

THE VINDIJAN LINE

Quadromolan Series Book 2

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Paramita Bhattacharjee thank you for your help with the cover.

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

Table of Contents

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

Chapter 1

Betrayed by Confidence

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dear Brother,

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

Vindijan Line,

Ertel

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“My brother,” said Coup implying a question.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“What do you mean, Emperor?”

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

Chapter 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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