

# THE VINDIJAN LINE

Quadromolan Series Book 2

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Cover art Creative Paramita [www.creativeparamita.com](http://www.creativeparamita.com)

Paramita Bhattacharjee thank you for your help with the cover.

My mother Martha passed last October and I miss her in my life. I know she would have enjoyed The Vindijan Line as she would have loved the adventure. I am dedicating this book to my mother Martha who is someplace better now.

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## Chapter 1

### Betrayed by Confidence

The Toen war raged, nearing its 7<sup>th</sup> year. Over 3 million lives had been lost. The Vindijans and the Kaa's rotting corpses littered the battlefield. The Kaa rebellion was comprised of the working class, craftsmen and laborers. They were tired of being mistreated and misused by the Vindijan Line, otherwise known as the Vindijan royal family.

The Vindijan's have ruled over Sras Oblique, the 8<sup>th</sup> planet from the T sun, for 9,000 years. Their reign started when the Pepest moon changed its orbit and solar flares bombarded the planet. The exposure to the radiation changed the people of Sras Oblique. Most notably the Vindijans, as they were newly christened. They found the extra radiation gave them a bounty of new powers.

First there were the mental triggers, they could sense minutes in advance when someone was going to attack them. This gave them the ability known as First Strike, a powerful advantage.

Then as the solar flares intensified they developed a ball of radiation that encircled their entire heads. It was an ocean blue orb visible only to the Kaa. The Circle of Seas as it was called by the Kaa, was meant to identify a Vindijan's birthright.

Then there is the power of levitation, the extreme radiation damaged their cells to such an extent it shifted their body's core. This made their bodies capable of anti-gravity for short stretches of time, furthering their divinity in the eyes of the Kaa.

Their feet and hands are lightning quick, caused by generations of breeding in quick muscle fibers.

Their dominance over the Kaa is never ending. They tell them what to wear, eat, read, and even think. They force all Kaa children to years of government sponsored brainwashing. Denying them sleep and food for days as they are barraged with commands and images from The Vindijan Line.

The Kaa Leaders, the Fini Seven, were forced into hiding at the start of the war. The Fini Seven are the first to have figured out that the Vindijan Line is corrupting the water supply. With what was left of their free will they all stopped drinking the water, relying on Hool milk to quench their thirst.

After seven days they all experienced violent shakes which almost forced them to drink the drugged water. Fortunate for them on the 9<sup>th</sup> day the shakes subsided and their minds cleared. They decided to liberate their countrymen, but they had to be careful. They couldn't just run into the streets shouting the news. They knew they had to be patient, one at a time. In 406 days the news had spread to every corner of Sras Oblique.

The Kaa as a whole kept their liberty to themselves. Then they caught a break, a scientist named Dr. Atom from the Veeres region, had developed an attack robot. The Musebot was capable of attacking twenty men at one time. With the Musebots the Toen War started in earnest.

Emperor Coup Vindijan sat shooting Dees, a fury cat-like creature, that were scampering around the royal entertainment quarters. Emperor Coup Vindijan is 6'3" with pale skin. He has long curly yellow hair and a bright blue beard that is thicker than concrete. He wears black silk shirts and trousers daily. His shoes are also black and are half dress shoes half sandal with gold tips.

Coup likes to shoot Dees to occupy his mind and dilute his anger and rage. He needs it because of the day's defeat at the Koalem battlefield. He thought about what a fool he had been for not seeing the uprising coming.

In strode Mela Vindijan carrying a tray with two baked rolls, a pound of cooked Vin meat, and 2 ounces of Pent, a sugary delight. She makes a point of serving all of her husband's meals even with all their many servants.

Mela is a striking woman of 6'0" tall with glowing green hair and large red lips. Her skin enriched by the Fome root is softer than a baby's. Her hands have a certain glow, visible only in darkened spaces, but visible nonetheless.

She places the tray next to Coup on the table in the middle of the couch. Then she sits down on her side and starts smoking her Messon leaf cigar. Coup gives neither her, nor the food any mind. He is still fixated on the day's failure.

In comes a servant boy carrying a letter for the Emperor. Mela instantly senses his murderous intent using her First Strike triggers. Coup on the other hand is too wrapped up in his anger to feel the servants' murderous intent.

Mela touches his hand and says, "Darling Coup, this man is here to assassinate you."

Coup looks at Mela and then realizes she is right. His eyes dart to the servant boy. He jumps out of his seat. Then he aims his Goalla gun and asks gently, "What'd you have planned for me, Peasant? The thoughts of murder haven't even crossed your mind just yet. Still a few minutes away aren't they. They are working their way to your conscious mind," says Coup sternly as his eyes glaze over and he continues, "Crawling towards the cerebellum, getting closer and closer still."

The servant boy stares at Coup in horror, nervously scratching his scalp and chest.

"No, no...I wouldn't, I wouldn't have. I was just, just delivering...this letter...that's all," says the servant boy as he starts to cry.

"No...I know that isn't the truth. I can feel your neurons firing, your mind is already beginning to boost your adrenaline," Coup says as he starts to grin like he'd won a pie eating contest. "That

treacherous heart of yours is already quickening its pulse, bum bump, bum bump. Your pupils have dilated, muscles readied, lips pursed,” said Coup coldly as he walked slowly closer to the boy, keeping the aim steady.

Just then the boy pulls a dagger from his pants and shouts,” Dream killer, To Dust!”

He lurches at Coup raising his blade high above his head and extending his other hand outward towards Coup. Coup squeezes the 3 triggers of the Goalla gun and scrambled the boy’s atoms. This wipes him effectively from existence forever. The daggers’ forward momentum slashed into Coup’s shoulder piercing his skin.

Mela meanwhile had sat silently smoking her Messon leaf cigar. More and more attempts were being made on their lives. It had become commonplace, almost routine. She sent for a first aid kit and a minute later it was there. She cleaned and nursed the wound and applied a bandage. She kissed her husband’s lips, put her hand on his shoulder and said,” These Kaa, these impossible Kaa, they can’t grasp our divinity. They scratch and claw at the ball of string, but their motives are invisible to their passionless hearts.”

“There’s a truth in this life, and it is as certain as the T sun’s symphony of warmth and abandon,” Coup paused as he let out a sigh and then said,” The Kaa can’t hear the music... can’t dissect the movements, their minds are left to hum along without pause. Generation after generation born into normalcy never...hysterical madness,” said Coup as he stared at the servant boy’s dagger. There was blood glistening on the blade and staining the carpet.

He noticed the letter, forgotten for a moment now as important as air. Coup bent down to grasp it and noticed the crest of Ambassador Ertel. They hadn’t spoken in the last several days, he knew instantly that something was amiss. He tore open the envelope and the letter read,

*Dear Brother,*

*The Fini Seven have taken me hostage. Their demands are as such: they want a face to face meeting with you to discuss ending the war. The meeting will take place at Bevray Chateau. You can bring only two bodyguards and 1 hand maiden. They assure me that your death is not what they're after. If you decline this offer my death by horrible ends will be assured. For verification that it is me writing this letter and not them here's proof. When we were children you swam across Lake Litoo twice and then back flipped over mum as she sunbathed. You also told me when you were 8 and I was 6 that the T sun tasted like Pent, and you had licked it. Brother, I need you now more than ever, but I'll love you no matter.*

*Vindijan Line,*

*Ertel*

After he had read the letter he gave Mela a look that told her she didn't want to know what he was thinking. She grabbed her husband and embraced him tightly. She took a good hard look into his eyes and said, "Ertel needs you."

Coup called his personal Humpacca soldiers. They were the elite army troops and known to be vicious. Coup moved briskly to the hangar bay.

Trident Souce 3, his personal transport vehicle, is in a constant state of readiness. It has ant-gravity thrusters, radiation converting turbines, and the Ceti Electrical Wave Enhancer. The Trident Souce 3 is entirely self-sufficient. It is capable of encircling the million mile surface in less than a day.

It is also equipped with mood destabilizing cannons, 3 per side. These cannons can shatter an enemies' sanity, making them incapable of rational thought. Though only good at short range, extremely effective at devastating a squadron of men. There is also the Medivit Mole. It's an escape capsule which can take its occupants hundreds of feet below the surface in a matter of seconds.

After Coup boarded the Trident Souce 3, and had strapped himself securely inside, his thoughts turned to his brother Ertel. He knew his brother was naïve and easily swayed, but certainly not a fool. If they



could capture him they had to be organized and certainly formidable. What was waiting for him at Chateau Bevray he wondered, he knew it was treachery. His mind needed to be sharp. He decided to focus on a former triumph. He replayed every detail over and over again in his mind. He finally had it framed emotionally and he was ready.

As they came over the Temery Hilltop they could see Chateau Bevray perched atop a rocky ridge. It was a former ambassador's castle of sin. He had hidden all of his mistresses behind the castle walls. Ambassador Lilly had overseen wild orgies with dozens of naked women. Their shouts of pleasure filled the halls of Chateau Bevray. The echoes of passions realized still hid behind every inch of the chateau's walls and the hundred foot paintings winked knowingly. The Emperor himself had witnessed a lifetime's worth of hedonism in a single night.

But this would be different the Emperor was not deluding himself. He knew in his heart it would get complicated. Oh Ertel so trusting, he thought aloud to himself. His soft spot for his younger brother now put his life in jeopardy. Ertel has always been one to raise a smile whenever needed. Not a serious man Coup thought, but certainly a friend to the Line.

The Trident Souce 3 taxied into the hangar bay and there was only one person waiting to greet them. He appeared to be unarmed. He was a tan skinned man in a flowing yellow robe with his hands clutching an envelope. He was named Joero.

Coup exited Trident and started to walk down the ramp when the tan skinned gentleman met him halfway up.

"Read this before you take another step," said Joero sternly as he handed Coup the envelope.

Coup opened the envelope and read the typed message," Why does 1 man hate another when they are both bore of a mother? Take the scent of the Borbe flower and inhale with a larger breath. Horizons of familiarity will be born. Don't add these numbers  $4+79=$ . Join us Coup, for loves sake.

Coup knew they were trying to rattle him. He looked at Joero careful not to reveal anything.

“My brother,” said Coup implying a question.

“He is well I will take you to him now.”

Joero led Coup to the second story ballroom. The dining tables had been removed and replaced with blue leather couches arranged in a circle. In the center there is a Pepe synergy snake encased in a green light energy cell. The snake slithered and hissed at Coup as he made his way to the couches.

“Brother Coup,” said Ertel as he embraced Coup and then said firmly, “They’re not what you think. They carry God’s love in their hearts.”

“Ertel...oh sweet Ertel, all men carry God’s love. What concoction have they given you?”

“Nothing, nothing but their unconditional love,” assured Ertel. “Open your mind, Brother, their friendship is forever,” said Ertel lovingly as he guided Coup to his seat.

Coup sits down and watches 2 men in red army fatigues sit down on either side of him.

“I am Edifus Time the leader of the Fini 7 and defender of the Kaa people,” said Edifus as he extended his arms palms up to Coup.

Edifus has shoulder length black hair with purple highlights. His eyes appear to be half open and abnormally relaxed. There is a quarter moon with a teardrop shaved into his chin heard. His skin is blood red and hairless. His muscular frame is hidden under loose fitting army fatigues. He has on a black lace choker wrapped tightly around his neck.

Coup waves his hand in a circle over Edifus’ outstretched palms. This is the customary greeting of the Vindijan Line. He finds it odd that a Kaa know of their greeting. He is also aware that this is an obvious play to curry favor.

“Edifus Time, otherwise known as the thorn in my side,” said Coup smugly. “So it is you, Sir, the first to turn away from the Vindijan Line. The 1<sup>st</sup> medicated mind to reject its medication,” said Coup and then he leans in close and says,” I’m not my brother, Edifus, I’m my own kin.”

Edifus looked away quickly then turned to Coup. He slowly crossed his legs Indian style and grinned.

“We want what you want. This war has taken more than lives a generations’ dreams have also been lost. Children are playing in rubble covered streets. Parents tell them it will be ok, knowing it may never be. Can’t you see this war is nowhere?” asked Edifus boldly.

“Here’s what I can see, and I can see it clearly, I can see you’re in the habit of speech making,” declared Coup as he tugged at his collar. “You invited me here, you have your demands let’s hear them before I grow tired of your company, Dear Sir,” said Coup calmly as he stroked his blue beard.

Edifus shuffled in his seat and looked sternly at Coup. Then he pulled a dark brown pipe from his pocket and smoked some Messon Leaf. After a couple of drags he gave a look to Coup that offered him the pipe. Coup shook his head no and continued to scan the other faces seated around the circle of couches. The faces he saw looked sullen and deflated, but he didn’t feel murderous intentions from any of them. He sat and said nothing, and waited.

“Emperor Vindijan, this war is a farce. Our brothers and sisters are dying needlessly every day.”

“As our mine, Edifus,” replied Coup calmly.

“As are yours, Emperor, but that could all end today,” started Edifus hopefully and then he continued,” With just a wave of your compassionate hand. Won’t you wave it...won’t you wave it now, Dear Friend?” asks Edifus as he waves his right hand two feet in front of Coup’s face.

“That settles it,” said Coup in a triumphant voice. “If you are the leader of the Kaa then the Kaa have no leader. Here is my decision, and it is definitive. This war will rage until every Kaa living under the T

sun recognizes the Vindijans' divinity," said Coup sternly as he summed up the room. "Oh, and those Musebot's which have kept you in the battle, if that is all you've got then you haven't got much. We'll find a way through it's a certainty, Dear Boy," said Coup as he got up from the couch.

"Emperor, don't cross that bridge, don't take those selfish steps!" snarled Edifus.

Coup could feel their murderous intentions swell as the whole room had started down the path. Coup pressed the honing beckon on his wrist and quickly looked for a way out. He checked the doors and they were all locked. He knew he was trapped.

There are 8 of them all told, with venom in their eyes and Kepaka blades in their hands. Coup only had his Goalla gun, but it took 15 seconds to recharge between shots. There were too many of them and he knew it. He decided it was him or them.

Coup lifted up and levitated above them. Only his feet were vulnerable, but he couldn't levitate forever. Then one of them attacked, a soldier named Rash, slashing at Coup's ankle. Coup fired his Goalla gun and vaporized Rash.

Coup's ankle was bleeding very badly. When the next two attackers Pid and Fro Gett advanced Coup kicked them in the mouth. Then Pid got kicked in the throat. The two were sent reeling, now the Goalla gun was recharged. Coup took dead aim and scrambled Pid into oblivion.

Unfortunately the levitation started to wear off. Coup could feel his body falling softly to the ground. He threw round house kicks to keep them at bay. He waited patiently for the Goalla gun to recharge. He noticed Edifus was simply sitting calmly. His blade was no longer drawn and he was smiling at Coup.

Coup saw why. Edifus had a Petiffee, a powerful brain altering rifle. If he was shot by the Petiffee he would instantly plunge into insanity, a living death.

“Stand aside! The Emperor’s gonna need some therapy!” thundered Edifus in an almost shrill voice as he charged up the Petifee. He aimed the Petifee at Coup and said coldly, “You shouldn’t have reckoned with me, Emperor. You should have loved, Coup! You should have cared!” shouted Edifus as his eyes glared at Coup. “You’re gonna know our pain, our tragedy, our loss you Son of a Bitch, you’re gonna learn!” thundered Edifus as he started to squeeze the trigger.

Suddenly the ceiling burst open and the Medivit Mole exploded into the ballroom. Coup’s 2 bodyguards jumped out and blasted the remaining Kaa soldiers.

Edifus gave a look to Coup, a knowing look, he realized he had to escape and he ran for it. Coup jumped into the Medivit Mole and took the controls. His 2 bodyguards ran aboard and the capsule door shut. When it did it crushed to Kaa soldiers’ hands as they tried to get in. They instantly started to dig through the floor and crashed down upon a group of Kaa soldiers. It killed them all and they dug through the floor. They went deep below the planet’s surface and stopped when they were safe.

“You did it Boys, you’ll be recognized and commended for what you did today,” said Coup happily as he sipped some Blakala brew and then continued,” but this is only the beginning.”

“What do you mean, Emperor?”

“That man, Edifus...I haven’t felt a rage like that since Eebrem. And we all remember Eebrem don’t we,” said Coup as he rubbed his brow.

## Chapter 2

“Alright Boys, we’ll eat then we’ll make for the surface. We won’t be able to contact my security team ‘til we’re above ground...”

Behind them they hear a loud rumble coming from the tunnel. Coup runs to the back of the Medivit Mole as fast as he can. He sees through the rear image hologram that a deluge of water is thundering down the shaft.

“Fire up the Mole!” shouts Coup as he clenches his fist, “I need full power in 5 seconds or we’ll be corpses. Full forward thrust!” thunders Coup as he runs to the control panel.

His 2 bodyguards Henra and Yoren rush to their stations and power up the Mole. Yoren can hear the enormous rush of water right behind them. Coup pulls down hard on the thrusters and they shoot upward. They travel at breakneck speed to the surface.

The water reaches the back of the Mole and starts seeping through the walls. If it reaches the drill before they make the surface the drill will jam and the motors would burn out. They would be trapped hundreds of feet below the surface inside the Medivit Mole forever.

Every second that goes by they grow closer to the surface, but the water continues to advance towards the drills’ motor.

His eyes grow wide and dart away quickly between the water gushing in and the monitor showing how many feet until the surface. They still have 500 feet to go and all they can do is hope.

The lights short out and the only light is the glow of the control panel. The precious feet to the surface showed 254. The Mole is taking on more water and their pace slows dramatically.

Coup squeezes the steering column while his eyes are nearly popping out of his head.

“C’mon baby, sweet Mole...dig baby Dig!! God damn you dig for it!” shouted Coup as the feet to the surface ticked away slower and slower.

Now they only have 23 feet to go, but they have lost almost all of their forward momentum. The water is up to their waists, only inches from the control panel. Everyone froze in place and stared at the feet tick by, 5 to go.

With its last bit of forward power the Mole burst out of the ground. A shower of water shot out of the hole behind them, soaking a herd of Hool and sending them off in every direction.

“Yes! That is the T sun I have seen in my dream,” said Coup triumphantly as he put his arms around Yoren and smiled.

“It’s glorious, Emperor, magnificent,” said Yoren.

“Ok, first things first send up the floating distress beckon, Henra. The military will be here as soon as they see it,” said Coup happily and then he continued,” then check the weapons cash, see what works and will continue to work. Lastly, fill me in immediately on our food supply and most importantly get me a Messon Leaf cigar. I’ve got some stress that needs to be exhaled away,” said Coup with a cocky smile and a quick laugh. Not yet he thought, not yet.

Coup felt relieved but also very nervous. He hadn’t felt his heart rate surge to such an extent since his time commanding the military. He allowed himself to relax slightly, because he knew of the beneficial effects of such a thing. He scanned the countryside for possible threats. There weren’t any, only a Hool herder and his son sitting on a hill watching them in amazement.

Coup walked over to them and asked,” I’m sorry about your herd will they return? Would you like my men to go after them?”

The man didn't move but the small boy named Peastro said, "I can't worry about Hool, they always come back."

Peastro was wearing a tan robe with a hood. His nose and mouth were barely visible.

"That's the truth of it all, Son, they always come back. Can I see your face, Dear Son?" asks Coup calmly.

Peastro stood up slowly and pulled the hood from his face. Coup saw his hair was green and glowing, a Vindijan trait. His features were strong and his lips were blood red. Coup could see Mela in Peastro. He walked over to the boy and ran his fingers through his hair and said, "What's your name, well...what was it?"

"My name is Peastro Lim and I am 3 years passed."

"Peastro, I am Coup Vindijan and you are a Vindijan now. Your days of Hool herding have ended," Coup said sternly. "Tell you father farewell and I will take you away from this. We should have found you before now and for that I apologize," said Coup as he looked lovingly at Peastro.

Peastro looked at Coup and then his father and said, "Ok, Coup."

Peastro hugged his father, who didn't hug him back, and they walked back to the Medivit Mole.

"Emperor, we have 3 working Goalla guns, 5 Pentat grenades and a Petiffee that appears operational. Our food supply will give us a day and a half if we're lucky," said Yoren as he pointed to a herder on a grass covered hill watching them.

"Well then we could fight if we had too. Let's hope it doesn't come to that," said Coup as he watched Peastro. "Fortunately these hills will give us cover, but I need to know about the Mole. Can she run?" asked Coup as he put his hand on Yorens' shoulder.



“She won’t, Emperor, the drill no longer has a working motor its fried. Best case scenario we would have to travel above ground,” said Yoren anxiously.

Coup felt uneasy about traveling above ground. He knew they’d be sitting ducks. He also knew things would get hairy. This was a Kaa stronghold and he had a bounty on his head.

Yoren handed Coup his cigar and Coup pressed the self-lighting tip and started to smoke. He took a long drag and squinted at the horizon.

“Ok, here’s what we’ll do strip the Mole of everything we can use. We’ll push the Mole back into the shaft and cover it up with dirt,” said Coup as he searched his pockets for a piece of candy. “All’s we need now is a place where we can hole up until the military gets here. Peastro, is there a place near to here where we can hideout? And if so, is it fit for a Vindijan?” asked Coup as he knelt down to look Peastro in the eye.

Peastro pointed to a nearby hill and said,” Over that hill is my father’s machine shop. It could give us safety we would be hidden from eyes.”

They stripped the Medivit Mole of all of its contents. Yoren backed the Mole into the shaft and covered the hole with dirt and Hool dung. They climbed the nearby purple grass hill and came upon the machine shop. The shop itself is built into the side of a rock face. It has a long ivory colored walkway that leads up to the entrance. There are 2 Hool sitting in front of the doorway. Peastro shoes them away and says softly,” They always come back.”

Coup smiled and Peastro grinned wildly. When they entered the shop it smelled of Pent, there are several robots doing various tasks. One is even hanging from a support beam and singing, “Swif Be Lost”, a popular children’s song. Others are building security fencing for the Hool herd.

There is a bed and two couches against the back wall. Hanging on the wall is a portrait of Coup, Mela, and their children in full regalia.

“Who’s that handsome Geeve?” asked Coup with a smirk.

There is also a circular piano by the front window with a bouquet of Borbe flowers on its stool. The sun fills the room with shards of light and makes the robots sparkle brilliantly.

Peastro walks over toward the frost inducing unit and returns with 3 cold Peco Swee drinks, a favorite of the Kaa children.

“I hope you will like these, I didn’t expect so much friendly persons,” said Peastro as he handed out the Peco Swee cans.

“Well I’ll let it slide this time, but don’t form this habit, Dear Boy,” said Coup jokingly as he pointed at Peastro.

Peastro half smiled and said, “I hope you don’t mind the Showd Fly I put in for seasoning.”

“You little Hool nugget I thought this drink was a little crunchy,” said Coup sarcastically as he picked up Peastro and tickled his belly.

Peastro laughed and tried half-heartedly to get away. Coup set Peastro down and walked over to the front window for a look at the countryside. He thinks about when he was young and how he had played in hills like these. He could remember chasing a particular Hool so long it dropped dead on the spot. They dined on him that evening, a simpler time for certain he thought.

He could see two forms coming over the hilltop. He squinted to see if they were friend or foe. They’re wearing red army fatigues and it has to be a Kaa scout team.

“Eyes Up!” shouts Coup as he rubs his hands together quickly. “We’ve got some scouts closing in on our position. Take a defensive posture Boys, maybe they’ll pass. If they don’t we’ll have to engage them with full force,” said Coup as he charges up his Petifee with his right hand and takes a drag with his left.

“What should I do, Coup?” Peastro asks shyly.

“When you fell their rage send it right back at ‘em. You’re a Vindijan, Son, believe your divinity.”

Peastro charged up his Goalla gun and perched himself behind the circular piano. The scouts stopped outside the machine shop and started to pet a Hool named Just Clancy.

“These Hool are beautiful animals, but their dumb as dust. I had one as a kid, Dova I called her. All that Hoevra did was eat and sleep,” said Retron snidely as Hellto nodded in agreement.

Inside the machine shop Coup had everyone ready. They all watched and waited, they knew if the scouts came in it was bloodshed for certain.

“Ya know I’m tired of this mission and this day. I say we head back, I don’t see any signs of life here,” said Retron sternly.

“Fine and fine it looks pretty dead here,” said Hellto as his red hair blew into his face and they started to walk away.

A small robot walked out the front door of the machine shop, to the horror of everyone inside. It climbed down the stairs and walked past the scouts. Retron and Hellto stopped and looked at the robot, then at each other. They took a look at the shop and raised their weapons. They walked up to the door and stopped.

Retron suddenly fired into the machine shop with his Checered Pulse Canon. The shot burst through the wall and barely missed Yoren, but hit Henra and severed his head. Now it was only 3 on two and the scouts hand body armor. They would have to get within a few feet for their weapons to work on the scouts.

Hellto and Retron walked slowly into the machine shop. Coup gave Peastro a hand wave and Peastro winked as he laid flat on the floor. Retron took a step towards the circular piano and Peastro blasted his legs with the Goalla gun. This left him only bloody stumps, causing Retron to scream in agony.

Before Hellto could shoot Peastro Coup blasted him with the Petifee. He plunged into insanity and ran screaming from the machine shop.

Yoren ran after Hellto while Peastro and Coup walked over to the wounded Retron.

“Alright, Peastro, you know what this man had on his mind don’t you,” said Coup as he pointed to the Checered .

“Yes, Coup...I do,” said Peastro as he aimed his Goalla gun at Retron and then said, “ Goodbye, Sir,” Peastro shot him and scrambled his atoms into oblivion.

Outside Yoren caught up to Hellto and shot him in the back, vaporizing his torso. His dismembered head fell to the ground and rested beside his legs. Coup and Peastro came outside and as they did a Vindijan military convoy appeared in the sky. There flew 50 Poro Cruisers and a Venebon battleship.

The Poro Cruisers all had the head of a Vindijan mounted on the nose of the ship. They are a flying tribute to the Vindijan Line for all to see. The Venebon battleships are bright blue with gold trim. With each of them having Coup Vindijan’s likeness fashioned onto their fronts, as well as his torso as the body of the ship. They are literally a flying statue, ominous and intimidating. They have the raw firepower to destroy an entire Kaa battalion.

1,000 Humpacca soldiers flooded the area and secured the perimeter. General Ruebluff walked up to Coup and extended his arms palms up. Coup waved his hand in a circle over the outstretched palms.

General Ruebluff is short in stature nearly a full head shorter than Coup, but with a commanding presence. His eyes are black with red specs throughout. He has 3 red squares of green beard shaved into each of his cheeks. He also has a prison tattoo in the center of his brow.

“General, I need Chateau Bevray destroyed immediately. Leave only the inhabitants prayers on that venerable peak,” said Coup snidely as he tugged at his beard.

“Dust and damnation, Emperor,”

Coup, Peastro, and Yoren boarded the retractable transport elevator. After they were inside the Venebon Mela joined them in the forward observatory.

The observatory is filled with floating holograms of the entire galaxy. It is lit by a dull yellow light and the walls themselves are holograms of Redford trees. The observatory is a place for thought and relaxation, Coup’s sanctuary.

“Mela, Magnificent Mela,” Coup said warmly as he embraced her and then kissed her lips and said, “I found someone a true Venkid.”

“A Venkid,” Mela said in disbelief. “Really, well I would love to meet this tremendous man, and soon.”

“He’s standing right beside you,” says Coup as he puts his hand on Peastro’s head.

Mela looks at Peastro and a flicker of surprise shot across her face. She knelt down and said, “Absolutely awe-inspiring a brow for the ages, Coup.”

“Isn’t he a glorious wonder and ruthless, Mela. A Venkid for the ages, more powerful and more filled with tempered anger than the original ruler of Sras Oblique,” said Coup greedily.

“What is your name, Dear Sir, and where were you hiding all this time?” asks Mela as she kisses Peastro on the forehead.

“I am Peastro Vindijan and I have slept and eaten all my life in Kepe Window, until today,” said Peastro as he extended his arms palms up.

Mela immediately waved her hand in a circle above his arms and winked at Coup. Whereas Coup winked back and was handed a Messon Leaf cigar by a young servant. Then he was handed a Verage

sandwich, which is made from shredded Amoss birds and centuries old yeast. This is Coup's favorite snack before the days feast.

"General Ruebluff, there is the matter of this Kaa Edifus Time," Coup said sternly and then waved Ruebluff in closer. "He is an enormous enemy and our efforts should center on his assassination. If he should perish I feel the Kaa and their uprising would end shortly thereafter. I've looked in this man's eyes and he is their hope I am sure of it," said Coup firmly as he took bites from the Verage sandwich.

"Our intelligence gatherers will focus their efforts and passions into this...Edifus. He will be found, he will be killed, Dear Emperor."

"Oh, I have every confidence, General, every confidence," said Coup smoothly.

General Ruebluff left the observatory and so did Yoren. Peastro started curiously looking around and then stopped abruptly to look at a hologram of the Kelev settlement on Yor One. The Kelev are dancing around a Nipol spring which is filled with natural light.

"Why dance, why dance for nature?" asked Peastro.

"That is what brings them merriment. It soothes their curiosity, Peastro," said Mela as she ran her hand through the hologram. "What brings you joy?"

"I love the morning air...that first breath, that's my favorite," said Peastro as he put his hand into the hologram.

"Oh Yes I love that first kiss of the T sun filling my lungs. We'll always have that in common. Simple pleasures thrill an extraordinary mind, remember that, Peastro."

Coup watched and thought about this new love that had entered his family. He didn't want to be too overbearing, he could tell Peastro was special. He also knew that his divinity was for certain, a Venkid was an extreme rarity.

They ate their feast and then prepared for sleep. Coup felt it important that Peastro sleep with them for the first night. The servants added an extra bed beside Coup and Mela for Peastro.

After Coup took his Wodo pill he slipped into a deep sleep. In his dream he was being chased by a glowing red square of light. He was terrified by the red square, but he was gaining distance from it with every step. After he had gotten a safe distance from the red square he came upon a golden river. In the center of the river there stood a man of age holding a shimmering diamond staff.

Their eyes locked and the man of age smiled and offered the staff to Coup. Coup grabbed the staff and his entire body filled with enormous power. His muscles bulged with size and strength. He felt closer to God than he ever had before. His entire body was engulfed in a blue flame, but he wasn't burned.

Coup's eyes rolled back in his head and he felt an orgasmic explosion. He yelled out in ecstasy," Glorious God, you are my maker! You are my unlimited light!" yelled Coup as he laid there shaking. "This is the answer, Dear Lord! I feel clarity of my purpose. Oh God...this is my bridge to the afterlife...I am showered in belief."

He thrust the staff into the edge of a golden river and the river turned into solid marble. Coup walked out into the center and words floated through his mind: Yes Coup, 7 sons, honest rebellion...the other door. Move before movement. Can you realize your ascension? Edifus, friends Maybe Morso and love your urge.

The messages danced over and over again in his mind. A hole in the marble appeared and revealed a staircase into the marble. Coup walked down cautiously keeping his hands to his sides. He held fast to reason and his sanity.

He climbed down farther and farther. On the walls there are crests of the Vindijan Line. There are holes periodically that are filled with balls of reddish light. He goes deeper and deeper into the ground until he reaches the bottom. It is a star shaped room with Kaa soldiers standing in each of the points. In

the center is a stand with a hole no bigger than his hand and the inscription that reads," Embrace your divinity."

Coup looks at the faces around the room and reaches into the hole. He is abruptly awoken from the dream. Mela gently shakes him awake.

"Coup, Darling, the Kaa have attacked the Veveli Barrier. They've breached the inner sanctum," says Mela as she rubs Coup's chest.

Coup said nothing and immediately got up and hurried to the War room.

"Let's have it," said Coup as he sat down in his throne at the head of the table.

