

The characters Jeffrey Andrews, Na'Krista Nahala Keth'lan, Kamram Keth'lan, Na'Kesta Keth'lan, Tegram Keth'lan, Traci McDonald, Bosteg Haas'lan, Kestam Ramm'lan, Treman Baze'lan, Merret Treet'lan, Tascal Hone'lan, Hallett Trasc'lan, Hammet & Na'Kayla Nahala (nee Keth) Craine'lan, Gillat Deen'lan, Marlett Blane'lan, Sa'Densa Nasia Andrews'lan (nee Deen'lan), Argess & Arrissa Wrraal, Rellen Sandren'lan, Sa'Jenna Nasia Deen'lan along with the characters Torvald and Victoria Svensen are the properties of Kellan Meig'h and may not be used without express written permission.

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“Scribe”

by Kellan Meig'h

Chapter Nineteen

“Looking Forward To A Homecoming”

Sa'Jenna Nasia Deen'lan looked up from her communications terminal and stared out the window of her home again, her fingers still resting lightly on the keyboard. It was an old terminal, not voice activated, that sat in her kitchen communications nook. She was old fashioned in that way, shunning the latest cutting edge technological developments for what was tried and true.

As she gazed out the portal to her garden, the ebony femme gave thought to what she would say once the call was placed. By *The Old Customs*, this offer must be made and every effort would be expended to convey her feelings in the matter. Steeling her nerves, she logged into the network and indicated whom she wanted to speak with. Sitting down on the stool she had pulled up to her work space, she waited for the call to be completed. Sa'Jenna knew her husband Harral would be mad at her for doing this, but to *The Eternal Fires* with him; she was the one that would put this very sad and disagreeable situation to bed.

The screen in front of her began to coalesce into the image of a male Earther, salt and pepper hair with expressive blue eyes. He had a rugged look about him but something made her think he would listen to logic and to compassion. He frowned as he poked at something off-screen, then he looked up at the camera on the top edge of the comm unit and spoke;

“This is Jeffrey Andrews.” he said with a hint of confusion in his voice. “Uh, I hope I'm doing this right. I can see your face on the display. Can you see me?” he asked.

The dark femme nodded in the affirmative. “Yes, I can see you. I am Sa'Jenna Nasia Deen'lan, Sa'Densa's mother. Because of the distance, there is a slight lag in the video and audio. Please be patient during our communication.” she replied.

“I'm pleased to meet you, Sa'Jenna.” Jeff offered up.

“As I am pleased to meet the patriarch of the House that my daughter now belongs to.” she conveyed. “I am contacting you because the old customs say I must. I know what my *One Love* instructed our daughter to do and I will tell you this; I almost threw him out of the house and out of my life for that. He had no business doing such a terrible thing like that.”

“I see . . .” the Earth man mused. “I was under the impression that both of you were in on that little operation.”

Jeff observed her chuff in annoyance. "Harral might have made it sound that way to Sa'Densa but trust me; I did not have a thing to do with the instructions that were given. We have known the Keth'lan family all of our lives and I have always been friends with Na'Kesta. I would never suggest my daughter should ruin Na'Krista's joining to another. You must mean something to Na'Krista, for her to fight for your joining."

"We are deeply in love." Jeff pointed out. "I am curious, though. You did not contact me just to chat about the weather."

Sa'Jenna shrugged her left shoulder. "As I have said, this has to do with customs. Because our daughter is now a part of your House, that brings with it ties to House Deen'lan." When Jeff didn't say anything but just looked at the monitor in a confused manner, Sa'Jenna continued. "Our House would be obligated to assist your House, should something arise. It would not matter the day or time, something big or small, we would come to your aid."

"And that would be reciprocal, right?" Jeff questioned.

After a moment's delay, Sa'Jenna nodded and shrugged her left shoulder again, just like Jeff had noticed Krista doing. "We know you are a small House, not yet at what one would call in the old days, a fully capable House. If we asked for aid, it would be at a level that you could manage. We would never overtax your assets or abilities to assist us."

"That's good to know." Jeff admitted. "But what of your daughter? Is there bad blood between you because of the orders given by your *One Love*?"

"I suspect she is not happy with us." the black female offered up. Jeff could see the hurt in her copper-colored eyes. "However, it is too late to ask her to come home. She is now part of your House and I hope she uses her skills in crop analysis to further your production. I also hope she joins with a male that belongs to a strong House, bringing further strong ties for House Andrews'lan."

