

*The characters Jeffrey Alan Sakaar Andrews, Na'Krista Nahala Christina Keth'lan, Kamram Keth'lan, Na'Kesta (nee Cern'lan) Keth'lan, Tegram Keth'lan, Traci McDonald, Talram Keth'lan, Bosteg Haas'lan, Kestam Ramm'lan, Treman Baze'lan, Merret Treet'lan, Tascal Hone'lan, Hallett Trasc'lan, Hammet & Na'Kayla Nahala (nee Keth'lan) Craine'lan, Gillat Deen'lan, Marlett Blane'lan, Sa'Densa Nasia (nee Deen'lan) Andrews'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 Thirty

#### “Deeds Of A Certain Kind”

A gray Elazi femme stared a hole through her erstwhile employer, not particularly happy with his response to her request to be paid. Apparently, “*No Payment*” was not an option for her. She fingered the power stud of her Amp-Light knife in her jacket pocket as she made her feelings known to the aging male behind the desk.

“Listen closely, *Old Fool*. If I do not have payment by the end of the day, I will come for you and I will not leave you alive when I am done with your carcass. The same goes for your mate. Do you understand me, *Old One*?”

The one behind the desk smirked and chuffed in annoyance. “I'm not afraid of your threats to my . . .” His diatribe was cut short by her knife, taking various items on the desk top to task in a wide sweep of the lethal cutting implement. She punctuated her response by unceremoniously removing a rather large section off of the corner of his desk.

“Do not cross me, *Old One*. I will be paid or I will extract my payment from your hide. You *do not* ask for me to kill another being for free.”

Dassan watched on as the femme mercenary strode out of his office, slamming the front door and breaking the glass in the process. Remembering to breathe, he decided he would ask another to “*pay*” her for her services to him. Someone he could depend on to keep their silence in the matter. This was one of those moments that made him question his quest to regain those three hundred and eight units of land. There was a good chance he would not live to see that acquisition take place.

Taking a glass of wine with him to the window, he pondered the situation at length while he surveyed his holdings. He was well aware he was risking an early death, one that would be much earlier than just waiting for the Phasic Disease to

take him. Was it really worth it, he mused? he wasn't sure. As it stood at the moment, he was no closer than he was one half-cycle ago. Something has to be done as soon as possible. He was tired of waiting for this plan to come to fruition.

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The gray femme mercenary tightened up the vicious submission hold she had on the Trexis male under her, using her free hand to press his face deeper in the soft dirt just off the path to her front door. She had encountered him on her way back from her discussion concerning payment from the old, infirm male. The femme had by chance caught a whiff of the offensive smell wafting from the created life form under her as she made her way home.

“The *Old One* sent you, didn't he?” she growled out in Trexannis, letting the one that was stalking her know he held no secrets from her. “You are dead already but you might live a bit longer if you tell me the truth in the matter.”

“Tell you nothing will I,” he retorted, knowing she meant to do horrible things to him if he didn't speak up. “Allegiance I owe not to you. Your pay my pockets not feel. Speak I not. Kill me you will.”

The femme aggressor shook her head in disgust. “You are as stupid as the dirt I'm pressing your face into. You would forfeit your life that easily?” she wanted to know. She had heard the Trexis mercenaries were not particularly fond of living for some reason.

“You kill me.” the male practically begged. “Kill I, then I no kill to live. I no in mental anguish no longer. Kill I. Now.” This request really bothered the femme in control of the situation. Was it that easy for a Trexis to give up?

“Just like that? Kill you?” she asked.

“Yes. Now.” After a moment's pause, he added, “Please.”

This really seemed to bother the femme. “What if I don't?”

“Then I kill I. Kill first you, maybe.” He was about to say more when a the next action by his target-come-hunter made him look over his shoulder at her in surprise.

You won't kill me first,” she said as she removed the hypodermic needle from his shoulder and watched him sag to the ground. “That should hold him long

enough to get him hidden away while I decide whether or not if I need his help with the *Old One*.” She mused under her breath as she stood up and brushed the dirt off of her clothes.

