

Guardian Chronicles

Timescape

Prologue from the Author

If you've made it this far, you think you know my writing pretty well, don't you? Boy, are you in for a surprise. We've journeyed through time, and other realms. We've seen massive battles against mech-beings, zombies and weird creatures. You've seen our hero's, set on fire, fight thier own clones and recently become part of a murder mystery. You've even seen the real story behind many of earth mysteries and lore. But you haven't seen anything yet, I was just getting warmed up. I'm making a personal challenge to all of you out there. I'm challenging my insanity against yours. Hang on for an action packed ride of multi-universal proportions. As we traverse the Timescape.

Second prologue by Matt

Ahh, don't let that blow hard scare you. As long as you keep feeding him Mexican food, he's a pushover. But, he is right about one thing, this can be a confusing story but I'm going to help you out. When were talking about our own universe we will call it universe zero. The others will be numbered, according which order different universes began interacting with ours, universes 1, 2, 3 and so on. Again, were universe Zero, got it, don't forget it. (whispers) By the way, I'm not supposed to tell you this but Etan is based on the Author himself and Reaper is based on his brother. In fact several of the major characters are based on real people. Go figure. Well, here he comes, so I got to go. Have fun.

Third prologue by Etan

Now that those two have totally confused you, let me catch you up with recent events. It's been nineteen years since the heart of darkness mission. We never did find the heart. But even before the mission, chaos agents were scarce in our galaxy and now it seems like they're all gone. It's like they've pulled out of every known galaxy at once. Whatever their up to it must be big but at least for now, they're not bothering us. On the Reaper news, He and Drax finally melded enough to work together most of the time. Although they still argue for the fun, sometimes. Also I'm teaching at the school in between mentoring my three young silvers. They each got silver status last year. Anyway let's finally get to the story.

Part one

Life as usual

Universe Zero

250 years until doomsday. Guardian year 5644 Earth year 1644 Etan age 224

Nineteen years after heart of darkness mission

Etan's normal day

In between major catastrophes, life as a Guardian isn't bad. I mean, who wants to spend everyday expecting some galactic conquest, or thinking that today you might have to see a guy split in half. Well, I know one guy who would. But any modestly sane person, certainly wouldn't. Overall though, while there are always minor natural disasters to deal with, for the most part day to day activities for Guardians aren't bad. Of course no one wants to hear those stories. Stories like how I survived a six hour protocol ordeal from a race that brings new meaning to the term Ocd. All of that was just to get them to agree to attend a peace meeting. The meeting itself was another matter. I'm glad Reaper wasn't there for that. Sometimes I envy him in his constant adventures.

I stated all that to say, when we are needed for major events, things can be more exciting than you want. After awhile you look forward to some down time. Mostly I look forward to the calm, dull, boring times when the galaxy is not falling apart. The first fifty years after the elemental mission was such a time. Today for example, I had a slight annoyance to deal with but other wise it was just a normal day. After last school year, Master Leo decided to step down from teaching. He wanted to enjoy some retirement time. He said he always wanted to do planetary research. Going on one of the pioneering teams that search new planets and discover what potential they have. He could go along, work at his own pace and enjoy new sights. I wish I could go with him. But for now I was filling in for him.

The annoyance I mentioned was a guy from GNN, the Galactic news network. He followed me around all day. I tried to explain what I was doing was not exciting right now. If he wanted exciting there were other Guardians working on bigger projects. Even my three young silvers were doing something kind of neat this week. They were about to split a mountain range so that the ocean rich air on the other side would pass through the opening and finally bring water to the nearby desert. The land was fertile but was to dry to grow much.

“So tell me Etan, what it like being a Guardian?” the news reported asked. I told him the truth.

“It’s kind of like being a parent at times. Parents look out for the welfare of thier kids, work to provide for them, and get onto them when they do something they shouldn't. Though often times they just take you for granted and rebel.”

The reporter looked bored. This was not the answer he was hoping for.

“Look, you asked.” I said “I told you the other day when you called me I'm not doing anything exciting right now. I'm filling in teaching at the school until a suitable replacement can be found.”

Reporter Odel's view

Well, exciting or not I had a job to do. We had taken a poll of what Guardian most people wanted to know about. Our audience wanted to know about a Guardian’s personal life, daily routine and such. This guy was one of the ones chosen. I've heard of Etan of course. But he's old news now. He hasn't done anything big in years. Now that Reaper guy, he would make the headlines. To be honest I was hoping to run into him soon. So how do I take this dullard and make him exciting. I mean so far this guy is about as exciting as the gardening telecast, my grandmother watches.

4th year student

Today Master Etan is showing us about fire form change. We've been practicing channeling our energy. But now was the day we would get to become flames for the first time. We were all excited until he told us about when he first tried to change to fire and set himself on fire instead. He spoke with authority as he taught. He was well known as an expert form changer.

“Now close your eyes and look inside, yourself. Pick a cell in your hand, any cell. Now look at the light energy being used by the cell. The nucleus of the cell is what controls the whole cell. Focus on the nucleus. Will it, to heat up the light energy.”

He waited until we all had that part. Then he continued

“Now you see the energy inside that cell is a small fire. Expand it to other cells. Try several at once, after a few times you should easily be able to do a whole group of cells at the same time.”

I had it, my hand was glowing.

“Now carefully keep expanding until you've given the command to your whole body.” he finished.

It was an exhilarating feeling. The annoying reporter kept asking everyone how it felt to be fire. Master Etan reached over and turned the reporter into fire. He looked down at his flaming body, screamed and ran. Well, he wanted something exciting, I guess he got it. After he calmed down, he seemed to enjoy the experience. Though later, he politely excused himself. I think he had, more than enough of Etan's boring day.

