proudly and then he asked, "Will you be staying long?"

"Only one day we must keep going on our voyage," Dramkick answered in between bites as he summed up Petimo in his mind. Not a violent man, not a killer he thought. "Time is of the essence. That's quite a hat you've got there is it hand sewn?" Dramkick asked as he continued to eat.

"It's not a hat, more specifically a crown," Petimo said nervously as he glared at Dramkick.

Dramkick didn't know what to do so he burst into laughter and hit the table with the side of his fist. Petimo started pursing his lips. Petimo closed his fist and went to punch Dramkick in the face, but Dramkick caught his hand mid blow. He held onto Petimo's fist tightly, squeezing the blood out of it. Petimo gritted his teeth and refused to cry out in agony, but Dramkick squeezed a little tighter and smiled at Petimo. Petimo did not budge. He stared at Dramkick defiantly and

Dramkick laughed.

Everyone else at the table stared at the battle of wills in terror except for Sasiege-he continued eating his Kaki pie unimpressed. Pomazer stood up and caught a look from Petimo that said don't interfere. Dramkick started to squeeze even harder now, crushing Petimo's bones, but Petimo still didn't shout out. He continued to stare at Dramkick as beads of sweat poured down his brow and a vein popped out of his forehead.

Dramkick smiled smugly and said snidely, "Give in, Petimo, and you'll still have use of your hand. It will heal and you be no worse for the wear he ha hee."

"I can't, it's not my nature, you'll just have to crush it to pieces," Petimo said sternly as he started to shake violently from pain.

Dramkick looked at him and decided not to squeeze harder. Instead he released his grasp. Petimo instantly grabbed his mangled hand and knelt over at the waist. Pomazer started to rush over him, but Petimo raised his hand for him to stop and said, "You spared my hand so I will spare your life. You can have tonight in my Palace if you still wish, but I must tell you something, Dramkick. You have *the only* will I have ever encountered that was stronger than mine. I look upon you now as my brother."

Dramkick nodded and said, "We thank you for the meal and I thank you for what you said. We would like to stay here tonight and tomorrow we will leave bright and early. I'm sorry about

your hand, but I have no tolerance for violence."

Petimo coughed twice and took a deep breath. Everyone at the table started eating their meals again except for Sasiege (who hadn't stopped eating to begin with).

Chapter 18

In the morning the Debrist Morou left Guglos and rejoined the fleet without incident.

Dramkick admired Petimo, but feared he was a fool. They spent the next week avoiding a giant black hole's gravitational pull and charting a course around. They came upon a series of 3 large space stations that had numerous ships flying in and out of them. They are known as the Elonex service ports-and they have a wild assortment of characters going in and out all day (if you hadn't committed a crime you probably weren't there). The stations are shaped like the body of a yacht and they are dark green, red, and the 3rd one is purple. On the topside of each is a statue of Grams Knot-the famous Emperor of Porange which is nearby.

Each statue shows him holding some sort of weapon. Dramkick determines this man has no monster inside. Why would he need a weapon if he is truly ruthless.. Grams in life is a bulbous man of 600 pounds (most of it belly from way too many chunks of meat and cheese). On top of his head is a single tuft of curly black hair. Mela thought it looked ridiculous and laughed to herself. He also has large puffy cheeks and a wide upturned nose. His appearance is comical, but no one dares cross him. He owns Elonex and draws a healthy profit from its many stores and hotel rooms (as well as its top notch brothel). It also has a large gambling parlor with fight for money slot machines-they literally require you to fight an android to collect your winnings.

"What do you say, Gigg, should we drop in for a look at this monstrosity?" Dramkick asked as he did a set of handstand push-ups.

"Wouldn't be good business not too," Gigg replied as he picked up a glass of Toffy coffee and took a drink. Gigg loved being around Dramkick when he was like this. He knew nothing bad could happen to him in these moments.

"I couldn't agree more, bring us into the center space station and we will find out what they do for fun out here," Dramkick said as he got out of the Capt.'s chair and then quickly left the room.

He made his way to the movie screening room known as Lacu's hole. When he arrived he saw Mela, Sasiege, Uaty, and Paut watching Doors of Demac-starring Babenth and Chard Divote.

It is a biopic of the late great singer Demac and his painter wife Dordec-played by Babenth. Demac has 381 hit songs on the Songs of the Minute charts. While his wife has created an entirely new Salop painting known as Sapir Sola-which involves painting people combined with original holograms. After Demac and Dordec moved from Membra to Tortum they used their vast wealth to start the Demac School of Art (and became obsessed with their own mortality). They searched frantically for any way they could postpone the inevitable, death. They hired a team of 30 doctors and scientists to work nonstop for 12 years to try and find a way to immortality. Dr. Verms Pawstep came up with a way to make the body age at a 5th of its normal rate. With his new serum-known as Coalfet-they were able to live to 148 for Demac and 169 for Dordec. Upon Dordec's death she'd written in her will that the serum could be shared with the

world. And thus began the age of the "5 lifetimes" as it was called. Later another doctor named Dr. Papsi Balmo created a serum that slowed the aging process to one 15th the normal rate. Thus the Talz, as well as many others, had virtual immortality.

Lacu's hole is 40 feet long and has several brown leather chairs and couches throughout the room. The movie screen covers the far wall. The floor is gently sloping and has a thick plush red carpet on it-the carpet envelops a person's foot when they step on it. The side walls are curved inward and have the side shots of the scenes in the movie (giving you the whole scope of the film). The ceiling has a built-in snack delivery system. Where when you wanted a particular snack you pressed a button on the armrest and it lowered down to you from the ceiling. There is a wide variety of warm and cold snacks as well.

In Doors of Demac it shows Babenth frantically painting a new piece while Chard watches her silently as Demac. Dramkick sees Mela fascinated by the film and stares at her. A slight smile comes across his face. How could she be so interested in fantasy? Mela feels him watching her, turns, and smiles at him. She points to the seat beside her and taps it 3 times with her index finger softly.

Dramkick walks over and sits down beside her and said quietly, "You really seem to be enjoying this one."

"This Babenth is a Revelation, the power behind her eyes is inspiring," Mela replied as she wrapped her arm around Dramkick's bicep. "I would love to meet her someday. I think we would

have a lot to talk about," Mela said as she watched the movie.

"Then you shall, I'll arrange it when you and Coup come to visit," suggested Dramkick as he crossed his legs. "You know I've met her and she is very shy, but you can feel her inner confidence," Dramkick said as he peeked over at Mela and then turned to watch the film.

Babenth did 4 quick violent brush strokes and stopped suddenly and asked, "Who is in here with me?"

Chard slowly walked over to her and said, "It' only the man who loves you, nothing more."

Babenth turned to face him and smiled wildly as she disappeared in his eyes. He is wearing only his white trousers and nothing else. While she has on only white shorts and a black T-shirt with specs of paint all over them. She stands up quickly, grabs him around the hips, and pulls him hard against her. She kisses him like she'd never seen him before, but they were madly in love at first sight. He runs one hand through her hair and the other grabs her butt. She pulled away suddenly and asked, "Please tell me that pie I taste, wasn't the last piece I left in the freezer?"

"I'm sorry it is," Chard replied with a devilish smirk.

