

The Seventh Realm: Volume Four

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Episode 47: Full Disclosure

After six weeks of training their soldiers, all of whom are volunteers, the Sa'kesh army gathers in the fields. Consisting of virtually every able-bodied male of every race, as well as the Zelkona females who are not currently pregnant, regardless of their stage, approximately twelve hundred warriors stand at attention, receiving their orders. A small detachment of female humans and Ketlan accompany the force as nurses, cooks and general assistants, also having volunteered. In order to protect the Sa'kesh, in the event that Kincaid has been plotting to lure away their military, Cy has ordered Jack and his team to stay behind with the Panzer IV, aided by several squads of Zelkona sharpshooters armed with every rifle and submachine gun in their possession.

They have been told to follow the army's path after waiting for seven days, the estimated time it will take for their forces to walk to Kincaid's city. Jack and the remnant forces will leave on the morning of the eighth day, with the sharpshooters riding in a custom-built cart that will be pulled behind the Panzer. To cover the rear of the army and also provide support, Muzalfur, Zikata's war-guide and leader of the Kelanethaka's army, will depart from the Sa'kesh with his force of over six hundred warriors; the two armies will converge just before Kincaid's force and await the arrival of the tank. All consider the plan flawless, but Cy has been on edge since the beginning.

Pacing back and forth, he looks nervously at his troops, many of whom may die during the battle. Glancing over to the fortress, he can

see Zakera as she holds Darius. His eyes water as he recalls his final words to them before departing.

"You have given me the strength to make all of this possible, and if I don't survive, I want you to know that I have never loved anyone as much as I love you." Cy said, holding Zakera's slender body tightly.

"I love you too. Nadamu, Cy. Please come home to us. I cannot bear to live without you." Zakera said with trembling voice, sniffing several times.

"I promise to do everything that is within my power."

"That is not good enough." She whimpered.

"I have never hidden anything from you or lied to you. I'm not going to start now." He replied, rubbing her back.

"You are a good man, a wonderful pledge, and an excellent father. Do your best to come home to your family." Zakera said with shaking breath.

Pulling away from his mate, Cy knelt down and kissed the belly of his pregnant mate, still toned and slender as she has yet to show her condition. Cy looked down into the crib at little Darius, picking up his son and holding him in his arms. Feeling the cold metal of the armor that Cy is wearing, Darius began to cry. Shushing and cradling his son, Cy stroked the boy's head until he became calm again.

"That's my little guy. One day you are going to be a strong man with all of the girls chasing you. People will look at you and say that you're the son of Cyrus, a great leader among the Sa'kesh, but when you are older, they will say 'there's Darius, an even greater man and leader than his farther'."

Carefully placing Darius back into his crib, a teary-eyed Cyrus glanced to his mate before departing. Now standing in the fields, his weak, human vision struggling to see anything more than the pink, white and cyan figure on the distant balcony, he feels fear as powerful as the hellish nightmares that he used to experience before meeting his mate. Cy looks to every formation, all with their leaders standing before them. Yasmin, Johnny, Muzel, Chekona, and even Jinaso lead designated groups. In order to maintain some leadership, Mirkon and Zia are remaining behind, with Zakera taking charge, Zia acting as her second and Mirkon as liaison between the citizens and the fortress. Looking to the force, Cy notices that the sixth group is missing their leader.

"Where the fuck is Katero?!" Cy growls.

Lying on his back, the soft, grass sheave mattress crinkles as Zia straddles her lover's pelvis. With his clawed hands on her ample, DD-cup breasts, Katero squeezes the plump, sun yellow flesh of her orbs. He pinches her nipples, causing the already moaning Zia's volume to increase. Bouncing atop her partner and riding him at his command, Katero takes a hand away and gives her ass a rough smack. His engorged flesh pulverizes Zia's taut vagina, the endowed, charcoal black member plowing into her with each bounce. Unable to contain herself, she grips his shoulders rather painfully as she slams herself down atop him, her long, whip-like tail swaying gleefully.