Reapers normal day

So there I was, standing face to face with a beast nearly the size of a mother ship and what did I do? I stabbed it in the foot of course. It had a soft spot between its toes. I mean how else was I going to get at it? With my tech arm's energy nearly depleted and me standing alone against this creature, I had to think fast. I couldn't have gone through its massive body; its skin was as hard as a rock. Both heads oriented on me, ready to cut me in half. My class was on edge for this one. I showed them one of its seven foot long teeth I had kept

I knew what I had to do next. When the beast roared in pain, from my stab, I jumped into its mouth, and it swallowed me whole. I began cutting gashes in its throat on the way down just to keep it in pain. When I got its first stomach, I saw my prize. There was the king's ruby. My tech arm may have been no help but my normal arm's aim was all I needed. I took the small lasso I brought with the claw and grabbed on to the gem.

I looked and saw I had about five minutes of air left on my breather. I knew I had to hurry. I climbed back up the esophagus and found a tender spot, and cut my way out. It seems that in the end he just couldn't stomach me. One student looked doubtful.

“We know you like to exaggerate, how do we know what's true?” I was glad he asked so I said.

“I'm glad you asked. Look here.” Then I teleported in the twenty foot tall egg I got from it. I had been told by the locals that the eggs lay dormant for twenty years before hatching.

“Ok kiddies story time is over, it's time for the simulations” I told them.

Selar had asked me to begin training an elite group based on my tactics and combat styles. My first response was no, but after he said when the first group graduated he would have a statue of me put at the school. How could I resist? I had ten students eager to learn how to be awesome. All of them already knew how to fight in many martial art styles and had some basic espionage training. They had extensive training on many kinds of vehicles, including a gold status on piloting fighters. Supposedly they were the best the Guardians had to offer. But they were not Reaper ready.

The first day of class I actually had started out with thirty students. First I took them on a ten mile run, second a climb up a mountain cleft then lastly we swam across a raging river. All but ten dropped out that first day. Now I was down to the ones who might be tough enough to survive me. Of course if I wanted too, I could push the others hard enough to make them to quit, but I wanted my statue. Today's assignment for my class was to infiltrate an enemy stronghold and obtain a data disk and get out. First up was one student I called whiny baby. I was terrible with names so I called them by characteristics I could remember. He liked to complain about my style so I called him whiny. I started off with a standard set up made for this practice. Later I planned to introduce them to death traps like acid sprays, and spikes. But for now it was a matter of getting past normal alarms and security. This was one of my warm up programs.

Student's perspective.

I took a long look at the layout of the building. It was designed to look like a standard office building. Reaper had infiltrated several exact situations as this, so we knew this was a real possibility for us. I got to carry along the standard ops stuff. Arm gantlet computer, grapples, and smoke bombs were some of the equipment we carried. I scouted out the place before making a move. I knew how sneaky Reaper could be, a trap could be anywhere. Three stories up was a window that was cracked open. I wasn't falling for that. I found an air duct to crawl through. I got shocked when I set off the alarms. So I had to start over. I took three times just for me to make it inside. I made my way to a secluded spot in a supply room. On my first run through, the guards had pistol weapons, but when I got caught by a camera and traps went up I had to do it all over again. I thought, Ok I got them now. But he had changed the program.

Now they had laser weapons and motions sensors too. Three months later when every student had gone through the program and made it to the disk and had gotten out, he announced we all had failed the assignment. He said we had obtained the wrong disk. We had picked the disk he had said to get. But then he stated what if a clerical error had occurred or they labeled it wrong on purpose. After that he brought in a whole new set up and we started all over. Man that's just not right. Reaper looked at me, obviously reading my mind

"If life was fair then I would be the emperor of the galaxy, and I'm not, though I should be." That was the start of the worst five years of my life.

Mistek's normal day

My little dears were still out searching the universe. I'm so proud of the way things turned out. Many of my children were still around in this galaxy of course but for the most part things were quiet so they weren't needed as much right now. I kept myself busy with a few projects. It was surprising the number of planets with run down technology. Selar would give me a list of planets to help and what I could do to help them with. Some species were still too aggressive to give them tech that could be turned into a weapon against their neighbors.

Today I was on a mostly agricultural planet. They had gone through a long drought and several natural disasters in the last few years. They had been able to trade with another planet, for some supplies. But now they wanted to be self sufficient. I was here to upgrade some of their tech. With a little tech boost the next growing season should be much better. My part was simple. I would inject the tech they already had, with my own special type of Nanites and presto a few days later, they would have new tech. My Nanites could be programmed to heal biological life forms or fix and upgrade tech, whatever was needed. I was on my way to my third appointment when I got a call from a man from the first site. It seems that after I left, some local thugs stole a small piece of the equipment. I could guess why.

They wanted to get some of my Nanites to study. They were designed to alter the tech then break down, but they would still be active right now. In the wrong hands my Nanites could be very dangerous.

Once I got back to the spot, it wasn't too hard to track down the bad guys. I mean come on, I could track heat, pressure, bio samples, almost anything you could think of. I was like a mobile investigation lab. I tracked them to an old warehouse in a nearby city. When I scanned the place it seemed empty. But I could see the missing item inside. Really, do they think they can spring an obvious trap like this, on me? I am Misteeek, queen and the mother of all Mistles.

I left an illusion of myself standing outside while I tunneled underground. Ahh, there they were. Hiding and waiting to spring thier surprise on me. I could see they held some kind of dark energy weapon. I had learned how to compensate for that along time ago. Unless I was hit with a massive amount, I could deflect it. But even that wasn't necessary here. These were humans not chaos guardians. I created a knock out mist and waited a sec. In no time at all I had them all delivered to the local authorities for theft of property. Another day saved, by my pure awesomeness.

