

Guardian Core Chronicles

The Reckoning

Prologue by Matt

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

Goodbye old world.

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

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

Tech wars

Part one

Planet Setal

Jade's view

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

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

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

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

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

Dark commander's report

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

Kanes orders

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

Planet Retan 1 week in the war

Planetary Shipment depot manager's report

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

Enlightenment

3 months into the war

Etan's view

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

First born's thoughts

Day one

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

Day 30

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

Day 120

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

Etan thoughts

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

Reaper comments

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

1's comments

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

A star is born.

1's past

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

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

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

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

Misteeks thoughts

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

8 months into the war

Etan's comments

Creepy crawlies

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

Kanes report

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

Silver guardian Vortex's report

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

Planet Setal

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

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

Silver and gold

Etans veiw

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Guardian Tarus's report

The guardian over Aragara

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

9 months in the war

Tarus update report a month later.

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

The dark queen's orders

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

1 year into war

Emergency transmission received.

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

Myth and Mystery

Mistle empire-- Year 100

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

Alesea's comments

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

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

The road not taken--50 years ago

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

Alesea's perspective

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Etans comments

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

Part two

Tactics

Mecha upgrade part one **Reapers view**

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

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

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

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

Unto the brink part one **1's view**

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

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

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

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

Titanium 519 thoughts

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

Unto the brink part two

1's view

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

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

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

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

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