Jeff nodded, glad to hear her mother still loves Sa'Densa. "Just like Na'Krista, I only want what is best for your daughter. I will help her in whatever she wishes to do with her life."

After a pregnant pause, the ebony female spoke again, carefully. "When you arrive on Elazia, I wish to have you, Na'Krista and Sa'Densa visit our home and have a meal with us. I wish to get to know you and there are some things that you need to know about. Important things. Things that will no doubt influence how you perceive a relationship between our two Houses."

"I would be delighted to dine with you." Jeff offered up. Before Sa'Jenna could speak again, he continued. "Would you like to talk to your daughter? She is in the next room so I could go get her real quick."

"I would like that." she replied, levelly, but Jeff could see the sparkle in her eyes when he suggested she could speak with her child.

"I will be right back."

Jeff walked to the portal between the two quarters and knocked on the door frame to get the azure hued femme's attention. Once she had looked up from her padd, he spoke up;

"I have been speaking with your mother. She is still connected to my terminal and I'm sure she would like to explain a few things to you. Important things."

"My mother?" Sa'Densa questioned, "She wishes to speak with me?"

"She does." Jeff smiled when he had to step out of the way quickly to keep from getting run over by the excited Elazi femme. Sa'Densa made a bee-line to the communications device, not bothering to stop and straighten her clothing as she went.

"Mother? You wish to talk to me?" Sa'Densa asked once she had sat down at the terminal, hoping this wasn't some trick to hurt her again. Once was enough, as far as she was concerned.

"Sa'Densa, my daughter. I love you and I miss you." Sa'Jenna offered up. "I am sorry for what your father has done. There is something going on between him and some other House, something that I am not privy to. I am sure he was directed by others to order your challenge to Na'Krista."

The blue femme looked surprised by that information. "You had nothing to do with that challenge? That all came from Father?"

Sa'Jenna chuffed again. "Your father has already heard what I have thought about this very disagreeable situation. I will support your becoming part of House Andrews'lan, even if he will not. It may be for the good, Densa. It will put you out of your father's sphere of influence."

"But I will still have ties to House Deen'lan, unless I officially renounce those ties."

"Would you, Densa? Would you renounce your ties to your birth House?" Sa'Jenna wanted to know.

"No, I would not." she replied with a crooked smile. "I was born into House Deen'lan and I have many good memories of our time together, doing things with you. I would not renounce my ties because of my love for you, my mother."

Jenna Deen'lan smiled widely. "I am glad you are not mad at me. I do not, however, feel sorrow for your father. He will have to mend things with you by himself."

"I agree. Father will have to ask my forgiveness in this matter."

While Sa'Densa and her mother conversed, Jeff excused himself and found Na'Krista sitting on the edge of the bed, padd in one hand, quietly sobbing. Wanting to know what had upset her, he sat by her and put his arm around her. She let him pull her into his side, comforting her.

"What's wrong, Krista?" he asked.

"My sister was recovered." she replied, right before she began sobbing again, openly this time.

"I'm glad she was recovered." Jeff offered up. "Uh, is she okay?" he had to know.

"She was badly injured by a rogue doctor, doing some exploratory surgery on her while she was awake." she explained between sobs.

"Oh no, Hon. Will she be all right?" the Earther asked.

"She will recover, but she is sure she will not be able to re-enlist. Her injuries were quite severe."

"I'm sorry to hear that." Jeff offered up. He knew how some very dedicated soldiers were affected when they were told they could not continue doing what they knew best; keeping world peace, weapon in hand. When these dedicated individuals were told they were through, they seemed to die inside from that news. It was common for some to turn to alcohol or drugs. Many were homeless, living on handouts. He couldn't imagine Na'Kayla living that way.

"I would not worry much for my sister," Na'Krista put forth after she wiped her eyes with a tissue, "She has a home that I am sure she owns outright and she will draw her pension from being injured in the course of duty. She indicated in her message that our father will help her with her crops until she can manage on her own."

"So, Na'Kayla and Hammet have some crops? I didn't know that." Jeff offered.

"They have land right across the roadway from ours. It's close enough that I can walk to her house in just a few Earth minutes. Her lands still need further planting to maximize the production, though. Maybe we can help her with that." Krista was still upset that her sister had been injured, but she was also glad that she would be home not long after they would arrive on Elazia.