It did not take her long to call an associate to retrieve the mercenary and get him headed to a holding facility. While she waited, she took the liberty of copying his contacts list from his communicator, no doubt given to him by the *Old, Infirm One*. A being should never use a communicator that is not locked down by at least bio-metric touch authentication. No telling who would access those files. . .

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Arrissa and Argess sat in a diner, watching a potential domicile across the street that was purported to be in use by some Bil mercenaries. It had been well over two *Heth* since the lone being had entered the apartment home and turned on the lights in their unit. What they really needed was the lights to be off to have the element of surprise work for them.

This waiting game had become tedious to say the least. There was only so much diner food you could eat in one sitting and hot steaming *Traa'vit* was a drink taken in moderation, lest one develop extreme stomach discomfort from over-libation. Just as they were getting ready to order water to put out the gastric fire, the lighting in their marks' apartment went out.

The being that had entered the building had been of Comeri or A'Pari descent, from what they could see with their unaided Mark One eyeballs. The one that had just left the building was obviously Bil. Something felt wrong so the two leonids got up from their table, hurriedly paid the tab and set out after this being.

Hanging back a bit, they observed the mark acting strangely, like pressing at his arms with the palms of the opposite hands. He was also pressing at his face, too. Hurrying up a bit, they caught up to their mark and shoved him into an alleyway between two businesses. Argess was just about to grill the suspect for information when he felt some of the scales on his quarry's arm come loose. A Bil's scales would not normally do this.

“You are not what what you appear to be.” Argess blurted out, right before Arrissa clocked their mark with her market bag, putting his lights out.

“Argess, this one holds some secrets.” she offered up. “Let's take him back to our hotel room and ask a few questions.”

“Yes, he has many questions to answer.” Argess agreed. “He will come with us.”

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Several *Heth* later, the one that wished to pass as a Bil had one more of his glued-on scales being ripped from his skin by Argess, taking a bit of his epidermis with it. In a way, it bothered the Adjudicator that the male under his control had stopped screaming from loss of small bits of skin.

“Tell us your name and why you wished to pass as a Bil, and I will stop torturing you.” the leonid offered up. “I am a fair being, all I offer is your freedom for some information. That is all.”

The detainee shrugged his shoulders. “I have told you, I am Tovan Zem'Dalla, an A'Pari citizen. I see it as a non-issue if I want to appear to be Bil. This does not concern you, Adjudicator.”

“I see it as an issue!” Argess growled, roughly taking several scales from the detainee's neck at once. “Maybe I should use a Vibro-knife to remove the rest of your false scales. What would you think about that?”

Tovan looked at the floor and shook his head. “That sounds very painful. If I speak, you will let me go?” he asked.

“I will allow you to leave.” Argess confirmed.

“Alright,” the semi-scaled one began, “I am a former A'Pari soldier. I was paid in A'Pari *Gaess Vinder* to go in disguise and find enough Bil to do a job. Ones that would kill without question. I do not know what the job entailed, though.

“My contact is a *Fask-aal* that goes by the name of Vash'aan Ov'Glangas. I do not think that is his actual name if you ask me. He loiters around the Kas'Madelle space port, dressed in the Comeri mercenary style. You know, tall leather boots, long vest, many knives in his belt. He is tall, sort of for a *Fask-aal*, gray pelt, prefers stokers, Vesta wine and Elazi females. That is all I know.”

“That is all?” Arrissa questioned.

“Yes. I cannot offer more for I don't have more to offer.”

“Then you may go.” she replied as she unbound Tovan. One he had picked up his errant scales and left, the femme leonid tapped an icon on her communicator. After a moment, she smiled widely.

“Arrissa, is it working?” Argess asked.

“Perfectly.” she commented. “He is headed back toward his domicile. The tracker we implanted works just as I intended. Now to see where he goes next.”