1's normal day

Now remember class, if you're going to serve jalapeño poppers, make sure you always have a large amount of cold refreshment to go with it. That got a good laugh. Then the buzzer rang, School was out for today. Drax, loved Mexican food so I had learned to cook it long ago. It turns out I loved it too, who knew? And since I am a mom now, I've even won two cooking contests for my unique recipes. All I did was download them from earth but hey a girl can have a few secrets cant she? One day I hope earth can join the galactic community, it has a lot of interesting things.

Now that class was over I had to hurry. I was going to a meeting to show my new invention. Originally I had made a scythe sheath for Drax to use. This one would not allow blood to soak in to the material. It was as soft as silk but very tough to rip or cut. After he showed it off, it became a popular item.

Other people working in jobs where they got muddy or wet found it useful. Undergarments could be made that would allow them to stay dry and comfortable all day. Without intending too, I had started a clothing craze. I was actually quite proud of myself for the materials invention. Drax was always coming home with his clothes so dirty and sometimes bloody I decided to do something about it. I had made it by adding a drop of Misteeek's essence to a silky material. I got her to help me program it to alter the fabrics atomic structure. It took some experimenting but we finally came up with an effect we liked. I heard her and Reaper worked on another material later that was resistant to bladed weapons, yet wore like a regular garment. Though I do enjoy my cooking classes, another part of my life makes me even happier. My son Lum is the joy of my life. I see a possible diplomat, in his future.

Selar's meeting with Regents.

As you know, there has been a haze to future events until now. The dark Guardians have hindered our sight with thier interference. With them gone, I have begun to see disturbing events. I see images that don't make sense, things past and present that do not conform to our history. There are more questions than answers right now, but know this something big is coming. I will let you know, when I have seen more.

Reapers bet Etans view part one

“You think you’re so smart don't you?” Reaper asked.

He had bragged he could do any job as well or better than anyone. So I set up an appropriate test. Something I knew he would absolutely hate. I set up a test in a Hol-room. Misteeek helped me fill in the details. I programmed it to simulate an office job in New York City. He had to drive in heavy traffic and work a regular job all day long, and see if he could do the job as well as a human.

I programmed it to give him all kinds of frustrating tasks to perform. He was supposed to do this for three days consecutively. I was betting he didn't make it past the first day. His whole ship was interested in what would happen. He wanted to prove he was the best at everything. When it came to fighting he was. But simple things like tying shoe laces stopped him. I had given him a pair of expensive earth shoes. He seemed to like most things from earth, so I thought he would like them. But he couldn't seem to get the hang of tying laces. He just threw the laces aside and said I don't need laces; my shoes are too sacred to come off my feet.

He also had to perform all tasks all three days with no enhancements or help from any non human tech. He could only use stuff humans had. He would start out in an apartment in queens. Misteeek and I even programmed in random events like attempted robbery and street cons. The first morning he reacted as expected. He didn't like having to make his own coffee. You should have seen him fighting with the filter. He didn't know it was the wrong size. The correct one was in another drawer in the kitchen. He decided he was going to get a cup on the way. But one of his requirements was he had to fix himself his own breakfast at least on the first day. The milk was spoiled, the cereal was stale and all the dishes were dirty. He wasn't used to having to take care of all of this, himself. He ended up eating the dry, stale cereal out of the box. He did not look happy. Score one for the home team.

I programmed it to be winter so he had to shovel the snow out the way and warm up the car. He made a trip to the local coffee shop. I made sure to have a few unseen potholes so he would spill his coffee on him. Getting to work was another matter in itself. He grumbled all the way on why it was called rush hour when people were moving so slow. And of course there was a wreck for him to get stuck behind. He was experiencing a few of the frustrations that humans face everyday.

Reapers comments

I'll get him, that dirty no good, trickster. He'll pay for putting me through this. Even if I lose my mind, I'll make it through the next three days, but I won't give up. I can't believe the traffic in this city. How do these people deal with this everyday? Parking was a headache, and then they had the nerve to make me go through something called a metal detector when I entered the office building. Etan knew, very well my tech arm would set that thing off. Instead of an efficient tube lift system they had something called an elevator. It was slow and crowded, and the music playing was made to torture my ears. The whole situation was made worse by me having to wear an office suit. What harm would it have been for me to wear my usual robe? It was comfortable, and easy to fight in, the perfect balance. But it got worse. When I got to my floor, I was shown my area called a cubical. I had to sit on a chair with a squeaky wheel hunched over an outdated computer that that forever to boot up and figure out how to use. It was almost an hour into the day before I could get any work done.

Etan comments part two

Well, he made it ok so far. But he was obviously upset. We made sure the coffee in the break room would be gone. I figured he would try to get more since he had spilled most of his in the way here. All this so far was just the warm up. The good stuff was yet to come. I had lined up a two hour long boring meeting for him to attend. A bunch of papers to sign and organize afterwards, and having to use the copy machine. He was already livid by the time the meeting started. The meeting was on the agricultural out look for the near future, and how it would affect this company's

financial growth. I made sure the speaker was drone and as dull as possible. Reaper fell asleep a few times so I had one of his fellow workers wake him up each time. He was on the verge of a mental break down already. It shouldn't take too much to push him over the edge. Reaper hates doing paper work of any kind, actual paper work or just computer records. He was set a task to fill out a few hundred papers. He had to look up and list countless addresses, and financial records.

He had already decided to cheat and not fill them out right, when he got to one form that required him to make multiple copies and fax them to a particular business then wait for their response back. He went stomping through the office, pushing people out of the way.