Jeff had some further questions in mind; "Do we need to do further planting on our land? And if so, what do we need to plant?"

"We should plant some Kebra fruit trees to replace the ones that don't produce enough." she offered up. "We can have the old ones extracted from the ground and planted in boxes. They will still have flowers in the spring and give shade during the summer. We can get a few hundred Crown for each one."

"That's good." Jeff admitted. "You know, I need to become better acquainted with what will be my second home world. Is there something I can read somewhere to become better informed, like the area around our home?"

Na'Krista used an application on her padd to bring up a world view of Elazia, then she zoomed down to show him the city of Kas'Madelle. She pointed out the City Center, an area with a large plaza, fountains, trees and an outdoor performing arts theater. To the North, there was a large park with a lake and what would pass as the suburbs as they scrolled the map further. Just out of the housing area was the agricultural area and a quick scroll and zoom, he was rewarded by an overhead view of what would be his second home.

The Elazi femme took great joy in indicating to her future husband what each area contained. The home seemed to have a motor court out front and an entry courtyard inside what was described as a gated fence of masonry and metal. The complex also had an inner courtyard inside the home with trees and a large garage to the side for land vehicles and skimmers.

“Jeffrey, this is Na'Kayla's land, right here,” she offered up, drawing a virtual line around that property on the screen. “This is ours and this large section over here, some thirty-seven hundred units, belongs to my parents. This parcel, North of ours, belongs to House Trent'lan. My father's mother, Grandmother Sa'Kayla Keth'lan was from House Trent'lan.”

Jeff nodded. “Sa'Kayla was your relative that was murdered, right?”

“Yes, she was murdered in the main living area of the home.” Krista replied. “The Zan'raa wood flooring had to be replaced and several walls had to be repaired. Some fracking *B'Taagh* murdered her in cold blood with a projectile weapon at a very close range. Our family members are sure she knew her murderer. There was no signs of forced entry or a struggle.”

That saddened Jeff. “You know, on Earth we say, “No good deed goes unpunished.”

“And that means?” she questioned.

“Whoever murdered your grandmother will be found out. There is no such thing as a perfect crime.” Jeff allowed.

“We will see.” Na'Krista said quietly. “I do appreciate the fact that Grandmother Sa'Kayla thought enough of me that she would leave her home to me but I do not like the manner in which the conveyance occurred.”

Jeffrey understood her position but he also understood Sa'Kayla's position; she was only protecting House Keth'lan's claim to the land. By 'forcing' Krista to marry and run the farm, she was keeping her wishes alive, the wish for the land to be part of House Keth'lan, her House through marriage.

Jeff just hoped he could fit in and help run the enterprise, in a manner that would make Sa'Kayla happy, if she were still alive.

Al'Dassan'an Trent'lan stopped at the edge of his Southernmost *Kebra* fruit grove and checked the flow meter on the drip irrigation system. Noting the flow rate, he logged that in on a padd that he removed from a pouch on his belt. He ran a few scripts to correlate the water rate from the last few years, weighted by the average temperature of the growing months. The results seemed to indicate less water was being used this year, much to his surprise. Irrigation was costly so a lower water consumption rate meant more profit for him.

Some would say that he was being too hands-on with his farm but Dassan knew better. One certainly had to keep a very close eye on the condition of the soil, the amount of water being applied and most importantly, the types of fertilizer being used. Walking amongst the trees, he

found an 'Early Ripe' *Keбра*. It was not at its peak, but the sample would tell of future harvest quality.

Dassan picked the fruit and cut it open around the equator, testing the firmness of the fruit by twisting the two halves to open it. He checked the single stone inside, noting it was of a dark brown shade that meant the trees had received enough water this season. The aroma had not developed that cinnamon tang to it yet but the deep yellow color looked good. The fruit would be a medium orange shade when fully ripe, later on this season. Tasting the flesh, he noted it was very mild with that slight bitterness of early fruit.

Looking across the roadway, the buff-hued Elazi shook his head in disgust. The property in question was Na'Krista's orchards, ones that should have been his by birthright. He was the elder Trent'lan sibling, the one that should have had first choice of lands that were being parceled off, not Sa'Kayla. She was female, after all. She should have had no right to choose, like it was in the old days before *The Awakening*.

