

## The Alutian/Verdatian Alliance

### Chapter Two: Tuesday

By Byl

(Revision: 2)

#### **Monday**

#### **Tuesday**

"Hey, what's this?" Laura held out a small green gem.

"Looks like an emerald, but aren't they darker than that?" Chris responded.

"I've never seen anything like it. No wait... yes I have. Did you ever get a good look at Seth's ring?"

"I saw the Guardian ring from a distance enough times, I'd know it if I saw it again. You think Seth made it for Fairchild?"

"It's green enough, and I can't scratch it. Little memento to remember him by probably. Only thing is I thought his creations disappeared when he lost consciousness, and I think leaving the dimension probably counts."

Chris thought about it for a moment. "Then again, how much do we really know about him? Fairchild knew him best. By far." Laura gave him a dirty look. "All I'm saying is he might be able to make something more permanent and we don't know about it. He did have some weird powers."

"Well none of this is helping us get Fairchild back. You couldn't find anything either, huh?" They had been searching Fairchild's room for hours trying to find some clue as to how to bring her out of her coma. They knew it was possible, they just didn't know the procedure. Laura had been dead when she used the technique on Kara, and Chris was at a safe distance and only had scraps of knowledge.

"What we need to do is find her scribe. If anyone would know she would. Unfortunately I have no idea how to find her either." All of Chris's ideas were coming up empty lately. "I've never even seen her, I don't think Fair even has. But every Protector is supposed to have one so I *assume* she's around somewhere and..."

"Chris, you're babbling."

"Sorry." Chris tossed the gem on Aurora's prone body, still laying on the floor. "Wish us luck, Seth. Wherever you are." If Chris hadn't known better, he would swear that Fairchild was dead. She wasn't even breathing, but he knew that it took a long time in her condition to actually die. Velorians had no need to breathe or even eat, but if her heart stayed still for too long... It was at least comforting to know that their time limit wasn't going to be up any time soon.

Laura and Chris then resorted to plan B. They were going to find the site where Fairchild had first landed on Earth, the island where she saved Chris from certain death mere hours after first discovering her powers.

"By the way," Chris pointed at the suit of powered armor still in the corner of the living room (an ironic place for the corpse it contained), "are we ever going to get rid of that? It gives me the creeps, it's going to start to smell funny any day now, and you promised you'd find someplace to dump it before anyone else saw it."

"All right already! Just give me a good place to get rid of it and I will. Otherwise get off my back."

"Are we ever going to get rid of that? It gives me the creeps, it's going to start to smell funny any day now, and you promised you'd find someplace to dump it before anyone else saw it."

"All right already! Just give me a good place to get rid of it and I will. Otherwise get off my back." Warrel still had no idea where to dump Gart's body, so he wound up tossing it in the back of their shuttle on their way to Earth's surface. "You ever been to the surface yet?"

"Nope. Okay, so tell me again about the gold bars?"

"Okay what you wanna know?"

"Okay gold is precious there, right?"

"Well yeah it's precious, but it's not 100% precious. I mean you can't just walk into a restaurant and pay with gold bars, they want you to convert it to dollars or whatever in certain designated places. Okay, it brakes down like this, it's legal to buy it, it's legal to own it, and if you have enough it's legal to sell it, it's a bad idea to carry it around but that doesn't matter cause get a load of this, no one on Earth is strong enough to try to take it away from you."

"Oh man! I'm staying, that's all there is to it I'm fuckin' staying there," Ardy laughed.

"But you know what the funniest thing about Earth is?"

"What?"

"The little differences. I mean they got the same shit over here that we got, but it's, it's just here it's a little different."

"Example." Ardy challenged.

"You know what they call a half-vacence with cheese on Earth?"

"They don't call it a half-vacence with cheese?"

"Nah, they got a different system, they wouldn't know what the fuck a half-vacence is. They call it a 'quarter pounder' with cheese."

"Quarter pounder with cheese... well what do they call a Big Mac?"

"Big Mac's a Big Mac, McDonald's has locations all over the freakin' galaxy."

"What do they call a Guntan?"

"I don't know, I didn't go into Burger King. You know what they dip into processed tomato paste?"