One of my favorite details was the possessed copier. It would eat the paper most of the time and smear the copies all the other times. That was all it took. Reaper grabbed the copier and threw it out the office window. He looked around and knew he had lost the bet. So he proceeded to take out his anger on all the simulated people. After five minutes the office looked like the something from a horror flick. I almost laughed myself hoarse. Too bad he didn't make it to writing the memos, being assigned to answer multiple lines on the companies' phone, or filing his taxes when he got home for the night. I still had a long list of torments I never got to use. Oh well, he got the point I'm sure.

Part two

Life disrupted

200 years until Doomsday Guardian year 5694 Earth year 1694 Etan age 274

Selar's report

The timelines are becoming blurred. Not covered or cloaked like when the dark guardians are involved but something else entirely. I suggest we send out all available Guardians to look for time instability fissures.

First sign of trouble

Etan's view

I should have known something was coming. The counsel called me in for a progress report. They looked over my missions since I have been a sergeant; they started with the elemental mission. I was not faulted for the heart of darkness mission as it was more powerful than expected. They gave me high praise for the progress of my silvers and all the diplomatic assignments I've had, as well as teaching at the school. In consequence I was promoted to captain's rank. Reaper was captain rank too, but mine superseded his. If I gave him an order, even on his ship he had to follow it. Though with Drax in his head, getting him to cooperate was a little easier now. Not only that, I now outranked my friends Celestial and Vortex. They were at my promotion ceremony too.

"See I told you we would have to call him boss one day." Celestial told Vortex. They weren't jealous though, we all got along well, and I didn't let rank be an issue. Rank was really only employed in times of averting emergencies or times of war.

I was assigned to take my ship called the shield and look for time fissures. I was given a type of chronoton emitting orb to seal the breach. Selar explained that usually breaches would begin at a specific spot in history and create unstable waves into the future. Matter and energy were able to pass from past to future and back again. This fissure bypassed the timelines tendency to eliminate unnatural events and reset. Normally when a break happens, it is because of someone using unrefined time travel tech. But this was something quite different. We were assigned not only to seal the breach but track the cause if possible.

Reaper and I were assigned the quadrant, earth was in. That was probably because if there was a breach we could recognize changes in earth's history. Selar detected over twenty fissures popping up nearly at the same time galaxy wide. Sure enough one eventually showed up around earth. This one looked nearly identical to the fissure I saw when I was on the elemental mission years ago. If that one was just the first of many to come, that could be a sign of something much bigger. Just then the fissure actually split into two different ones. Oh great, just what I needed, twins. Fortunately Reapers ship was close. I reminded him that he needed to go into the other fissures and place an orb at the sight of the instability, but to keep from messing up the timeline, not to talk to anyone or be seen. This end of the fissure was the past manifestation. Normally fissures start in the past and send out unstable waves to the future but this one was backwards. The troubled spot was in the future and sending the waves backwards. How strange.

A few quick fixes

1's Accidental fissure

1's view

While the boys were on assignment, I decided to pay a trip to Argaria. Lum was going to school there. He had already gone through many basic classes and now was continuing his education. I had not pressured him to have to leave so fast, but he wanted to go. In many human societies they had to get the kids out of the house and working because thier society was based on acquiring money or power. But Argarian society was not this way; it was based on personal growth. By no surprise he wanted to be a diplomat. Drax hated that of course. But he still loved his son, though he didn't like to show it in front of others.

I was on my way to the home world when a fissure opened up right in front of me. It was too late to avoid it. When I came through the fissure the shuttle was approaching a planet. The sensors showed the other end of the fissure here in space. Most of the officers working for the Guardians had been given an orb to seal the breeches. Fortunately I did have one in this shuttle. I sent it to the fissure but nothing happened. It didn't work. I messaged Selar through the breach. When I did get in contact with him, he said he had just gotten messages from several others having the same trouble. He said we may have to find out what's being disrupted and set things back on course in history to repair the breach. It was like giving a ball a push down stairs. It needs an initial push then gravity takes over from there. If we could get time events in the right direction, the timeline should continue in the same direction, reorienting itself to its former state. I checked with the star locations to determine the exact date.

This was in fact a famous date in history. It was just over six thousand years ago. I needed to go find a man named Adon. He was a good leader and the strongest of any Argarian in his time. Argarians had always been blessed with fast healing and high intelligence. But a few decades ago prior to this time, they discovered some new abilities. They realized they were able to channel energy into and through their bodies. Once the initial shock wore off, this new ability was quickly manipulated into a weapon. After many years of war, a peace treaty was signed that neither side would use thier powers to kill the other. One small nation couldn't settle for peace so they secretly developed a missile with the power to wipe out an entire continent at one time.

I cloaked and landed on the planet. A famous battle outside one of the capital cities was supposed to happen today. It was the turning point for my people. Cronos Adon made a speech and then mind linked with several people and the link grew. The link reached the rival nation just moments before they were to launch thier weapon. Some say he got his idea on the link by studying communal insects. His parents had been naturalists.

I could see on the monitor the other nation preparing its attack. Adon didn't have long. This history was taught in school, so I knew right now he should be at the capital building making his famous, all for one speech. Children were taught to memorize this speech in school.

I teled down but he wasn't there, Instead I found him a short distance from the capital building preparing a group of men for a raid. I popped in, and he looked very surprised.

“What are you doing here?” He asked.

“You need to be uniting our people?” I told him

“I don't know who you are, but you need to leave.” I couldn't take no for answer. I explained about the time fissure and the enemy nation's eminent attack.

“I see” he said “Well, I don't know anything about insects, my parents died years ago. Just go away we'll do this our own way.” He argued. I went on to explain about the link and how it would change our people. He didn't believe me, until I linked with him. It took a moment for him to take it all in. But I showed him enough of what our people would become for him to agree to create the link.

