

*Futile Fantasy Creations Present...***The Kasira Project Complete.****Enaki Forest – South Continent of Vitazoe.**

Deep in the southern continent, the Enaki forest spread like a blanket across many hundred miles of unspoilt land. The vast, dense woodland acted as a barrier to the plague that was mankind. Those who were not indigenous to the forest feared the spirits within and never dared venture inside. Safe from the anarchy of the outside world the oriental Enaki forest people had gained wisdom and peace from living in harmony with the great woodland. Many of them believed they were the sacred people of the world of Vitazoe, after all, it was they who kept the secret to man's prosperity.

**The Kasira Project Part I - Kasira's Destiny.****Dezara's Plateau – East Continent of Vitazoe.**

(Mist oozed from the great lake, pouring out onto the nearby meadow like dry ice as darkness overcame the land. Standing tall on the embankment nearby, a robed Enaki wise man looked on accompanied by a muscular warrior. As the mist thickened, neither flinched, choosing to remain focussed on the lake and the mountain that stood coldly at its centre. As they watched silently on, a deep menacing growl vibrated through the thickening mist until it echoed all around making the ground shake in its wake.

Lifting his neck to look skyward, the wise man scanned the bright midday sun then looked all around himself at the darkened fog that swamped the land around them. In no surprise at the day time darkening or the phenomenon around him, he clasped his praying hands together before nodding in acceptance. Stony-faced, he turned to his muscular giant Enaki compatriot beside him and spoke in a definite tone.)

*OMKI SAAN:* The creature is awakening, it is time!

(Without looking back at him, the warrior nodded and stared ahead as he replied.)

*DAKURI:* Then it begins!

**3 Days Later – North Continent of Vitazoe**

The north continent of Vitazoe was home to many great cities where the poor scratched and scraped for a living, often existing two families to one small hut. The rich, in contrast, enjoyed education, socialising and were accustomed to two storey cabins. The city of Sudereva, situated on the south coast of the continent was no exception. A large settlement had been erected around the castle there and city walls had been built to keep out intruders, and though nobody admitted it, to keep out peasants. As a result a sprawling shanty town had sprung up outside the city walls consisting of huts, shelters and lean-tos. This shanty town was home to many of the people who worked in Sudereva's many textile mills. Inside the city walls, however, it was a different world, there were 4 churches and a cathedral, many fine schools and the streets were paved with

cobbles. The homes there were made from the finest timber and the people lived in blissful ignorance of those outside.

One particularly hot summer afternoon, inside the city walls, the pupils of 'Sudereva finishing school for girls aged 16-18' sat sweating in their seats as their young male teacher lectured them on the importance of mathematical formula. Most of the girls wilted in their seats or fanned their faces as he spoke, while one girl 'Suzina' sat drooling lustfully over this most handsome educator.

Towards the back of the class, seemingly engrossed in his lecture, one of the quieter pupils, Kasira, concentrated hard on his words and followed his lips with her eyes. To the naked eye it may have appeared that she was focussing hard on his teachings. In reality, she was staring at his lips and secretly fantasising about wonderful it would feel to kiss them. Unlike the lustful Suzina who simply wanted to rip the teachers clothes off, Kasira was very much in love with him. When he greeted her as she came into his class, her legs would always turn to jelly and she'd have to rush her reply then hurry to her seat before she fainted. Her feelings went way beyond a crush, she'd completely and utterly lost her heart to him.

Had the teacher, Mr Cole Fishman, known about Kasira's feelings, he'd have been terrified. As a twenty one year old man surrounded by eighteen year old girls he was always very quick to distance himself from his pupils. The penalty in Sudereva for a teacher becoming romantically involved with a student was death and he was always very careful to make sure there could never be any misunderstandings. Suzina's obvious crush made him uncomfortable enough, if he'd known one of the girls was in love with him, he'd undoubtedly have requested a transfer.

Despite the depth of her feelings for Cole, Kasira would never dare to tell him how she felt. Despite being a very pretty young woman, she'd convinced herself she was funny looking. In her heart she was certain that such a handsome man would never go for a strange looking girl like her. As far as she was concerned, she had an oddly flat face and her eyes were bizarrely askew. What Kasira didn't know, however, was that the features she considered odd were in fact inherent traits of her race. Having been raised in an all white city, she though was a Caucasian girl. In reality, she was oriental. Sadly for her, however, few people within the white nations even knew an oriental race existed and nobody had ever told her about her ethnic origin. Even the black couple who'd adopted her as a baby had kept the secret from her, not wishing to draw attention to the things that made her different to her peers. And so, she'd grown up in ignorance of her own race.

As Kasira sat watching her teachers eyes lovingly, lost in her own little world, she suddenly felt a tapping on her shoulder from her left.

*CHEYANNE:* Oi, Kasira!

(Desperate not to lose her romantic train of thought, Kasira furrowed her brow.)

*KASIRA:* Shush!

*CHEYANNE:* Oi!

(Once again, she tried to ignore her.)

*CHEYANNE:* I'm talking to you, you wonky eyed bint!

(Kasira spun round and glared at her.)

*CHEYANNE:* Sorry, but it got your attention didn't it?

(Kasira shook her head with annoyance.)

*KASIRA:* Look, what do you want? I'm trying to listen!

(Cheyanne grinned.)

*CHEYANNE:* Look at Suzina, she's got no chance!

(They both glanced over at the love struck blonde who was leaning back, pushing out her chest and pouting at the teacher while constantly crossing and uncrossing her legs.

Kasira and Cheyanne both shook their heads with disbelief as they watched Suzina's skirt ride higher and higher up her leg each time.)

*CHEYANNE:* She's sad!

*KASIRA:* She's a disgrace!

*CHEYANNE:* I don't know what she sees in him!

(Kasira looked over at him as he gave his animated description of long division and sighed lovingly.)

*KASIRA:* I do!

(Cheyanne laughed.)

*CHEYANNE:* Brilliant, you looked just like her then!

*KASIRA:* Eh? Who?

*CHEYANNE:* Suzina!

(Kasira gave an unconvincing laugh.)

*KASIRA:* Yeah... um, good impression that!

(Suddenly the air was filled with the sound of the headmistress ringing the school bell to signify the end of the day. The girls all sat forward and looked at the teacher excitedly.)

*COLE:* Okay, off you go then... oh, Kasira, can you see me after please?

(She looked bewildered as the girls all hurriedly put their inkpots and quills away before making a dash for the door, all except Suzina that is, who hadn't even heard the bell.)

*COLE:* Suzina, you can go now... whoa!!!

(He suddenly turned his head and held his palm towards her looking flustered.)

*COLE:* Um... could you pull your... skirt down please!

(She blushed and did as she was told.)

*COLE:* Right, lovely, thank you, bye!

(In a panic, he headed for the door at lightning speed, forgetting all about his request to see Kasira after class. Luckily, before he could pass through the door, she was on hand to remind him.)

*KASIRA:* Um... sir?

(Looking a little startled he stopped in his tracks.)

*COLE:* Where am I going?

(He scratched his head as Suzina minced past him smiling seductively.)

*SUZINA:* Bye sir!

(Cole looked down.)

*COLE:* Um... yes... bye then!

(As she closed the door behind her, Cole returned to his desk.)

*COLE:* Ah, Kasira, yes... take a seat!

(He gestured to her to sit down in front of him.)

*KASIRA*: Sir!

(She obliged.)

*KASIRA*: Am I in some sort of trouble, sir?

(He scratched his chin.)

*COLE*: I don't know, is there a problem?

(She looked confused.)

*KASIRA*: What do you mean?

*COLE*: Well, you were my star pupil, five 'A' grades in a row at the start of the year, but the last two pieces of work you've done have been somewhat lacking!

*KASIRA*: Really?

(She looked disappointed.)

*KASIRA*: I thought I'd done okay!

*COLE*: Seriously?

*KASIRA*: Well... yeah!

*COLE*: The last one was so poor it looked like you got the family pet to do your calculations for you!

*KASIRA*: We haven't got a pet!

*COLE*: Yeah but if you had...

*KASIRA*: But we haven't!

(Cole sat back.)

*COLE*: You're upset!

(She looked away.)

*KASIRA*: No, I'm not!

*COLE*: Look, is there a problem with me? Is it something I'm doing? Only you don't get this bad overnight!

(She looked up.)

*KASIRA*: It's not you, you're the best teacher I've ever had, I only got them five 'A' grades because of you, I just need to try harder!

(He smiled.)

*COLE*: Fair enough, it'd be shame for you to fail this close to the end of the year!

(She nodded.)

*COLE*: That's all, I'll see you soon then!

(She stood up.)

*KASIRA*: Bye sir!

(With that, she headed slowly to the door.)

*COLE*: Oh and um... Kasira, cheer up eh? You're an intelligent girl, you can do it!

(She smiled and headed out into the corridor. As she closed the door, however, she was immediately confronted by an angry Suzina.)

*SUZINA*: What were you doing in there, what did you say to him?

(Taken aback by her demeanour, Kasira retorted angrily.)

*KASIRA*: What's it to you? Just 'cause you follow him home every night doesn't mean you own him!

(Suzina was furious.)

*SUZINA*: I don't follow him!!! We walk together!

*KASIRA*: Together? Is that what you call 20 feet behind?

(Fuming wildly, Suzina grabbed Kasira's blouse and thrust her against the wall.)

*SUZINA:* Who the hell do you think you are??? No one likes you, you're a freak, no wonder you've never had a boyfriend! Look at you, you wonky eyed bitch!!!

(In a fit of rage she threw her to the ground.)

*SUZINA:* Go on, get out of here you scary eyed freak!!!

(Fighting back tears, Kasira scrambled to her feet and fled down the corridor. Once outside the school grounds she ran towards her home with tears streaming down her face. Receiving strange glances from everyone she passed, she changed direction and headed for the nearby church. Still fighting back her emotions, she raced up the steps outside the old brick building and dashed through the large wooden doors straight into an old lady, sending her sprawling face first onto a pew. Feeling flustered she apologised unreservedly.)

*KASIRA:* Sorry, sorry, I didn't see you!

(The kindly lady climbed to her feet.)

*LADY:* That's quite alright child!

(She looked up at the sad young girl.)

*LADY:* My, my, haven't you got funny eyes?

(Kasira frowned angrily.)

*KASIRA:* Piss off, you old bat!

(With that she stormed off towards the front of the church, to where her friend, the straight talking, reverend Bond was polishing a candlestick.)

*KASIRA:* Reverend?

(He turned and smiled.)

*BOND:* Ah, Kasira, always a pleasure to see you!

(She said nothing.)

*BOND:* Oh dear, like that is it?

*KASIRA:* I don't want to talk about it!

*BOND:* Jolly good!

(He about-turned and continued polishing. Kasira protested in a small voice.)

*KASIRA:* Hey!

*BOND:* Changed your mind?

(She stepped up to him.)

*KASIRA:* Can we talk somewhere?

*BOND:* How about here?

*KASIRA:* It's private!

*BOND:* This is a church, there's no bugger here, never is!

*KASIRA:* There's that lady...

(She pointed towards the door.)

*KASIRA:* There was!

*BOND:* She's gone, probably won't come back either, not after you tried to kill her!

*KASIRA:* It was an accident!

*BOND:* Yes, that's what I said when I knocked her flying earlier!

(They chuckled.)

*BOND:* There, you're smiling again!

*KASIRA:* Only on the outside!

*BOND:* I see! So what's up?

(She looked around to make sure they were alone.)

*KASIRA*: It's everything really!

*BOND*: Well can you narrow it down? I've got a date this evening!

*KASIRA*: A date?

*BOND*: I jest!

*KASIRA*: Oh, anyway, well...

(She hung her head.)

*KASIRA*: Thing is, everyone hates me at school, I've got weird eyes, my parents are the only black people in Sudereva, I'm failing school, I'm in love with my teacher, I'm a funny shade of yellow...

(Looking somewhat baffled by her outburst, Bond interrupted.)

*BOND*: What? Eh? Stop it!

(She looked glum.)

*BOND*: Bloody hell, talk about overkill, how am I gonna remember all that... wait a minute...

(He looked down his nose at her.)

*BOND*: Did you say you're in love with your teacher?

*KASIRA*: No!

*BOND*: Meaning?

*KASIRA*: Yes!

*BOND*: Thought so!

(She looked ashamed.)

*BOND*: Come with me!

(He lead her to the front row of the pews and sat down.)

*BOND*: Please!

(She sat down looking thoroughly embarrassed.)

*BOND*: Right, firstly, who cares what anyone else thinks about you, secondly you're eyes aren't weird, they're special, thirdly, your parents are nice people...

*KASIRA*: Yeah, nice and black!

*BOND*: Even so, they love you don't they?

*KASIRA*: Yeah but...

*BOND*: But nothing, now where was I? Oh yes, try harder at school and stop drooling over the teacher, finally...

(He gasped for breath.)

*BOND*: You're a lovely shade of yellow!

(Unimpressed, Kasira stood up.)

*KASIRA*: You're a fat lot of help!

*BOND*: Well, this is as good as I get!

*KASIRA*: I'm going home!

*BOND*: Before you do, Kasira, seriously, you are a great person, if other people can't see it, well, that's their problem!

(She smiled.)

*KASIRA*: I know, thanks for trying!

*BOND*: I didn't!

*KASIRA*: I know!

*BOND*: Oh, and another thing, if you really love your teacher... leave him alone, the penalty for a teacher interfering with a pupil is beheading!

*KASIRA*: I can't help the way I feel!

*BOND*: Then try, now piss off home and be nice to your parents!

*KASIRA*: I will!

(Feeling cheered by the reverends straight talking attitude, she headed out of the church doors then stopped at the top of the steps and grinned at the sight in the street before her.)

*KASIRA*: Oh, my god!

(She watched with amusement as Cole hurried past being followed by a lusty Suzina. Looking flustered and more than a little annoyed, he remonstrated with his pursuer.)

*COLE*: Look, stop it, leave me alone, must we go through this every day?

(Suzina said nothing and continued on intently. As Kasira continued to enjoy the spectacle, the reverend Bond came out and stood beside her.)

*BOND*: I was thinking, this love for your teacher, is that why you're failing?

(Kasira bit her lip and said nothing.)

*BOND*: Thought so! Just remember, there'll be plenty of time for love after you've left school!

(Kasira just smiled and headed for home.

In the meantime, back at her home, Kasira's parents were deep in conversation.)

*ROSE*: Where dat girl got to?

*RUFUS*: She late again?

*ROSE*: No, I got amnesia, why ya think I asking?

*RUFUS*: Chill woman, she probably got herself a gentleman friend!

*ROSE*: With those eyes, I doubt it!

*RUFUS*: Hey, don't be cruel, she a pretty girl!

*ROSE*: As pretty as I?

*RUFUS*: Don't be crazy woman, she far prettier than you!

*ROSE*: I can slap your head from here you know!

*RUFUS*: Now look, you got me pissing in me trousers!

*ROSE*: You really wanna go down dat road?

*RUFUS*: I told you, I was ill!!!

*ROSE*: I been ill before, I not go soiling me clothes!

(Before he could answer there was a loud knocking on the door.)

*ROSE*: Dat be Kasira, let da girl in will you!

*RUFUS*: I aint you slave you know!

*ROSE*: Wanna taste me rolling pin?

(Rufus flinched and hurried to the door.)

*RUFUS*: I only doin' this for she!

(Mumbling under his breath he swung open the door.)

*RUFUS*: Where you been at???

(He then froze to the spot.)

*RUFUS*: It's... you!

(He gaped in distressed silence, staring out of the doorway in utter shock until the caller spoke.)

*OMKI SAAN*: He has risen!

(Shaking his head from surprise, Rufus stepped aside and allowed the majestic wise man, Omki Saan to enter the abode, followed by Dakuri his giant companion. Rufus, still in a state of shock, called out with a trembling voice.)

*RUFUS:* R-Rose, it's Kasira's... parents?

*OMKI SAAN:* Guardians!

(Rose came from the kitchen in a hurry.)

*ROSE:* What are you crazy...

(On spotting them she too gaped with shock.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Mr Ashford, Mrs Ashford... the time has come! The chosen one, Kasira, must now fulfil her destiny!

(A brief, tense silence ensued before Rose tripped forwards.)

*ROSE:* I need to sit down!

(She staggered over to the dining table, followed by the others.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You look well, Rose!

(Slinging herself on a chair, she looked up.)

*ROSE:* You gonna take her away?

*OMKI SAAN:* As we agreed, her eighteenth birthday approaches, it is time for her to fulfil her destiny! It has stirred to devour us all!

(Rufus too, took a seat.)

*RUFUS:* My little girl!

(Omki Saan took the liberty of pulling up a seat opposite him.)

*RUFUS:* I always knew this day would come, I just never expected it!

(There was silence.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Is she here?

*ROSE:* She aint back from school!

(Rufus shook his head.)

*RUFUS:* Man, how we gonna tell her she adopted? We told her nothing!

(He received three disbelieving looks.)

*ROSE:* Don't ya think she might have figured dat out?

(He shrugged.)

*ROSE:* We as black as a burnt chicken!

*RUFUS:* She hardly white!

*ROSE:* Even so!

*OMKI SAAN:* Please, do not argue. When she returns she will understand, her Enaki blood will help her understand!

(Just then they heard footsteps approaching the open door.)

*RUFUS:* This is she, act normal!

*ROSE:* What? Why?

*RUFUS:* Man... I don't know, I'm feeling nauseous!

*ROSE:* Relax, we not want to spook the girl!

*RUFUS:* You right, this is gonna be tough enough on her as it is!

(They all turned to face the door as Kasira strolled in. As she caught sight of them she stopped dead and looked bewildered.)

*ROSE:* Um... Kasira darlin', come and sit down!

(Looking anxious, she approached Omki Saan and Dakuri with caution.)

*KASIRA:* Y-you're eyes!



(She stared at them in amazement.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You have grown into a beautiful woman, Kasira!

(Turning her head slightly, she spoke nervously.)

*KASIRA:* You're eyes... is one of you my... father?

(Rufus spanned his forehead.)

*RUFUS:* She knew it wasn't me all along!

*KASIRA:* What's happening mum?

*ROSE:* Oh precious, come and sit down!

(Nervously she crept alongside her foster mother and sat down.)

*KASIRA:* Am I adopted? I thought I was!

(Looking sad and confused she slumped in her seat.)

*KASIRA:* Why are you here?

(She glanced up at Omki Saan.)

*KASIRA:* And why are you all acting so strangely?

(Omki Saan leant forwards.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira, beautiful Kasira...

*KASIRA:* Stop saying that you slanty eyed freak, I don't know you!

*ROSE:* Chill out, girly!

(She put her arm around her.)

*OMKI SAAN:* This must be a shock to you...

*KASIRA:* Are you my father? Are you the one who gave these ridiculous eyes?

(Shaking with anger she bit her nails and stared at him.)

*OMKI SAAN:* I am not your father, you have those eyes, Kasira, because you are an Enaki!

*KASIRA:* Well... you're fat!

(Omki Saan was quite taken aback.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Enaki is not an insult, it is the name of our proud race, we all have these eyes!

(Rufus and Rose hung their heads as Kasira continued to stare angrily.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You may not remember, but you are one of us, now we have come to claim you!

*KASIRA:* Claim me? I'm not going anywhere with you!

(Omki Saan scratched his chin.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira...

*KASIRA:* It's Miss Ashford to you!

*OMKI SAAN:* But I am you're guardian!

*KASIRA:* Poop!

(She folded her arms and looked away.)

*OMKI SAAN:* I am not a guilty father trying to make up for the past, I brought you here to be safe... so that you could fulfil your destiny!

(She looked at him.)

*KASIRA:* Are you still here?

(And looked away again.)

*OMKI SAAN:* I had to bring you here after someone tried to kill you!

(She looked at him not knowing whether to believe him. Having grabbed her attention Omki Saan continued.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You are the chosen one, the saviour of mankind, you are revered by the Enaki people! An incredible destiny awaits you!

*KASIRA:* Rubbish!

*ROSE:* Hear him out, Kasira!

*KASIRA:* But... Mum? What is all this? Why should I listen to this senile old tosser?

(She looked into Kasira's eyes.)

*ROSE:* 'Cause I think he speak the truth!

(She fell silent.)

*KASIRA:* Mum?

*ROSE:* It was 17 years ago...

(She caught her breath and began again.)

*ROSE:* 17 year ago, we was poor, we has no money, we live out there in the slums... we got no children, work was hard to find, it was tough Kasira...

(You could of heard a pin drop as Rose spoke closely to her.)

*ROSE:* ... That's when Omki Saan came into town with this big ape carrying a baby...

(Dakuri folded his arms and pretended not to be offended.)

*ROSE:* ... We all laughed at their funny eyes, especially the big one...

(He sneered and bit his lip.)

*ROSE:* ... then they approached your father and I, I offered the big one a banana...

*DAKURI:* It wasn't funny then and it isn't funny now!!!

*OMKI SAAN:* Dakuri!!!

*DAKURI:* I apologise master!

(He stood tall and folded his arms.)

*ROSE:* They asked us to adopt you... in return for giving you the best education and a comfortable upbringing, they offered us riches beyond our wildest dreams, they even paid for this house... we accepted straight away... now we could live inside the city walls... in comfort...