The War room is 40x40 feet and square in shape with a white ceiling. The walls are made of a raw mahogany with gold accents. There is a large consul on every wall, which gives the Emperor a view of all the pertinent battles. The room is independent from the rest of the Venebon. If the Venebon is destroyed the War room would survive. The walls are made 8 foot thick Titan weave, a metal so strong it can withstand almost any attack.

The room is equipped with several Petiffee spread cannons. If need be the occupants can fight off any attacker. It also has enough water and food to last for a month.

"Emperor, they've coordinated their attacks and are hitting us on all fronts. Most importantly the Veveli Barrier, which they somehow shattered the inner core," said General Ruebluff as he pointed to the monitor in the center of the table.

"How in the Terious did they do that? I could have sworn that someone told me that Veveli was impenetrable," said Coup in a sarcastic tone.

"I am gravely sorry, Emperor, it should have been. They apparently have gotten hold of some sort of wave cannon, which can separate molecules at the subatomic level."



“What are our chances of regaining control of the Veveli, General, and please be blunt my patience is evaporating,” growled Coup.

“There is no chance they’ve got too many troops on the ground, Emperor. The situation is impossible.”

Coup paused briefly and then said, “Then I want it devastated. I will not accept those disgusting Kaa sipping my Borco wine or sleeping in my backyard!”

“But, Emperor, we’ve got troops and civilians there, not to mention children,” said Ruebluff cautiously.

“I know this and every Vindijan has known it. There is only the Line, there is only one cause. I’m not asking for approval, General. Take my words and make them sing,” said Coup as he pushed the hair back from his face.

“Done, Emperor,” said General Ruebluff and then he called in the order.

They watched on the monitor as 3 Poro cruisers flew over Veveli, dropping gravel busters. Everything was destroyed, every building and every person. They were just gone.

Coup sat back in his throne after seeing the devastation and stroked his beard slowly. No one said anything they simply stayed inside their own heads.

### Chapter 3

Three months have passed since the Kaa siege. Over 400,000 Kaa and Vindijan soldiers have passed over into the afterlife. Both sides have lost their belief in war, but neither side is willing to give in.

The Kaa general Fo Trowd has sworn that he wouldn't rest until the Vindijan Line was no more. He is more than willing to trade Kaa lives for what he calls Vindijan scum. It is he who orchestrated the Kaa siege and it was he who wasn't willing to compromise. He told the Kaa soldiers we are free or we are dust, and they agreed without hesitation.

The Vindijan Line on the other bloody hand, are openly weighing the extinction of the Kaa entirely. Having decided that too many bridges have been burned, peace is only a pipe dream now.

The Alon counsel gathered at a secret location in the Wolfveer Province. The secret location is a sunken valley surrounded by brush. The castles were too hot for a meeting of this importance. They decided to think in the open air. It is nighttime and the 6 Mevery moons are glowing brilliant blue and green. The entire Vindijan hierarchy is in attendance, with the exclusion of Ambassador Ertel. He has yet to be returned since his capture by the Kaa.

It's time and every single member sits in a silver floating throne. There is an orange liquid bubble that surrounds each of them and it is used to amplify their thoughts. A meeting like this means only one thing, the natives are restless.

Ambassador Geetou is a bulbous man of 490 pounds. He has jet black hair and beautiful blue skin. He is known to be hot headed and few dare to contradict him.

"He who wants more than his hands can hold is an enemy to himself. These Kaa want the world that we created and they want us to give it to them," said Ambassador Geetou as he floated into the center of the floating thrones.

"True, irresistibly true," said Coup.

"They think our will is bendable," said Cleric Cortel as he closed his fist, "but it is unbreakable, Friends!"

“We can see their lack of reason, their blind obsession and we...will...use it against them,” said Geetou plainly.

Coup floated into the center beside Ambassador Geetou and then stood up and said,” These scoundrels, these petulant fools...no matter I came here today with a chalice of good news, Brothers. Edifus Time’s hideout has been discovered and a strike force has been sent. He will be captured before the night greets the T sun.”

Inside the 4<sup>th</sup> Banko district at his hillside home Edifus sat with his lover Suces.

“We’re winning this war, Darling Suces, and they have known it. They think we’ll just roll over and perish and that is their first and last mistake,” said Edifus as he kissed her on the lips. He gently caressed her cheek and pulled the hair from her face.

Suces is a beautiful brown skinned purple lipped stunner. She has on a lavender slip and a pair of pink gloves.

They sit on the Hool skin rug locked in an embrace. Edifus feels an uneasy sensation. The Amoss birds have stopped singing. He thinks this odd and he gets up and goes to the balcony.

“They’re so dumb they think they can rule over our dreams. They’ll feel our pain and we won’t be fearful of them again,” said Suces as she runs her finger across Edifus’ lips.

Suddenly 2 hands grab Edifus around the neck. The room fills with Vindijan soldiers. Suces screams as the two are overpowered by the soldiers and pinned to the floor

“How’s that revolution working out for you now, Kind Sir?” asked Hammot snidely.

“You fool, my power is beyond anything under the T sun!” shouted Edifus.

“Really, well your power is about as valuable as a Hool nugget now,” said Hammot as he kicked Edifus in the back.

Edifus doesn't fight back, he knows he's caught. He decides to save his energy.

Back at the Plushi Chateau Coup receives the news that Edifus has been captured. He feels relief wash over him and also a wave of glee.

He's done it, his thoughts race over the possible outcomes of such a thing. In his mind he fantasized about the end of the war and the Kaa surrender. He also thought about the glory and praise the Vindijan Line would shower on him. He is filled with.

Coup walks around his Empirical suite and kicks Dees into the fireplace, laughing as he does. The Dees burst into flames sending warm air into Coup's face. Coup grabs 2 bottles of Borco wine and starts devouring their contents. He feels the rush of intoxication shoot into his bloodstream. He starts dancing clumsily around the suite. He smashes the bottles into the fireplace and mutters, "Glory, oh glory has come to Sras Oblique. My children can sing again, play their Covolu flutes in musical rescue, thank you Builder."

Peastro walks into the Empirical suite carrying a tray of baked rolls. He is wearing the same clothes as Coup and looks like a miniature version of him.

"Coup, I have brought you a snack, I hope it is suitable," said Peastro as he set the tray on the table in front of the fireplace.

"Peastro, I would love a roll and it is very considerate of you to do this. I have received some great news and I am rejoicing," said Coup as he put his hand on Peastro's shoulder.

"What is this joyful thing, Coup?" asked Peastro.

"The horrible ache, the cloud of black filth has shifted its course. Edifus will be joining us, Peastro, and his heart will be on our plate," said Coup snidely.

Peastro smiled and sat down on the couch, while Coup sat down beside him and put his arm around him. The two of them sat silently on the couch eating their warm rolls.

“I want to show you something,” said Peastro quickly.

“Of course, what would you like to show me?” asked Coup as he looked into his eyes.

Peastro pointed his fingers at the fireplace and a red light came out of the tips. The light went through the fire and made the wall behind it transparent. Coup sat up in his seat anxiously. The red light grabbed a crystal vase in the other room and brought it to Peastro’s hand. Peastro set it down on the table in front of Coup. Coup grabbed the vase and held it in his hands.

“How can you do this?” asked Coup in utter disbelief. “I...it is clear you are truly a Venkid. Your divinity is certain in my mind, Peastro. Let’s keep your powers a secret. The Kaa would certainly destroy you if they knew,” said Coup firmly as he felt thrilled by the new discovery and the possibilities.

“I will not speak of it, Coup, never,” said Peastro as he pet a Dees, “I have other powers too.”

The door tone sounded and Coup entered the security code and in walked Cleric Cortel.

“We have Edifus in the liquid heat cell, Emperor. We’re grilling him for information, but he isn’t telling us anything,” said Cleric Cortel as he handed Coup the live hologram feed of Edifus.

“Well, there’s our dear friend in all of his spiteful glory. Boy he doesn’t look happy, maybe we should send him a gift,” said Coup sarcastically, “I want him to undergo the Cuptank series. We’ll see if he’s smiling after that.”

The Cuptank series is a group of 12 torture techniques. The techniques bring most to the edge of insanity and some beyond. It is typically reserved for only hardened criminals and only as a last resort.

“Absolutely yesterday it will be done,” said Cleric Cortel and then he exited the Empirical suite.

Coup and Peastro walked over to the window and Coup draped his arm around him. They stood and watched as the T sun came up and filled the room with light. They stood like father and son would do.

They could feel the days' first wave of solar flares. A Vindijan is at their most powerful at dawn. Coup and Peastro started levitating several feet above the floor. Their eyes glowed and their muscles filled with strength.

There is a flock of Amos birds filling the sky. They can see Kaa children fishing for the Mempion fish.

The Mempion fish carries nutrients which sharpen the senses. It also gives a person clearer vision and the Kaa swear by its healing powers.

From the window they could see all the happenings of Sras Oblique stretched out before them. The hustle and bustle of a complex society was never more beautiful. In the distance the black smoke plumes of an early morning battle rose up into the sky.

The Gogif Tower, the Vindijans' place of worship, glistened in the T suns' shower of light. The tower stood as a reminder of the presence of Jivan in every Vindijan and Kaa's life.

"I want to share something with you, Peastro, and I don't want you to be alarmed. Take my hand and walk with me, I want to share my greatest gift," said Coup as he offered his hand.

Peastro took his hand and the two of them walked over to the black Kabervian tiger statue. Coup pressed in the statues' eyes and the head rolled back into the body of the statue. Then a blue bottle rose up from inside.

Coup grabbed the bottle, opened the top, and showed Peastro the contents. It was filled with large white pills with the word Rixpo on the side of each. Peastro ran his finger over 1 of the pills and asked, "Are they nutritional?"

Coup took one out and held it in the palm of his hand and said, "They are far more, Dear Son. These have been handed down from one generation to the next. Heriog Vindijan created these pills centuries ago, by using toxic Kilo berries," said Coup as he lifted a Rixpo up into the sunshine. "The berries no longer grow, so this vile is all we have left. These pills separate ordinary Vindijans' from extraordinary ones," explained Coup as Peastro started to glow. "One of these pills every 10 years will give you tremendous power. It will enhance all of your strengths and give you the ability to forger all of your weaknesses. This has been our family secret, and all best secrets are lost in the holders' mind, right."

"Right, lost to the wind," replied Peastro quickly.

"Right indeed, I want you to take this," said Coup as he handed Peastro the Rixpo pill and then continued, "and put it in your cheek 'til it is halfway dissolved. Your mouth will feel warm and your vision will blur, but it's only temporary. When the pill is dissolved halfway swallow the rest of it. You will experience shakes and a swelling sensation in your hands. You will lose consciousness and begin the Aaver sleep. Take your divinity and ascend my son."

Peastro took the Rixpo pill from Coup's hand and glanced at him. He held the pill in his hand then slowly placed it into his cheek. He didn't feel scared because he trusted Coup with every fiber of his being. The pill tasted sugary and sweet as his mouth felt warm. Sure enough his hands started to swell. Then his body started shaking violently and he suddenly slipped into the Aaver sleep.

Coup held Peastro in his arms and smiled. He then laid him down on a couch. In the Aaver Peastro saw himself flying over Sras Oblique's countryside. He dipped in and out of every valley and soared inches above Lake Ve Gune, grabbing a Mempion fish in his hands as he did. He could see the T sun rise and set several times. He basked in the Memry Moons' glow. The sky turned green and he could see a flying armada entering the Sras Oblique sky.

Peastro was sitting in a throne at Plushi Chateau with all green skinned women named Faha. She smiled and asked him questions. They were important questions he could tell, but he gave no answer. He stared at Faha's white eyes and felt love for her, but felt anger that he couldn't give her what she wanted.

Peastro could tell it was a dream, but it was as if it was really happening. He was in an ancient cavern standing in front of a screaming black marble statue. The screams are so loud his ears were bleeding and he couldn't move or make a sound. The statue exploded into dust and in its place was a collection of small books. All of the books bore the crest of the 1<sup>st</sup> Vindijan dynasty The Corrupts.

Very abruptly Peastro felt his body turn to that of a Kabervian tiger. He is stalking a Hool herd and has selected a target. He chases after the Hool and corners it in a cave. He pounces on it and tears open its chest. Peastro awakes and is handed a glass of wine by Coup.

"Vindijans' drink my Friend, please join our humble family with a toast," said Coup slyly as he raised his glass.

Peastro smiled and toasted with Coup. He drank the entire glass in one swill, then sat up and looked at the Vindijan faces around him. Mela was there and she sat down beside Peastro and put her hand on his thigh.

"We know it's been hard on you, it can be very painful not knowing your place in the world. Show me a soul who hasn't made his way home and I'll show you a difficult life," said Mela as she fought back tears and continued, "we'll be there for you in this life and the next. This is your home, Peastro, let your heart sing...inside these walls."

Peastro started crying as he knew he'd been alone so long that maybe he'd forgotten how to love. He felt worried that he wouldn't know how to be open, but he also knew that he was home. For the first time in his life he felt somebody's love given to him. He didn't have to beg for it. He looked around the room and his eyes welled up and he said tearfully, "The love that I feel and have felt, is the greatest gift



under the T sun. I will do whatever is asked of me from here 'til infinite discovery, to be a part of the Vindijan Line. I never knew my mother and wished I hadn't known my father, but I will fight ferociously for the Line. This is my Home...you are my family!"

Everyone in the room put their finger on Peastro's head and pressed down slightly. This was the final gesture to induct someone into the Vindijan Line. Once a member, you and all of your offspring are protected and given all the riches of the Vindijan Line.

NO one owned anything, they all owned everything under the T sun. This included the Kaa and all of their possessions. The first 4 days of an inductee's life in the Line are filled with fulfilling all of their desires, material or otherwise. There is also the documentation of the Aaver sleep. Every detail you could think of was entered into the Kevelary Text

The Kevelary Text is used as a gateway into a Vindijan's subconscious. Often times it could also be used to predict the future. Many portions of the Aaver sleep actually come to pass. Because of this fact, teams of scholars and clerics pour over the Kevelary Text for a viewpoint into the future. The Kevelary Text has been kept for hundreds of thousands of years and its volumes numbered in the millions. It is kept under lock and key in Gogif Tower. No Kaa has ever read a passage or known of its existence.

The wife of the Late Heriog Vindijan insisted that the Aaver sleep be documented. She sat with her husband and wrote down every detail of his dream. She was so enthralled with the journey the Aaver sleep had take him on, she titled it the Kevelary Text in dedication to the abstract painter Hoart Kevelary.

Hoart's paintings were based on surreal drug induced dreams he himself had been through.

When a wealthy politician was assassinated and the Cone River ran dry, 2 things he had seen in his Aaver sleep it thus began the dissection of the Kevelary Text.

After Peastro had undergone the documentation of his own Aaver sleep, he was asked what he desired. He replied only a hug and a kiss from a beautiful girl. A young lady came to his chamber and he got his hug and his kiss.

He wanted a pound of Pent and a Kabervian tiger cub for a pet as well. He also asked that his father's life be made easier, and it was. He was showered with riches and a new home. He asked that Jarvis Jo be made to suffer.

Javis Jo had beaten up Peastro when he was only 1 year passed. The beating had left his back scarred and crooked. He hadn't forgotten and fair is fair he thought. Jarvis Jo did suffer and all of his relatives as well.

The cleansing of a Vindijans' shame was very important. They believed you had to be free of all past disgraces to enjoy future victories. His 5<sup>th</sup> day though changed everything.

On the 597<sup>th</sup> day of the year of the builder the T sun couldn't be seen, no warmth hit the ground there was just a black cloud hugging the countryside. The sky was filled with tens of thousands of multi-colored diamond shaped vessels of war, an endless armada on an enormous scale. These were not Vindijan or Kaa warships.

Every ship has 20 giant red and black striped cannons. Diabolical sneering faces adorned on their bellies, visible to everyone below creating a panic in the Kaa. Their music was manic and being blasted from the bows and it had no rhyme or reason. It was a melodic battle cry that could rattle the bravest warrior. Every child in Sras Oblique cried but one. Peastro was not shaken, not even a little.

Peastro tapped Coup on the wrist and said, "Emperor, they've come to talk with me. This is only window dressing, they're looking to corrupt our reason...but we are Vindijan's."

Coup didn't know initially what to think, but he looked at Peastro and felt his conviction.

"You will speak with them, Peastro, and you will speak for us," said Coup as he ran his finger in a circle around Peastro's temple.

"They'll need us before this day is over, and we will only smile," said Peastro as his eyes glowed.

His body started levitating and he laughed a sinister laugh. His thoughts were clear he felt only a dull joy. He knew there was work ahead.

The armada started sending small vessels to the surface, filled with small groups of soldiers. When they landed on the ground they didn't attack, they simply stood among the Kaa. The Kaa didn't know what to think so they simply stood and stared at the soldiers.

The soldiers themselves are covered in shimmering golden body armor. On their chests are the letters, "WOS" in red lettering. Their heads are abnormally large in proportion to their bodies. Their skin is

silver and green as their necks have several electronic inputs protruding from them. Their eyes aren't eyes at all as they're a bright purple light coming from their eye sockets.

A large shuttle came out of one of the battleships. It is surrounded by 4 smaller attack vessels. The shuttle is broadcasting a sinister musical symphony. The music is so terrifying it sends a Hool herd running in every direction. The Kaa children are crying and covering their ears.

The back of the shuttle has flower pedals being dropped to the ground. The shuttle taxis' into Plushi Chateau and hovers for several minutes before landing on the royal rose garden, The Vindijan children are seen dancing and singing in the courtyard.

A beautiful green skinned woman with white eyes named Hocah emerges from the shuttle. Hocah is tall and has a very thin figure. Her lips are large and red with the word Pepty written on her lower lip. She is wearing a pair of black leather pants and a skin tight see through red top. She has large beautiful breasts accentuated by her flowing blonde hair. In her left hand she is clutching a small leather case.

Hocah is met in the royal garden by Coup and 4 Humpacca soldiers. Coup walks up to her and offers his hands palms up. She looks at Coup oddly and then drops to the ground in a full split and kisses his foot.

Coup is oddly aroused by this but only for a moment. Coup pulls at his beard and then says, "I am Coup Vindijan, Emperor of Sras Oblique. What aid can I give you?"

"Hocah is my name and I have come here to speak with a powerful young man. We felt his presence and came as soon as fortune would allow," said Hocah as she put her hand on Coup's shoulder.

"I know who you speak of Peastro is his name."

"Peastro... what a beautiful name," said Hocah as her eyes smiled.

“But why bring an army for a conversation. What importance could warrant this, please explain,” said Coup smoothly as he slowly adjusted his collar.

“Emperor, all questions will find their answers when Peastro and I share love,” said Hocah as she looked lovingly into Coup’s eyes.

Coup looked at her and felt a certain love for her. She reminded him of a young Mela. He caressed her cheek and said, “Hocah, you will have what you desire. We will go to Peastro now.”

Coup and Hocah walked into Plushi Chateau and down a long corridor. The corridor is lined with family portraits and busts made of white marble. One of those has its nose worn completely flat. It is the bust of Capethia and is thought to bring great tidings to gently rub his visage. Coup gave the statue a rub as he walked by and this was noticed by, but she said nothing.

They came to the end of the corridor and they entered the Polvie conference hall. There are several orange energy fountains at either end of the hall. They gush with water filled with tamed energy and greeted the eyes warmly. They smelled of Llion rose pedals and have a soothing series of natural musical notes they emit.

The ceiling is a large red glass pyramid that reaches in vain for the T sun’s chin. There are hundreds of Flarea Flies being born in the rafters then seconds later explode into brilliant lime green bursts of light. The walls in the Polvie are adorned with ornate gold carvings. The carvings, and there are thousands, each depict a single day in a Vindijan’s life. For some it was a military triumph, others sexual, but most have their moment of clarity carved into the gold. So as it is there are also carvings of Vindiajn’s eating breakfast. There are also others combing their hair and even some simply reading.

In the far left corner Peastro sat with his chair facing out the window. The T sun is shining directly into his eyes. His hair and eyes are glowing brightly. In his hand he is squeezing a Bour Ro Leaf. The Bour Ro Leaf gives the body a prolonged energy burst.

He senses Coup and Hocah drawing closer, but he is mentally busy focusing on a former triumph. They come close and Peastro draws in a deep breath and holds it in his chest for 5 seconds. He exhales slowly and uncrosses his legs.

Hocah walks up next to Peastro and blows gently into his ear, then kisses his cheek. Peastro gives no reaction and continues to stare into the T sun through the window.

“I have come a long way, Peastro, many stars and countless moons to feel the warmth of your skin,” said Hocah as she knelt down beside him and turned her eyes to the T sun and continued, “we know you are more than a boy, much more than a Vindijan. We believe that you are the Oas Pla.”

“Hocah, I do not know what is this Oas Pla.”

“Peastro, the Oas Pla in our culture is an extension of God. The deliverer of his magnificent mind, the embodiment of all of his divine virtues,” said Hocah sternly as she felt Peastro around the neck and then said, “When your mind delivered to us your pristine logical thought. Our minds collectively shook and our mission was clear,” said Hocah as she put her hand on Peastro’s.

Peastro turned to her and said, “You’re very beautiful, Hocah, now that I see you in life, you are more radiant than my dream could show.”

“This is very kind of you, you are a vision to my eyes,” said Hocah as she pulled the hair from her face.

“What my clarity requires is to know more about your mission,” said Peastro plainly.

“We only want to nurture and caress your divine virtue, and what we feel that requires is your presence in our world.”

“Oh I could never leave my home. Sras Oblique is the blood in my veins,” replied Peastro as he grinned. “If you’ve come here in the hopes that I would leave with you, then you have made a tremendous error,” said Peastro as he turned his back to the T sun.

Hocah took her hand off of Peastro’s and said nothing. She put her hand gently to her lips and kept it there for a few seconds. She couldn’t believe his reaction, she had just assumed that he would come with her. She felt bewildered but decided to give him the Frospt Proposal anyway. She handed Peastro her small leather case and then said, “Inside that case is our Frospt Proposal in Lea, please open your heart and entertain this offer in earnest.”

Peastro opened the case the Lea root was inside. The Lea root is a plant that had the ability to have messages carried in its vines. You simply spoke at the Lea and it would retain the information. When the receiver breathed on the Lea the words of the message would be formed by the Lea’s vines.

Peastro breathed on the Lea and words started forming, “Divine Child of the Builder, for centuries we were lost and our hearts black. Our ambitions lacked conviction or a relevant direction or cause. The Nor are a passionate people who only want our love and passions to be shared forever with you. Every whim or whimsy you desire will be given before the wanting enters your mind. You’ll rule over a world Goldva for as long as your lungs draw breath. Think about the supreme power that could inhabit your soul. Our planet is an oasis, with lush rolling Hif grass hills and glorious waterfalls around every corner. The place where you would live, the East Palace, is over 100 miles of unheard of opulence. Your intellectual curiosity would be nurtured with our centuries of collected wisdom. All this great wisdom gathered in our Terpo library. We know you are wise, but even wise men need to be challenged. Take a day and think of the possibilities our love and friendship could bring.”

Peastro felt excited about their offer as it wasn’t long ago he was a simple Hool herder. Wow he thought how his fortunes have changed. He felt conflicted, he had a family now and he was a Vindijan, but the Nor’s offer was a sizable one. He could have supreme power and everything he ever wanted.

“I will take one day and then I will give you my definitive answer. I am not leaning either way, my mind is neutral, Hocah. We would love it if you would be our favored guest,” said Peastro warmly.

“I would love to be your guest and I know you will do what is just. Give us a chance, Peastro, you just might like it,” said Hocah as she put her hand on Peastro’s shoulder and smiled.

Peastro smiled back wildly and ran his hand across her brow. Coup was standing behind them. His arms were crossed and his eyes glowed. He motioned to a pair of servants and they walked briskly to his side.

“These two servants will take you to your quarters. They will take care of all of your needs,” said Coup as he looked intently at Hocah.

“So kind...so very kind of you, Coup, I won’t need much,” said Hocah as she took a knowing glance at Peastro, then she was escorted away.

Coup watched as she walked away and then turned to Peastro and said, “Peastro, you know what we can offer you here...”

Peastro interrupted, “Coup, please you know where my loyalties lie.”

“I know...of course dear son.”

“My allegiance will always be to the Vindijan Line ‘til my veins run dry. What is more important now is the Nor army and their use of it when I reject their offer,” said Peastro as he sat up in his chair.

“You are absolutely right, the problem is our army isn’t large enough to truly defeat the Nor,” said Coup calmly as he looked at the T sun.

“No it isn’t, but the Kaa on our side it would be. If they would join us we could destroy the Nor,” said Peastro greedily.



“True...but this is our cause why would they aid us at all? It would be in their best interest to see us destroyed,” said Coup as he tugged at his beard.

“Yes true, but they only know what we tell them. If they were made to think that Sras Oblique is in danger of being destroyed by the Nor per se,” said Peastro sternly as he eyed a Kaa family bathing in a fountain. “They would rally to our cause. With their help our combined armies we could wipe the Nor armada out entirely!” thundered Peastro.

“Oh you are wise dear boy, but will he go for it?” asked Coup.

“What are his options? Right about now Edifus is probably growing desperate. He’s at least halfway through the Cuptank series.”

“Brilliant...absolutely brilliant he’ll have no choice but to join us. Let’s go bearing gifts and show him our real concern for our desperate world,” said Coup slyly as he pulled a Messon Leaf cigar from his pocket.

“We only have a day and that troubles me,” said Peastro anxiously.

“Fear is fleeting, we have reason and that is our advantage.”

The pair made for the holding cell where Edifus is being held. In his holding cell Edifus is about to have the skin on his hands charred by a Consin laser machete. The Consin is able to pass through your flesh and burn underneath the surface of your skin. Thus the burns are not visible, but the pain is excruciating and unbearable.

His hands are fastened to a floating table. Then a soldier named Raskon pulls the Consin from its holster and waves it in front of Edifus’ eyes. Edifus is terrified as his entire body is already in pain. He doesn’t know if he can take much more. Raskon lines up the Consin with Edifus’ right hand and raises the machete high and slashes down.

Coup and Peastro burst into the room and yell for Raskon to stop. The Consin is only an inch from his hand when the soldier stops. Peastro is carrying a tray of baked pies and a bottle of Borco wine he'd brought for Edifus.

"Thank you, Emperor, I just couldn't..." said Edifus before being cut off.

"Don't thank me yet, our world is under attack."

"What do you mean?" asked Edifus nervously.

"The Nor armies have invaded our planet and are on the verge of destroying our world. I know we have had our differences, but this is far more important, Edifus," said Coup as he released Edifus from his bonds.

Edifus started ravenously eating one of the pies and takes a giant gulp of the wine and then says "You need my army, is that correct?"

"Correct."

"If you assure me that the Toen war ends today and we will share Sras Oblique as brothers. Then the Kaa army will fight side by side with the Vindijans and gladly spill our blood, Emperor," said Edifus as he ate another pie.

"The Toen war is no more, Edifus. We are brothers now and until infinite discovery. I give the word of myself and the Vindijan Line," said Coup as he extended his arms palms up to Edifus.

Edifus looked at him for a moment and then runs his hand in a circle over Coup's outstretched arms. Edifus grabbed the bottle of wine and drank the last of it and said, "I need a transport vehicle and also a change of clothes. How long 'til they attack?"

"Tomorrow," replied Coup.

“Then forget the clothes. I want to thank you, Coup. The Kaa will thank you with all their hearts and minds. You’ve done a brave act<sup>5</sup> and a righteous one,” said Edifus as he walked rapidly out of the cell. Then he turned and said, “I will contact the Fini Seven...this situation will dissolve into history, Coup, I know it.”

Coup watched as Edifus walked away and then said boldly, “There goes the greatest genius in the history of morons.”

Peastro and Coup shared a hearty laugh and then the two touched each other’s foreheads together. This is supposed to symbolize one mind, one logic a Vindijan ritual. They went to their sleeping quarters and prepared themselves mentally for the following days’ gear grinding.

## Veveld and Carnag recon 8<sup>th</sup>'s

Coup awoke and shouted, "Too dust!" as was his habit. He sat up in his bed and started smoking a Messon Leaf cigar. His hot breakfast was waiting for him on a retractable table in the center of the bed. He ate his Vin meat sandwich and some Youba berry ice cream, then downed a glass of Hool milk.

Mela is sound asleep beside him, but her hand is violently rubbing his chest. This is something she often did unknowingly and Coup was more than used to it. Coup stood and attached his hands and feet into four Spryga rings and started his daily workout.

Spryga rings allow you to move any part of your body in any direction and they provide resistance. They gave a vigorous workout in very little time. After a few minutes in the Spryga rings Coup sat in his chair on the balcony. He happily took in the first rush of the T sun's rays.

The morning is very important to Vindijans as they feel that a well thought out morning leads to an extraordinary day. Every Vindijan has their morning designed to maximize their own set of wants and must have's.

On the table is an absorbable thought patch, known as a Lila. The Lila carries more than a message, an actual thought from the sender. You simply have to attach the Lila to your skin above your temple. Then the senders' thought would enter your brain after it dissolved. This particular Lila was from Edifus. Coup attached the Lila and after it had dissolved he understood that Edifus wanted to thank him tremendously. He also understood that the Kaa army was ready to fight side by side with the Vindijan's whenever he gave the call. This was the news he was waiting for and it thrilled him.

He refused to allow himself to get too overjoyed. He knew that he had to keep his emotions in a certain acceptable range or run the risk of self sabotage. There was still the matter of Hocah.

She might catch on to his plan and hatch a plan of her own if he wasn't careful. He thought to himself about the possibility of her and her army simply leaving after Peastro gave her his answer. Deep inside he feared this wasn't going to be the case. If so, why bring such a large army for a simple request.

No, he saw the way she looked at Peastro. They wanted Peastro to think that they were asking, but before long they'd be demanding and he knew it.

Coup got word that Peastro had finished his morning routine and would meet him in the Royal Sepcha garden.

Sepcha's are miniature purple Togot trees, very rare and very pleasing to the eye. Their branches are all at 90 degree angles and each has a lavender Devoi snake living in their trunks.

Devoi snakes have been domesticated and are a treasured children's pet. They have a fury brown exterior and are very soft to the touch.

Hocah is told to meet them in the Royal Sepcha garden as soon as she is ready. She tells the messenger she will be there shortly.

While Coup and Peastro wait they both get lost in their own thoughts. They sit silently and ponder the possible outcomes. Then they look at each other and nod, as if to say to one another be ready.

Hocah is led into the garden and she sits down across from Peastro. She is wearing a skin tight white leather suit and her hair is done up to look like a rose pedal. She looks at Peastro and says, "I hope this morning is as prosperous as it feels."

"I couldn't agree more, there's a bounty of hope here today," replied Peastro.

"So true, so yes," said Hocah as she smiled.

"Do you need anything, Hocah?" asked Coup.

“No, I couldn’t be more taken care of.”

“Hocah, I thought about the Frospt proposal with all of my faculties. I weighed the dynamics of a yes, as well as a no,” said Peastro calmly as he gently patted his own chest. “When I thought about the power of saying yes, my heart was torn. I have family here and the Vindijan Line took me in and inspired me to ascend. The love I feel for them and my home Sras Oblique is unending. What I say, and I say it in earnest is no...a thousand times no.”

Hocah’s hint of a smile had completely faded. She sat defiantly and stared at Peastro. She leaned forward and shouted, “We’re not ASKING!!” and then she spit and yelled, “You’ll be coming with us today by freewill or by force! If force, we’ll wipe this planet clean of every Vindijan and every Kaa, if that’s what it takes! Your precious Sras Oblique will be desert before the T sun sets!”

Coup pressed his transmitter in his pocket signaling his troops to start the attack. He and Peastro shot back out of their chairs and watched as Hocah tried in vain to grab Peastro with her legs.