"You scoundrel I should've let you die in the Tasto Sea, " Babenth said sternly as she pushes him back from her with both hands.

"No we'd both be dead, remember, I was the only blood match when you had your accident on the Comact colony," Chard declared plainly as he gave her a small shove of the shoulder.

"Fate always laughs in my face even when there isn't a joke in the air. Maybe I should just kill you now and take my chances with this liar called *Fate*," Babenth said sternly as he pinched Chard's chest and stomach.

"I love you too, but who'd sing your favorite songs if I weren't here?"

"I've got plenty already on file, I could manage."

"Don't kid yourself just the thought of my passing would ruin your life forever," Chard barked as he walked over to her painting and said, "This is truly...Mind blowing. It's so far beyond anything you've done before."

"You think so?" Babenth asked as she folded her arms and looked down at the floor.

"I don't think anymore, but this almost made me," Chard said honestly as the movie screen filled with vibrant colors and then the picture just suddenly ended.

Mela laughed and said boldly, "Oh that was good, I could watch it again right now. How many films has she done total?"

"106 and counting, she's working on a new film as we speak. It's some sort of period piece," Dramkick answered as the tone of his voice had a childlike quality to it. Mela notice this and she liked it. "It should be a fascinating one to watch," Dramkick said as he pressed a button and a Monat chocolate bar came down from the ceiling.

"Well I just can't wait for that one," Mela gushed as she fiddled with her hands. "What brought you down here was it the movie, the candy, or just to say hello?" Mela asked as she got her own Monat chocolate bar and chuckled to herself.

Monat candy bars have 72 small pockets inside them each filled with a different treat like: nuts, Dop berries, or even fried blueberries. They also have 34 different chocolates mixed in to create the secret recipe. They are named after Ofred Monat-the former disgraced politician who had been caught in bed with 5 women (none of which were his wife Marca). After being forced to resign he took whatever money he had left and decided to roll the dice. He set off to make his own candy bar. His tiny initial investment brought him untold riches and also a very affluent life as a playboy (A position he relished more than he ever would have hoped).

"A bit of all 3, but also to tell you we're pulling into a space station for an adventure," Dramkick said using a bright tone of voice before catching himself. He stood up and stretched his arms above his head like he was lifting all the weight of the world.

"A space station, that's great news," Mela said happily as she fussed with her clothes for a few

seconds."It will be fun to see some new sights and sounds. And also taste a few new cuisines. I love an adventure," Mela said as she rose from her seat and gave Dramkick a soft punch in the stomach.

He laughed and pretended to be injured as he walked out of Lacu's hole. They stepped out into the hallway and Gigg's face appeared on the monitor. Gigg smiled and said, "We're docking now, Quadromolan."

"Thank you, Gigg, alright then, Mela, let's get into some trouble," Dramkick said gleefully as he put his arm around her. What a life they could've had together he thought.

"Don't say trouble, Dramkick, I've had far too much for my liking," Sasiege said nervously as he put his hand to his forehead.

"Don't worry about a thing, we've got reinforcements if things get harru. Besides, you could use a little turmoil a break up the monotony he hee hah," Dramkick said with a laugh.

The Debrist Morou landed and everyone made their way to the exits. The inside of the hangar bay is filled with every kind of space ship imaginable as well as every type of alien life form in existence. Dramkick felt comfortable in a crowd like this because he knew someone would push his buttons. And he knew someone would wish they hadn't. After exiting the ship they found a small transport waiting for them. It is dark blue and looks like a deck of cards lying flat (the juvenile symmetry not lost on Dramkick). It also has 10 seats and voice operated navigation.

Dramkick sat down and looked at the list of destinations and asked, "Who's up for dinner and gambling?"

"Oh God yes, I'll eat anything as long as it isn't ship food," Sasiege responded as his stomach growled in an embarrassing fashion.

"You aren't kiddin, I really hope it's not far," Mela muttered as she wiped her forehead off with a towel.

"Distance can always be gotten," Dramkick said smoothly as he hit the button marked Knots casino.

They sped away at casual speed. They lifted into a tunnel that has water encased in plasma as its walls and ceiling. The look of the tunnel alone gave everyone awe. What was holding this tunnel together they all collectively thought. It gave everyone a very tranquil feeling to say the least. Suddenly the tunnel went hard left, then hard right, and up slightly and down sharply. It ended inside Gram Knots trophy room and in front of the casino's front doors. There are several hundred racing trophies and hand to hand combat trophies in the cases-he had won them over several years of competition. The largest of which is the Mitker-which entails thousands of duels and martial arts matches every 3 years. It is on a mining colony and is the most feared competition because it is fight to the death. The only prize for the runners up is a fighter's chance in heaven. It took place over 6 days and each contestant had to have a valid will and a death wish to compete. The trophy itself is 13 feet tall. It looks like a polar bear with a leopard's face. It also

has the words, "you could've played it safe, huh," engraved on the Mitker's brow.

The doors to the casino are only an optical illusion and fool almost every person into stopping short of them. They are actually only a hologram of 2 large blue doors with jagged edges.

Dramkick and Mela climbed out of the transport and walked up to the holographic doors and right through them without hesitation. Sasiege just smiled, ran full out, and jumped through the doors.

Inside there are 3 saucers of slot machines hovering 10 feet above the poker room's first floor. There are 800 green poker tables and over 1500 gold and silver slot machines-as well as androids protecting every machine's winnings. Above each machine is Gram Knots smiling face with one eye winking and the other staring you in the face. The ceiling is covered in paisley carpet as well as the floors. To get to the slot machines you have to step on a controlled air jet-it lifts you softly up to the hovering saucers 2 at a time and lowers you down when you've finished playing. The walls of the room have thousands of hand held weapons like: swords, clubs, and daggers from all over the galaxy on them.

Dramkick walked in, looked around, and said, "Mela, I feel like gambling, maybe you and the others should go and eat without me."

"Alright, we'll swing by in an hour and help you carry out all your winnings. Do you think we should bring 2 bags or 4?" Mela asked sarcastically as she smirked to Dramkick.

"Bring the ship," Dramkick fired back as he peered over at Mela. He was only half kidding.

Mela laughed and then said, "Done, see you in a little bit."

Mela left with everyone as Dramkick walked over to the air jet and stepped on it. He rose up to the saucer above and giggled as he did. There was just something about gambling that always struck him as odd. He couldn't figure out why it was so easy. He walked past several machines and androids as he searched for lady luck. He stopped cold as he saw a beautiful woman sitting at one machine with an empty seat beside her. She looked up at him and smiled and Dramkick asked, "May I sit here?"

"Certainly I would love it, I'm Nalista. Who are you?" She asked as if she already knew him and offered him her cheek.

Nalista is a few inches shorter than Dramkick (and very leggy). Her fake breasts are large and round with very pointed nipples. Her hair is red with blonde streaks and filled with tiny braids and charms. She has sensual eyes (they are a dark blue that Dramkick has never seen before or even conceived of). She has a long nose that almost didn't seem real in its symmetry. She is wearing a white lace dress with several tiny yellow birds sewn into it. Her white lace choker drives all the men crazy.

"I thank you my name is Dramkick. What is this is extraordinary music that I hear playing?"

Dramkick asked as he sat down.

