

XXXII

Ka' Mu-Naka's Story (Day 277 on Tashoo)

A dream. A wonderful, colorful dream. Tyarza is back, the beautiful woman with blue-blond hair and yellow-in-blue eyes. She is smiling and laughing. Her brown lips stretched open revealing pearly white perfectly straight teeth. Her two-piece leather dress, which is held together by two leather strings and accentuates, instead of hiding, all of her womanly charms, blends in nicely with her lion yellow skin. She is also wearing sandals reminiscent of ancient Greek sandals.

I am wearing low cut athletic style shoes, blue jeans and a gray t-shirt with ITN in navy blue on the front. I am also wearing a silly grin of ecstasy as we walk along holding hands. I have never felt this way about a woman before in my entire life. I spent most of my youth flirting with all the girls I could find. After I graduated from the Academy, I was like a butterfly flitting from flower to flower where women were concerned. But, ever since I met Tyarza, I don't even remember any other woman I ever knew. I don't want to remember them. Because of this, I don't want this dream to ever end.

We are walking down a garden path. The trees along the path are large, but not nearly as large as the ones on Tashoo. The name live oak comes to my mind as I look at them while we walk along the path. The foliage is thick and creates a cool shade beneath the trees. As we walk, the feel of her soft hand in mine is exhilarating. She brushes up against my arm. She stops, turns, puts her arms around my neck, pulls me down to her, and kisses me. The kiss, while not passionate, is not a friendly peck either.

As Tyarza kisses me, things change. The color is fading to grayness, then blackness, deep, dark blackness. Seeing a black bug in a coal bin at midnight on a new moon would not be nearly as dark as the blackness I am experiencing during this dream. Now the blackness is punctuated by blindingly white pinpoints of light. The blackness fades to gray and finally back to color.

When the color returns, I seem to be in a disjointed dream. I am not in the dream, yet, I know that somehow it is about me.

A young woman is sitting at her computer terminal at home when she receives an instant message. "Hello sweet lady."

The young woman smiles. It is her friend, Gregory. Even though he knows her real name, he always opens his IMs this way. "Hi, Gregory." She types. "How was your day today?"

"You know how it is with government work. You work on projects you aren't allowed to talk about."

"Same here."

"I saw that there was some excitement there yesterday. What happened? Or is that classified?"

"If you saw the news cast, you know it wasn't classified."

"Did that young man really fly a private aircraft to an altitude of 65 km?"

"Yes, he did. I had him on my radar scope the whole time."

"Don't private aircraft have remote controls on them to prevent this?"

"Yes, but, he disabled it."

There is a short pause, and then, "Boy, he must be a genius."

"I don't know about being a genius, but he is very intelligent and resourceful."

"Is he really 16 years old like it was reported?"

"Yep. I have known him since I arrived at Moody four years ago. He's a real charmer, too."

"Should I be jealous?"

"Nah. He's a charmer, but a bit arrogant and obnoxious at times. Besides, I am six years older than he is."

"Arrogant and obnoxious? What does a 16-year-old have to be arrogant and obnoxious about?"

"He has a lot to be arrogant and obnoxious about. If he says he is going to do something, he does it."

"Really? That doesn't sound like a lot to be arrogant about."

"He has about twenty patents on things he has outright invented and several more on things he has improved upon."

"Such as?"

"The hard drive in your chronputer probably is a 20,000-terabyte hard drive. He developed the method to put that much memory on such a small disk. He also developed the software that runs the 3D keyboard on the chronputer. He also developed the software that allows voice activation of the chronputer."

"Wow!"

"He's a third-degree black belt in five different styles of martial arts. He is also on the Olympic team in archery, shooting, judo, karate, and fencing. He is expected to win medals in all five."

"I was about to say perhaps someone should take him down a notch; but, it looks like that would be one Hell of a takedown attempt."

"Yeah, he would probably do the taking down. Everyone here calls him 'Nine Lives.'"

"Why would they call him such a name?"

"Because he gets out of scrapes that would hurt or even kill most people, yesterday was one example. What wasn't stated in the newscast was the fact that, when his aircraft reached 65 km, his engine flamed out. He flew the aircraft down to an altitude of 35 km, restarted his engine and landed safely. Plus, he loves cats of all types. He has photos, statues and models of every known feline species on Terra as well as all of the house cat breeds. He even has artwork and statues of every known extinct species of feline as well."