Dassan suspected his sister knew what their father knew about those lands and that's why she built her house where she did. Dassan thought her a fool for not exploiting what was there for the taking, making herself rich beyond anyone's imagination. He had a suspicion that she knew why the *Keбра* fruit grew so large and delicious on trees that were in a diagonal line across her property, a line that ran right through her home. Well, their parents were gone now, long deceased and so was Sa'Kayla. As soon as this distasteful issue involving Na'Krista was settled, Dassan would dance a Bil jig on his father's grave, right before he urinated on the headstone.

Dassan knew Na'Krista was attached to that home so a property swap, even if it was for a larger parcel, wouldn't work. The Trent'lan family was directly related to Kamram Keth'lan's family but there were times that blood was not thicker than water. There were riches involved, and Dassan wanted those riches for himself. Although he had only a handful of years left to live, he would live them in the lap of luxury. No more getting his hands dirty in the soil. He would live like an *Old World Land Baron*.

Once he arrived back at his office that was part of the compound his home was situated in, he returned a call that came in while he was out in the fields.

"Sallan Fenn'lan," the light gray male on the other end answered after the screen came to life.

"This is Dassan, my friend. I'm returning your call."

"Oh, yes, Dassan. I have been doing that research you requested." The smartly dressed male on the other end straightened his tunic, then continued. "I have the pertinent information you asked for. I will send it over by courier this afternoon."

"Thank you, Sallan. You always seem to be able to take care of any legal issues I need attended to."

"Dassan, there is something I'm curious about. Why did I need to dig up this information for you? Your children are all joined with families of their own."

“You will see, Sallan. This will be my crowning achievement, making House Keth'lan look like fools.”

“Dassan, you know you're treading deep waters if you cross House Keth'lan. Kamram and his brother Tegram will have your behind roasted for mid-meal.” the lawyer warned.

“I think not, SaI. I have been doing my due investigation. House Keth'lan will have to abide by this shocking revelation that I'm preparing to unveil on the Senate floor.”

“Dass, if you fail . . .” Sallan's diatribe was interrupted.

“I will not fail, my friend. You will see.”

“Dass, hear me out. If you fail, the Senate will have you barred from ever gracing the Senate floor again! Think about it, please?”

“I will give it thought, but I think I am right. This needs to be revealed.”

“I will miss you Dassan.”

“I'm going nowhere, Sallan.”

The tan colored male ended the videoconference and leaned back in his chair. Looking at the map that graced the wall opposite his desk, he smiled at the newly reorganized boundary lines. It looked good with those former Trent'lan lands reincorporated. It would not be long, now.

Several days later, Jeff found himself sitting in the left seat of *The Za'rrah*, House Keth'lan's private shuttle. He was being pressed into service as Na'Krista's Co-pilot for this trans-atmospheric foray to the planet below. *The Flagship Korrallid* was currently in orbit around the planet Saa'naa and Na'Krista had been tasked by her father to pick up an Ambassador that would continue on with them to Elazia.

“Jeff, just follow the checklist. You will do just fine.” Krista reminded him. “When you're asked for our call sign, I have put that information on a self-adhering note by your comm console.”

“Okay, Krista. I'll try not to panic.” the Earther shot back.

“Jeffrey, please lean to the left. I need to see your auxiliary console.” Sa'Densa asked from her supplemental navigational position behind him. It sounded odd because the helmet speakers made it sound as if she were right in front of him.

“How is that?” he asked, once he was as far to the left as possible.

“That is acceptable. Please put your comm to frequency zed-sixteen. That is the common channel to use while near a flagship.” the blue femme brought up.

“Channel zed-sixteen selected.” he replied. Jeff was immediately 'introduced' to the salty mouth of the ground control for Landing Bay Starboard Lower.

“*Armored Scout Serenn*, watch your *jekking* speed in the taxiway! And furthermore, watch that heavy *fracking* supply ship ahead of you! Don't you dare ram into her sorry *jekking* flank!” the gruff voice blasted out through the comm channel.

“This is *Armored Scout Serenn*, call sign Tesna Vandd Three Two Nine. We will take your orders under advisement, Technician Fennis'Ian.” a calm voice replied.

“See that you do!” the Ground Control spat back. Once the comm went quiet, that was Jeffrey's cue. Steeling himself, he pressed the comm button on the console to open the channel.