"It's a Trollope's concerto, it's a rare piece," Nalista explained as she slowly rubbed her thigh. "It was written by Bonsto Yorke. I absolutely love his work. He passed away not long ago unfortunately," Nalista said as she picked up her glass of red soda and took a sip.

"Bonsto Yorke, I've never heard of him or his music until now. It finds my minds imagination," Dramkick said as he waved a wage stick in front of the slot machine. He pulled the human looking arm and waited.

"I couldn't agree more he was ahead of his time," Nalista agreed and then she saw Dramkick's slot line show 8 Casats and said excitedly, "YOU'VE WON! You've won the grand prize! Get ready you have to fight that android for your winnings."

"What, really, okay let's go, Pal," Dramkick said as he got up awkwardly. He was happy about the winnings, but a lot happier he was going to get to destroy this android.

A large red android came out of the compartment in the slot machine and glared at Dramkick. A second later he kicked Dramkick in the gut. Dramkick grabbed his foot and tossed him onto his back, but the android caught himself with his fingertips and through his body back up straight. The android punched Dramkick in the chest, but Dramkick was able to grab its fist. He ripped its arm from its socket and handed it to Nalista and asked, "Could you be a dear and hold this for a second?"

Nalista laughed, took the arm, and said, "Fine with me."

The android regrouped and did a roundhouse kick hitting Dramkick in the head. Lucky for Dramkick it was only a glancing blow. Dramkick kicked his foot right through the android's waist. This caused sparks to shoot out and a small fire to start in the hole. Dramkick's foot was stuck inside the android. He tried to shake it loose, but he was stuck but good. He punched the android so hard it sent the android onto its back and Dramkick's leg broke free. The android exploded into flames a few seconds later and Dramkick stood up quickly. All the other gamblers cheered and Dramkick walked up to his machine to collect his winnings. He looked at the video screen that read, "You cheated, YOU forfeit all winnings."

"What!" Dramkick shouted as he punched the machine. "What kind of scam is this! I want my money or heads are gonna roll!" Dramkick shouted as he shook the machine violently. He thought about snapping it in two and taking what was his. If he were on Membra he would've done just that.

The casino manager Rot Dodds walked up and stood beside Dramkick nervously. He is wearing a white jumpsuit, black belt, and round black hat. He taps Dramkick on the shoulder and asked, "Is there a problem, Sir?"

"You know there is," Dramkick barked at Rot like he was a little child. "This machine is malfunctioning and won't give me my winnings," Dramkick said sharply as he looked down at

the much shorter Rot.

"Well you see, Sir, you destroyed the android. You were supposed to only use non-destructive blows in your battle and since you didn't, you forfeit all winnings," Rot said brightly as his lip quivered and his face sweat like a gym class sock. "I am sorry is there anything else I can assist you with?" Rot asked firmly as he put his hands behind his back. The gesture was intended to show Dramkick he had no fear, but Dramkick wasn't an idiot.

"You know there is," Dramkick said condescendingly as he grabbed hold of his slot machine and ripped it out of its slot. He turned and threw it into 2 other slot machines, smashing all 3, and then asked politely, "I think I might need a new machine, could that be arranged?"

Rot looked wide eyed at Dramkick and said nervously, "Yes, yes I can...I can make that happen. I will also make sure your winnings are delivered to you immediately."

"Thank you for being so helpful," Dramkick answered as he gave Rot a good *embarrassment you in public* shove.

Rot hurried away and Dramkick moved over to the machine on the other side of Nalista and sat down. Nalista looked at him and said, "That was a nice trick, I have a feeling I don't need to worry about being attacked with you as a friend."

"There aren't a lot of people I'm truly afraid of, so yes. And since you're being so nice to me

I'm going to give you a share my winnings," Dramkick said honestly as he waved his wage stick and bought a glass of scotch.

"That's not necessary," Nalista replied as she gently rubbed Dramkick's shoulder with the back her fingers.

"Please, I really want to. You're very good company I appreciate that," Dramkick spoke as if he known her for forever. He stretched out his right punching arm and said, "Now let's see how long it takes for that little weasel to return."

Dramkick felt a tap on his shoulder, turned, and got cold cocked in the mouth by a very pissed Gram Knots. The blow knocked Dramkick into Nalista's lap. He looked up at her and then gathered himself. Dramkick was not amused and that meant he was pissed. Gram shouted, "YOU think you can destroy my property and get away with it! HUH, you think you can intimidate my casino staff you little pile of bones, HUH! I'm gonna bash your skull in!!"

Dramkick smiled a sinister smile. He knew there were people like Gram that existed and he wasn't scared. He knew full well though they would be if they saw him though. Dramkick grabbed onto Gram's legs and lifted him off the floor. The group of people that had gathered around them gasped at this tremendous display of physical strength. They couldn't believe anyone could be that strong. Dramkick started spinning around and around at a slow speed and still holding onto Gram's legs. He spun him faster and faster and faster still. Dramkick started to laugh like he was stealing the last piece of pie. He threw the enormous body of Gram 35 feet into

a row of slot machines. This caused parts and piles of gold coins to go flying into the air.

Dramkick said snidely, "YES!"

Gram's left arm was broken as was his left leg, but he was able to crawl to his feet. He yelled to his casino staff, "Get me the Carbsha!"

The Carbsha is a 9,000 year old forged steel sword that is completely unbreakable. It has a black steel handle with the engraving, "To take is my charge in life." The blade itself has the first chapter of the Sinkya guidebook written on it-the Sinkya is an ancient book with 300,000 techniques for taking a person's life written in its pages. The Carbsha is four feet long and 5 inches wide. The blade is so sharp you can touch it with leather gloves on and still get cut. Gram stole it from the king of a neighboring planet after killing him at a poker game.

Rot grabbed the Carbsha off the bracket on the right wall and threw it to Knots. Gram swung the blade a few times quickly in front of his face and said snidely, "Your life is a few grains of sand 'til its ending. Tell my mother I love her when you die."

Gram sprinted at Dramkick as he twirled the blade in front of him. Dramkick wondered if he would actually cut himself with such a fast rate of speed. Dramkick stood calmly and waited for him as he drew close. Dramkick grabbed the chair he had been sitting on and tore it from its mount. Gram raised his blade and Dramkick threw the chair at him, but Gram sliced it in half with a single blow. Dramkick smiled and grabbed another slot machine. Gram swung the Carbsha at Dramkick, but he blocked it with a slot machine. The slot machine nearly split in half

and gave Dramkick just a seconds worth of fear.

"Watch out, Dramkick!" Nalista screamed as her trembling hand covered her mouth.

Dramkick kicked Gram's legs with a sweeper kick. This caused Gram to lose his balance and fall onto his side. Dramkick grabbed hold of his wrist and crushed it to pieces. Gram had to let go of the Carbsha due to the fact that his hand no longer worked. Dramkick grabbed the Carbsha and cut off his head and shoulders with a single slicing motion. Dramkick said snidely, "Tell Ma yourself, I'm on vacation." Dramkick turned to Rot and gave him a look that nearly killed him. Dramkick shouted, "Weren't you getting my money!"

"Yes, Sir, I'm getting it now!" Rot said frantically as he started to run, but he ran face first into a slot machine. It knocked him to the ground, but he got up quickly and sprinted out of the room.