(Kasira started to cry.)

*ROSE:* It didn't take long for us to start loving you Kasira, you must understand that, I wish you really were my daughter... but, you're not!

(Rose also began to sob.)

*ROSE:* We said at the time 'sniff' you must really be important to them...

*KASIRA:* I 'sniff' always kinda knew I was adopted... I just hoped...

*ROSE:* I know... but now they come to claim you!

*KASIRA:* I don't care, I want to stay here... with you!

*ROSE:* You will always have a home here, 'sniff', always Kasira, always!

(They hugged as they poured out the rest of their tears on each others shoulders. Rufus shrugged and looked at Omki Saan.)

*RUFUS:* Forgive the tears, it's a woman ting, you know?

(With that, he too, burst out crying.)

*RUFUS:* What the hell!

(He threw his arms around Kasira and Rose. Omki Saan watched on bemused then raised a finger in the air.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Um... hello?

(There was no response. Wearing a confused frown he turned to Dakuri who shrugged back at him.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Um... I'm still here!

(Rufus looked up.)

*RUFUS:* Can't you see we're having a private family moment?

(He resumed hugging them. Omki Saan turned to Dakuri.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You might as well sit down, this might take a while!

*DAKURI:* Yes master!

*OMKI SAAN:* Um... Dakuri?

*DAKURI:* Master?

*OMKI SAAN:* What is a... tosser?

(After a few minutes had passed and the tears had ceased, Kasira sat herself between her parents and talked directly to Omki Saan across the table.)

*KASIRA:* If I do this, I want you to know, I'll be returning here to Sudereva afterwards!

*OMKI SAAN:* It saddens me, but that is your choice!

*KASIRA:* And if I change my mind half way through the job...

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira, I came here with the intention of taking you back to Enaki forest, as the chosen one, you have no choice... you either come voluntarily... or by force!

*RUFUS:* You hold ya horses grandpa...

*OMKI SAAN:* I apologise, but my reason for existing is to make sure the chosen one is ready, once you have been empowered, Kasira, you will know what you must do! Until then, my sole purpose is to make sure you recognise your destiny!

(There was silence for a moment until Kasira frowned and banged the table.)

*KASIRA:* NO!!!

(Everybody Flinched.)

*KASIRA:* This is the only life I know, you can't just walk into my life and destroy it like this!

(Omki Saan sat forward and spoke softly.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira...

*KASIRA:* No, listen to me! This is all a bit much to take in, don't you think?

*OMKI SAAN:* I understand, but you must also! This is not negotiable!!! You are the one, the only one. Since an attempt was made on your life when you were a mere baby, Rufus and Rose have given you sanctuary, nothing more! Your life starts here, you are Enaki, you are chosen, this is not the way it must be, it is the way it *will* and can only be! If you do not fulfil your destiny, the whole of mankind and all life in this world will perish. So you see, there can be no other way!

(Startled by the depth of his revelations, Kasira spoke softly with little certainty.)

*KASIRA:* So I have no choice?

*OMKI SAAN:* This is the way it has to be!

*KASIRA:* But... says who?

*OMKI SAAN:* The spirits who chose you and gave you your gift!

*KASIRA:* What gift? I don't have a gift, I'm even failing maths!

*OMKI SAAN:* I can show you, allow me to demonstrate!

(In one quick swift movement, he thrust his hand to his side and produced a dagger.

Kasira and her parents instinctively thrust themselves back in their seats.)

*RUFUS:* Hey, Omki Saan, there's no need for violence man!

(Ignoring them, Omki Saan called Dakuri to his side.)

*RUFUS*: Hey what ya gonna do?

*OMKI SAAN*: Watch!

(As they looked on with curiosity, Dakuri placed his arm flat on the table.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Observe!

(Clutching the dagger tight in his hand, Omki Saan placed the blade over Dakuri's forearm.)

*ROSE*: Ooh, I can't watch!

(Sensing Omki Saan's next move, Kasira, Rufus and Rose all squirmed as he dug the blade into Dakuri's arm and started to carve.)

*RUFUS*: Stop tat!

*KASIRA*: Err... yuk, no don't!

(She looked away.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Now see!

(Nervously they glanced at his arm, Rufus doing a double take.)

*RUFUS*: No wound?

(They were dumbstruck.)

*RUFUS*: You some kind of freak?

*KASIRA*: I... I don't get it... how does this mean I'm gifted?

(Omki Saan handed her the knife.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Now you!

*KASIRA*: You aint touching me with that thing!!!

*OMKI SAAN*: No, now you try to cut Dakuri!

(Dakuri gulped.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Though do it gently!

(Unsure how to react, she slowly took the knife from Omki Saan.)

*KASIRA*: You want me to...

(She looked at Dakuri.)

*OMKI SAAN*: That is correct!

*KASIRA*: Well... no, I can't!

(She put the knife down.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Please, Kasira... you must!

(Shaking like a leaf she reached for the knife again.)

*KASIRA*: I don't like this!

(Silence fell as she reached across the table towards Dakuri. Omki Saan nodded in encouragement as she reluctantly neared his skin with the blade. As Dakuri braced himself, Kasira shut her eyes and poked at him with the daggers sharp point, barely scraping his skin.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Excellent!

(Kasira opened her eyes to see blood ooze from the tiny wound and leapt up and down looking somewhat distressed.)

*KASIRA*: Err... no... yuk, yuk, yuk...

(She shuddered with discomfort.)

*KASIRA*: That was horrible!

(Rufus looked stunned.)

*RUFUS*: What was da point of tat?

*ROSE*: Damn fool gonna get tetanus!

*OMKI SAAN:* The point of that, my friends is this... I carved at Dakuri, I applied much pressure, yet I could not cut him... you, Kasira, drew blood from a tiny poke!  
(Suddenly, Silence.)

*RUFUS:* Yeah... how tat work den?

(Omki Saan pushed out his chest and spoke with pride.)

*OMKI SAAN:* This is the sacred dagger of the Enaki, only the chosen one can use it, to anyone else it is useless, yet in the hands of the chosen one... it is a lethal blade!

*KASIRA:* So I really am... the chosen one?

*OMKI SAAN:* You have seen it with your own eyes, have you not?

(There was silence for a moment.)

*KASIRA:* So what must I do?

(Omki Saan smiled.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You are convinced?

(Kasira nodded.)

*KASIRA:* Yes, yes I am!

*ROSE:* Man, even I'm convinced, and I just thought you were a fruitcake!

*RUFUS:* Gotta admit, tat was some ting!

*OMKI SAAN:* Then you will come?

*KASIRA:* I still don't want to, but I still have no choice... of course I'll come!

*OMKI SAAN:* Bless you Kasira!

(Rufus looked at her.)

*RUFUS:* I no hear you sneeze!

*ROSE:* Shut it Rufus!

*KASIRA:* So what am I to do?

(Omki Saan leant forward.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You are to go on a trip, to seek out and destroy a beast...

*DAKURI:* Apologies master... does anyone have anything to stop the bleeding?

(They all looked at his blood soaked forearm.)

*RUFUS:* Not letting people poke you with knives, would be a good start!

*ROSE:* Hold on, I get you a sponge!

(She climbed from her seat and headed to the kitchen.)

*ROSE:* Come here blood boy, I aint havin' ya bleeding to death all over me nice new furniture!

(Dakuri followed.)

*RUFUS:* Fancy letting him chop you up!

*KASIRA:* Dad!

*RUFUS:* Sorry love!

*KASIRA:* You were saying?

*OMKI SAAN:* Yes... this journey is to destroy the beast, the beast who is reborn every two hundred years. With each rebirth, there is a new chosen one. The beast has only one weakness, the sacred dagger. Only *you* can deal a fatal blow.

(Kasira looked terrified.)

*KASIRA:* B-beast, when you say beast... you mean like a cow, right?

*OMKI SAAN:* No, I mean a foul, disgusting evil one!

(She bit her fingernails.)

*KASIRA:* When you say foul...

*OMKI SAAN:* I don't mean a chicken!

(Quaking like a leaf, she put her hands over her face.)

*KASIRA:* But... I'm just a schoolgirl, I'm not even 18 yet... I'm scared... what if the beast eats me?

(Rufus put his arm around her.)

*RUFUS:* Kasira darlin...

*KASIRA:* I'm scared... I can't do it! I'm just one girl!

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira, you will not be alone!

(She looked up.)

*KASIRA:* I won't be alone? Then who...

*ROSE:* There you go... now stop showing off, there's nothing clever about letting people stab you, you know!

(Dakuri returned to Omki Saan's side of the table while Rose retook her seat.)

*ROSE:* Where was we?

*OMKI SAAN:* I was just about to about to ask Kasira about life here in this metropolis!

*KASIRA:* Really?

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira, apart from Rufus and Rose, who do you turn to for spiritual guidance?

(Despite the apparent oddness of the question, Kasira shrugged and answered without hesitation.)

*KASIRA:* The reverend Bond, I suppose, he usually helps me out with advice... why?

*OMKI SAAN:* Reverend Bond!

*ROSE:* Huh, reverend Bond, I'll give you reverend Bond!

*RUFUS:* Give it a rest woman!

*ROSE:* Hmph!

*OMKI SAAN:* What about knowledge Kasira? Who do you turn to for learning?

(She shrugged.)

*KASIRA:* My teacher's obviously!

*OMKI SAAN:* Which one in particular?

*KASIRA:* Maths... Cole Fishman... he's my favourite anyway!

(Omki Saan turned to Dakuri.)

*OMKI SAAN:* The chosen one has spoken, reverend Bond and Cole Fishman will be her mental and spiritual guardians!

*KASIRA:* What? I never said that!!!

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira, your first reaction was to pick these two as the ones who you turn to, I can only deduce from this that they will be the most suitable!

*KASIRA:* They'll kill me!

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira, with Dakuri to protect you, I very much doubt it!

*KASIRA:* Oh, shit!

*ROSE:* Language girly!

(She gave her a clip round the ear.)

*KASIRA:* Ouch!

*RUFUS:* Didn't protect her from that though, did he?

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira, gather yourself a few essentials, it is time!

*KASIRA:* Already?

*OMKI SAAN:* There is no time to waste, your eighteenth birthday approaches, we must collect reverend Bond and Cole Fishman, our ship leaves at dawn!

*KASIRA:* But, I'm still in my school uniform!

*OMKI SAAN:* Then change!

(In a panic she rushed off to her room.)

*KASIRA:* I won't be long!

*RUFUS:* You female, of course you will!

(As she disappeared out of sight, Rose shook her head.)

*ROSE:* She'll be okay won't she?

*OMKI SAAN:* You have my word! Dakuri and I have waited all our lives to oversee this moment and lead the chosen one to her calling. Failure would be unacceptable!

*RUFUS:* If any ting happen to her, I come after you and kick your slanty face in!

*OMKI SAAN:* Well... I'd like to see you try!

(Dakuri stepped up beside him.)

*RUFUS:* Um... I said if!

(He hid behind Rose.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Have faith Rufus, Dakuri and the other two will protect her!

*ROSE:* Huh, I doubt it!

(Omki Saan raised an eyebrow.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Meaning?

*ROSE:* That reverend Bond's a horrible man, he won't protect her!

*RUFUS:* Here we go again!

*OMKI SAAN:* What is your concern?

(Rose waved an angry fist.)

*ROSE:* He's a racist, nothing but a fascist!

*RUFUS:* How many times?

*ROSE:* He refused to let me join the church choir just because I'm black!

*RUFUS:* Everybody else in the choir is black, you crazy old boot!

*ROSE:* Don't give me dat! The entire church system is racist!

*RUFUS:* Where you getting dat from?

(Feeling somewhat embarrassed, Omki Saan stood up.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Um... we'll wait by the door!

(Oblivious to Omki Saan's backtracking, Rose replied to Rufus sternly.)

*ROSE:* I sent the church elders a petition saying he was racist, there were over 200 names on dat petition, yet they did nothin'!

*RUFUS:* You filled it out yourself woman!

*ROSE:* What are you trying to say? That's a lie!

*RUFUS:* Really? Are you trying to say 'the old lady who works at the bakery' is really her name?

*ROSE:* I can't help what they wrote!!!

*RUFUS:* And why would anyone sign them name "Ethel's oldest boy, the one with the squint"?

*ROSE:* Whose side are you on?

*RUFUS:* It's not a case of sides, the man did nothing to you, he turned you down for the choir 'cause your singing sounds like a donkey being beaten to death!

*ROSE:* That's nasty, you know damn well I sang in the choir all the time back in the old country!!!

*RUFUS:* What choice did they have, your father was the priest!!!

*ROSE:* That's got nothing to do with it!!!

*RUFUS:* Even then he made you stand at the back!

*ROSE:* That's 'cause it was higher up!

*RUFUS:* That's 'cause it was further away!!!

*ROSE:* Who cares, it's a crap choir anyhow!

*RUFUS:* I like them, but thanks to you Kasira never got to see them!

*ROSE:* Lucky for her, they terrible!

*RUFUS:* 'Cause of dat, she grow up thinking we the only black people in Sudereva!!!

*ROSE:* Don't you be blaming me for dat, Rufus, don't start with me!

(Luckily, their squabbling was interrupted by Kasira emerging from her bedroom.)

*KASIRA:* I'm ready!

(They all turned to face her. Looking sad and upset she stood in the doorway holding a small back pack. Rose approached her slowly and smiled.)

*ROSE:* Darlin... you look... like a tart, get changed!

*RUFUS:* Leave she alone, Kasira, you look lovely!

*KASIRA:* The make up's not too much is it?

(Rose sighed acceptingly.)

*ROSE:* No, you look beautiful.

(Kasira blushed.)

*KASIRA:* Thanks.

*ROSE:* And I guess it makes sense that if you're going on a trip, you might as well try to snare a husband! You'll have all the boys eating out of your hand.

(As Kasira nervously fiddled with her hair, unwilling to admit she'd only made extra effort on her appearance to impress her teacher, Omki Saan whispered to Dakuri.)

*OMKI SAAN:* The chosen one should not be thinking about boys!

*DAKURI:* I told you it was a mistake to bring her here!

*OMKI SAAN:* No you didn't!

*DAKURI:* But...

*OMKI SAAN:* Now shut up and do as you're told! The main thing is we have achieved our first objective. The chosen one, mankind's only hope is alive and well, undiscovered by the beast and its minions. Our decision to bring her here has been justified.

(Dakuri nodded and folded his arms as Omki Saan approached Kasira.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Do not worry about your appearance, Kasira, your attire will be customised once we reach Enaki forest anyway!

*KASIRA:* Eh?

*OMKI SAAN:* A traditional costume awaits you in Enaki, for now... let us go!

(With saddened eyes Kasira threw her arms around Rose and Rufus, hugging them for all she was worth. Moments later, feeling frightened and dejected she made her way out of the door with Omki Saan and Dakuri. Rufus and Rose hugged each other as they watched her go. The day they'd always feared, had come.)



(As the once scorching sun began to make its way down from the sky, candlelight began to appear in the windows of every homestead. The city streets grew emptier as the market stalls closed down for the day. Soon, the doors and gates to every public establishment would be locked firm, all except one, the eternally open door of the church. This was a welcome sight for one particular resident, in search of refuge from his torment.

As the reverend Bond straightened up his dog eared religious books, he looked up to see a man rushing through the large church doors, looking behind him like a frightened rabbit. Curious as to the man's trouble, the reverend Bond approached him in the aisle.)

*BOND:* Good evening!

(Startled, the man yelped and held his chest.)

*COLE:* You almost gave me a heart attack!

*BOND:* Then try not to be so highly strung. What's the matter with you?

*COLE:* What do you mean?

*BOND:* You look like you've seen a ghost!

(Cole shook his head.)

*COLE:* If she persists I might well end up being one!

*BOND:* Woman trouble, eh? Tell me about it!

(Cole looked him in the eye.)

*COLE:* You think you can help me father?

*BOND:* Reverend! And yes, woman trouble is my speciality... god knows I've caused enough of it!

*COLE:* Sorry?

*BOND:* Don't apologise, so what's the problem?

*COLE:* Shall we sit?

*BOND:* Sure, if it makes you feel better!

(They both rested upon a pew and Cole began.)

*COLE:* There's this girl... 'Suzina'...

*BOND:* Ah, girls!

(Cole gave him a curious look as the reverend mused happily for a few moments.)

*COLE:* You okay?

(Snapping out of it the reverend continued.)

*BOND:* Yes, yes, sorry, carry on!

*COLE:* This girl keeps following me, every day she waits for me to leave work and follows me home!

*BOND:* Enough boasting, what's the problem?

(Cole scratched his head.)

*COLE:* Well, *she* is!

*BOND:* Bit of a dog is she?

*COLE:* Well... no, she's very pretty actually!

*BOND:* Ah, I get it, you're married!

*COLE:* No!

*BOND:* Then what are you complaining about?

(Suddenly he edged backwards down the pew, looking most uncomfortable.)

*BOND:* Wait a minute, you're not one of them bloody poofa thingies are you???

*COLE:* No, I bloody well aint!!!

*BOND:* Good, though don't swear in my church!

*COLE:* You just did!

*BOND:* I'm allowed... anyway, forget that, what are you whinging for, you aint married and there's a beautiful girl after you, what's the problem?

*COLE:* I'm her teacher!

(With realisation etched into his face, the reverend sat forward.)

*BOND:* See, now I understand! Why didn't you just tell me in the first place?

*COLE:* I tried to, you kept interrupting!

*BOND:* Really? I have a habit of doing that apparently!

*COLE:* What shall I do reverend? If anyone suspects anything... I could be beheaded!

*BOND:* Well, you wouldn't be the first bloke to lose his head over some girl!

(He chuckled to himself.)

*BOND:* That was quite witty!

*COLE:* What sort of a holy man are you?

*BOND:* What? Sorry... so, where is she now?

(Looking frightened, Cole turned towards the door.)

*COLE:* I don't know exactly... but she's out there somewhere... waiting to pounce... help me reverend... please!!!

(Sure enough, Suzina was lurking in a bush outside. She was so engrossed in staring at the church's main doors lustfully, she didn't even notice Omki Saan, Dakuri and Kasira, march past her and into the holy building.

Feeling an overwhelming sense of guilt, Kasira ran towards Cole and Bond as soon as she saw them. With a sorrowful expression, she held her hands to her face and immediately began grovelling as Omki Saan and Dakuri slowly caught up.)

*KASIRA:* Please, forgive me you two, it wasn't my fault, they tricked me, I'm so, so sorry!

(She shook her head with shame as Cole and Bond both gave her an odd look.)

*COLE:* You okay, Kasira?

*BOND:* What the bloody hell are you babbling on about girl?

*KASIRA:* Sorry!

(Hearing Omki Saan and Dakuri's footsteps, the two men looked over.)

*BOND:* Who are you?

*COLE:* Isn't it obvious?

(He stepped up to Dakuri.)

*COLE:* Hello, you must be Kasira's father.

(She was not amused.)

*KASIRA:* What? Why do you assume that? Just 'cause we've got the same ridiculous eyes?

(Cole didn't understand.)

*COLE:* I always thought you've got beautiful eyes!

*KASIRA:* Oh!

(She blushed and looked at the floor.)

*BOND:* No wonder you've got problems.

*COLE:* Excuse me?

*BOND*: Saying things like that to young women.

(Something suddenly dawned on him.)

*BOND*: Wait, that explains everything... you said you're a teacher, are you Kasira's teacher? Is that how you know her?

*COLE*: Yes, actually!

(Having told Bond of her love for her teacher, Kasira wanted to die.)

*KASIRA*: Shut up, reverend!!!

*BOND*: What?

(He scowled.)

*BOND*: Don't tell me to shut up!

(As a grin appeared on his face he looked at Kasira and gestured towards Cole with his eyes, Kasira just bit her lip and nodded.)

*BOND*: Thought so!

(He then turned and mumbled towards Cole so Kasira couldn't hear him.)

*BOND*: Is she the one who's been stalking you?

(Cole replied with a scowl.)

*COLE*: No, she's not.

*BOND*: You mean there's another one?

(Bond mused to himself for a moment. Pondering the fact that Kasira was in love with this man, as was another of his good looking beautiful pupils, Bond sighed and accidentally aired his conclusion out loud.)

*BOND*: I wish *I* was a teacher!

(Just then, Omki Saan cut in.)

*OMKI SAAN*: You must be the reverend Bond?

*BOND*: Do I owe you money?

*OMKI SAAN*: What? No!

*BOND*: Then yes, yes I am, who are you?

*OMKI SAAN*: I am Omki Saan, lord protector of the Enaki people!

*BOND*: Wonky who?

*OMKI SAAN*: Omki Saan!!!

*BOND*: Alright, calm down... what can I do for you?

(Kasira cut in.)

*KASIRA*: Um... Omki Saan, this is Mr Fishman, my teacher!

*OMKI SAAN*: Cole Fishman?

(Cole looked confused.)

*COLE*: How do you know that?

(Kasira hung her head as Omki Saan looked between Cole and Bond.)

*OMKI SAAN*: You two know each other?

*BOND*: We just met!

(Omki Saan looked towards the ceiling and mused to himself.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Interesting. Maybe it's a co-incidence, but then maybe this is destiny!