“Shuttle *Za'rrah* requesting clearance to taxi.”

“Shuttle *Za'rrah*, please give your call sign.” the controller requested.

“Shuttle *Za'rrah*, call sign Zed Fa Deh Four Two Vandd.” the Earther replied.

“Shuttle *Za'rrah*, cleared to Taxi Lane One, hold for final clearance to launch on Mag Rail Three.”

“Cleared to Taxi Lane One.” Jeff repeated.

Na'Krista set the ground repulsors to low hover, lifting the craft off of the deck just slightly. Engaging the ground maneuvering thrusters, she nudged the stick ahead, making the shuttle leave her berth and move toward the taxi lanes. While they were moving, she retracted the landing gear while they went through the final checklist, point by point.

At the end of the taxi lane, she halted the craft at the entrance to Mag Rail Three, which was a door that separated them from the vacuum of space. A clear window allowed them to watch the ship in front of them, a light repair craft, to be spat out the other end of the launching tube. Once the tube was clear, another door that would act as an air lock closed, then the door right in front of them opened.

“Shuttle *Za'rrah*, cleared for Mag Rail Three.” Technician Fennis'Ian directed. “Stow your junk or it will be on your bunk,” he added, with a bit of mirth in his voice. “Turning you over to Launch Control.”

“Understood, turned over to Launch Control. Launch Control, this is Shuttle *Za'rrah*. Launch weight at fifty-seven thousand zet, approximate.” Jeff offered up.

“Fifty-seven thousand zet – confirm?”

“Launch Control, confirm weight at fifty-seven thousand zet.”

“Shuttle *Za'rrah*, move into launch position and engage Synchro mode.”

Na'Krista nudged the controls to ease the craft into place, then pressed a button on her console that switched them into Synchro mode. The shuttle bobbed for a moment, then it sat down on the launching rail, straddling a carriage that was the launching armature. She confirmed they were attached firmly by inverted functions of the repulsors, then she pressed her button that would acknowledge they were ready. The doors closed behind them, then the main doors to the tube opened. It took just moments for the breech rails to engage the main rails, making the launch system ready.

“On my mark,” the Launch Controller stated, giving them fair warning. “Launch!”

The shuttle accelerated to some ridiculous speed in a heartbeat, pressing the passengers back into their seats firmly. At the end of the rail, the repulsors powered down, allowing the ship to be flung out into space. By computer control, the Ion Drive came on line, holding their speed at what was roughly calculated by Sa'Densa to be somewhere around twenty thousand miles per hour.

“Shuttle *Za'rrah* clear and away under power.” Jeff finally remembered to announce.

“Shuttle *Za'rrah*, turning you over to Ground Controllers on frequency zed-nine.” they were told over the intercom. “See you on the return trap.”

Jeff changed frequencies, then made his announcement. “Saa'naa Ground Controller, this is Shuttle *Za'rrah*, call sign Zed Fa Deh Four Two Vandd, requesting permission to land at coordinates positive six three six mark three nine by positive one zero two mark four.”

“Shuttle *Za'rrah*, clear to proceed to coordinates. Your landing profile is being sent to your nav set. Please engage landing profile before entering the atmosphere.” a very sensuous femme voice replied smoothly in Elazi to them.

“Thank you, Saa'naa Ground Controller.” Jeff replied to the female voice.

“Ground Controller clear.”

Na'Krista engaged the navigation set, allowing it to fly the ship for her. Once she was sure things looked good and the profile was loaded, she slid her seat away from the console so she could stretch her arms and legs.

“Better get comfy,” she offered up to Jeff. “It will be at least one quarter of a planetary rotation, about seven Earth hours, before we land. Because we do not have a heat shield, the ship will synchronize to a flight speed just faster than the planet's rotation speed, then we will just 'sink' into the atmosphere.”

“Well, that's different.” Jeff mused. Sa'Densa spoke up with her thoughts, to add to that idea.

“One of our best pilots rode with your Space Shuttle crew, just so we could critique and help improve your space shuttle and space station program.” she offered up. “He was scared by the takeoff but it was our understanding that he fainted during reentry. He was sure the shuttle was history when the fire came past the cockpit windows. He then fainted again when he heard one shuttle was lost due to a thermal tile failure.”