"By the way, what does your being six years older than him have to do with anything? My mother is eight years older than my father."

"I happen to prefer my men to be older than me. I prefer the experienced types."

"I see. Then, I'm glad that I'm twenty-five. LOL."

A loud insistent knocking interrupts the conversation. The woman types. "Be right back." She walks to the door, opens it and steps aside just as a man in an Air Force uniform with technical sergeant stripes on the sleeves rushes inside and falls flat on his face.

As I sleep, I hear something, or someone, scratching on the door to my room. I also feel a heavy weight on my chest. Chy is lying on me, protecting me from whatever is causing me to thrash about on my bed. I know that Ara must be hearing my moaning and thrashing. I know she is going to enter my room. I fear what Chy will do. I hear my door open. I also hear Chy start churring. He is warning her to stay out. Ara doesn't hear because his churring is a very low rumbling that is difficult to hear from more than two meters away. Ara enters and Chy's growling becomes more audible. Ara freezes and calls my name. I open my eyes and I see her standing near my door looking uneasily at Chy. I also see him crouching next to me. Ara is

afraid he is about to attack her, and he probably would have had I not called out to him. I also reminded him that this was Ara and it was all right for her to enter our room without permission. As I spoke to him, Chy calmed down and allowed Ara to enter the room.

Ara said, “I heard you moaning and thrashing. Were you having another nightmare?” As she spoke, Chy eased up beside her and nuzzled her arm wanting her forgiveness. Ara gave him the attention he wanted from her as I responded.

“Yes, Ara, I was having another one. I hope one day to find out why I have them and what they mean.”

“When you are ready, the nakyvy is ready. Rora is already at the table.”

“Thank you, Ara. I will be there in a thalloo. Do we have something that I can feed Chy now? I know he must be hungry.”

“Yes, I prepared some fresh food for the nakyvy. You can feed him what was left from last night.”

“Good. Thank you again, Ara. I will feed Chy before I eat.

“Wait a thalloo. Rora is already at the table? How late did I sleep?”

Ara laughed and said, “Actually, you are awake earlier than you normally awaken. Rora just seems to be in a hurry to get up this morning.”

After eating, I decided to go for a walk. Rora and I were going to do some one on one sword training; but, he had some chores he had to perform for Ara; so, I went for my walk by myself. Rora said that, as soon as he finished his chores, he was going to find me and we would start training. I had not gone very far when I heard a familiar voice behind me. I turned and saw the Ka’yna, Lo-Katoo, approaching me and calling my name. I stopped and waited for him.

“Chitekuro, Ka’yna. What can a simple Uany do for you this day?”

“I would speak with you, Mvilu.”

“I would be happy to have you walk with me, Ka’yna. We can talk as we walk. What do you wish to talk about?”

“You have managed to anger my chorothy again.”

“Are you talking about what I did twenty-one days ago at TaJoola’s booth at the market?”

“Yes. When Sheshoo handed him the bag with the daggers in it, my chorothy flew into the worst rage I have ever seen him experience. He recalled the spies and, since he had no reason to have them killed, expelled them from the village. Why did you do that?”

“I wanted your chorothy to know that I will not tolerate being spied upon.”

“I understand your feelings but, I believe he is going to continue sending spies. I know he wants to find something that will allow him to kill you outright.”

“If he does, he does, but, I doubt he will. I follow Mory Law too closely to allow myself to be in that situation.” I chose to ignore the fact that I had Chy in Ara's home and that was a violation of the *Dangerous Animals Law*.

“But, if you anger him enough, he will challenge you to a duel. That will be all he needs to kill you.”

“Perhaps, but at least in a duel, I will have a chance to defend myself. I am more fearful that he will hire an assassin.

“Speaking of following Mory laws, why do you insist on breaking one of them?”

This question caught him totally off guard. “Wh—what do you mean? I follow all the laws implicitly.”

I looked around to be sure nobody was listening. “Really? Then tell me why you have not challenged Rora to a duel.”

“Wh—why would I want to do that?”

“Where is that vaunted Mory honesty? I know you are his chorotha; you know you are his chorotha; Ara knows you are his chorotha. I knew it before I heard you admit it to Ara one night.”