Everyone looked at Dramkick in awe of his tremendous powers. Nalista grabbed onto his forearm and said seductively, "You really are a *good man to have around.*"

In walked Mela, Uaty, and Paut. Mela surveyed the damage and asked, "What happened, was there a war in the casino?"

"In so many words, you could say that. How was the food?" Dramkick asked as he glared at individual people in the crowd for fun.

"Not bad, it was a very interesting style of food to say the least. Who is your new friend?"

Mela asked as she smiled at Nalista.

"Hello, I'm Nalista, you're very beautiful by the way. Who are your friends?" Nalista asked as she squeezed Dramkick tightly around the bicep.

"I am Mela and thank you you're very beautiful yourself. This is Uaty and this is Paut," Mela answered as she motioned to Uaty and Paut with her left hand. She pulled a brown cotton bag out of her pocket and asked, "Is this big enough, it's all I could get?"

Dramkick laughed briefly and said, "We'll soon find out, here he comes now."

Rot walked up to Dramkick with 3 assistants-each with their arms filled with 8 trays of gold coins. Mela looked at all the coins and her mouth dropped and she said, "I don't think this will cover it."

"Sorry I disappointed you," Dramkick said sarcastically as he started to mimic a gorilla with his arms out wide and his muscles flexed. What was left of his adrenaline was making his decisions for him and he knew what.

Sasiege strolled in and saw the dead body and the coins. He paused momentarily and said, "Death and gambling how wonderful."

Chapter 19

After a night of gambling, dining, and several bottles of wine everyone went on a shopping trip to get: supplies, habits, and goodies with Dramkick's newly won fortune. They left Elonex and set off again into the blackness of space newly rested.

To get to Sras Oblique in the shortest time the Debrist Morou (and its accompanying fleet) would have to travel through the Ormack galaxy. The Ormack is ruled over by a vicious tyrant known as Runlad Dauntis Koe the 10th.

Runlad is a Teopay and has traditional black quartz like skin and white hair. He keeps his hair exactly 1 inch and a half long and never longer or shorter. He has a widow's peak with 3 peaks and a hairline that reaches down his bulbous forehead. He is clean shaven, but has a series of small tattoos that look similar to a goatee.

His dark green double eye balls (one being larger than the one beneath) each work in conjunction. He is 4 1/2 feet wide and 6'3" tall. His muscular stomach and frame protrude from all clothing noticeably. He wears the same black and grey leather robes-that he has worn all of his life-every single day. He took over the Ormack galaxy and its largest planet in a fixed hand to hand sword fight. Then ruler Cornbre Gode's blade inexplicably broke while they were fighting, giving Runlad the ability to strike the deathblow.

"What galaxy is this?" Dramkick asked as he sat in the Capt.'s chair eating a purple apple known as a Hesut.

"It's the Ormack, Quadromolan," Gigg said quickly as he looked at Dramkick for only a moment.

"You need to be careful through here, this is Runlad's territory," Mela said as she sat down the chair next to Dramkick.

"I've never heard that name, Runlad. Why should I be careful men are but flesh?" Dramkick asked as he chewed his Hesut.

"Well, you would think that, but Runlad is a Teopay and they don't exactly have flesh...it's really more stone than anything," Mela explained as she rubbed her temples in a circle. "We had a run in with them many years ago and it nearly toppled us. It'd be best to just pay their tariffs and go on with our voyage happily," Mela suggested as she looked at Dramkick like all the butter was gone.

"Tariff!" Dramkick barked to the extent it echoed off the walls.

"Uhh," Mela said as she rolled her eyes and then continued, "Dramkick don't do it." This reminded Mela of Coup's stubborn side.

"I will pay no tariff," Dramkick declared sternly as he tapped his fingers on the chair at an incredible rate of speed. "If they think they can force me to do such a thing, then maybe my Vor Me soldiers and my battleships need a Good practice battle. Tariff, let's see them collect it," Dramkick said snidely as he crushed his Hesut.

"Fine, thank Builder you brought an army," Mela said with a long drawn out sigh.

"Yes...wait what is this Builder?" Dramkick asked as he stopped chewing. He wondered if it was another ridiculous theory of the underworld. These often found him laughing.

"Builder is our term for God," Mela answered in a soft determined voice. "We call him such because he drew out every aspect of the universe from planets to people. This before he ever created a grain of sand or child's laugh. The way a builder of a home would have. It's a celestial blueprint so to speak," Mela explained as she pulled out a pack of Tut cigarettes and lit one up.

"That's fascinating what a wonderful logic...so pure," Dramkick said as he eased his waist upward. He was thinking of Peastro now and what a loss it was. "I believe something very similar to what you just said. And yet we are from entirely different civilizations. There is a beauty in this I assure you," Dramkick spoke now in a voice close to his most honest. He was never truly honest, but sometimes he came close. "What is that beautiful aroma? Those aren't government cigarettes for certain," Dramkick said as he grinned like the devil at Mela.

Mela smirked and said slyly, "I was saving 2 packs of Tut cigarettes from my home world for the trip back. Would you like to try one?"

"I'll need too if you don't mind?"

"Of course, but bear in mind I only have the 2 packs. Here ya go," said Mela as she handed him 2 cigarettes.

Dramkick lit one up, exhaled, and said, "Now that's flavor so rich and smooth. Well I'm glad I asked for 2. I guess because of the short supply I'll just have to savor these 2"

"Were being hailed, Quadromolan, should I put them on the monitor?" Gigg asked and he waited as was his protocol.

Dramkick exhaled, stood up, and walked up next to Gigg and said, "O.K. then let's have it."

Gigg pressed the message link and a fat angry looking Teopay in a red leather robe and sunglasses named Topy appeared on the monitor. Topy said sternly, "You are in the galaxy presided over by Runlad Dauntis Koe the 10th. If you wish to pass through you will pay a 2 ton payment of gold. If you do not wish to pay, turn around and go back or face the consequences."

"What consequences are those?" Dramkick asked smoothly as he smoked his Tut cigarette.

Topy frowned and said calmly, "You will be annihilated right down to your last ship *and soul.*"

"Well, at least you're reasonable," Dramkick shuffled his feet and stuck out his tongue at Topy. "Can you give me a moment to think it over?" Dramkick asked as he continued to smoke and dance a few steps. He knew overconfidence meant abundant fear and weakness. He was going to love this one and he knew it.

Topy thought for a moment and then said, "Fine, but only for a moment."

Topy disappeared from the monitor and Dramkick said sternly, "Alright, Gigg, send out the 30 second readiness command and take dead aim on this fool's ship. I'm going to talk to him for 30 seconds while the fleet prepares. Then when I say the words, you know your face looks a little like my driveway, you *blow, that idiot, to pieces.* Got it?"

"Affirmative, I am ready, Quadromolan," Gigg answered boldly as he sent out the order and locked the cannons on the Teopay ship.

Gigg hailed the Teopay's ship and Topy appeared on the monitor and said sternly, "What have you decided and make it quick, my life is more valuable than your breaths?"