Either way, the fact you are both here at the same time makes what we have do so much simpler!

*BOND*: You waffle a lot, don't you?

(Ignoring him, Omki Saan cut to the chase.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Kasira tells me you are the one she turns to for guidance!

(Bond gave a conceited grin.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Cole Fishman, Kasira says you teach her much!

*COLE:* I'm glad she...

*OMKI SAAN:* Therefore you have been chosen as her spiritual and mental guardians!

(Cole looked somewhat miffed.)

*COLE:* Did you see that? He cut straight across me while I was talking!

*BOND:* Ah diddum's!

*COLE:* What?

(He sneered.)

*COLE:* I can't say I like your attitude very much, reverend!

*BOND:* Well, aint that a shame? Still, I doubt I'll lose any sleep over it!

(Furious at being ignored, Omki Saan raised his voice.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Are you even listening to me?

*BOND:* Sorry, what?

*OMKI SAAN:* You are to be Kasira's guardians!

*BOND:* Guardians?

*COLE:* I'm not ready to be a parent, I'm only three years older than she is!

(Omki Saan sighed.)

*OMKI SAAN:* My patience wares thin, you will accompany her on her trip! Come, we must leave now!

(He gestured to the door.)

*BOND:* You want me to go with you?

*COLE:* I'm not going out there, *she's* out there!

*OMKI SAAN:* You are Kasira's chosen guardians...

*KASIRA:* Sorry you two!

*OMKI SAAN:* You will either leave willingly or by force!

*BOND:* Hold on, hold on... you want us to go on a trip with Kasira?

*OMKI SAAN:* Correct!

*COLE:* I can't, I've got work tomorrow!

*BOND:* Me too, my work is never done... oh no, that's god! Well... I'm very busy!

(Omki Saan stepped forward.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You will join us and help Kasira destroy the beast!!!

*COLE:* Beast?

*BOND:* Listen pal, you can't come strolling in here and expect me to follow your ridiculous whim... get out of my church!!!

*OMKI SAAN:* I hoped it wouldn't come to this, if you will not come voluntarily, then force it is!

*BOND:* Really? Let's go old man!

(Bond raised his fists and started to dance on the spot.)

*BOND:* I'll make short work of you!!!

*OMKI SAAN:* Dakuri!

(Dakuri nodded and paced up to Bond.)

*BOND:* Oh... um... oh!

(His fists began to drop as his dance slowed to a stop in awe of the sheer size of the man before him.)

*BOND:* Please don't hit me!

(Dakuri proceeded to cosh both Bond and Cole before scooping them up and carrying them over his shoulder.)

*KASIRA*: There was no need for that!

*OMKI SAAN*: There's room for one more, he has big shoulders!

(Sheepishly she hung her head and kept her protests to herself.)

*OMKI SAAN*: That is better! Come, we will take you to our safe house, we catch the ferry at dawn!

(Satisfied with his day's work, he then headed out of the side door of the church followed by the proud Dakuri and a guilt-ridden Kasira. Still waiting outside the front doors of the church, Suzina waited in vain for a further two hours for Cole to re-emerge then went home disappointed.)

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(Miles away to the east, the mist that shrouded the Great Lake of Dezara's plateau had cleared away, leaving no trace of any mysterious goings on. Deer had returned to frolic on the plain and everything seemed calm. Inside the mountain at the lake's centre, however, a dark, sickening entity stirred, bellowing every now and again and sending birds scattering from the tree tops. It was alive and it was hungry.)

Back in Sudereva, the next thing reverend Bond knew was waking up with a stinging headache, lying on a strange bed in a large wooden room. He rubbed his eyes and sat up to see Kasira staring out of a window and Cole lying on the bed opposite, staring at the ceiling. Not sure what was happening, he sat up and glared at Kasira.)

*BOND*: Journey? Beast? Kasira, what the hell have you done?

(She looked at her feet.)

*BOND*: Dozy fucking cow! What the hell have you got me into???

(Clearly upset she turned sharply in his direction.)

*KASIRA*: Stop it, I've already had this lecture from him!

(She pointed at Cole.)

*COLE*: I wasn't as rude!

*KASIRA*: You were still rude!

*COLE*: I was articulate!

(He continued to stare upwards.)

*COLE*: And I didn't swear!

*KASIRA*: You called me a gormless cow, though!

(He grinned.)

*BOND*: Whatever, will someone tell me what the hell's going on?

(Kasira sat on the step by the door.)

*KASIRA*: I have to go on a journey to kill some beast, it's my destiny apparently. I don't want to, I have to...

*BOND*: What's that got to do with me?

*KASIRA*: It wasn't my fault, they asked me who I trusted the most and I said you two...

(She sighed.)

*KASIRA*: ... I didn't know they'd force you to come with me!

(There was silence for a moment or two.)

*BOND:* So where are they taking us then?

(She shrugged.)

*KASIRA:* All I know is...

(She went on to relate everything she knew about the chosen one and the rebirth of the beast. Filling in every detail about what may lay ahead, she started to sound more and more miserable.)

*KASIRA:* That's all I know!

(Still staring at the ceiling Cole spoke up.)

*COLE:* What happens if we don't kill it?

*KASIRA:* Don't know, I don't want to die... I never even been kissed!

*BOND:* I have!

(They turned to him.)

*COLE:* And?

*BOND:* And what?

(Cole shook his head.)

*COLE:* Are you crying, Kasira?

(With tears in her eyes she spun round angrily.)

*KASIRA:* No, are you?

*COLE:* Whoa, temper!

(He laid back down.)

*KASIRA:* Sorry, I'm just upset!

*BOND:* Do you really feel that bad about all this then?

*KASIRA:* Yes I do!

*BOND:* Good, you should!

*KASIRA:* And I do, alright?

(Bond just sighed and said nothing.)

As the clock ticked slowly onwards, Cole continued to lay motionlessly and stare at the ceiling while Kasira sat looking depressed in the doorway. The reverend Bond, on the other hand, had spent the whole time pacing up and down mumbling to himself. Angrily he circled, now and again beating his fists together when suddenly he stopped and paced into the centre of the room.)

*BOND:* Listen you two, this is ridiculous!

(Cole sat up and swung his legs over the side of the bed and approached him.)

*COLE:* Well what do you suggest?

(Kasira got to her feet and slowly joined them.)

*KASIRA:* Tell me you've got some sort of plan!

(Bond folded his arms.)

*BOND:* Well, not a plan as such, but I was thinking... we're all in this together, never mind whose fault it is...

(They both looked squarely at Kasira.)

*KASIRA:* I said sorry, didn't I?

*BOND:* Anyway, the point is, we *are* all in it together, so let's work together and find a way to escape!

*KASIRA:* Escape? But my destiny...

*BOND:* I thought you didn't want to fight the beast!

*KASIRA*: I don't!

*BOND*: Good, 'cause if we can escape, we can go anywhere, they'll never find us!

*KASIRA*: I'm in!

*BOND*: Cole?

*COLE*: You don't have to ask *me* twice!

*BOND*: Great... now the hard part, escaping!

*KASIRA*: Oh!

*BOND*: What do you mean, "oh"?

*KASIRA*: How?

*COLE*: I've had an idea!

*BOND*: Great!

(Bond and Kasira listened intently.)

*COLE*: It's not a great plan, but what can you do?

*BOND*: Go on!

*COLE*: If you two keep a look out, I'll sneak out of the window and open the door to let you out, then we leg it!

(There was silence.)

*BOND*: Carry on!

*COLE*: That was it!

(Bond threw his arms in the air.)

*COLE*: What?

*BOND*: What if it's padlocked or something?

*COLE*: Whatever, I'll find a way of opening it!

*KASIRA*: It's worth a try surely!

*BOND*: That's the saddest part, it actually is!

*COLE*: Okay, go to the other windows!

(He headed to the window on the left.)

*COLE*: Go on!

(Instantly they hurried to keep an eye out at the other two windows.)

*COLE*: Right!

(With that, he tried to force open the window.)

*COLE*: It won't open!

*BOND*: Force it, smash it, just do something!

*COLE*: Okay!

(Using all his force he whacked the window frame with his elbow.)

*COLE*: Yeow!!!

(Bond frowned.)

*BOND*: Good one!

*COLE*: Shut it, smart arse!

(He ceased rubbing his painful elbow and shrugged.)

*COLE*: Oh well!

(Shielding his face, he then proceeded to smash the glass and knock out all the remaining segments.)

*COLE*: So far, so good!

*BOND*: Okay, now go!

*KASIRA*: Good luck, sir!

(And with no more ado, Cole thrust his right leg out of the window.)

*COLE:* Get ready!

(As he swung his head through the open gap, however, a voice chilled him to the bone.)

*DAKURI:* Going somewhere, Mister Fishman?

(Cole froze for a moment then cringed. Dakuri was standing right next to the window he'd opted to smash.)

*COLE:* I was looking for the toilet!

(Dakuri growled and pushed him back in the room.)

*COLE:* Hey!!!

(Angrily, Dakuri thrust his head through the window.)

*DAKURI:* Do I have to knock you all out again?

(He looked around and saw Kasira and Bond asleep on their beds.)

*DAKURI:* Oh, so *you* are the trouble maker?

*COLE:* Me?

*DAKURI:* I am watching you, Cole Fishman!

(With that, Dakuri disappeared out of sight.)

*COLE:* I'm not a trouble maker, I'm a member of the wine club, I'll have you know!

(With Dakuri gone, Bond sat up and rolled his eyes.)

*BOND:* Are you chief whiner? Wine club indeed!

(Cole grimaced.)

*COLE:* Was that a joke?

*BOND:* Yes, now laugh!

*COLE:* Get lost Bond, oh and thanks for backing me up you two!

*KASIRA:* Sorry, I just copied him!

(She pointed at a chuckling Bond.)

*COLE:* I don't like you!

*BOND:* Feelings mutual, you wine club sissies make me sick!

*COLE:* Oh, Really?

*BOND:* Yes, really!

(With that, he slid off his bed and squared up to Cole.)

*BOND:* Why? Do you want a piece of me?

*COLE:* Yes, I do! And by the time I've finished with you, there'll be enough pieces for everybody!!!

(Fearing the worst, Kasira jumped between them.)

*KASIRA:* Stop it, don't fight!

*BOND:* Move woman!

*KASIRA:* No, please... this isn't going to solve anything!

*BOND:* Move, or I'll tell Cole you're in love with him... oops!

(Kasira's hair stood on end as she almost died of embarrassment. Feeling weak and stupid she headed bow-legged for her bed.)

*COLE:* She loves me?

*BOND:* A-ha!

(With Cole off guard, thrown by the revelation, Bond opted to cease the moment and swung a right hook at Cole's chin. Missing by inches he flew to the ground under the weight of his own punch. Looking somewhat bewildered, Cole just stepped over him and approached Kasira slowly.)



*COLE:* He was lying right?

(Kasira gave half a grin.)

*KASIRA:* Of course!

*COLE:* Thought so!

(Having pulled himself to his feet, Bond climbed onto his bed.)

*BOND:* Forget this. Let's get some sleep! We can try to escape again in the morning or something.

(Staring at each other, Cole and Kasira both nodded.)

*COLE:* Good idea. Um... night, Kasira!

*KASIRA:* Night... Cole!

(And thus they headed to their beds to try and get some sleep before sunrise.

Unsurprisingly the night was a long one, the three captives tossing and turning in their beds. Even when the sun eventually began to appear from the night sky, not one of them had managed a moments shut-eye. Morning had arrived and nobody had slept a wink.

(Feeling tired and bitter Bond sat up and scratched his unshaven chin.)

*BOND:* Oh, for fuck sake!

*COLE:* Bond, there's a lady present!

*BOND:* Who cares?

(Cole too, sat up.)

*COLE:* Can't you sleep either?

*BOND:* What are *you*? Blind? Look at me snoring like a good 'un!

*COLE:* Hey, don't get angry at me, it aint my fault!

(Kasira rolled over and pouted.)

*KASIRA:* I thought we weren't gonna blame people any more!

*BOND:* You'd like that, wouldn't you?

*COLE:* Leave her alone, man!

(Bond scoffed and climbed out of bed.)

*BOND:* I need a shave!

*COLE:* Me too!

*KASIRA:* I want a wash... and some sleep!

(Suddenly, the door flew open and Dakuri appeared on the threshold holding a tray.

Bond squinted into the light that emanated from over Dakuri's shoulder.)

*BOND:* Is that food?

*DAKURI:* Yes! Eat well, we leave in half an hour!

*KASIRA:* Half an hour? I need to wash and put my face on!!!

*DAKURI:* I will bring water... and you already have a face!

(Baffled by her words, he shook his head, placed the tray down then closed the door behind him.)

*KASIRA:* Half an hour? That's not long enough!

*BOND:* Then quit complaining and eat your breakfast!

(Twenty or so minutes later, feeling a little refreshed, Kasira pulled her hairbrush from her bag and set about redressing her hair as Bond watched on curiously.)

*KASIRA:* What are you staring at?

*BOND:* Nothing, I was just thinking!

*KASIRA:* What about?

*BOND*: I used to have hair!

(He sighed.)

*BOND*: Time catches up with you, you know, it really does!

*COLE*: Kasira... I don't suppose you've got a knife in that bag have you?

*KASIRA*: Probably, why?

*COLE*: Can I borrow it, to shave with?

*KASIRA*: Sure!

*BOND*: Why have you got a knife?

*KASIRA*: Protection, my mum always insisted I carry one!

*BOND*: Wise I suppose, can I use it after?

*KASIRA*: I suppose so!

(Minutes later, clean shaven and ready to go, Bond and Cole sat waiting on their beds while Kasira continued to adjust her appearance. Racing against time to make herself look her best she let out a loud scream of displeasure as Dakuri thrust open the door.)

*DAKURI*: It is time!!!

*KASIRA*: Five more minutes!!!

*DAKURI*: We go!

*KASIRA*: Look, I'm the chosen one, not you!!!

*DAKURI*: Do I have to drag you?

*KASIRA*: Yes!

(Calling her bluff, he strode in and dragged her to the door.)

*KASIRA*: Bastard!!!

(She looked at Cole.)

*KASIRA*: My bag!!!

*COLE*: Okay!

*DAKURI*: Come!!!

(Bond and Cole followed the protesting Kasira out of the door, grabbing her bag as they went. Once outside, Omki Saan approached and bowed.)

*OMKI SAAN*: It is a beautiful morning!

*KASIRA*: Let me go, Dakuri... you're hurting me!

*OMKI SAAN*: Dakuri, release your grip!

(Dakuri stood tall and released her. She rubbed her arm and muttered obscenities under her breath.)

*OMKI SAAN*: We shall now head for the port, if any of you try to run... Dakuri will get angry!

(They gulped.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Let us go!

(With no more ado, they headed out into the streets of Sudereva.

At this early hour the streets bustled with people heading to work and children en route to school. Many horses carried their heavy burdens across town to get ready for the busy day ahead. Among all this bustle, even the giant Dakuri looked anonymous. Worrying about what lay ahead, Cole, Bond and Kasira followed their oriental captors in silence, performing various nervous idiosyncrasies as they went. Before long they found themselves heading down King Guadle Street, the longest road in Sudereva. It was there that Kasira spotted her arch nemesis 'Suzina', heading to school on the other side of the

road. Looking up at Dakuri, she grinned to herself, then without even checking for horses, she sprinted across the road at her. Before Dakuri could react, she made it to the other side of the road then thrust out her arms and barged Suzina head first through the bushes next to her. As the other watched on amazed, Kasira then ran back and stood aside Dakuri.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira, this is no way for chosen one to behave!!!

*KASIRA:* She had it coming!

(Looking somewhat livid, Suzina struggled from the bushes and looked angrily about her. On sighting a grinning Kasira, she charged head first towards her. Untroubled by Suzina's fury, Kasira simply stepped behind Dakuri.)

*KASIRA:* Protect me, Dakuri!

(Much to her horror, however, Dakuri inexplicably stepped aside, leaving Kasira panicking profusely.)

*KASIRA:* What are you doing??? She'll kill me!!!

*DAKURI:* Mine is to protect you from others... not from yourself!

(Flustered and quaking she yelled.)

*KASIRA:* What about protecting me from her???

(Dakuri folded his arms and stepped back.)

*KASIRA:* Shit!!!

(Fearing the worst, she covered her head and shuddered as Suzina approached rapidly.)

*KASIRA:* Help!!!

(Scared to death she cowered even more as Suzina reached her and pulled back her fist.)

*KASIRA:* No!!!

(Before Suzina could strike, however, Bond stepped up.)

*BOND:* Hey, hey, that's no way for a lady to behave!

(Spying his clerical attire, Suzina relented.)

*SUZINA:* Sorry father!

*BOND:* I'm not your father!

(She looked ashamed.)

*BOND:* Now go in peace!

(As Suzina ran down the road, Kasira stood up straight.)

*KASIRA:* Thanks, reverend!

*BOND:* You owe me one... now where's Cole?

(Dakuri stepped aside and a rather nervous looking Cole peered around him.)

*BOND:* What's the matter with you?

*COLE:* Has she gone?

*BOND:* What? Oh... is that the crazy one that's been following you?

(He nodded.)

*BOND:* Hmm, I wouldn't say no!

*KASIRA:* Reverend!!!

(He shrugged.)

*BOND:* I was joking!

(He coughed.)

*BOND:* Um... come on, let's get going shall we?

(And so they continued on down 'King Guadle Street', turning at the end and heading towards the school. With the port in sight at the bottom of the hill, they all felt resigned to leaving Sudereva, as a result sadness filled their hearts.)

*BOND*: You know, this place has its faults... but it's home!

(Kasira nodded.)

*KASIRA*: Everyone insults my eyes, there's only one girl at school who talks to me... yet I've been happy here!

*COLE*: Yeah, there really is no place like home!

(Looking back, he sighed.)

*COLE*: Hey, it's not like we'll never see the place again is it?

*BOND*: I hope not!

(As they soldiered on past the school, Kasira looked over and saw Suzina standing just inside the gates, obviously waiting for Cole to arrive. Safe in the knowledge that Suzina wouldn't be allowed back out of the gates, she waved to grab her attention.

Furiously Suzina shook her fist at her, then stopped in horror at the sight of Cole marching past the school in front of her. Seizing the opportunity, Kasira pretended to squeeze his backside, making Suzina gesture wildly. Clearly enjoying the torment, Kasira then swung her arm as if pretending to slap his bottom. Unfortunately for her, this was the moment he picked to stop and turned around.)

*COLE*: Goodbye school!

(Suddenly his eyes bulged and he yelped as Kasira inadvertently grabbed his privates.)

*COLE*: Yeow!!!

*KASIRA*: Argh!!!

(Horried at herself, she leapt up and down in disgust at her deed, waving her hands in front of her disgraced expression. Cole stood tall in an embarrassed rage, shaking with displeasure at her indiscretion.)

*COLE*: You grabbed my ding-a-ling!!!

*BOND*: You're complaining?

*KASIRA*: I'm so, so sorry!

(She then raced ahead feeling ashamed of herself.)

*COLE*: I feel quite violated!

*BOND*: Are you sure you're not a poofa?

(Cole scowled.)

*COLE*: I'll ignore that thank you!

*DAKURI*: Come, we must not be late!

(As Dakuri hurried them along he mumbled to Omki Saan.)

*DAKURI*: Are you sure she's the chosen one?

(Omki Saan just sighed and shook his head.

Finally, after what had seemed an eternity, the party arrived at the busy docks. With many large ships being loaded and unloaded all around them, the whole scene was one of deafening chaos. Keeping a sharp eye on Cole, Bond and Kasira, Dakuri walked behind, allowing Omki Saan to lead them to their ship. Very much aware of the hustle around them Bond leant to Cole and spoke quietly.)

*BOND*: You know, amongst all this confusion, a man could quite easily get lost... if you catch my drift!

(Cole mused.)

*COLE:* Hmm, I get you!

(He tapped Kasira on the shoulder and spoke to her while looking at his feet.)

*COLE:* Kasira, get ready to leg it!

(Also unable to look him in the eye, she replied shyly.)

*KASIRA:* Okay!

*BOND:* Oh, get over it you two!

(They were silent.)

*BOND:* When I give the word, follow me!

*COLE:* Why you?

*BOND:* Well, you then!

*COLE:* No, you do it!

(Bond sighed.)

*BOND:* Pillock! Fine, stay close you two!

(They continued on in a bunch until Bond spotted a gap between two large crates.)

*BOND:* Leg it!!!

(Upon his word, Cole and Kasira took off as quick as they could in pursuit of Bond down a gap in some crates. Desperate to escape, they didn't look back as they charged, head down towards the gang-plank of another ship.)

*BOND:* They'll never find us on here!!!

(Cheered by his optimism, they sped up, making the planks beneath them shake.

Confident that Dakuri wasn't behind them, Bond clenched a triumphant fist as he bounded up the gang-plank straight into a waiting Dakuri. As he fell flat on his face, Cole and Kasira stopped dead and looked up at the unimpressed giant.)

*COLE:* Um...

(He looked down.)

*COLE:* I can't think of an excuse!

(Kasira panicked.)