His eyes widened as big as I have ever seen a Mory's eyes widen. He was at a loss as to what to say to me. I knew he was wondering if he should admit to it, or continue denying it for Ara's sake. Finally, the honesty for which the Mory are so well known finally came to the forefront.

“What should I do, Mvilu? I love Ara and she loves Rora and me. Actually, I have loved Rora as a chorotha would love his rothoo from a safe distance. I have protected him as well as I possibly could without admitting as to why I was protecting him. If I admit to the truth, I will have to challenge Rora and one of us would have to die. I could not do that to Ara.”

“You have already done it, Katoo. You admitted it to me but, I want you to do me a favor.”

“What kind of favor?”

“I want you to admit that you are the chorotha of Rora as soon as the Chorotha-Rothoo Law is overturned.”

“That is not likely to ever happen, but, if it is, I will.”

“Good. Here comes Rora, and we have training to do. Please have a good day and take care of yourself, for Ara’s and Rora’s sake. By the way, you really should consider taking my training. It could help you in the future.”

“I will, Mvilu, and I wish you a good day as well. I will consider your offer of sword training. I know I could use it. I have heard you have taught the achohachy of Ka'na Ka' Mu-Nakany things they have never considered before.”

Katoo turned and walked back toward the Suala Ka’ynony as Rora approached. As Rora approached, he gave me a strange look, but said nothing. I guess he was the type that did not delve into what others did or with whom they conversed.

“Mvilu, I am ready to start the day’s training. Are you?”

“Of course, Rora. You have proven to be my best pupil and I am more than a little happy to show you more. So, let us get started.”

“Very good, Rora.” I said, as we sparred. “You are learning well. I would rate you at 90%”

We spoke as we continued to spar. Rora said, “90%? What do you mean?”

“I mean that I believe you could best 90% of the achohachy in Talo-Vy.”

“That is very good.”

“Not good enough. There are over sixty thousand achohachy in Talo-Vy. Being at 90% means that over six thousand achohachy are better than you. I will not be happy until that number is less than six hundred or even sixty. I know that all these achohachy are on your side now, but what about the future? You still have a lot to learn.”

We continued sparring. Rora was showing me moves I had taught him. Fortunately, since I had taught him, I could easily defend against the moves. I said, “You are doing great, Rora but, if you wish to best me, you need to try something I did not teach you. Plus, you are still giving away your moves in plenty of time for me to defend against them.”

Suddenly, Rora pulled a move I was not expecting. Fortunately for me, it was a move I had taught him and I defended against it, barely. I parried his move and made a thrust toward him and he parried my thrust.

“Fantastic, Rora. You may be at 95%, after all.”

Neither of us was getting the upper hand. We had been sparring this round for about twenty-five athaloo. Suddenly, I saw Rora look behind me with shock. Knowing I had taught him that trick, I decided to show him another trick. I made a quick lunge and, when he went to parry the thrust, I reversed my move, caught his dauanka with the flat of mine and, since he wasn't expecting the move, managed to wrest it out of his hands and send it flying. Then, I turned quickly and leveled the tip of my sword on the nose of a chohachy I had never seen before. The chohachy was so shocked he nearly tripped as he stepped back to avoid the strike he expected, but never came. Even though he stumbled, he never fell. He was able to reach a hand down and steady himself.

I had stuck the tip of my dauanka into the ground and was leaning on it when he regained his balance. I said, “Chitekuro, stranger. My apologies, I did not mean to frighten you.”

“Chitekuro.” He answered, then asked, “How—how did you know I was behind you?”

Indicating Rora with a nod of my head, I answered, “I saw Rora look at you as you walked up behind me. Who are you?”

“I am called Jy-Choona. You are Mvilu Uatusun?”

“I am. What can I do for you, TeChoona?”

Rora said, “Excuse me, Mvilu. I do not wish to interfere with your conversation,” pointing toward his house, he continued, “so I will walk over there and continue practicing.”

“All right, Rora.” I replied.

After Rora walked away, Jy-Choona continued, “I have come from the village called Ano-Cho. It is about fifty kilometers southwest of Talo-Vy. My Ka'yno, Ma-Tooza, has heard that you are training the achohachy of Talo-Vy to be better swordsmen. Ours is a small village and at the mercy of numerous other villages nearby, both Mory and Uany. Ma-Tooza hopes that you will be willing to train me in your sword fighting methods. I will then train achohachy of Ano-Cho so we can better defend ourselves against the villages that attack us regularly.”