With the golden furred scrotum pressing into the crack of her buttocks, she grinds her loins over his groin, his member sheathed completely within her. The waves of pleasure are overwhelming and she soon finds herself experiencing another orgasm. With her corvette red and yellow hide glistening from her sweat, she leans forward atop her lover. Pressing her ample breasts against the matted golden and black spotted fur of Katero's equally sweaty body, the pair share a series of passionate kisses.

"Am I doing well?" She asks sweetly.

"You are a very good girl." Katero growls. "But do not stop now. You are almost done, my love."

Still leaning forward, she rests on her forearms and knees as she rocks and sways her hips, struggling to work the exceptionally thick organ within her body, which is not necessarily designed for breeding with either Ketlan or human. As she works her lover, she understands why so many Zelkona females walk hand-in-hand with human partners. Katero gives her firm ass several more smacks before she can no longer contain herself. Plopping down atop him, she oozes white cream as she climaxes once again. The pleasure she experiences with Katero is like no other. With his snout just below her jawline, he tilts his head down and licks the sweaty flesh of her neck, his hands squeezing her buttocks and driving her wild.

Katero suddenly takes control, sitting upright. Zia grins from cheek to cheek, bearing her razor-sharp teeth and growling in pleasure. She adores his dominance and feels herself melting as he takes control. With her legs wrapping around his waist, he forces her to grind against his pelvis, which swirls his already large member within her undersized loins. She soon feels another climax building as Katero grunts louder and with even more force. Just before Zia can cum yet again, Katero lies her on her back and pummels her loin with his member. Swift and hard thrusts drive the black flesh into and out of her yellow nether lips.

"I am about to finish." Katero growls.

"Yes! Please give me your seed!" She squeals.

His grunts turn into a roar as Katero buries his phallus into her quivering, taut flesh. With his scrotum and full testicles pressed tightly against her, Katero winces as though in pain from the

incredible sensation. He shoots powerful jets deep inside of his lover. The force of his expulsion startles both of them as he releases as though he never had before. The waves of fertile semen flooding her forces Zia's orgasm and magnifies it, quaking her body with pleasure indescribable. Lying over her with his chest pressing between her large breasts and his snout beneath her chin, Zia lies there in ecstasy, stroking her lover's hair and back softly with her claws.

Both of them lie spent for some time before Katero can even withdrawal himself from his partner. Snuggling and kissing, they exchange their feelings of love more times than they can count. As they lay beside each other afterward, Zia looks to the shuttered window. Her golden eyes grow wide as she suddenly realizes what time it could be outside. Leaping from the bed, a weakened Katero looks into a brass basin atop her nightstand. As clocks are rare and owned only by the humans from Earth, Chris and Daniel concocted a clever but primitive form of hourglass for use by everyone else. With two cups of fine sand, each representative of one hour, Katero sees that the basin is empty; the sand has drained through a small, tapering hole at the bottom and into a collecting bowl beneath it.

"Oh no. We have been together for too long." He remarks.

"I am sorry." Zia lowers he head.

Katero rushes to her side and takes her hand in his, slipping an arm around the voluptuous raptor-like woman's waist.

"Do not be upset. I am always glad to spend time with you. Even if we had simply sat and talked, I would not regret it." Katero says with a smile.

"Truly?" She turns her eyes to him.

"Yes. And when I return alive and well, I wish to pledge to you." Katero continues.

Zia pounces upon him, squealing with glee. Kissing his neck and cheek, she ends at his lips and the pair briefly make-out.

"Is that a 'yes'?" Katero grins.

"It is. When you return, alive and well, I will pledge myself to you as your mate. We can sell a home and live together, and then try to make children." Zia replies.

"Oh, the fun we will have." Katero winks.

Quickly dressing in his clothing and armor, Katero retrieves his weapons and kisses Zia goodbye. Rushing outside, he turns back as he runs down the eerily deserted street and towards the field. Glancing back, he waves goodbye to the now dressed Zia who stands at an open window. He soon finds the soldiers in formation, many of whom immediately snicker as they see the disheveled captain; the Ketlan among them can smell a female all over him.