Hocah pulled a blue light stick from her crotch and a second later she disappeared. The room filled with the smell of a dying animal. The ground where she had stood was burned black and there were traces of blue light.

Then they heard a loud crackling sound that got louder and louder. Coup knew it wasn’t good so he shouted to Peastro, “Make for the far end of the garden quick!”

They levitated and soared as fast as they could over the Sepcha trees. Behind them, as Coup looked back, he could see large sections of the Chateau being lifted by the Nor battleship. The marble roof, the walls, everything was being lifted upward. A powerful tractor beam tore Plushi Chateau too pieces, as the Nor tried to capture Peastro.

As Coup and Peastro got closer to the exit Peastro looked back to see the Sepcha garden being hoisted into the sky. The tractor beam closed in on them, their hearts pounded like a jack hammer in their chests.

Peastro and Coup kept their wits about them. They were frightened as every Vindijan could focus their resolve under stress. They flew through the exit arms struggling. The exit itself was hoisted into the sky a second later.

Coup grabbed Peastro's arm and they made a hard left for the hangar bay. The tractor beam barely missed them, but they knew they weren't safe yet. As their levitation powers wore off, they sprinted for the hangar bay. Coup shouted as he turned his head, "When we get to the hangar bay are only chance is to dig! If we try to use the shuttle they'll catch us for certain!"

"If there is a hangar bay," said Peastro nervously as he felt a pain in his neck.

Coup looked at Peastro and felt a chill go down his spine. He wished he hadn't said that because he feared he was right.

Behind them again they heard the crackling sound. They could see the hallway they had just run down rapidly disappear. They sprinted into the hangar bay and Coup shouted, "Made for the shuttle!"

"But we can't fly," shouted Peastro as he made for the shuttle.

"The Mole, the Medivit Mole it's our only chance!" shouted Coup.

They ran into the shuttle and as they did the hangar bay started to lift into the air. The two of them jumped into the Medivit Mole and hit the launch button. The Mole tore through the hangar bay floor, which was already lifted 50 feet off the ground.

"Brace yourself, Peastro, we could become a whole lot thinner!" shouted Coup as he held the steering wheel as hard as he could.

Peastro looked at Coup for a moment, but he wasn't scared he felt at ease. He had a rush of relaxation come over him. He could see a small yellow man floating in front of him and the man whispered the words, "Veveld, Carnag." The yellow man spoke, "It's all for you," and disappeared.

The Mole smashed into the crater where the hangar bay had been, causing Coup and Peastro to shoot forward violently. Coup hit the control panel and split his forehead wide open. His blood dripped into his eyes blurring his vision, but it was only a flesh wound. Peastro had a bruise on his chest from the impact, but wasn't shaken.

A second later the Medivit Mole started to dig into the ground. They went deep below the surface and then Coup took over manual control. He steered for Edtwarp Rim which is the staging area for the Toen War. He knew his generals would be there and they would be safe.

Above the ground they heard bomb blasts and then Coup said, "Sounds like a party."

Peastro smiled and then said, "Let's hope they save us some Pent."

"They always do," said Coup as he rubbed Peastro's cheek and then said, "I just hope there's a world left to party in."

"Sras Oblique is more than a collection of molecules. The idea will always transcend the questions answer," said Peastro as he rubbed his chest and watched the gauges.

"But who will be left to query?" asks Coup slyly.

Peastro stopped rubbing his chest and nodded at Coup. The Medivit Mole pierced the surface and as it did a missile flew past them and hit a squadron of Kaa soldiers, bursting them into flames. Coup and Peastro are soon met by Humpacca soldiers and are instantly shielded with Quo energy shields. They have the ability to scatter energy and their edges give you total security from the blasts.

Soon Coup and Peastro are brought to the Ge Pau.

The Ge Pau is an impenetrable stronghold, where all their military minds are waiting and orchestrating their attacks. Coup is met by General Ruebluff and they exchange the Vindijan greeting. General



Ruebluff says sternly,” We’ve taken some hits, Emperor, but they’ve taken more. We have destroyed ten of their battleships and are even with ground troop losses.”

“Good, good but what of their flagship, have we taken her?” asked Coup anxiously.

“Not yet, it seems to have eluded us on how to break through their shield. The smaller ships seem to work in tandem to protect the larger ones. The more we try to pull her from the sky, the more losses we take,” said General Ruebluff cautiously as he showed Coup the monitor.

“I see...let her be for now. We’ll wipe out the rest of their fleet. Then we’ll take another pass at her. And if she’s dumb enough to fight at that point, then she’s dumb enough to die.”

“It will be exactly done, Emperor, she’ll have to flee, I’d bank on it,” said General Ruebluff.

“I wouldn’t, she may be too proud this one. Either way wars are for winning,” said Coup proudly.

“Yes they are,” said Ruebluff as he smirked.

Peastro watched as Coup made his decisions, making a point to make notes. He was particular to remember the tone of Coup’s voice and his cadence. He knew the best way to learn was to find someone wise and learn from their wisdom. In the Vindijan Line age wasn’t feared but revered and looked forward too. Children dreamed about the day they\ would have all the answers. They are careful not to ask many questions, instead observe and acquire the knowledge as it pertains to them. The Vindijan youth is for life building, the shaping of ideas and forming personal truths.

Peastro felt someone’s hand on his shoulder and turned to see Mela smiling at him.

“I see your learning already keep your mind limber today. All the worlds’ complexities are learned through conflict,” said Mela.

“Mela, I want to know it all, so much so I can’t keep as single thought in my head,” said Peastro honestly as he put his arm around Mela.

“Then don’t...keep your focus on not focusing on a single detail. Better would be just the larger ideas and the way a thought feels.”

“I’ll learn as fast as today will let me,” said Peastro.

“Yes,” said Mela with a wink and a nod.

ON the monitor in front of them there are several Kaa fighter jets engaging a Nor battleship. They are imploring the Cushy Fly technique

The Cushy Fly technique is based on how the Cushy fly bites a Hool, then leaves poison beneath the Hool’s skin. Enough bites from the Cushy Fly and a Hool will perish.

“The Kaa fighter’s are attacking in short bursts with armor piercing grenades. Then they flee until they have detonated. The battleship wouldn’t pay them any mind, because of the small damage they cause, but over time the combined effect will cripple the battleship’s defenses. Then the Venebon battleship will swoop in for the kill.

“How in the Terious did they do that?” joked Coup,” that’s what they’ll be saying when we pluck them from the sky.”

“How in the Terious indeed,” said General Ruebluff as he sipped from a flask of Breediv coffee.

Breediv is made from coffee beans that have passed through a Kabervian tiger’s intestines. The beans are then dipped in Amoss bird droppings and left to bake in the T sun’s morning rays. The coffee is too strong for the Kaa’s, but the Vindijans swear by it.

“That one looks about ripe,” said Coup as he observed 1 of the Nor battleship’s start to smoke,” send in the Venebon!”

General Ruebluff sent word to a nearby Venebon battle ship to engage the Nor battleship. The Venebon hovered only feet from the surface, below the Nor battleship. Then it rose rapidly up from beneath and fired its entire arsenal of weapons into its belly.

The Nor were defenseless and the Vindijan's missiles tore through the ship, splitting it in two. Instead of being captured the Nor self destructed the rest of their vessel. The ship burst into an enormous blue flame and left a plume of ash and smoke.

A moment later 2 green skinned men appeared out of nowhere. They stood for a moment then walked casually over to Peastro and Mela. Their clothes are skintight white leather suits. They are also wearing red rimmed sunglasses and have no shoes on. They are petit, only a few inches taller than Peastro. Their noses are long and prominent.

"Hello, Veveld, Carnag, are you here for conflict?" asks Peastro as he holds Mela tightly.

"No, Peastro, we are here to end one," said Veveld flatly.

"If you think you're going to take Peastro with you..." said Coup sharply before being cut off.

"We wouldn't take him against his will. We can see the error in that way of thinking," said Carnag as he looked at Peastro.

"Pardon me if I find that troublesome to fathom," said Coup calmly as he rubbed his belly and grinned.

"We can see that this battle is ridiculous. All's we want now is for it to end. But we have come to recon 8<sup>th</sup>'s," said Veveld as he adjust his sunglass.

"What do you mean recon 8<sup>th</sup>'s?" asked Mela as she looked at Veveld.

"They want an 8<sup>th</sup> of my life, in exchange for no further hostilities," said Peastro as he let go of Mela and walked up to Carnag. "That's right isn't it?"

“That is completely factual. All’s we are asking is that you spend an 8<sup>th</sup> of your life on our planet. We’ve calculated that you’ll live approximately 56 years and 4 months. Which means you would spend...”

“7 years,” said Peastro quickly.

“That’s correct, 7 years on Goldva is all that we would require,” said Carnag warmly as he gently rubbed his forehead. “And of course you would choose the 8<sup>th</sup> of your life you would spend with us. We are not a vicious people. Our hearts and minds would be open to you and you would always feel loved. We would embrace you completely and I can assure you it would never be mundane. We can’t imagine another day of bloodshed. When we can talk as friends, of compromise?” asked Carnag as his hands rested at his side.

“Well there it is, don’t decide until your greeted with a pure thought,” said Coup.

Peastro thought for a moment, then looked at all of the faces around the room and said, “What I know is this, the first 8<sup>th</sup> of my life is almost over and I need my Vindijan family now. The next 8<sup>th</sup> if my life I’ll be becoming the Vindijan I’ll be for the rest of my life, so that 8<sup>th</sup> is spoken for. But the 3<sup>rd</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> of my life would be best suited for adventure,” said Peastro firmly as he paced a bit back and forth. “It would give me a chance to grow and reach my divinity. If I embraced the Nor at that point in my life, I would be capable of true understanding and ascension. So in my discovery has come your answer.”

Veveld put the tip of his finger to the roof of his mouth and spoke, “The conflict has passed, end the assault.”

Suddenly the Nor Fighter’s and battleship’s stopped attacking as well as their ground troops. General Ruebluff immediately ordered a ceasefire and the battle ceased.

“Then that’s it?” asked Coup.

“That is the summation of our dispute. We will not be back to Sras Oblique for 10 years. And when we return we won’t be bringing our army,” assured Carnag as he looked at Coup intently. “We have total faith that Peastro is a man of honest intent. That said, Peastro, enjoy your years here. A man’s youth lingers long into old age and brings endless satisfaction,” said Carnag as he smiled warmly.

“I’ll be ready upon your return,” said Peastro as he offered his hands palms up.

“We know, you’re braver than us all,” said Veveld as he waved his hands in a circle over Peastro’s.

Veveld pulls out a blue light stick from his waist and in a flash they are gone.

“Coup, I am sorry I’ll be leaving you,” said Peastro slyly.

“Oh Builder no, don’t give it a moment’s worry,” replied Coup as he waved his right hands. “We want your ascension as much as our hearts can bear. For the sake of the Vindijan Line we need you to go there and find out all you can. The bounty of technology and experience you’ll acquire will only strengthen the Line.”

“So spying is my function?” asks Peastro with a smirk.

“More than that, flat out stealing is your mission. Let’s be truthful, if we hadn’t had the Kaa’s help they could have destroyed all that we have pained for,” said Coup nervously as he tapped his leg and looked up to the ceiling. “Our infinite discovery would have arrived far before its invitation had been extended. For the Vindijan’s to continually ascend we’re going to need every trick and ploy their dumb enough to teach you. When the time comes you’ll need to be porous, sticky for information,” said Coup as his brow furrows.

“I completely understand and my grasp of this opportunity is firm. I will devour all of the wisdom they will serve me,” said Peastro sternly.

“Yes, there is only the Line,” answered Coup snidely as he clenched his fist.

“The Line is my first and last breath.”

“Completely, now there’s still the business of those insufferable Kaa. There has been enough war for today we’ll send them our thank you note in the morning. I can’t think of a better sound than bomb blasts in the morning, it thrills me to no end,” said Coup snidely as a wry smile came across his face.

“I think Edifus greets the T sun early. It would be a travesty not to be there when he does,” said Peastro smugly.

“The debt we owe is that, and this time we’ll bring a much more hospitable gift. You should never let the ones you love pain wanting,” said Coup menacingly.

“I agree let’s make our undying love and gratitude bubble to the surface for, Dear Edifus,” said Peastro as he smiled.

Coup nodded softly then he took Peastro by the hand and led him into the dining area. The two sat silently and ate ravenously. A Vindijan always ate all that they were hungry for before speaking.

“Peastro, I want you to be there with me when we capture Edifus. I think it’s important you see a proud man’s will broken. This will give you a better understanding of his character and all of his eternal flaws,” said Coup smugly as he eyed a bottle of Borco wine.

“When the T sun rises I will be there to see Edifus’ glory set,” said Peastro as he sat back in his chair.

Peastro and Coup smoked Messon Leaf cigars and sipped Borco wine late into the evening.

Meanwhile Edifus was back with the Fini Seven, they were having their own celebration. They all sat around a large table inside the games room at Fireo castle. The 7 large brown and black leather thrones surrounded a white and red marble table. The walls of the room are filled with the heads of exotic dead animals. There are Vense bears to Tibervian tigers, even the head of a purple Corne lizard, extremely rare since the Pendido war.

“The old man finally went for it,” said Vier.

Vier is a red skinned, slight built man with stark white hair. His face has jagged scars running from his chin to his hairline. His eyes are perpetually dilated and his teeth are large and yellow. He isn't wearing a shirt and has a silver necklace with a blue diamond star attached.

“Yes, he allowed his grasp of what's right to finally come out righteous. He could've dragged this war on for decades and crippled the world,” said Edifus in disbelief as he looked around the table.

“True, I never thought I'd see a free T sun ever rise. My two sons will be owners of Sras Oblique instead if Prisoners in it,” said Vier as he drew a drag from his pipe.

“What Coup did was more than ending the Toen War. He's ending a worn out, dated hypocrisy! He's doing away with their crushing of our people's dreams,” said Edifus as he shook his glass. “With what he did today...I'll thank him every moment of my life. I truly honor Coup Vindijan, and I'll tolerate the Line if it means equality for my daughter,” said Edifus as he puts his glasses on the top of his head.

The other members of the Fini Seven also put their glasses on the top of their heads. They joined hands and in one quick motion they all jerked their head forward, sending the glasses crashing to the floor. They all let out a shout, “To dust with divinity!” Edifus jumped on the table and danced and the others followed suit.

## Chapter 6

### The Bounty of Breask

The T sun crawled down the Gogif tower as was its' habit, but there is a storm brewing. In the distance a large purple storm cloud is rapidly encroaching on Cas City, as was Coup and Peastro. They intended to personally thank Edifus for all his treasured assistance. They brought along 2 squadrons of Humpacca soldiers. They were quickly closing in on Edifus' hideout.

“There are 2 types of men, those who can be honest with themselves and those who cannot. Then there is a third, people who make up elaborate lies to themselves that they expect others' to believe,” said Coup frankly as he thought of Mela. “These men...and there are several are the embodiment of everything I hate. Edifus, I hope you loved another last night, for today...I'll be stealing your kisses. Open the door!” shouted Coup as he charged up his Petifee.

Two soldiers stepped forward and placed a Woipt sound grenade.

The Woipt will adjust its wavelength to that of the door and then sound waves will shatter it. After placing the Woipt it started to emit a low hum. Then the hum got louder and louder and the door shook violently. In an instant it shattered like a pane of glass and created a puff of smoke that filled the entryway.

Coup walked through the doorway and shouted,” How's the Vin this morning, bold or tart!”

There are 2 of the Fini Seven, Vier and Shad, sitting in facing chairs watching a hologram of the day's news. Shad goes for his Goalla gun, but before he could fire it Coup blasted him with the Petifee. Shad froze in his tracks. Then he got down on the floor and curled up into a ball. He started muttering to



himself, while his eyes glazed over. He was trapped in the grip of insanity. The Petifée's effects are quick to take hold and slow to improve.

Meanwhile Vier darts for the balcony. Coup's soldiers fired their Goalla guns at him, but missed both times. Vier dove from the balcony and into the Buot River below, disappearing below the surface.

Coup and the two soldiers raced to the balcony and watched as the surface of the water for Vier. Coup shouts, "Get down there!"

The soldier named Deroy jumps from the balcony and into the Buot River. The river is over a hundred feet down and the water is choppy. Coup starts frantically searching every room for Edifus. He can hear a panting sound, but can't tell what room it is coming from.

He walks cautiously down the hall peering into every room with his gun barrel leading the way. The hall is dark with only shards of light from the open doorways lighting the way.

As Coup gets closer to the end of the hall he hears a metal door snap shut. He knows that sound and instantly terror shoots through his mind. He sprints the last few steps to the end of the hall and enters the room. His worst fears are realized, inside the room he sees Edifus sitting inside a silver egg shaped escape pod. Edifus smirks at Coup, then the escape pod blasts through the ceiling. Coup can only watch with anger as Edifus escapes his grasp.

Coup is infuriated he really thought this would be his greatest triumph. He turns to leave the room and sees Peastro standing in the doorway. Coup looked at Peastro sternly and says, "Someday...someday soon he'll run out of chances. A fool can only run from the foolish."

"What do we do now?" asked Peastro calmly.

“There is a better way to chase the tiger, make him chase you. Every man has a possession they love. Take that away from them and they’ll cover every corner of Sras Oblique for its return,” said Coup as he looked around the room.

“But what is worth chasing for Dear Edifus?” asked Peastro as he started looking through the cabinets.

Coup also starts to search around the room. He looks in the closet and he starts to rummage through Edifus’ papers. He stops suddenly and says, “Why I love to swim with rainbows by Grena Time. Well isn’t that precious our Dear Friend Edifus has himself a daughter, a real talent to behold too.”

“Really,” said Peastro as he walks over to Coup.

“Oh yes, she has a poetic gift like I haven’t seen since Hared Tops,” said Coup as he handed Peastro a piece of off white paper.

“Rainbows are young, rainbows are fun, I met one and went for a swim brilliant! Well I can see where all the talent is in this family,” said Peastro as he kisses the paper.

“I need to meet the author, you know just to occupy the same space with a genius is thrilling. Hmm...all of the Kaa children in this city go to the Emo Se School. I’ll send a message to the Oa authorities right now,” said Coup as he pressed the thought transferring button on his temple.

The Oa authorities keep the peace among the Kaa and are under control of the Vindijan Line. After Coup sends his message, the Vindijan Line puts out the word and Grena Time is immediately picked up at Emo Se.

Coup feels relieved, now the tiger will be chasing him.

Coup and Peastro board Trident Souce 3 and make for Emo Se. Peastro occupies his time with a Framebot.

Framebot's are robots used to practice all of the Vindijan martial arts. They are all 6feet tall and cast in the image of Venkid. Their limbs are covered in white leather padding and are programmed to fight to the limits of your ability. They can't do you any real harm. Their processors give them the appearance of intelligence, but they possess no real ideas of their own, only memory.

Peastro gave his Framebot the name Urte, after his father. Urte has been programmed with humor reflexes to keep the lesson light. Peastro kicks Urte in the stomach with a twisting kick and asks," How's the floor taste today, Urte?"

"It's good, but you really should try some yourself," said Urte as he kicks out the legs of Peastro, sending him crashing to the floor.

Peastro laughs then jumps on Urte's back as he is getting up. Urte tries to spin and get Peastro off but can't and says," Peastro, you really shouldn't eat so much Pent. I don't think my circuits can handle much more."

"Oh really, you know I think I need a new necklace. Maybe I'll make one out of a Framebot."

"Oh no, I'm screwed," said Urte slyly.

"I wouldn't worry about it, Urte. A friend like you is worth more than a necklace," said Peastro as he rubbed Urte's chest.

"Thank Builder for you, Peastro. I thought I'd miss the T sun's morning kiss tomorrow. You go ahead and eat all the Pent you care too."

"Ahh don't tempt me, Urte," said Peastro as he smiles and climbs down off Urte.

Urte smiles and gently pokes Peastro in the belly. Whereas Peastro looks down at his own neck and pretends to run his fingers over a necklace. Urte looks worried and says," I'm just trying to keep you at your maximum readiness. Those Kaa can be vicious if you're not nimble."

Coup sat watching the two of them and then said, "There is nothing truer than that, Peastro. An extra bit of Pent here and there can add up to a softer self outlook," said Coup firmly as he rubbed his belly and then said, "be careful."

"Now you're entering the festivities and not a minute too soon," said Peastro as he pulled up his shirt to reveal his muscular stomach and then said slyly, "My body is my mission, see for yourself."

Coup gave him a nod and a wink. Urte poked Peastro's stomach and said proudly, "I was wrong, you're winning the war against the Pent, but not the battle with Urte."

Urte tried to strike Peastro in the chest but Peastro slipped the punch and grabbed Urte's arm. Then he tossed Urte hard into the wall.

"Think again, Urte, that wars' been won," said Peastro boldly as he put his hands on his hips.

Coup let out a belly laugh and clapped loudly. The landing tone sounded and everyone prepared to land. Trident Souce Three taxied into the schoolyard. Below they could see 2 guards and a young girl waiting for them. The schoolyard was filled with red sand and Dees prancing around. The school itself is a floating orb of white crystal and black windows. The school's student body can be seen crammed against its windows, they are eager to see the Emperor.

The sky filled with purple storm clouds and the rain is thick and enveloping. Every so often red lightning lit up the sky and hit the ground with a loud crashing sound. Storms like these, known as Toretas Wakes, can last for weeks or minutes you never knew which.

"Let's go take some Pent from a child...ahh the glory of politics," said Coup as they exited Trident Souce Three.

Peastro felt uneasy about what Coup had said, but he didn't let it show. He looked at Grena Time's face and felt sorry for her. He also was taken aback by her beauty.

Grena Time is a striking young lady with piercing yellow and green colored eyes. She has long straight black hair with purple streaks. She looks like a female version of Edifus, with a strong jaw and high cheekbones. Her skin is blood red with black freckles. She is wearing a black spandex body suit with a T sun pattern over all of it. Around her neck is a light necklace that changes colors every few seconds. On her feet are white lace slippers with pointed tips. She is standing with her legs crossed and her hands are on her hips.

As Peastro grew closer he saw that she had been crying. Coup tapped Peastro on the shoulder and said sternly, "Remember the Tiger."

Peastro nodded, but felt guilty about what they were doing. Coup exchanged greetings with the two soldiers then said, "Miss Grena Time, we're taking you on a little adventure today. Please take my hand and we'll be off."

Grena looked at Coup and took his hand as she scowled at Peastro. Peastro felt terrible, that he hadn't been so embarrassed in his life. The 3 of them hurried onto Trident Souce 3 and then the ship took off.

Coup gave Grena a roll and a glass of Nehe pop, a drink loaded with Yorba berry juice. Grena set the roll down and sipped the Nehe pop slowly. She didn't know what to say so she just kept sipping her Nehe pop. Peastro watched her for a moment then decided to sit down beside her. He slid in next to her and said warmly, "Grena, we're not going to hurt you ok. That's not why you're here."

"Then why go to the trouble, why...I mean why?" asked Grena anxiously as she spilled some pop on her leg.

"It's your father, Edifus he's done something against the Line and that can't be tolerated," answered Peastro sternly as he glanced at Coup.

"You'll never find him, he can hide out 'til your dust believe me. He's wiser than any of you," said Grena quickly as she bit into her roll.

“No harm will come to your father...”

“Don’t lie to me, I heard what you did to him last time. He still has trouble sleeping because of it. I hope there’s a poison in this Nehe pop, I really do,” said Grena angrily as she took a big drink of her Nehe pop.

“Calm down, if your father agrees to meet with us you can go back to Emo Se. All’s we want is to ask him a few questions,” said Peastro calmly.

“What questions, is it about the Breask?” asked Grena defiantly and then she said angrily, “I’ll tell you where it is right now if that will settle this!”

Coup and Peastro exchanged a quick glance and then Coup perked up in his seat and asked, “Yes indeed, why don’t you tell us where the Breask is and as you said we’ll consider this settled?”

“Alright, it’s buried in the garden behind Blanvie Market. It’s beneath the kissing stone. They buried it deep and put it in a silver casket,” explained Grena as she tied her hair back. “You got what you wanted now let me go,” said Grena as she took a bite from her roll.

“You’ll be released right after we dig it up. I give you the word of the Vindijan Line,” said Coup as he tugged at his beard.

“Fine, I trust you since you are the Emperor and all.”

“Thank you...ah, Peastro, could you help me with the logic probe? I’ll need an extra pair of hands,” asked Coup coyly as he motioned for Peastro to follow him.

Peastro looked at him puzzled, but he got up and followed him nonetheless. The two made their way to the Emperor’s quarters. Once inside Peastro sat down on the couch and Coup shut the door behind them. Peastro grinned and asked, “What is this Breask and why is it important?”

Coup paced in front of Peastro unable to contain his excitement and said, "Breask, Dear Boy, is the Ultimate human enhancement. What is it? A tiny yellow pill made from the Earry trees' sap. The Earry tree only grows every twenty years and the last harvest seven years ago was stolen by the Kaa."

"What does it do?" asked Peastro.

"Well...what does it do, one Breask pill causes a feeling of euphoria for 70 days, one pill," said Coup greedily as he jumped around like a fool. "It also increases a person's muscle mass by 50 percent and their endurance is never ending, excuse my excitement! It also stimulates the brain and sharpens reason to extraordinary heights. Oh and let's not forget Sex!" said Coup excitedly as he pretended he was leading a parade. "In men imagine a never ending libido and in women endless orgasms! Oh, Peastro, if this turns out to be true then there will be a party on an epic scale," said Coup as he continued to dance like a fool.

Peastro let out a nervous laugh. Coup's pacing was making him uncomfortable. He'd never seen him like this.

Coup sat down beside him, still lost in thoughts of Breask. Peastro sat and smiled as he watched Coup so overjoyed and excited. Coup's thoughts were about Breask and how long it had been since he had one. Coup thought about how amazing it would be to get his hands on some. Vindijan's drank in the lean years as they waited for the Earry tree's return. If Coup returned with the Breask he would be the most favored Vindijan under the T sun.

Coup set his course for Blanvie Market. They didn't have far to go, the only problem was the kissing stone is always filled with newly joined couples. It is a tradition for the Kaa to kiss their lovers passionately as they lay on the kissing stone. The stone itself is a long piece of red marble in the shape of a mouth. It is said that the kissing stone can fill a union with passion and virility. Coup is hoping that what lies underneath will do the same for him.

They land and then they make their way through the crowd. Coup's Humpacca soldiers secure the area. The soldiers grab the kissing stone on either end and move it to the side. Peastro and Grena watch on as Coup orders the soldiers to dig.

Using dirt dissolving shovels they dig deeper and deeper until the soldiers' heads can't be seen.

"I hope you're not wasting our time, Grena," said Peastro as he looked intently at Grena.

"Don't worry, I saw them bury it. It's a couple more feet you'll see," said Grena reassuringly as she sucked on her index finger.

A soldier named Hida yells, "We've got something, something silver!"

Coup walks over to the edge of the hole and sees a silver casket at the bottom. The soldiers attach anti-gravity rings to the casket and it floats up to Coup. He grabs it and guides it over to the Trident Souce Three. Everyone boards and huddles around the casket as Coup smiles greedily.

"There's a lock here and we'll have to disarm it," said Coup as he rubbed his hands together.

Hida attached a universal key disk to the lock. The lock changed colors rapidly and then it popped the casket lid loose.

"Well children of the Builder...let's hope for passions," said Coup as he lifted the lid.

Inside the eight foot silver casket were thousands upon thousands of Breask pills. It was filled with those familiar yellow pills that Coup dreamed of. Everyone's eyes grew wide, but none wider than Coup's. Then Coup shouted, "A bounty of Breask for the Builder's most favored!"

Everyone cheered except for Grena. She sat in the corner with her head in her hands. Coup meanwhile grabbed a pill and held it in his hand. He gave it a whiff, then put it in his mouth and sucked on it for a moment, then swallowed it whole. Instantly all the tension in his face disappeared. Soon his chest and



shoulders started to grow. He started running in place and shaking his hands. Coup said excitedly, "Breask, oh Breask...our love gone for too long. Nobody kisses like you baby. I love you!"

Coup gave the soldiers a nod and a wink and they quickly took a Breask.

"Peastro, don't kid yourself get your hands on a Breask quick. You'll thank me someday for this one," said Coup as he sat down on the couch.

Peastro walked up to the casket and grabbed a Breask and put it in his mouth. He swallowed it whole and felt a rush in his brain. His entire body felt warm and he was completely filled with joy. He felt so good it scared him. His shoulders and chest grew quickly. He felt strong and powerful. Peastro asked, "What about Edifus, Grena, and Toen war?"

"Well I guess we'll drop off Grena and our dear friend Edifus will be safe for now. As far as the Toen war...let it Rage! We've got the Breask in our sails now. The Kaa will be totally destroyed, I feel my vigor once again," said Coup snidely as he got up did a spin on 1 foot.

Trident Souce Three lifted off and left Blanvie Market behind. Coup danced around the casket of Breask and sang the Vindijan national anthem, "Remember the Line."

Peastro danced with him and then sat down beside Grena. Grena looked sullen as she felt that telling Coup about the Breask may have been a mistake. She wonders if this ordeal will ever be over. She taps Peastro, who is singing with Coup, on the shoulder and asks, "Will this make things even?"

"Look, Grena, things are even we're taking you back to Emo Se right now. You need not let worry enter your mind," reassured Peastro as he held her hand in his.

"But what of my father...I just need him to be ok, Peastro. You got the Breask can't you let us be?" asked Grena sadly as her eyes welled up.

Peastro lifted her chin with his finger and said, "I'll make you a promise. If anything happens to Edifus I'll make sure you're taken care of," then he kissed her softly on the lips and gave her a nod and said, "Ok?"

"Ok, I trust you, Peastro. I can tell you don't make empty promises," said Grena then she kissed him on the hand.

Peastro felt strong feelings for her, but she a Kaa and the Vindijan's didn't pursue relationships with Kaa. It just wasn't done and he knew there were no exceptions. Still he had to have another kiss. He leaned in and kissed her on the lips. This time he caressed her cheek as he did, while she draped her leg over his. After they kissed they stared deep into each other's eyes.

Peastro caught himself and looked quickly at Coup to see if he had noticed, but he hadn't. He was too busy with his ill gotten gain to notice. Peastro felt relieved that he hadn't, but he didn't want to push his luck. He pulled away from Grena and said, "Grena, I should be dancing."

"I know, Peastro, you're a Vindijan and I am but Kaa," said Grena as she got up and walked across the room.

Peastro watched her walk away then he got up and danced with Coup. When they arrived at Emo Se, Grena grabbed a Breask and swallowed it. She walked a few steps and then turned halfway around, but then she just walked away. She didn't turn to face Peastro. Peastro wished she would give him one last look. His palms and face got sweaty as she walked away. He knew he missed her already.

## Chapter 7

### The Corruption of Slag

Today is Peastro's yearly reckoning, making him 8 years passed. In celebration the Vindijan hierarchy gave him his own Poro Cruiser with his head on the front. They also give him a Logic Thrust.

A Logic Thrust is a 7 day course of study designed specifically for the development of a Vindijan's creative mind. For twelve hours a day a Vindijan would be shown thousands of ways to access their creativity. This will give them the ability to think far beyond their rivals and in a moment's notice. 8 years passed is the agreed upon time to undergo the Logic Thrust.

Peastro was also given a Waveso silk thumb ring. The Waveso is a tiny worm that is only found in the Veeres region. The silk made from their backs, once fashioned into a ring will adhere to their skin. To remove the ring you'd have to remove the skin. Needless to say they are a part of you for life. Written on every one is the words, "Be partially apart," a reminder not to stay outside the Line.

Today is also the day Peastro is to choose his wife. He has dated several women and of course he wants to find a suitable match. He knew he needed a keen intellect as well as a passionate lover, if he was truly to ascend. His thoughts were still strong for Grena, even more so now that the finality of marriage is upon him. He tells himself he can be happy with another woman, specifically Morn Bevoi.