"Well, I had a question about the gold," Dramkick said hollowly as he feigned real concern. "Ya see we've got the amount you asked for, but most of it is in jewelry. Would it be alright if we

sent over 2 tons of gold jewelry? Trust me, it will ya know," Dramkick asked as he smiled and did the awe shucks routine. Then his face went black with anger and he said snidely, "Ya know your face looks like my driveway."

Topy was instantly offended and was about to shout something when Gigg fired upon his ship. It blew a shattering metal scar right through their shields and into their cockpit. Dramkick watched and laughed as they were one by one sucked out into space by the gaping hole. He tapped Gigg on the shoulder and said gleefully, "Hit 'em again, this time finish them off proper!"

Gigg fired all the fleet's cannons 4 times and the Teopay ship shattered into a million pieces. Dramkick felt a giant rush seeing the Teopay ship destroyed, but it was short lived when he saw 2 dozen similar ships coming his way.

The Teopay are all the same size and shape and are known as Cront fighters. They are seal black and have hundreds of jagged edges and angles everywhere you looked. They are roughly the same size as the Talz battleships. Dramkick took note of this. They have T shaped barrels on each of their guns. And they also have Teopay soldiers affixed in small cockpits on the top of each weapon-they would swivel with the weapon as they aimed. The Bettebody bombs they use are a type of black goo encased in a blue orb. And when it hit its target it corrodes the enemy's vessel at incredible speed. On top of each vessel there is a globe of 250 missiles-they would deploy simultaneously for maximum destruction and are deadly accurate.

The only ship in the fleet that is different from the Cront is Runlad's Mercim battleship. It is

the equivalent of a flying fortress and is 4 times as large as the Debrist Morou. It has a ¼ mile long super cannon that pushes the Mercim back as it fires-and could take out anything in its path with its abundance of ammunition. The sides of the Mercim are filled with laser cannons-over 200,000 of them with each always manned by a Teopay soldier.

"This should be fun, great, Dramkick, great," Mela said as she shook her head in disbelief. She loved war but would only admit it to Coup.

"Fear not, Mela, I was born on the battlefield and have no plans to die there," Dramkick's adrenaline levels were peeking now and his mind was on fire. "We will be victorious for we know no different," Dramkick said sternly and then he lit up his other Tut cigarette.

"I believe you, I've seen Coup in more battles than I can remember," Mela said with a certain glee in her eye that Dramkick knew too well. "I have no doubt you can and will win. And because I'm am so sure, I want you to have these," Mela said as she handed him her pack of Tut cigarettes.

Dramkick took the pack of cigarettes and said boldly, "Darling Mela, Coup is a lucky man. O.K. then, Gigg, have my assistants send up some Kamast cookies. This could be a lengthy battle. Let's use a combined fleet strike and fire everything we've got in unison. Let's see how they respond, Send out the orders, Gigg."

"It's done, Quadromolan, they will unleash the full power of the fleet as soon as they are in

range," Gigg said just after he sent out the order. He knew the importance of being quick and being right.

"Good good, you might want to see this, Mela. It's better than any celebration you've ever been to," Dramkick said snidely as he eyed the Teopay's fleet moving ever closer.

"I wouldn't miss it, but what if we are hit, what is our escape plan?" Mela asked and then she put her hand on Dramkick's shoulder. She wasn't afraid, but she wasn't stupid either. She needed to know where the exit was just in case the front door was closed.

"There is nothing to worry about we have 3 times the shield power as any ship in the universe," Dramkick replied as he stretched out his fingers like he was getting ready to punch someone. "Also as long as we stay in Rerni Realm we can't be destroyed. In other words, hold tight and you'll be fine," Dramkick said as he put his arm around Mela.

"O.K. you've eased my worries. Hopefully the cookies will come soon in case the Teopay have a weapon you hadn't planned on," Mela said jokingly and then continued, "Just having a bit of fun, I believe you."

"Very funny, but maybe we've got something they hadn't planned on namely, the Zobalt festering robot," Dramkick said proudly as he bent down at the knees and put his hands on the floor. There was just something about war he loved.

"What is this Zobalt, and what does it do?" Mela asked as she furrowed her brow.

"The Zobalt is a 30 foot tall android that has an amazing ability to shred vessels at lightning speed," Dramkick spoke as if he'd already won the war. "I doubt that we'll need it today, but maybe we'll use one just for fun. And if so, watch their mouths keenly. You see, they have a highly corrosive laser slash liquid that eats through metal like you eat through soup. Not to mention their unheard of strength and speed," Dramkick said proudly as he took a drag.

"Really...that's fascinating, in the battle we fought with Peastro he had several powerful robots," Mela muttered as she thought of the horror that was Peastro. "Well this changes things, I won't question you again. This will give us the upper hand in this battle," Mela replied as she took one of the Tut cigarettes she had given Dramkick and then continued, "And gives us new hope in the bigger picture."

"That's just one of the many surprises I have at my disposal. War's in my blood, Mela, always has been."

"They're 5 seconds out, Quadromolan, initiating the final firing orders," Gigg said boldly as he sent out the final sequence to the firing computers.

"Perfect, let's hope they have a fighting spirit," Dramkick replied as he fought off a grin. "I need a good rush before supper, which reminds me I could use a little Praem to un-clutter my senses," Dramkick said as he walked over to the drawer on the left wall and waved his hand in

front of it. It opens revealing a dozen Praem tubes. Dramkick felt victorious over his lapses in memory. He has stashes of Praem all over the ship to compensate. He grabs one and pours it into his eyes and lets out a sigh of relief. He grabbed another and asked, "Would you like some, Mela?"

"I would actually thank you," Mela responded and then she walked over and he handed her a Praem tube. She drank its contents, quickly smiled and said, "Now I'm ready for anything." This was a bit of a joke to Mela as nothing fazed her anyway.

"And we're off!" Gigg shouted as the entire fleet fired in unison at the Teopay fleet.

The Cront fighters number in the hundreds and were sliced to shreds in seconds. There mangled heaps were almost completely destroyed in just moments. Dramkick saw this and broke out laughing and asked sarcastically, "What happened, where'd their fleet go?"

"Is that it?" Mela asked in disbelief.

Dramkick laughed and said, "I don't know, maybe those were decoys. Let's hope they've got reinforcements hee," Dramkick was eager for the fight to continue and half hoped they were decoys. "God if I had known that other galaxies were so weak, I would've conquered the whole universe haa!"

Mela laughed and then said, "And I wanted to see Zobalt in action. I feel unsatisfied, those

cookies can't get here fast enough."

In walked Dramkick's assistant Carlso with a large plate of Kamast cookies and a bottle of Wams.

"Are you psychic, do you have x-ray vision?" Dramkick asked sarcastically as he took the plate from his assistant Carlso.

"Both, let's eat and hope for their real army to show up," Mela said as she took one of the Kamast and started chewing. She didn't mind ditching this battle, but still wanted to see some more action.

Dramkick poured 2 glasses of Wams and grabbed a pair of Kamasts and bit into them both. The Mercim appeared in front of the Debrist Morou accompanied by 30 more Cront fighters. Gigg saw this and asked, "We've got more friends to deal with, Quadromolan, what is our course of action?"

"Hail them and ask them to surrender," Dramkick said casually as he ate and then said sternly, "but if they refuse blow them away with the power of our entire fleet!"