As Choona told his story, Ka' Naka walked up behind him. As he walked up, we exchanged a nonverbal greeting and he listened as Choona spoke. Since the three of us were in an almost straight line, and Naka was behind Choona, I was able to surreptitiously watch, Naka's reaction to what was being said.

After finishing what he had to say, Choona stood there expectantly. Naka and I studied him for a short while before I spoke, "Fifty kilometers is a long distance to travel. It is only half past the second hi'nu of the day. Knowing how the Mory feel about traveling at night because of the dangerous night animals, when did you arrive?" I asked this question trying to ascertain the honesty of his answer.

"I arrived late yesterday afternoon, around half past the ninth hi'nu."

"Where did you stay last night?" Naka asked.

Choona jumped as Naka spoke, turned and, turning his face to each of us in turn, said, "As I approached, I was surprised by the small katoorovodo surrounding the village. I had not been told Talo-Vy was on an island. I approached one of the crossings and spoke to the two guards there. They explained that the crossings are called akatooeka. They also asked me my business in Talo-Vy. I explained to them my purpose here and they granted me entrance.

"After entering the village proper, I met a nohachy. I told her I had just arrived from Ano-Cho and was very tired. I asked her if she knew of a public house where I could stay until this morning. She told me that all were full, but she would allow me to stay with her for a small fee of one Shurtan a day. She asked if I wanted to stay permanently in Talo-Vy. I told her the story I just relayed to you and she said she knew where I could find you and would point me in the correct direction."

I said, "I see. Do you recall the name of this nohachy?"

"I believe her name was . . . My-Tara."

When he said the name, Naka turned toward me and caught my eye. I knew he wanted to talk to me alone, even Rora, who had walked up when Naka arrived, seemed intrigued by the name. Rora said, "Why does that name sound familiar to me?"

Ignoring Rora's question, I said, "Does the Ka'yno of Talo-Vy know you are here?"

"I have not informed him. Why do you ask?"

"I do not train achohachy without written permission from either their Ka' or the Ka'yno of Talo-Vy. Since you are not from Talo-Vy, if you get the Ka'yno to give his permission, I would be happy to give you the training you seek. Return tomorrow by the third hi'nu if you can obtain the permission of the Ka'yno." I had told a little white lie here, but I knew Naka wanted to speak to me alone and this was the best way to get Choona to leave without raising his suspicions and the excuse not only sounded plausible; but, it would be believed if he really did go to the Ka'yno. The Ka'yno could not doubt the story since every chohachy I had trained so far had received permission from their respective Aka'.

"Thank you, Mvilu Uatusun. I will be back tomorrow at the appointed time with the permission you require."

Naka stepped to my side and watched him leave. After he got out of earshot, which, for a Mory, is close to 50 meters, Naka said, "It is interesting that TeChoona found lodging with My-Tara."

"Why do you say that?"

"My-Tara had been dead for over twenty-five years."

"Really? It would seem that there is more to this TeChoona than meets the eye."

"Yes, there is." Turning to Rora, he said, "Rora, I would speak to Mvilu alone, please." Rora looked shocked. He had never been told something was so secret that he was not allowed to hear it.

He replied, "What should I do?"

I said, "Perhaps you could visit TaJoola. I understand she is still not feeling well. You may be able to help her with something that she needs done. Plus, I am certain that Kyta will welcome your presence, I mean assistance." I smiled at him.

Rora just glared at me, but he turned and walked toward TaJoola's home. After he left, Naka led me to one of the many benches that I had built and installed around the training area. After we sat down, he thought for a short while then asked, "Does the name My-Tara mean anything to you, Mvilu?"

"I do not recollect ever hearing it before, my Ka', although it sounds familiar to Rora. Should it mean something to me?"

"My-Tara was the norotha of My-Ara and norothazyo (1) to My-Rora."

I was silent for several athata, thinking. Finally, I asked, "What happened to her?"

"I need to tell you the whole story. It will help you to understand certain things better.