Morn has been everything he thought he wanted and is beautiful, generous, and kind. Still he was betrayed by his love unrealized for Grena.

Inside his personal Poro Cruiser in the ballroom his 3 potential mates have gathered. It is custom for a vase to be placed in front of each. Inside one vase there will be a tiger's tooth, in another a diamond star, and in the third a chocolate rose. The woman who gets the tigers' tooth is least favored and will

immediately be ushered away. The woman who gets the diamond is second favorite, and led through a staircase in the ceiling so as to lessen the embarrassment.

The one who gets the chocolate rose will consume it and sit at the throne beside Peastro. This will signal their equality in the relationship and the start of their new life. The 3 candidates sit in front of Peastro and the vases are brought out. The vases are all white and have the crest of the Vindijan Line on each. Each woman opens the lid of their vase and after seeing its contents gives no reaction, as is the custom.

Pew Mosty pulled a tiger tooth out of hers and is immediately ushered out of the ballroom. Nis Pept pulls a diamond star out of hers and leaves through a staircase in the ceiling. Morn Bevoi pulls out a chocolate rose, looks warmly at Peastro, licks her lips and then consumes the rose entirely. She then promptly rises and walks over to Peastro and sits beside him in her throne.

Now that a match has been chosen, it is customary for the Emperor to sprinkle the cremated remains of a Vindijan passed over their heads. This signifies their belief that unions are in this world and the next. Then there is the final ritual, the Mers Knowing stare.

The Mers Knowing stare consists of the united couple looking into each other's eyes for several minutes, as they visualize the highs and potential lows of their marriage.

Peastro and Morn lock eyes as they each smile warmly. They each start to play out the hopes and dreams they have for the marriage in their minds. Peastro thinks of their passions first then he thinks of children. The thoughts of his ascension to Emperor and wars he will fight come into focus. He worries of a child possibly dying, and the effect on their love because of it comes into focus.

He visualizes the man he will become in 10 ten years and the woman she will grow into. He thinks intently about the pressures that could drag them apart. He knows she won't stray, but he still thinks of Grena. He visualizes the day he might leave her for Grena and how it would devastate her. His palms get

sweaty and his heart rate rises. He notices Morn noticing him and quickly calms himself for the fear of spilling over.

Her expression hasn't changed the whole time as she continues to look at him warmly. What could she be thinking of he wondered. He thinks if only she knew about my true feelings for Grena.

After several minutes of the Mers Knowing stare they grabbed each other's hand and said softly," To dust I surrender."

Each member of the Vindijan hierarchy comes forward one at a time and touches foreheads with Peastro and Morn. After which they leave the ballroom taking handfuls of Break with them.

The last two to touch foreheads are Mela and Coup. After they do so Coup hands Peastro a Lila and gives him a wink. Peastro winks back at Coup, and then puts the Lila to his temple. After it dissolves he understands that Coup and Mela are happy he has found someone. He also reminds Peastro that there is a war to win. Then Peastro is startled to find out Coup had once loved a Kaa but thought better of it. Coup is happy that he has done the same.

Peastro feels nervous about the last thought, but relieved at the same time. He is glad Coup knows, glad somebody knows what he is going through. Peastro decides not to focus on how Coup knew. He just left it at that.

"Peastro my Love...will this day share favored space in your memories?" asked Morn as she kissed Peastro softly.

"It will be my most treasured and most vivid, My Love," said Peastro as he caressed her neck, then kissed her passionately.

Vindijan's believe wildly in prolonged sexual experiences, sometimes stretching over several days. In Peastro and Morn's case, they didn't come up for air for over a week. Next Coup sees Peastro has a certain glow to him. His eyes are completely relaxed and calm.

Peastro walks into the lounge at Bolti Chateau to meet with Coup. Coup is sitting with a red skinned man, obviously a Kaa. Peastro walks up to Coup, Coup walks over to him and says," Peastro, this is Slag he is one of the Fini Seven. He has come to speak with us of a ceasefire."

"Of course, Slag, always," said Peastro as he sat down in a floating throne.

Coup and Slag sit down across from him in two blue floating thrones. In the middle of them is a floating table with a bottle of wine on it. The walls in the lounge are comprised of video screens with the slideshow of the famous actor Va Bleem. His movies are playing on each of them.

Va Bleem is widely regarded as the Vindijan's favorite even though he is a Kaa. His film Quos B Taken is a cinematic masterpiece about a man whose life becomes a perpetual daydream. He won the Eepstrem award for it.

The Eepstrem is only given out but once every 5 years and has gone to both men and women. Va Bleem is the only person to have won it twice and of course the Vindijan Line chose the winner.

Every so often a large red bubble would float down from the ceiling and burst. It filled the air with a soothing smell of rose pedals to keep everyone on an even keel in the lounge. The bartender is sprawled out in a bed behind the bar. If anyone wants a drink they would press a button and the drink would rise up through the counter. The universal mixer can make any drink in a moment's notice.

"What has infected our mother Sras Oblique? What has destroyed her children?" asked Slag coldly. War, a war can never be won by either side. I can see now that there needs to be a compromise before there is only ashes to fight over," said Slag as he sat back in his throne and lit up a Tut cigarette.

Tut cigarettes are black with gold filters and smell of honey. They are commonly smoked among the Kaa, but less so among the Vindijans. They are famous for having no ash hence there is no need for an ashtray. They are named for the Tutaca plant that is used for its flavorful leaves.

“The Line would love to help you, but what of the Fini Seven? Do you speak for them?” asked Coup intently.

“Alas no, they are determined to fight this war until the Line is no more. All my efforts to sway them have been in vain,” said Slag as he looked at Coup.

“That’s a travesty, I’m sorry but to fight a war for some ax that needs grinding...”

“I know,” said Slag as he patted Peastro on the hand.

“...is ridiculous,” finished Coup.

“You have to wonder, Slag, are their reasons as pure as they once were. You said ‘til the Line is no more, but for Builder’s sake we both know that will never happen,” said Peastro smoothly as he looks directly at Slag.

“It’s crazy,” said Slag as he looked at the table.

“It is crazy and they’re ignoring your logic! They’re playing you for a fool! I don’t know how you can stand it,” said Peastro as he threw his hands up in disgust.

“You’re right, they’ve lost their focus and I can see now that they’ve betrayed me. I believed in this war in the beginning. I bought into their lies and now I think they are just after power.”

“Of course they are, I bet Edifus has got himself a castle somewhere and all the riches a man could want. And he tells you it’s all about equal rights while he’s king of the Kaa. He’s sipping Borco wine while his beloved Kaa are fighting for Hool nuggets,” said Peastro boldly.

Slag started laughing then his face got serious and he said, "How do we right this, tell me what needs to be done and I will do it. I am no slave to Edifus."

"Look, Slag, I can't ask you to do what needs to be done. I just wouldn't hear of it," said Coup coyly as he crossed his legs and sipped his wine.

"Please, Emperor, I am a serious man and I am willing to take on this burden and bring the Toen war to resolution."

"Slag, I know you're a serious man, but what it would..."

"Please," said Slag quickly.

"Ok, but what we're talking about is murder," said Coup firmly as he stood up and rubbed his forehead and then he continued, "Specifically the murder of Edifus and the Fini Seven, minus you of course."

"I...I can do it, but I will need help."

"Then help you will get," said Coup as he tugged at his beard.

The following day Slag arranged a meeting of the Fini Seven at Cas City at the Gepe Floating Fist. The Gepe Floating Fist is a restaurant in the shape of a fist that hovers several feet above the ground. It has the best Hool steak in the city and is a favorite among artists. Va Bleem and his wife Korso Kell are frequent patrons.

The Fini Seven, which are now 6 because of Shad's departure from his sanity, are all seated in floating thrones around a glowing green table. Across from them at an adjacent table is Va Bleem and his wife Korso enjoying a shoulder massage before dinner.

"Slag, we are here please don't be coy. What is the problem this time?" asked Edifus in a condescending tone.



“Well,” said Slag as he looked at the ceiling,” Well...ah my real friends are here. How about a dance, Edifus?” asked Slag coyly as he grinned.

Then a dozen Humpacca soldiers burst through the ceiling and one of them blasted Vier with his Goalla gun, vaporizing him. Edifus tried to run but the exits are blocked, he hid beneath Va Bleem’s table instead. Va said,” Look, Honey, another stargazer, isn’t that precious.”

Whereas Korso nods and says,” I love a pushy fan, Va, because you can push them right out of your way.”

Two of the Fini Seven, Koo and Exis were tackled by 3 soldiers and had their faces shoved violently into the floor. Another member Venip, ran and jumped through a window and fell awkwardly to the ground below. A Humpacca ran to the window to go after him, but when he got there he was already gone.

The last member of the Fini Seven Frea Oak, climbed up on a table and shouted,” I have a bomb strapped to my chest!” She pulled up her coat to reveal a circular red bomb and then said angrily,” and if anyone tried to take me or any of my friends, excluding Slag, anywhere! Then I’ll blow this place and everyone in it to Terious!”

Everyone in the room froze and stared at Frea except for Va Bleem who continued eating his Hool steak. Edifus climbed out from under the table and shouted,” You heard her! You now our parameters and for Builder’s sake, don’t get cute. Frea...hold fast I’m watching the room.”

“Oh I’m steady, Honey,” said Frea as she kept her finger on the bomb’s trigger.

Koo and Exis were released by the Humpaccas and slowly made for the exits. This while Frea climbed down off the table and walked towards the door.

“Coup said dead or alive, Captain, preferably dead you heard him,” said Sergeant Yates.

“What are our options?” asked Captain Beckus.

“Remember the Line,” said Sergeant Yates as he pointed to the Captains’ Goalla gun.

Frea looked at him and mouthed the word no. Captain Beckus raised his gun and blasted Frea, causing the bomb around her chest to explode.

The Gepe Floating Fist instantly became a toxic fireball of heat and flames killing everyone inside. The Fini Seven, Va Bleem and Korso Kell, and all of the Humpaccas were now just charred remains. The Explosion was so large it sent a shockwave through Cas City that terrified the residents. When Coup and Peastro got the news they were sitting inside Trident Souce Three.

“Finally, oh, Peastro treasured friend,” the Toen War is no more. Within a few weeks the Kaa forces, without their leadership will crumble,” said Coup snidely as he smoked a Tut cigarette.

“We broke them we broke their spirit in half. This is a glorious day for the Line, an absolute solution,” said Peastro as he smiled at Coup.

“To an infinite question,” said Coup snidely as he tapped his forehead. “The Kaa will be well suited not to trifle with us again. Our mercy may have limits, but not in the face of an appreciative man,” said Coup as he gently smiled and then took a drag from his Tut cigarette.

“They wouldn’t trifle, they’ll fall back into the service of the Line before Long,” said Peastro as he took a large drink of his Borco wine and smiled.

## Chapter 8

### The Squares of Z

“I don’t believe it, I WON’T believe it!”

“What are you steamed about, Darling?” asked Mela as she came up behind Coup and wrapped her arms around him.

“This war will never end. Those ridiculous Kaa fight on now without their leadership, even harder than before,” said Coup angrily. “They just took Mercut city and are literally dancing in the streets! It makes No sense,” said Coup as he watched a monitor with the days’ battle displayed on it.

“Darling, you’re missing the obvious logic.”

“And that would be what my, Radiant Mela?”

“A war can’t fight itself and without leadership that would be exactly the case,” said Mela as she kissed Coup’s ear.

“Then what is your point?” asked Coup as he kissed Mela.

“The Fini Seven were never the brains of the Kaa rebellion, only the catalyst. To put it plainly, they were figureheads.”

“You’re saying...yes, that would make perfect sense. Edifus wasn’t wise enough to keep us at bay. The rest of the Fini Seven were more artists than warriors,” said Coup softly as he thought of Edifus.

“There’s another someone who has the inner power to best us. It must be someone smart enough to hide in the shadows yet patient. So patient, just the thought of such a mind is excruciatingly delightful.

Yes...a true adversary for sure,” said Coup as he tugged at Mela’s ear.

“Careful, Darling, a mind like that would be vicious, best to be prepared for their treachery. The question now is how to find this person. If he’s smart most Kaa wouldn’t know he exists. The ones that do would only be those close to him,” said Mela as she sat in Coup’s lap.

“True, but he is not invisible, some have seen him and surely someone receives orders from him. If we could get a hold of one of their communications, then we could follow them back to this scoundrel,” said Coup as he rubbed Mela’s thigh.

“Then how do you know which communication is the one you want. I see you daily listening to Kaa generals over your computer. How will you know which person is the one you seek?” asked Mela.

“I won’t, but Peastro would. This Kaa that we’re dealing with is a Venkid, as is Peastro. Peastro will be able to detect similarities in a person’s speech to his own,” explained Coup as he tapped his brow.

“Logic patterns would jump out at him I am certain. I will send for him. This Kaa, this other Venkid he will be caught and we will break him,” said Coup snidely as his brow furrowed.

Peastro received word, while he was bathing, that Coup needed to see him urgently. He ended his shower prematurely and made for Coup’s quarters. When he arrived Coup was levitating upside down and smoking a Tut cigarette.

Coup took a drag and said, “We’ve got a Venkid who needs to be brought to the surface.”

“Venkid...another Venkid who are you speaking of?” asked Peastro as he levitated upside down in front of Coup.

“The Fini Seven were an illusion of power. We’ve determined that someone else is winning the war from the shadows. And this person needs to be gotten too immediately,” said Coup as he took a drag and then blew a smoke ring.

“Wow that is a perfectly pure thought. There is no way Edifus could be the mastermind behind their assaults on the Line. Another Venkid a truly diabolical Kaa who understands the power of secrecy,” said Peastro softly as he spun in a circle. “How do you find such a man without him knowing that you’re looking?” asked Peastro as he lit his own Tut cigarette.

“Precisely, what I have reasoned is that you would be able to identify him by similar speech patterns.”

“The daily Kaa correspondence,” said Peastro quickly.

“Yes, is it possible for you to discern him from the others?”

“Well let’s think about this. How could he communicate with his forces and not arise suspicion? He wouldn’t pose as a general we know all their generals. A captain maybe, but no...even their captains are known by the Line. If it were me I’d pretend to be a foot soldier,” said Peastro as he danced sideways through the air.

“Exactly, a soldie4r in the field!” said Coup excitedly as he slapped his hands together.

“Better still a medic, then he could pass through the war zones undetected and easily communicate with his generals,” said Peastro as he tugged at his chin.

“But there must be thousands of medics, how do we find this Venkid and root him out?” asked Coup as he smoked slowly.

“Well I’ll tell you exactly how we find him. All’s I would need would be their medical frequency. Instead of trying to listen to thousands of messages going to their generals, I would only need to listen to their emergency medical assistance line. What I would bet is their using code to relay information, actually...”

“Yes,” said Coup anxiously.

“Ok all’s I need is to hear his voice. I am certain if he’s truly a Venkid I would spot him.”

Coup flipped around and walked over to his computer. Peastro followed him and stood beside him at the computer. Coup started riffling through the different channels of the Kaa communications. He flipped through several with generals giving orders then he stopped when he heard, "We've got fifty men who are badly injured, we're gonna need a medic yesterday." Then they heard another voice say, "Hold fast, Sergeant, they'll be there as soon as possible."

"I think we've found it, Peastro," said Coup as he smiled and winked at Peastro.

"I think so I may be here for quite some time. This mystery Kaa may only send occasional messages."

Coup moved away from the computer and Peastro sat down. Coup put his hand on Peastro's shoulder and said warmly, "Find him find this scoundrel and when you do. We'll go pay him a visit and show him the Line's appreciation," said Coup snidely and then he let out a loud cackle.

"Oh I'll find him a man can't hide from himself. Only shadows have that luxury," said Peastro as he turned his focus to listening to the messages.

Coup got down on the couch and started shooting Dees. A few hours passed and still no luck. Coup fell fast asleep on the couch with Mela in his arms.

Peastro on the other hand is focused intently on the task at hand. He'd heard hundreds of messages and was still supremely focused. He is looking for a distinct phrasing that would imply a high level of thought. He starts to smile at a humorous exchange on the computer, "Yeah this is Z here. We're gonna need more caskets than bandages, Rand."

"You always do, Z, maybe you should try reincarnation on this batch," said Rand.

"I would but the Builder's out of refunds," said Z with a laugh

Peastro hears this and says to himself, "That joke is a little too funny for a medic. Coup, we've got a winner!" shouted Peastro.

“Coup startled jumped up sending Mela falling to the floor.

“I’m sorry, darling,” said Coup as he gets up and walks briskly over to Peastro.

Peastro smiles and says,” This Kaa Z is just a little too smart for his own good.

“Is it certain?” asked Coup intently as he started to sweat across his forehead.

“As certain as the T sun’s never finding a lover.”

“Now that’s certain. Ok where is our darling new friend Z residing?” asked Coup snidely as he wiped sweat from his eyebrows.

“I can’t pin it down, but he mentioned the Veeres region. That’s a notorious Kaa stronghold, which would make perfect sense if somebody wanted to hide out.”

“It would indeed, the problem is it’s as you said, a Kaa stronghold. But...anywhere can be gotten to and anyone can be found,” said Coup smoothly.

“But we’d need to be completely invisible to travel to Veeres.”

“No, not invisible more specifically we would have to...”

“We’d have to appear to be Kaa,” interrupted Peastro quickly.

“Exactly,” said Coup with a smirk.

“Then we’ll need a Kaa vessel and Kaa garb. You wouldn’t know anyone with such accommodations?” asked Peastro already knowing the answer.

“Oh yes, I would know because that anyone would be me. We captured a Kaa scout ship and five Kaa soldiers 4 days ago. What we’ll do and we’ll do exactly this. Tonight you and I and a skeleton crew will travel to the Veeres region and find this Z.”

“Do you think there’s any hope that Z would join the Line or is his fate to be dust?” asked Peastro.

Coup put his hand to his mouth and said, “I don’t know, I fear not.”

Coup and Peastro have the Kaa scout ship prepared for the journey and fleece the Kaa soldiers of their uniforms, making the necessary alterations of course.

Inside the Kaa vessel are several bins filled with odd lizards and reptiles. One of the Kaa soldiers was apparently a collector. The floor has the 72 scriptures of the Hoehnec, a 56<sup>th</sup> century philosopher who believed emotions are experienced in circles. His writings are very popular among the Kaa and taught as fact among their curriculum.

The outside of the scout ship is covered in off white mesh that changes color at night to a brilliant blue. The front of the vessel looks like a Tibervian tight snout. It is equipped with large gun barrels forward and aft. The glaring difference between the Kaa’s vessel and a Vindijan’s is the speed. The Kaa vessel can travel at enormous speed and is extremely agile.

They set off for the Veeres region just as the T sun is beginning to set. The sky glows a warm orange, which is a sign of a storm coming. The Kaa have a saying, “Orange sky just before night and we hide where we might. Orange sky in the morn and children be joyous.” The Veeres region is several hours away and Coup decides he will do the driving, because only he can guide them away from potential trouble sources.

Coup had been through the Veeres region several times in his youth when he was a soldier, but it was called the Moetop Plains then. The name changed when Veeres Vindijan settled the first township there with his wife Babarot. It has since been flooded with the Kaa and Veeres and his wife Babarot long since passed.



It is a lush and gorgeous green plain lined with white marble mountains on either side. The Kaa have built thousands of beautiful black hardwood homes. All the homes are square in shape and are built on top of each other like a spiraling staircase to the sky.

On top of every set of homes is a blue flame that burns night and day. It is meant to symbolize for the Kaa, their enduring struggle and their ability to always strive for equality. They go to great lengths to keep their flames perpetually lit.

At the far end of the Veeres region is Lake Saa Cic. In the center of Lake Saa Cic is an island that houses castle Morp. The castle is where Veeres and Babarot had lived and is now inhabited by the Kaa army.

It is a towering structure over 2 miles high and a mile wide. It is made of black stone and without the lights burning disappears into the blackness of night. It has a pyramid shooting out of its roof and there are staircases every so often around its perimeter that lead nowhere.

Veeres Vindijan had been rumored to have been insane when he built it. Inside its walls are hundreds of rooms with no way in or out.

“What’s our best bet for finding Z?” asked Peastro as he looked out at Veeres.

“There are only two army hospitals in this area. I’m betting we’ll find him there,” said Coup as he sipped his Borco wine.

“How exactly are we going to do that?”

“Peastro, I looked in your eyes and knew. I’m certain you will be able to do the same.”

Peastro looks at Coup for a second and then nods and says, “He can’t hide from me, no more than I can hide from myself.”

“So true, so yes,” said Coup.

Peastro laughed and rubbed Coup's shoulder. Coup let out a belly laugh and nearly crashed the ship as they clipped a tree branch, sending a feeling of shock through the crew.

"Who put that tree there have him killed!" said Coup in between laughs.

"We would, but he's already dead, he fell cleaning the branches," said Peastro smoothly.

"Really, kill him again. Let's dance on his ashes!" shouted Coup as he laughed uproariously.

Peastro started to wonder how much Borco wine Coup had consumed. He felt a little nervous as he laughed with Coup. The crew also felt nervous, but didn't let it show. Coup caught himself and pulled in his emotions. He sensed the worry in Peastro and refocused his energy on the mission. After everyone stopped laughing there was an awkward silence, where no one knew if they should be serious or keep telling jokes. Coup sensed this and said, "We're fine, Gentlemen, we've still got our wits about us. We had our laugh now to the business at hand lovely Z."

"So true so yes," said Peastro plainly.

"Don't start that Hool in that direction or we'll crash into the mountain," said Coup with a smile as he gave the steering wheel a quick tug.

Peastro felt safe with Coup at the wheel. He knew he was powerful and wise. They flew over the countryside and there were thousands of blue flames lighting their way. They could see into Kaa's homes as they passed. Some were eating dinner, others working out, and on the walkway many were out for a night time stroll.

In the distance Morp castle is all a glow with its lights reflected on the surface of Lake Sa Cic. Peastro feels thrilled for a moment at how amazing the adventure of his life has become. It is bittersweet though, he thinks of his family that he has left behind. He wonders what his father thought of his leaving and had

he felt blessed with the riches the Line had given him. Only now did he allow himself to miss his father and only for a second.

“Eyes up! We’re nearing the first hospital,” said Coup sternly as he admired the warm glow of the hills. “We’re gonna land and just walk right through the front door. Walk as if you’ve been here earlier in the day. Keep your thoughts on your steps and not on your emotions. You’ll need to go blank if anyone looks you in the eye. Don’t let them see you seeing them. We’re Kaa soldier’s so one word answers if anyone gets curious,” said Coup as he made eye contact with Peastro and the crew.

“Clear as Kaa’s blood. I think if we’re gonna get out of here alive, it’s kill him on sight and pretend it was a misfire if anyone asks,” said Peastro as he checked his Goalla gun.

“They’ll ask and when they do look ‘em in the eye and lie. We’re all going home tonight, Gentlemen, so keep that in your subconscious. It will pop up when it needs to,” said Coup firmly as he pressed the automatic landing button.

The outside of the hospital is bright yellow and has several circular spires shooting out of its roof. The word Somjet is written in large crystal letters above its entrance.

Somjet is the name of the first Kaa revolutionary, the man who got it as he was referred to by the Kaa. Before Somjet passed he gave everything he owned to complete strangers. His belief that only love is remembered was widely adopted by the Kaa.

The ship landed between 2 other Kaa transports. Coup and Peastro check everyone’s weapons and they prepare to exit. Peastro says sternly, “Kaa are relentless so fight like your bloods on fire, if they get you cornered.”

Everyone put on their helmets and pulled down their face guards. They looked at each other one last time, Coup opened the hatch. After everyone was outside they made their way to the hospital’s front entrance. There were several soldiers and doctors coming in and out of the hospital. It was certainly a

bee's nest of activity, but Coup kept everyone moving forward by not hesitating a bit. They entered the hospital and a Dr. Yolm grabbed Peastro by the arm and asked, "Hey do you think you could give us a hand with a patient? We can't hold him down long enough to sedate him."

Peastro looks at Dr. Yolm and then quickly at Coup and then back at Dr. Yolm and said, "You got it, whatever you need."

Peastro, Coup, the 2 Humpacca's followed Dr. Yolm down a long hallway and into an operating room. The unruly patient named Petad kept everyone at bay with a scalpel. Petad slashed it violently in front of his bed whenever anyone drew near.

Petad shouts, "I want the Emperor I'll only speak with him or no one at all."

Coup and Peastro look at each other and Coup says to the Dr. Yolm, "My men and I will handle this Doctor, could you please leave the room?"

"Sure, but it's your peril. But you'll need this to sedate him," said Dr. Yolm as he handed Coup a syringe.

Dr. Yolm and his medical staff left the room, but Petad kept swinging the scalpel and shouting, "Bring me the Emperor!"

Coup removed his helmet and ran his fingers through his hair and looked Petad directly in the eye and said, "Well, you little Hool Nugget! Let's hear it, what's so urgent?"

Petad looks at Coup in shock and says, "I..." then fainted and crashed to the floor.

Coup walks over to him and checks his pulse and says, "He's still kicking, what ah shame. Well let's sedate this poor soul and get back to more pressing matters."

Coup administered the syringe and put his helmet back on and they stepped out into the hallway. Dr. Yolm walked up to Coup and asked, "What happened?"

“I pretended I was the Emperor and he fainted quicker than a Hool herder at a brothel.”

“Well thank you,” said Dr. Yolm with a laugh as he went into the operating room.

Coup walked down the hall and said, “No more detours, Peastro, for Builder’s sake.”

“That man needed our help,” said Peastro with a laugh.

They walked down the hall as soldiers and medical staff kept coming in and out of practically every doorway. Two men in yellow fatigues came out of one doorway and started walking in front of Coup and Peastro. Coup noticed one of them, the one on the right, has an odd gait to his walk.

He galloped more than he walked. Coup tapped Peastro on the shoulder and pointed to the man’s feet. Peastro smirked and kept watching the man’s odd walk. Peastro thought about what a different inner rhythm this man must have. What a different mindset he must possess. He smiled a little to himself at the sight of this man’s walk.

The second man walked into a room and the man with the odd walk was alone walking in front of them. Coup and Peastro looked at each other and smiled. Coup eventually got a hold of himself and started looking around in earnest. Peastro couldn’t control his fascination with this man’s odd walk. He’d never seen someone who was so at ease with himself.

Then nurse Klow waved to the man and said, “Hey, Z, how’s your shoulder?”

Z responded, “Not great, but it keeps my head on straight.”

Peastro and Coup felt a shock go through their bodies. Their heart rates quickened and their palms sweat. Coup thought to himself, “How could this be him?”

“Z!” spouted Peastro before he could stop himself.

Z turned the corner and as he did he sprinted down the corridor. Everyone saw this and chased after him at full speed. There were just too many people in the corridor to shoot Z, so they just kept sprinting. They dodged in and out of the soldiers, nurses, and doctors who were coming out of every door. A gurney came out of a room in front of Coup and he kicked it aside.

Z jumped through a wall and vanished in a burst of light. "Oh no you don't," said Coup. He jumped through the wall and disappeared in a flash of light.

Peastro stopped short of the wall and said to the Humpacca's, "Wait here, and if we don't return post haste come in after us with guns blazing."

Then Peastro jumped through the wall and came out in a dark room filled with cubes. Coup was inside one of the cubes and Z was inside another. The cubes are floating above an endless ravine and everywhere there is blackness. Above the cubes, and there are dozens, is an endless blackness. The cubes are transparent and only the ridges and seams can be seen. They glow a dull red or green filling the eye.

Z is floating several feet in front of Peastro and Coup's cubes. Peastro looks up at Z and Z waves and says, "Welcome, Vindijan, how's the accommodations?"

Peastro looks at Coup anxiously and Coup takes off his helmet and says, "Eyes up...for now."

Peastro takes off his helmet and looks at Z intently. Whereas Z jumps through the side wall of his cube and appears instantly beside Peastro. Peastro is startled, but only for a moment, and Peastro says boldly, "Nice trick, Z."

Z softly says, "Please call me by my Kaa name Dr. Perzetious Atorn or Dr. Atorn if it suits you."

Dr. Atorn is 6 foot two inches tall with pale skin and has seal black hair, with purple green star patterns throughout. His eyes are gold in color and are very serious. He has no facial hair except for a half inch strip of green hair that runs along his jaw line. On his right hand is a tattoo of the staff of Terious.

The staff of Terious is rumored to be the weapon of the Builder that he used against passionless hearts.

In the center of his neck Dr. Atorn has a square glass window that fogs up with every breath. He is wearing yellow army fatigues and has on blue tinted see-through shoes, which expose his feet. On every toe is a ring of silver and inscribed on each two of the 24 commandments of the Book of Yealik.

The book of Yealik is a 100,000 year old parchment that is written by Oma Vev. Oma Vev was the first of the 7 prophets, who had spoken directly with the Builder at top of Mt. Poes. Oma listed the 24 commandments as such.

1. Never take one step until you have visualized the 3<sup>rd</sup>.
2. Love more than you're being loved.
3. Never try to change a fully realized being.
4. Give away two before you ask for one.
5. Only take a life if yours is in jeopardy.
6. Ask questions early so your answers don't come late.
7. Remember the Builder daily.
8. A man who wants more than his hand can hold is an enemy to himself.
9. Do not consummate where another man's love lies.
10. The great reckoning is a certainty, be mindful.
11. Be considerate of the childless mind
12. All men eat or no men eat
13. Love your form and take pride in its upkeep.
14. Fill your head with dreams.

15. Make your afternoons in the morning.
16. Children must be guided into successful adults, not left to wander.
17. Understand every person's struggle and fill your mind with their failings.
18. Be a friend to the friendless.
19. Find the knowledge you need, then reflect on its capture.
20. Never close the door your heart.
21. Wars are for winning.
22. Find sexual pleasures and rejoice.
23. Force your mind to thirst.
24. Never pass judgment on yourself I will take care of you

Peastro looked him over and said," Dr. Atorn, you know the Line is very fond of your Musebots. They've given us more headaches than a bottle of Blatis wine."

"I'm thrilled you like them. I was a little worried they wouldn't be embraced by the Kaa army, but I think they're very happy with their productivity. What are they killing... 15 or so of your soldiers for every Musebot?" asked Dr. Atorn sarcastically.

"Well now that we have this time together, maybe you could explain how their central processors work?" asked Coup coyly as he smiled.

"No, no I think we'll save that discussion for another T sun," said Z as he paced back and forth in a cube, in front of Peastro.

Peastro watches him for a moment and then reaches for his Goalla gun. When he does Dr. Atorn jumps through the cubes' wall and appears in another cube a hundred yards away. When Peastro goes after him, by jumping through the same wall as Dr. Atorn, he reappears inside the cube Coup is in.



“I tried that already. I’m not sure what we’re dealing with here,” said Coup as he pulled out a Messon Leaf cigar and then said, “we better just stay put.”

“Ok,” answered Peastro as he put his gun back in its holster.

“Don’t bother trying to catch me, Peastro, that would be futile on your part,” said Dr. Atorn as he jumps from cube to cube.

Coup watches intently to see if there is a pattern to get from cube to cube or possibly a technique. Coup noticed that Dr. Atorn is pointing with his right hand as he jumps through the walls. He reasons that has something to do with it. Coup whispers to Peastro, “Use your right hand to aim for the cube you want. Wait for my signal”

Peastro nods and turns his eyes to Dr. Atorn

“The Great Coup Vindijan and the famous Venkid Peastro,” said Z snidely as he chuckles. “What a delightful pair to share my squares with. Do you like my parlor? I wasn’t expecting guests of such notoriety,” said Dr. Atorn snugly.

“The layout is gorgeous and we couldn’t be happier to share this time with you, Doctor,” said Coup in a dry tone.