"The hail has been sent and the fleet is ready, Quadromolan," Gigg said and then stood up and asked, "May I have a Praem tube?"

"Of course, Gigg, but please hurry this will be worth seeing," Dramkick answered as he took a sip from his Wams and smiled a Mela.

Runlad appeared on the monitor with a pair of sabers in his hands. He stared fiercely at Dramkick and said sternly, "I am Runlad and I can only warn you not to trifle with my patience. Those ships you destroyed were decoys, and what you see before you is my true fleet. You have, but one chance to pay the tariff or face your entire destruction, WHICH IS IT?!"

"Now, Gigg, light the cigarette," Dramkick ordered smoothly as he continued eating cookies.

Dramkick's entire fleet fired again in unison. And again the Cront fighters were torn to shreds, as was the Mercim. Suddenly the sky in front of the Debrist Morou was filled with smoking carcasses where ships had been a moment earlier. Again Dramkick and Mela burst into laughter (as Gigg did his best not to). Dramkick got a hold of his emotions and sat down in the Capt.'s chair. Sasiege walked in and asked, "What was all that laughter I heard as I walked up?"

"You missed a minor fracas where the Teopay army was completely obliterated. It was the finest thing I've ever seen," Mela said as she burst out laughing. She knew now she had an incredible story to tell Coup.

Sasiege started laughing himself as he saw Mela's uncontrollable joy. Gigg (who'd been silent all the while) burst into uncontrollable laughter himself. This went on for a few minutes and then Gigg saw they were being hailed. He put the message up on the monitor. It was Runlad with

blood running down his forehead. Runlad asked sternly, "Are you ready to surrender?"

Everyone stopped laughing for a second as they looked at Runlad in shock. Dramkick rose and ordered, "Hit him again, Gigg."

The Debrist Morou blew away Runlad and what was left of his entire fleet.

Chapter 20

There was a Talz prophet named Yanew who lived in the 22nd century who said, "If I ever find out what's bothering me, it will be the last worry I'll ever have." Dramkick thought of this quote and Yanew often. He knew they had each gone many years without a true friend. And he knew the helplessness of such a thing. Yanew had written over 80 books in his lifetime that ranged from comedy to politics. When asked just before he died why he was so prolific he said, "I had so much worry and grief that it poured out of my mind and onto the pages of my books, one word at the time."

Dramkick awoke this day and Yanew was omnipresent in his mind, as well as Peastro. He knew what he had to do, but his mind was filled with feelings of doubt. As much of a friend as Mela was she was someone else's soul mate and friend he thought. The closer he got to her the more he thought of the day she would be back with Coup, and not at his side. He dreaded this more than anything and the killing of Peastro more than he would admit.

Dramkick sat on the edge of his bed and watched the fake sunrise come up. He heard a knock at his door and yelled, "Enter please!"

It was Mela carrying a bowl of Obaday flakes covered in Wams.

Obaday flakes are dark Brown and shiny. They have the shape of a laser pistol, a sword, a helmet, and a battleship. They taste like Fruitloops and Mini-wheat's combined, but also have a gratifying aftertaste that kicks in an hour after you've eaten. They are named after the 6 fingered guitar player Obaday Notas-he was a Vexidian. Obaday was renowned for the unbelievable speed and dexterity of his fingers-also for his flawless playing of chords. His album, "I'll play the one you like forever," had sold over 1 billion copies in its initial run. The first track, "A Genamy for lunch," featured a 380 part harmony the first of its kind.

Mela set down the Obaday flakes on the foldout table in front of Dramkick. The table in front of her came out automatically when she sat down beside him. Dramkick continued to look at the sunrise as Mela put her head on his shoulder. He lifted his right hand to her cheek and rubbed it softly causing her to smile.

"Are you troubled, Dramkick?" Mela asked in a fragile voice.

"I'm somewhat troubled, but these things tend to pass," Dramkick admitted as he held a breath in his chest for a few seconds. "Must tell you, Mela, I'm concerned that when you are reunited with your husband Coup, the part of our friendship I treasure will perish," Dramkick said quietly as he rubbed her cheek.

Mela lifted her head, looked him in the eye and said warmly, "Never, Dramkick, our friendship is bigger than that. Coup is not unlike myself and will take to you the way I have. I have no trepidation about that. Don't ever fear about where my friendship and love is for you,

because it is right here."

"Thank you for that," Dramkick said honestly, his thoughts were of killing Peastro. "Often times my mind can race and travel where it shouldn't. I want you to know that my friendship and our bond is forever. I mean that," Dramkick said as he rubbed Mela's arm.

"I'll never doubt it, Dramkick," Mela said as she put her head back on his shoulder.

Dramkick kissed her on the top of the head and started eating the Obaday flakes. They sat together with the sun shining through a window and felt the warmth of it on one another's faces. Mela thought even for a fake sun it had its benefits. It did make her miss the T sun even more. She would give anything for one more look.

After 2 months in space the entire fleet wanted a break. Dramkick had Gigg find the nearest hospitable planet-it was Yafoal a large green planet.

Yafoal is half water and half land and very sparsely populated. There are dozens of small cities, but no real urban areas. The people of Yafoal are known as Fomits. They are very happy and youthful looking even into old age. They all have seal black hair and dark tan skin-as they have 8 months of summer each year because the one continent revolves around the equator. Their leaders (and they have 3) are Momah, Ahyah, and Pubeo. Each one spends a 3rd of the year tending to the needs of the Fomits.

Dramkick gave the entire fleet 3 week's vacation to prepare them for the final push to Sras Oblique. Small shuttles started sending Vor Me and Vexidian soldiers to the surface. Mela, Dramkick, Sasiege, Uaty, Paut (and Dramkick's new lover Nalista) boarded their own personal shuttle. Dramkick's shuttle landed on a large green field of mowed grass in the city of Bauwa.

As they were getting out of the shuttle a short man with fire orange hair and a dark brown tan stood there waiting for them. He is wearing a white T-shirt, a pair of off white shorts, and brown sandals. He has small gold charms in the shape of a thumb and forefinger attached to each shoe. He has an ear to ear smile on his face and his hands are waving wildly as Dramkick observes him. Dramkick rubbed Mela's arm and said, "Hello I am Dramkick and these are my friends. We've come here for a bit of a vacation if you don't mind."

"I am Pubeo and I am one part of 3 who rule over Yafoal. And yes you are more than welcome to stay here as long as you like. Would you like me to show you around?" Pubeo asked as he waved his right arm slowly to steer them in the right direction. Dramkick liked Pubeo and could see him easily becoming a Benbre if he had been from Membra.

"We would indeed," Dramkick said as he and Nalista started to walk beside Pubeo with everyone else walking behind.

Pubeo walked a few steps and then a small hovering transport pulled up. There is a young boy piloting it and he has a broad smile on his face. The ship is black in color and has a smooth rounded nose. It also has the body of a rose lying on its side. Gigg took note of this from the

ship. It has a see through ceiling that is tinted slightly. Inside you have 9 black leather chairs and 3 refrigerators filled with a variety of cold drinks-from booze to soda pop. There is music coming from a small speaker sewn into each of the chairs that is by the artist Duadop Hig.