"My apologies, I was-"

"Save it." Cy grumbles, raising a hand to silence Katero. "Next time, spend the night and don't be late for war."

"You... You know?" Katero nervously asks.

"I think everyone does." Cy replies.

"It is a poorly kept secret." Muzel chirps.

"I am sorry! I know that it is taboo!" Katero bows his head.

"Calm the fuck down, boy." Yasmin snickers.

"We'll give you a pass for that so long as you plan on doing the right thing. You know what I am talking about, don't you?" Cy asks with a little smile.

"We are pledging as soon as we return from battle." Katero assures the group.

"Good! More motivation to survive this! Now get in line and let's move out." Cy orders.

With Katero finally present to lead the final group and the orders understood by the Kelanethaka, Jack, the sharpshooters, Zakera and the remnants, the army of Sa'kesh begin their march. Half of the Sa'kesh and Kelanethaka will soon bear down upon the tyrannical Kincaid and the teenager's army of human-centrists. Zia walks through the streets, watching the soldiers marching away, with each group behind the other in a line. Taking a deep breath, she sighs and rests her hands on her belly. She looks to the fortress where she can see Zakera standing with Darius in her arms. Her eagle-like vision sees even the glossy eyes of the crying Zakera.

Approaching the fortress, she sees several others in the courtyard. The pregnant Minoma cries beside a sobbing Samantha on the wooden bench. Granted entry by the few guards remaining, she enters the fortress which is frighteningly silent. She climbs the staircase and through the fortress until she stands before the bedroom door of her leader. Rapping her knuckles softly against the wood, though she knows that Zakera could hear her, she waits patiently. Opening slowly, a sniffing Zakera stands before her with Darius asleep in her arms.

"Hello, Zakera. I have come to stay with you, should you need anything." Zia says softly.

Zakera nods and allows her into her private room. Returning to the balcony, the pair watch the army snaking into the jungle and toward their sworn enemy to do battle. The fortress is deathly silent. Even Rico, Richard, Michael, Amanda, Chris and Daniel are going to be a part of the war; for the first time in many years, the inhabitants of the fortress can be counted on one hand.

"Did you enjoy your time with Katero?" Zakera suddenly asks.

"... I should have bathed before I arrived." Zia remarks.

"That would not have mattered. Trust me." Zakera taps her feline nose with a fingertip.

"We did enjoy our time together." Zia answers.

"Good. Do you have plans?" Zakera presses.

"If he returns, we will pledge ourselves together."

"If?" Zakera turns to her.

"Everyone understands the risks involved. We are at war with a dangerous and numerous enemy. He may not survive, but I hope that he does."

"Why are you here so quickly after leaving? You left as soon as Katero; you did not have time to make the tea." Zakera comments.

"I... Have not been taking it." Zia somewhat shamefully admits, bowing her head.

"What?! Why?!" Zakera exclaims.

Darius stirs in her arms, so she enters the bedroom and sets him down gently in his crib.

"Do you know what will happen if you bear his child and he has died in the battle?" Zakera quietly asks.

"I do, but I also love him and though I know it is taboo and improper, I would rather keep a piece of him should he never return." Zia answers.

Zakera ends her inquiry. She knows in her heart that if she were in Zia's place, she would have quickly done the same with Cy. Giving the tall Zelkona a hug, both women sniffle at the prospect of never seeing their men again.

"I cannot wait for this to be over." Muzel comments to Cy, leading the first group of soldiers.

"Likewise." He murmurs.

"Do you think this will be a difficult fight?"

"Yeah." He grumbles.

"... We are certainly going to put Kincaid in his place."

"Probably." He sighs.

"Please forgive my asking, but are you alright?" She asks.

He glances to the orange Zelkona female with green stripes, their eyes briefly locking.

"I left behind my pledge, my son, my unborn child and my home to deal with this brat who has become insane with power and cannot learn to play nice with other races. I would rather be doing anything else than this right now."

"I understand but I am just making conversation. I do not spend much time with you." Muzel remarks.

"Why do you want to spend time with me?" Cy asks with a raised brow.