“Great accommodations, fit for a Vindijan and certainly a Kaa,” said Peastro snidely.

“You would be an expert on both considering you too were once a Kaa, Peastro. Well...before your mind was corrupted by the Vindijan Line. I’ll never forget the parts of my past I can’t remember. You’re more Kaa than you’ll admit,” said Dr. Atorn as he jumped into the cube beside Coup and Peastro.

“You insufferable Kaa, so quick to downplay the Vindijan’s divinity, yet too weak to lift yourselves up and ascend. Dr...Atorn, doctor of your own treachery is all you can manage,” said Peastro in a serious tone.

“Easy, Child, don’t trifle with a serious man. I’d hate to see you fall from such a height,” said Z as he pointed to the ravine below.

Peastro looked down and felt nervousness come over him. He is much higher than he had thought. A fall from here would kill him instantly on impact. He looked at Coup nervously and Coup smirked and gave him a wink. This calmed Peastro long enough to regain his composure. Coup on the other hand was sizing up Dr. Atorn.

## Chapter 9

### Z

“Well, Z, you’re as worthless as a saddle on a Hool’s back. I see no pristine logic or even one pure thought in anything you’ve done or are doing,” snapped Coup as he glared at Z. “I feel a sickness in my heart just having to have to share breath with a fool such as you. Vanity...in all forms is corrupt, and you, Z, are as vain as a mirror admiring a mirror. I say this to lessen the burden you’ve heaped upon yourself. The love man shares with only himself is a love with no beginning and a horror to behold,” said Coup sharply as he nudged Peastro’s forearm.

“My mind, Emperor, is a place where only I reside and you are not welcome! Your divinity is a crime upon the Builder and your reckoning is at hand!” said Dr. Atorn fiercely as he glared at Coup. “I know a place where dream killers go to hide and you will be there soon. That place is Terious and all your Vindijan friends are awaiting your arrival!” thundered Dr. Atorn as he jumped into the cube in front of Coup and Peastro.

When Coup saw this he pointed his right hand and jumped through the wall and into Z’s cube. Peastro saw this and did the same.

Z kicked Coup in the stomach as he entered the cube. Then Z shot over to another cube 50 feet away. Coup was knelling on the floor of the cube when Peastro came into it. Coup said quickly, “Don’t worry about me go after Z.”

“Alright,” said Peastro as he pointed at Z’s cube and jumped through the wall.

Z sees this and pulls a diamond edged blade from his hip.

The blade is a foot long and has a silver handle.

Peastro enters into the Z's cube and Z slashes at him, slicing his chest. The wound isn't deep, but still drew blood.

Peastro ducks his next swipe and kicks Z in the throat. Z gathers himself and jumps through the wall behind him and into another cube. When he gets there Coup is waiting for him. Coup punches him in the mouth and asks, "How's my fist today sweet or tart?"

"Keep smiling you can laugh your way to Terious!" shouted Z as he slashes at Coup barely missing his throat.

Behind Z Peastro comes into the cube. Z sees Coup's eyes light up when he does and he jumps into another cube before Peastro can shoot him.

"We can't let him escape the war depends on it!" shouts Coup as he looks at Z.

Peastro and Coup jump through the wall, but when they get to Z's cube he had already jumped to another one. They see Z jump through the bottom of a cube and disappear in a flash of light. They jump to that cube and see that it has a square portal on its floor that is revolving, it has a cloudlike appearance. Whereas Coup says, "Well this is where our divinity gets truly tested."

Coup jumps through the portal and emerges on a castle balcony. Peastro follows shortly thereafter, but there is no sign of Z. Coup looks around and he spots a staircase.

"I don't know where we are, Peastro, but we're here," said Coup with a smile.

"If we're here then Z's here, let's try the stairs," said Peastro as he goes for the staircase.

The castle itself is built into the side of a mountain. The walls are pale red rock and are made of hexagons. From the balcony can be seen an endless forest with a large flock of Amoss birds flying above it. There are no other shelters of any kind that can be seen.

Coup goes down the staircase as he charges up his Goalla gun, as does Peastro. At the bottom of the staircase there is an opening into a grand ballroom. Inside the ballroom there are waterfalls on either side. There is also 20 beds, 10 per side, that are filled with lifelike plastic dolls. The dolls are all positioned as if they are sleeping or about to get up. Coup is startled at the sight of them and says, "Those are the only people who'd spend time with his sort."

Peastro laughs and replies, "Make your own friends, now that's progress."

As they walk through the ballroom they notice that the ceiling is breathing in and out. Coup says anxiously, "Something is amiss here keep your wits about you. If we get separated fight your way home."

"Absolutely certain, I'll leave this place with my faculties intact," said Peastro as he looks around the room.

When they get 2 thirds of the way through the room they see that there is a large window in the floor beneath them, allowing them to see into the room below. There are boxes of stuffed animals piled up on top of each other in the room below. Coup and Peastro look at each other not knowing what to make of it. They stand on top of the window and look for Dr. Atorn.

Coup sees eyes looking at him in one of the boxes and then Dr. Atorn jumps out of the box and runs for it. Coup sees this and blasts through the window with his Goalla gun and just misses Dr. Atorn, hitting a box of stuffed animals and vaporizing them.

"I almost got him! We need to get down there. I think those boxes will break our fall," said Coup.

"Let's jump for it," said Peastro, then he puts his Goalla gun back in its holster.

"Alright, but be ready to strike when we hit those boxes," said Coup sternly.

Coup and Peastro jump through the broken window and land on top of the stuffed animals. And as they do the stuffed start attacking them

“These things are alive, run for it!” shouts Coup as he fights off one of the stuffed animals.

Coup jumps to his feet with a teddy bear’s claws digging into his back and another biting his neck.

He quickly levitates and spins in a circle at blazing speed. This sends the stuffed animals flying off of him and into the wall.

Peastro is being attacked by half a dozen miniature Vindijan royal family dolls, he can barely stand up. Once he gets to his feet he starts levitating and spinning as Coup has done, sending the mini Vindijan’s flying.

“How do you like my friends? They sure love you,” said Dr. Atorn as he laughed loudly and ran through a doorway.

“I am going to banish him to dust,” said Coup.

“We’ve got more pressing matters,” said Peastro anxiously.

Every box of stuffed animals and every doll jumps at Coup and Peastro’s feet. They see this and float over them and go after Dr. Atorn. They follow him into a room as he tries to escape. The room is small, only 20 feet long, and the walls are lime green with 2 paintings on opposite walls. The painting on the right is of an old man with an endless beard sitting on top of a pyramid of stairs. His teeth are clenched and his eyes are bulging out.

The other painting is of a young man with orange hair, who has circles shaved into his beard as he is riding a wheel less bicycle. The road he is riding on is made of naked people lying face down with their faces in the mud. In the background there is a tree playing flute as it dances.

At the far end of the room there are 4 blue doors with green doorknobs and the words, "Left to here," written on each of them.

Coup and Peastro pause for a moment to take in the room before they move. Then as Coup looks at the painting of the old man, it looks back at him and says, "Hi, I am Tesk and I am older than I look."

"Don't believe him those are some old bones over there," said Retc as he smiled.

"Now the paintings are talking, I'd half expect the wall to kiss my cheek," said Coup as he looked quizzically at Peastro.

"The wall won't but if you pucker up just right Retc will believe me. I've lost more paint to that man," said Tesk as he winked at Coup.

"Don't you believe it, I wouldn't touch such a thrown together painting like that," said Retc.

"Thrown together, where's that paint remover. I had it here somewhere," said Tesk as he pretended to look around his painting.

Coup and Peastro just smiled at each other, not knowing what to make of the situation. Then Peastro asked, "You wouldn't happen to know where Dr. Atom went?"

"Paint remover, I'll burn your canvas, Old Man. You'll be smoke in my pipe," said Retc as he ignored Peastro.

"Old? Young paint burns much quicker, so don't you get me fired up or we'll both be smoke," snapped Tesk.

Coup and Peastro look at each other for a second, smile, and then walk over to the 4 blue doors. Peastro opens the first one and it has a staircase that goes upward.

Coup opens the next two and in the second is a black tunnel with torches lighting the way. In the third is a multi-colored slide that twists downward.

“Well let’s see what’s in the final door,” said Coup sheepishly.

He swings the door open and it is a cloud covered yellow portal.

“Well which is it?” asked Peastro as he looks at the doors.

“I’ll tell you which one it is. It’s whatever one gets me the Terious out of here. I’m tired of chasing the Neff,” said Coup as he let out a loud sigh and bent over and grabbed his knees.

Neff’s are a rat like creature that would run sporadically in every direction when approached.

“I say this, a portal got us here and that’s the only way we’re getting back. Those stairs will probably just take us further into the madman’s labyrinth. The tunnel will probably collapse as soon as we enter and the slide probably leads to a pit of knives. So that’s my thinking what are you leaning towards?” asks Peastro as he is obviously exasperated.

“I say when we get back we do something fun like dig a ditch,” said Coup sarcastically.

Peastro let out a huge uncontrollable laugh and Coup soon followed.

“I agree, but we’ll use spoons instead of shovels,” said Peastro as he smiled.

Coup laughs loudly and then says, “Let’s get the Terious out of here. We’ll go through the portal at the same time and with weapons drawn. Anyone waiting for us at the other end will shortly be dust.”

“Agreed,” replied Peastro.

They charged up their Goalla guns and stepped up to the door. They stepped through the portal and a second later were in a busy kitchen. There are chefs and wait staff hustling about preparing meals. A few of them look at Coup and Peastro briefly but then go back to work.



The kitchen has a long silver grill that runs the length of it. On the other side is a gold freezer with see-through doors filled with every variety of meat and a large assortment of desserts. In the center there is an island where every few seconds food is placed there, then quickly taken away by the wait staff. The ceiling is high and arching as Coup notices the crest of the Vindijan Line.

“Isn’t that hilarious, this is one of our restaurants,” said Coup softly.

“Better ours than theirs, needless to say I could use something to nibble on about now,” said Peastro as he walks over to the freezer.

“You aren’t the only empty stomach. After that last fiasco my resolve has been weakened. Let’s...grab a table and see where we are,” said Coup as he walks through a doorway.

Peastro grabs a Sland ice cream and follows Coup out of the kitchen.

Sland ice cream has no fat and very few calories. It tastes like chocolate and strawberries combined.

They walk through the revolving doors and enter into the dining room. Coup looks around in amazement as he sees all of the Vindijan royal family and several generals eating breakfast.

“I can’t believe it, we’re inside the royal dining hall. Now that’s a trick of sheer brilliance,” said Coup as he waves to General Ruebluff.

The room is in the shape of an octagon with twelve tables in all. There are no walls, only windows so as to let in the T sun’s morning rays. The floor is beautiful lush 5 inch thick blue carpeting with the faces of the Vindijan Emperors sewn into them. Everyone is seated in floating brown leather couches.

One by one they look at Coup and Peastro in bewilderment, because they are wearing Kaa army fatigues. Coup and Peastro can only smile and wave. Coup spots Mela walking up to him.

“Coup, Darling, is everything alright? We had heard you were still on your mission,” said Mela as she kisses Coup.

“It’s alright now my love. Let’s just say Dr. Atorn, or Z as you know him is dancing without a partner.”

“Really he’s completely deranged, was he shot with a Petiffee you think?”

“No, I think he’s just accepted his own form of reality. I came so close to killing him with my Goalla, another inch to the left and he would be no more,” said Coup plainly as he grabs at the air around Mela’s shoulders.

“You should have seen his castle of treachery,” said Peastro.

“Well I can tell your condition that I’d rather not walk those hills,” said Mela as she kissed Peastro on the forehead.

“I fear Dr. Atorn is convinced of fighting this war to the infinite discovery. For us to defeat the Kaa we’ll have to fight a more cerebral battle. We’re going to need to get 4 moves ahead of this man and when he gets there be ruthless!” said Coup sternly.

## Chapter 10

The Toen war marched on with vicious intent towards its 18<sup>th</sup> year. What once was an uprising had become a revolution. Another 7 million lives had become dust, bringing the casualty count to 10 million. Both sides had passed the point of surrender. There are too many crippled Kaa families for them to give in and far too many Vindijans lost for their mercy to ever enter the conversation. The 21<sup>st</sup> commandment in the book of Yealik stated, "Wars are for winning." Oma Vev knew it and knew it all too well. The Kaa knew it now and the Vindijan's knew it once again. The Toen war had spilt over from the battlefield and out into the streets.

Dr. Atom had sent out a message that every Kaa has to be actively fighting the Vindijan Line. He said that any Kaa who broke bread with a Vindijan is betraying himself and his fellow Kaa. The Vindijan Line became increasingly more distrustful of their Kaa servants and did away with them all together. Now it was Vindijan's serving themselves and it caused them to become close knit.

The T sun has also changed, its' solar flares have become even more powerful. This greatly amplifies the Vindijan's powers. They can levitate 50 feet in the air and fly for over half a mile before they need to land.

They also added a few new powers. They can centralize the radiation into a ball in their hand. Then punch it through their knuckles at an attacker, shattering their skulls in a burst of bone and flesh. They call this the Mormo Technique and use it without hesitation.

They also developed the Coreto Eye, a technique which gives them the ability to see through walls. It also enables them to look inside a Kaa's beating heart and burst it with the blink of their eye. Many Kaa have had their lives cut short with the blink of a Vindijan's eye.

Peastro's powers have gotten especially strong. He has all the new powers, the Mormo Technique and the Coreto Eye, but also a few others including his floating arm clench, the F.A.C. He doesn't have to move to attack at all. He can use the F.A.C. enabling him to crush someone simply by visualizing it in his mind. He can now feel the strength of his mind growing daily.

Peastro is nearing 14 years passed and his thoughts are of Veveld, Carnag, and the agreed upon 8<sup>th</sup>. He has prepared himself mentally for the day they will arrive. He is eagerly awaiting their arrival.

The war has taken a toll on Peastro and he dreams of the tranquility of Goldva. He longs for a break from the brutality of Sras Oblique and a new reality. Morn also looks forward to a new start with Peastro, a chance for their love to blossom anew.

Coup meanwhile is becoming a beaten man. The Toen war has humbled him and it is starting to show.

"Can I get ah...ah cup of coffee?" asks Coup softly.

"Darling, you already have two cups in front of you. Would you like a third?" asks Mela as she looks intently at Coup.

"Maybe some Vin or Pent...something though...I feel cold. This winter has been especially harsh, when will it end I fear not soon," said Coup as he curled up into the fetal position on the edge of the bed.

"You will have whatever you desire I will see to it," said Mela nervously then she motioned to their servant to bring the Vin, Pent, and another cup of coffee. She embraced Coup and whispered, "My Love and passion for life is here, with you right now. The Builder will aid us it is a certainty my love. Take the pressure off your shoulders and set it aside for as long as you need to," said Mela reassuringly as she rubbed Coup's shoulder and played with his hair. "Your power is greater now than a thousand armies. Remember the Line and the greatness of a thousand generations. They are all here with us now, they never left."

Coup nods and takes her hand in his firmly and whispers,” Mela, your strength doubles mine. I forget that sometimes and I know I shouldn’t. Remember the Line...I feel I’m letting them down and it hurts. It tears this Vindijan’s heart to pieces.”

Mela’s eyes start to well up and she says softly,” A foolish man over thinks his failures and you are the bravest man I know. You honor the Line with every breath. This war can be won and you will be the victor.”

“You’re right...I know it, but I still needed to hear it one more time. Maybe even one more another T sun,” said Coup softly as he turns to face Mela.

“I’ll say it a thousand times,” said Mela as she cried and then continued,” And a thousand more if that is our task. Together we are a bridge to the future as well as the past.”

Coup feels his strength coming back to him. He looks deep into Mela’s eyes and kisses her passionately. He smiles and says,” Vindijan’s succeed because we don’t believe in failure. We need to out will these Kaa! Every Vindijan needs to regain their Warrior’s Pei, I will see to it.”

The Warrior’s Pei is a state of fighting without rage, only reflex. It was taught originally by Pei Fo, a master of the body’s inner capacities. Pei Fo believed great fighting could only be achieved when you were on the verge of laughter. A great many Vindijan soldiers have mastered the technique, much to the humiliation of the Kaa. Vindijan soldiers will often break out in laughter in the middle of hand to hand combat. The Kaa soldiers call it the horrible har har. The Kaa generals don’t know what to make of it. They encourage their soldiers to laugh back, but few did feeling embarrassed at the thought of it.

“Your power will feed their power. Be the Emperor, embrace your divinity my love!” shouted Mela.

“I shall and so shall the Line. We’ve got something they haven’t, the Builder’s ear and we’re starting to whisper,” said Coup triumphantly as he stood up and spread his arms.

He walks over to the balcony and soaks in the T sun's rays as he hums," Remember the Line," as he once did. Then he levitates a few feet off the ground and shouts," We';; wait no more for your surrender! You'll bow or be broken you troublesome Kaa!!"

A meeting of the Vindijan hierarchy is summoned. They all arrive at Whitkus Blo at 3<sup>rd</sup> T sun. Whitkus Blo is an underground castle buried 2 miles beneath the surface of Sras Oblique. It is a worst case scenario fortress that is built in case the Builder asks for the check.

It is far larger and more extravagant than any castle above ground. It is nearly a hundred miles long and is in a constant state of expansion. Construction had started on Whitkus Blo nearly a thousand years prior.

It has enough space and supplies to last the Vindijan elite over a century underground without missing a beat. It also has something else, secrecy only the Vindijan's inner sanctum knows of its existence.

It is a world onto itself with an entire forest being nurtured inside its walls. It has every species of animal grazing in the underground Eden. All of the Vindijan's and stolen Kaa sciences are hidden behind its 10 foot thick walls.

Many famous Vindijans thought to have passed by the Kaa are comfortably residing at Whitkus Blo. They take great satisfaction in their hidden reality, and laugh to themselves at their apparent passing. Micta Vindijan, a cruel and vicious Vindijan general, was reported to have died 44 years passed, but he has been relaxing comfortably for 3 years passed at Whitkus Blo. He took great joy in ordering the occasional morning air strike.

Messi Ors, a famous artist and beloved tunesmith, has been enjoying the last 4 years passed beneath the surface of Sras Oblique.

Once you learn of Whitkus Blo and are sworn to secrecy, arrangements can be made at anytime for your arrival. All who walk its halls are stunned at the opulence. All of the Vindijan's prized possessions

are on display and ready to be enjoyed. That said most came and stayed for the precision. It is an entirely different documented history than above ground. Each inhabitant contributes to the story that will never be told or even mentioned above ground.

The Kaa are oblivious to the comings and goings of a society right below their feet. It is one more final blow from the Vindijan Line.

As Peastro walks into the Vsep room he is greeted with a wink from Coup, who is lying facing the hologram. The room is light green and in the shape of a circle with a large circular bed. There are 36 segments of the bed filled with all of the Vindijan hierarchy, who are all lying flat on their backs. The bed is white and in the center there is a hologram that changes to whoever is speaking at the time. Peastro lays down in his segment of the bed and rests his head on the community headrest.

“I woke today with an ache so fierce my memories were of failures. I couldn’t relive a moment of joy and I’d lost my joyous heart entirely. I lay there with Mela and was lost in a somber wave. Then...” said Coup softly as he looked at the faces around the bed,” then a pure thought grabbed my reason and I was reminded of our divinity. We are losing this war because of focus, not strategy.”

“Yes, yes that is it,” shouted Ambassador Voon.

“You have captured it,” bellowed Cleric Cortel.

Coup put his hand on his chest and said,” We forgot ourselves and became lazy in our execution! Musebots are not divine and certainly cannot ascend! We must use our powers old and new and make an enormous push to destroy and cripple the Kaa’s will once and forever! Every soldier in the field, every captain, every general must take the field of battle with destruction on their brow!”

“We can destroy them it is a certainty!” shouted Peastro.

“Your fire will be our fire from now on!” shouted General Coses.

“I feel the Vindijan heart beating once again! Today the message will be sent out to all of our armies. Once received we will coordinate all of our attacks to deliver one magnanimous shot across the bow!” thundered Coup as he grinned and hit the table 3 times hard. “Tomorrow the Line will deliver our most vicious attack! The Kaa will remember for a thousand generations the final lesson, of the Vindijan Line!” thundered Coup as he crushed his glass in his hand.

The message was sent to every battalion and strike force in the Vindijan army. It declared that on the 659<sup>th</sup> day of the year of the Kanett every soldier would fight as if it were their last. That meant every ship, soldier, and every Vindijan under the T sun prepared for battle. Everyone slept that night with a sense of purpose. Careful not to let their passion inhibit their sleep, they needed to be rested and they all knew it.

In the hour before the T sun came up all of the battleships prepared for battle. Every gun and grenade was checked and readied for what was called, “The Great Push,” by the Vindijan Line. They all visualized the effort it would take to pummel the Kaa into submission, and were ready and willing to give it. Wars are won or lost on a single day, Coup knew it. Peastro knew it also and as far as he could surmise the Kaa were about to.

The Kaa on the other hand were fast asleep and dreaming of another day as free men. They felt comfortable that they were winning the war and had broken the Line’s spirit. They awoke and felt an extra rush of glee.

Coup and Peastro sat inside Coup’s Venebon battleship as the T sun was just creeping over the horizon. The first wave of the T sun’s rays is particularly thrilling for a Vindijan. Euphoria will wash over them as they fill with power and strength. Today was no different and Coup and Peastro’s eyes glowed and their skin was warm.

Coup looked at General Coses and gave a gentle wave of his hand, signaling the first strike. All the Venebon battleships in the entire fleet fired in unison on the unsuspecting Kaa armies. 8 million Kaa soldiers were burnt to a crisp in the first few seconds. Most of which were still preparing to take the



battlefield. It had been a millennia's old rule of battle that there would be no fighting until the second wave of the T sun had started. The Vindijan's had enacted the law to keep troops to a civilized form of warfare. Now they had just broken it and caught the Kaa completely by surprise. Most of the Kaa generals were at home watching holograms of the day's news when the destruction started.

The Poro Cruisers weaved in and out of every city street and fired on any Kaa in sight. Women and children were being treated like soldiers and killed without a moment's pause.

While this was happening 70 Venebon battleships descended on the Veeres region and scorched everything in sight. Every man made structure, including hospitals, was decimated. The Vindijan's net of carnage no longer had even the smallest hole in it. Even schools are targeted for destruction.

It was no longer a war, but a Kaa cleansing. The Moors Rep Tower, the Kaa's place of worship, was blown into a million pieces of ash, as unsuspecting Kaa were caught on their knees.

The Kaa soldiers who were up and ready to fight didn't stand a chance. The Vindijan's new bounty of powers made them unstoppable. When one Kaa soldier ran at a Humpacca, the Humpacca punched radiation through his knuckles using the Mormo technique. This burnt the Kaa soldier's skull until it exploded.

Another Kaa soldier attacked a Vindijan captain, but the captain used his Coreto Eye and looked into his chest and burst his heart with a blink of his eye. These weren't the passionless merciful Vindijan's the Kaa were used to fighting, far from it.

All across Sras Oblique Vindijan's could be seen levitating in the air and chasing down frantic Kaa. No one was excluded, Kaa's from every walk of life ran for their lives.

For the first 2 waves of the T sun the readjustment, as it would later be called, continued. What once were beautiful Kaa cities,, were now piles of bodies and rubble. The smelled of death and smoke plumes

littered the countryside. Nowhere or no one was excluded. The Musebots that had kept the Kaa fighting strong were too little too late and did little to stem the carnage.

At the beginning of the T sun's third wave Coup gave a gentle wave and the Vindijan forces ceased their destruction. All told the bulk of the Kaa armies and half of the Kaa population were no more.

## Chapter 11

### The Belief of Popaturn

The Toen war had ended in a barrage of death and total destruction. The Kaa had been sent back to their familiar place in the service of the Line. All told 600,000,000 Kaa lives had been lost to the Builder's left hand. In the weeks that followed the Kaa who hadn't perished were forced to dispose of the ones who had. Now they were forced to clear away the rubble of their once beloved cities and homes.

Their will had been broken and few dared a negative word about The Line. Not one person allowed a critical thought to enter their minds. Now they are focused on the grim reality of being on the losing end of war. The victor's enforce their will on the losers.

The Vindijan Line has a whole new set of rules for the Kaa, demands that are worse than before the Toen war. This makes many Kaa wish they hadn't gone to war and had been content with what they had in the first place.

The one rule that terrified the Kaa was the Eoy rule. Eoy is the nickname for a small child. The Eoy rule states that only one child is allowed for every 2 Kaa couples. They started a lottery to determine which couple could have a child. And if the rule was broken the parents were put to death, no exceptions. The Line had decided to keep their numbers advantage, in case the Kaa tried another rebellion.

Peastro sits shooting Dees as his mind is in turmoil. He thinks the Line is being, and has been, too harsh on the Kaa. He can still remember being on the other side of the fence. And as much as he wanted the Toen war over, he could never have imagined the lengths the Vindijan Line would go to. He is mortified to know that his father was killed in The Great Push. Coup said it was an accident, but he

feared it was the Line's way of cutting his connections to the Kaa. He knows what treachery they are capable of.

A servant boy enters the room and sets a Lila on the table beside Peastro. The servant boy is Kaa and Peastro notices his complacent body language. The boy doesn't make eye contact with Peastro, he simply sets down the Lila and leaves.

Peastro looks at the Lila for a moment and then attaches it to his temple. After it has dissolved he sees it as a thought from Coup. He understands that Coup is thrilled that the Toen war is over. Peastro feels a little sick to his stomach at Coup's lack of remorse. Then he understands that someone called Popaturn is here from Goldva. He is prepared to take Peastro back with him.

This fills his heart with joy and relief, he couldn't imagine being around Coup as he relieves the Great Push again and again. He secretly hopes he will be leaving Sras Oblique for good. He thinks seriously about starting a new life on Goldva with Morn.

The final 15 seconds of the thoughts reveal that they are waiting for him with all of his things. They are in hangar bay 15. Peastro stands up quickly and makes for the hangar bay.

On the way he makes a point of not making eye contact with anyone. A part of him fears they might get wind of his true intentions. When he arrives, Morn meets him at the door and embraces him tightly and says, "Adventure's are for taking my sweet."

Peastro and Morn walk over to Coup and Popaturn. Coup does not offer a greeting to Peastro he just stands there and looks at him sternly. Popaturn walks up to Peastro and says into Peastro's ear, "Goldva, Goldva will embrace you, Peastro."

Popaturn is a ball of bulging muscles. His arms are like granite and covered in blue veins. His head protrudes from a muscle bound neck and his hands are enormous, much larger than Coup's. His face is like that of a child, smooth and rounded, with a pronounced jaw and long wide nose. His eyes are crystal

and a storm can be seen thundering in each. He has a long mane of flowing blonde hair that stretches to his forearms. Above each eye is an electrical input that has a red light blinking inside. He is wearing a skin tight green sweater, with the sleeves pulled up. He also has on a black leather loin cloth that exposes his large muscular legs. On his feet he is wearing Ang Ma slippers, which are skin tight socks with a hard plastic sole sewn into them. On his right calf is a gold control panel with a blinking green light. ON his right hand he has a glimmering silver forefinger.

Peastro looks at Popaturn and feels a kinship with him. He can't understand why, something about him just puts him at ease. Peastro put his hand on Popaturn's shoulder and says softly," I believe in Goldva now. I know it will be magnificent and a sight to behold."

"Thank you, Peastro, we will love you unconditionally. The hands of Goldva will hold your worries to the side," said Popaturn as he puts his hand around Peastro's waist and then says," And, Morn, there are many splendors for you to enjoy as well."

Morn smiled and said," I am sure that it will be a glorious adventure. I think it will be a new beginning of sorts."

Morn and Peastro's eyes stared at Popaturn. He didn't want to reveal his true plans to Coup. He could feel Coup's eyes on him and he knew Coup was looking for signals. Peastro meanwhile keeps himself calm and keeps his emotions in check. He knows not to appear too eager to leave or Coup might try and keep him from going.

"Popaturn, you really should see Pepiveddie Plains while you're here. The Alsee grass is especially beautiful this time of year," said Peastro plainly.

"I would love too, but we're expected at Goldva. There is a wonderful surprise waiting for you upon our arrival and it is surely a gift that can't wait," said Popaturn as he boarded the Nor ship.

“Well, Coup, I will see you in 7 years passed. I hope the Kaa don’t topple the Line by then,” said Peastro with a smirk.

Coup laughs and says,” So true, so yes.”

Peastro laughed and then said quickly,” You old Hool nugget, you couldn’t resist.”

“I’ll miss the laughter, Peastro, keep your eyes up and your wits about you if you know what I mean,” said Coup in a serious tone as he embraced Peastro.

“It is as certain as the T sun’s morning embrace,” said Peastro as he and Morn boarded the Nor ship.

The Nor ship was grey on the outside and nearly see through. The outline of the engine and all aboard can be seen from the outside. The word Permate is written on either side.

Permate Yeps is the Nor philosopher who introduced the Ohva technique. The technique involved you only focusing on the problems in your life for small segments of time. Then spend the rest of your day fantasizing about the great things that are going to happen to you. Going into great detail and thinking passionately about what was the best thing that could happen to you the following day. Once the Ohva technique was started followers did things in their real life just to have more realistic fantasies. This led them on a path to success.

The inside of the Nor ship is stripped pale blue and white. There is a seven segment painting of the Nor mountain Booslepe. Mt. Booslepe has the faces of every Nor ruler going back to the first, carved into its sides. There are over 10,000 faces and each face has its own presence.

Peastro looks at the painting and asks,” Does this mountain really have all these faces on it?”

“Oh yes every ruler we’ve had. I didn’t want to ruin the surprise, but you asked. Your face will also be on Mt. Booslepe,” said Popaturn.

“Outstanding, what an odd and wonderful gift,” replied Peastro as he felt giddy at the idea. “I can’t wait to see it,” said Peastro as he scanned the faces in the painting and then asked, “How long will it take to get to Goldva do you think?”

“Not long at all, once we’re out of Sras Oblique’s atmosphere we’ll be using a Gravitron to pass into another dimension. Once we are there we can travel quite quickly to Goldva. You have to understand that in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> dimensions it’s possible to reach tremendous speeds,” said Popaturn as he set down his head on the large bed.

There are 5 large lavender beds placed in all five corners of the room. The Nor ship is modest in size and is no longer than a tennis court. Inside there is only Morn, Peastro, and Popaturn. The ship is a self piloting vessel and has its flight plan programmed in advance.

Once they left the atmosphere of Sras Oblique the Nor ship stopped and a solid yellow beam was shot from the nose of the ship.

“Don’t be scared, that’s the Gravitron. It’s just creating a doorway for us to travel through,” said Popaturn.

In front of the ship a crack started to form in space, with a white light emitting from inside it. Then the hole got larger and larger while through the hole could be seen a white tunnel; with floating yellow specs of light throughout.

“Fear not, we’ll be in and then we will be out. It’s a painless procedure with very little risk,” said Popaturn as he strapped himself in, “You’ll need to attach your safety harnesses though, but not for long.”

Peastro and Morn locked themselves in and quickly kissed on the lips. The Nor ship drove into the 7<sup>th</sup> dimension and stopped inside the long white tunnel. The Nor vessel started pulsing and swaying side to side. Then it started moving rapidly through the tunnel. Outside their ship were bright orange people who appear to be running beside the ship and shouting at them.

They were thin hairless and had very plump faces like they were blowing a bubble. They weren't wearing shirts and their chests had a dull green glow from the center. Their pants were white and made of some sort of bendable plastic. Morn and Peastro watched in amazement. Morn burst into laughter at this odd sight. Peastro looked at Popaturn to see if he knew who or what they were, but he just shrugged his shoulders and said, "They're not Vindijan's, I know that."

"Certainly not," said Morn happily as she smiled at Popaturn.