"What?"

"Fried potato strips."

"Ulgh! Potato?"

"I seen 'em do it man, they fucking drown 'em in that shit."

Their shuttle landed, and the pair got out, checking the cargo hatch. "We should have Orgone for this kind of deal." Warrel commented, pulling a dangerous-looking energy pistol out of the hatch.

Ardy asked "How many are up there?"

"Three or four."

"That's counting our guy?"

"Not sure."

"So that means there could be up to five guys up there?"

"It's possible."

"We should have fuckin' Orgone." Ardy shut the cargo hatch, and they left the small shuttle in the alley. A quick click on some kind of remote control device and the shuttle shimmered for a moment, and a garbage dumpster stood in its place.

"You know? We leave Gart in there too long and it's going to smell like a dumpster too."

"Shut the fuck up, Warrel."

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Chris and Laura landed on the island about an hour after they left. "This place brings back memories," Chris commented. "I think that's where she first showed up, by the big rock over there. She buried the last of the evidence there."

Laura put both arms around the boulder, but she couldn't get a good grip. "It's too big to reach around."

Chris walked to the other side of the boulder, and pushed it along with Laura's lifting so she could get her arms under it more easily. "That's got it!" Laura set the rock down a yard away.

"Well, what do you see?"

"Nothing much. Looks like she took everything with her last time she was here."

"Damn. Another dead end." Chris took a look around. "Wow, no wonder the pirates came here. This place is completely unchanged since I was here last. No one must ever come here. Look, there's the machine gun they used, and the motorcycle Fair crushed, I'd bet the bodies would still be here if we hadn't gotten rid of them."

Laura took a quick look around. When she looked back, Chris was heading toward the harbor. "What's up?"

Chris looked out into the sea. "You know what? I miss my boat."

"Come again?"

"Before all this strangeness started happening around here, I used to spend a lot of time boating. That's when the pirates picked me up, sunk my boat, killed my friends, and then Fair came along and saved my life. And you know what? I haven't even been on a boat since then. I think I want another boat."

Laura was awe struck. "Fairchild is laying in a coma in our kitchen, and you have time to think about your boat?"

"What, just because she's unconscious I can't have a boat?"

"I just think you're being a little insensitive here."

"It's just a boat!"

"All right, all right, maybe I'm getting a little edgy. Come on, let's go back home, if you're finished thinking about your boat."

"What do you have against my boat?"

"Nothing, I'm fine, buy your damn boat."

"Maybe you don't need a boat, you can fly, but I like boats. I like fishing. And I like the ocean. I..."

Laura slapped a hand over Chris's mouth and flew him home.

\*

"Well that went down easier than I expected." Warrel was pleased with his performance this morning. "Walk into a place, make a big deal, act too cool for them, and they get so scared they don't bother to fight back."

Ardy responded, "It would have gone down a little easier if you'd told me 'our' guy was another Prime."

"So sue me. I thought you knew that's what I meant."

Ardy clicked the remote device and the dumpster shimmered back into a shuttle. "You have what we call a little communication problem, Warrel." They began packing the guns back into the cargo hatch, nudging Gart's body out of the way.

"Okay, okay. Next time I tell you every detail, all right? Hey, does the briefcase have everything in it?"

Ardy slid the combination into place and opened the briefcase, a bright golden glow became visible on his face. "Oh yeah... yeah it's all here."

"Good. We can move onto step two then." Warrel tossed the briefcase into the cargo hold, closed the hatch, and stepped out of the alley to make sure that the street was empty. "Looks clear, we can HOLY SHIT!!!"

Warrel was nearly run over by a crotch rocket doing about two hundred miles per hour down the empty street. The driver was dressed in tan and his helmet had a visor too dark to see through. By the time he was ready to use tachyon vision, the motorcycle was out of sight. "Fuck this, he's going down for that." Warrel pulled a small laser pistol out of his jacket and ran down the street after the motorcycle, confident that he could outrun any Earth vehicle.

"Um, yeah... I'll just stay here then." Ardy turned the hologram back on and the shuttle was once more a dumpster.

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Chris and Laura landed back in California to find the windows glowing a strange green. "Um... is that supposed to happen?"

