

# Guardian Chronicles

## The Great Divide

### Prologue by Matt

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

### Older and wiser but not perfect

#### Etan's view

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Into the flames**

### **Reapers view**

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

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

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

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

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

"Take me to your leader." I demanded.

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

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

"Welcome stranger, you come in our time of need." The king said. "My name is King Ashfall the Third, Leader of this dying people."

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

"What's your problem?"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Come this way" it growled.

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

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

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

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

## **Icy Reception**

### **Etans veiw**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I bowed slightly to show respect for his position

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Matts comments**

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

## Rocky determination--Gemanites

### Misteeks view

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Stratos fear

### 1's view

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

"I suppose not." I agreed.

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

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

"That would be funny." Misteeek agreed.

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

## **Odds and ends.**

### **Misteeeks veiw**

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

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

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

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

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

"Are you still there?" I asked.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gust said. "Neither do we"

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

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

## **Rock and fire Commentary**

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

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

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

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

## **Matt's comments.**

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

## **Emptiness or empty nest. Commentary**

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

## Reapers view

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Current events**

### **1's view**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Misteeq's comments**

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

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

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

### **Don't take me for granite**

#### **Reapers view**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Etan's view**

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

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

“Ahh, they are your problem not mine.”

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

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

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

## **Hide and Seek Commentary**

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

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

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

### **Threes company and fours a crowd**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Little annoying things**

### **Reapers view**

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

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

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