"Some dimensions just shouldn't be opened is all I can say," said Peastro as he watched the orange people tap on the window.

"They can't help it, look they seem friendly. Look at that one there," said Morn as she to one and then continued, "How could that goofy grin be trouble?"

"Are you kidding, he'd smile you to death," said Peastro jokingly.

Morn rolled her eyes and squeezed Peastro shoulder gently. After an hour the Nor ship slowed and stopped in front of a white wall with coordinates written on it. The yellow beam shot the wall splitting it wide open, revealing a large green planet.

"Goldva," said Peastro warmly.

"Yes this is the land of dreams, Peastro," said Popaturn and then he smiled and spoke softly, "A place for new realities and endless enrichment," says Popaturn as he thinks of how amazing Goldva is and then says, "The one world where a man can truly ascend and be counted among the great men in history. Goldva is yours now," said Popaturn as he handed Peastro a silver pyramid.

Peastro holds it in his hand and then asks, "What's this?"

"Give it a good squeeze and you will see," said Popaturn smoothly.



Peastro looks at Popaturn for a moment and then Morn. He looks at the pyramid and squeezes it. The pyramid is instantly absorbed by his skin, leaving the words Pre Ma written on his palm.

“Alright now what do I do?” asks Peastro nonchalantly.

“Every Nor has their personal status given to them at birth. Of course it’s possible to go father and be greater, but everyone wears their beginning as a badge of honor,” said Popaturn as he showed Peastro his palm with word Oc 7 written on it and then he said, “I was only born to be a craftsman, but I am a scientist and a diplomat now.”

“What does Pre Ma signify?” asked Morn.

“That is as high as you can go on Goldva. It signifies that you are the most treasured one and that your essence has no limitations. Pre Ma is given out only once a generation and grants you protection from all Nor law,” said Popaturn firmly as he hands Morn a golden pyramid, “And this is for you, Morn.”

“Thank you, a squeeze is in order,” said Morn as she squeezed the golden pyramid. The golden pyramid dissolved leaving the words Cre Ma on her palm.

“Cre Ma is the designation of our cherished and most powerful female. You will be granted every desire you have and be above Nor law,” explained Popaturn as he tried to contain his glee and then said, “That as well as the first to drink from the Chalice of Sepsem. That is also at the Preptep ceremony this evening. Don’t worry the Preptep is very brief and will simply cast Peastro as Emperor,” said Popaturn

The Chalice of Sepsem is the original cup used by Sepsem Vee Nor, the first Pre Ma of Goldva. They did this to baptize his subjects into enlightenment. Once someone has become fully realized they are given all of the accumulated knowledge of the previous generation. Then once they have mastered the information they are allowed to drink from the Chalice of Sepsem. This signifies that a person and a new generation will be smarter than the last. It was always Sepsem Vee Nor’s great hope that everything he

knew would eventually be thought of as common sense. He hoped that the knowledge would build on top of itself, making every man and woman a genius.

The Preptep ceremony, though brief, is extremely involved. The Cre Ma will drink from the Chalice of Sepsem and then raise the Chalice to the Pre Ma's lips. Then she slowly pours the remainder the contents down his throat. They will stand in the Uohova booth and a cast of the Cre Ma and the Pre Ma holding hands, and it will be made of Veno plastic. Eventually a gold statue will be erected in the garden of Esevo, beside all the previous Pre Ma's and Cre Ma's

While the Preptep ceremony is taking place, the Nor watch the ceremony on large monitors all over Goldva. There is nothing more important to a Nor than the Preptep ceremony. Upon its completion every Nor locks their loved ones in an embrace. This can last for several minutes. Most are brought to tears and some even die from the sheer emotion of it. With the New Pre and Cre Ma the Nor know the collective joy will be tremendous in every corner of Goldva.

"Pre Ma...I am truly honored," Peastro says warmly as he rubs his brow and then says, "From lowly Hool herder to Vindijan and now Pre Ma. And all on the Builders' whim," said Peastro as he looks at the Goldva countryside and then says softly, "Where whim becomes reality."

The world of Goldva is one third ocean and 2 thirds forest and farmland. It's a beautiful world of green, with thousands of lakes and winding rivers. Goldva is slightly smaller in size than Sras Oblique, measuring 110,000 miles in circumference compared to 120,000 for Sras. That said there are far more inhabitants, nearly 50 billion all told.

The Nor have split their world into thirds, the first is designated for industry and science. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is used for farmland and livestock, and the final 3<sup>rd</sup> is for cities and recreation. The Nor believe that every person should eat every day. They knew with a large population steps had to be taken to assure this. Thus centuries earlier the Pre Ma Nectis Nor split the world into thirds to assure that every Nor would

have a great quality of life. It is known as the Nectis provision and is celebrated twice yearly for its tremendous foresight.

Peastro, Morn, and Popaturn fly over the Goldva countryside and they can see people enjoying the day. Many were floating through the air in helium bubbles known as Bublave Balls. Peastro notices how happy and content the Nor appear. The Bublave balls float several feet above the ground. The Nor use long black 2 pronged straws to breathe through and keep the Bublave balls thick.

There are also Nor running up and down large trees. They use adhesive boots known as Woorlo Heels to keep from falling. They'd run up the tree and then enter a tree house at the top. As they pass one such house Peastro sees a woman who is nude and sipping from a small cup. She sees him looking at her and gives him a wink. Morn sees this and says, "Don't let those neurons fire for another second."

"I was just admiring the fine Nor craftsmanship," said Peastro as he gave Morn a wink.

"You know I have a belief that all great accomplishments come from mental anguish. Show me a person who's happy and content and I'll show you a mind that's content with not enriching itself," said Popaturn boldly as he looked out over Goldva.

"I couldn't agree more, the problem is the level of bravery it commands to expand," said Peastro as he brushes some lint off his pants.

"True," said Popaturn.

"The Vindijan Line is very particular about the order of things. So much so that before you arrived an enormous battle took place where 600,000,000 Kaa lost their lives. One of those Kaa was my father. This mental anguish you speak of is rapping on my temple as we speak," said Peastro as he put his finger to his temple.

“I saw the devastation, the Line can be ruthless, but they are far from here, Peastro. Your journey is your own and you will become what you decide.”

“I believe you, Popaturn. The Line may be many miles from here, but not from here,” said Peastro as he tapped the center of his forehead with his fore and index finger, “I fear their presence will linger in my decisions.”

“It doesn’t have to,” said Popaturn warmly as he pointed to two Nor laughing.

“That is what I am hoping.”

## Chapter 12

### The Misinterpretation of Marlick's Oath

Inside the castle Foiv, Peastro and Morn's quarters are being prepared by two male servants named Paso and Stea. They are each thin and wearing royal blue uniforms with glowing shoulder pads.

"Do you think the new Pre Ma will fall into line?" asked Paso as he folded the covers.

"What are you referring to?" asked Stea as he lit a candle on the end table.

"You know Marlick's Oath," said Paso quickly and quietly as he smoothed over a pillow.

"He'd better or he'll be our shortest Pre Ma in a century," said Stea as he lit up a cigarette.

"You bet," said Paso with a laugh.

"To come so far and have a moral conundrum at the last minute, terrible simply terrible," said Stea sadly as he wiped the lint from the drapes.

"It's happened before, remember Tatio?" asks Paso sadly while he adjusts his pants.

"Oh yes...Tatio was a stunner, such a handsome Pre Ma. I hated to see him pass," said Stea quickly.

"A travesty for sure, but this Peastro might not be as foolish," said Paso hopefully as he checked everything in the room.

"All Pre Ma's are different Peastro sounds to be strong enough from what I've heard, let's hope," said Stea as he and Paso leave the room.

Peastro and Morn are touring Foiv castle. There are several large plasma windows that act as a centerpiece in the dining area. They are in the shape of the letters in Peastro and Morn's names. The ceiling is a perpetual carpet of red flames. This fascinated Morn to no end. They walked into the adjoining garden and they could see acrobats. The acrobats are wearing black magnetic suit and are floating over the oppositely charged ground. They flip and twist in ways not meant the body. Peastro uses his power of levitation and floats in amongst them and mirrors their routine. This is much to the enjoyment of Morn and Popaturn. Peastro uses the Mormo technique and punches a ball of radiation into the air. The acrobats are obviously impressed and give him a nod of recognition.

Peastro, Morn, and Popaturn walk into a room filled with ancient robots. There are some dating back 30,000 years.

"All of these robots here are actually used in battle," said Popaturn as he motioned with his hand.

"Really, they look almost human," said Peastro as he touched one of the robots' faces.

"Well they've killed men...beyond that they're only mere machines. The ones we have are far more advanced and even possess high level cognitive thought," said Popaturn proudly as he rubbed the chest of a silver robot.

"That is quite an accomplishment, an absolute triumph," said Peastro as he looked at the various robots.

"Thank you we've made great strides."

Peastro stopped in front of a giant silver robot with 4 heads. It is 50 feet high and is smooth and sleek. There are no visible wires and each of its heads' are facing in a different direction. Each one of its faces look sullen and menacing. The fingers on its right hand are made up of machine gun barrels. The left is holding a long metal staff.

"How's the T sun taste big fella?" asks Peastro jokingly as he grins.

“This is Bron he’s our assault robot that we used in the last war with the Cupsti’s. He looks like trouble and trouble he is. Would you like to see a demonstration?” asks Popaturn as he walks over to Bron’s leg.

“Not necessary, some things are better left in a state of unknowing. I would have loved to have had Bron in the Toen war though. I have a feeling it would have been much shorter,” said Peastro as he walks between Bron’s legs and looks up at him.

“We’ve found that the right technology can level any battlefield. We have hundreds of these Bron and many other robots with unique capabilities. I would love for you to see them sometime,” said Popaturn as he walked into the next room.

“Of course,” replied Peastro as he and Morn followed him.

They entered into a smoky lounge with scantily clad men and women dancing as they watched a movie. The movie was called Missed Your Longing and is a movie biopic about Veto Yorns.

Veto is the first Nor woman to rationalize her emotions as after thoughts. Her theory known as the Yorns Reaction, it basically says that real emotions are experienced only in the moment and descriptions of them are emotions felt after the fact. She is renowned for her social activism and paved the way for Nor women to truly achieve. Veto is now in her seventies and is a member of the Zepre.

The Zepre is the ruling body under the Pre Ma and Cre Ma. Is comprised of twelve members and carries out all the wishes of the Pre and Cre Ma, regardless of how absurd. Mistya Toe, the fourth Pre Ma, had it made law every Nor must eat chocolate pudding after breakfast and so they did. The law was never repealed and became a cherished moment in Nor history.

Peastro watches the movie and is transfixed by the lead actress. A beautiful blonde with short slicked back hair and lavender eyes. He watches as she scowls then smiles and then yells as she bursts into laughter.

Morn isn't watching the movie she is keenly transfixed on Peastro. She starts to feel ignored by him and pokes him in the ribs. Peastro looks at her and realizes his error and nods. Then they continue on their tour.

They walk through the dancing crowd and into a plasma aquarium. Inside the tanks are millions of species of fish swimming above, beneath, and beside them. They walk by one tank and a Firo fish swims beside them.

Firo fish have human eyes and mouths, but a nose that goes into their heads. They have paintings of landscapes on their sides and are propelled by bursts of gas from their rear ends. This causes them to shoot forward suddenly every second or so. They are in the shape of a shoe and are flat on the bottom.

"That fish is really peculiar," said Peastro as he stared at the Firo fish.

"Creepy is what I think. He's staring at my crotch," said Morn as she walks over to the other side of Peastro.

"Firo fish are very sexual by nature. They mate hundreds of times daily. They are very friendly to people," said Popaturn as he put his forehead to the tanks wall and blinks at the Firo fish.

A Firo fish turn to face Popaturn and puts its face to the tank wall and smiles as it winks at him. Popaturn says, "You'd be amazed at how little they eat and yet they have so much energy to burn."

"Really I'd love to know their secret," said Peastro as he puts his finger right between the Firo fish's eyes and taps gently.

The Firo smiles and then spins at enormous speed. It then stops for a second and shoots off into the depths.



“There is a lot to see and experience on Goldva, but you will need to rest and get settled before the Preptep ceremony. There is one other thing to show you, it really is quite extraordinary. Please follow me,” said Popaturn as he led them down a blue corridor with shooting lights in the floor.

At the end of the corridor there is a large door in the shape of a circle. Popaturn stops them at the door and says, “This is Mt. Booselepe, throw your glance to the center peak,” and then he opened the door.

Mt. Booselepe is 20 miles high and 1000 miles long with parts of it having burned off in the atmosphere. There is over a thousand faces carved into its sides. Each of which is 1000 feet high and 500 feet wide. Most are at the top of the mountain, above the clouds, but a hundred are nearer the bottom.

Beside every face on Mt. Booselepe is a small chateau that is erected for the relatives of the Pre Ma. Not only are the faces of the Pre Ma carved into the mountain their names are as well. Above every face is a video screen that shows the Pre Ma’s favorite moments.

Peastro’s face is right in the middle of Mt. Booselepe with his name emblazoned beneath it. The chateau is to the left and the video globe is above it.

When Peastro sees it his eyes open wide and he lets out a quick breath. Morn squeezes his shoulder and says, “It is more magnificent than...a thousand T suns.”

Peastro is at a loss for words, he just keeps scanning all the faces in amazement as they all seem eerily familiar.

“This is a truly great gift. The sheer size and scope...it is beyond description, Popaturn,” said Peastro.

“Take a moment...all of your friends are here. They all stood where you are standing and felt as you do now. Try to take them all in, the next will do the same for you,” said Popaturn softly as he looks at Peastro.

Peastro looks at Popaturn, then back to Mt. Booslepe. He scans the faces and he is overcome with emotion. He starts to weep and then says tearfully, "I was alone for so many T suns, so many..."

Morn fought back tears as she put her arms around Peastro and embraced him tightly.

"Let it out, Peastro, leave it here today," said Popaturn sternly.

"I was alone so long I hated the world...and everyone in it. I just couldn't feel hope, not even for a second. And now...I feel hope. I look at these faces and can see their struggles...I just needed to know they were out there. I just needed to see them. This is all the hope I ever needed," said Peastro tearfully as he wept.

Popaturn put his hand on Peastro's shoulder and said sternly, "Don't smooth away your moment, soak them in."

"I'll...I'll do it I can let go," said Peastro tearfully as he grabbed his knees and his tears hit the dirt below causing puffs of dust, "it just hurts so bad."

"Many a brave man came to this spot and wept. They were carriers of an important torch, passed from generation to generation. All these faces endured incredible hardships yet...became glorious souls. The worst is behind you, Peastro. Every day will be the brightest from tomorrow's T sun," said Popaturn boldly as he embraced Morn and Peastro tightly. The 3 of them stood there and took in Mt. Booslepe for many minutes.

"They were here it's real," said Peastro tearfully as he smiled to himself.

Peastro and Morn were shown to their quarters and prepared themselves for the Preptep ceremony. After they had finished dressing they made their way to Pear Cathedral. That was where the Preptep ceremony was always held since Sepsem Vee Nor's original one.

Pear Cathedral is in the shape of an outstretched hand. Each of the fingers are filled with rows of large descending black leather couches. In the center is a revolving stage that floats on a cushion of air. On the stage there is 2 modest chairs that are illuminated by yellow and blue lights. There are holograms of the last 3 Pre Ma and Cre Ma's encircling the stage. Above the stage is a red and brown box with the face of Sepsem Vee Nor written on it. The room is filled with the smell of wild berries, while a lone musical note is repeated every few seconds. The ceiling is made of glass and the night sky can be seen through it, the planet of Yeave can be seen shining brightly.

As Peastro and Morn walk down the aisle the faces they see look happy, but also concerned. This causes Peastro to have an unsure feeling as he walks up.

Peastro and Morn are shown to their seats and then Morn is handed the Chalice of Sepsem. It is filled with a shiny blue liquid that is known as Lifos and is very pungent. It is made from fermented Nono bat's blood.

"Well my love this is our moment," said Morn as she lifted the Chalice of Sepsem to her lips.

She took a sip and then paused for a moment as she felt a rush of blood to her head. Then she felt a wave of euphoria come over her and she laughed loudly. Everyone in the room smiled and said, "Ve Bo," which is slang for love.

Peastro smirked and put his hand to her cheek. Whereas Morn nodded and raised the chalice to Peastro's lips and poured the contents into his mouth. Peastro swallowed hard and then smiled and said, "Simply incredible, what a glorious concoction."

Everyone was smiling as Peastro and Morn stood in the Uohova booth while a plastic mold of them holding hands was made. As they stepped out of the booth Popaturn walked up to them and said, "We're almost done, there's just one more thing to complete."

"Really, I thought that was it," said Peastro anxiously as he rubbed Morn's neck.

“There is still Marlick’s oath. Marlick was our first high priestess and it was decided to increase the Pre and Cre Ma’s powers that,” said Popaturn as the red and brown box above them lowered to their knees in front and he continued,” a symbolic bond is needed. What is in this box is the Quar monkey. What you need to do and do it now, is crush his skull and the Quar monkey’s cells will join with yours and increase your brain capacity to its maximum,” said Popaturn sternly as he opened the box revealing the live Quar monkey sitting still inside.

The Quar monkey is 2 feet tall and has a pink and white face. Its hands and feet are tiny. Its eyes are very large and have a silver tint. And on its belly is a black star.

“Ok, ah...alright and then what?” asked Peastro nervously as he looks at the Quar monkey as it stares lovingly back at him.

“Two things, one Morn will have to put her hands into the Quar monkeys’ blood and cover her skin with it. This will also give her maximum brain function,” explained Popaturn cautiously as he hoped they wouldn’t fail. “And the second thing is to keep this part of the ceremony a secret ‘til the end of your days. If you should break Marlick’s oath the Quar monkeys’ cells will cause your heart to stop functioning and you will perish,” said Popaturn as he put his hand on Peastro’s shoulder and then says warmly,” we don’t want to lose you, either of you, but our secret can’t leave this room.”

Peastro and Morn look at each other blankly and say nothing. They feel terrified and they each start sweating. Peastro looks around the room at the emotionless faces and then at the Quar monkey, who is still staring up at him.

He paused for a minute and then says,” Yeah, enjoy the afterlife Quar monkey.”

The onlookers burst out into laughter. Then Peastro put his hands on either side of the Quar monkey’s head and squeezed its skull until it burst. Its blood covered his hands and splashed all over his face.

Then Peastro stepped out of the way and Morn looked at him and smirked. She dipped her hands in the blue blood. The Quar monkey's blood is completely absorbed by Peastro and Morn's skin. In a few moments there isn't a trace to be seen. The rest of the Quar monkey crumbles and then bursts into an orange ball of light.

"Sweet Builder these Nor are something elsewhere," said Peastro slyly as he smiled and looked skyward.

"You are officially our new Pre Ma and Cre Ma. Goldva is yours!" said Popatum as he turned to the audience.

Everyone on Goldva embraced one another and held each other tightly. Many cried tears of joy and the entire world held tightly for several. Many older Nor choose this moment to pass over, they just wanted to see one more Pre and Cre Ma and had been holding on for that.

The sky fills with rockets and shimmering rainbow trails. Every person on Goldva feels a collective sigh of relief.

## Chapter 13

### Tonkato's Curse and the Scepter of 8

The first 8 months on Goldva for Peastro and Morn, the new Pre and Cre Ma, was filled with the fulfillment of whims. To have absolute power over your own self is a triumph but over a world is something more profound. Morn hit the ground running and whenever someone started to annoy her she slapped them. At first it was a joke, eventually it became a reflex. When she didn't like the food she was served she threw the plate at the chef, they said nothing.

Peastro got in the habit of kicking people randomly, at any sign of apparent stress. He also started yelling at Popatum every time he saw him for no apparent reason, simply a whim that became a habit. Peastro also got in the habit of putting his fist through priceless paintings and shouting, "Waste of paint, waste of time!"

Their sexual fantasies started getting acted out in public. Whenever they were when the urge hit them they started having sex right on the spot. This made for some interesting days at the zoo, and some strange outings to the aquarium.

They also added a new law, the Novay referendum, which stated that no one could walk on any street more than once daily. And if they were caught they would have to spend 3 months in jail. They implemented this law to keep the crowds fresh, as they called it.

It wasn't all fun and games though there was a large ship spotted in the outer rim of their solar system. The ship is unidentified and is holding its orbit. Peastro sent a scout ship to investigate and bring back all pertinent details. Two days have passed and still no word.

Peastro sits in his throne in the command center waiting for the news from the scout ship. General Stram enters the room carrying a white sealed envelope in his right hand.

General Stram is 6 foot 4 inches tall and orange skinned. His shoulders are wide and he has a barrel chest. He has short white hair with a very pronounced widow's peak. He has surgically attached black oval sunglasses that hide his re corneas. He is wearing a black spandex shirt and skin tight red leather pants. Above his upper lip is the tattoo of a pyramid. And on each cheek there is a similar tattoo. He also has on black Hones head boots. They are made from the actual head of a Hones, which is very similar to a buffalo.

"There is urgent word for you, Pre Ma, it is from the scout ship Rone 18," said General Stram as he handed Peastro the white envelope.

Peastro grabbed the envelope and then nodded to Stram. He then pressed the crest of the Pre Ma on the front of the envelope and the inside of the envelope became the outside. The message read," Engaged the unidentified vessel and attempted to make peaceable contact. They ignored us for several minutes and then the front of the vessel opened. Suddenly we were locked in a tractor beam. We were able to send this distress message before they sealed us inside. Ne3ed immediate aid they've surrounded the ship, Sergeant Blank out."

"This is troublesome I am extremely concerned at their actions. They've started our conversation with hostile intent. A wise man knows where such things lead," said Peastro as he looked out the window into the T sun.

"It is unfortunate but true," said General Stram cautiously.

"Well prudence implies weakness. We will engage this unknown ship with a swift blow. What I fear is their testing our resolve. Weighing their chances in a forthcoming invasion," said Peastro as he caresses his forehead in a circle.

“I agree completely we should stomp out their aggression before they gain confidence,” said General Stram.

“Mor than that...we must be vicious in our methods!” said Peastro sternly as she started to fill with strength and then said boldly,” The point I am making is Sergeant Blank must be seen as an acceptable loss for the greater good. No one on that ship must survive of their will survives,” said Peastro coldly as he slammed his fist on the table.

“He is a soldier and all soldiers know of sacrifice. I will attend to his family. They will not go without or feel wanting,” said General Stram firmly as he wiped his left shoulder off with his palm.

“Of course...I would like to go on this mission personally, and I would like you out there as well. I’m not talking about one or two ships, we’ll bring half the armada and half will stay on Goldva. This one ship is certainly not a rogue. This stinks of a trap so we will treat it as such,” said Peastro as he tugged at his chin beard.

Half the armada is readied and sets out for the outer rim. The rest of Goldva’s forces are put on high alert. The entire planet is enclosed in its protective plasma shield.

Peastro is sitting inside the Rerni Realm, which is the core of the battleship. If the entire ship is destroyed the Rerni Realm will remain and keep the Pre Ma protected until help arrives. It is a black box for the protection of the Pre Ma and his generals.

After they have passed through the 7<sup>th</sup> dimension they come out near the outer rim. Peastro slows the ships for a moment and says over the loud speaker,” We’re not here to make friends. We’ll ask once and only once for the return of our soldiers. If they do not reply we will treat that as an assault and they will shortly be dust. Eyes up, let your actions come as reflex! Let’s start the festivities, General Stram, please.”



General Stram says sternly,” We have come here for the retrieval of our soldiers. We wish to avoid hostilities, but we are prepared...”

“Hello Nor vessel I am Brade Rick of the Marto, who am I speaking with?” asks Brade as his hologram appears in front of General Stram.

Brade Rick is a large fat man, over 1800 pounds, and 7 feet tall. He has dark blue skin and thick green hair all over his body. His teeth are bright yellow and his eyes are checkered black and white and wide open. He is wearing a long white flowing robe and white soles that are tied to his enormous feet. Around his neck is a gold necklace and on his wrists is a flashing bracelet with words that perpetually change.

“You are speaking with General Stram and...,”

“General Stram, I am truly blessed to be meeting you. I would like to apologize for the capture of your scout ship. We are simply curious about the inhabitants of this galaxy,” said Brade apologetically as he tried not to burp.

“Then you’ll be returning them post haste?” asked General Stram.

Brade paused for a second and then said snidely,” Well therein sits the problem. We collect various species of humanoids you see. And we’d hate to part with your soldiers.”

“Brade!” said Peastro as he shot up in his seat.

“Ah...and you are?” asked Brade suspiciously.

“It doesn’t matter, but what does is this. You’re gonna release our soldiers and their vessel or we are going to BLOW you out of the sky,” said Peastro sternly with a smirk.

Brade took a few steps forward and then said,” Well I don’t know...you see I had my heart set on keeping them. So I guess I’ll do just that.”

Peastro motioned to General Stram to fire at will and every ship fired their cannons at the Marto ships. The hologram of Brade showed him burst into flames and then the Marto ship exploded, leaving only debris and smoke.

“Well there goes an unreasonable and unlikeable soul lost to the vacuum of space. I’m all broken up about it. What I am certain of is the longing I already feel for Brade,” said Peastro sarcastically.

“I hate to say this, Pre Ma, but he put his hands in a crossed V position before he perished,” said General Stram nervously as he made the V.

“What is the significance of that?” asks Peastro anxiously as he rubs his forehead.

“That’s Tonkato’s curse, Brade’s last wish in this life was to put that on you,” said General Stram nervously.

“What is Tonkato’s curse?” asked Peastro anxiously as he looked wide eyed at Stram.

General Stram looked around nervously and then said, “Katrem Tonkato was a master surgeon who was murdered in his sleep by a patient of his, who had lost her hand during surgery. A surgery he himself did and she felt his negligence caused her to lose her hand. But that’s not where the story ends 3 days later he rose from the dead just long enough to cut off her other hand. When a person crosses their hands in a V death, it signifies that the deliverer of death will have a debt to pay,” explained General Stram cautiously as he fumbled at his belt.

“But who is going to collect it?” asked Peastro snidely as he knew he could take it.

“Well where there’s one ship there’s always another. Obviously he put himself in that position so his soul could wreak havoc in our lives,” said General Stram softly as he put his hand on Peastro’s shoulder.

“Understood, we’ll keep our eyes up. The passions of a people should not be trifled with, we will be mindful,” said Peastro as he tugged at his chin beard.

Several weeks later a vessel landed in Goldva right in front of Foiv castle. It is in the shape of a coffin and has the number 8 written all over it. The ship is black in color and is no larger than a small car. It has no windows and no one can understand how it arrived unannounced, without triggering an alarm. Peastro sends a group of soldiers to investigate the odd craft.

As one of the soldiers named Merch looks it over he stops and says, "It doesn't appear to have any door or even a single grove. It's completely smooth and it feels warm to the touch...perplexing."

"Well," said Captain Netti as he gave the ship a knock, "if it were a bomb it would have blown already. I say we blow a hole in it and see what she's hiding."

Captain Netti steps back from the ship and then Merch raises his Pome blaster and fires.

The Pome blaster is blue and has a long barrel with a hexagon at the end. It fires a white hot stream of condensed explosions.

The alien ship absorbs the Pome's shots and there appears to be no damage, but now the ship is emitting music. The music is loud and aggressive and the ship starts pulsating.

The soldiers drew their weapons and stood back a safe distance from the ship. Then the ship starts to unravel, like a house of cards, and it soon it is completely flat. There is a scepter in the center that is 5 feet tall and had multi-colored buttons on it. It is red in color and has a hand clutching a large blue diamond at its peak. The scepter is covered with carvings of naked women frolicking in a stream.

Captain Netti walks up to the scepter, pauses for a second, then grabs it and says, "The Pre Ma's gonna love you," as he looks it over.

Captain Netti brings the scepter to Peastro, who is waiting in his personal garden.

"Here it is, Pre Ma, ready for your inspection," said Netti happily as he handed it to Peastro.

"Thank you, Captain, and there was no note of any kind?" asks Peastro suspiciously.

“No, Sir, nothing,” answered Captain Netti quickly as he straightened his shoulders.

“Just as well it doesn’t take a genius, but it helps to figure out this is Coup’s handiwork. It certainly is a stunning work of art,” said Peastro as he looks it over,” but what is this?” asks Peastro as he looks at the bottom of the scepter.

“Have you found something?” asked Captain Netti eagerly as he rubbed his neck.

“Well...it has the number 8 on its underside...fascinating. Coup always has a sense of grandeur. The Scepter of 8...let’s try these buttons,” said Peastro as he squeezed the red button.

A red laser shot out of the diamond and blew a 10 foot wide hole in the castle’s wall. Whereas Peastro said,” I like it already. Let’s try another.”

Then he squeezed the silver button and a hologram appeared in front of him. It was of a fierce battle between two factions he didn’t recognize and in a world he had never seen before.

“At last the last button,” said Peastro as he squeezed the lavender button.

The scepter shot a blue stream of light into the sky and an enormous storm cloud formed overhead. The wind started to howl and the sky opened up. Rain thundered down on top of Foiv castle. Peastro said coldly,” Glorious Coup you’ve wrapped me in your treachery once again. Terious awaits your arrival.

## Chapter 14

### Macre and the Heavy Hand

Peastro was sound asleep when suddenly he was awakened by an enormous explosion. This was followed by several more explosions. He jumped out of bed and ran to the balcony. He could see the night sky filled with battleships. Morn followed him to the balcony and shouted, "We can't stay here!"

"You're right, we need to get to the command center!" shouted Peastro as he saw a man on fire fall into a fountain.

They jumped from the balcony and levitated to the courtyard below. Once they were in the courtyard they raced to the far end, as explosions lit up the night sky as the castle came under fire. A missile hit right beside them and the force of the explosion sent them into the wall.

They gathered themselves up and entered the secret passageway behind the waterfall. They ran a few steps and jumped into the turbo elevator. Peastro breathed into the security clearance recognition spout and the turbo elevator rocketed downward.

"Everything is fine, Morn, we'll get through this," said Peastro as he kissed Morn on the cheek.

"I know," said Morn quickly.

Morn felt scared she had never been in battle before and her nerves were shot. Peastro felt like his heart was going to burst out of his chest, but he knew he had to be strong for Morn.

When the turbo elevator stopped the doors opened and General Stram was sitting in front of the large monitor at the end of the room.

“We’ve taken some hits, but we’ve got the bulk of our fleet in the sky now,” said General Stram as he walked up to Peastro.

The command center is a large room with up to the second holograms of every sector of Goldva. There are 2 small thrones and one large throne for the Pre Ma and his generals. It is buried a mile below the surface and is impenetrable to attack. It has 1 year’s worth of food and supplies inside of it. It also has access to a labyrinth of tunnels. The tunnels lead to every sector of Goldva.

“Do we know who they are and why they’re attacking?” asks Peastro as he looks intently at the holograms.

“These ships are the same as the ones Brade was piloting. Suffice it to say his friends are reclaiming a debt,” said General Stram sadly as his left hand shook.

“Well wars are for winning, let’s blow them out of the sky,” said Peastro coldly as Morn kissed his hand.

On the hologram in front of them they could see a Nor battleship using a robotic arm to smash through the outer shell of a Marto ship. The giant robotic arm penetrated deep inside the Marto ship and left a bomb in the center. The Marto ship exploded from within releasing an ungodly scream and a burst of flames.

Peastro shouted, “To dust!”

Another Nor vessel approaches with a Bron robot inside it. When it got close to the Marto ship a large plasma door opened and a Bron jumped onto the Marto ship. The Bron robot started pummeling the Marto ship with blow after deadly blow. The Bron punches into the Marto ship and its machine gun fingers start blasting every Marto soldier in sight.