"You are my idol; I breath your ideology and the life of the Sa'kesh. There are so many things I can learn from you. How to be a better leader, how to speak to others the way you do, how to stay calm under pressure. As a captain and a loyal warrior for our people, I suppose it would be nice to be friendly with you, like Yasmin or Katero." Muzel explains.

"Damn, I just met my biggest fan." Cy chuckles. "You're a good person and a great warrior, Muzel, but friendship takes time. Survive this, and I'll try to see more of you. I promise."

"Alright." She nods.

"If you want advice, I'm an open book. Being a leader is fairly easy. Just be honest and fair but stern. Punish wrongdoers accordingly but never brutally. Always reward good behavior and loyalty. Treat your soldiers like family and do not misuse them and they will follow you like family in turn."

"Is that not hard to do?" Muzel sounds perplexed.

"Sometimes. It helps to have something to take your mind away from everything." He answers.

"What about fear? You always appear so calm, even under great duress. I am in awe of that ability."

"There's nothing I can say to fix that problem. The truth is, if you spend enough time being afraid and upset, you either collapse under the pressure or you wake up one day and just don't feel it anymore. Thankfully I experienced the latter." Cy grins.

Muzel looks over the human, her lips curling up into a pleased grin. It delights her to finally speak at length to a man she had long considered the ideal, and so far, she is not disappointed. Walking

through the forest and beside his girlfriend, Yasmin, Rico plays with one of several devices that were found in Yulan's pod the night of his escape. Yasmin had been saving them, on the off chance that they could be salvaged in the future. Forgotten inside of her pack when they started packing for the journey, Rico was quick to snatch what appeared to be Yulan's golden and platinum bracer computer. Touching several buttons, the blue screen flashes but nothing happens.

"What are you doing, babe?" Yasmin asks.

"Just seeing if I can make it do something. It doesn't look all that complicated." He replies.

"Just be careful. If you press a button that blows your hands off, I'll fucking kill you." She says rather sweetly.

"Don't worry about me. I'll sew them back on." He smirks.

Suddenly, as his thumb strikes a button, a green, holographic map emerges from the device, startling Rico who drops the bracer. Quickly picking it back up, they halt the march for only a moment as they examine the map. On it are several blue pinpoints, one of which lies almost directly between the Sa'kesh and Kincaid's city; it is not the primitive tribe that they had destroyed months earlier, but an entirely different point roughly a mile or less out of their way.

"We'd better tell Cy about this. Run ahead and tell him, and let us all know what we're doing." Yasmin orders her boyfriend.

"Alright. I'll be right back!" Rico exclaims before darting off.

Catching up to the others, he approaches Cy and Muzel as they converse, interrupting them to reveal the device. Simply because Yulan was interested already peaks Cy's curiosity. Looking over the map, they realize that the location can be easily reached along the

way. Perhaps Yulan, J.T. and Isabella have fled there? Knowing that they will not lose much time, if any, by simply visiting the site, Cy instructs Muzel and her team to diverge at an angle and toward the pinpoint. Rico races back to the second group, informing Yasmin before running down the vast expanse of troops to tell each leader the same.

"Are you certain that this is a good idea?" Muzel asks.

"I don't know. Part of being a leader is making quick decisions and accepting the consequences. If this helps us capture the most dangerous man I have ever met, then it's worth it."

"That is not Roland or Kincaid?" She asks with a raised brow.

"No. J.T. is worse than all of them. You can't even imagine the horrors that he's done; things Yasmin and I did under his command. Some of it is absolutely unspeakable." He answers.

Taking him at his word, Muzel and her group double-time their efforts to blaze a trail that first day. Word of the potential discovery spreads like wildfire and Chris, Daniel and Richard all join Cy and Muzel at the front of the line, made easier as they were not leading any groups but tagging along with Johnny's. After many hours of carving a path throughout the day, evening inevitably approaches. The Sa'kesh hastily cut clearings to camp in during the night, leaving shifts of watchmen who rest during the clearing period. As dawn arrives, they eat simple breakfasts before striking camp and continuing on. This repeats for five days and four nights before they draw near the pinpointed location.