*KASIRA:* We were looking for the toilet!

(Dakuri held his head in his hands.)

*COLE:* Smooth Kasira!

*KASIRA:* You said it earlier!

(Dusting himself down as he did so, Bond rose to his feet.)

*BOND:* Ah, Dakuri, we were looking for you!

(Dakuri sighed.)

*DAKURI:* You leave me no choice, and don't say I didn't warn you!

(Many hours later, all with throbbing headaches, the three of them found themselves waking up on board a ship, many miles out at sea. Feeling completely resigned to their fate, they all sat in silence in the cabin thinking about the events of the last 24 hours. Looking somewhat dejected, Bond was first to break the silence with a heavy sigh.)

*BOND:* Fucking wonky-eyed bastards. No offence, Kasira.

*KASIRA:* Some taken.

*COLE:* And watch your language, will you?

*BOND:* Like bollocks I will!

(Just then, Omki Saan burst into the room followed by Dakuri. Angered by their presence Bond turned away while Kasira looked to the floor. Cole, on the other hand stared at them angrily.)

OMKI SAAN: Friends, I am sorry you chose this path!

COLE: We had no choice, you forced us to come!

OMKI SAAN: I invited you, resistance was your idea!

(Cole shook his head.)

OMKI SAAN: So far you have disappointed me, but I am confident you will come through!

COLE: We've disappointed *you*? You should hear yourself!

OMKI SAAN: Cole Fishman, I know you are upset, but see it my way...

COLE: Upset?

OMKI SAAN: It is my burden to make sure the chosen one and her guides make it to the empowerment. My success in doing so is imperative.

COLE: Fair enough, but see it *our* way. We didn't choose for this, this is happening *to* us! You can't blame us for resisting.

(Omki Saan nodded.)

OMKI SAAN: I admit, if Kasira had been raised an Enaki, her and her guides would be prepared, but after the attempt on her life, that was not an option! As outsiders, ignorant of our ways, your resistance is understandable.

COLE: Then you *do* understand!

(He bowed.)

OMKI SAAN: And I hope you understand *my* position. Kasira is the chosen one, everything is about *her* destiny! I can not and will not fail to see she fulfils it.

(She looked up.)

KASIRA: Stop talking about me as if I'm not here!

(Omki Saan turned to her.)

OMKI SAAN: Kasira... I know this is difficult for you, but you must understand, you were never meant to be raised in Sudereva, but the threat on your life made it necessary. If it was not for that, you would feel no confusion! Enaki forest would be your home and you'd understand what's expected of you.

(She sighed.)

KASIRA: But it isn't my home... I miss my parents!

OMKI SAAN: Don't be ridiculous. You've only been gone a day!

(Cole approached her.)

COLE: Ignore him Kasira, he doesn't care how you feel!

OMKI SAAN: This is far from true!

(Angrily, Bond leapt to his feet.)

BOND: Isn't it? Isn't it? Be honest Omki Saan, all you care about is her destiny... she doesn't matter a thing to you!

OMKI SAAN: I can not change the way you feel...

(He turned away then turned back.)

OMKI SAAN: By the way, feel free to roam the ship... but be warned, these waters are home to some of Vitazoe's biggest sharks!

(He turned and left, being sneered at by the others. Once he'd gone, Kasira looked up.)

KASIRA: Thanks for standing up for me guys!

*BOND:* Huh, who does that old fart think he is anyway?

(Cole sat next to her.)

*COLE:* Don't worry Kasira, whatever happens, we'll be here!

(She smiled.)

*BOND:* Speak for yourself, first chance I get I'm legging it... it'll be easier without you two slowing me down!

(With that, he paced out of the door.)

*COLE:* Aint he got a funny way about him for a holy man?

*KASIRA:* He's angry, that's why... angry at me!

*COLE:* Nah, I get the feeling it's a bit deeper than that, if push came to shove I bet he'd be the first to help you out!

*KASIRA:* Maybe!

*COLE:* C'mon, let's get some fresh air... it might help clear this headache!

(Cole climbed to his feet and offered her his hand. Smiling, she let him pull her to her feet, then they too, went outside. The cool breeze out on the deck was indeed refreshing.

Taking a lung full of pure fresh air, Kasira stepped up to the side of the ship.)

*KASIRA:* I always wondered what the sea was like!

*COLE:* You've never seen it?

*KASIRA:* No, well... only from a distance!

(Cole nodded.)

*COLE:* Calming, isn't it?

(She smiled.)

*KASIRA:* Yeah!

(They continued to look out to sea in silence, smiling at each other now and again.

Where Bond had got to, they didn't care. As the afternoon wore on, however, the monotony of a constant blue horizon began to weigh heavy.

Feeling increasingly bored, they were only too glad to see a strip of land appear in the distance. Slowly becoming apprehensive about what awaited them, both Cole and Kasira stared wide-eyed at the ever nearing land. As they continued to close in, Bond came back and immediately joined them in silently surveying the forested wilderness before them. It wasn't long before the ship started to draw up near a wooden jetty. Feeling pretty certain they'd be arriving any minute, Cole turned to Kasira.)

*COLE:* This must be strange, coming back to your birth place!

(She shook her head.)

*KASIRA:* Sudereva's my home, this place means nothing to me!

(She stared out with contempt at the people on the dockside, who were now clearly visible.)

*KASIRA:* They may look like me, but I'm not an Enaki, I'm Kasira!

(She looked at Cole.)

*COLE:* I agree!

*BOND:* Never forget that Kasira, I told you before, if anyone can't accept you, it's their problem!

(She nodded and stood tall then stared from the side of the ship once more.)

*KASIRA:* You're right.

(In the meantime, as the bewildered trio looked out towards the rapidly approaching land and tried to gather their thoughts, Omki Saan stood opposite Dakuri on the bridge of the ship listening to him expressing a few concerns.)

**DAKURI:** The chosen one is far from how I expected her!

**OMKI SAAN:** In what way, Dakuri?

**DAKURI:** Well... in almost every way!

**OMKI SAAN:** I admit, she is not as I expected either, but all will be well!

**DAKURI:** You are sure?

**OMKI SAAN:** I am certain! Once empowered she may remain a little strange and uncultured, but she *will* be focussed when the time comes!

**DAKURI:** As long as you are sure!

**OMKI SAAN:** Trust me, Dakuri. Allowing her to be raised in the alien culture of the North Continent may have made her less refined, but if we hadn't hidden her, chances are the minions of evil would have found her.

**DAKURI:** I agree, Omki Saan. I just think maybe we should have brought her home sooner, we destroyed the last bounty hunter many years ago!

**OMKI SAAN:** This may be true but as long as she continued to be safe, nothing else mattered!

(Dakuri bowed.)

**OMKI SAAN:** I know she seems strange and her guardians seem less than worthy, but tradition and destiny have lead us all here. Come the time, it will be as it must be. The beast has stirred and the chosen one is on her way. This is as we planned when we first sent Kasira into exile.

**DAKURI:** It is!

**OMKI SAAN:** And after empowerment, the journey to Dezara's Plateau will begin, just as fate dictated long ago when the first chosen one undertook her calling. There is no time to waste and she will leave on schedule as planned long ago.

**DAKURI:** So you're saying, all is going well despite the fact the chosen one and her guardians keep trying to escape and don't want to be here?

**OMKI SAAN:** Yes! Like I said, after they are empowered, their sense of duty will be instilled... even if they are just as annoying to be in the company of.

**DAKURI:** Can't we make them less annoying?

**OMKI SAAN:** I only wish we could, Dakuri, I only wish we could!

*Portside, Enaki Forest, South Continent...*

(As the ship made landfall, Kasira felt horribly uneasy. Setting foot in the land of her birth, she feared, would confirm the fact that Sudereva was not her home. As such, it was with heavy heart that she and her two comrades made their way off of the ship and onto the dockside.

Once they were all on dry land, Omki Saan ordered them to wait then headed up the dockside. With Dakuri watching them distrustfully, Kasira, Cole and Bond could do nothing but shrug at one another as they awaited Omki Saan's return. Feeling like lost sheep, they said nothing as passers-by stared at them wearing baffled expressions. It was a silence that continued unabated until a young lad yelled out from a nearby treetop.)



*BOY:* Oi, round-eyes!!!

(A stone whistled past Bond's ear.)

*BOND:* Hey!!!

*COLE:* Little bas... sorry, Kasira!

(She grinned.)

*KASIRA:* You are allowed to swear you know!

(He shrugged.)

*COLE:* It just doesn't seem right!

(At this point, Omki Saan returned looking focussed and determined.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Come, follow me!

(With that, he headed along to the end of the dock, followed by Dakuri.)

*COLE:* I suppose we'd better go with them!

(With many shrugs, they started to follow while a deluge of fat-eye jokes rained down from children in tree-tops. Ignoring it, they continued on until a tall armour clad man approached Omki Saan. Having ordered them to wait again, Omki Saan approached him.)

*TINCHOI:* Omki Saan, welcome home, oh great one!

(He bowed.)

*OMKI SAAN:* I thank you, Tinchoi!

*TINCHOI:* Your mission, great one... was a success?

(Omki Saan bowed.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Tinchoi, go forth and tell the empowerer... Kasira Chen-Kai has returned!

(Flapping wildly, an angry Kasira strode up to him.)

*KASIRA:* It's Kasira Ashford!!!

(Tinchoi seemed startled.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Go, Tinchoi!

(Looking quite rattled, Tinchoi turned and ran down the dirt track behind him as fast as he could. Kasira turned to Omki Saan with fury in her eyes.)

*KASIRA:* My name's Kasira Ashford!!! Not Ching-chunk, or whatever you said!!!

(Coldly, the powerful old man turned to her and spoke in no uncertain terms.)

*OMKI SAAN:* As long as you are here, you are Kasira Chen-Kai!!!

(He walked on, determined to hear no more about it.)

*KASIRA:* That's it, I've had it with you!

(They all looked at her.)

*KASIRA:* I'm not going any further, until you accept my name's Ashford!

(Glaring angrily to her left she put her hands on her hips and pouted.)

*KASIRA:* So there!

(Omki Saan just shook his head and nodded to Dakuri. Soon enough they were on their way, Omki Saan leading while Bond and Cole followed a livid Kasira.)

*KASIRA:* Put me down!!!

(Angrily she battered and thumped Dakuri's back as he carried her over his shoulder, deeper into the woods.)

*KASIRA:* I hate you!!! Let me go!!!

(Watching Kasira's stress as they made their way down the narrow path, gave Bond an idea.)

*BOND:* Hmm... this could be my chance!!!

*COLE:* What?

*BOND:* I'll see you later!

*COLE:* Don't be stupid, face it, they've won!

*BOND:* You might give up that easy mate, but I don't!

(With that he darted off into the woods. Within minutes, however, Cole found himself ambling along behind, watching both Kasira *and* Bond thumping Dakuri's back and complaining as he carried them forth.

After a while, sick of making futile protests, Kasira and Bond became resigned to travelling upon Dakuri. Silently, they hung there as Cole followed on kicking his heels. It wasn't long however before the path turned and they could sight a river. At this point Omki Saan ordered Dakuri to put them down. Feeling less than impressed they glared at him as he spoke.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You are about to enter the village of Namki, you have a choice, you can either enter with dignity... or being carried like a screaming child, the choice is yours!

(They all looked at each other.)

*BOND:* We'll walk thanks!

*OMKI SAAN:* A wise choice Mr Bond!

(He looked to Kasira.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Are you ready to return to your place of birth?

(She sneered.)

*KASIRA:* Whatever!

*OMKI SAAN:* Come!

(He about turned and headed around the slight bend in the river ahead. The others followed on in silence, feeling empty about the whole experience. Trudging slowly in no particular order, they followed him around the bend in the river then stopped suddenly in awe of the view before them.)

*COLE:* This is breath-taking!

(Bond nodded.)

*BOND:* Gotta admit, this is how I imagine paradise!

(Kasira, on the other hand, wasn't quite as enthusiastic.)

*KASIRA:* It still isn't home!

(Noting her pessimism, they looked around at the river flowing between rows of quaint wooden cottages, with flowers strewn across the many bridges.)

*BOND:* Awe inspiring!

(He looked up at the endless rows of brightly coloured lanterns that lined the path and nodded in approval.)

*BOND:* I know it isn't home, but wouldn't it be nice if home looked like this?

*KASIRA:* Aesthetics! It's not the look that makes a home, it's the feel!

*BOND:* Aesthetics? Big word, Kasira!

*COLE:* Well, I am her teacher, you know!

(He grinned.)

*BOND:* Yeah, her maths teacher!

*COLE:* Who asked you anyway?

*KASIRA:* Look can we go now? I don't care how it looks, I just want to get this over with!

*OMKI SAAN:* Very well Kasira, follow me!

(She started to head off after Omki Saan, while Cole and Bond stood by Dakuri.)

*OMKI SAAN:* All of you!

*DAKURI:* Oh, sorry master!

(Still admiring the picturesque scenery, they were lead down the path and across the first bridge, all the while they received funny looks from passers-by.)

A short way down the path, Omki Saan turned and headed towards the door of a long thin pavilion.)

*OMKI SAAN:* This... is the 'hall of the chosen', please, follow me...

(Like sheep, they followed him through the large doors and into a long wooden corridor then through a door to the right, where they received the shock of their lives. The room was filled with old men, all of whom were dressed like Omki Saan. Feeling like zoo exhibits, they were lead them in front of the many rows of seated dignitaries. While they stood there looking embarrassed, Omki Saan approached a lectern to address the ensemble.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Thank you, Tinchoi!

(He nodded to him and received a bow in return.)

*OMKI SAAN:* I'm glad you could all attend at such short notice!

(This time the entire assembly bowed to him. Baffled by it all, Bond, Cole and Kasira looked on in silence.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Friends... fellow members of the hall of the chosen... the day of reckoning is almost upon us... the beast, who may blight us all has woken...

(There was a murmuring of discontent from the gathered elders.)

*OMKI SAAN:* But once again, we the Enaki people, will supply mankind with the means to defeat this evil...

(A positive mumbling rose from the auditorium.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Let me introduce to you, the chosen one... Kasira Chen-Kai!!!

(Smiling, he gestured towards an irritated looking Kasira.)

*KASIRA:* It's Ashford!!!

(Unimpressed by what they considered her disgraceful attire, the members mumbled amongst themselves.)

*MAN:* She looks like a whore!

*MAN 2:* There must be some mistake!

(Feeling everything going awry, Omki Saan thought quickly.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Of course, she is still in disguise!

(An air of understanding filled the room and the entire audience stood to applaud her. Making the most of the moment, Omki Saan waved her over to the lectern. Scared stiff, she shook her head and refused.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Come, Kasira, it is your duty!

(Again she shook her head.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Dakuri!

*KASIRA:* Alright, alright!!!

(Shyly, she began to step up to Omki Saan.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Thank you!

(As she arrived at the lectern, the audience fell silent and awaited her words of wisdom. Feeling about 2 foot tall, she stared at them and said nothing.)

*KASIRA*: Um...

(Omki Saan nodded at her in a frantic plea to get her to say something.)

*KASIRA*: Um...

(He leant to her and mumbled quietly.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Say something!

(Shaking like a leaf, she grinned.)

*KASIRA*: Um... Hello!

(The sea of old men before her, looked at one another and shrugged.)

*ALL*: Hello!

(Feeling a little more confident, she spoke up.)

*KASIRA*: Nice hut!

(Their scornful expressions and the silence that accompanied it sent her straight back to square one. With bright red cheeks she stood perfectly still before them.)

*OMKI SAAN*: That'll have to do!

(Shoeing her to one side, Omki Saan retook his place at the lectern.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Friends, I must also introduce to you... her guardians!

(He gestured to Cole and Bond, who received a polite round of applause.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Cole Fishman and Reverend Bond!

(Soaking up the applause, they headed to the lectern. Omki Saan turned to them.)

*OMKI SAAN*: What do you want?

(Bond looked confused.)

*BOND*: We've come to say a few words!

*OMKI SAAN*: I don't think so, go away!

*BOND*: That's bloody nice, isn't it?

*OMKI SAAN*: Now you must excuse us, we must prepare the chosen one!

(Introductions over, they were lead from the door of the auditorium, across the corridor and into a large dormitory opposite.)

*OMKI SAAN*: This will be your accommodation for tonight!

(They looked around the basic quarters and frowned.)

*COLE*: It's a hole!

*BOND*: I think I'd prefer a hole!

*OMKI SAAN*: You will get used to it!

*KASIRA*: Where will we stay after that?

(Omki Saan looked confused.)

*OMKI SAAN*: After that, Kasira, you will begin your journey!

*KASIRA*: I thought I had to go on my eighteenth birthday?

*OMKI SAAN*: That will be your eighteenth birthday!

*KASIRA*: My birthday's weeks away!

*OMKI SAAN*: Maybe Rose and Rufus were confused as to what day they were told... I know for a fact that you will be eighteen on the morrow!

(She frowned.)

*KASIRA*: Even my birthday was a lie! Has my whole life been bullshit?

*OMKI SAAN*: I will not apologise for their mistake!

(Cole offered her a comforting pat on the back.)

*COLE:* Don't worry about it!

*KASIRA:* That's easy for you to say!

(She looked away feeling bitter and frustrated.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Now Kasira, you come with me!

*KASIRA:* Where?

*OMKI SAAN:* You will see!

*BOND:* Where are you taking her?

*OMKI SAAN:* Worry not, she will be back soon!

(With that he lead her from the room. Bond and Cole shrugged at one another and lay themselves down on some beds.)

*BOND:* Might as well rest I suppose!

*COLE:* Yup! May as well!

(As the next hour crept past at a snails pace, Bond and Cole chatted politely. Not caring to raise themselves from their respective beds, they spoke with little enthusiasm in their voices.)

*COLE:* I never really fancied going overseas anyway!

*BOND:* I did, but I always figured it'd be of my own free will!

*COLE:* I don't get this, what the hell do they need us for?

*BOND:* Beat's me!

(He sighed.)

*BOND:* I don't get it either!

*COLE:* At least Kasira gets to be with people she knows!

*BOND:* Is that supposed to be a consolation?

(He shrugged.)

*COLE:* You wouldn't want her to go through this alone, would you?

*BOND:* Would you think less of me if I did?

*COLE:* Yes I would!

*BOND:* Do I have the right to remain silent then?

(Cole sighed.)

*COLE:* You really are something, you know that?

(Just then the door edged open a few inches. Wearing curious expressions, the two men looked at the door and listened hard to the voices the other side.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Don't be foolish Kasira, why would they laugh at you?

*KASIRA:* Look at me!

*OMKI SAAN:* You look like an Enaki princess!

*KASIRA:* I look ridiculous, and what's this thing on the back supposed to be?

*OMKI SAAN:* Your bow!

*KASIRA:* It looks bloody stupid!

*OMKI SAAN:* You look divine!

*KASIRA:* I look like a colour blind wasp!!!

*OMKI SAAN:* You insult the national costume?

*KASIRA:* Is this the national costume?

*OMKI SAAN:* Yes!

*KASIRA:* Um... no, I like it really!

*OMKI SAAN:* A convincing liar you are not, now go, I will send for you all soon!

*KASIRA:* Do I have to? They'll laugh at me!

*OMKI SAAN:* Yes! Now go!

(Slowly the door started to open wider. Acting innocent, Cole and Bond tried to look natural as she slowly trudged in looking thoroughly embarrassed by the brightly coloured costume she'd been made to wear. Pretending not to notice, Cole approached her.)

*COLE:* Where did they take you?

(With her bottom lip almost dragging on the ground, she looked up.)

*KASIRA:* To get changed!

*COLE:* Really?

(His fake surprise was far from Oscar winning.)

*COLE:* Oh yes, I just noticed... you look lovely!

(Cheered slightly by his attempt to be nice, she looked to Bond. The highly amused holy man was standing there with his face about to explode into fits of hysterics. Bravely fighting it back, he attempted to offer a pleasantry, but as soon as his mouth opened he fell about laughing.)

*KASIRA:* Oh, piss off you!!!

(She turned away.)

*BOND:* I see what you mean... colour blind wasp!!!

(As he continued to split his sides, Cole stepped aside her.)

*COLE:* I like it!

*KASIRA:* Don't take the piss!

*COLE:* Seriously, I think it looks really good on you!

(Uncertain whether to believe him she turned her head to one side.)

*KASIRA:* Really?

*COLE:* Really!

*KASIRA:* Thanks Cole! I hate it, but thanks!

(He didn't have time to console her further as only a matter of moments later the reluctant threesome found themselves being taken to a small room in the back of the pavilion, where they were lined up against the wall while an odd looking hooded man looked them up and down. Omki Saan and Dakuri looked on as he stared into their eyes and mumbled to himself. Feeling quite unaware as to what was going on, Bond, Cole and Kasira stood perfectly still looking more than slightly perplexed by the weird man's actions. Having surveyed them for a good five minutes, the hooded figure turned to Omki Saan.)

*HANUKI:* I am ready, Omki Saan!

*OMKI SAAN:* Then proceed, Hanuki!

(Bond stepped forward.)

*BOND:* Hold on a minute, proceed with what?

*OMKI SAAN:* Worry not Bond, it will not hurt!

*BOND:* What won't hurt?