"My-Tara and Zo-Joola were born within days of each other, perhaps four days. In fact, they lived next door to each other growing up and were the best of friends. Shortly after My-Tara and Zo-Joola reached sexual maturity, a young chohachy named Ne-Raro became Ka'yno. He was, young, perhaps sixteen years of age. He had been living in Talo-Vy for about two years and he chafed at the thought of the way the Ka'yno ruled Talo-Vy. The Ka'yno, Oo'-Koo'ha, was a tyrant, more of a tyrant than Lo-Nachoo. He ruled with an iron fist and would have achohachy executed for some perceived affront, even if the chohachy was completely innocent. Some said that he was borderline insane. Ne-Raro challenged Oo'-Koo'ha to be Ka'yno. To make a long story short, Ne-Raro defeated and banished Oo'-Koo'ha. When a former Ka'yno is banished, if he returns, he is immediately put to death. That is why his name is never mentioned, even though his portrait still hangs in the Suala Ka'ynony portrait hall. That is both tradition and law

because, even though he was a terrible Ka'yno, he was a Ka'yno. However, it is not required that a defeated Ka'yno be banished. In fact, banishment is reserved for the worst kind of former Ka'yno.

“Ne-Raro was open minded socially. He believed that the archaic laws needed to be repealed but, because he was new, he did not think he had enough support to change them.

“Not long after Ne-Raro became Ka'yno, I arrived in Talo-Vy. I had just recently been required to leave my home village due to my maturity; I had just turned thirteen, myself. As is required of all new achohachy arriving in a Mory village, I went straight to the Suala Ka'ynony to present myself to the Ka'yno. This requirement is one of the reasons I am curious about this Jy-Choona, since he said that he had not spoken with the Ka'yno as yet. Anyway, when we met, I gave the Ka'yno my criteria as to why he should allow me to stay. After listening to me, Ne-Raro said that I would be allowed to stay in Talo-Vy and suggested that I find a Ka'na in which to live and present myself to the Ka' and offer my services as a chohachy for him. I did so and was accepted. I found a place to live and settled in.

“My-Tara was a very attractive and desirable nojasa, as was Zo-Joola. They lived in the same Ka'na I had settled in.

“Not long after I arrived, I was walking through the Ka'na to learn more about it. I saw Tara and Joola standing together outside of their respective homes talking to each other. I glanced at them and saw them looking at me. As I walked by, I noticed Joola whispering to Tara and smiling a bit seductively. I will admit that both Tara and Joola caught my eye; however, Tara had also caught the eye of Ne-Raro but, I did not know it at the time. When I found this out, I became immensely worried. However, Raro surprised me by befriending me and promoting me to Ka', after my Ka' was killed in a battle several months later, and making me Keeper of the Law over several other more experienced achohachy.

“I do not want to sound conceited, but Raro and I were very handsome and had caught the eyes of several females ourselves. I noticed that Raro spent a lot of time in Tara's home. In fact, several mornings I was passing her home and saw Raro leaving. He would see me and place a hand to his mouth. (2) I never would have said anything, even without his admonition. That was between the two of them. Besides, I was enjoying the company of Joola.

“A couple of months later, I was, once again, visiting Joola. We heard someone scratching on the door. When Joola opened the door, Tara burst in without the customary invitation. She said, 'Please forgive my intrusion, Joola! I am so happy! I just verified that I am pregnant!' They were both so happy it even affected me. About two days later, Joola told me she was pregnant as well. Seven months later, both of them gave birth. Tara had only one rothoo, Ara, and Joola had four, one chorochoo, Kana, and three anorochoo, Jalo, Lajoo, and Looja.

“About a week later she gave birth, Tara invited Joola, Raro and me over to meet her norochoo. When Raro entered, Tara handed him Ara. While Raro held Ara, I could see mixed emotions in his eyes, happiness by holding his norochoo and sadness from knowing he could not

be a part of her life. I think that is when Raro decided to repeal the Mating Law and the Chorotha-Rothoo Law.

“When word about the Ka’ynony decision was released, a lot of the residents of Talo-Vy rejoiced. I would say four out of five of the residents of Talo-Vy hated those laws; perhaps I should say hate those laws. However, Lo-Nachoo, who was part of my Ka’na, did not. He brooded about this decision. I saw him discussing, then arguing, with his achorothy. Finally, the day before the decision was to be officially released, Nachoo, backed by his achorothy, Tamoo more than Katoo, challenged Raro for the right to be Ka’yno.