Later that day, they had landed at an estate in the countryside, surrounded by forests and meadows. Jeff looked around, taking in the beauty of the land surrounding him. This was a very scenic area, one that he would not protest living in. Just ahead was a covered patio area near the landing pad where two persons awaited them. As they drew nearer, the two individuals reminded him of Arrissa Wrraal by their builds and features. Na'Krista approached the shorter of the two, the one dressed in ceremonial robes and offered her hand.

“I am Ambassador Kamram Keth'lan's daughter, Na'Krista Keth'lan and this is my future *One Love*, Jeffrey Andrews'lan.” she stated in Elazi. “I apologize if we have kept you waiting.”

“I am Melia Tasment, Junior Ambassador to Saa'naa. It is pleasing to meet you, Na'Krista.” She then turned to Jeff. “I am pleased to meet you too, Jeffrey. Tell me, are you Comeri?”

“Pleased to meet you, Ambassador.” Jeff replied with a slight bow of the head. “To answer your question, I am a citizen of the Planet Earth.”

Melia smiled widely at this information. “A real Earther! I am doubly-pleased to meet a new race!” she blurted out. “Are you a pilot?” she wanted to know.

“I hold a private pilot's license on Earth, but I have not been checked out in a shuttle.” he replied. Although the thought of being checked out in a space craft did pique his interest.

“I do beg your indulgence, however.” the felid femme asked. “I need to put on my suit so we may get underway. While I am dressing, my assistant, Arielia will load my possessions.”

While they waited for Ambassador Tasment to change into a flight suit, he gave thought to just how much Melia resembled Arrissa, another very robustly built bipedal lion with a sensual voice. Since she looked so much like a *Fask-aal*, he thought he would have to ask her about that. Even her assistant appeared very much like a *Fask-aal*.

While they made their ascent out of Saa'naa's gravity well, Melia took the time to ask what seemed like an endless string of questions about Earth. She was amazed by the thought of each continent having multiple countries with separate governments. Even the United Nations seemed weak to her, since they had no direct control over a country.

“How do you ever prevent wars?” she had to know. “If your United Nations cannot dictate a policy of non-combat, how do you prevent wars from cropping up?”

“We don't, sometimes.” Jeff replied. “There is an area of Earth that is considered Holy to several religions. As such, there has never been peace in that area, in all of recorded history. We have had several world wars in the last one hundred years, or I guess what you would understand to be one hundred solar rotations.”

“Those world wars weren't world-destroying, I trust?” the ambassador wanted to know.

“The last one, between the United States and China, was very devastating. The Chinese bombed key centers on the West Coast of the North American continent, killing hundreds of millions. My late wife and my only daughter were killed instantly. At least that's what I hope happened to them.” Jeff replied. “In retaliation, we carpet-bombed their capitol of Beijing. We left nothing but a smoldering crater behind. We were no better than the Chinese, in that way.”

“That is a sad story.” Melia offered up.

“Ambassador, I would like to ask something of you,” Jeff began, “I know you are Saa'naani but you look like you could be a *Fask'aal*. Would you elaborate? And, what is the difference between a Saa'naani and a Pak'Saa'naani?”

The felid femme chuckled. “Both issues are somewhat related to one another. Many Centons ago, our religion worshiped only one Ascended Being, Van The Redeemer. It was said in the Old Books, he came from within the Shrine of Lights to place the Saa'naani on our planet. The Shrine of Lights is a sacred location and it was only entered by our priests, and at that, only on holy occasions.

“About six Centons ago, well, you would say six hundred rotations around the sun, while our priests were preparing for a High Sun ceremony, a great noise came from within the Temple. They could see lights flashing and electricity arcing about and as the story goes, it scared them.

“What scared them further were the beings that streamed out of the Altar. They kept coming through what was probably a temporal breach, ten thousand and another ten thousand, all armed to the teeth. They were strange, reminding us of our beasts of burden, with their hooves and long tails. They spoke a very strange dialect, too.”

“That would scare me, too.”

“The leader of the group managed to convey to our priests, that they were looking for a being called Gregand Thetablitt. Our priests tried to assure them that there was no such being that came through the Altar fitting the description they gave, to their knowledge. We realize now they might have meant a Comeru or maybe an Earth being. They looked about the continent for a while, then they decided to leave through the Altar, just like they had come to our planet.