*OMKI SAAN:* You are to be empowered with knowledge!

*BOND:* What kind of knowledge?

*OMKI SAAN:* Why so many questions?

*BOND:* Why so few answers?

(Omki Saan sighed.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Once again, I ask you... do you want to do this the easy way or...

*BOND:* Wait a minute!

(Cole shook his head.)

*COLE:* Give it up Bond. Whatever it is, they're going to do it anyway, regardless of what we think!

(Bond sighed.)

*BOND:* That's true!

*OMKI SAAN:* Who will go first?

*BOND:* One of those two!!!

*OMKI SAAN:* I was speaking to Hanuki!

*BOND:* And I was only making a suggestion!

(Hanuki stepped up to Kasira.)

*HANUKI:* I suggest we start with the chosen one!

*KASIRA:* What? But I didn't do anything!!!

(She looked terrified.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Relax Kasira, what you are about to receive is truly pleasurable!!!

*KASIRA:* Oh, go on then!

(She closed her eyes and shuddered.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You may begin!

(Cole and Bond watched on with trepidation as Hanuki raised his hand to Kasira, placing his palm flat on her forehead. As Kasira trembled with worry, Hanuki's arm suddenly began to glow a brilliant white. Shielding their eyes from the blinding light, Cole and Bond grimaced in fear for her.)

*COLE:* If they so much as hurt one hair on her head...

*BOND:* What? You'll be cross?

*COLE:* Yes!

(As they continued to try and watch, Hanuki proceeded to hum a repetitive tone while the light from his arm began to fluctuate.)

*BOND:* This isn't normal!

*COLE:* You don't say!

(Suddenly, while the light continued to flash, Kasira started to groan with pleasure.)

*COLE:* I say!

*BOND:* Shut up you, I'm listening!

(As her groans turned to howls of delight she started to wriggle.)

*KASIRA:* Oh yes, ooh, that's amazing!

(Over the next sixty seconds or so, her excitement continued to grow until suddenly, the light disappeared and Hanuki stepped back.)

*HANUKI:* It is done!

(Kasira opened her eyes and stepped forward in protest.)

*KASIRA:* Don't stop! Please??? Do it again!

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira control yourself!

*KASIRA:* But it was wonderful!

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira!

*KASIRA:* But...

*HANUKI:* So, who is next?

(Bond and Cole almost flattened him in their desperation to go next. Had it not been for Dakuri it may well have come to blows. Annoyingly for Bond, Cole was chosen to go next.)

*BOND*: Bastard!

(Once Hanuki had placed his hand upon the three of them, Dakuri lead them along the corridor to a large square room with a mat in the centre. 10 or so Enaki warriors were lined up against the wall, holding a vast array of weaponry. Feeling a little daunted, Bond tried to walk out as soon as he walked in, something Dakuri was not likely to allow. Once again unsure as to what would happen to them, Dakuri lined them up against the wall and walked to the centre of the mat.)

*BOND*: Now what are they going to do?

*COLE*: I shudder to think!

(Suddenly Dakuri stamped hard on the floor, making everyone jump.)

*DAKURI*: Now that I have your attention...

(He paced up to the tough looking men around the edge and scoured their faces.)

*DAKURI*: Watch and learn!

(With that, he spun around and pointed to Kasira.)

*DAKURI*: Kasira!!!

*KASIRA*: What?

(Scared half to death by his demeanour she tried to make herself look small.)

*DAKURI*: Come out here, you too Bond!

(Bond looked at him and shivered.)

*BOND*: You're not going to hit me are you?

*DAKURI*: Not if you come out here!

*BOND*: Well... okay!

(Slowly he began to approach Dakuri. Buoyed by Bond's activity Kasira slowly followed him to the centre of the mat.)

*BOND*: Well, we're here!

*DAKURI*: Finally!

*BOND*: We got here didn't we?

(Ignoring his cheek, Dakuri continued.)

*DAKURI*: Good, now Bond?

*BOND*: Yes!

*DAKURI*: Hit Kasira!

*KASIRA*: Eh? Why? What did I do?

*DAKURI*: Shut it! Bond!

*BOND*: Hit her?

*DAKURI*: Or must I hit *you*?

(Given the choice of hitting a girl or being hit himself, Bond swung a left hook at Kasira. Much to both their amazement, she grabbed his arm and threw him over her shoulder.)

*DAKURI*: Excellent!

(While Cole stood there gob smacked, Bond leapt to his feet.)

*BOND*: Hey, but you're a girl!

(Kasira was too busy looking bemused to answer.)

*KASIRA*: But... what? Eh?

*DAKURI*: Now Kasira, you must hit Bond!

(Feeling confident, she laid into him immediately only to be thrown to the ground also.)

*KASIRA*: Ouch!!! Hey!!!



*BOND:* Ha! Mess with me!

(Dakuri nodded to Omki Saan before summoning Cole to the centre.)

*DAKURI:* Kasira, your empowerment is successful... now, sit down please!

(Instantly, she obliged.)

*DAKURI:* Not there! At the side of the room!

*KASIRA:* Oh!

(She got up and went to the edge.)

*DAKURI:* Now Bond... hit Cole!

*BOND:* It'll be a pleasure!!!

(Naturally enjoying the thought of flattening *any* wine club member, he tried to deliver an uppercut to Cole's jaw, only to be thrown onto his back.)

*BOND:* Bugger, you can do it too!

(After trying out a full set of fighting combinations between the two, Dakuri sent Bond to sit out while Kasira came back in.)

*DAKURI:* So far so good, your reflexes are excellent! Bond, you too, are empowered well!

(The watching warriors nodded.)

*DAKURI:* Now Cole, try to kick Kasira!

(Cole gave him a disgusted look.)

*COLE:* Hit a girl? Me? Never!

*DAKURI:* Then you'd rather *I* hit *you*?

(Cole nodded sternly.)

*COLE:* Yes! Yes, I bloody well would!

(He folded his arms.)

*DAKURI:* Strange! Okay, Kasira... kick Cole!

(Sure enough she dragged back her foot and kicked him full on the knee cap.)

*COLE:* Ouch!!!

*DAKURI:* Why did you let her kick you?

*COLE:* My mother told me, never hit a lady, no matter how much she deserves it!

(Looking baffled by his lethargic attitude, Dakuri shrugged at Omki Saan who gave him a baffled look in return.)

*DAKURI:* Cole, you are the only one, watch!

(With that, he summoned one of his warriors to attack Kasira. The big man ran up to her ready for a flying assault. Kasira braced herself to fend him off, when suddenly and inexplicably, Cole rushed over and high kicked him to the ground before rushing over to the other warriors and laying into them all with violent assaults.)

*DAKURI:* He's gone mad!!!

*COLE:* I will never let you harm Kasira!!!

(Omki Saan hung his head as warriors flew around the room on the end of Cole's swift fists.)

*OMKI SAAN:* There's always one!

(As Cole continued to physically try and kill the warriors around him, Dakuri rushed over with his cosh at the ready.)

*DAKURI:* Back to empowering for you, Cole Fishman!

(He then coshed the out of control academic over the head and knocked him out cold.)

(By early evening, a revived Cole returned to Bond and Kasira, having been re-empowered. Feeling more than a tad ashamed about his earlier antics he was taking back to their quarters where he choose to ignore Bond and Kasira and laid upon his bed, waiting for Bond to begin insulting him. He wasn't waiting long.)

*BOND:* What's *he* doing here? I don't remember ordering a psycho!

*KASIRA:* Shut your face, Bond!

(He stuck out his tongue.)

*KASIRA:* Same to you!

(Slowly, she walked over to Cole's bed and sat down beside him.)

*KASIRA:* You okay?

(Grimacing with embarrassment, he closed his eyes.)

*COLE:* I'm fine!

(Try as she might, the well meaning young lady could think of nothing to say. Not a problem for Bond, however.)

*BOND:* What happened anyway?

*COLE:* What?

*BOND:* Why'd you go all mental?

*KASIRA:* Bond!!!

*BOND:* Oh, belt up Kasira!

*COLE:* Hey, leave her alone... and if you must know, they empowered me wrong, for some reason I went into 'protect Kasira overdrive'!

(Bond chuckled.)

*BOND:* You should have seen yourself!

(Cole shook his head.)

*COLE:* I don't care what you think!

*KASIRA:* Well said... um, guys?

(She looked worried.)

*KASIRA:* I don't know what happens now, but, I'm actually looking forward to our journey tomorrow!

(Bond sat up.)

*BOND:* Really? I didn't want to say anything but so am I!

*COLE:* Must be part of the empowering, I'm anxious to get going too... even if you *are* coming, Bond!

(He gave Bond a filthy look.)

*BOND:* Get used to it grape guzzler, I'm going!

*COLE:* Grape guzzler? What have you got against the wine club anyway?

*BOND:* Everything!

*COLE:* No, come on, tell me!

(Bond was narked.)

*BOND:* Leave it Cole, I mean it!

(Cole folded his arms.)

*COLE:* You raised the subject!

*BOND:* Yeah well... drop it!

*KASIRA:* Pack it in you two, this is difficult enough without you arguing all the time!

(Saying nothing, the two men glared angrily at each other.)

*KASIRA:* Sod this, where's my hairbrush?

(Minutes later, as Cole and Bond lay in silence and Kasira sat quietly brushing her hair, the door creaked open. Slightly adjusting to face the gap, they gave a simultaneous groan as Omki Saan glided into the room.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Hello again!

*COLE:* What now, Omki Saan?

*OMKI SAAN:* Do I sense hostility?

*BOND:* Does Kasira's bow look ridiculous?

*OMKI SAAN:* No, then!

*BOND:* Eh?

*OMKI SAAN:* Is everybody ready for tomorrow's trip?

*COLE:* Yes, we are actually!

*BOND:* Are you responsible for that?

*OMKI SAAN:* In what way?

*BOND:* Since we met you, we've been trying our damndest to avoid going on this journey, yet since that empowering business, we've all been eager to go. Don't tell me it's a co-incidence!

(Omki Saan nodded.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Your suspicions are well founded reverend Bond, not only has your empowerment given you excellent fighting skills, it has also given you insight into the Enaki way of life. Your anxiety to leave on this trip, comes from your desire to do what is right!

(Bond was sceptical to say the least.)

*BOND:* Right, so hypnosis then!

*OMKI SAAN:* No... why must you be so doubting?

(Bond shrugged.)

*OMKI SAAN:* There is no power of suggestion here, you have merely been enlightened to the truth, why is this so difficult for you to believe?

*BOND:* Well...

*OMKI SAAN:* Tell me Bond, why can you not trust the word of an elder?

*BOND:* Well, you did kidnap us then have your big ogre of a bodyguard knock us unconscious...

(Omki Saan was enraged.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Apart from that!!!

(Defeated by Omki Saan's refusal to accept any wrong doing, Bond threw up his hands.)

*BOND:* I give up!

*OMKI SAAN:* I'm glad!

*BOND:* You didn't have to shout though!

(Having seen off Bond's challenge, the elderly master turned to Kasira, seemingly glowing with joy. Bond turned to Cole.)

*BOND:* What's wrong with his face?

(Cole looked bewildered.)

*COLE:* I think he's... smiling!

(They looked at one another.)

*BOTH:* Nah!

*OMKI SAAN:* Beautiful Kasira, my heart is filled with joy at your readiness to fulfil your destiny. My life's work is almost complete. Now it is for you and your companions to do the rest. Vitazoe is in your hands.

(Her face dropped.)

*KASIRA:* We're doomed!

(Omki Saan merely smiled and left the room. Feeling a crushing sense of foreboding from the enormity of her responsibility, Kasira turned and headed away to the back of the room silently. Spotting her saddened demeanour, Cole and Bond looked to one another.)

*COLE:* That damned Omki Saan!

(Bond turned to him.)

*BOND:* Go talk to her, I'm no good at this kind of thing!

*COLE:* I can imagine!

*BOND:* Hey!

(Cole smiled and headed towards her, turning once, to give Bond the thumbs up.

Receiving two fingers in return, he slowly approached her and placed his hands on her shoulders.)

*COLE:* Kasira?

(As quick as lightning, she spun into his arms and placed her head on his chest. As she sniffed back the tears, he gently rubbed her arm and spoke softly.)

*COLE:* At time's like this Kasira...

(She looked up at him inquiringly.)

*KASIRA:* Yes?

*COLE:* Well...

(Grimacing like a lunatic, he desperately tried to think of something.)

*COLE:* Um...

(Kasira looked down.)

*KASIRA:* I know... at a time like this, it's nice to have someone just to hold you!

(He nodded.)

*COLE:* Exactly!

(Bond chuckled and lay down on his bed.)

*BOND:* Alright Kasira?

(Stepping back from Cole she smiled.)

*KASIRA:* I think so, I just want to get this journey over with now!

*BOND:* Well, you're not the only one, right Cole?

(Cole nodded.)

*COLE:* Absolutely!

(And so, with their empowerment complete, the only task left on the agenda would be to make a speech to the Enaki people. Their eagerness to leave would have to bow to Enaki tradition and their restless feelings would have to be put on hold for the evening.)

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(That evening, an enormous street party got underway in Namki village as soon as darkness fell. People from all over the forest turned up to partake in the festivities and celebrate another chosen one beginning her trip. Whether it was the sound of the minstrels playing their beautiful melodies or the chance to enjoy some fresh air, Bond,

Cole and Kasira couldn't be sure, the only thing they knew for certain was that they couldn't wait to get out there and join the festivities.

Having waited for what seemed like an eternity, Omki Saan finally lead them out to the village square to a rapturous applause. Feeling pleased by the adulation, both Cole and Kasira walked along smiling to themselves, while Bond waved, saluted and yelled many an Elvis style "thank you" to the crowd. Moments later, they arrived at the top table and sat themselves down, Bond still waving to the people.)

*BOND:* Thank you, thank you very much!

*OMKI SAAN:* Some one tell that idiot, they're applauding Kasira, not him!!!

*KASIRA:* He's happy!

*OMKI SAAN:* Happy?

*KASIRA:* Sorry, I forgot, you don't know what fun is, do you?

(Omki Saan frowned.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Such disrespect for authority and wisdom, it pains me to see it!

*KASIRA:* Whatever! So, what's for dinner?

(Looking out at the massed ranks of brightly dressed Enaki men and women filling the entire village before them, Cole smiled.)

*COLE:* It's good to see people looking so alive!

(Bond gave him a funny look.)

*BOND:* As opposed to being dead, you mean?

*COLE:* No, I mean, these people are so vibrant! It's nice to see.

(Remembering Kasira's words, Omki Saan leant over.)

*OMKI SAAN:* They are vibrant and excited because part of Kasira's initiation is to swim naked in the river!!!

(They all glared at him.)

*KASIRA:* You're joking?

(He beamed.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Actually, yes I am, see... I can have fun too!

(Her filthy look made him burn red and look ashamedly at the table.)

*KASIRA:* That wasn't funny!

(Cringing he offered a soft reply.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Yes, I see that now!

(Bond grinned.)

*BOND:* You know, in our culture, if you offend someone like that you have to put a finger in each nostril and wobble your bottom lip with your thumbs!

(Kasira smiled.)

*KASIRA:* Yeah, and you really upset me then!

*OMKI SAAN:* Very well, to prove I'm a nice guy... and out of respect to your culture... I will!

(They watched with glee as he slowly raised his fingers towards his nose.)

*OMKI SAAN:* I am doing this for you!

(Allowing a grin to crease his chisel features, he suddenly gave a hearty laugh.)

*OMKI SAAN:* You must think I'm as stupid as you are!

(He chuckled some more and folded his arms.)

*KASIRA:* That wasn't funny!

*OMKI SAAN:* Oh, shut up!

*BOND:* You know, in our culture, if you tell a lady to shut up...

(Omki Saan hung his head.)

*OMKI SAAN:* I hate them, all three of them!

(Just then Dakuri nudged him.)

*DAKURI:* Master, it is almost time for her speech!

(Omki Saan nodded in full agreement.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Indeed. Kasira, it is almost time for you to make your speech!

(She pouted.)

*KASIRA:* Yeah, alright then Omki Saan, I'm stupid, I believe you!

*OMKI SAAN:* What?

*KASIRA:* Like I'm gonna fall for that!

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira, when the gong sounds...

(Almost as soon as he said it the gong sounded.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Now, Kasira!

(Instantly, the partying Enaki people fell silent and stared her way.)

*KASIRA:* You silly sod! Do I have 'dipshit' tattooed on my forehead?

(As if she'd just confessed to genocide, a deafening gasp of disgust came her way.

Feeling herself shrink to the size of a peanut, she slowly turned and faced out to the crowd.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Stand up, Kasira!

(Grinning like a naughty schoolgirl, she bit her nails as she climbed to her feet.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Now say something sensible!

(Clearly at the end of his tether, Omki Saan leant a tired elbow on the table and cringed with anticipation of her speech. With cheeks as red as a beetroot, she nervously began.)

*KASIRA:* Um... I'm Kasira... I'm not very good at speeches...

*BOND:* She doesn't say!

*COLE:* Shush!

*KASIRA:* So, to be brief, don't worry... my friends and I, we'll beat Necronema easily...

*COLE:* Necronema?

*BOND:* Necronema?

*KASIRA:* And... that's all I have to say... peace on Vitazoe!

(If there was a world record for the speed anyone had ever sat down, she'd have shattered it. Embarrassed as it was, the cold silence from the people she'd addressed made it ten times worse. While she stared at the table, hoping she'd die, Omki Saan raised to his feet and applauded. As he did so, every man and woman assembled did so too, until she received a deafening ovation.)

*KASIRA:* Thank you, Omki Saan!

*OMKI SAAN:* Who's the silly sod now then?

*KASIRA:* Yeah, okay... touché, Omki Saan!

(While the crowd continued to toast her, Cole leant her way.)

*COLE:* Um... Kasira? Who's Necronema?

*KASIRA:* Don't know, I just felt the urge to say it!

*OMKI SAAN:* Necronema, my friends, is the name of the beast!

*KASIRA:* Well... how did I know that?

*OMKI SAAN:* There is a lot that you know, yet you do not know that you know it!

*KASIRA*: Eh?

*OMKI SAAN*: You learned a lot of things during empowerment!

(She nodded.)

*KASIRA*: Fair enough, now where's this food?

(Bond agreed.)

*BOND*: Good question, I'm bloody famished!

*OMKI SAAN*: Before we eat, would anyone like some wine?

*KASIRA*: Will the food come any quicker if we don't?

*OMKI SAAN*: No!

*KASIRA*: Okay then!

*OMKI SAAN*: Dakuri, wine for our friends!

*DAKURI*: Why? They are quite capable of whining themselves, after all they have done nothing but whine since they got here!

(Dakuri grinned.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Dakuri, you made *my* joke seem almost funny!

*KASIRA*: Your joke wasn't even slightly funny!

*OMKI SAAN*: Exactly!

*DAKURI*: I try to be nice, what do I get?

*OMKI SAAN*: Dakuri, shut up and fetch the wine!

*COLE*: None for me thanks!

(Bond was flabbergasted.)

*BOND*: What? But you're a wine weirdo!

*COLE*: I hate wine!

*BOND*: Uh? But you're a member of the wine club!

*COLE*: So?

*BOND*: So? What do you mean, so? Aint it obvious?

*COLE*: Drop it bond, I don't want to talk about it!

*BOND*: You didn't pop in *there* to hide from Suzina as well, did you?

*COLE*: Eh?

*BOND*: And they made you join?

*COLE*: What? Look, no! Forget it, will you?

*KASIRA*: So why did you join then?

*COLE*: Don't you start!

*OMKI SAAN*: Cole Fishman, you would prefer ale?

*COLE*: Please, call me Cole!

*OMKI SAAN*: Thank you... well?

*COLE*: Yes please, Omki!

*OMKI SAAN*: Please, call me Omki Saan!

*COLE*: Fine!

*BOND*: Did someone mention ale?

(For the first time in days, the party from Sudereva felt free enough to enjoy themselves, as they laughed and drunk their way through the evening.)

(By the time midnight approached, the village had begun to clear. Before long, the village that had previously heaved with people was only left with a few drunken souls to stagger around its many paths. Fast asleep on the table, Bond was extremely drunk, having downed 15 straight ales and a carafe of wine. While he snored like a wildebeest face down in his plate, Kasira and Cole were being lead away to their dormitory, Dakuri, deciding to come back for him later. The next thing Bond knew about the existence of life on this planet was when he fell out of bed first thing the next morning. The thudding of him crashing to the floorboards woke up Kasira.)

*BOND:* Bollocks, fucking stupid bed!

(Holding his head he clambered to his feet.)

*BOND:* Where the hell am I?

(As he cleared his vision, Kasira mumbled, half asleep.)

*KASIRA:* Morning reverend!

(He leapt out of his skin.)

*BOND:* A woman!!!

(In a flash, it all came back to him.)

*BOND:* Oh, Kasira... morning!

(As he sat back on his bed rubbing his hair, Kasira sat up swiftly.)

*KASIRA:* The journey!!!

*BOND:* Uh? Oh, that... with this hangover?

*KASIRA:* We'd better get ready!

(She turned in the direction of Cole's bed.)

*KASIRA:* Cole? Cole?

