

Jochlan stood in the back yard of the human's home. From the tanarull a holographic image displayed, connecting them to the news network on Dacwen. Jochlan had not expected the news to be good but this was...

"It can't be," Jochlan whispered. The newscaster went into the details but the transmission was getting harder to maintain. Something was wrong on Dacwen, something worse, if there could even be such a thing, than Narozen Ladanya's death. Jochlan shut off the cast, tears running freely down the lines of their silver face. How would they tell Saraya?

"Jochlan?"

Jochlan squeezed their eyes shut for a brief moment, pushing more tears down their face. They opened their eyes and turned around to look at Saraya. Jochlan watched the concern immediately move onto the Narosel's face.

"Goddess, Jochlan what's wrong?" Saraya came towards them.

Jochlan could not answer her right away. Instead, they lifted both hands and touched Saraya's cheeks. "I must show you something first."

Saraya gently closed her fingers around Jochlan's wrists, concern still creasing her brow. She nodded. "All right." Saraya closed her eyes.

Jochlan kissed both her closed eyelids. They kissed her forehead, opening up their connection with the gentle touch. "I ask permission to share these memories with you. I ask permission that you see, Saraya."

And suddenly she could see - an image of her mother, staring at her. *"Tell her I love her."*

Saraya jerked open her eyes, a question sitting plainly on her face. "Jochlan... why are you showing me this now?"

"She is dead, Saraya. Narozen Ladanya is dead."

Saraya felt like she couldn't breathe. The world was spinning around her, she couldn't feel her feet on the ground. She knew she was stumbling forward. Vaguely behind her she heard concerned tones from the two humans. Still she moved, pushing against the screen door so hard, it tore off the hinges. She fell with it, unable to catch herself, hitting the patio concrete. The slight pain it caused was insignificant in comparison to the screaming in her head.

Her mother was dead. Gone. Labeled a traitor to her people. She'd killed Savil. Savil had killed Atomeia. Her family was destroyed, some *thing* was attacking her planet and she could do *nothing*.

She screamed in the concrete underneath her. She pushed herself to her feet, stumbling forward again, no real direction and screamed again, a hoarse, loud anguished sound. She managed to get several steps into the yard, then fell to her knees under the weight of her emotions, her grief, her guilt crushing her. She screamed *No*. Her mother's name. Atomeia's. She gripped the dirt on either side of her in fistfuls, her muscles straining, another fierce cry leaving her mouth that ended on a sob. Her head bowed forward as she lost it, her pain expelling from her in the shaking of her shoulders and the rush of tears that blinded her. The emotion was so thick her aura shined bright enough to be seen.

Elena stood in the doorway, watching. Her brow pinched, her hands clasped together and pressed against her mouth as she studied Saraya's back and listened to her grieve. Her people carried ancient wounds like that; of loss. Of helplessness against the tide. She felt Saraya's pain in her soul, in the DNA that carried the trauma of her people and her heart broke. Without thinking when the woman's screams turned to gut wrenching sobs, Elena moved out of the doorway and across the yard in quick determined steps. She dropped to her own knees at Saraya's side, empathic eyes studying the woman as she reached out and gently touched Saraya's shoulder. Saraya abruptly shrugged off the embrace, but still her eyes remained tightly closed, her sobs continuing. Elena hesitated, but something urged her... she came closer this time and put her arms around Saraya's shoulders, and rested her head against the other woman's. Saraya stiffened again, and Elena braced herself to be pushed away. This time Saraya allowed it and after several long moments, when her sobbing had lessened, Elena felt the weight of Saraya's head leaning back against her own. That small gesture made Elena's chest tight.

Jochlan watched with Will from the doorway. Will had his arms crossed over his chest, his eyes a little wet from his tears. In truth he didn't know why he was crying, only that he was deeply moved by Saraya's pain and Elena's insistence on comforting her. He would have happily hugged them both but he was pretty sure now wasn't the time.

He cleared his throat, lifting his hand to wipe at his eyes and cheeks, sniffled a bit and looked over at Jochlan. "Tell us how we can help, and we will."

"You must remember who you were. Fully. On earth we know of one way to do that quickly. It is called a Holon. We will take you to it."

"Okay. Sure. Why?"

"Because you can close the doorways. Your people know the ancient codes. You can ensure they destroyed, which is what we must do. This planet is lost."