

Chronicles of Mardoun

Chapter 3 - Mendera

“There was a group that wanted to take power from The Chaln  in the early days. I think he asked if he could join it” - Kittara

It was very early and Kittara knew Sikush would be at least another half hour before he arrived, but it gave her time to think. She was hovering about at about 100 feet over the Sentinel Temple of the West and as usual a black mist swirled around her. This was one of seven points where they meet every morning and despite him choosing by random which of the seven places to meet she never chose the wrong place to wait.

Below her a spring of fresh water had sprung from the roof of the temple and it had various ferns growing along its path down the wall where it formed a small stream that joined eventually into the lake next to the grand council building. Such springs were created everywhere Kittara regularly waited and were considered holy signs by the Menderan people. Sikush said it was his punishment for saving her from a vengeful crowd all those billions of years ago. She once again reflected on how annoying he could be and how smoothly her short sword could remove his head from his neck. Not that it really could even if she wanted to, The Eternal was completely invulnerable to almost all weapons and forms of damage. Why did he need a guard ? It was tradition and often he protected them from harm, but you could hardly expect The Emperor, guardian of over 4000 worlds, head of the Temple, eternal and perhaps much more to walk into a meeting alone. There was one weapon which it was rumoured could kill him and she had it in her collection of weapons. It was very old and came from a part of Qasit the name given to a whole series of impossible part worlds where the normal laws of the Multiverse seemed to have been forgotten. How he found it and why Sikush had given it to her she didn't know, but as she'd never use it against him perhaps it was in safe hands.

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Mendera lay stretched out before her. Mendera was the capital City of the planet Mendera. A large hot semi desert planet with four moons and a light blue ring of dust that shone in the morning sky, which were the remains of a 5th moon that hadn't quite formed when the solar system was created. Mendera is a walled city, with a five metre high wall running around it in a circle of approximately 40 miles diameter. Visitors to Mendera often thought the wall was a bit of history, a remnant of its early years. In fact the wall marked the extent of Chlo's area of full control. Within the wall people going to bed with a virus or a cell turning cancerous woke up cured, usually unaware of being cured. No one fell off a high roof, no one except the guards could use weapons, no one was bitten by any wild creature and for the most part sex had no unpleasant consequences. People still fell in love and formed attachments doomed to failure, but that fell outside Chlo's remit.

In the centre of the walled area was The Temple of The Flame. It took up five square miles and went down a further four miles below ground. Around the Temple the original colonists had built 15 or so rings of housing fanning out in gradually more uneven and unclear rings. Only the first 8 rings were clearly seen on a map and houses in these rings were extremely sort after and spectacularly expensive. Kittara had waited nearly an entire age of the Temple for a house in ring 1, the ring closest in to the Temple to come up for sale and had paid a small fortune for it. Not enough money to buy an entire galaxy, but certainly enough to buy a whole string of planets. Within the wall to the south of the City was the Sentinel Temple of the South and then just before the wall was the Well of Souls, or just The Well as the locals called it. To the North

West was the Royal Palace of The Chalné which covered fifteen square miles and to the North East was the barracks of the Imperial Guard. Various official buildings were dotted about inside the wall, like the Grand Council chamber and the other Sentinel Temples, but nothing new had been built inside the wall for countless billions of years. Outside the wall was another matter, but the sprawling cities built by migrants from the planets of the Empire lay miles from Mendera City and rarely affected the quiet existence of the Menderan people.

Just to the south of the Circle was the market area and behind it the space port and camp of the outer world traders. Strictly the ever growing colony of traders living a semi permanent life in their craft was illegal, but like so many things in the Empire that were illegal but useful a blind eye was turned. The citizens of Mendera liked exotic pets, they liked rare fruits, and they liked variety in their courtesans. So the traders offered their goods and services and the respectable citizens of the Empire arrived in their droves. As long as no one was killed, or at least no one that mattered, then the Menderan mercenary police force left them alone.

There were no laws on Mendera, just Imperial notices about the way citizens were expected to behave. The problem was that some of these notices were ignored with impunity, but if you ignored others you were likely to receive a visit just before dawn by a group of mercenaries paid by the Empire to keep the peace. These visits often gave rise to a much sought after property suddenly becoming vacant and on the market.

One long standing notice was to the effect that anyone resident within the wall was entitled to attend council club nights at the Grand Council building. The Grand Council building was just as these kind of building should be, grand and imposing, with long sweeping hallways and a large meeting chamber where laws, or rather Imperial notices were agreed. Part of the building was a very exclusive restaurant that led out to a poolside area and a large swimming pool with changing rooms along its far side. The pool was an extension of a long lake that went right up to the wall and was fed by a stream from the north that came through a gated entrance through the wall. To the south another stream went past the Well of Souls and out through a gate in the southern wall. During the day and most evenings the restaurant and pool were always full of the elite of Mendera as place to enjoy a hot afternoon by the pool or a meal with their friends and family. Every 9th night though the pool and lake became the venue for the famous Council Club nights. Any person resident within the wall was invited and this included the outer world traders and merchants. You might think the Menderan's would object to this, but they enjoyed the variety. Council Club nights were from sunset to sunrise and offered sex and excess without consequences.

