

## Chapter ??? (quote)

SVT Securities File:  
Planet: Earth  
Agent Notes:

Awkward.

That word was the first thing that came to Elena's mind and it felt like the biggest understatement on the planet, being in the same car as Jochlan and Saraya as Will drove them back to their home. Saraya and Jochlan were silent. Elena was trying hard to resist the urge to peek at the rear-view mirror, but she kept failing. Jochlan was... silver and Elena had no idea if they were male or female or both or neither. Saraya was... something else entirely and Elena had the sense she was, well, not happy. Saraya stared out the window and there was a far away look in her eyes, a weight to her silence that Elena didn't dare break. Even Will had been tight lipped and he usually talked when he was nervous.

It was odd. Aside from it being the most awkward silence in the history of awkward silences, Elena felt like she ought to be comforting Saraya some way and she had no idea how. Or why she felt like that. She had so many questions. Too many questions it felt like. She purposefully dropped her eyes from the mirror and stared down at her hands, making a mental list in her head like she often did. She would prioritize the questions. Yes. Maybe then she would sound less like the lesser being she felt like in the presence of the two incredible aliens in her backseat. Should she even call them aliens? Shit. Elena mentally corrected herself. She'd have to find another word. Ugh.

"What happened here?" Saraya broke the silence as they turned down the street into the apartment complex they lived. Cars had been over turned. Glass and debris were still in the street. The bodies were gone, thankfully, but a few blood stains marked the pavement were people had killed themselves.

Will's hand tightened on the steering wheel.

Elena sighed. "We don't know. Things were good. Really good. This was a peaceful cooperative. But, a few days ago... some of the community members just started going crazy. Worse than the Red Zones. Five went to the hospital, they're in comas we think. Doctors don't seem to know. Two people killed themselves. Six others-

"Seven," Will corrected quietly, his face unusually grim as he slowly navigated through the parking lot.

"Right," Elena said quieter. "Seven others got violent. They kept screaming about losing something and when we tried to help them, they attacked anyone who got close. We were able to restrain a few of them, police came and got them. We think they went to the Mental Care center down the road. The rest just ran away. We don't know if they've been found yet."

Saraya and Jochlan looked at each other.

"We will explain," Jochlan said.

Elena turned in her seat looking at Jochlan and Saraya. "Wait. You know what happened?"

"Yes," Saraya said.

"Tell us. Please," Elena said. "We lost friends."

Saraya's eyes narrowed. "What you know of loss human pales in-

"Saraya," Jochlan cut her off their tone gentle.

Saraya said nothing more, but didn't answer the question, turning her head to look out the window again.

Jochlan looked at Elena and Will. "When we arrive at your residence, we will tell you. I would not wish to distract William from his driving."

"We're here," Will said, pulling the car to a stop in front the building.

Saraya was the first to climb out and Elena could almost feel the other woman's impatience. She wasn't sure at what though. More questions.

Will and Elena lived on the first floor. It was a short walk, the silence undisturbed by anyone. Will unlocked the door, and stepped aside to let everyone enter. There was plenty of light coming in through the patio doors. It was a modest, three bedroom apartment and clear by the artwork choices on the walls and the figurines on surfaces and in between pictures of family and friends that both of them were serious geeks.

Saraya and Jochlan came into the living room both of them inspecting the interior, though Elena couldn't tell by either of their expressions what they thought of it. She set her purse down on her desk which occupied what would have been a small dining area right off the kitchen.

"Can I get either of you two anything? Water or coffee or?"

"I don't have much time. We need to get through this," Saraya said.

"Coffee I think it is called, do you have that?" Jochlan said, giving Saraya what Elena could only described as a parental expression, which Saraya seemed to ignore.

“Are you... Related?” Will asked. “But, yeah, yeah coffee we’ve got. Love the stuff. Regular okay or you want decaf?” He walked into the kitchen.

“Not in the way you mean, no.” Jochlan answered. “And regular is fine, William. Thank you.”

“Just Will, if that’s okay,” Will shot Jochlan a smile. The coffee machine had been something he splurged on, and he was damn proud of it. The kitchen was his domain, he loved cooking and he would have taken the dining room space as his office but the third bedroom’s window didn’t provide a lot of natural light and Elena loved natural light.

Elena stood in what felt like a much smaller space with the presences of Saraya and Jochlan filling it up, her attention on Saraya. “You don’t like us much do you?”

Saraya’s gaze moved quickly to Elena at the question, as if she was surprised by it. At first she said nothing. Gradually, Elena watched some of the tension in her shoulders ease a little. “I don’t have an opinion of you. Things are... complicated and very dangerous. We need to get you caught up, and we need you to do something very important.”

No opinion was better than a bad one, Elena reasoned. “You saved our lives that day at the crop circle. The helicopter. That was you, wasn’t it?” At the question she watched the tension return to Saraya’s posture, and for a moment Elena wished she hadn’t asked.

“Yes,” Saraya said tightly.

Before Saraya could say anything else, Elena took a step closer holding the woman’s gaze. “Thank you. I never got to say thank you. And I...” this was stupid she should just shut up, but despite what her brain was saying she heard herself saying, “... I think it cost you

something. Maybe not helping us but something has and I think it has to do with us and I'm sorry I guess. We're grateful for what it's worth. If it's worth anything."

Conflicted is the only way Elena could describe the expression that came over Saraya's face. Elena could see the lines of Saraya's mouth tighten, a slight furrow in the center of her brow, and those eyes... Goddess Elena didn't know a person could carry so much emotion in a single expression but Saraya did. "Can we just get on with this. Please."

Her tone wasn't unkind. Elena thought she sounded like a woman who couldn't take much more and Elena felt her chest tightening again, that inexplicable urge she had to comfort Saraya growing stronger.