Chris had no idea, so he just stayed quiet. Upon entering the house they found the green gem that Chris had carelessly tossed on Fair was glowing brightly, and pulsing, and was noticeably smaller than before. "Would you look at that..."

"Should we, I dunno, leave it?" Laura asked.

"Don't look at me, I don't know what's going on."

Laura looked at the situation a little more carefully. "Well, if Seth did make the gem..."

"Which he might not have since it hasn't vanished yet..."

"I'm just looking at possibilities here. If he did, it might be helping her."

"If it's Arion it might be hurting her."

"Why would she have an Arion gem in the house?"

"Maybe they snuck it in when no one was home?"

"They would have trashed the place. They don't think this far ahead. Never have."

Chris pondered for a moment. "Well it's that same shade of green that all of Seth's other things were, so I'm going with that theory."

"Sounds good to me. Okay, now why's it pulsing and glowing?" They studied the pulsing for a moment.

"Looks, kind of like a heartbeat."

"You know, you're right, it does."

"Okay, so what do we know now?"

"Still nothing."

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Warrel ran as fast as he could, listening for the high pitched whine of the engine. It was almost five minutes before it was in sight again. "Hey, hey you!" was all he could think to yell.

The motorcycle driver glanced back, and slowed down a little to allow Warrel to catch up. Warrel ran alongside the motorcycle and pointed his gun at the driver's face. "Pull the fuck over. You almost ran me down back there."

Instead, the driver gave a friendly little wave and accelerated away, the whine of the engine giving away the strain it was under. The motorcycle must have been going well over 200 mph when it finally turned onto an on ramp, jumping a good 10 feet in the air and about hundred yards across onto the highway. "That's it, you're fuckin' dead." Warrel was pissed, and this kind of insult was unforgivable.

Warrel ran as fast as he could down the highway, finally catching up with the motorcycle. He pointed his laser pistol at the driver's helmet and said "I'm giving you to the count of three to pull the FUCK over. One... Two..." And then noticed that they were coming up fast on a red sedan doing only 50. "Shit." Warrel had to slow down to avoid running into the car, and pulled back up next to the motorcycle once they had passed.

"You're only getting to the count of two this time. One..."

Then the driver pulled out an energy sword and slashed out at Warrel with it. "What the hell?" Warrel was caught off-guard, and ducked. Unfortunately, when you duck while running at over 200 mph, bad things happen. Warrel wound up somersaulting down the highway, finally rolling to a stop after a few hundred yards. "You fucking shithead!" He yelled at the driver, who had come to a stop about fifty yards ahead of him. The crotch rocket then pulled away, accelerating down the highway at breakneck speeds. Warrel opened fire with his laser pistol, and the motorcycle was over the next hill in no time. "I hit him... I know I hit him... I saw the beam hit his bike... why is it still moving?"

Warrel turned around just in time to see the red sedan they had passed earlier barreling straight down on him. "This is not my day."

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"Did you see that?" Chris asked.

"I think I did. Did Fair just take a breath?"

"I think she did, Laura. Seth, you're welcome back in our house anytime."

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"It's about time you got back, Warrel. Have some trouble with the Terran?" Ardy mocked him.

"I hit the damn bike, I know I hit the damn bike. But it's still running. Ardy, if you shoot a motorcycle with an Arion laser pistol, it's supposed to stop moving, right?"

"Generally, yes. They tend to become a few thousand tiny little pieces of motorcycle and the driver needs to be identified by his dental records. Why?"

"Because I hit the bike and it didn't do that."

"Are you sure you hit it?"

"Yes, I'm sure I hit it. Just above the left tailpipe, three inches forward and I would've hit the driver's leg. I saw exactly where the beam hit. Then I got run over by a car."

"Well look, we're behind schedule now. We've got the briefcase back, now we've got to go deliver it to la base."

"It's not 'la base,' Ardy, it's 'El Aye' base, as in Los Angeles base."

"I told you, this is my first time on Earth." Ardy glanced at his watch. "And we don't have time for that. The drug deal goes down in half an hour, and thanks to your screwing around we're going to have to deliver the stuff *after* we take care of that."