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Jeffrey and Na'Krista were enjoying the last day of their honeymoon, one that was cut short by a need for them to report to their duty stations ahead of time. At the moment, they were enjoying a mud bath, one that was purported to be relaxing and invigorating at the same time.

They were reclining on molded plastic couches filled with the clay medium and the nozzles situated above them would spray the liquefied mud at timed intervals. There was a mask of sorts on an articulated arm that would cover their faces while the liquid goo was being deposited. The treatment had started about fifteen *Munar* ago and while it wasn't building up all that thick on Jeff, Krista seemed to be covered in quite a thick sheet of it.

“Jeffrey, are you enjoying this?” she questioned. Krista did notice the mud was getting rather thick, making it hard to reach her refreshment on the stand next to her. The human had to stop sipping his drink to answer that question.

“It is rather enjoyable.” he admitted. In truth, he had almost fell asleep several times. The warm contact all over his body was very relaxing, making him have to concentrate on staying awake. “I see we are almost done by the chrono on the wall. This is relaxing, though.”

A few more *Munar* had gone by when the attendants returned to their room to get them extricated and cleaned up of their enrobement. Jeff followed the male Elazi that was his attendant while Krista followed the female enlisted to help her clean up.

Na'Krista stood still while her pale buff colored assistant used a squeegee to work most of the mud off before she stepped into the shower to rid her pelt of the remaining goo. The water flow quickly warmed up and it seemed to relax her, too.

While she was using a back brush to help the process along, she began to feel somewhat dizzy. Krista also noted she was tingling all over for some reason.

Stepping away from the shower flow, the femme Elazi gripped the towel bar to keep from falling down as she became disoriented. Something was wrong, very wrong.

“Na'Krista?” a muffled female voice called out softly from behind her. Turning to face the owner of that voice, she was startled by a gray Elazi femme she didn't know off-hand, wearing a full coverage supplied air environmental suit. “Na'Krista, don't struggle with me.” the femme offered up as she slipped a clear silicone hood over Krista's head that was being filled with some kind of sweet, sickly gas mixture. It was somewhat loose over her head but it was certainly snug to her neck, holding that gas mix inside the hood. She was fairly certain whatever chemicals were in the shower water had incapacitated her to the point she couldn't pull that hood off.

“Breathe normally, this won't take long. I don't want to hurt you.” The femme in control of the situation instructed while she restrained and to a degree, held up Na'Krista from falling to the floor. “Please, Na'Krista. We need to get you away from here before you get hurt or Gods forbid, you get killed.” the unknown femme pleaded.

The buff-colored femme's urgent need to breathe prevented her from just holding her breath to avoid whatever was soon to come her way. This was getting real serious in a hurry and her lungs were starting to burn due to lack of oxygen. A few moments later, once her body took a few involuntary lungfuls of that gas in the hood, she felt very light-headed. Krista was also positive she was no longer standing on her own, at that. Lungs burning again, she took several more involuntary gulps of that tainted mixture in the hood. Momentarily, the world around her without warning faded to black.

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Na'Krista became somewhat aware of the fact she was in a ship of some sort that seemed to be climbing out of a gravity well at a steep angle of attack. What surroundings she could manage to bring into focus made no sense to her drugged mind. It seemed like she was inside a patient transport pod that was pressurized and that sweet, cloying scent was still hanging in the air. Trinn gas? Was that it?

Unable to see much of her immediate area, what she could see indicated this was a utility ship not of Bil origin by any means. It seemed to be built to withstand heavy attack by the mass of its structural design, possibly a small war ship of Elazi



manufacture? That thought, that the ship was something Lestim might have built was scary in itself. No telling what manner of malfunctions could occur without warning while they were underway. The thought crossed her mind, so out of context, was to sell off her shares of Lestim and distance herself from the company.

Two beings in full vacuum rated suits walked by her pod, so that might mean the area she was in was not pressurized at the moment. That certainly left out escape for the time being. The pod and the attendant vacuum in the space she was inside muffled any sounds, so there would be no way to identify who the beings were by their voices alone.