Striking camp on the morning of the sixth day, Cy and Rico play with the device that once belonged to the criminal astronaut. Having learned how to manipulate certain functions, the device appears to be able to track its progress. According to the bracer computer, they are a short walk from whatever the pinpoint is resting over. Excited but apprehensive, Cy and his team press onward. Armed with their

trademark falcata swords and spears, shields and a cache of handguns, the only firearms among them, they make short work of the jungle that stands in their way. Chopping down foliage, a Sa'kesh swings a cykera machete at a harmless blue fern, stopping and staring in awe when the felled brush reveals some intriguing.

Onyx black stones, about the size of an old organ or a loveseat, are stacked and fitted together without mortar. Quickly clearing away the brush and tugging at thick, purple vines, they uncover the structure beneath. Pillars similar to those of Greek and Roman architecture emerge, however, the building is clearly not Greek or Roman. Carving their way around it, they soon discover a long, stone ramp and statues with a strikingly Egyptian appearance. They are Ketlan and Zelkona, sitting before human masters. At the front of the line, Cy, Chris and Daniel, the most experienced in ancient Earth history, are mindboggled by the site.

Cutting away the foliage from the structure, it appears very similar to a cross between the Pantheon and the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut. Entering the vast courtyard of the first level, there are no vines or plantlife growing anywhere; a perfectly flat expanse of black stones await them. The first and second team easily fill the stone yard without any difficulty. Stepping over the threshold of the second and final ramp, another yard with pillars of massive black stones begins to glow a sickly pale green and teal, activated by their presence. Each the size of a school bus resting on it's rear and facing the sky, they line the yard like a well organized graveyard.

At the end of this second courtyard is a massive, rectangular building of black onyx. Eager to explore, Cy continues the journey but stops when he does not hear any footfalls behind him. Turning to the others, they stare in fear at the glowing patterns like circuitboards cut into the stone pillars that line the second courtyard.

"Am I *really* going to do this alone? ... Because I will."

Muzel looks to her team before stepping forward, the green claws of her digitigrade feet clicking on the stone beneath her.

"I will follow you, Cyrus." She grins.

"I just... Needed time to catch my breath. I'm not as spry as I used to be." Chris comments, also stepping forward.

"I *did* come along for a good story." Richard remarks, joining the other two.

Everyone else stays put, keeping their distance out of fear. Daniel watches over the other Sa'kesh, whose eyes dart frightfully from pillar to pillar.

"Alright then. Let's check this place out." Cy smirks, drawing his Bersa pistol.

Walking through the yard, the pillars hum and the oscillate their pale glow, which reflects on the shiny stone blocks like water. After walking through a yard the length of a football field, they find an rectangular archway with a stone door. Approaching the door, Cy steps before the arch, a carved human face centered above it. At his mere presence the carving awakens, the eyes glowing a violet color. Beams of light emerge and strike the human, who stares back at the face above the stone door. The light strikes Muzel, who stands very near to Cy, before turning off as though someone flipped a switch. The door slowly opens, the dust of centuries falling from the railing it rides in as it slides to their left, revealing a dark room on the other side.

Stepping inside without any fear, Chris and Richard are no longer capable of joining them. Petrified, they stare like statues as Cy and Muzel walk inside together. Within moments of entering, an altar of what appears to be black onyx emits a faint, teal glow. Many small pillars of various heights, like the skyline of a city, bear similar patterns to those outside and glow various colors: ruby red, cobalt blue, emerald green, gold, silver, violet, white, lime, orange and teal. Stepping closer to the altar, a white light emerges from the ceiling, striking Cy and Muzel and illuminating the pair as they stand within arms reach of each other.

"Greetings. I am Agnis, the Artificially Generated Network of Intelligent Services." A disembodied, female voice begins.

"Agnis?" Muzel tilts her head.

"Yes."

"How is it that you speak English?" Cy asks.

"I am, in fact, not speaking at all. I am projecting my response directly into your brains through targeted beams. You are hearing me in a manner that your minds can easily decode. As a human, you have full access to my systems, and your Zelkona slave shares the connection because of your bond." Agnis answers.