I explained further how, if we fix this event, the rest of the timeline should fix itself. After that we proceeded down to the capital building bringing a crowd with us. Adon made his way to the steps of the capital building. He raised his hands in a welcoming manner and spoke these famous words.

“My fellow Argarians, I speak to you now in the name of peace. For too long have we fought pointless battles, for too long have we brought only misery to ourselves and others, for too long have we only destroyed when we should have been creating. I ask you now, to join me in unity as one mind, and one voice. I propose a link of mind and spirit. Together we can end all this pointless fighting, rebuild our world and bring order from the chaos. We must live all for one and one for all. United we stand, and divided we fall.”

Although I could have created the link easier, for the timelines sake it needed to come from him, not me. He was a strong and powerful leader, so he eventually was able to focus enough to start the process. He started with his generals. They were all older and reasonably wise men, so it didn't take long for them to get it either. The more people joined the link the faster it grew. This was exciting see history in action.

Just then a missile from the other country came into my sight. It was still high in the atmosphere. I only had a moment to stop it. Adon was supposed to have made this speech and link over half an hour before. So the missile hadn't been launched originally. I was a fairly powerful Argarian, if I do say so myself, though I probably had gotten a little rusty in the last few years of being a mom. I launched myself high in the atmosphere and grabbed hold of the missile and pushed with all my strength. I barely was able to redirect it in time to hit the ocean and not the capital. Lesson learned, when I get back home I'm restarting that exercise class. Then a wave of dizziness hit me, and I was back in the shuttle headed toward Argaria. Well, that was exciting, but I hope I'd never have to do that again.

Etan's bad day

I took my ship through the fissure and set it down in a clearing. This end of the fissure was in a nearby ravine. I didn't sense anyone around for miles. Could it be this easy, just place the orb and go? But as my usual luck dictates it was not going to be that easy. The orb did not work on the fissure. After conferring with Selar, He gave me the answer I was expecting. I would have to figure out what had changed in the past and change it back to set things right. I looked and this was 1959 near Hawaii. This was the time and place at Kilauea that my parents died. My gut wrenched with the realization.

By the look of things, the fissure was affecting the magma flow to the volcano. If I let things go as is, my parents would not die. But if they lived the timeline would be messed up. One on hand I had a job to do, but on the other hand how could I not try to find a way to save my parents. I was now two hundred and seventy four years old, I stopped thinking of myself as human some time ago. Through constant meditation and Guardian teachings I've been able to rid myself of emotional outbursts. I still have feelings but I am disciplined enough to keep them in check most

of the time. This however was a special circumstance. The most efficient thing I could have done was simply place the orb at the site of the fissure and leave.

I let my crew keep an eye on the fissure while I took care of the eruption. I cloaked and flew up to the summit. My parents were there taking samples. My father was a volcanologist. Dang! I hated to do this. I just stood there for a long moment starrng. Maybe if I took them with me, it would still look like they died.

I remembered all the Christmases and Esters afterwards and how lonely it was. I regretted never really spending enough time with them. But I didn't want to do all the traveling they did. I decided to do one thing before I let them die. I changed to Argyle form so they wouldn't recognize me. I walked up and told them I had heard of them and it was an honor to finally meet them. I told them I had meet Etan a year ago. My father said

“Oh you meet Etan. He's a good son. Were so proud of the man he became. He tries so hard to help people.”

My father had always been a private man who showed very little emotion. I don't ever remember him saying he was proud of me. I responded with

“He says he misses you very much.” After a few minutes of talking with them, I had to force myself to leave before I started to cry.

“Wait” my father said " Will you see him anytime soon?" he asked.

“Yes,” I told him. “Well give him this.” He handed me a gold watch.

“This was handed down from my father to me, now to him.” I was astounded.

“Why didn't you give him this before?" I asked.

“I had been saving it for a special occasion. But our schedule is so busy now; I haven't had time to give it to him.”

This was a great gift. “Mr. O Brantley I'll be glad to give him this.”

With that I had to go. If I didn't go now I would change my mind on fixing the timeline. I left, and then dived down into the magma chamber. The flow had been slightly altered by the fissures presence. It wasn't hard to redirect. When I was young, I felt guilty about their death like it was my fault, now it really was. Maybe when this was all over, I could find a universe where they didn't die and visit there. As I emerged from the opening the ground began to crumble. A small hole appeared and my parents tried to scramble out the way. Then a larger gap opened up. As they fell they clawed at the air, trying desperately to grab a hold of something, anything. I can still see the look of horror and shock on thier faces. I couldn't help but cry out as they plunged into the void.

“Mom, Dad, I'm so sorry, and I love you.”

Of all places and times, the fissure could have sent me why did it have to send me here? I stood there and mourned for them all over again. In spite of growing older and wiser, I could still be hurt by this kind of thing. I looked inside the watch's front latch. There was one of our family pictures inside. After a few minutes I returned to the ship. I went back to my cabin to be alone while we waited for the fissure to heal itself. Fortunately the crew left me alone to have some quiet time. In a few moments we were back to our own time again. I expected the watch to disappear but it didn't. It stayed with me, anyway. I had always feared my parents were disappointed in me, because my life was such a failure. This situation was bitter sweet. On one hand I got to hear them say they were proud of me, but on the other hand I had to cause thier death.

Reaper making history.

Reapers view

My ship had just entered the fissure when Etan called me explaining that the orbs didn't work. He said I needed to find out from history what was not right and see if I could fix it. Fortunately that's what I had underlings for. After a few minutes of scanning we discovered the problem. We were on earth in the year 1347 in a place called Brandenburg Germany. There was an odd looking ship, hiding in a foggy area. It was emitting a heavy mist. According to the scans it could have been a byproduct of their propulsion system. Whoever or whatever they were was not supposed to be here. This mist was killing everything in the area. Not only people but trees and animals too. It also seemed to be destroying some of the bacteria in the ground, making it become infertile. We opened communications with the vessel but they didn't answer. Either they were so alien as not to recognize our communications or else they simply refused to answer.