(Wearily he replied.)

*COLE:* Uh?

*KASIRA:* Get up, we've got to go on our journey!

(Semi-stunned, he sat up.)

*COLE:* Oh yeah... happy birthday, Kasira!

(Remembering, she sat crossed legged and placed a finger on her lips while she stared excitedly ahead.)

*KASIRA:* Yeah, I'm 18!

*BOND:* Yeah... I was eighteen once!

(Cole yawned.)

*COLE:* I would have got you a present Kasira, but I got kidnapped and taken to a strange forest where I learned martial arts from a touch on the head. I would get you something today but I have to go and help slay an evil beast!

*BOND:* Funny, same thing happened to me!

*KASIRA:* Excuses, excuses!

(She giggled excitedly.)

*KASIRA:* Come on, let's get ready!

(She leapt from the bed.)

*KASIRA:* Come on guys!

*BOND:* You get ready, it takes longer for you to brush your hair than it takes both of us to wash, shave and eat our breakfast!

*KASIRA:* No shame in wanting to look your best!

*BOND:* Well in my case, this is pretty much as good as I get!



(She looked at his uneven stubble, fly away hair and bloodshot eyes and grinned.)

*KASIRA*: I sincerely hope not, for your sake!

(As Kasira rushed excitedly around, Cole and eventually the shiftless Bond, also began their morning routines.

Despite Bond's alcohol induced slow progress, the three of them managed to be ready on time. With no particularly sad feelings about leaving Enaki forest, they followed Omki Saan and Dakuri back to the docks and boarded a ship. Feeling both excited and apprehensive about the journey ahead, they sat out on the deck together as the ship set sail. Once any sight of land had long disappeared, Omki Saan called them all closer to give them a briefing about what might lay ahead.)

*OMKI SAAN*: Okay, listen well, we are heading to a place called Dezara's Plateau, a large body of land far to the east...

*BOND*: How far?

*OMKI SAAN*: Very far...

*BOND*: Yes, but how far?

*COLE*: Bond, let him finish!

*BOND*: I only asked how far!

*OMKI SAAN*: Please... you must be aware of the dangers...

*BOND*: Now I'm listening!

*OMKI SAAN*: Good... located somewhere on this land is a giant lake, in the middle of which, there lies... the forbidden mountain...

*BOND*: Why's it called the forbidden mountain?

*OMKI SAAN*: Because it is forbidden!

*BOND*: Makes sense I suppose!

*OMKI SAAN*: Mr Bond, are you deliberately being obtuse?

*BOND*: No, it comes quite naturally to me!

(Dakuri leant to him and spoke in a booming voice.)

*DAKURI*: Silence when Omki Saan is talking!

(Bond gulped.)

*OMKI SAAN*: That's better!

(And so, he continued.)

*OMKI SAAN*: In a cave on this forbidden mountain, is located... Necronema's lair!

*KASIRA*: So that's where we head?

*OMKI SAAN*: Yes, but beware, for there will be many hidden dangers on the way!

*COLE*: Such as?

*OMKI SAAN*: Dezara's Plateau is home to some of Vitazoe's meanest beasts, you must be on your guard. Not only that, there is a chance that Necronema may send a minion to intercept you!

*BOND*: Um... Omki Saan?

*OMKI SAAN*: What now, Bond?

*BOND*: Are you certain we're up to the challenge?

*OMKI SAAN*: You doubt yourself?

*BOND*: No, I doubt these two!

(He gestured to Cole and Kasira.)

*BOND*: A girl and a wine club sissy!

*COLE:* Hey!

*KASIRA:* Bastard!

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira!!!

*KASIRA:* Well, that's mean!

*OMKI SAAN:* Kasira, Bond is right to speak of his worries now and not later!

*KASIRA:* Even so!

*OMKI SAAN:* But Bond, you must understand, if you doubt your allies then it is you who is a danger to *them*, not the other way around!

(Bond nodded.)

*BOND:* Fair comment!

*OMKI SAAN:* Good, one other thing... be on your guard for thieves, the people of Dezara's Plateau are a tough, lawless race. Keep your gold pieces and your weapons safe, but most of all the sacred dagger!

*KASIRA:* And how do we kill Necronema?

*OMKI SAAN:* When the time comes, your empowerment will enlighten you!

(Content with his lecture, Omki Saan nodded firmly.)

*OMKI SAAN:* That is all I can tell you, please, remember it well!

(And with that, he and Dakuri headed for the cabins.)

*COLE:* Interesting!

*KASIRA:* I'm nervous!

*COLE:* You'll be okay?

(He patted her on the back and headed to the front of the deck to watch the sea.)

*BOND:* And then there were two!

(Kasira nodded.)

*BOND:* So, um... how are you coping?

*KASIRA:* Like I said... I'm a bit nervous, that's all!

*BOND:* No, I mean... how are you coping with being on a trip with lover boy?

(She bit her lip.)

*BOND:* No comment eh?

*KASIRA:* To be honest, I've had other things on my mind!

(He nodded.)

*BOND:* Hmm, your life's been turned upside down hasn't it?

*KASIRA:* You could say that!

*BOND:* And I did. I guess everything considered, you're coping quite well!

(She shrugged.)

*KASIRA:* Maybe I'm stronger than I thought!

*BOND:* No doubt about it... Come on, let's go and see what Cole's up to!

(As the ship continued to sail on into late evening, spirits remained reasonably high. Even when Port Amanti, first landing point in the fated lands of Dezara's Plateau appeared into view, nobody allowed it to get them down. They all watched on with seriousness etched into the faces as the ship edged ever closer to the dirty looking township ahead. Psyched and ready to go, the three of them marched from the ship as soon as it docked. Anxious to go, they stood talking with Omki Saan and Dakuri by the quayside.)

*OMKI SAAN:* This my friends, is where I must take my leave!

(Hardly lovers of the elderly wise man, Cole, Bond and Kasira were polite at best.)

*KASIRA*: Bye then!

*COLE*: See you when we get back!

*BOND*: *You* might, I'm going straight back to Sudereva when this is over!

(Dakuri on the other hand, was in no rush.)

*DAKURI*: Farewell master, it has been a joy and a privilege to serve you these last 21 years!

*OMKI SAAN*: Dakuri, master warrior of all Enaki, you have served me well!

(They bowed to each other.)

*BOND*: Are you coming with *us* Dakuri?

(He nodded.)

*DAKURI*: As master warrior, I was selected to guard the chosen one since before she was born... that time has come!

(Bond turned to Cole and Kasira.)

*BOND*: Oh good, he'll be a right barrel of laughs!

*COLE*: So much for 'the more the merrier'!

*KASIRA*: Give him a chance, under that dull, serious, angry exterior there might be a less horrible man struggling to get out!

(Cole and Bond screwed up their faces.)

*BOND*: I wouldn't bet on it!

(They watched as Omki Saan returned to the ship, Dakuri bowing to him as he went. Once he was aboard, Dakuri turned and walked through them.)

*DAKURI*: Come, we have work to do!

(They watched him go and shrugged.)

*BOND*: Excuse us, why don't you!

*KASIRA*: Come on, let's get this over with!

(And thus, they headed slowly and carefully from the dockside into the dusty township ahead.)

With the much disliked Omki Saan no longer on their backs, the three wide-eyed travellers already felt a little more comfortable as they followed behind the giant Dakuri. The true extent of their extraordinary situation was still to hit them. Surveying the township all around them with wide eyes, they kept one hand on their valuables and stuck close together. Never slow to air his feelings, Bond was first to make an observation.)

*BOND*: Why does everybody here look angry?

*DAKURI*: Because, reverend Bond, they are!

*BOND*: Oh... well, that would explain it!

*KASIRA*: I'd be angry if I lived in this filth!

*COLE*: You know, some would say it has character!

*BOND*: Character? If this is character I'd hate to see a town with personality!

(As they marched into the dusty depravity of broken buildings and drunken noises, Cole turned to Dakuri.)

*COLE*: Shall we blow this place off and get going?

(Dakuri shook his head.)

*DAKURI*: First we need to establish our bearings!

*KASIRA*: I thought you knew where to go!

*DAKURI:* This is almost as new to me as it is you! I have only been here once, a few days ago!

*BOND:* Now he tells us!

*DAKURI:* On the contrary Bond, I never told you otherwise!

*BOND:* Never mind trying to get out of it on a technicality... wait a minute, you were here a few days ago? So you should know our bearings then!

(Dakuri was furious.)

*DAKURI:* Once again, Bond, you get ahead of yourself. Only a fool would travel these lands without a guide. I can not risk getting us lost in such an inhospitable land.

(Angrily he strode towards a broken down building with missing windows and a faded sign half hanging from the balcony. Jogging to keep up, Cole and Kasira remonstrated with Bond.)

*COLE:* Why are you trying to piss him off?

*BOND:* He annoys me! He's so condescending!

*KASIRA:* Yeah, but making him angry makes him even worse!

*BOND:* Bollocks, a little humility is just what he needs!

*COLE:* Whatever Bond, just remember his fists are as big as your head!

(As Dakuri paced purposefully through the rotten wooden door of the dilapidated building, the others raced to his side. Without even acknowledging them, he paced up to the counter just inside the door and banged it with his fist. As dust rose up in front of them, they looked around.)

*KASIRA:* What is this place?

(Bond shrugged.)

*BOND:* I think condemned is the word your looking for!

(Dakuri turned from the counter.)

*DAKURI:* If you knew anything about this world, you would recognise a travellers rest when you see one!

*COLE:* How?

*DAKURI:* I have my methods!

*BOND:* You read the sign outside didn't you?

(Dakuri frowned.)

*DAKURI:* You would be wise not to try my patience any further Bond!

(Edging away from Dakuri's piercing stare, he innocently looked away.)

*DAKURI:* Better!

*KASIRA:* Um... Dakuri? Why are we standing here?

*DAKURI:* We are waiting...

(Before he could finish his sentence, a lady in her thirties appeared from behind the counter. Wearing a fake smile and eyelashes to match, she spoke in an almost seductive tone.)

*LADY:* Welcome to Port Amanti. So, what can I do for *you* boys?

(Spotting Kasira, her eyes bulged and she shook her head.)

*LADY:* I've seen it all now?

*KASIRA:* Eh? What's that suppose to mean?

*LADY:* Well... nothing darlin', now tell me, how can I help?

(Dakuri stood tall.)

*DAKURI:* We are travellers, our journey is to be a long one, so we need maps and information to help us on our way!

(Smiling politely the lady replied.)

*LADY:* Well, I'd love to help you folks, but this is a burlesque house!

(Cole and Bond sniggered as Dakuri turned and marched through the middle of them, towards the door.)

*DAKURI:* Not a word... either of you!

(Bond then waved to the lady behind the counter and they made their way outside.)

*LADY:* You take care now!

(Once outside, they again had to catch up with Dakuri.)

*COLE:* Doesn't hang around does he?

*KASIRA:* He's wearing me out, I've only got little legs!

*BOND:* You've got great legs!

*COLE:* Bond!!!

*KASIRA:* Hey!!! Thanks, but hey!

(Finally they caught the angry giant up.)

*DAKURI:* You people walk too slow!

*KASIRA:* Whatever... so now what?

*DAKURI:* We need to find a travellers rest!

(Bond stopped and yelled.)

*BOND:* A-ha!

(He started to walk towards a building on the right.)

*DAKURI:* Where are you going?

(Wearing the worlds most satisfied grin, he pointed to the big sign over the door.)

*BOND:* If you knew anything about this world, Dakuri, you'd recognise a travellers rest when you see one!

(Clenching an angry fist, Dakuri shook his head and didn't follow him in.)

*DAKURI:* He's not as clever as he thinks, I have the money!

*COLE:* Don't be so bloody childish!

*DAKURI:* He started it!

*KASIRA:* You're as bad as one another, come on!

(Reluctantly, Dakuri followed them into the travellers rest.)

*BOND:* What kept you?

*COLE:* Dakuri walks too slow!

(Fed up to the back teeth with his fellow travellers, Dakuri barged his way to the desk to be greeted by a middle aged lady wearing a unwelcoming sneer.)

*LADY:* What do you want?

*DAKURI:* Ah, a straight talker, perfect...

*LADY:* I asked you what you want, I won't ask twice.

(Bond leant to Kasira.)

*BOND:* Polite, isn't she?

*LADY:* I *can* hear, you know?

*BOND:* Really, can you sing too?

*LADY:* Don't make me come over there...

(Annoyed by her ignorance of him Dakuri raised his voice.)

*DAKURI:* Are you here to help people or insult them?

(She smiled.)

*LADY:* Depends, you spending any money?

*DAKURI:* Money?

*LADY:* Yeah, money, what are you stupid?

*DAKURI:* Spend money on what?

*LADY:* Food, accommodation?

*DAKURI:* No, we need information, then we will go!

*LADY:* That's up to you!

(As she glared at Dakuri, Kasira stepped forward.)

*KASIRA:* Um, Dakuri, it's getting late, perhaps a hotel would be an idea!

(Dakuri nodded.)

*DAKURI:* Yes, a bad one!

*KASIRA:* But we'll have to set up camp soon, we might as well stay here!

*COLE:* She's right!

*BOND:* Yes, she is!

*KASIRA:* Dakuri?

(Seeing he was outvoted he growled inwardly and turned to the lady.)

*DAKURI:* Very well, I have no choice, we will take a room!

*KASIRA:* A room?

*DAKURI:* Two then!

(Hearing these words, the lady's demeanour changed entirely. With a welcoming smile she spoke with a softer voice.)

*LADY:* A wise choice, one room for the lady is it? The other one for the men?

*DAKURI:* I suppose that is how it must be!

*LADY:* Lovely, and what was the information you seek, sir?

*DAKURI:* We seek passage to the great lake!

(She stroked her chin and shook her head.)

*LADY:* Long trip, eh?

*DAKURI:* As I said!

*LADY:* Thing is, we'd usually offer you a guide, but they're all out at the moment I'm afraid!

(Suddenly an unimpressed voice piped up from the room behind her.)

*VOICE:* Hey? What about me? *I'm* a guide!

(A scruffy looking thirty year old man appeared from around the corner.)

*VOICE:* You forgot *me*!

(Staring though him, the lady replied directly.)

*LADY:* I didn't Micalov, believe me!

(Looking hurt he folded his arms and stared at the ceiling.)

*MICALOV:* Your words cut me in half, they really do!

(Dakuri mused.)

*DAKURI:* What about him? Can he be our guide?

*LADY:* I wouldn't recommend it...

(Looking furious, Micalov cut in.)

*MICALOV:* Look, I'm perfectly capable!

*LADY:* Micalov, the last people you were guiding still having returned, that was almost a month ago!

*MICALOV:* They ran off!

*LADY:* You lost them!!!

*MICALOV:* What would you know? You weren't even there!

*LADY:* No, but I'm always here when the people you guide come back and demand a refund!

(Micalov took a deep breath and sighed.)

*MICALOV:* What can I say, I'm hurt, and I thought you were a friend!

(She looked confused.)

*LADY:* How the hell did you get that impression???

(This time he *genuinely* looked hurt.)

*LADY:* I've been nothing but rude to you since we met!

*MICALOV:* I see what's going on here, you're still bitter 'cause I wouldn't go away with you!

*LADY:* No, I'm just bitter 'cause you wouldn't go away!

(Suddenly a look of horror crossed her face.)

*LADY:* You thought I wanted you to go away with me???

(Micalov seemed bemused.)

*MICALOV:* Well, you did, didn't you?

*LADY:* No!!!

(Enthralled by their conversation, Cole, Bond and Kasira were most disappointed when Dakuri intervened.)

*DAKURI:* Excuse me, we are still here!

(Giving Micalov a disturbed frown, she turned to Dakuri.)

*LADY:* I'm sorry, two rooms was it?

*DAKURI:* Yes, and even limited knowledge is better than none, we will take this man as a guide!

(Micalov clenched a triumphant fist.)

*MICALOV:* Yes!!!

(The lady shrugged.)

*LADY:* It's your funeral!

*DAKURI:* Young man...

*MICALOV:* My name's Micalov!

*DAKURI:* Micalov... meet us out the front of the building at sunrise!

*MICALOV:* In the morning?

(Dakuri's face bore a blank expression.)

*LADY:* I warned you!

*DAKURI:* We'll see you then, right now, our rooms await us!

*LADY:* Indeed they do, let me show you to them!

(As she lead her guests up the creaking staircase to their flea ridden rooms, Micalov did a little jig.)

*MICALOV:* Woohoo, I'm back!!!

(The down-trodden condition of the rooms, hardly contributed to a good nights sleep, but having had a few drinks to toast Kasira's coming of age, a good nights sleep was had by all. By now, quite used to early mornings, Cole, Dakuri and Bond found themselves up and ready to face the day long before the sun rose from the hills to the east. As the

faintest sign of a new day dawning appeared, the three men found themselves standing outside the travellers rest.)

*COLE:* It's quite warm for this time of day!

*BOND:* You think so?

*COLE:* You're shivering!

*BOND:* Yes, I'm well aware of that!

*DAKURI:* I wonder if our guide will come!

*COLE:* You don't think he will?

*DAKURI:* I don't know, we never discussed his fee!

*BOND:* The sun will be up in a minute, where's Kasira?

*DAKURI:* She is late! Cole Fishman, go and get her!

(Cole looked quite taken aback.)

*COLE:* Who put you in charge?

(Dakuri gave him one of his trademark filthy looks.)

*COLE:* I'm going, I'm going!

(With that he paced back into the hotel and made his way to Kasira's room, complaining to himself all the way.)

*COLE:* Bloody overgrown ape, who does he think he is?

(As he reached Kasira's door he knocked softly.)

*COLE:* Kasira?

(Receiving no reply, he knocked again.)

*COLE:* Kasira?

(Still receiving no reply, Cole sighed to himself. Convinced she must still be asleep, he threw open her door and stepped inside purposefully.)

*COLE:* Kas...

(He was thrown into silence by the sight of Kasira, fast asleep on a sheet on the floor, wearing only her underwear. He stared happily for a few moments then thought better of it and shook his head.)

*COLE:* Shouldn't stare!

*KASIRA:* Hi, Cole!

(He looked down and saw her smiling back at him... then panicked.)

*COLE:* Oh... um... I wasn't staring at your fantastic curves!!! What??? No!!! I was coming to wake you!!! We're all waiting!!!

(He averted his gaze.)

*KASIRA:* Everybody's waiting???

(She leapt to her feet and rushed to her clothes.)

*KASIRA:* I'm late, help me get dressed!

(Instinctively he agreed.)

*COLE:* Okay!!!

(Suddenly, morality cut in.)

*COLE:* What am I doing?

(With that he headed for the door.)

*KASIRA:* Cole?

(Taking one last look at her he pulled the door.)

*COLE:* I'll be downstairs!

(Feeling quite the fool, he trudged back outside.)



*BOND:* Where is she?

*COLE:* She's... coming!

(Bond gave him a sideways glance.)

*BOND:* You okay?

(He hung his head.)

*COLE:* I saw her underwear!

*BOND:* Oh... was she wearing it?

(An angry Dakuri intervened.)

*DAKURI:* Kasira is the chosen one, you will respect her!

(Adjusting his collar, Cole agreed.)

*COLE:* Quite right too!

(Unable to read Cole whatsoever, Kasira tried to forget about it and prepared herself as quickly as possible. Not quick enough for some.)

*BOND:* Bloody women!

*DAKURI:* Calm yourself, Bond!

*BOND:* They spend two hours getting ready, then look exactly the same as when they started!

(He paced up and down.)

*BOND:* If we'd known, we could have all stayed in bed!

(Finally, looking flustered and apologising like it was going out of fashion, Kasira raced out of the inn.)

*BOND:* Oh, look... here she comes!!!

*KASIRA:* Sorry!

*BOND:* When we said sunrise, we meant sunrise in this country!!!

*KASIRA:* Alright, calm down, I said I was sorry!

*DAKURI:* Never mind, we go!

*KASIRA:* Eh... but where's Micalov?

*DAKURI:* Our guide has not come, worry not, we will find a way!

(With that he started to head for what looked like the edge of town.)

*DAKURI:* We'll try this way!

(Before he could take another step however, a tired looking Micalov raced around the corner.)

*MICALOV:* Thank god you waited!

(He screeched to a halt.)

*MICALOV:* So sorry, late on my first day, I'm really sorry!

*DAKURI:* You will make it up to us, now come, show us the way!

*MICALOV:* Okay, and thanks for waiting!

*BOND:* It's okay, we had to!

(He glared at Kasira.)

*KASIRA:* Up yours, you're not my dad!

*BOND:* Eh? What's he got to with it?

(She sneered.)

*KASIRA:* Shall we?

*MICALOV:* To the great lake you say?

*DAKURI:* This is correct!

*MICALOV:* Then follow me!

(With that he started to head off to the top of the road.)

**MICALOV:** I'll have us there in no time!

(Suddenly a voice yelled out from the travellers rest window.)

**LADY:** The great lake's *that* way!

(They turned and saw an arm pointing the opposite way.)

**MICALOV:** Yeah, I know that!

(He about turned and headed through them.)

**BOND:** God help us!

**COLE:** You know, that's the first religious thing I've ever heard you say!

**BOND:** I'm getting desperate!

(With that, he followed Micalov.)