And that scent of sweetness was getting stronger again, making it harder to keep her eyes open and her mind alert. Momentarily, she unwillingly slipped back into her forced sleep.

The two beings that were attending to Na'Krista and another pod headed forward to an open hatch, stepping into the air lock between the cargo section and the pilot compartment of the ship before pressing a few buttons on a panel. They waited for the lock to cycle and pressurize before continuing on into the ships' operations cabin to attend to the ship's operation.

The taller one, a very pale buff-color *Fask-aal* female, sat down at the communications panel while the other, a slightly shorter solid black Elazi male, took his place in the co-pilot's seat. Once seated they removed their helmets and stowed them in the bins supplied for that purpose.

The pilot, a gray Elazi femme, slid her seat back from the main console as the male next to her took over the piloting duties. She stood up and stretched out to get the kinks out of her back.

“How are our passengers doing?” she asked as she retrieved a beverage from the cooling compartment in the galley area of the cabin.

“Just fine, Na'Cira.” the dark male replied while he checked the full glass touch display for any abnormalities. “We had to readjust Na'Krista's gas flow up two percent because she was sort of awake when we checked on them.”

“That's fine, Jevvit. She's not getting too a high dose at the moment, as long as we aren't delayed in our arrival.” the femme pilot replied. “We'll be docking in slightly over a *Heth* so she won't be under the influence of that *grakking* nasty gas for

too much longer.” After a moment, she continued. “I’ll be glad to finish this up and be paid. I hate doing this kind of dirty work.”

The female leonid agreed. “I think we all feel that way. Get it over with, get paid, head out for some place to relax for a while.” Turning her attention back to her console when it chirped at her, she opened a channel. “Traffic Controller, this is *The Expeditionary Ship Dosh'vann'zang*, Commander Marinna Rreal speaking. We request docking rights at *Fask-aal* Sector, Agra Port Upper Number Seven. Authorization code Agra-Vitt-Breg-Sond-Five-One.”

“Message received, Commander,” the speaker crackled, “*Dosh-vann-zang*, you are cleared for port Agra, Upper Seven. Use local channel Nineteen-Ahd-Vendh on High Frequency band to contact local traffic controller.”

“Understood, use Nineteen Ahd-Vendh High Frequency. *Dosh'vann'zang* clear.” The femme leonid turned back to face her associates. “Things like this, reasons why I’m not interested in further work of this nature. No more live freight for me.”

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The pale gray, almost white Elazi femme on the examination table tried to be still while her torso was being scanned by a computer, hoping for the procedure to be over with at any moment. The Regen Unit had been removed from her torso and as such, she had lost the vital support it was supplying for her abdominal injury. As such, she felt like her abdomen was falling open, an unnerving feeling at best.

The technician finished his work, then sent the specifications for the required shapes to a high speed polymimetric printer in the next room. Na'Kayla tried to be still but the level of pain was becoming intense due to the lack of support to her torso.

“Would you like some pain meds?” the attending nurse asked while she checked Na'Kayla's vitals.

“Please?” was the injured femme's reply.

“You’ll feel a little pinch,” the nurse offered, right before she injected her charge with a small dose of general analgesic.

“Much better,” Na'kayla commented, feeling the familiar numbness that Famitimal Sodium Citrate provided. “That is so much better.”



“I'm glad you feel better,” her nurse stated, “Your body brace should be ready for you by now. I will help you to stand up so you can be fitted.”

The medical nurse helped the ailing female to get her legs off of the table and into a sitting position, then she helped Na'Kalya to stand. Before the pale gray femme could complain about the discomfort, the technician and an assistant surrounded her torso with an articulated body brace.

The tech used a torque limiting wrench to tighten the brace, making sure nothing was too snug per the doctor's orders. Once he was done with the adjustments, he stepped back and observed how his charge was standing.