Duadop Hig is one of 6 musicians on Yafoal, but by far the most famous. After 3 years in jail for corruption for a minor infraction, Duadop emerged a changed man. He gave up alcohol and all forms of stimulants and depressants (especially hard drugs). He poured all of his passion into singing acapella songs. His first song, "The last thing I wanted was the beginning," dealt with the issue of child abuse and how to protect the innocence of a child. It was so popular that for 6 months straight it was heard every other song on the radio. After 87 hit singles later Duadop was arrested again for crimes against the public good. He apparently stood in front of Ahyah's home and relieved himself on his rose garden. For which he served 8 months of hard labor.

They drove through the Bompatan gardens-which is an intricate labyrinth of flowers and shrubbery. Dramkick couldn't believe how fragrant and fresh the air was. It took him back to his childhood and days at the lake. Dramkick continued to take deep and deeper breaths, as he looked around in awe at the different artwork shaved into the bushes. There is one bush so lifelike it appears to have a man beneath its leaves.

"Pubeo, I must tell you your garden here is truly remarkable," Dramkick remarked as he reached out and touched a bush as they sped by.

"Oh wait 'til you see the Gontafic and the Cokot temples. Then you will see what we are

proudest of," Pubeo said brightly as he smiled.

"Will be long 'til we arrive at the Cokot temples?" Nalista asked and she kissed Dramkick on the cheek.

"We're but minutes from there now," Pubeo replied as he searched for something in his pocket and then continued, "I thought we would have you live there while you're here. It is our most lavish accommodations. We reserve it for royalty per se," Pubeo said as he opened a blue refrigerator and started handing everyone a can of Ezsi soda. He grinned and said, "These are very delicious, please try one, but only one."

Everyone was handed one of the mint green cans and took a drink-Ezsi is a combination of soda and tonic that is filled with nutrients and mild medicine. The Mehaha drove onto a gently flowing river and out into the middle. It snaked through Bompatan gardens. They drove beneath a series of walking bridges. And then out of nowhere the ship started to go through the blue backdrop of the sky and into a lighted tunnel. This startled everyone but Dramkick as his adrenaline kicked in. His senses were enhanced instantly and he surveyed the situation.

"What in a Terious is that?" Mela asked as she looked around at everyone.

"That is our way of keeping the Cokot temples secret," Pubeo explained proudly as he pulled out a comb and gave his hair good brushing. "You just passed through a holographic illusion that only the Fomits know of. Hold on tight there are more surprises to come," Pubeo said as he

looked at everyone's shocked faces.

"Another surprise like that and I'll die of a massive stroke, and I don't mean of genius," Sasiege said anxiously as he massaged his own chest with both hands.

Dramkick just sat there looking at everyone and was amazed at how frightened they looked. He himself only felt a small prick of unease. They continued through the tunnel for a half mile and then the walls turned from lights to glass. This revealed 1,000 workers mining for gold and diamonds.

They came out of the tunnel and into an empty room. The room has lush wall to wall blue carpet on the walls. And there is a full recreation of Kest plague in gold and diamonds.

Kest is a man made disease that was accidentally unleashed on the Fomits a hundred years earlier-it dramatically altered their DNA and brain function. It altered their DNA so much so that never again did a single child bare a resemblance to their parents. An entire new race of people emerged after the onset of the disease. And strangely enough, they were smarter and more athletically gifted than anyone could have ever imagined.

The Mehaha slowed and then stopped in the center of the room. Nalista turned to Dramkick and asked, "So what happens now?"

Just then the floor beneath them started to float up towards the ceiling. Everyone looked up

hoping that this wasn't a malfunction and hopefully planned. Mela said sternly, "If we hit that ceiling I will be infuriated."

They didn't hit it instead they passed right through into another large room. The room has 3 levels to it and a statue of Godper on the right wall. There is also a living area on the first floor with couches and a round television. There is a pair of musical androids at either end of the room as literal living jukeboxes. There are also 5 black leather chairs and a gold and diamond end table next to each. The kitchen and fitness center are next to the left wall and glow dark red from within. Floating in the center of the room is the Dorpus intoxicator-which is a machine that you can type in how drunk you want to get and how long you want it to last. And then you could either drink one extremely dense concoction or take a blue and red pill and get the same effect. The Dorpus is meant to give you total control over your leisure time. The 2nd level has a living room with 2 long white leather couches positioned facing each other. The 2 round TV's at each end hover above the carpet. There is a lavish bathroom with: a sauna, hot tub, 12 showers, large tub and the works.

The 3rd level has 8 large bedrooms equipped with everything you could possibly need to retire properly. They have 4 person beds to particle showers that induce sleep by barraging the senses to exhaustion.

"This will be your accommodations while you are here," Pubeo explained brightly as his shoulder twitched. "All of your baggage has been placed in your rooms and the refrigerators are ready when you are. Also there is one other thing I must show you that I think you will find

fascinating, please follow me," Pubeo said brightly as he ushered them to the far wall.

Pubeo let out a primordial scream and the wall disappeared. This revealed the completely waveless Gontafic ocean-there are millions of people swimming, boating, floating and living on it in wooden floating homes. The homes look like toothpick houses and most have little in the way of solid walls. The boats are incredibly detailed and some are even jet propelled. The Gontafic has a high salt density that allows you to float very easily. There are 3 suns-with one in a stage of collapse-fill the Gontafic with an almost mirror image. Since there are no moons around Yafoal, there are no waves or moonlight. This gives the planet an eerie darkness that never leaves you.

"I thought I'd seen it all 'til now," Dramkick stated as he shook his head in disbelief. "I really needed this trip, Mela, if for no other reason to see this now. What an awesome spectacle," Dramkick leaned back and his eyes darted from people to ships and back again. Where was all this life before now? He wished his parents could've seen this.

"You're reading my mind, I've never been this close to the enormity of life. Pubeo, thank you for this indeed," Mela said awestruck as she put her arm around Pubeo and her head on his shoulder.

"This is why so few Fomits leave Yafoal," Pubeo admitted as he chased away a crab like creature with his foot. "We're all together as family and friends here. I ventured out 10 years ago just to see what the universe had to offer. 2 months ago I came back and never ventured out

again. I know you are my guests, but lives are shared or they disappear," Pubeo said and he kissed Mela on the forehead.

Everyone stared at the scene in front of them for many minutes. Pubeo left for his home and everyone stayed up half the night partying and telling stories. The next 2 weeks they all took full advantage of Yafoal, the Fomits, and the incredible Gontafic. Everyone boarded the ships and set off into space for a shotgun wedding with destiny.

Dramkick sat in his lounge with Sasiege playing a game of Pomdeck.

Pomdeck is an ancient card game. The game centers on a person's ability to lie and not get caught. The consequence of getting caught is that they lose the game.

Dramkick has a tendency to win at Pomdeck, because he rarely believes anything entirely or with total conviction. He could fool himself into believing anything at the drop of a hat. Dramkick laid a card on the table that suggested he was Pamse-which is a person who's about to lay the remaining power cards and win the game.

Sasiege looks at Dramkick with a vicious eye. He tried to decide if Dramkick was telling the truth, because if it is the truth he has to lay his power card first or lose the entire wager. If he thinks he is lying, he has to play no cards and force Dramkick to admit that he is lying (and Dramkick would lose the game of course). Sasiege stares at Dramkick for over a minute. Then he notices there is a single bead of sweat on his left temple and He said snidely, "I lay nothing,

Dramkick, you better have it or you're a goner my friend."