"Slave?!" Muzel's eyes narrow in anger.

"Wait... What about other Ketlan and Zelkona?" Cy inquires.

"The slave races have no need for my services and are not authorized. I detect that your female Zelkona has a submissive bond with you; your slave will be permitted limited access, as my programming allows. How may I assist you?" Agnis asks.

"I do not like this, Cyrus." Muzel whispers to him.

"So what should we do? Just leave?!" Cy asks in shock.

"Perhaps..."

"Your slave is experiencing dangerously high stress levels. Shall I liquidate her for you?" Agnis asks.

"No!" Cy barks.

"As you wish."

Holstering his pistol, Cy turns to her and rests both hands on her shoulders. In full view of Chris and Richard, who stand frozen outside, he pulls her in and gives the tall raptor a warm embrace.

"I know you are scared, and that's okay. You can leave if you want, but I have to stay and learn about this place."

"No! ... I will stay." Muzel says, her trembling arms holding Cy in kind.

After a moment, they release each other and Cy steps forward. Glancing up at the light coming from the ceiling, he clears his throat.

"Agnis, I would like to know more about the history of this place." Cy asks loudly.

"Please specify."

"The Ketlan, Zelkona, this place, the ziggurats and your network." Cy clarifies.

"Understood. Prepare for neural download." Agnis says.

"Neural what?!"

A blue beam emerges from the ceiling and strikes Cy, dropping him to his knees as he screams in what sounds like incredible pain.

With his hands resting on each temple, he winces and gasps for breath. In an instant, the blue beam disappears as quickly as it has appeared. Muzel races to his side.

"Your master will require rest for no less than thirty minutes." Agnis warns her.

"What did you do?!" Muzel yells.

"I obeyed. He will awaken with the knowledge he desires."

Lifting Cyrus into her arms, the catatonic human stares blankly at the ceiling. She races outside where she quickly and forcefully snaps Chris and Daniel from their trance. Heading back through the field of glowing pillars, down the ramp and into the primary courtyard, Yasmin and Johnny, the leaders of the second and third teams, race toward Cy. Lara, who was with Johnny's team and leading the medical volunteers, checks on Cy. Muzel attempts to explain what happened but few can believe her. It simply sounds too radical and farfetched; even Chris and Daniel are skeptical, and they witnessed it. After a grueling thirty-minute wait, Cy suddenly comes too, just as Agnis and Muzel had said.

Crowding around Cy, Chris, Richard, Daniel, Yasmin and Johnny bombard him with questions, ignoring Lara's pleas to allow him time to rest. Muzel keeps them at bay for a moment before Cy raises a hand, silencing everyone with a single gesture.

"I'll tell you everything..." He says, taking a deep breath.

They stare with wide eyes, awed by the regaling as he confirms Muzel's story to the letter. Without missing a beat, he continues his tale, revealing the knowledge that he had gleaned, downloaded directly into his brain by the incredibly ancient and advanced super

computer. Approximately 124,893 years ago, Monala was a vibrant world populated only by humans. Reaching the peak of their technology, they did not have other nearby worlds to explore. Though they had not ignored space travel altogether, they had not perfected the science to reach the nearest star in a lifetime. Instead, they began focusing their technology on genetics. In a bid to make their lives more entertaining and comfortable, the ancients crafted hybrid creatures by splicing human DNA with those of the native animals of this planet.

The ethakona, moltaka, kodana, genashin, and many others were the first to be fabricated. The Zajak and Kaladez were unsuccessful attempts to build sentient beings, being intellectually inferior and far too difficult to tame without mechanical restraining devices. They were used for the tasks they were best suited; the Zajak worked in caves and mined minerals, while the Kaladez were effectively bipedal horses, using brute force to haul things and operate oversized machinery. The Ketlan were designed with no actual purpose, but made from creatures that were far less dangerous than those used in the creation of the Kaladez and Zajak. They were the first experiment considered truly successful, essentially becoming pets, house slaves and field hands for their human masters.