“Is that brace reasonably bearable?” he had to know.

“It is snug,” she replied, noting it had a tight purchase of her body. It barely moved when she attempted to adjust how it sat on her torso. “Is it supposed to be this tight?” she asked, noting it was forcing her stand up fairly straight.

“The brace by its design, will gently force you to stand with a proper posture.” the tech replied. “It will flex with you as you sit down or bend over slightly. You may have to use your overhead grab bar that was supplied to you to be able to get in and out of bed. Other than that, go about your routine as normal. You may shower with it on or if you have your *One Love* to assist by supporting you, remove it to shower. Once you dry off, it must go back on if you are to recover properly.” The tech then added this snippet; “Yes, to answer your question, it is supposed to be that tight. Please do not take it upon yourself to adjust my handiwork.”

“Well, it is what it is,” Na'kayla commented in one of her favorite Earther idioms. “I guess I'll be wearing clothes that are easy to put on for a while,” she added while she put on a traditional loincloth and secured the belt to hold it up.

Once she had added a breast wrap and light vest, she headed out to the waiting room where her *Head Of Staff* and Sister-in-Law Na'Veri was waiting for her. The smoky gray femme assisted Kayla in sitting down in her mobility chair and wheeled her out to Na'Kayla's utility skimmer on the adjacent landing ramp behind the building.

“I noticed they made a custom support for you.” Veri offered up.

“Yes.” the pale gray femme replied. “It is very snug, too. It will articulate just a bit but not much, so the assist bar over my bed will have to stay for now.”

“I would guess so.” Na'Veri mused. She assisted her relative into the skimmer, then loaded the chair into the rear cargo bay. Once she was seated in the cabin and the Ion Drive was coming up to full power, she posed a question; “Kayla, are you going to get re-certified for combat duty or are you going to retire?”

“I'm not sure, Sister Veri.” Kayla said with a wistful tone of voice. “I miss the excitement of being in a high pressure situation. Being out of action like this,” she tapped her brace for emphasis, “It's making me restless.”

“I understand.” the dark gray femme put on the table. “I missed the military for many rotations after I retired. It takes a while to get back to being a civilian non-combatant. You have your farm to keep you busy now. While you won't be up to operating harvesting equipment, you can keep tally of the harvest. That by itself will keep you busy for four or five ten-days.”

While Na'Veri piloted them back to the farm, Na'Kayla looked out at the scenery below. The office buildings gave way to housing, then on to light manufacturing and warehousing. Eventually the fields under production made her realize she loved her homeworld and if she never went back to Earth again, she wouldn't feel left out.

Thinking about the orchards and an offer by her sister, she tried to call her and see what she was up to. Since Krista had offered to loan her a Kebra fruit harvester for a ten-day, she needed to know what the timeline would be for that loan and if she needed to supply an operator or not.

Krista's communicator was coming up “*Out Of Range*” and so was Jeffrey's. Reconnecting to her sister's number, she left a message for her to call back at Krista's convenience. Maybe the two of them were having just a bit too much fun to be disturbed at the moment.

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Sub-Commander Marlett Blane'lan reluctantly finished his sweep of the cabin his charges should have been using for at least the remainder of the day, feeling very uneasy about the situation. All of their belongings were absent, the tab paid by an unknown individual in Crown currency and Na'Krista's skimmer was not on the ramp. What really bothered him was the lack of fingerprints throughout the entire domicile. There should have been at least some fingerprints or footprints on the bare

floor that would have illuminated from his optical scanner. In his estimations, some being had taken great care to erase all traces of activities both legal and illegal.

One of his troopers, Valmet Donnen'lan was scanning for either the squawk signal from the transponder in Na'Krista's skimmer or a signal from one of the transmitters Hallett had put in his charge's supplement capsules. The skimmer signal was a no-go but the smaller transponders were giving the technician fits. For some reason, they seemed to be coming from overhead, very faintly.