**COLE:** Strange!

(Along with Kasira and Dakuri, he too followed Micalov to the edge of town. Once there, they stopped and gazed at the vast meadows before them.)

**KASIRA:** Finally, my journey begins!

**BOND:** Finally? You've already travelled half the world!

**KASIRA:** Trust you to spoil the moment!

(And with that, they headed out into the beautiful green wilderness before them.

With the soft green grass under foot and the gentle breeze sweeping across their faces, it became easy forget their troubles for a while. Feeling somewhat relaxed, they followed closely behind the serious looking Micalov and let their thoughts roam free.)

**COLE:** Places like this make you wonder why we have cities!

**BOND:** I agree, life would be a lot easier if we could all live near one of these!

**COLE:** Exactly, I think that same thing every time I leave the city!

**BOND:** Me too, yet we always return!

**KASIRA:** I've never seen anything like this before!

**BOND:** That's right, you'd never left the city had you?

**KASIRA:** No, Enaki forest was the first forest I ever saw, and this is my first...

(She frowned.)

**KASIRA:** What is this?

**BOND:** It's a meadow!

**KASIRA:** Oh right, *this* is a meadow!

**COLE:** I suppose the park and the school field were the only greenery you really knew!

**KASIRA:** Yeah!

**BOND:** That's quite sad really!

**KASIRA:** No, not really... you can't miss what you've never seen!

**BOND:** That's true!

**DAKURI:** I have travelled most of the world and there is only one thing I don't understand!

**BOND:** What's that?

**DAKURI:** Why do you people cover your cities with concrete then complain you have no grass?

(There was silence.)

**BOND:** That's a good question Dakuri!

**DAKURI:** Do you have a good answer?

**COLE:** We didn't do it Dakuri, we only live there, who knows why we do what we do?

*DAKURI:* Is it not important for a man to know why he does what he does?

*COLE:* Nobody's perfect Dakuri, not even you!

*DAKURI:* So you're happy just to drink your wine and question nothing?

(Cole shrugged.)

*BOND:* Speaking of wine...

*COLE:* Forget it Bond!

*BOND:* No, come on Cole, why join a wine club when you don't even like it?

*COLE:* Look, Bond, why do you want to know?

*KASIRA:* Well... I was kind of wondering too!

*DAKURI:* I too am curious!

*MICALOV:* So am I, and I don't even know you!

(Cole glared at him.)

*COLE:* That's right, you don't, just keep walking!

(He shook his head.)

*COLE:* Damn cheek!

*BOND:* Well?

*COLE:* What?

(He looked up at everyone keenly awaiting an answer.)

*COLE:* Fine, if you must know... it was my mother, she made me!

(Bond chuckled.)

*DAKURI:* Are you not a grown man?

*COLE:* You don't get it, she's so overbearing... I grew up with her setting standards for me, a true gentleman joins the wine club, he plays chess... that's what she'd say!

*BOND:* And you never thought to argue?

*COLE:* I was young, she opened doors for me, I became a teacher thanks to her!

*BOND:* Really?

*COLE:* Well... she's a headmistress!

*KASIRA:* What? From our school?

*COLE:* Well, yeah... who else would give a 21 year old man a job in a school full of 16 to 18 year old girls?

*KASIRA:* We didn't mind!

*COLE:* I guess I've always tried to live up to her expectations of me!

*DAKURI:* You are one sad bloke, Cole Fishman!

*KASIRA:* You can talk Dakuri, you try to live up to Omki Saan's expectations and he aint even related to you!

*DAKURI:* Omki Saan is my father!

(Feeling humble, she looked away and sunk to the back.)

*COLE:* Dakuri's right, I am pretty sad. I don't even enjoy teaching any more, all I do is tell these kids what other people think they ought to know. I want to teach them something they'll personally find useful!

*BOND:* What do you mean?

*COLE:* Well... I teach 20 odd kids at a time exactly the same thing! Even if they don't need to know or even if they already do!

*BOND:* Ever considered private tutoring?

*COLE:* I have actually, I don't know. When this is over though, I'm gonna took a long hard look at my life, some changes are gonna be needed!

*MICALOV:* Good for you!

*COLE:* Were you listening again???

(He trotted away innocently.)

*MICALOV:* No!

*COLE:* Nosy git!

(They continued to chat about life in Sudereva as they made their way deeper and deeper into the plain lands.)

*DAKURI:* Yet the people outside live in squalor?

*BOND:* It's a cruel world Dakuri!

*KASIRA:* How come I didn't know about these shanty towns?

(She looked at Cole.)

*COLE:* Don't blame me, I'm your maths teacher!

*BOND:* Anyway Cole, so um... do you still live with your mother then?

(Cole grimaced.)

*COLE:* I wish I hadn't told you now!

*BOND:* Well?

*COLE:* Look, not as if it has anything to do with you, but no I don't...

(He scratched behind his ear and looked embarrassed.)

*COLE:* My mother bought me an apartment!

(There was silence.)

*BOND:* Spoilt bugger!

*DAKURI:* You have it easy, Cole Fishman!

(Cole looked angry.)

*COLE:* I'm a nice guy, I try hard to be decent... so what if my mother's rich?

*KASIRA:* Exactly, you *are* a nice guy Cole, I can see that!

*BOND:* She's so young and innocent!

*COLE:* She isn't blinded by bitterness you mean!

*BOND:* I'm not bitter!

*COLE:* Why are you such a git then?

(Bond stood tall.)

*BOND:* Listen pal...

(He started to gape.)

*BOND:* If it wasn't for that ugly creature floating in the air behind you, I'd give you a piece of my mind!!!

(Slowly they turned to face the way Bond was, receiving quite a shock. Levitating a foot from the ground, with teeth the size of small daggers, was an ugly scaly, half human beast, twice the size of Dakuri. Staring in horror at its sharp terracotta scales and menacing black eyes, Micalov backed away.)

*MICALOV:* Um... I'll leave this one to you!

(As he tip-toed backwards, Dakuri stepped forth, drawing his hefty sword from its sheath.)

*DAKURI:* Great beast... we mean you no harm, please, let us pass!

(The beast replied in a deep growl.)

*BEAST:* Oh, okay then!

(Dakuri bowed.)

*BEAST:* Fool!!!

(In light of the beasts tone, Dakuri stepped back and adopted an attacking stance.)

*BEAST:* You do not come in peace, you have come for *him*!

(Undaunted, Dakuri spoke up.)

*DAKURI:* Mighty beast, our fight is not with you, let us pass!!!

(Clenching its huge fists the beast retorted angrily.)

*BEAST:* You have come for Necronema, but first you will have to go through me!!!

*DAKURI:* Very well!

(Looking slightly worried, Cole, Bond and Kasira stepped up to Dakuri.)

*COLE:* How do we defeat it, Dakuri?

*DAKURI:* Step back, Kasira!

(He thrust an arm to his left to stop her passing. Without even having to duck, she walked under it and approached the beast.)

*KASIRA:* You may be big, but there's five of us!

(A small voice piped up from behind.)

*MICALOV:* Um... four actually!

(As Dakuri dragged her back, the beast sank to the ground and folded its huge arms.)

*BEAST:* Prepare yourselves, your deaths are imminent!!!

*KASIRA:* Violence won't solve anything!

(Bundling Kasira out of their way, Cole and Bond stepped up to Dakuri.)

*COLE:* Let's do it!

*BOND:* Show us what you've got... you!!!

(As Cole and Bond raised their hands in state of readiness, the beast suddenly disappeared in a cloud of smoke. Coughing, everybody shielded their eyes from the smoke, until all at once it wafted away.)

*KASIRA:* What the?

(Shaking their heads and squinting to check their eyes didn't deceive them, they stared before them at where the beast had transformed itself into a perfect copy of Kasira. Right down to her heart-shaped necklace, the two were identical.)

*COLE:* How the... and why?

*BOND:* I see what you mean!

*KASIRA:* Who are you? What do you want?

*BEAST:* Who are you? What do you want?

*KASIRA:* Don't copy me!!!

*BEAST:* Don't copy me!!!

(Suddenly, the fake Kasira raised its hands above its head and dropped a pellet of green liquid in its hair. As the beast laughed, Kasira screamed and held her head.)

*DAKURI:* What have you done?

(Cole looked on in horror as Kasira started glowing green.)

*COLE:* You bastard!!!

(In a red rage, he charged at the creature, punching it with all his might on the side of its face. As he did so, Kasira flew back to the ground, while the beast stood laughing.)

*COLE:* How can this be?

(Semi-conscious and looking seriously ill, Kasira sat up.)

*KASIRA:* What the hell's happening?

*BEAST:* What the hell's happening?

*DAKURI:* Silence Kasira, conserve your energy!

*KASIRA:* Don't 'silence Kasira' me!!!

*BEAST:* Don't 'silence Arisak' me!!!

*BOND:* Arisak?

*KASIRA:* That's my name backwards!

*BEAST:* That's my name backwards!

(Looking to and fro between the beast and Kasira, Dakuri didn't know what to do.)

*DAKURI:* She's poisoned!!!

(Desperately Cole stood by Kasira.)

*COLE:* We'll get you out of this!

(The beast lashed out its right arm making the real Kasira mirror his movement and slap Cole to the ground.)

*KASIRA:* Sorry!

*BEAST:* Sorry!

*BOND:* What the hell can we do? If we hit it, we hit Kasira!

*COLE:* Yeah, and in the meantime she's getting poisoned!

*BOND:* Look she's fading fast, we have to do something!

(As Kasira's legs began to buckle, Dakuri ran to her and pinched her face.)

*BEAST:* Ow!!!

*KASIRA:* Ow!!!

*DAKURI:* I've got it, everybody attack Kasira!

*BOND:* Steady on Dakuri!

*DAKURI:* Trust me... I know what...

(His words were interrupted by the beast lifting its knee to make Kasira kneel him in the groin. Bright red and struggling for breath, Dakuri slashed at Kasira's neck with his finger nails in a vain attempt to draw blood.)

*COLE:* Hey, it wasn't her fault, the beast did it!

*BOND:* You've got a lot to answer for beast!

(Cole had to physically restrain the angry cleric from attacking it.)

*COLE:* Don't! You'll hurt Kasira!

(Suddenly, there was a thud as Kasira passed out, too weak to stand up from her poisoning.)

*COLE:* Damn it, she's dying!

(Bond held his head in despair while Dakuri lifted his sword aloft and glared at the beast.)

*DAKURI:* Her pain is your pain!!!

(With that he slashed his sword blade towards Kasira's neck.)

*COLE:* Dakuri, no!!!

*BOND:* Kasira!!!

(As the sword sliced through her neck and out the other side, Cole and Bond turned away holding their heads in considerable anguish. In their haste to look away, they didn't notice the head fly from the beast's shoulders and land with a bounce twenty feet away.)

*COLE:* I don't believe this!

*BOND:* Poor, poor girl!

(Dakuri watched on as the beast began to fizz away and dissolve, while at the same time, Kasira's poisoning vanished and she sat up breathing a sea of relief. Cole and Bond, however, continued to grieve for their perfectly healthy ally.)

*COLE:* She had so much to live for!

*BOND:* So young, she was far too young to die!

(Cole looked into Bond's eyes with a menacing look.)

*COLE:* We must avenge her!

*BOND:* Yes!!!

(The two men spun around, ready to give the beast the beating of its life.)

*COLE:* Right, you... eh?

*BOND:* Where is it?

(They noticed Kasira sitting up talking to Dakuri.)

*BOND:* What the... but he killed her?

*COLE:* Yeah... uh?

(They approached Dakuri, looking confused.)

*BOND:* How did...

*DAKURI:* Easy, the beast's poison nearly killed Kasira, yet when I scratched her neck, the beast bled... yet she did not... it was then obvious what I must do!

(Cole drew a breath of relief.)

*COLE:* I'm glad you figured that out, I thought she was a goner!

*DAKURI:* It was hardly a difficult enigma to solve, Cole Fishman!

*BOND:* So, how come she isn't poisoned anymore then?

*DAKURI:* Because the beast that was hosting the mirror is now dead... its body, is undoubtedly poisoned!

*BOND:* Man, I need to sit down!

(As Micalov re-joined them from his hiding place, they all took their opportunity to grab a rest for a minute or two. Feeling more than a little relieved at the outcome of the fight, Bond laid upon his back and looked up at the clouds.)

*BOND:* I hope we don't meet many more of them things!

*COLE:* Well, if we do, we know what to do!

*DAKURI:* We do?

(Cole looked confused.)

*COLE:* Yeah... like, the head thing!

*DAKURI:* What if it doesn't work this time? What if our enemy is just a spitting image of her?

*COLE:* Hmm, I hadn't thought of that!

(Bond grinned.)

*BOND:* I hope you haven't got a twin sister Kasira, Cole would take one look at her and chop your head off!

(Enjoying the moment, they laughed together.)

*DAKURI:* Come, let's head on!

(And sure enough, in no time at all, they were back on the journey. Once again, Micalov lead the way as the others talked about nothing in particular just to pass the time.)

*DAKURI:* How does it feel to have your first battle under your belts?

*KASIRA:* Battle? It wasn't much of a battle for *me*, I nearly died!

*DAKURI:* Don't be a drama queen!

*KASIRA:* That's easy for you to say!

*COLE:* We didn't do much either!

*BOND:* Who's we?

*COLE:* You and I!

*BOND:* Yes, okay, I'll give you that!

*DAKURI:* At least you got a feel for the heat of battle!

*BOND:* Not much of one!

*COLE:* There'll be other battles!

(As early evening approached, the tiring party trudged onwards. Feeling much less enamoured with the scenery, a hint of discontent began to set in.)

*BOND:* We've been walking all day, my feet are killing me!

*COLE:* Hang in there Bond, it can't be far now!

*KASIRA:* I hope not, my ankles ache!

*DAKURI:* I know it is frustrating, but we must soldier on!

*KASIRA:* Frustrating isn't the word!

*BOND:* Irritating's a little closer to the mark!

*COLE:* Why don't we rest for a minute then?

*BOND:* Only a minute? And the rest!

*DAKURI:* Please, I fear we only have a few hours daylight left, we must push ourselves!

*BOND:* Push ourselves? It's alright for you, you've got big muscular legs!

*KASIRA:* Let's quit complaining shall we, the sooner we reach the place, the better!

*BOND:* We'd probably be there by now if you didn't insist on stopping and brushing your hair every five minutes!

*KASIRA:* Hey, don't start on me, I've stopped to brush my hair once... once!

*BOND:* That's once too many, you don't see me stopping to brush *my* hair!

*KASIRA:* You haven't got any hair!

(Flapping wildly he pulled at his hair.)

*BOND:* What do you call this then?

*KASIRA:* That's just debris from where your hair *used* to be!

*BOND:* Why you... I've got a fine head of hair for my age!

*KASIRA:* Really, did you forget to bring it?

*BOND:* It's on my head, what's the matter? Are your eyes so askew you can't see properly?

*KASIRA:* Hey, that's racist!

*BOND:* Oh, here she goes, you sound just like your mother!

*KASIRA:* Leave my mother out of this!

*BOND:* Do you sing like Rose, too?

*KASIRA:* Piss off!

*BOND:* Oh, good come back!

*COLE:* Bond, give it a rest will you?

*BOND:* Up yours!

*COLE:* Excuse me?

*BOND:* Sorry, better not insult you, your mother might come and tell me off!

*COLE:* Hey, there's no need...

*BOND:* Mummies Boy!

(Cole pulled an angry face and rolled up his sleeves.)

*COLE:* I'll give you mummies boy!!!

(Sensing an unsavoury end to the disagreement, Dakuri leapt between them.)

*DAKURI:* Enough of this foolish nonsense!



(The two men glared at each other.)

*KASIRA*: Let's go, Cole! He's not worth the effort.

*COLE*: No, he's not.

(With that, Cole turned away and joined Kasira in following Micalov. Giving him a filthy look Bond, groaned under his breath.)

*BOND*: Bloody Nancy boy!

(As he went to resume his trek, however, Dakuri grabbed him by his collar.)

*BOND*: Uh-oh!

*DAKURI*: One more thing, reverend Bond, any more slanted eye jokes from you and I won't be impressed!

(With that, he put him down and went after the others. Bond adjusted his collar and flexed his arms, then he too followed on mumbling to himself.)

*BOND*: Bloody blaming *me* for the argument!

(Before he could muster another complaint however a cry of joy filled the air. They all looked up as a delighted Micalov stopped and stood tall, beaming with pride at his flawless success. Nodding with self satisfaction he announced with joy as he gestured impressively over the nearby ridge.)

*MICALOV*: Lady and gentlemen, I give you... Crosier's Point!

(Holding his triumphant pose he spoke through tears of elation.)

*MICALOV*: They said I couldn't do it, they laughed at me, yet here we are... Crosiers Point...

(He smiled to Dakuri.)

*MICALOV*: My work here is done!

(Grinning happily he took a deep breath and gazed over the ridge.)

*MICALOV*: It's never looked so good!

(The four travellers in the meantime, were utterly baffled.)

*COLE*: Crosier's Point?

*DAKURI*: This can't be happening!

*KASIRA*: He looks so proud, it'd almost be cruel to tell him!

*BOND*: In that case, allow me the pleasure!

(With that, he strode up to Micalov and stood beside him.)

*BOND*: So, Crosier's point eh?

*MICALOV*: Yup, this is it!

*BOND*: Well done!

*MICALOV*: Thank you!

*BOND*: Just one thing though!

(Micalov looked curious.)

*MICALOV*: What's that?

(Grabbing him by the throat and squeezing, Bond screamed.)

*BOND*: We asked you to take us to the great lake!!!

(Micalov couldn't reply for Bond's thumbs blocking his airway. Fortunately for him, Dakuri managed to drag him away.)

*MICALOV*: He's a psychopath!

*KASIRA*: Is he? I wanted to push you off of the ridge!

*COLE*: So did I!!!

*MICALOV*: But, I could have sworn you asked me take you to Crosier's Point!

*DAKURI:* Fool, time is not on our side, we have limited supplies!

(Looking appalled at himself, he tried to offer a suggestion.)

*MICALOV:* Well, we'll have to pass through the town of Solstice and get some more... on the way!

*DAKURI:* Hurry, show us the way!

(Desperate to atone for his stupidity, Micalov dashed towards some nearby woodland.)

*MICALOV:* Follow me, I won't let you down this time!

(They all looked at each other.)

*BOND:* He said that last time!

(Kasira shrugged.)

*KASIRA:* Let's go, shall we?

(Feeling extremely dejected by now, they trudged tiredly after the apologetic Micalov. Keeping a close eye on the so-called guide, they made their way into the woodland, ducking under branches and jumping tree roots.)

An hour passed and darkness began to approach but the intrepid travellers were still deep in the wood. Determined to find grassland before resting, they soldiered on even when the ground beneath their feet became boggy and wet.)

*DAKURI:* Micalov you prick, you've lead us into a swamp!

(Micalov protested innocently.)

*MICALOV:* This is the way, I know it is!

*DAKURI:* If you're wrong, I will impale you on my sword!

(Gulping, he lead them forth.)

*KASIRA:* It's hard to wade through this, with this stupid skirt on!

*BOND:* Lift it a bit!

*KASIRA:* Then my legs will get dirty!

*BOND:* Oh, and we don't want that, you might stop and brush your hair again!

*KASIRA:* Oi!

(Suddenly a loud buzzing noise made them all stop and look around them wearing terrified expressions.)

*BOND:* I don't like the sound of that!

(Micalov had turned pale and started to gape.)

*MICALOV:* Aqua... qua... quack...

*DAKURI:* Stop quacking like a duck and say something!

*MICALOV:* A-Aquinas Flies!!!

(With that, he tried to take off like a bat out of hell, but fell flat on his face in the water.)

*COLE:* I'm guessing from his reaction, that this is bad!

*BOND:* Let's not hang around to find out!!!

(In total agreement with his sentiments, they all tried to scramble away as fast as they could, being hampered by the water. Micalov scrambled to his feet as the others raced past him.)

*MICALOV:* Wait for me!!!

*DAKURI:* I think not!

(Desperately, they stamped through the water in the opposite direction to the noise.)

*COLE:* I can't see them!

*KASIRA:* Hey, wait for me!

(They turned and saw her struggling to hold up her skirt and maintain her balance as she attempted to flee. Turning abruptly to Bond, Cole puffed out his chest.)

*COLE:* Leave it to me!

(He raced towards her.)

*BOND:* Pillock!

(As he reached her, he grabbed her hand and started to pull.)

*KASIRA:* Don't pull me over!!!

(Suddenly the sound of the buzzing swelled immensely and an 8 foot square swarm of bright blue flies, the size of small birds, charged towards them.)

*COLE:* Fuck that!!!

(Like a man possessed he scooped Kasira out of the water then promptly apologised for his use of profanity, before bounding away with giant footsteps. From the relative safety of a nearby bush, Dakuri, Bond and Micalov watched on in horror.)

*DAKURI:* It should be me who is rescuing her!

*BOND:* Yes, you should be ashamed!

(Bond watched Dakuri hang his head and looked at Micalov.)

*BOND:* As for you!