“Because he was challenged, Raro had to fight. He told me just before the fight that he did not trust Nachoo to be honorable in the fight. I tried to assure him that, as a Mory, Nachoo had to be honorable.

“Raro was about three years older than Nachoo, and a great chohachy. Unfortunately, Nachoo was, and is, very unscrupulous. As Keeper of the Law, I had to be a witness to the challenge fight. Raro was holding his own against Nachoo and it looked as if he was going to win. Suddenly, a rock came from out of nowhere and struck Raro on his sword arm causing him to drop his sword. When this happened, Nachoo rushed Raro and knocked him down.

“I must let you know something of Mory Law here, Mvilu. If a combatant in a Ka’yno challenge fight is bested, he can concede and the battle is over. Raro, being unarmed and, as a result, bested, threw his arms over his head and conceded. Then, Nachoo did one of the most dishonorable, despicable things he could do. He thrust his sword through the heart of an unarmed, defeated opponent.”

I said, “That is one of the most disagreeable things I could ever imagine anyone doing to an opponent. What did Lo-Katoo do?”

“Katoo looked on in horror. He even ran up and yelled, ‘What have you done? That is the worst thing a Mory chohachy can do.’ However, Tamoo came out of the crowd from the area the rock was thrown and congratulated Nachoo on his victory.”

“But, what happened to TaTara?”

“As time went by, Nachoo started visiting her regularly, but he never stayed long. Occasionally, I would walk by her home and would hear her talking loudly. One day in particular, I heard this conversation, ‘My-Tara, I do not understand why you continually repulse my advances. I am Ka’yno of Talo-Vy. I could make your life so much better.’

“‘I know this, Great One. I just have no desire to mate with you, or any other chohachy at this time.’

“‘Perhaps that is true now, but at one time you were willing to mate.’

“‘Yes, I was. There is only one that I have ever mated with and, at this time, is the only one I ever desire to mate with.’

“‘You can mate with as many achohachy as you so desire. There are no achohachy stronger than I am. So, why not me?’

“‘I told you, I do not desire you, Great One. It is true that I could mate with as many achohachy as I desire. But, I desired only one.’

“‘What about Ara’s chorotha? Would you mate with him again?’ That statement showed me that Nachoo was not the most perceptive chohachy I had ever met.

“‘My-Tara answered him saying, ‘That, Great One, is none of your business. It is mine and mine alone.’

“‘So! You do know who Ara’s chorotha is! Does Ara know?’

“‘Once again, Great One, that is none of your business.’

“‘I could tell from the sound of his voice the Ka’yno was slowly getting angrier and angrier. He said, ‘You know I could make you Noka’yno of Talo-Vy. Would that not be sufficient reason to reconsider my proposal?’

“‘Noka’yno? Great One, is that not against Mory Law? The very law that you challenged Ne-Raro about?’

“‘I could have the law changed, Tara. You know that I could. No one would challenge my decision, except perhaps Ka' Mu-Naka and he would accept my decision even if he disagreed with it.’

“‘I have no doubt you could change the law, Great One, but, it would not change my mind about mating with you. Besides, was that not the reason you murdered Ne-Raro?’

“‘Lo-Nachoo refused to react to what TaTara said. He continued with, ‘Why not me, Tara? Am I that repulsive to you? I am a full head taller than any other chohachy in Talo-Vy. I would be able to give you big, strong arothoo. Who else would be a better mate for you than I? You know that I could force you to mate with me.’

“‘Yes, you could, Great One. But, I could also force you to do battle with all the achohachy of the village if you did and you know that. You may be a lot of things, Great One, but I doubt a fool is one of them. And as for the type of arothoo you could give me, that is my fear. I would not want to have the arothoo that you could give me.’

“‘You could not rebuff me if you were unconscious.’

“My-Tara yelled, angrily, ‘GET OUT OF MY HOUSE! HOW DARE YOU THREATEN ME THAT WAY! DO YOU THINK YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH SUCH AS THAT?!’

“This seemed to trigger the anger that was building in the Ka’yno because he fairly shouted, ‘I will have you, Tara! There is nothing you can do to prevent it! If you care about your norothoo you would be wise to reconsider. But, sooner or later, I will mate with you. You can count on it!’