“Commander Blane'lan, I have something.” the buff-colored male offered up. “The signal doesn't make sense to me, though. It appears to be coming from above, off in that direction at a long range. The signal, while faint, is not moving as far as I can tell.” He pointed in the general direction of the setting sun in the Western sky to show what he had a lock on.

“What's in orbit over in that direction?” Marlett mused as he pondered this situation. “*The All Worlds General Trade* transfer station? Trooper Donnen'lan, see if I'm correct in that matter and contact the *Kas'Madelle* Space Port Authorities. Find out who has lifted off in the last twelve *Heth*, headed in that general direction.”

Shaking his head and chuffing in disgust, he now had to contact Sa'Vesi and have her lead the other half of Orange Detachment on an assignment. She would need to go to the Andrews'lan-Keth'lan compound to see if they had somehow returned home without telling him first.

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The tall, gray *Fask-aal* sipped his wine as he watched on while two Saa'naani females applied a Bil-designed Obedience Unit to the now azure-colored femme laying in the bed in front of him. It was like a Bil leather full body harness except it was made almost completely of highly polished articulated silver metal segments with kinetic charging units at every joint. Just by moving around, the femme would keep the unit fully charged. Very convenient, and the batteries would remain charged for several ten-days with no movement at all.

“Well, we've done our part, Hhess,” the third female in the room brought up. “I would like to be paid so we can get out of here before she is noticed missing.”

“Na'Cira, I thought you said she was willing to serve me if I decided to keep her.” he asked as he counted out her payment in A'Pari *Gaess Vinder*.

“Sorry, you must have misunderstood me. She is not willing, not yet anyway and make no mistake, she is not a permanent addition to your house.” the femme Elazi replied. “As soon as you explain to her she was marked for termination and you will provide her a somewhat easy to handle alternative for a while, I’m sure she will come around.”

“And the Comeri male with her; what of him?” the leonid asked further while he lit up a stoker and took a few puffs off of it.

“I thought I told you; he is an Earther.” she replied. “He is her mate and a doctor from what I was able to deduce. He may be useful to you.”

“Very good.” Hhess pondered. “I will fit him with an obedience collar, then. If he will not act as a doctor for me, I will have him assisting the cooks or something like that. Eventually, he too will come around.”

“Remember our deal; no harm comes to either one of them.” the gray femme pointed out. “I have my contacts on your homeworld and I can keep track of what’s going on. I am acquainted with her family and it would make me sick if you hurt her in any way. That would mean I would have to visit you with an agenda. Understand my meaning?” After a moment, she continued. “And don’t forget, I may buy her back at any time at our agreed price.”

“Yes, I understand, Na’Cira. I will not harm her and you may buy her chattel back at our price if you so wish.” the leonid agreed. “What I don’t understand is this; Na’Krista is related to you somehow. Why are you selling her into service as chattel? Is she not that important to you?”

The gray femme looked up from counting her *Gaess Vinder* to answer; “I heard about this apparent danger to her from my sister. After I explained to “*Miss Mercenary*” just who she was helping to kill, my sister decided we needed to get her out of the way until we could deal with her attacker. We have no idea how long that might take without incriminating ourselves in his termination. I know you won’t hurt her. Actually, I trust you not to hurt her.”

“You are right; I have no stomach for injuring a femme, no matter what race.” he agreed. “Femmes are to be revered, the bringers of life.”

“Just remember, she will probably be temporarily blind from too much Trinn gas. Be prepared for that possibility. She might have trouble with motor skills until that gas finally wears off.”

He nodded in agreement to that request. "I will keep that in mind. If you're sure we should do this, then who am I to argue." Hhess put forth. "I'm sure my brother would not approve of this. She was wearing one of those *Tah-Nash* amulets. Nothing good comes from being associated with them."

Na'Cira Dannen'lan took her payment, put it in a non-descript pouch on her belt and left the suite, her destination the docking bay where her ship was and after that, somewhere to meet up with her sister. There were things to do and she owed that much to her relative, Na'Krista.