With their human intelligence, the Ketlan could operate the same equipment with adequate training and often did, working on many construction projects, including Agnis. The Zelkona, however, were the final experiment and purpose built as an army to be used for interstellar travel, when that time finally came. Bred for extreme loyalty, which was granted to those they could respect and otherwise admire, they were gifted with heightened senses useful in combat; powerful eyesight, immense strength, and even a dense hide for protection. However, as a side effect to their heightened senses, they learned even faster than the Ketlan and humans; it frightened many of the citizens, only exacerbated by another problem becoming much more prevalent as time went on.

The Ketlan had existed for only two generations, but had already become a common sight on the planet. Younger and more

open minded humans began interspecies relationships with both new sentient races almost as soon as they became commercially available. Though some Ketlan women bore children from human lovers, and human women became pregnant by Ketlan men, it was not until the Zelkona entered the mix that many of the ancients began to rally against the interspecies couples. Birthed from human DNA and a myriad of mammalian creatures with a reptilian appearance, the genes of male Zelkona were programmed for subservience, while the females were made more vibrant, feminine and dominant. As a result they became physically larger and voluptuous.

Due to no fault of their own but the genetics of their creation, both Ketlan and Zelkona females can detect pheromones from males of every race, though this is subconscious. As human DNA is their primary, humans are inherently more appealing to the other races as sexual partners, though personal preference is still predominant. Discovering the unique biological form of the Zelkona, the raptor-like females soon found themselves greatly enjoying the companionship of their human male masters. Fearing that the new wave of half-breeds would simply become the norm and wipe out their race altogether, the ancients lobbied to ban and liquidate the experiments.

Realizing their potential fate, the Ketlan began to rebel, preemptively striking out against the mixed race couples and their children in a desperate bid for survival. It backfired, however, with the ancients now believing that the Ketlan were as violent and dangerous as the Kaladez and Zajak. A war exploded almost overnight between the humans and Ketlan. Though initially used in their defense, the Zelkona's strength nearly defeated the Ketlan. Fearing their most dangerous creation yet, the Zelkona were simply lumped in with the Ketlan rebels. Betrayed by the fearful humans, the Zelkona changed sides and the tables swiftly turned.

Without another planet to colonize and preserve their race, the humans built two ziggurats and left Agnis plugged into both as a control center. One was constructed with a new and untested device, built in secret. The second ziggurat was constructed thousands of

miles away and used as a distraction, it's device almost an afterthought. With the Ketlan and Zelkona tricked into believing that this second ziggurat was a weapon to fight them, they ignored the first entirely, allowing the ancients to focus on the first device, an interdimensional gateway. After weeks of searching alternate dimensions, one was found that was only just adequate for human habitation.

Fleeing their homeworld, Earth was invaded by the interdimensional aliens. Forced to suffer on a planet where seventy percent of the flora is poisonous and many creatures are predatory and dangerous, it was humanity's only chance for survival. Insects with horrific diseases exist there, and unlike Monala, with a sun perfectly suited for humans, the sunlight of Earth damages human skin after prolonged exposure; it was either endure or face extinction. The first teams were soldiers and survivalists, men and women trained to persevere under the harshest conditions. However, before their knowledge could be sent with them, or one scientist able to step through, the ziggurat was attacked.

Beseiged by Ketlan and Zelkona who used their own weapons and vehicles against them, they captured the scientists and massacred them. Agnis, whose systems monitored the battle, deactivated the device and left it idle before any of the rebels could witness it. The second ziggurat was built as a decoy, but the device contained within was created hastily by hopeful scientists who wished that one day humanity would win the war against their rebellious creations. Left activated, it pulls in humans and any animals or structures unfortunate enough to be caught in the randomly generated storms, bringing them back to humanity's home dimension. The time difference experienced by many is simply a result of a buffer delay from the uncalibrated device.

Those scientists were captured and killed before they could finish their calibrations. With humanity virtually extinct, Agnis watched on with her robotic eyes as the Ketlan and Zelkona celebrated their victory. Instead of continuing to advance, an ideology emerged almost

immediately after their victory; though they were crafted from science, science was now considered an abomination. Stripping away their modern clothing and forsaking their technology, they burned the cities, destroyed the weapons, vehicles and buildings, and fled into the jungle to live as primitives. Using a cache of robots under Agnis' control, the A.I. network carved the pictures as a message to any who might see them before entering hibernation mode, leaving the second ziggurat's device active should humanity prosper of Earth.