"How can we help you?" Will broke the brief silence, looking at Saraya while the coffee brewed. "Cuz the way I see it, we've got a lot of questions sure but, you saved our lives and the life of a friend of ours so I feel like we belong to you." As soon as the words left his mouth, Will started stumbling. "I mean you know, have you ever see The Shadow? Okay the movie wasn't that great but in the comic when he saves people, he gets to claim their lives, so that's what I meant when I said that. In case... you know what, never mind. How do we help?"

Elena almost laughed, managed to catch herself, but a grin settled on her mouth that she politely tried to cover with her hand. She was pleased Will seemed to be just as effected by Saraya as she was. And she could have sworn she'd seen Saraya's lips twitch if only for a moment. Jochlan looked thoroughly amused.

"We understand your meaning," Jochlan said.

"You shouldn't be alive," Saraya's words shifted the tone of the conversation and rendered Elena and Will completely silent. "A device that surrounds your planet went off when it

shouldn't have. When it went off, it should have killed every human on earth. Instead it seems to have done something else."

There was a moment of stretched silence as Will and Elena processed this. Elena sunk down into her captain's chair, tightly gripping the arm rest with one hand.

"Why is there a device around earth that does that?" Will finally asked.

Saraya hesitated, choosing her words carefully. "There is something of importance on Earth that must be protected at all costs. If your race were to ever do anything to jeopardize this thing, the device was there as a last resort."

"What did it do? What happened to those people, my friends was awful," Elena said looking at Saraya. "They didn't deserve what happened to them."

Saraya looked at Elena. "I think it's important we find out but, that's not the only reason I need... I require your help."

"What's the other reason?"

While they spoke, Jochlan felt the hum of their tanarull, alerting them of an urgent report from the security center on Dacwen. Quietly, Jochlan stepped through the living room over to the patio doors. "Excuse me a moment," they said and stepped outside.

Saraya glanced at Jochlan before answering Elena's question. "How the two of you can read the crop circles, it's not suppose to happen. They are not there for humans to decipher. They are codes to a lock. The fact that you can decipher them means you are reincarnated souls from the race <racename>. I think it's the reason those creatures were after you."

Will almost dropped the coffee cup he was holding. “We’re do what now?”

Elena’s eyes widened. “Reincarnated? Us? How?”

Saraya sighed. It was the kind of impatient sound a teacher might give to a student who should have known this information. “All souls are infinite. There are reasons when you take form on earth you don’t remember. Not all planets are like that. On some planets you remember all the lives you’ve lived. On my planet you remember the ones you choose too, a decision you make when you come of age. Earth is underdeveloped so there are systems in place until you evolve.”

“2012 was suppose to be something special for us. Earth, Humans wasn’t it?” Elena frowned. “It felt.. I don’t know. It felt incomplete.”

“Humans. 2012 should have been special for humans. Earth has nothing to do with your Ascension processes, but she will suffer until you evolve as many mothers do until their children grow up.” The latter words caused Saraya’s form to tense for a moment, a distant look invading her gaze before she refocused on the pair. “You’re right though, it wasn’t completed. You were suppose to have gotten help, a group to come down and help hold the shifting energy and ease you through the process. Instead you were given great power and enlightenment and left to your own devices. It’s why your world is so split into duality. Some of you were able to embrace the changes and the energy that you hit, that could not be explained with the logical mind. Others, have resisted those changes, refusing to evolve and they suffer for it.”

“Hang on. Hang on just a dang second.” Will came out of the kitchen balancing coffee mugs between his fingers. “There’s a killer ray gun around earth that wasn’t suppose to go off. It did. We were suppose to get help to ascend, we didn’t. What the hell? Is there some

cosmic villain determined to keep earth non evolved or whatever?” He stopped by Elena and she carefully took one of the mugs from him. “Jochlan’s coffee’s ready too.”

Saraya shook her head. “No. Aside from certain things that exist on the planets surface there is nothing special about Earth. Earth has been treated as all un-enlightened planets are when you’re in a system that contains beings more evolved than you. You’re not the first planet to be enslaved by an alien race either, it happens often in the cosmos.”

“Huh.” Will set Jochlan’s coffee mug on the table and remained standing, looking thoughtful. “So all those movies about how special humans are and us stumbling around in the dark being beautiful..”

Saraya snorted. “There is nothing “special” about humans and your stumbling and stupidity is not beautiful. It’s *stupid*. Your ways destroy ecosystems, animals, plants, things your silly little eyes can’t even see,” her tone rose, frustration clouding her words and her heightened emotions made her eyes shine brighter. “You are not born this way. There is nothing inbred into your DNA to choose competition over cooperation, hate over love. Worse, you don’t have to be this way, the knowledge is there, especially now in the throes of a planetary evolution, even a botched one. Too many of your kind still choose not to use this knowledge. You cower behind your weakness instead of embracing your strength. So no, your slow destruction of the planet and yourselves is not beautiful. It is stupid, and harmful, and primitive.”

A silence fell over the room after that, and though a touch uncomfortable because of the harsh words Will and Elena continued staring at Saraya.

“Do your eyes always do that? That’s just incredible,” Elena blurted out, realized she’d spoken aloud and immediately brought the mug to her mouth.



Saraya sighed again, her frustration calming. “Sometimes.”

“Your not wrong. That line in Age of Ultron always rubbed me the wrong way anyway,” Will mused. “You have no idea what I’m talking about do you?”

Saraya gave Will another exasperated look. Will couldn’t help but give her a sheepish grin and shrugged. “Yeah, wasn’t the best Avengers movie anyway. You didn’t miss anything.” He cleared his throat.