Dramkick starts to sweat even more now. He takes off his sweater and keeps on his white T-shirt. Dramkick looks at his cards and then said, "Your mind is old weak and filled with too many years gone by. I'm going to show you why my will to win can never be beaten. Or you were smart enough to see through my lies, Old Man." Dramkick then laid his cards on the table showing Pamse and shouted, "Or you'll be dead in a week from SHAME!"

Sasiege's body completely deflated and he let out a yell of, "Not again, not now!"

"Yes Now, you wounded buffoon," Dramkick said jokingly as he twisted the knife of shame in his side. "I feel the urge to remind you of your lack of true foresight. I saw you eyeing that bead of sweat and knew that *you* would think it nerves, but it was caused by my sweater. So once again I've taken your self-respect, confidence, and of course your gold hee ha hee," Dramkick said snidely as he took Sasiege's gold and chuckled.

Mela and Uaty walked in and grabbed a seat on the couch. Mila asked, "Dramkick, I wanted to ask you since we're nearing Sras Oblique, exactly how you plan to get close enough to Peastro to *kill*, or even capture him?"

Dramkick smiled and said, "A fortunate blow will get me close enough to kiss his skin with pain. You see before you arrived on my home world of Membra, I'd become aware of Peastro and sent a messenger. I sent that messenger with a truthful and passionate plea for his friendship.

The great part of this is it was written in truth, which a man of his power would be able to tell."

"So he'll be under the assumption that you've come to become friends and share experiences," Uaty said implying a question. Uaty was now convinced Peastro would die.

"That's correct, Uaty, so at the very least I'll get next to him," Dramkick explained as his giddiness filled the room with joy. "And then if I capture him I'll snap his scrawny little neck," Dramkick said smoothly as he tightened his fist and smiled. Dramkick was buying into the idea that maybe there was someone else, besides Peastro that was meant to be his friend.

"How do you plan on knocking him out?" Mela asked as she curled up her legs.

"Nowet implants in my fingertips," Dramkick explained as he showed her the tips of his fingers. "Ya see a Nowet can be placed under the skin. And with just a tap on his neck he'll be out cold within seconds. Then I throw him into my personal luggage and walk right out with him inside," Dramkick explained as he walked over to the fridge and grabbed a bottle Wams.

"That's brilliant, there's a great chance this will happen...o.k. but what if they catch you? What if they catch you with Peastro's unconscious body, what then?" Sasiege asked as he lit up a cigarette.

"Then its fight to the death and my fleet will lay waste to their army," Dramkick said sharply and then he finished his bottle of Wams. "Either way Peastro will meet an unfortunate end. And

then you and Mela will be able to free Coup and take control of Sras Oblique," Dramkick said as he pulled out the last Tut cigarette from his pocket. He lit it and started smoking.

"Then I can get back to my life again," Mela spoke to the rafters as she covered her face with both hands and squealed. "And to see that ungrateful pig Peastro fall will make the T sun's rays that much brighter. The glory of it all, Dramkick, it makes my heart beat anew."

"How do you plan to free Coup, have you thought of something?" Sasiege asked as he chewed a Kamast.

"That's the easy part, Sasiege, I'm using 10 of my Vor Me to free him," Dramkick offered as his mind jumped to that part of the plan. "They will go in under disguise as Kaa soldiers. And they'll paint the walls red with the guards holding him. They will wait for my signal and then pounce. And after we have Coup and Peastro the sky will fill with my fleet. We will escape under laser fire as they pray for their lives he he hee," Dramkick said snidely and he took a drag from his tut cigarette but stopped abruptly and said, "I'll need a few hundred cartons of these before I leave, Mela."

"You can have a ship's worth and that is for certain," Mela answered as she prowled the room like a lion. Mela stopped and said, "Then that's it, we're ready for arrival and we must be nearing the security outpost by now." Mela thought of Coup and the tremendous pain he was going through. She prayed he would survive mentally long enough to be freed. She also knew that might not be the case.

The fleet kept a safe distance from the security outpost while the Debrist Morou continued on. Dramkick made his way to the Capt.'s chair and sucked on a Praem tube. He needed every bit of confidence, edge, and advantage he could get. Mela stayed in the lounge with the others carrying anxious hearts. Dramkick sat down in his Capt.'s chair and said sternly, "Be calm, be nothing, Gigg, I can handle them."

"Of course, Quadromolan, I won't speak unless required to," Gigg said as he hailed the outpost. He hoped Dramkick would speak in the first place as his nerves were frayed.

On the monitor appeared Kelsy Pott-a Sgt. in the Kaa army. Kelsy is green haired and orange skinned. He has a black T shaped scar above his left eye that he got on his wedding night (he flirted with the bridesmaids). His face is boyish, but his eyes are a killer's. He is wearing a purple hat that is tight to his head, but loose around his forehead. He also has on a black cotton jacket with the Kaa symbol for freedom on the right peck-which is an X inside a circle with 2 P's next to it. He also has on a pair of white silk gloves that have an apparent glow to them.

"Hello there what are your reasons for traveling here today?" Kelsy asked dryly as he smiled to himself. He felt worn out after a long shift.

"Yes, hi I am Dramkick Reign and I come to request an audienc-"

Kelsy cut him off and said quickly, "Wait, wait just a second we have a standing order...ah

here it is. We're instructed upon any visit of Dramkick Reign to immediately allow him through. And also to let you know that Peastro is eagerly awaiting your arrival. You'll be waited on hand and foot. We are also told to ask if there is anything you need right now?"

"I would like a nice bottle of white wine this evening, but that is the sum of it," Dramkick said smoothly as he started to grin. He knew the plan was going to work. The soldier was weak and easily swayed, he thought.

"The wine will be in your castle and you may proceed with our escort fighters," Kelsy said happily as he tried to contain his excitement. He really thought that Dramkick would never come. "It is great to finally meet the person in the letter. I hope you have a great stay," Kelsy said as he smiled from ear to ear.

"Thank you I will, it is great to meet you," Dramkick said hollowly as he manipulated his body language to match up with the correct moment Kelsy had offered him. Kelsy faded from the monitor and 12 Kaa fighters flanked both sides the Debrist Morou. Dramkick stood up and smiled at Gigg and then left the room. He strolled over to the lounge and walked in to see Mela and Sasiege sitting side by side eating Kamasts. He said snidely, "He's dead, Mela."

"Really," Mela said as the air raced out of her lungs. She set down her Kamast and put her head in her shaking hands.

"Moments from dead and he still doesn't know it," Dramkick felt like kicking something so he

put his foot through the back of the couch. "I wonder how he'll spend his final waking breaths, before he finds the secrets of it all. Death will be the friend he sought for so many T Suns," Dramkick said coldly as he walked over to Mela and kissed her on the lips gently. He hugged her tightly and she tried to control her breathing. Coup was all she could think about, dear Coup.

"If death knew him like I do, even he would run screaming. They should meet nonetheless," Mila said snidely and she gripped Dramkick tightly and said coldly, "Remember the line!"

The End

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