I didn't care which; it was my job to stop them. We fired our main weapon, but they only sustained minor damage. We tried several different ship to ship attacks but none of them worked. They never fired back; I guess they didn't see us as a threat. That was fine with me, it gave me an excuse to get out and take care of them personally. I used my dimensional cloak and proceeded over to the alien vessel.

Inside was like nothing I'd ever seen. I've seen bio-tech before but this was different. Most bio-tech was made for humans but this was like an insect colony. Then I realized what was probably happening here. This could be an advanced group of **Terraformers**. The mist could be something they used to Terraform this planet to their needs. If that's all it was, I could take of this problem easy enough. As I went along I planted small charges along the bio-power conduits in the hall and rooms I encountered. I could plant the charges then re-cloak and no one even knew I was there. I saw one of the creatures. It looked like a cross between an ant and a preying mantis, but it was over seven foot tall. I knew of earth insects because Etan had showed me these forms. They were formidable fighters for their size.

I planted a few bombs in the control and engine rooms. Those rooms were trickier since the creatures were present, but I managed none the less. As soon as I finished I left the ship and found a good spot to watch the show. It should be a fairly big explosion. Sure enough after a moment the ship exploded with a very loud blast. Three of the creatures from the ship, had been scanning the area, and came running up. I had to have at least a little fun before I left.

I uncloaked and challenged them. They spit acid at me, but it wasn't anything my armor couldn't handle. I could have taken them out instantly but decided to chop off their legs first. Once they were grounded I could take my time finishing them off. After a few moments of their torment, I stabbed the last one in the chest and said

“The Reaper has come.”

Suddenly I heard screams in the back ground. Some of the local citizens had seen and heard me. I cloaked to avoid more interference. They went on to discuss how the Reaper was here to claim the souls of the Black Death victims. Later I learned that my appearance here had started the black cloaked Reaper legend in the first place. So In a weird way I created the legend that later I would become. Etan would appreciate the irony in that I'm sure.

I took one last look around town before I left. I wanted to make sure that no other creatures were present. I was still cloaked but one small child saw me anyway. He was a small boy about nine or ten. He was just standing in the window of the house staring at me. But I know he saw me because his eyes moved as I did. He never spoke a word he just stood and stared with those empty eyes. Maybe he had the sickness and being close to death gave him altered perception. I don't know. I'm not sure why but he made me feel uneasy.

Matt comments

For the next fifty years there were other fissures off and on, but eventually we patched them as they appeared. The strange thing is, there was no detectable source.

150 years till doomsday Guardian year 5744 Earth year 1744

A few updates

Etan's comments

Although the galaxy was at peace for the most part, we kept busy, constantly tracking down the fissures. They were only fissures in the general sense. Normally, time fissures acted in specific ways and predictable patterns. A normal fissure was like an eddy of swirling water in a flowing stream. When some new time tech came along, sometimes it could alter the flow. Fortunately, the time stream self corrected many of the issues, but occasionally we had to step in to assist some unbalanced part. But these new fissures were different. Quite often they defied logic. Sometimes multiple timelines would meet in one place. It was like the timeline had become confused on what was real and what wasn't. Not only that, but often whoever went into one of these, the fissure would change to fit them. We monitored one fissure for example that was set to a specific time and place, but when one of the Guardians entered it, it changed. Somehow this phenomenon changes to match the person involved. I guess this is why mine took me to my parents.

Today, I would get to see something unique. Selar invited several hundred silver and blue guardians to watch him fix a problem. It seems the inner rim of the universe had developed a tear. We took a long range vessel to the place of eternal light. Selar pulled us along in the light field, so we could get there faster. Once again it was easy to forget just how powerful he really was. When we got to the edge, we could see the obvious tear. He showed us how he repaired the breach. This wasn't the same as the time fissures we had been fixing. I couldn't imagine what it would take to create a tear in the universe. Even though the phenomenon was different could this and the fissures somehow be related? With this new problem we began making and sending out probes to others layers of the universe to monitor any other occurrences.

In other news, Reaper is now teaching a class for advanced Guardian agents. He calls them his Paladins. He had started out with just teaching the one class that Selar had asked him to do but now had turned into a regular thing. It turns out he enjoys training others in his style. He designed all the obstacles courses and battle simulating classes. A few of his past students, who did survive him, are now some of his teachers. I guess I didn't have to worry about it going to his head since he was already full of himself. I swear that man's ego never ends. He has pictures of himself in every room and statues in the corridors. I runs the business end of things as Reaper can't even keep up with his socks much less the schools records. Lum did indeed go on to become a successful diplomat. Better him than me. I don't like long meetings that drone on for hours anymore than Reaper. Over all we just kept doing what we do. Trying to keep the peace and stop any major disasters from happening.

100 years till doomsday Guardian year 5794 Earth year 1794 --Etan age 374

Etan's comments

“Good mourning Captain and happy birthday”. Security chief Dred stated. He was the first crew member I ran into this mourning. I had been a Guardian for 300 years now. Boy time flies. Dred was one of Reapers former students. Once when we got boarded by a militaristic opponent, he took care of it quicker than I could respond. I had been away from the ship trying to diffuse a possible war. The leaders of a local planet were threatening to send apocalyptic weapons to each other.

By the time I got the call, excused myself from the meeting and returned to the ship, chief Dred had everything in hand. The invading soldiers were already in confinement waiting for me to decide what I wanted to do with them. I'll say one thing, Reaper trained him well. I'm glad I had gone with Reaper's suggestions. All my officers were now people that had once served on his ship. They were efficient and professional in all that they did.