The Bron does a handstand on the Marto ship and lets its feet drop down quickly. The kick sends its feet right through the center of the Marto ship. Once the Bron is inside it destroys everything in reach. It makes quick work of the Marto ship The Marto vessel falls to the ground like a dying bird and crashes into a group of houses and explodes.

Whereby Peastro clenches his fist and smiles menacingly and says softly, "We're just getting started ilk of Brade. We'll dance for some time you I."

They see a Marto ship land and its troops stream out of it. Only to be crushed to death by a trio of Bron's a moment later. Then a Marto ship shoots out a hook and latches it onto a Bron's leg. It starts to hoist him up into the sky. The Bron jerks back and forth violently as the Marto ship tries to capture him. They pull the Bron into a hangar bay and Marto ship's doors close.

Peastro sees this and says, "They've captured a Bron...we can't let them take him back with..."

"Wait," said General Stram quickly as he points to the hologram of the Marto ship.

They see a fist punch through the top of the Marto ship. Then a second later the Bron's head pops out with a smirk on its face. The Bron starts spinning in a circle and destroys the Marto ship as it does. The Bron robot spins faster and faster as the Marto ship is reduced to flames and debris.

"Outstanding, I hope they capture more! Bron you are truly remarkable. The Marto had better flee before there are no ships to carry them home," said Peastro snidely as he sits back in his throne.

In the hologram to the right of Peastro 2 Marto ships were doing just that. They were frantically trying to escape as a Nor battleship was bearing down on them. The Marto ship released a large bubble filled with a red cauldron of flames in front of the Nor ship. The Nor ship tried to steer clear, but it was too late. The Nor ship hit the bubble and it burst into an inferno of flames engulfing the Nor vessel. It melted away the front half of the ship and sent them crashing into a busy marketplace. Hundreds of Nor were crushed to death instantly.

Peastro sees this and says sternly, "Nice trick Bradeians, but no one escapes! I want those ships scorched General Stram!"

Stram nodded and sent word to a nearby destroyed. Stram said, "Their days of merrymaking are drawing to an end, Pre Ma. The Moti destroyer is in fiery pursuit."

"Good good, I will have my debt repaid! Don't run so far my sweet," said Peastro menacingly as he lit up a cigarette.

The Mo Ti destroyer is half the size of the battleship. It is in the shape of a grapefruit with wings. It has 8 large cannons on either wing that are filled with thousands of impact missiles, IMT's as they are called. It is grey in color with red windows. It has the face of a Nepe lion smiling painted on the front of it. It is also equipped with a Toho dart, which is a small projectile that is the size of a football. It can travel through virtually anything in its path due to tremendous lightspeed.

The Marto ships are just leaving the atmosphere of Goldva when the Moti catch up to them. The Marto ships release 2 large bubbles filled with a cauldron of flames, but the Mot Ti destroyer dodges them.

The Mo Ti fires a thousand Toho darts into the Marto ships. It fills them with holes and slices through unsuspecting crew members. Then the Mo Ti fires its IMT's. Then the IMT's blow gaping holes in the fuselage of each Marto ship. The Marto ships are all ablaze and then suddenly they implode. The sky is filled with glory and loss.

"Got your Tonkato right here, Brade!" said Peastro snidely as he leapt from his throne. "You're friends just couldn't bear to live without your company," said Peastro as he lit up a cigarette.

"The rest of their fleet is retreating, Pre Ma. Should we follow them?" ask General Stram happily as he grins.



“NO no, let them go they won’t trifle with us again. What a glorious battle, if this be a dream do not touch my shoulder,” said Peastro as he smiles at Morn and pumps his fists.

“Who would dare my love only a fool,” said Morn then she kissed Peastro on the lips.

“You defended Goldva triumphantly, Pre Ma. Your reflexes were quick and just. By destroying those 2 fleeing ships you broke the will of the whole fleet. That was a masterstroke, Pre Ma,” said General Stram happily as he nodded his head to Peastro.

Peastro nodded back and said,” Thanks be to Bron that glorious bringer of death. I’ve never seen a robot so spry or so vicious...yes!”

Peastro and Morn walked back to their quarters and went back to sleep. After Peastro was asleep he was awakened by a voice. He sat up in his bed and looked around the room and could see no one. Then he heard the voice say,” Macre is a friend to the friendly. Be open, Peastro, to new horizons.”

Peastro got up from his bed and walked over to the Scepter of 8. He heard a voice coming from the scepter saying over and over again,” Ascension is to be shared.” Then it stopped suddenly and a hologram of a beautiful blonde haired woman appeared in front of Peastro. He had never seen her before and was taken with her beauty. He stared at her longingly and then the hologram disappeared.

The commotion woke Morn up and she asked softly,” Is everything alright, Peastro?”

“Everything is fine it was just a bad dream, nothing serious,” said Peastro as he got back into bed.

He was happy she hadn’t seen the hologram, but didn’t know what to make of it.

A few months have passed since that night. Peastro still thinks of that beautiful blonde whose name he doesn’t know. He never mentioned what happened that night to Morn. He couldn’t tell her now he thought, too much time had passed.

Morn and Peastro are leisurely levitating over a field of wild Earen flowers. Earen's are square in shape and filled with a kaleidoscope of reds, greens, blues, and oranges. They are incredibly soft to the touch and produce bubbles that when burst, give a person a euphoric sensation.

They fly over the fields and they have never felt a deeper love for each other. Since arriving on Goldva their love has blossomed the way Morn had hoped it would. Peastro feels like he is learning something new about Morn every day. She continues to fascinate him and fill his heart with joy. Sras Oblique seems far away from them now, Goldva fills their sails.

Peastro grabs Morn's hand and guides her to the ground and says, "Morn, I had loved you before...but never as strong as I do now. I woke up today and looked over at you before you had awoken. And I thanked the Builder you were in my life and prayed you always would be."

Morn put her hands to Peastro's cheek and kissed him and then said, "I always will be my love. Our time here has been more...more than I could have dreamt. If we die tomorrow what we had together will somehow survive I know it."

"I love you, Morn."

"Peastro, I will always love you," said Morn and then she kissed Peastro passionately.

A floating white box with a bow on it hit Morn in the head. Peastro looks up and the sky is filled with them, floating to Goldva. Morn isn't injured and Peastro is happy about this. He grabs one of the boxes and it says the words, "Macre is arriving." Peastro undoes the bow and the box bursts open. It reveals a little blue man, the size of a candy bar, and he jumps onto Peastro's hand. The man named Oalitr is bone thin and only wearing black shorts. His eyes are giant black ovals. Oalitr smiles and says brightly, "Macre believes in love and will convey a love that few can comprehend. I am Oalitr and I was sent here to find Peastro and announce to him that Macre will arrive today."

"Well, Oalitr, I am Peastro and who is this Macre by chance?" asks Peastro as he inspected Oalitr.

“Macre is the ruler of Rermon and is the most beautiful woman in this reality. She is the owner and commander of the passionate self. She is also a profound thinker of thoughts and can titillate all of the senses,” said Oalitl quickly and then he gasps for air.

Peastro looks at Morn and sees she is not amused by what Oalitl has to say.

“Morn, how many women does a man need? You have my heart for certain,” said Peastro as he touches his forehead to hers.

“Ok, but this Macre has some treachery inside her. Nobody goes to these lengths for a handshake,” said Morn sternly as her cheeks got red.

“I am not easily swayed, Morn. Have a little faith.”

A large baked silhouette of Macre floats down in front of them. Peastro and Morn look at the silhouette than back at each other. Morn lets out a screech and levitates away in a huff. Peastro stands there and watches as Morn flies away. He looks at the silhouette and feels instantly aroused. He looks at Oalitl and asks, “Is that picture accurate?”

“Absolutely,” said Oalitl.

“You had to say yes didn’t you,” said Peastro then he looked up and said, “Builder, I’m going to need profound guidance today.”

## Chapter 15

### Macre, Vidid's Urn and Calfe Revisted

Peastro and Oaliti levitated back to Foiv castle. Peastro kept a firm grasp on Oaliti worrying he'd die if he fell to the ground. When they arrived they saw a purple polka dotted ship hovering above the castle. A long spiral staircase lowered from the ship and a symphony started to play. A beautiful woman emerged at the top of the staircase and started to descend.

She has on a black lace teddy and high heels. She also has on a diamond necklace and purple tinted sunglasses. The sunglasses hide her dark brown eyes. Her legs are long and muscular, as well as her entire body. Her skin is tan and smells of wild berries. She also has thick pouty red lips with stars on them.

As Macre nears the bottom of the staircase Peastro can see that she is carrying something in her left hand. She takes the last step and smiles, then walks over to Peastro and locks the side of his face. She then says, "Peastro, I am Macre and combined we could be a juggernaut of power."

"Macre, you are incredibly beautiful, but alas I am spoken for. But I would surely love to invite you to dine with us this evening. We can share out experiences common and unfamiliar," said Peastro smoothly as he motioned for her to follow him.

Macre batted her eyes at him, then smirked and nodded as she said, "Ok, we'll talk things over...yes a meal would be a nice beginning."

The 3 of them walked into Foiv castle. Morn waited inside with a disgusted look on her face. She walked up to Macre and said snidely, "Aren't you a little hot, I sure am not. It really feels brisk today I'm glad I wore the right clothing. Oh, I'm Peastro's WIFE, NICE TO MEET YOU."

Macre scowled at Morn and said, "You know I am a tiny bit warm. You're cold though, why am I not surprised that you're frigid."

"Frigid, odd choice of words," shot back Morn sternly as she smirked. "Ya know that ship of yours is not the least bit juvenile. It screams class and distinction. I wish I had one of my own, I do I do. If for no other reason than the joy it must bring to all who see it," said Morn coyly as she folded her arms and tapped her toe.

"The ship, my body, my total command of every sexual technique in the galaxy," replied Macre firmly as she rubbed her neck. "The ships' an original and the only one of its kind, but what I could give you and Peastro would help you reap benefits forever. I wrote a book called Orgasm at a Touch. I can see right now, and my vision is exceptional, that you in dire need of my tutelage," said Macre as she put her arms behind her back and pushed her chest out.

"Well," said Morn as she put her index finger to her hips and then said, "It's great that you're an author and I love picture books more than I'll admit. You know what...I've got it, what is you forget about Peastro and make a play for the little blue man in his hand? With your vast sexual knowledge and the fact he's roughly the size of a phallus, imagine the possibilities! We're talking love here!"

Peastro let out a laugh and then stopped quickly, not wanting to exasperate Macre. Macre then said, "Morn," then she pulled her panties down revealing her bottom," get real there isn't a vulgar inch on my entire body. Not a single noticeable flaw," said Macre as she smiled and stared down Morn. "Now I look at you and I feel the relationship that you had with Peastro was born out of convenience. Not so much love. You and I both know that the exact second you turn your back Peastro will be ravishing my body, again and again."

Morn said, "I love your theories, I'd love to get them down on pap..." then she punched Macre in the mouth.

Macre lunged forward and grabbed Morn by the hair and yanked her head to the side. Whereby Morn wrapped her hands around her waist and pulled her to the ground.

Macre shouts, "Get this tramp off of me!"

Peastro slowly starts to pull them apart.

"Not yet, Peastro, give me a second!" shouted Morn as she kicked Macre in the butt.

Then Morn put her forearm on Macre's breasts and pinned her to the ground. Then she kissed her on the lips and said, "That's as close to his lips as you're ever going to get, so savor it on your way home, Densk!"

A Densk is an extremely amorous and clumsy form of beetle, which is known to sleep in its own droppings. There are very few worse things, for a woman, to be called in the galaxy.

Peastro separates the 2 women and then says boldly, "I'm sorry, Macre, but orgasm at a touch I've read it and there are several flaws in your technique. I wasn't going to bring it up, but I believe in total honesty."

Morn starts laughing and then Macre says angrily, "I am not here for ridicule, Peastro. Whatever bond you have with Morn doesn't entitle you to mock me. I will not be made a fool."

"Understood," said Peastro with a nod, "we would still love to have you as our guest please."

Macre caught her breath and then said softly, "I will, but there will not be another violation on my body or the consequences will be dire," and then she says sternly, "Whoever attacks will incur my wrath and my armies' wrath you have been warned."

“There won’t be another,” said Peastro quickly.

Morn did not say anything she just nodded and looked away. The four of them made their way to Bovashanks study. Bovashanks study is where all the great Nor writings are kept and where Morn and Peastro favor eating.

It is a small room with 2 levels. The walls are filled with books that are accessible by floating chairs. There is a triangle shaped table made of ivory that has red silk covered chairs at each side. The center of the table there is a food elevator, where the different courses rise up every 10 minutes.

Peastro, Morn, and Macre sat down in their respective seats and Oaliti walked around the table admiring the first course. There is baked Gits’ head with an almond glaze. There are mashed honey potatoes and a pair of Mem fish for each person. And to drink there is ice cold Tazo pop, a delicious Nor beverage.

Morn takes a sip from her Tazo pop and asks, “What is it like on your planet, as far as relations between the people and their ruler?”

“On Rernon,” said Macre as she swallows a Mem fish, “my people accept that my judgment concerning their needs is infallible. They know that my grasp of their desires is unequalled.”

“How did you become the ruler of Rernon?” asks Peastro warmly as he looked at Macre.

“I was born with the divine membrane known as Ketily pores. The scientists determined eons ago that divinity is a birthright. They developed a series of tests to identify these Ketily pores and enhance the lives of their carriers. When I was born I had the largest amount of Ketily pores in the history of Rernon,” said Macre plainly as she tried the Gits’ Head.

“That’s fascinating, on my home world of Sras Oblique there are no such tests. They believe that your ascension will identify you to the truly divine,” said Peastro as he tugged at his chin beard.

“Extraordinary, if you don’t mind me inquiring how long was it before you were identified?” asks Macre warmly.

“I was 3 years passes and it was completely happenstance that it happened,” explained Peastro as he grinned. “When I think of my ascension it forces me to accept that the Builder has a plan for me. There’s also a part of me that feels a sense of terror, because my life could have easily gone a different direction,” said Peastro as he stared at his glass of Tazo pop.

“But see that’s the thing, a part of you believes that there is luck involved. When in reality your soul wouldn’t let you accept that it was an eventuality. A divine entity hurls itself towards its fate on an engine of insecurity. It was always this,” said Macre as she sat back in her seat and draped her leg over the armrest.

The second course popped up through the center of the table. It was an assortment of desserts from cakes to pies to fried ice cream filled with berries. There is also a thick chocolate pudding with a Te Te garnish.

Te Te birds are small birds, the size of a golf ball, that have sugary rich meat and feathers.

Also with the second course came the Mesidich brandy.

Mesidich brandy is a flavorful and potent as any alcohol you would ever drink. It has a delayed effect that starts 20 minutes are you start drinking it.

“Now for the main course,” said Morn as she threw back a glass of Mesidich.

Macre took a whiff from the Mesidich, then took a drink and smiles and said,” Certainly worth the trip. I brought something for you it is a treasure from Rernon. It is known as Vidid’s Urn,” then she set a small egg on the table.



Just then Morn felt her first strike trigger kick in. She sensed Macre's murderous intent. She lifted her glass to her mouth and then asked calmly, "What does it do?"

"Touch it and find out," said Macre with a smile.

Peastro looked at Morn and grinned knowingly and then looked at Macre and said, "No thank you, Vidid's Urn shall remain a mystery."

"I wasn't asking!" shouted Macre as she reached for the Vidid's urn.

As she did Peastro and Morn levitated up above the table. Macre threw Vidid's Urn at Morn and just missed her foot. When Vidid's urn hit the ground an enormous red skinned wolf-like animal called a Killor appeared from inside the urn.

Macre got on the Killor's back and jumped onto the table. The Killor snarled and gnashed its teeth at Peastro and Morn. Peastro and Morn continued to levitate.

Macre and Killor sprung into the air at Morn. Peastro sees this and uses his Coreto eye and looks into the Killor's heart, blinking his eye and bursting the Killor's heart.

Macre and the Killor fall to the floor below. Macre jumps up and runs at hyper speed out of the room. Peastro fires a ball of radiation at her, but he is too late. He and Morn race after Macre, but as they get outside they see her already boarding her ship. They watch as her ship shoots out of their atmosphere. Before it does it drops a stream of pink envelopes. Morn picks one up and it reads, "In case," on the outside. When she opens it up it reads, "Peastro, If you're reading this then she has her claws in you pretty deep. You're all I ever wanted and my love for you will never end. Expect my next visit to be a little less formal, love Macre."

"What do you think she means by that last part?" asks Morn anxiously as she takes in a deep breath.

“Who knows that woman is capable of anything,” said Peastro as he looked at Morn, “Best to keep our eyes up and our wits about us. I’ll have General Stram start running contingencies,” said Peastro as he scratched his forehead.

“She’s wise...the whole spectrum of treachery is at her disposal. I have a feeling about her and my concerns are warranted,” said Morn as she embraced Peastro.

2 weeks went by and still no sign of Macre. Peastro hoped she would come to her senses and leave him be. He just wanted to be allowed to rule over Goldva without any complications from Macre.

It is night on Goldva and the sky is littered with Calfes. Calfes are a series of bursting gas pockets that create a living sky. They create beautiful shards of light that explode continuously. The Calfes come every year at the beginning of the summer.

They are named after Dr. Michar Calfe, who is renowned for his scientific discoveries and understanding. He is the first to theorize that if a hole can be punched in a wall then a hole could be punched in a dimension, if you had the right tools to do so.

He marries 9 times and has 62 children who he self taught and mentored until his death. Many of his children went on to work at his institute and continue his research. His youngest son Col Calfe is considered the premier life actor on Goldva. He has the entire spectrum of emotions at his command. His film, “See Said,” is the most popular film on Goldva. It has established him as its most beloved actor.

## Chapter 16

### The Paha Wave Bamve

Peastro is being driven in his Eetle jeep and he is blasting Haw birds with the Mormo technique. Eetle jeeps' have wheels that are 15 feet above the ground and a black red stripped chase. They have bright red flashing lights on all four sides and the Eetle's wheels bounce and sway, but the occupants stay perfectly level.

The Haw birds that Peastro is hunting are 8 feet tall, white feathers with blue faces and menacing teeth. The Haw birds don't fly they jump repeatedly. They hurl themselves 40 feet in the air with every leap..

Peastro races after the Haw through the Beys swamp, the Haw jump over the Eetle as they drive along. One knocks off Peastro's blue hat. Peastro shoots the Haw in the butt and shouts," Don't mess with the Pre Ma."

Peastro's Eetle blasts through a mud waterfall and continues to chase the Haw through Beys swamp. Then the Haw jumps into a tree and tries to hide under the branches. Peastro sees this and motions for the driver to stop. Peastro o levitates up to where the Haw is hiding. He looks the Haw in the eye and says jokingly," Funny us both here like this."

Peastro smiles and blasts the Haw in the face with the Mormo technique, sending its feathers flying in every direction. The Haw is loaded onto the back of the Eetle with four others they have killed. Peastro says smugly," Haw, you ran so far and so fast that I've decided to have you as my guest for dinner. We'll have loads to talk about."

When they arrive back at Foiv castle there is a crowd of people standing out in front. Men and women are crying and look very emotional. Popaturn walks up to Peastro and says, "Pre Ma, there's been a terrible accident. There is no way but just to say it, Morn is dead."

"WHAT! How did it happen? Who's responsible?!" shout Peastro defiantly.

"Pre Ma, Peastro, it was no one's fault. She was exercising and her bedroom ceiling collapsed, killing her instantly. I assure you she did not suffer," said Popaturn earnestly as he put his hand on Peastro's shoulder.

Peastro suddenly feels light headed and sick to his stomach. He starts to sweat profusely, his thoughts race, and he starts shaking violently.

"Oh Builder, Popaturn, this is horrible news. She was the air in my lungs. She...I need to see her as she is, right now!" said Peastro as he looked at the crowd that had gathered.

"Of course," said Popaturn as he led Peastro into the castle and then said, "They're keeping the body secure in the study."

They ran to the study and as they did Peastro had to fight to keep it together. He knew he wanted to see her, but didn't know what it would do to him emotionally. The corridor is lined with tear soaked faces and as they got to the study Peastro stopped before entering.

He walks in and sees Morn's body lying on the table. Her head is intact, but her torso and legs are crushed and mangled. Peastro walks over to her and kisses her on the lips. He starts crying and shouts, "MORN, my sunrise...Morn my glorious love! How could this happen!" and then he whispers, "I will rage in your memory," as he took her body in his arms.

The following day Morn's body was prepared for the Gonvy ceremony. The Gonvy ceremony takes place at Aerial Tower.

Aerialex Tower is a large spire that stretches a thousand feet into the air. It's walls are covered with ornate carvings of previous battles the Nor have fought and won.

What is to take place is the Cre Ma's body is placed on a bed of flowers. Her prized possessions are placed around her. The Pre Ma will escort her remains to the cylindrical hearth. Then Peastro will take one last look at her. The body is then lifted high above the crowd below and a single shot of white hot fire will vaporize her body. This leaves a single puff of smoke rising to a small opening in the roof and then vanishes.

Peastro arrives at Aerialex Tower and sees a large crowd of Nor mourners have gathered outside. He looks at the faces and sees how grief stricken they are. Many are sobbing and holding tight to one another. Peastro looks at one woman who mouths the words, "It will be ok." This touches his heart and he musters up as much of a smile as he can for her. He lights up a cigarette and levitates above the crowd and smokes. He floats there and spins gently as he takes a drag with the light shining all around him.

"Damn it Morn...the Builder got greedy for you. I just needed to see you again, that's all. One more smile, Morn, maybe another 10 minute conversation that stretched all day," said Peastro softly as he took a drag and exhaled, "Now my love is lost and I am alone again. I don't know how I did it before, I worry I can't do it now, Morn. Where does the T sun go when its hiding? I thought we'd find out together...but you beat me to it, ahh."

Peastro puts out his cigarette on the side of the Aerialex Tower and floats gently down to the ground. He walks inside and goes right up to Morn's body. He guides the body over to the hearth. Peastro leans in and licks Morn's lips and says as he starts to weep, "I never gave you anything you hadn't already given me. Morn, you were my hope."

Peastro steps back and walks out of Aerialex Tower. Behind him Morn's body is vaporized and the puff of smoke pops out through the roof and the Gony ceremony is over.

Peastro decides he doesn't want to see or hear anyone for 27 days. He has his meals slid under the door and no one is allowed to come anywhere near him. He empties the entire castle of everyone except for one chef. He spends the first week only leaving his bed to work out in the morning, eat, bath, and go to the bathroom. He lays there in that bed motionless and feels uncontrollable guilt.

How could he have let this happen he thought? Even his dreams are of Morn and this terrifies him. The second week he starts randomly blasting holes in the walls, with the Mormo technique, and torches the garden. He still refuses to speak or to see anyone, his guilt becomes anger. Then suddenly on the 18<sup>th</sup> day his aching abruptly subsides. He summons all his servants back to Foiv castle. Then he sets up a meeting with Popaturn in what is left of the garden.

“Popaturn, I know you think talking about my pain will in some way help, but this ia not the case. What I have decided to do is to self analyze until it is no longer required. All kidding aside I know me better than anyone, I will find a bridge,” said Peastro sternly as he tugged at his sleeve. “In regards to Morn’s memory I want it made law that every Nor speak her name in public twice daily. And have it spoken in a spirited fashion as she certainly would have liked. I want a 300 foot statue of her erected in front of Foiv castle and I want it made from red marble and with haste. Is there anything you don’t understand?” asks Peastro as he pokes Popaturn’s chest.

“No, Pre Ma, I completely understand and it will be carried out to completion,” said Popaturn as he bowed his head.

“Great, get away from me,” said Peastro as he slapped Popaturn’s cheek.

Popaturn hurried out of the garden. Peastro levitated flat on his back and sipped some Goos tea. Goos tea is made from a stash of ancient tea leaves reserved especially for the Pre and Cre Ma, and pack a serious punch.

Peastro lays there and he sees a milky green light stretch across the sky. The green light completely envelopes the castle and the countryside. Popaturn runs back into the garden and says, "He's here again."

"Who's here?" asks Peastro as he stands up straight.

"Paha Wave he's a notorious prankster. This is only the beginning I'm afraid," said Popaturn flatly.

Then a man wearing only a smile flew in on a red surfboard with a jet pack.

"Paha Wave," said Peastro implying a question.

"Yes Paha comes every year or so and runs rampant through the countryside. He's Vitorian, he hails from the planet Vitor near the Unass black hole. Last time he was here there were at a dozen pregnancies," said Popaturn as he watched Paha doing aerials on his surfboard.

"Really," said Peastro.

"I'm afraid so, on Vitor they don't believe in marriage. So you can imagine the sorts of things that take place there."

"Huh," said Peastro as he marvels at Paha's aerials.

"Yes it's an extremely hedonistic society. You'd be hard pressed to find anyone wearing clothing of any kind. Paha specifically is a gentle soul, he's just a product of his culture," said Popaturn.

Peastro waves to Paha and then says, "I understand completely, well...I'm always in the mood for a laugh. When he's done with his flips and spins have him find his way to me."

"Most assuredly, Pre Ma," said Popaturn.

Peastro waved as Paha flew high into the air and shot fireworks from his board that exploded into the word, "Yeah." He flew into a crowded marketplace and patted a few women on the butt as he flew by.

He stopped and started kissing two women. Peastro laughed at this and said, "Before we meet make sure his legs find their way into some trousers. I'll be on the observation deck."

"I can get pants on him, I'm just not sure if they stay," said Popaturn.

"They had better," said Peastro as he walks into the castle.

Popaturn rounded up Paha and got him adequate clothing. Paha being a Vitorian has dark skin and flowing blonde hair. He has features of a puppy dog and is considered very handsome by the Nor women. He is tone and muscular and has a working television attached to each shoulder. Footage from all the places he has been constantly plays on each. Around his neck is a necklace of tiny furry teddy bears. Around his waist is a skin tight gold necklace that adheres to the skin.

The observation deck is filled with holograms of every known planet and civilization. The room itself is 2 football fields long and square in shape. On each of the walls are pedestals with living statues of the great Nor explorers. The most famous of which is Midicam Whook. He discovered and settled Goldva over 200,000 years ago. He named it Goldva after his late mother Goldva Whook. When his ship arrived at Goldva his crew of 20,000 liked it so much they decided to stay permanently. The name of their ship is the Nor 10, hence they became the Nor. The planet they originated from Delds, never heard from them again.

As Popaturn and Paha Wave enter the observation deck they see Peastro levitating on his back. Peastro is a few feet above the ground and smoking a cigarette. Paha ran and jumped over Peastro and then said, "I thought it was ropes. That's a nice one, Pre Ma."

"Thank you, Paha, I hope you'll save a few women for the rest of us," said Peastro as he smoked.

Paha smiles and says apologetically, "I'm truly sorry about the babies, I just lost my concentration at the last second."



“Don’t trifle with it, we could use a few more Paha Wave’s in the world. Goldva takes herself a little too serious most T suns. So, Paha, what do you think about when you’re doing those maneuvers in the air?” asks Peastro as he sits in mid-air with his legs crossed.

“That’s the thing I don’t think at all. It’s just me and my board slicing through the atmosphere. I get up there sometime and I can see Bamve raging beside me,” said Paha as he sat Indian style on the floor.

“Bamve, I’m not familiar with that term. What does it refer to?” asks Peastro intently as he grins.

“On our world is a documented belief in a being known as Bamve. There are over a hundred pictures of him in existence and I myself have seen him several times. What we believe Bamve is...is a being beyond our comprehension. He’s someone who can dance between the living and the passed.”

Peastro looked quizzically at Paha and then motioned for him to continue.

“Bamve loves to show up unexpected. A week ago I was out for a ride and he appeared on top of my board. He’s blue with red hair, red eyes, and red teeth. He’s about a hand shorter than I am,” explained Baha happily as he used his hand to illustrate. “He danced for a few moments then he said to me...Paha forces are converging in your galaxy that will lead to a massive change to everything you’ve ever known. If you had a trip you’d been saving wait no more. Your reality is about to shift so be mindful and limber,” said Paha coldly.

“Is that why you’re here now? Is it because of Bamve?” asks Peastro as he turns his head to the side and then sticks out his tongue.

“Yes, Pre Ma, I had to see Goldva again in case of a travesty. I always loved it here,” said Paha as he ran his fingers nervously through his hair.

Peastro looks at Paha not quite sure what to think about what he said. He wondered if Paha is working him as some sort of prank.

“Bamve eh, I’ve see some odd realities. This Bamve changes things a little. I’m fascinated by this Bamve. Let’s hope he shows his face and let’s keep our eyes to the sky for trouble. But enough about that, I would guess that you’re hungry, yes?” asks Peastro as he stands up and offers his hand.

“Very hungry, thank you,” said Paha as he grabbed Peastro’s hand.

## Chapter 17

### The Colossus of Rem

The 3<sup>rd</sup> day of Paha Wave's visit to Goldva is rudely interrupted by a figure of a man in front of the T sun. Everyone on Goldva, and all the other planets under the T sun, saw the shadow of a this eerie figure. Word spread like wildfire to every heart and mind. When Peastro sees it his heart skips a beat and he drops his morning coffee. He says in disbelief, "I don't know what that is, but it wants us to know. Prepare the fleet and every soldier we've got. Make it happen!"

"It's done two breaths ago," said General Stram as he hurries off the balcony where they were eating breakfast.

Peastro stares at the eerie figure in awe at its apparent size. "Is it the Builder, is it a...robot? What in the Terious are you?" asks Peastro softly to himself.

The figure moves away from the T sun and starts flying randomly around the sky. Peastro prays it will leave and never come back. His emotions are tattered and he starts sweating buckets. The figure turns and makes a beeline for Goldva. It is so far away, but still can be on Goldva in a day Peastro thinks.

Peastro runs into the castle and makes for the observation deck. Once inside he sees the giant robot on one of the holograms of the outer rim. He gasps and says, "It's a colossus, my Builder it's the size of the moon. Who's controlling it and what can we do to stop you if anything...this is troublesome."

The colossus kicked one of the planet Joep's moons as it passed by. This sent a chill down Peastro's spine. He watches the colossus engage the Joep fleet. They blast rocket after rocket and it has no effect. The colossus uses its giant hands to crush their battleships with one giant swoop.

Their fighter jets fare no better. The colossus shoots laser beams from its mouth and vaporizes them. It grabs a handful of their fighter jets, crushing them into a ball and throwing it at Joep. This created a crater in the surface and filled the atmosphere with dust and debris. And still it advanced towards Goldva.

Peastro watches as neighboring world's fleets join in the battle, but they are quickly subdued. Peastro noticed that the colossus curls its knees inward when it is fired upon. He says slyly, "Why would you do that? What are you protecting? I think you have a secret."

He quickly hurried to the hangar bay. He flew down the corridor and levitated into his personal battleship and raced into the Rerni Realm. Admiral Poptop Grennings is waiting inside.

Admiral Poptop is 5 feet 11 inches tall with very broad shoulders. His skin is green and his hair is white with red streaks and cut into a Mohawk. His eyes are dull and orange in color. He has several earrings in each ear that dangle and swat when he walks. Each of them depicts a different phase of the T sun. His mouth always appears to be slightly smiling. He also has a scar above his lip. He is wearing a black and green striped jacket that has miniature robots reenacting a famous Nor battle, they are in a glass case on the front. On each shoulder of the jacket is the word Mehave, a slang term that means, "To take them with you."

Peastro walks over to him and says, "Admiral Poptop, I saw a potential flaw in the colossus. I believe that he may have a weakness in his mid section or groin region."

"She," said Admiral Poptop as he took a puff from his cigarette, "she may have a weakness."

"What do you mean she?" asks Peastro as he grins rubs the back of his head.

"It's Macre, she sent us this message for you a few moments before you came in," said Poptop as he pressed a button on the forward computer.