The group stand in shock at Cy's tale. Muzel believes him, as she heard Agnis' voice in her mind, but everyone else, even Yasmin and Johnny look skeptical. How can Earth not be humanity's homeworld? Humans are interdimensional aliens?! They look as though their heads are about to explode. Emboldened by a desire to know the truth, Chris, Johnny and Yasmin head for the room, told by Cy exactly what to request. Zelkona and Ketlan warriors follow them, their nerve strengthened by the fact that Cy and Muzel returned unharmed. Sitting in a corner, Muzel sits with him and drapes an arm over Cy, comforting the human who is clearly distraught by the discovery. Katero approaches the pair and kneels before him.

"Is it all true?" He asks.

"It is. I'm sorry..."

"What your ancestors did is not your fault, and neither is what my ancestors did my fault." Katero says, resting a hand on Cy's shoulder.

"Thank you, Katero. You're an excellent friend."

"As are you." Katero nods. "... Forgive my asking, but do you have other knowledge?"

"Such as?"

"You know that Ketlan and Zelkona females are drawn to humans and that humans can breed with out races because our shared heritage." Katero begins.

Muzel appears embarrassed, looking down and away from the men.

"Why do py'sel look as they do?" Katero asks.

"They are blended from two races, but human blood is dominant. The half-breeds have more human in them than Ketlan or Zelkona." Cy answers.

"What if a py'sel has a child with a human? Will they be even more human?" Muzel sheepishly asks.

"No." Cy turns to her. "As a precaution, your races were made with genetic markers... Locks in your blood that prevent degradation. If you had a baby with a human, and they had a baby with another human, it would appear just like your child."

"Did you ancestors know this?!" Katero asks in shock.

"Yes, they did." Cy nods.

"Then why were they so afraid your race would die out?" Muzel sounds perplexed.

"Because of the pheromones. The attraction is strong, and too many were having children with Ketlan and Zelkona; eventually they thought there would only be py'sel left and no humans, Ketlan or Zelkona." Cy explains.

"I see..." Muzel murmurs.

"... Can Ketlan and Zelkona breed?" Katero asks.

"It is... Extremely difficult. Your races do not have compatible blood but with your shared human traits, there is a *small* chance that you and Zia could have a child together after you pledge." Cy answers.

"How small?"

"For every 100,000 attempts to get her pregnant, it *might* happen once." Cy answers.

"It would seem we have much work ahead of us... What would our child be like?"

"It only takes one lucky shot, my friend." Cy chuckles. "Your child would be a mixture of Ketlan and Zelkona. It's never happened in the history of Monala, but I can imagine it would be the strongest, most intelligent and powerful of all of the races."

After a short wait, Chris, Yasmin and Johnny are brought back by the Sa'kesh warriors, left in a similar catatonic state after experiencing the neural download. Recovering roughly thirty minutes later, they confirm Cy's story and word spreads throughout the Sa'kesh. A wave flows through the races, but it isn't as they had feared it would be. Instead of anger, fear and resentment, the Ketlan and Zelkona now look to the humans with a bizarre reverence. Considering them their true ancestors and the creators of all, they look with admiration to the humans among them. Many were once pleased to do battle with Kincaid and his human army, but now their hearts are heavy; they do not wish to destroy members of the race that gave them life, even if they are led by an ignorant and confused tyrant.

Unfortunately, the past changes nothing about their present. Kincaid and his army must be destroyed before a new world can be born; a world where all three races live in peace, intermarry at will and have the freedom to enjoy their lives is within their grasp. Still reeling after the shocking discovery, the Sa'kesh camp within the courtyard of the Agnis complex. They agree to leave before dawn the following day and continue their march. A great battle awaits them, one that has raged on Monala for nearly 125,000 years, and a final conclusion is close at hand...