We were still in a time of over all galactic peace but there were always smaller assignments to do. More cracks in the Rim, occasionally appeared but the Regents were able to repair them each time. Then another strange phenomenon occurred. According to Selar the Rim of the universe had now hardened to become impenetrable. Even Selar could not get out at the moment. Even under normal circumstances exiting the universe into the intraverse was a dangerous thing. Each time the Rim was punctured it caused a weakness that had to be repaired. As a consequence Guardians only went to the intraverse when necessary. But now that they couldn't get out, this indicated the problem could be coming from the outside of the universal bubble not the inside.

We had, been given several hundred years of relative peace and tranquility in spite of the fissures and tears, but all that was about to change. There was a strange disturbance going on at a local planet. Someone masquerading as me was claiming to have the rights to rule the planet. I was on my way to the ships bridge to announce our next mission. I just rounded the corner when I ran into Reaper, but he was definitely not my Reaper. He was wearing Aries armor and carrying his sword and shield. He had the same chocked look on his face, as I had. He raised his sword and shield and declared.

"You will not take me emperor." To be honest I was too stunned to say anything for a moment. Then I scanned him and saw only light energy. This was the first of a great many shocks to come.

Part three

Universal History

Universe One

Adon's All for one speech.

Commentary

"General Adon, the Kelts are attacking, and their coming in the south and east gates." His first lieutenant reported. Adon took on a look of determination. "Well then, now is the time to begin the domination initiative." Adon stated. He made his way to the steps of the capital building, bringing a crowd with him. He then raised his hands in a grand gesture and spoke these words.

"My fellow patriots, I speak to you now, in the name of order. Too long have we been a divided people. Too long have other nations and other planets interfered in our ways. It is time to take a stand against the chaos. We will create order where destruction now lies. I propose a union as one mind and one voice, a link of will and determination. We will build a mighty empire that no one can destroy. Join me now we must live as one nation, one people, and one empire. All for one and one for all, united we stand divided we fall."

December 2012

Etans view

Here I was, lying in a hospital, soon to die. I had gotten shot during a robbery. I would have rather seen that no good bank manager shot instead of me but what can I expect with my luck. I was about to write a goodbye note to a friend when I looked over and saw a man dressed in purple and gold sitting on the chair beside my bed. I turned to him and said

“I guess you’re the Reaper and have come to claim my soul.” He laughed.

“Not quit, but close enough. Being mortal is no fun at all is it? How would you like to become immortal?” He asked. I responded with “Sure who wouldn’t.” He put his hand on my shoulder and we flew up and out the window. He showed me the world below. He took me to a battle field in Sudan.

“You see Etan, your world like many others, lives in chaos. But I am a leader of a group called Guardians. We bring order to chaos. Your world is next on our list. We need someone like you to join us. Someone who will keep the order, this world needs.” Anything was better than dying like this. “Sounds good, tell me more.” I told him.

Several months later when the counsel disappeared in the intraverse.

Etans view continued

“I am the guardian core.” it said to me. I knew immediately what was really going on now. Now, while the counsel was vulnerable, was the perfect time to take control. And bring in a new order, my order. When I take my rightful place I will take on a new name and a new title. All will bow to the emperor. But what name should I take? Let me think, I’ve always admired the Roman Ceasers. Yes, I will rename myself as Augustus the new emperor of the Galaxy.

But I needed help. I had been working secretly to stage a coup. I brought Aries and few others with me. I timed it, so that right before I shut down the intraversal bridge that Aries and few others attacked the counsel while they were weakened. Officially Aries took control of the empire from there. I let him continue to rule until I was ready. I still had the prime matrix so I was actually more powerful. I told him that I couldn't un-bond with it, but that he had my support. I was just waiting for the right time to take full control myself. In order for my rule to be absolute I needed support from all planetary generals. I was from earth, and if there was one thing we knew well, it was war. My only real challenge was a rebel Guardian. His name was Drax but they called him the protector. He leads a small rebel faction against the Guardian sovereignty.

Present day

Kane has failed me yet again. Can’t he kill this one man? The protector must die. I have no other choice but to go after the protector myself. When he is gone the rebel threat will end.

Universe Two

Drax's 10th birthday commentary

"I'm sorry Drax, I'm sorry your mother died." Loki explained. "I know you've had a right to be mad at me. But you're old enough now to understand what happened. Your mother was captured by the dark guardians. They wanted to combine dark and light in the same person, you. If you get angry at the Guardians then they still win. I'd like to encourage you one day work for the Guardians. By working for them, you can hinder the dark guardians." Drax looked up at Loki.

"I'm still mad, but I guess it's not really your fault." he said.

Etan's first year of school

Drax's view

Some new Guardian came to school this year. It took a while for me to get over being mad at Guardians. One was partially responsible for my mother's death. Later I realized it was the dark Guardians who really were responsible and that I couldn't really blame Loki. I talked to the new guy Etan a few times. He is a little odd, but others wise he's ok. I'm sure if he was chosen for a Guardian, he must be a good guy.

Terrocian planet incursion

Selar's report

All the dark guardians are dead, and the all thier bases destroyed. I still plan to send scouts out to make sure that there are not others in hiding but I believe we got them all. If they hadn't committed all thier forces we might not been able to do that. Lokie's battle ship was able to capture the queen. All lesser agents are being deprogrammed from dark Guardian brainwashing. Keeping a lasting peace is now possible.

Universe Three

Earth, December 2012

Etans comments

Here I was, lying in a hospital, soon to die. I had gotten shot during a robbery. I would have rather seen that no good bank manager shot instead, but what can I expect with my luck. I was about to write a goodbye note to a friend when I looked over and saw a man dressed in black sitting in the chair beside my bed.