A hologram of Macre wearing a red bikini appeared in front of Peastro and said in a sultry voice, "My love, my yearning, Peastro. When my heart was rejected by you I become morose, to put it mildly. A heart is a funny thing it can't be feed rejection for too long or it perishes. I love you I need you and I must have you or my heart won't beat," said Macre tearfully as she pressed her breasts forward. "I know I can fill your mind with passion. We could truly be that missing piece in both our lives. I have come to a crossroad and I have reached a decision," said Macre sternly as she batted her eyes. "My glorious robot friend Rem and I are on our way to Goldva. When we arrive tomorrow you will have 2 choices to choose from. One...you can come aboard Rem and come back with me as we enjoy a love and godhood beyond comprehension. Or choice 2...my dear friend Rem will lay waste to every person on Goldva and you will be taken to Rernon by force. Either way you're coming with me. I won't let our potential dual ascension be put in jeopardy, because you can't commit! So think it over my love. There are worse fates for men," said Macre as she slowly put her hands on her breasts and smiled.

"Hmm...as I was saying I think I've found a weakness in Rem's defenses," said Peastro quickly.

"You don't want to consider her offer?" asked Admiral Poptop.

"Well let's see, she's beautiful, smart, and not too long she attempted to murder me. I'm still gonna pass, Admiral. Let's be honest what do you think Macre would do the first time I crossed her. I think, and I'm a fairly wise man, I would probably end up as a series of steaks. Probably not so much garnish," said Peastro smoothly as he danced in a goofy fashion.

Admiral Poptop laughs and asks, "Ok then...what's our plan of attack, Pre Ma?"

Peastro walks over to the hologram of Rem and points and says, "This area here I believe is vulnerable. A coordinated strike could bring Rem to his knees. Or in this case get him before he gets here."

Admiral Poptop nods and says, "I'll alert the fleet. We'll be ready when she gets here."

Peastro goes to his sleeping quarters in Rerni Realm and lays down in and replays his day briefly. He fantasizes about what if he did actually go with Macre. He likes to sometime explore possible negative scenarios just to understand his own thought processes. Then he spends an hour envisioning the following days' possible outcomes. He prepares himself for the showdown with Macre. He falls asleep in the middle of a thought and awakes with that very thought in his head.

The bulk of the fleet has made all the necessary preparations. All they can do now is wait and hope.

Rem is now bearing down on Goldva. Inside Rerni Realm Macre's hologram appears in front of Peastro and Admiral Poptop. She is wearing a flesh colored spandex suit and a silver necklace. Macre smiles and asks," Peastro, heart of all hearts...I need to know right now. Are you coming back with me to be my Love yes or no?"

Peastro looks at her and waves his hand and says flatly," No, Densk."

Macre lets out a scream and as she does the Nor fleet attacks Rem. They fire every missile and cannon they had at him. Rem stays curled up into a ball. The first Nor assault has done only minimal damage. With Rem in a ball they are unable to damage him and Peastro knows this. He shouts to Admiral Poptop," Send in the Brons!"

The battleships and Moi Ti destroyers stop firing and the hangar doors open. Then thousands of Brons jump out and onto Rem, who is still curled up in a ball. The Brons start punching into Rem and destroying his outer shell.

Rem uncurls and bashes every Bron in his reach. The rest of the fleet starts a massive assault. They take dead aim at Rem's groin and stomach. Rem starts to glow red and orange from the blasts. The Brons keep smashing and tearing Rem to pieces. Rem's head detaches and races away at unbelievable speed.

"Run far away little girl," says Peastro snidely as he laughs to himself.

The body of Rem starts to splinter off, pieces of it fly in every direction.

“How did you know we could defeat Rem?” asks Admiral Poptop.

“I’m the Pre Ma I’m expected to know. The problem is Macre is still out there. We could chase her, but that could lead to a trap. I have a feeling she’ll drift back by come another T sun. She’s wise and her people are wise. That Rem was substantial, could have been a much greater threat... wars are for winning,” said Peastro as he sipped some Borco wine he had been saving.

Two weeks later Peastro, Paha, and Oalitl went out for a swim at Contago Bluff.

Contago Bluff is an intricate series of waterslides that stretch for miles. They have rest areas every quarter mile of the slide. They do this so you can grab a bite and keep sliding.

Oalitl takes a bite from his cookie and says, “This is the most fun I’ve ever had. I could slide all day and never get tired.”

“You aren’t kiddin’, boy these slides are grand,” said Peastro as he lay back in the water.

“You are dead right with that. What a great day might I add gorgeous,” said Paha as he ate a barbecue sandwich.

Peastro walks up to the edge of the slide and says, “I say let’s leave our worries behind us. We still have some ground to cover before we make the end, so let’s keep moving,”

“You got it,” said Oalitl brightly as he eats a Gordod, which is a fruit similar to a grape.

“Right and right,” said Paha as he scouted out the women down below.

Peastro jumped onto the slide with Oalitl on his stomach. Paha wasn’t far behind. They slid through several miles of Goldva’s countryside and past many villages and towns. The sides of the waterslide are see-through making it easy to take it all in.

After a few hours of sliding they came to a giant wave pool that was filled with flashing lights and a sign that read, "Half way home." This was the end of Contago Bluff and the pool was filled with other sliders, most of which just floated on the sides of the pool as they were worn out.

There is a floating bar and restaurant in the center of the pool. Peastro, Paha, and Oaliti swam over to it and grabbed a stool. They called it M.C. Fin's snack and sip. Peastro sat there exhausted, Paha tapped his shoulder and pointed to a dark haired woman a few stools over. She was wearing a black silk bikini.

Peastro looked at her and was blown away at how beautiful she is, but also how much she looked like Grena Time. He couldn't believe the resemblance. She had the same eyes, hair, and even the same aura. He couldn't take his eyes off of her as she sipped her drink. Then she pulled her hair from her face and his heart skipped a beat.

She glanced over at him and smiled slightly. Peastro smiled back and then walked over to her and asked, "You know it's a lonely world out there, would you rather be alone?"

Culby laughed and then she said quietly, "I would not, Pre Ma. I would love if you sat down. And I would especially like it if you sat in my orbit. I could use the body heat."

"I would love to sit in your inner orbit," said Peastro happily as he sat down beside Culby and touched her shoulders and said, "I forgot that everyone knows who I am being the Pre Ma and all. I would prefer it though if you called me Peastro. And what should I call you?"

"Well, Peastro, I am Culby Mosem," said Culby as she offered her hand and then she said, "I have to tell you I am sorry about your loss. Everyone loved Morn, she was a stunning Cre Ma and her passionate spirit will never die."

"I appreciate that Morn would have appreciated your sentiment. She was all I ever wanted, it was hard to lose her I must confess," says Peastro somberly as he plays with Culby's glass to her amusement.



Culby puts her arm around Peastro and says, "You haven't lost her soul, only her body. No one on Goldva will ever be more than 5 moments from her memory."

A blueberry vodka arrives in front of Peastro, he nods, then sips his drink and says, "You know, Culby, I feel I have some distance from Morn's death now. I haven't forgotten obviously..."

"No of course not," said Culby.

"...but it's a new mindset I have now. I'm ready to love again. Who know I could fall in love with you, some other T sun," says Peastro honestly as he examines Culby's hands.

"Well I won't lie to you I've loved you from afar. I believe the Builder guides us people together sometimes. I mean here we both are, at this place. A place I've never been before and today, and only on a whim," says Culby in a dry tone as she flashes a smile.

Peastro looks at her and wants to kiss her with every fiber of his being, so he does. He puts his hands gently on her neck and consumes her with a kiss. Culby had hoped he'd kiss her and unleashes her wanting in a kiss. After a long passionate kiss Peastro says, "It's us then."

"It is for as long as we draw breath," said Culby strongly as she runs her fingers along Peastro's lips.

"I can't go through another Cre Ma ceremony right now. I don't know what your feelings are on that," says Peastro pointedly as he tickles his glass of vodka.

"I don't want the Cre Ma. I just want you, all of you," said Culby as she wrapper her arms around Peastro's waist.

"Then you shall," says Peastro confidently and then he kissed her and said, "have it all. But it's not all pretty to look at. I am a completely honest being, so don't hold my honesty against me."

"Never!" said Culby quickly. "I have no tolerance for deception, Peastro. Give me a million truths with jagged edges and I'll embrace them all."

Peastro told Paha and Oaliti that he was going to spend some time with Culby and that they should go on without him. Paha and Oaliti caught a transport back to Foiv castle, while Peastro and Culby went to her apartment nearby. They made love for several hours and stayed up all night talking about their lives. In the morning they had a light breakfast then went for a walk inside the Imatron.

The Imatron is a large building where you can go and have a hologram of yourself made. Then you can change and distort it any way you want. You can manipulate the hologram with an interactive headpiece. You can interact with your holograms with ease. It is considered a favorite attraction for recreation among the Nor. After you have created your hologram it will enter a grid with all the other holograms. Then all bets are off!

Peastro and Culby enter the fashioning booth and there are basic holograms of themselves being made. Peastro has his nose stretched out to 4 feet long and his hair so long that it is tied around his waist. Culby sees this and laughs then says, "Hmm nice look."

Culby has her hologram's butt made 10 times larger than normal and her hair made of feathers. Peastro sees this and smiles as he says, "Still stunning feathers and all. And that backside will come in handy in a fight. You can sit on seven, maybe eight soldiers easy. I'm gonna call General Stram, he needs to hear about this."

Culby elbows Peastro in the side gently and says, "You're terrible. Who knows maybe in another 2 years that's where my butt will be. I just wanted you to know where we're heading."

Peastro looks at the hologram then at Culby and says, "Looks like heaven to me. We'll need a bigger bed, but being the Pre Ma and all I can make that happen."

Culby laughs loudly and bumps Peastro with her hip. She gives her hologram an enormous head with a battleship sticking through the sides. Peastro smirks and he gives his a giant muscular arm and the other arm turned into a sandwich. Whereby Culby smiles and fights back laughter.

Peastro and Culby sit in their private booth and their holograms enter the playing field.

Their booth is 10 feet by 10 feet and has crimson carpeted walls. There is a black leather loveseat and 2 leather footstools in front. In the armrests are various beverages and snacks. There is also some music playing through the speakers in the loveseat headrest. It is by the band Mercifimo. They are a loud aggressive angst ridden rock n' roll act. Their music is somber and deals with social unrest. Their songs are filled with positive messages. They refuse to take compensation for their music. They feel true art is only expressed not sold.

Peastro feels a real love for Culby. He puts his arm around her and he remembers the joy of love. Culby knows she has never loved like this. She catches herself wanting not to blink for fear of missing a moment. She puts her hand on Peastro's heart and says quietly, "Thank you for finding me."

"I think you were in there all along. I don't know how, but it feels true," said Peastro then he kissed Culby on the lips.

"I know you're mine," said Culby as she puts Peastro's hand on her heart, "I don't need to know why."

Peastro smiles and says, "Let's see how this horrific creation can play."

"Here here to that," said Culby as she steered her hologram around to the center.

Peastro took his and tripped Culby's with his nose. Culby grabbed a handful of its feathers and stuffed them into Peastro's pants. Peastro laughs and Culby giggles loudly. Then Culby's hologram blasts Peastro's in the butt with his guns from the battleship.

The other holograms in the playing field surround Peastro's and grab it and throw it to the rafters. It plummets back to the floor and Peastro shouts, "You're lucky this is make believe or you'd be dust!"

## Chapter 18

### The Cortellian Stake

It was the 4<sup>th</sup> year passed for Peastro on Goldva. His love for Culby has become a triumph on every level, and they had each blossomed righteously for the better. Culby especially, being it that she is now pregnant with their 1<sup>st</sup> child. All of Goldva is waiting with baited breath for the birth of the Siad.

The Siad is the name given to the Pre Ma's carrier of the bloodline. It is understood that not all children can ascend. That as it may be the thought of another Pre Ma starts many a conversation.

Peastro doesn't know what to think of being a father. His own father never had the time or the tools to raise him. He worried that his zeal to make up for the childhood he didn't have, may eventually destroy his own child's ascension. He knows he needs to think on it and fight every urge to spoil his child into mediocrity. The Nor have a saying, "Only give if it's appreciated and only 'til."

Culby is busy thinking as well. She feels enormous responsibility to deliver a son. While at the same time she has to reconcile with her desires for a daughter. She has decided to devote her life to fulfilling the passions of their child. They haven't decided on a name, they are going to wait until the name becomes apparent. They know the Builder will guide their selection.

Culby and Peastro are lying on their bed with Peastro resting his head on her stomach. He is reading from the book of Yealik, the Derge passage. "We hold on with prudence to possessions and with passion to our flesh covered souls. While the path is daunting and the footing narrow we guide step after step into the blackness. Secure in the logic that if we falter a hand will reach out and envelope us in safety. While even the bravest man seeks refuge along the way, our lack of vision does not dissuade us. It only fills our minds with uproarious laughter," says Peastro and then he kisses Culby's belly and caresses it with his hand.

Culby smiles and runs her fingers through Peastro's hair and then says softly, "This baby of ours is wise, I can already tell."

"How do you know that?" asks Peastro as he walks his fingers up Culby's arm.

"I can just tell, honestly. The other night I thought I heard the baby whisper. It was probably something else, but wouldn't it be grand if our baby can communicate so young," said Culby as she looks down at her belly.

"There's enough Vindijan in that belly for virtually anything to be possible. There have been several documented cases of Vindijan children speaking in the 1<sup>st</sup> few days."

"Really, well if our baby comes out speaking it will be an incredibly thrilling! What a day that would be," said Culby excitedly as she caresses her belly.

"That day can't come soon enough for my liking. 3 more weeks and then our glorious child will greet their 1<sup>st</sup> T sun. The wonder of it all," says Peastro smoothly as he grins.

The 3 weeks were drawing to an end and with only 2 days to go Peastro and Culby were expectedly anxious. All the necessary preparations have been made at the Pre Ma's personal hospital. There will be 4 doctors and a dozen nurses there to handle any complications.

The Nor use a Lal suction pump to literally suck the baby out in one fowl swoop. They also use Peme cream to dilate the Virginia. An entire birth takes only 1 to 4 minutes from start to finish. Of course that is providing there are no complications which there rarely are.

Once the baby is clear of the birth canal and inside the Lal chamber, it is gently sprayed with water and a skin cleanser. Then a doctor will sever the umbilical cord using a laser. The child is then given a battery of tests for precautionary reasons.

Peastro and Culby have decided to stay within shouting distance of the operating room until the birth. They are relaxing in a personal suite. Culby is watching a hologram of her favorite sport Reeptal.

Reeptal involves holding a blue grass target in one hand and a Nailto gun in the other. The Nailto gun is a rapid fire laser pistol. The 2 contestants will stand 10 feet apart facing each other. When the Ratom, which is the referee, yells Reeptal they will raise their weapons and try to destroy the other person's targets. The first to do so will advance to the next round. There are 12 rounds and the winner of the two brackets will meet in the finals. If you are victorious in the final round you are given your choice of prizes. You can either have a year of luxury or a brain enhancing microchip. You are also included on the guest list to every social function.

Culby is only half watching the Reeptal her thoughts are of the birth. She worries that she hasn't thought of everything the baby will require. She sits there and keeps going over the future realities of motherhood. She knows it isn't all fun and games with sacrifices having to be made.

Peastro is out on the balcony smoking a Tut cigarette and preparing emotionally for the big day. He knows that a child is not a plaything, but a person who needs guidance and love. He finishes his cigarette and walks into the room where Culby is and asks sarcastically, "You sure you wanna have kids?"

Culby smiles and bursts out laughing and then she rubs her belly and says, "We're sure. OH by the way your son or daughter were definitely speaking last night."

"Really that's incredible," says Peastro as he slides in beside Culby.

"I just hope we never forget to make this child feel loved," said Culby warmly as she winced slightly.

"That's as sure as the T sun's embrace," says Peastro as he kisses Culby's belly.

Popaturn comes in and says, "Pre Ma, there are visitors here from the planet Cortell. They insist upon an audience with you and they will not say why."

“Cortell,” says Peastro implying a question.

“Yes it’s a planet in the Warve solar system. There isn’t much known of Cortell. These men are not to be trifled with I can assure you,” said Popaturn in a serious tone.

Peastro sits up straight and says,” Serious men...I haven’t spoken to any of those in quite some time. Did they arrive in a battleship or transport?”

Popaturn walked over to the balcony and Peastro followed. In the sky they could see an enormous ominous battleship. The ship is black and perfectly spherical, with large cannons on every angle of it. There is a pair of eyes painted onto its front and an unemotional mouth as well. It is dotted with hundreds of thousands of blinking lights. It also has a tower on its uppermost flank that is similar to a lighthouse, with a revolving light.

“Somebody wants to play,” says Peastro boldly as he leaps into the air and throws his arms high and head back.

Popaturn then said,” They’re waiting for us in the Hosiz ballroom. Our military is on high alert and ready if need be. There is something...they mentioned that they were here for repayment of a favor.”

“Ok why don’t I feel reassured by that?” asks Peastro as he started to levitate and walk in a circle. “I need to see these men immediately let’s go,” said Peastro sternly as he and Popaturn made for the Hosiz ballroom.

The Hosiz ballroom is filled with dozens of priceless statues. The walls are covered in blue velvet and the ceiling has thousands of lime colored crystal balls hanging from it. The floors are covered with 6 inch thick rugs that nearly swallow your foot.

Peastro and Popaturn stop short of the ballroom and go into the adjacent room. They peer through a two-way mirror at the Cortellians. The Cortellians are very bulbous and serious. Their skin has a purple

hue and their beards are black, long, and thick. They are each wearing black leather robes and red pants. They have on black slippers with white tips. Their countenance suggests they are devoid of any sense of humor. Their heads are shaved bald and they have large star tattoos on the top of their shaven heads. They are each holding a long black staff with a golden orb at the top.

“They look like war alright. I see no compromise in these men. Let’s keep our emotions in check...be ready, Popaturn, to act,” says Peastro gravely.

“Yes, Pre Ma, deadly serious and ready.”

Peastro and Popaturn walk into the Hosiz ballroom and make their way to the Cortellian’s. The largest Cortellian Preck says plainly,” Pre Ma, I will not mince words. I believe in being blunt.”

“Please,” Peastro said with a nod.

“My name is Preck and we are not here to battle with the Nor. Our grievances lie elsewhere. A hundred years ago today the Cortellians were at war with the Vindijan Line. It was a brutal and savage war that lay waste to over 5 million Cortellian soldiers,” said Preck plainly as he adjusted his robe.

“That would have been the Eeves war. I’ve read of it,” says Peastro as he lights up a cigarette.

“Yes the Eeves war, and it was savagery on an epic scale,” says Preck as he stands up and walks a few steps and then says, “The type of savagery that you being a Vindijan would know all too well.”

“That is a certainty, Preck. The line does not believe in sympathy for its combatants,” said Peastro as he gently levitated off the floor a few feet.

“But you are also a Kaa and I have no doubt that if what we head of the Toen war is true. Then maybe you’d like to see the Line pay for the pain they’ve caused your fellow Kaa.”



Peastro tugs at his beard and then says, "I've thought of it often...of settling the score. The Line can't be allowed to force their will on the people under the T sun. But the Line's army is powerful and vast...what did you have in mind?" asks Peastro as he spins in mid-air.

Preck smiles and then says boldly, "We're willing to do whatever it takes for justice. We have rebuilt our army and it is more powerful than before. It is at your disposal, ready and waiting for your command. Think of it our combine armies could annihilate the Vindijan Line and free the Kaa once and for all! NO one will fear the Vindijan agenda."

"Yes a thousand times yes! Together we can topple the immortal Coup Vindijan and end his tyrannical reign! Preck, prepare your fleet. We'll take a little trip to Srass Oblique and we'll come bearing gifts!" shouted Peastro.

## Chapter 19

### The Final T sun

“When we show up in Sras Oblique’s orbit they’re gonna know it. Our actions need to be swift and without hesitation. We’ll try to overpower their battleships with our Brons,” said Peastro boldly as he floated above his generals. “While that’s happening our Moi Ti destroyers will be laying waste to their communications and their ground troops”, said Peastro coldly. If by any chance you should get Coup Vindijan in the crosshairs...punch his ticket to Terious. Don’t shed a tear for Old Coup, he’s been heading there all his life. Finally, we’ll be paying the residents of Whitkus Blo a visit and Yes. They should be thrilled to see us. Keep your eyes up and your wits about you to Dust!” said Peastro boldly to all his troops via hologram

The combined Nor and Cortellian fleets are traveling through the 7<sup>th</sup> dimension. They are nearing the exit point for Sras Oblique. They have literally thousands of ships filled with millions of troops. They will outnumber the Vindijan’s 2 to 1. The Vindijan’s will be completely blindsided.

Peastro is inside Rerni Realm sitting in his throne with a glass of Borco wine in his grasp. He refuses to think of Coup, his thoughts are of his new son Yerpo Lle. Yerpo Lle is the spitting image of his father except his eyes are checkered orange and yellow. Peastro puts all of his mental energy into visualizing his young son’s aura. Culby was with him back on Goldva as she recovers from the pregnancy.

Peastro looks out the plasma window and sees the orange men again running beside his battleship. He is not for laughing now. He simply glances at them and then goes back into his thoughts. Then he hears the single dull pulse that signals that they have arrived at Sras Oblique.

The entire fleet passes through the portal and they see the glorious Sras Oblique in front of them. They quickly enter the atmosphere and are met by a pair of battleships. The Vindijan Line always keeps 2 in the air.

About this time Coup is alerted that they are under attack from a formidable fleet. He runs to his balcony and sees the sky turn black with ships. He almost dies from the shock of it, he buckles over and shouts, "Where's our fleet!"

Peastro at this time gives his hand a gentle wave and the Vindijan battleships are besieged with missiles. The Brons laugh and thrash their way through the Vindijan battleships. This causes them to plummet to the ground below, engulfing the countryside with flames in one giant blast. Every Vindijan battleship is quickly in the air, but they took heavy fire as they launched.

In a few minutes the sky is a sea of destruction. Vindijan vessels are being destroyed left and right by the Cortellian Monki fighters. The Monki are unmanned kamikaze death bringers. They are black and red striped crab shaped ships, whose sole purpose is to cripple an enemy's defenses. They do this by smashing through their shields and into their core.

One after another the Monki careened into the Vindijan battleships. This created giant explosions and broke the Vindijan's will in two.

On the ground the Nor's army of Brons are laying waste to every Vindijan soldier in sight. There will be no mercy for anyone who dares to take the battlefield today.

The Brons are crushing the Humpacca's under their fists, 20 at a time. They also blast them with their machinegun fingers, tearing most into pieces.

Peastro watches the devastation with a wry smile on his face. He sits and watches with glee as the score is settled. Peastro asks, "But where is dear Coup?"

At Plushi Chateau 10,000 Cortellian soldiers are flooding the castle's halls. They search room after room for the day's greatest trophy, Coup. Two soldiers go into an empty dining hall and started looking around. There was no one in sight. They looked under the tables and in all the closets and found nothing. "This room's clear, let's move on," said Sergeant Tepps sternly.

They started to leave when a small black piece of cloth floated down in front of them and Sergeant Tepps grabbed it. He looked at the cloth for a second and then threw his gaze skyward. He saw a figure flat against the ceiling, it was Coup.

"You come down from there or I am going to blast you to Terious!" shouted Tepps as he aimed his gun at Coup.

Coup paused for a moment and then said, "Don't shoot I'm sure we can work something out," then he floated down and said coyly, "I can give you riches and pleasures beyond your comprehension. A deal could lead to generations of good fortune for you and your family. Don't be a fool, deals are for making."

Sergeant Tepps looks at Coup for a moment and then says snidely, "Precious Coup, my grandfather was tortured and murdered in the Eeves war, as were millions of Cortellians. These pleasures you speak of...seeing you grovel right now is one. Seeing you pay for your crimes is the greatest gift you could ever give. And I'd just like to thank you in advance for that one."

Sergeant Tepps pressed the locator button and the room was besieged with troops a few seconds later. Coup stared defiantly at Sergeant Tepps and said coldly, "Your father was a Densk, and you are a fool. My divinity is beyond your dull reason. You can't hear the music you just hum along in endless oblivion. Remember the Line!"

The soldiers listened to Coup and burst out laughing. They encased Coup in a see through green energy shield. He was unable to move his arms and legs, only his head. They transported him to Rerni

Realm, where Peastro is eagerly awaiting his arrival. They bring Coup inside and place him behind Peastro's chair.

Peastro spun around and said, "Coup, darling Coup, it is a glory to see your beautiful essence. Oh how I pined for your company. A shame the years haven't treated you better. How's Mela, still stunning I bet. I have a feeling I'll see her before the day is out."

Coup quickly said, "You don't have to do this, Peastro. Together we can own every soul under the T sun."

Peastro tugs at his chin beard and claps his hands and says, "Funny thing hands, hands are for moving. Own every soul eh...see that's the problem. You think you have the right to control people or won as you said. Every life has the same value, Coup, you should know that already."

"Look, Peastro, if my love ever counted for anything. If...if my plucking you out of that dismal life was worth anything! Let an old man enjoy his twilight," begged Coup. "For Builder's sake!" he pleaded.

"No," says Peastro coldly.

Coup is infuriated by this and struggles to free his hands and legs in vain. Then Coup says, "Alright...well you had better hope to Terious you win this war or my mercy will be vacant from my thoughts!"

"Please," says Peastro as he shows Coup a hologram of the battlefield and then says, "Your troops have already surrendered. The bulk of your fleet is completely destroyed. The war is over the only question now is what to do with the remainder of the Vindijan Line," said Peastro confidently as he waved his arms in a circle. "Oh, and of course the inhabitants of Whitkus Blo," said Peastro slyly as he acted like he was going to boot Coup in the gut.

“You wouldn’t dare!” snapped Coup.

“I would indeed I’m sure the Kaa will be thrilled to find out some of their favorite Vindijan’s are still drawing breath,” says Peastro with a smile as he stands up and walks around Coup.

“Ah...I don’t,” stammered Coup.

Peastro puts his hand on top of Coup’s head and says,” Drink it all in, we’re here to help.”

Coup blinked his eyes rapidly and said,” I just...I can’t, why...how, how did it.”

Peastro smiles and then laughs as he says snidely,” You know I never much cared for the term Venkid. It always seemed like it was your way of keeping me under your thumb. The moniker I prefer is Pre Ma. Go ahead try it on for size.”

“Pre...I ah, just make it end Builder wake me please. Shake of my shoulder, please shake!” says Coup nervously as he starts crying hysterically.

The soldiers laugh and Peastro pulls out a Messon leaf cigar. He taps the elf lighting tip and takes a long drag. He dances a few steps and sings,” How in the Terious, your brain gets so serious! You think about things I’ll never know. I ask for goldddd...you give me Hool nuggets. I ask for love you slappa my face.”

Sergeant Teppes smiles and says,” This is certainly a day for rejoicing. The Line is no more!”

## Chapter 20

### Dora of Bells

The poem Dora of Bells, written by Kaa poet Rye Lamoi, described a day when the air wasn't heavy and all the muscles were loose and free. The line from the poem, "I finally tasted the T sun's laughter," spoke of the day Kaa would be free men and women with power to take things for granted. That day had come and the Kaa's lives could finally start in earnest.

The final tally counted the loss of 300 million Vindijan souls, lost to the ether. The day of the Cleansed Heart as it would later be called, saw the Kaa join in the fighting when they saw the opportunity. When the Kaa were told of Whitkus Blow their shock turned to joy. There were several Vindijan scoundrels that they could now personally vanquish to Terious. Peastro led the way and Bron smashed through the doors of Whitkus Blo. It was the final battle with the Vindijan Line. Every inch of their hidden society was destroyed, leaving only rubble behind.

A few Vindijan's exited Sras Oblique in escape pods, most notably Mela and her children. Peastro let them go, he showed the mercy they never had. Peastro sat in the entertainment room in Plushi Chateau with Popaturn, enjoying a game of Mex Os.

Mex Os is a video game where you sit across from each other. You try to collapse your opponent's tower as they try to topple yours.

"Do you think he'll mind it much?" asks Popaturn honestly.

Peastro laughs briefly and then says, "No Coup's a warrior he can take it. Trust me the old man can endure anything, he'll find his rhythm."

Popaturn toppled Peastro's tower in Mex Os and pumped his fist as he smiled and then asked, "And what plans have you? Will you be coming back to Goldva for the agreed upon 8<sup>th</sup> or has your heart turned?"

Peastro closes his eyes, sighs and says, "I've decided to stay on Sras Oblique for a while. My people need me now. I couldn't leave them in turmoil. The hope is this, Popaturn, I need Culby and Yerpo Lle to join me here until things can get sorted out. I hope I can count on you to bring them here."

"Of course, first thing remedied will be that. I hope we're not losing you for good," said Popaturn implying a question.

Peastro looks at him sternly and says, "Never, my heart is with Goldva. I want you to understand that what you did for me was not a small thing. Your aid in toppling the Vindijan Line is as a great gift to me the Kaa as the gift of life. I also want you to understand if I am needed in the future, let there be no hesitation."

"Thank you, Pre Ma, let's hope it isn't required."

That evening Popaturn and the Nor fleet journeyed back to Goldva. And true to his words Popaturn sent Culby and Yerpo Lle to Sras Oblique the following day. The bulk of the Cortellian fleet left for Cortell, leaving several ships and troops behind to aid and protect the new Kaa government. Peastro was put in place to rule over Sras Oblique for as long as he saw fit to do so.

At the Terpeply zoo a large crowd has gathered for the unveiling of a new exhibit. Everyone is crammed inside to see the spectacle.

"We've had many a fortuitous break in the last several days, but today we're here to celebrate the hunt and capture of a rare animal. A wise beast of height and breadth, but with a savage heart! This animal, if let to roam free would kill every one of you!" says Dr. Beus loudly as he beats his chest. "A murderous beast that roamed the hills of Sras Oblique for far too many T suns!" says Dr Beus and then he says



sternly, “Gaze upon it and marvel at its coarse features and callas heart. Many a man fell under its jagged teeth and lost their will to live. Look is you can!” yelled Dr. Beus the zoo curator as he pulls back the curtain, revealing Coup bound inside an energy cell.

Coup sneers at the crowd unable to hide his anger. He wants to murder each and every one of them, but he is unable to move. The crowd yells at him and then throws rotten fruit at his cell. And when Coup grimaces they all cheer.

Peastro, Culby, and Yerpo Lle watch from the balcony and laugh. Coup gazes up at Peastro and the two become locked in a stare. Peastro gives a gentle wave of his hand signifying that the battle is over. Coup gnashes his teeth and looks away.

Peastro says greedily,” Remember the Line...I’d almost forgotten.”

“He trifled with people’s lives. Mercy should not be extended to such a beast. His fate is now his reality,” says Culby plainly as she gently bounced Yerpo Lle on her belly.

Peastro whispers,” So true so yes.”

“What was that?” asks Culby as she grins.

“Just an old punch line that isn’t funny anymore,” says Peastro as he kisses Culby on the forehead and then kisses Yerpo Lle.

At the same time on the planet of Quogmir a woman in a black robe sits down across from 2 men at Scetos bar. The men are wearing long red robes. They are tall and thin with faces similar to camels. The bar is as dark as a cave with only small lights in the center of each table. There are 5 tables positioned in the shape of a star. The bar itself has only a dim blue glowing sign that read,” It’s lost.”

“We understand that you seek an arrangement. Possibly we can each benefit together,” said Uaty.

“When I get what I want you’ll have every luxury under the T sun,” says Mela honestly as she slides a silver envelope across the table.

Uaty opens the envelope and gasps. He shakes his head and says coldly,” What you’re asking is vile and despicable. To even ask us to do it is murdering us as we sit.”

“Will you do it?”

Uaty threw back his drink and then lit up a cigarette and said firmly,” Is Terious cold?”

THE END