“Their scientists began to set the controls to send them home but the first one to enter the portal caused the whole thing to explode. They were now stranded on Saa'naa so they did their best to become citizens. We called them Pak'Saa'naani, roughly translated, meaning 'New to Saa'naa.' They called themselves Hununny or something like that but we preferred our name for them. It was descriptive as to who they were.

“Now, once we became space faring, we stumbled across the planet *Fask'aal*. It intrigued us that they seemed to speak an old dialect of Saa'naani and we were further surprised when we discovered they had a Shrine of Lights, too. Further investigation seemed to indicate they had traveled through the Altar portal from Saa'naa to *Fask'aal* hundreds of Centons in the past. For what reason, we do not know to this day. We are both of the same stock and as such, we consider our races to be the same race.”

“Well, now that's a very unusual tale, indeed.” Jeff mused. As they slowly made their way into orbit, he mused about who this Gregand Thetablitt might have been. Was his name really Greg and he had a tablet in his possession? That made more sense to him. Could he have been an Earther, from a possible parallel Earth? Only this Gregand could say for sure.

With the flagship in visual range of the standard Mark 1 Eyeballs, Jeff was getting ready to do his part in handling communications while his *One Love* prepared to land their ship back onboard *The Korrallid*. They carefully went through the landing checklist, making sure things were ready for the events to follow. At the end of the checklist, Jeff pressed the comm button and made his announcement.

“Landing Control, this is the Shuttle *Za'rrah*, call sign Zed Fa Deh Four Two Vandd. Requesting clearance to land on *The Korrallid*, Landing Bay Starboard Lower.”

“*Za'rrah*, this is Landing Control. Landing vector Plus Three Seven One by Minus One Nine Six. Keep approach speed at point-six-five. Please state landing weight for trap set.”

“Control, landing weight fifty-seven thousand five hundred zet.”

“Copy, fifty-seven thousand five hundred zet. Set to Synchro mode.”

“Synchro mode engaged.”

“You did well,” Na'Krista stated over the ship's comm channel once the Autopilot took over from her.

“Thank you.” Jeff replied. “I had a bit of practice.”

Krista kept one hand near the flight joystick, just in case the Synchro gave out, which did happen from time to time. The ship lined up on the landing bay and slowed to the correct speed. At the outer marker, the propulsion shut down and four retro-motors fired some small bursts, fine tuning the alignment.

The landing bay lights indicated the path they would follow, and the landing gear extended by computer control, getting them ready to touch down. They crossed the threshold at what seemed like a walking speed and moments later, the mag-trap pulled the ship down onto the deck.

“Shuttle *Za'rrah*, you are cleared to taxi to your berth on taxiway one.” they were told over the comm system.

“Jeff, why don't you taxi us back to our spot?” his future wife suggested.

“You're serious?”

“Yes, I am. I think you can do it.” she pointed out.

Jeff took the joystick to his left and once the repulsors were active, carefully nudged it forward. The ship responded, moving toward just slightly. He continued to give the control little adjustments, finding it was not as hard as it looked. At the appropriate berthing area, he stopped the ship and carefully backed it into the slot, using the cameras mounted pointing aft to assist his progress. The ground crew gave him the signal to stop, so he pressed the 'All Stop' button, halting progress. Another button shut down the repulsors, settling the craft down onto the deck. Jeff then helped with the shutdown checklist.

While the ground crew personnel helped to remove the Ambassador's things, the small retinue all went through an airlock that led to some dressing rooms. The Ambassador and her aide chose to change into something more suited to roaming a flagship in a semi-official capacity while Na'Krista, Sa'Densa and Jeff changed into House Andrews'ian clothing to go have last meal.

“Well?” Krista asked, smiling at her future husband.

“I enjoyed myself.” Jeff replied.

“Would you like to take some formal training for a shuttle license when you have the time?”

“That I would.”

“I thought so,” Krista mused, correct in her thoughts. Once a pilot, always a pilot. She had watched him pilot the craft in the landing bay, smiling from ear to ear. He had enjoyed himself, despite what he had conveyed. “Let's go to that pizza shop. I heard they added a few new styles of pizza.” she suggested.

“That sounds good.” Jeff commented.

“Na'Krista, they have added a thing called a 'Deep Dish Pizza' that sounds good.” Sa'Densa offered up, checking the menu on a handy padd.

“That sounds very good,” the human stated, taking Krista's hand in his. “Let's go eat pizza.”