"Oh no, if we're late with this briefcase they're going to tear our lungs out our throats. You take the drug bust, I'll deliver the briefcase."

"Why me?" Ardy looked shocked, he didn't want to deal with the Terrans one-on-one yet, he hadn't even met one yet.

"Because I know where LA base is. You'll be able to find the deal pretty easily. Here's the address. You'll know when you're getting close, Earth is pretty capitalistic and the poorer sections of they city look pretty bad. Don't be late, these things can go down in under a minute if nothing goes wrong."

"Gotcha. I'll meet you back here in two hours." Ardy jumped high into the air, landing on the roof of the building next to them. Leaping from building to building, he would be at the site in no time.

"Besides, I want the credit for delivering the brief case, schmuck. One more commendation and I'm off this dirt ball planet and onto one we don't have to sneak around on." Warrel hated all the covert operations he found himself running. He longed for a straight battle again, real conquest. He hopped back into the shuttle and took off.

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Moments later the driver of the motorcycle was back on the Vendorian ship. Parts and more motorcycles were strewn around the workbay. He turned to the engineer with whom he worked for so long on the vehicle. "Well, the thing works all right. And guess what? I almost ran over an Arion down there!"

"Really? Well that was unexpected. How'd it go?"

"Played with him a bit, the bikes can outrun them no problem but I never really opened it up. Then he pulled a gun on me. I surprised him with my laser blade and he tripped up. Then he took a shot at me, but check it out, no damage." He had a smug look on his face. "We're gunna do okay here."

"Did you get a chance to try the transformation?"

"Not with the Arion, I tried it later though and it worked all right, I didn't get anything caught in the moving parts anyway. We're going to have to look out for that."

"Well if that works, then we can get started on the bigger robot. And get the jeep ready."

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Ardy was lost. He figured out fairly quickly that the streets with numbers went in order, but the streets named by words had no discernible order at all. "Okay, think. Where does one go to ask for directions on this planet?" He looked around, and saw what appeared to be a refueling station for cars. "Okay, streets are for cars, so the person manning the refueling station must know about streets because so many cars go there... I'll ask in there."

Ardy was caught off-guard when the door didn't open by itself. This was a public place, weren't these places supposed to have doors with sensors for that sort of thing? Awkwardly, he backed up and opened the door, to find some people inside looking at him strangely. "Great, as if I wasn't nervous enough. Now they're all looking at me."

Ardy walked up to the counter where people were paying for their fuel. The attendant was sitting behind a machine with lots of buttons on it that he would put small slips of paper into and then take more slips of paper and some little metal disks out of and give them to the customer. Ardy thought it was strange that the customer always seemed to leave with more little slips of paper than he came in with though. He shrugged it off. "Um... hello. I'm looking for this address." He slid the note Warrel gave him under the plexiglass and to the attendant, who's shirt identified him as Al.

Al looked at the paper, saw the words "drug deal" and looked back at Ardy. "Hey, I'm not gunna help you find a drug deal. Get lost."

"I am lost. I need to find that address."

"Look, I hate drugs, alright, I'm not going to help you find them so beat it."

Ardy glanced at his digital watch. He only had forty Earth minutes, and at the rate those Earth seconds were passing that probably meant he didn't have much time left. He grabbed the thick plexiglass shield the attendant sat behind and pulled it out of the wall, shattering it noisily. "You **will** help me find that address. I don't have much time left."

"Holy fuck! You're one of those fucking aliens!" Al pulled a small pistol out from under the counter and fired, nailing Ardy dead center in his chest at point blank range. People ran out of the station as fast as they could and drove away, many without paying.

"Ow! Hey, cut that out." Ardy grabbed the gun from Al and squeezed it into a metal lump, slamming it back on the counter. "Just tell me where this damn place is and I won't hurt you."

"Okay! Okay! Turn left when you get out of the station and go down three lights. Then turn right and its a couple blocks down."

"Thank you." He added, irritated. Ardy stormed out of the station. He checked his watch again, and noticed that there were only 60 seconds in a minute, not 100. "Oh no, if minutes pass like that too I've only got 20 of them left." He ran off at a brisk jog, passing cars trying to get there in time.