Chlo monitored everything and ensured not only that pregnancy and disease weren't an issue, but also that any couple wanting to couple couldn't do so if it meant death or serious injury due to anatomical incompatibility. No one drowned in the lake, or died from a drugs overdose or eating anything too alien for their body to handle. On top of her duties looking after all the merry makers, Chlo was also one of the most adventurous. Knowing the full limits her body could take enabled her to carry out some truly memorable couplings. Some Alien creatures had more than two sexes involved in the procreation process and far from confusing things this just seemed to add to the fun after a few drinks or some drugs. The Menderan's bought ointments, unguents and lotions from the traders that enhanced libido to the point that by the middle of the night the lake was full of creatures copulating in a wild frenzy among the myriad small island and sand bars that filled the lake. Chlo stopped any camera from working, or any recording device, so everyone could do as they pleased with no fear of it becoming public. What happened at Council Club stayed at Council Club.

Only a few people had ever told stories about what went on there and they mysteriously vanished after a dawn visit from the Mercs. Kittara sighed as she remembered a particularly well

endowed Kivar warrior who had boasted he could pleasure her for six solid hours. He only managed four, but even so he'd left an impression and she'd arranged to meet him again. The Chaln  had his own area in a quiet part of the poolside where only invited guest and The Damned were allowed to go. Kittara often watched as pushy women from the Empire planets almost fought to give him fellatio, hoping it might help their career or perhaps because he was The Chaln . He rarely penetrated anyone other than a member of The Damned and even then he usually quickly vanished taking him and his playmate of the night to an island out on the lake. Often it was Kittara he took and she enjoyed those nights better than with anyone else. Not because he had the biggest sex organ or kept it hard for longest, but because there was just something about being fucked by an eternal.

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Alyz appeared near her looking very pleased with herself. Alyz was quite different in appearance to Kittara. She had long blonde hair and pale skin, and she had curves that turned heads. Alyz had been an Arcadian before becoming a member of the Guard and had kept the skin tone and blue eyes of a typical Arcadian.

Kittara was had been from a non human looking race of warriors who's name was impossible to pronounce in her Menderan form. She had been dark skinned and almost lizard like, with a violent and brutal personality. She had kept the dark almost jet black skin and dark eyes and deep within still smouldered the brutal nature. She had been part of a raiding party that attacked a small colony planet in a seldom visited part of a now long gone galaxy. The planet was only inhabited by a few dumb miners and it was going to be easy pickings. They had been wrong and Kittara had found herself the only survivor of her party and tied to a stake in the middle of the colonist's settlement. They took turn to beat her with sticks, crow bars, shovels, even the children had joined in, and then they went off to tend their own wounded leaving her to die. First she had noticed a glow around her, and then the glow took on the shape of a female human, but with short stubby wings. She felt more pain and then a voice she came to know very well said,

"Gently, give her just enough to make sure she survives".

Then she'd lost consciousness. Many years later she realised Sikush had tracked her down as a potential member of The Damned, but at the time she was just grateful for being saved and brought back to full health. Being made a member of The Damned had a price to pay, no children, no marriage and being asked to risk that life to protect the same dumb colonists she had thought of as vermin. She had thought The Chaln  would try to erase the dark side of her nature, but instead he nurtured it and encouraged her to learn from those of their enemies who would, for the right price, teach some very dark arts.

The Chaln  was proud to say often that the Guard were not assassins, but she'd killed for him without question on many occasions. The good, the powerful, the bad, she didn't care as long as he was pleased with her and she could enjoy the kill. In half a billion years, on the day the new age of the Temple started he had arranged for her to go past Gateway and far into the lands of their enemy, to be taken even further along the dark path. Only a few truly powerful beings could survive long once past the 7th rift and she was not yet sure she was one of them. So she trained, she practised her arts and she read all the forbidden books in the Temple of the Flame she could.

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Sikush had slept with all the female members of The Damned at some point but he had a few favourites. Kittara knew she was top of his list and tried not to resent Alyz her after glow this morning, but she found it hard to return the usual morning greeting. Not that they'd ever get in a serious argument over anything so silly, or in fact anything serious either. The Damned could

spar and hold contests, but they had never been known to seriously fight one another. Was it part of the initiation that turned them from normal citizens of the Empire into supernatural immortal beings ? No one was quite sure, but no member of the Imperial guard had ever turned rogue, or seriously attacked a fellow member of the guard. Kittara approached Alyz and they brushed lips, which was their usual greeting. They had fought side by side in conflicts on worlds now gone and jealousy would never mar their friendship. By the time The Chalné arrived they were both hovering a few feet apart and ready for the day. The Imperial Guard were equally made up of men and women, but The Chalné invariable chose the women as his personal guard. Any journalist asking why usually got just a smile or a "Why do you think ?". The Chalné gave the women a kiss each and then felt their minds to link his reality change with them and then all three had vanished.

Mendera continued to bask in another hot sunny day and a sandstorm started to build up to the west.

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