"Well, well, well. What do we have here?" he said. "I turned to him and said" I guess your the Reaper and have come to claim my soul."

He laughed. "Not quit, but close enough." Tell me Etan, how would you like a chance to live your life over and this time obtain power, and influence? "He asked.

"Sure who wouldn't," I answered. He stood up, and said "let me show you something." He put his hand on my shoulder and we flew up and out the room. He showed me a battle field. There was a conflict going on in Sudan at the moment.

“Throughout your planets history you have war and conflict going on all the time. And look how much it has accomplished. You’ve have advances in weapons, defense and even medicine. Violence and death are just as much a part of life as birth.” He explained.

“Yeah so what are you getting at?” I asked. “Misery and chaos bring change. What's often called evil is just another word for natural. Is it evil for a predator to chase and kill and its prey? No. It’s just hungry. In fact it’s promoting the over all flourishing of life by getting rid of the sick and lame. I'm part of an organization that does the same thing but on a bigger scale.

“It sounded interesting. “Tell me more” I said.

One year later during the intraverse incident

“Master Kane I present to you the Guardian core.” Thantos Etan said.

“Well, well, well, I am most pleased. You've done very well indeed. “With the counsel dead no one can stop us. Signal the fleet we are ready to initiate full scale landing. I predict that with in three days we can secure every populated planet”

Etan asked “What about earth?”

Kane nodded “Don't worry I'm still going to let you rule earth, were just leaving them for last. They have a higher population than most planets well need all the troops we have to secure it. Have you decided on the manner of execution you will use for any rebels?”

Etan nodded with glee “They will die the same way my parent’s did. I will have any rebels pushed into a live volcano. So there will be nothing left to mourn.” Kane was most pleased with his new apprentice.

Part four Universal trades

Thantos Etan from universe three Present day

I found myself on a strange planet. The Guardians are relentless. Master Kane has taught me well, though. Actually with him he has taught me well, well, well. The locals called me by old name but for some reason they didn't fear me. They thought I was a Guardian, how dare they defile my dark name. I’ll show them my true rage, and my true power. Don’t they know the true power of the dark? If they don't, they will soon. I had just begun terrorizing the public when some copy of me showed up.

Universe zero

1's comment

A very odd thing happened on my way home today. I went to the local market to pick out some fresh fruit and veggies for dinner. Although Lum had been gone from home for awhile now, I had gotten used to eating freshly cooked meals. Replicators were ok, but they could not match the taste of fresh grown and cooked foods. Usually once a week when nether Drax or Etan was gone on a mission he would come over to have dinner with Drax and I.

You would think Drax would get tired of telling the same stories over and over. But he and Etan would usually reminisce for a few hours before Etan had to go. As I was saying I was on my way home when the market suddenly took on a new look. Argarian markets are always open and cheery places, lively and full of activity and color.

I felt dizzy for a second then the whole market changed to a dark and unfriendly look. It was more like a military base rather than an open market. There were guards in uniforms on every corner scanning people as they passed. When I looked around I noticed that all the business now had bars on the windows and force field projectors around their perimeters. My first thought was I was either being drugged or this was a complex illusion of some kind. I found a crumpled poster on the ground. It said "The history of the Guardian empire, being played on the community Holo-doom." What did they mean Guardian empire? We've never been an empire. Then, just as suddenly everything changed back to the way it was. Except that I still had the poster. What just happened?

Drax the protectors view

"You will not take me emperor." I told him.

But instead of fighting, he just stood there. I looked at him. He seemed different. He usually wears that over the top black cloak. He calls himself death incarnate. I mean really who does he think he is the real Grim Reaper? I bet he thinks he looks scary with that scythe on his jeweled emperor's staff. This Etan was very different. He was wearing Guardian robes and was carrying no staff. I also noticed that he did not have his usual haughty sneer.

Maybe this was a failed clone. Clone or not if he worked for the emperor I would have to take him out. The real emperor thought he was untouchable with his prime matrix but I had a secret weapon. I had Aries sword and shield. He had willed it to me right before he died. I promised him the fight would go on, and that I wouldn't let the fight die no matter what. But this Etan just stood and stared at me for a long moment.

"I don't know who you are but I'm not an emperor. I'm Etan and I'm a Guardian." I sensed him and he was different. I know the emperor's energy signature and this was not him.

Etan's view

This new Reaper and I talked for a few minutes. He called himself the protector. The best I could figure is, he was from an alternate timeline or alternate universe, a universe where he was the good guy and I was the bad guy. I can't wait until my Reaper finds out about this. He is going to freak. I must say though this protector looked epic. He's got Aries armor and sword. He warned me about the emperor from his reality, that he had the prime matrix. If the version on the planet was him, then I would need to be prepared.

I was old enough now to be more cautious than I used to be. I scanned him long range. And I saw his energy signature looked quite different than it should have been. It was the emperor. With the prime matrix he should be glowing like the noon day sun. But then I realized why he wasn't. I bet he can't open the life stream. It doesn't just take power, but emotional balance to access it. That's why; neither the dark Guardians nor regular Mistles can open the stream.

Dark guardians are far from balanced and Mistles have no emotions, except for Misteek herself. If this other me is as ruthless and dark hearted as the protector says, then he wouldn't be any different than a dark Guardian. I linked with the protector and got the basic history of the other universe. They had started out wrong in the first place. They ruled with an iron fist, with enforcement of law rather than by principle. They confirm the old earth saying, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. True balance is a choice not an accidental arrival. It was amazing how our Guardians have been able to stay pure and not fall prey to that kind of thinking.

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