“Once again, Tara responded angrily, ‘YOU WOULD THREATEN MY NOROTHOO AS WELL? GET OUT! IF YOU LEAVE NOW, I WILL FORGET THIS CONVERSATION EVER OCCURED! IF YOU DO NOT, I WILL TELL THE KA’ MU-NAKA AND YOU WILL HAVE TO ANSWER TO THE ISHOO’SE AKA’NY!’

“I heard her door open, turned and saw Nachoo exiting her house. His back was to me so I ducked aside until he passed. I returned to Tara’s home and scratched on her door. When she opened the door, I could see she had been crying. She invited me in and I saw Ara standing in the doorway of her room.

“Ara was only about three years old and had only recently started walking on two legs.” Naka stopped for a moment and smiled at the memory. “Ara was such a cute rothoo. But, I saw fear in her eyes. She must have heard Nachoo’s threat.

“I walked over to the table and sat down next to Tara. I sensed how distraught she was and put my arm around her shoulders. When I did this, she buried her face in my shoulder and her whole body shook from her sobs. Ara walked to her mother, placed a little hand on Tara’s knee and looked at her norotha sadly, but did not say anything.

“I suggested that Tara and Ara spend a few days visiting Joola. I thought she would have a little protection from Nachoo’s unwanted advances. Tara agreed; she and Ara packed a few clothes and I took them to Joola’s home. I explained the situation and Joola welcomed them.

“Nachoo did not return while Tara was at Joola’s home. But, the morning after they returned home, Ara was scratching on Joola’s door, crying. When Joola saw Ara, she asked her what was wrong.

“Ara said, ‘TaJoola, something is wrong with Norotha. Her eyes are open but she will not get up.’

“Joola bundled up her arothoo and Ara, took them to the home of another neighbor and came to the Suala Ka’ny. She got a guard to awaken me and told me what Ara had said. I sent one of my guards to summon the Ka’yno and accompanied Joola to Tara’s home. I went into the bedroom and found Tara just as Ara had described her.

“I performed a cursory examination and noticed Tara’s dress was up around her waist, she had been sexually violated, the fur around her neck had been ruffled and her neck had been broken.

“Just as I finished examining her, Nachoo arrived. He glanced at her and said, ‘It looks like she died of natural causes. I do not understand why you awoke me from a sound sleep for this. Naka, take care of this. I am going back to sleep.’”

I know I looked my shock. I said, “What a cold-hearted thing to say. He really is a santoonthy (3).”

“What happened to Ara? I mean, who took care of her?”

“Joola took her in and raised her like she was one of her own arothoo. That is why Ara treats Joola like her own norotha.”

“Was Ara traumatized by the death of her norotha?”

“Yes, she was. In fact, she would regularly cry for her norotha, wanting to go see her. It took about a year, but she finally accepted the fact that she would never see Tara again.”

“Do you believe that Nachoo killed TaTara?”

“After overhearing the argument, I had heard several days before her death and witnessing the Ka’yno’s callous attitude when he saw her dead body, I have no doubt. Unfortunately, the only witness was lying dead on her bed.”

“Maybe that is why Ara looked relieved when I left my room the day I met you.”

“What do you mean?”

“About two ahi’nu before you arrived that day to test me, the Ka’yno had visited. TaAra escorted me to my room and told me she did not trust the Ka’yno. She asked me to listen closely and return to the dining area if I felt he might possibly cause trouble. She also mentioned that she seemed to remember something from her rothoochy (4) about the Ka’yno. She implied that her memory was disturbing to her. So, I listened from my door. The conversation you heard just days before TaTara was murdered was almost word for word the conversation I heard between the Ka’yno and TaAra that day.”

“That is interesting. I did not know that the Ka’yno had wanted TaAra so badly that he would offer to make her his Noka’yno just as he did her mother.”

We sat there for a while thinking about our revelations to each other. We were also wondering if Nachoo’s desire for Ara had anything to do with the fact that her mother had also refused his advances. It could also just be a coincidence but, personally, I don’t believe in coincidences; so, there must be a connection.

1-grandmother

2-This is the Mory equivalent of a human placing a finger over his mouth to request that you not say anything about what you've seen.

3-Santoonthy is a general descriptive that corresponds to SOB, bastard, and any other negative descriptive that we on Terra could possibly use.

4-childhood/cubhood