(While the three off them prayed for their safety, Cole continued to spring majestically through the water with Kasira in his arms. Unfortunately for him however, the giant blue flies gained at tremendous speed.)

*KASIRA:* They're coming!!!

*COLE:* Shit... excuse my language!

(Within seconds, the winged swarm were a matter of inches away.)

*KASIRA:* Look out, Cole!!!

(Instinctively he dived into the water face first, sending Kasira sprawling. She rolled twice and landed on her backside as the giant swarm buzzed overhead and continued on out of sight into the woods. Feeling much relief, Bond, Dakuri and Micalov climbed from the bush and approached them.)

*DAKURI:* Kasira, what can I say, I'm ashamed!

(She looked up at him unimpressed as reeds and dirt dripped out of her straggly hair. Shaking her head and sneering, she leant on her fist as Cole climbed to his feet. Standing with his arms out and his legs apart he looked down himself and then slung his head in Micalov's direction.)

*COLE:* You!!!

(Micalov's bottom lip drooped.)

*COLE:* They weren't even after us!!! They were just passing!!!

(Micalov replied nervously.)

*MICALOV:* Well I wasn't to know that!

*COLE:* We shouldn't even be in these woods!!!

(Kasira looked up at Dakuri.)

*KASIRA:* Get me out of here!

(Looking sorrowful, he bent down and lifted her from the swamp.)

*DAKURI:* Again, I apologise!

*KASIRA:* Just get me out of here!

*MICALOV:* There's a meadow about a mile away, we'll head there!

(Receiving many filthy looks he turned slowly and crept away.)

*BOND:* Prick!

(Watching Micalov with angry eyes, they followed him through the woods, Kasira and Cole, both filthy and soaked to the skin. Following an angry five mile hike along Micalov's predicted one mile route, they were overjoyed when a meadow finally appeared through the trees up ahead of them.)

*KASIRA:* Finally! Can we light a fire when we get there, you know, so I can dry my clothes?

*DAKURI:* No need, Omki Saan insisted I brought a spare for you!

*BOND:* Why?

*DAKURI:* She is wearing the sacred costume of the Enaki princess, it is very significant!

*KASIRA:* Am I an Enaki princess then?

*DAKURI:* No!

*COLE:* Are we going to chat all night or are we going to set up camp?

(Unsurprised by his angry quip, they hurried from the woodland and immediately began to set up camp under a small lone tree in the meadow.

As darkness fell, the tired allies built a fire and arranged small mats to sit or sleep on, then began to prepare some meat from their supplies. It wasn't long before the fire blazed and Bond, Dakuri and Kasira, who was by now changed into a dry costume, were seated by the fire, while Cole stood there trying to dry in the heat of the flames, as not to get his mat wet. While they started to cook their meat, Micalov was sitting by himself at the foot of the tree, a good 15 feet away from the warmth. Feeling lonely and dejected he watched them laugh and joke with each other and hung his saddened head, before curling up and shivering at the foot of the tree. As he lay there in isolation, the four of them chatted freely.)

*BOND:* What a bizarre day!

*DAKURI:* Yes, and thanks to that stupid Micalov, we have achieved nothing! We should have reached the lake tonight!

*KASIRA:* So we're a day behind schedule because of him?

*DAKURI:* Exactly!

(Cole looked at the silhouetted figure under the tree and shook his head.)

*COLE:* I feel a bit sorry for him actually!

(Bond was dumbfounded.)

*BOND:* Why?

*COLE:* Well... look at him!

(They all turned and gazed and the blackened shadow of Micalov, shivering in a ball.)

*BOND:* No more than he deserves!

*KASIRA:* Oh, come off it, he's freezing look!

*BOND:* He'll get no sympathy from me, the man's an idiot. We've got another days walking ahead thanks to him!

*COLE:* Hey, I thought the church was supposed to be all for forgiveness!

*BOND:* If god was *that* forgiving, we wouldn't need to be good to go to heaven, now would we?

*KASIRA:* What are you saying reverend?

*BOND:* Well... picture it... sorry god, I wasn't meek... that's okay, I forgive you, here, you just inherited the earth!

(They were stunned by his words.)

*COLE*: Are you saying that the holy book is a lie?

*BOND*: I'm saying, that pillock *deserves* to be freezing his arse off under a tree!

(They all faced Micalov again.)

*KASIRA*: We can't leave him there!

*BOND*: Oh, we can, it's easy!

*COLE*: Not if you've got a conscience Bond!

(Dakuri nodded.)

*DAKURI*: It is our duty as human beings, not to let the idiot suffer!

(He leant round and yelled to Micalov.)

*DAKURI*: Idiot! There is warmth and food here...

(Bond cut in.)

*BOND*: So there!

*DAKURI*: Shut it, Bond!

(Micalov looked over.)

*DAKURI*: Come, we do not want you to starve!

(Nervously, the shivering Micalov, rose to his feet.)

*BOND*: Just don't sit next to me!

(Slowly, he approached the fire as Dakuri and Kasira shifted sideways to make a space for him.)

*BOND*: That's far enough Dakuri, you'll be on my lap in a minute!

(Having been given the idea, Kasira deliberately kept going in the hope she'd end up close to Cole. Unfortunately for her, she hadn't noticed him wander off to answer the call of nature behind the big tree. Next thing she knew, she was sitting right beside Bond.)

*BOND*: Yes, yes, very funny you two!

(Pretending it was a joke, she giggled for a moment then started to shift all the way back. Her timing, once again proved awful as she sidled straight back into Cole, just back fresh from his doing his business. With a crash, she landed face first in his lap just as he sat down.)

*COLE*: What?

(Looking a tad flustered by the depravity, he flapped angrily.)

*COLE*: For heaven's sake Kasira, restrain yourself!

(Glowing with embarrassment, she scrambled off of him and threw herself down in her place. Feeling too much shame, she stared into the fire, never looking left or right and never uttering a word. Feeling as if he'd been violated, nor did Cole.

For the next hour or so everyone sat tiredly looking into the fire, thinking about happier times, when suddenly Bond looked at Cole.)

*BOND*: Do you own a horse?

(Cole gave him an odd look.)

*COLE*: No, do you?

*BOND*: No!

(Silence.)

*COLE*: Why?

*BOND*: Dunno, I was just thinking about horses and I thought you might own one, you are rich!

*COLE:* My mother's rich, I'm just a teacher!

*KASIRA:* Why were you thinking about horses anyway Bond?

(Bond shrugged.)

*BOND:* Just thinking how much quicker this trip would be!

(Dakuri looked to Micalov.)

*DAKURI:* It would be quicker if *you* knew where you were going!

*MICALOV:* I do... well... now I do!

*DAKURI:* Yes, but do you know how to get there?

(Micalov hung his head.)

*MICALOV:* I'm pretty certain... but I don't blame you if you don't believe me, I'm useless!

*BOND:* Yes, that point has been rather well demonstrated today!

(Feeling pity for him, Dakuri leant to him.)

*DAKURI:* Nobody is useless, Mr Idiot. Maybe you have just chosen the wrong profession!

*KASIRA:* Yeah, why do you want to be a guide anyway? You've no sense of direction at all!

(Taking a deep breath, Micalov spoke in a sorrowful tone.)

*MICALOV:* I just wanted to keep up the family tradition!

*DAKURI:* You're whole family are idiots?

(Too thick to be offended, he continued.)

*MICALOV:* No, far from it, my father is the greatest guide Dezara's Plateau has ever known. There isn't a single sod of turf he isn't familiar with...

(A look of pride crossed his face.)

*MICALOV:* There's no creature he doesn't know the name of, or have the power to kill if he has too. With my father, you get a guide and guardian rolled into one... everybody knows my father!

*KASIRA:* *We* don't!

*MICALOV:* You've never heard of Bulgur the great?

*DAKURI:* We are not from Dezara's Plateau!

*MICALOV:* All my life, I wanted to be like him, to be loved and revered as he is... but who am I kidding?

*BOND:* Nobody!

*MICALOV:* Exactly!

(He frowned.)

*MICALOV:* When I started off I was known as "Micalov, son of Bulgur", but since that party I was guiding disappeared, my father has forbid me to use his name!

*DAKURI:* This surprises you?

*MICALOV:* No, not really, I've disgraced my entire family, if my mother was alive today she'd turn in her grave! They're ashamed of me!

*BOND:* That made no sense!

*COLE:* Life rarely does, Bond!

*BOND:* No, he just said, if his mother was alive today...

*KASIRA:* That's not really the issue!

*BOND:* Will you let me finish?

(Ignoring him Dakuri turned to face Micalov again.)

*DAKURI:* Micalov, just because you have failed as a guide, doesn't mean you can't make them proud of you another way!

*KASIRA:* Yeah, what makes you so sure your family are ashamed of you, anyway?

*MICALOV:* Well, they threw me out of the family home for being an embarrassment to them!

*KASIRA:* Oh...

(Stuck for anything to say, she turned to Bond.)

*KASIRA:* I know you don't like the man Bond, but can't you offer him some kind words?

*BOND:* Lie to him, you mean?

(She raised her voice in annoyance.)

*KASIRA:* You're a holy man, at least try to raise his spirits!!!

(Bond shook his head.)

*BOND:* Maybe!

*MICALOV:* Now I can't even use his name, instead, some of the other guides dubbed me, 'Micalov the Different', it's humiliating. I really thought I could prove myself on this trip, but look what happened!

*BOND:* Yes, look what happened!

(Kasira glared at him.)

*KASIRA:* I thought you were going to be nice!

(Bond gave her an unimpressed look and continued.)

*BOND:* Let's see what really happened, after spending your whole life pretending to be something you're not, you've finally realised it!

(Micalov seemed vague.)

*MICALOV:* I don't... what do you mean?

*BOND:* What I'm saying is, you've finally admitted you can't do it! This is your opportunity to make a few changes and do something you really want to do, something you are good at!

(Micalov nodded.)

*COLE:* He's a bit like me in a way...

*KASIRA:* Don't put yourself down Cole!

*COLE:* No, I mean, he spent his whole life bowing to peer pressure, and now he's got nothing! I'm only 21, it's easy for me... but... how old are you Micalov?

*MICALOV:* Thirty!

*BOND:* That's plenty young enough, as soon as this trip's over Micalov, you go and make something of yourself!

(Micalov sat up proudly.)

*MICALOV:* I will!!!

(He then started to sink slowly.)

*MICALOV:* But, I'm generally rubbish at everything!

*DAKURI:* Nonsense, you just don't know what it is you are good at!

*MICALOV:* Yeah... I suppose your right!

(Seeing him smile, Kasira turned to Bond.)

*KASIRA:* Thanks Bond, I guess you're not so bad after all!

*BOND:* This is true, but don't tell anyone!

(He offered her a friendly smile, then yawned.)

*BOND:* Oh well, sod this, I'm going to sleep!

*DAKURI:* That is a wise decision Bond! Come, we should sleep, we have a long day tomorrow!

*MICALOV:* Yeah, I'm gonna lead you well tomorrow, then I'm gonna start a new life!

*COLE:* Good for you!

(Moments later, everyone except Cole had laid down their heads and had begun trying to sleep. Looking down at the horizontal young lady beside him, Cole smiled and chuckled to himself about how she'd earlier landed in his lap, then cringed at the way his old fashioned up-bringing had made him react in such a stuffy way. He too, then laid down his head and closed his eyes.)

*KASIRA:* Night, Cole!

(Cole opened his eyes.)

*COLE:* Night, Kasira!

(And with a smile, he closed his eyes for the night.)

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(With the tree as a convenient wind break, and the fire for heating and protection from beasts, the party of five slept soundly under the stars. By the time morning arrived however, the fire had almost fizzled out, and a morning dew had rendered the air cold and moist. Shivering all over, Bond was first to wake.)

*BOND:* Bloody hell!

(He sat up and looked at the fire, but his eyes were distracted by the sight of Cole and Kasira, beside him. He grinned at the sight of Kasira, snuggling up to Cole's back with her arm across him and allowed himself a chuckle.)

*BOND:* He'll freak when he wakes up!

(Suddenly aware of a voice, Dakuri opened his eyes with a flash and sat bolt upright.)

*DAKURI:* Bond, you are awake!

*BOND:* Thanks for telling me, Dakuri!

(Suddenly, both men were distracted by Cole rubbing his eyes and yawning, then adopting a baffled expression.)

*COLE:* Uh?

(He looked down and saw Kasira's arm draped over him.)

*COLE:* Kasira?

(Expecting fireworks, Bond grinned as she began to stir.)

*BOND:* Now the shit's gonna hit the fan!

(Less than impressed by the sight, Dakuri leapt to his feet and strode over.)

*DAKURI:* What is the meaning of this???

(Feeling somewhat alarmed by his demeanour, Cole sat up straight.)

*COLE:* What's the meaning of what?

*DAKURI:* Kasira is not here for your conquest!

*COLE:* Eh?

(Still half asleep she looked up.)

*KASIRA:* Conquest?

(Quickly waking, she jumped up and confronted the angry Dakuri.)

*KASIRA:* Oi, don't talk about me like that!

(Leaning back from her scorn, he spoke softly but with a firmness.)



*DAKURI:* Kasira, you are the chosen one, your virtue must be without question!

*KASIRA:* Well it would be if *you* weren't questioning it!!!

*DAKURI:* But you and Cole...

*KASIRA:* I got cold in the night, okay? He was warm, so I huddled up to him!

*DAKURI:* But...

*KASIRA:* He was asleep!

*DAKURI:* But...

*KASIRA:* Stop saying but!!!

(Startled by her will to retaliate, Dakuri figured it best to relent for now and bowed to her apologetically, before glaring at Cole. Feeling the weight of his stare, Cole looked away at a rather disappointed Bond.)

*BOND:* Hey, how come you didn't squirm? You always squirm when she touches you!

*COLE:* Those days are over Bond, nobody else is that uptight, why should I be?

*BOND:* Well... for my amusement!

*COLE:* Sorry Bond, you'll have to find someone else to entertain you, now if you'll excuse me, I've got a beast to slay!

(Having achieved the difficult task of waking the shiftless Micalov, Bond reset the fire, while the others prepared themselves for the day ahead. Having feasted upon a hearty breakfast, all they needed before leaving was for Kasira to finish brushing her hair.)

*BOND:* You're gonna have to start waking up earlier!

*KASIRA:* Piss off, I aint having this conversation again!

(While they stood around her, making her feel uneasy, Micalov jogged up and down.)

*MICALOV:* I wish she'd hurry up, I'm anxious to get going!

*BOND:* We all wish she'd hurry up!

*MICALOV:* I've gotta prove myself today, then I can move on!

*DAKURI:* Relax Micalov, patience is a virtue!

(Kasira tutted loudly.)

*KASIRA:* You and your bloody virtues, you're obsessed!

*DAKURI:* A bit like you and your hair!

(Fed up with their complaining, she leapt to her feet.)

*KASIRA:* Fine, I'll brush while we walk then!

(Expecting them to try and pacify her, she felt a little put out when they all cheered and picked up their bags.)

*KASIRA:* You'd really let me?

*DAKURI:* Come, we go!

(And with no more ado the four men headed off, lead by Micalov. Kasira stood firm and shook her head.)

*KASIRA:* Bloody men!!!

(And then, she too headed off.

Setting a good pace, they marched across the remaining plain lands. As the lush meadow they'd been crossing started to come to end, Micalov stopped and pointed to some nearby hills.)

*MICALOV:* We can either go round the hills, or across them!

*DAKURI:* That Micalov, is obvious! How long does each route take?

*MICALOV:* Well, if you go around it could take hours... but it's a lot safer!

*BOND*: Safer?

*MICALOV*: Yeah, if we cross through the hills we could be in Solstice in about half an hour, but if we run into the Epsilon...

(He shuddered.)

*DAKURI*: The Epsilon?

*MICALOV*: Yeah, it's a foul, nasty creature. It's got claws, fangs, toxic jets... it's bloody merciless with it, I don't ever want to see *that* thing again!

*COLE*: You've faced it?

(All of a sudden, Micalov become quite uneasy and started to shift around on the spot.)

*MICALOV*: Well, no not me, I just... let's go shall we?

*KASIRA*: Hang on, hang on, which way?

(Dakuri stood tall.)

*DAKURI*: I say we go through the hills, with my sword skills and you three, this Epsilon will be no match!

(Micalov shook his head and muttered quietly.)

*MICALOV*: That's what *they* said!

*BOND*: Who did?

*MICALOV*: Are we going then?

*COLE*: If we go through the hills, we'd better beware!

*DAKURI*: Okay, Micalov, you lead the way!

(And so, they continued on with caution as they approached the foot of the hills.

Watching Micalov step daintily forth with his eyes on stalks amused Bond greatly.)

*BOND*: Do you get the feeling he's a tad nervous?

*COLE*: Concentrate will you? If this thing is as nasty as he says it is, we want to avoid it at all costs!

*BOND*: Keep your hair on Cole, sheesh!

(Moving swiftly, the party soldiered on across an ever increasing gradient, keeping one eye out for danger all the while. Even Bond had started to check over his shoulder now and again as the green grass beneath their feet turned to mountain gravel. Trying to keep the crunching of the tiny stones beneath their feet to a minimum, they felt much relief when a ridge came into sight. Forgetting himself for a while, Cole raced over to it and turned excitedly to the others.)

*COLE*: Hey, there's a town down there!

(Increasing her stride, Kasira paced to his side.)

*KASIRA*: Is that Solstice?

(Still trembling and staring in all directions, Micalov didn't hear her.)

*KASIRA*: Oi, I said, is that...

(Suddenly, she let out a loud scream as she caught sight of something in the corner of her eye. Feeling the need to protect her, the others raced over to her as she clung on to Cole and trembled with fright.)

*DAKURI*: What? What is it?

(Cole shrugged.)

*COLE*: Don't ask me!

*DAKURI*: I wasn't! Kasira? What is it?

(Without looking she pointed just below the ridge. Wearing curious expressions, they all looked over.)

*BOND*: Oh, my!

(He turned his head.)

*DAKURI*: Who could of done this?

(He looked again at the pile of dismembered bodies before him. A nervous wreck, Micalov spoke up.)

*MICALOV*: I told you... Epsilon is pure nastiness!

*BOND*: Epsilon did this?

*COLE*: That thing must be phenomenally strong!

*BOND*: You aint kidding...

(He pointed at the bodies.)

*BOND*: That guy's been folded up like a deckchair!

*KASIRA*: Do you have to be so graphic?

(Taking the matter in hand, Dakuri spoke up.)

*DAKURI*: We must hurry from this place, stay close to each other!

(With seriousness imprinted into all their faces, everyone nodded, when suddenly Bond looked thoughtful.)

*BOND*: Micalov?

(Shaking all over, he replied.)

*MICALOV*: W-what?

*BOND*: Is that the missing travellers you lead?

(His failure to answer left them in no uncertainty that it was.)

*BOND*: Thought so!

*MICALOV*: Can we go? It isn't safe here!

*DAKURI*: Okay, but everybody, be careful!

(Not needing to be told twice, Micalov started to lead them down the hill. After taking only two steps, however, he turned.)

*MICALOV*: Um... can one of *you* go first? You can *see* Solstice from here, you won't need me to guide you!

(Not waiting for an answer he stood amongst them. Cole shook his head.)

*COLE*: Fine, come on, let's get out of here!

(He strode purposefully to the front with Kasira stuck to him like glue. With Bond and Micalov close to each side, Dakuri gave the word and they started to march through the gravel.)

*KASIRA*: That really spooked me, it was barbaric!

*COLE*: It *was* a bit gruesome, yeah!

(Just then a pebble rolled across the front of them from the embankment to their side. Cole looked up.)

*COLE*: Did you see that?

*KASIRA*: Walk faster!

(They only managed to scuttle two feet further when suddenly, the air was filled with a deafening roar. Almost leaping out of their skins, they looked around with hearts full of fear.)

*DAKURI*: Where is it?

*BOND*: I can't see anything!

*COLE*: Let's get the fuck out of here!!!

(Before they could even run an inch, however, a giant hunk of dark green matter flashed through the air, landing in a heap before them. As the ground vibrated under its weight, they noticed its giant dragon like body with claws like swords and incisors to match. Gaping with horror they looked on transfixed, as it rose on its hind legs and let out another beastly roar before turning an angry head in their direction.)

*BOND*: Um... it might be friendly!

(Quivering in fear, Micalov pointed and ran away.)

*MICALOV*: Epsilon!!!

(As they shivered in awe of the mighty beast, Dakuri stepped forward.)

*DAKURI*: Either he dies, or we do!

(His words seemed to instantly drain the fear from their bodies as they too stepped forward.)

*COLE*: We're with you Dakuri!

*BOND*: Just tell us what to do!

(Kasira nodded as Dakuri grimaced.)

*DAKURI*: How am I supposed to know?

(They said nothing as they continued to stare down the beast.)

*DAKURI*: Just do your best!

(Adopting defensive poses, they watched on in a state of readiness as the giant foe seemed to taunt them with displays of its colossus teeth. Then, suddenly it roared and lashed out a giant paw in their direction. Scrambling all over the place to avoid it, Kasira and Dakuri dived to safety, but Bond and Cole crashed into each other.)

*COLE*: Ouch!!!

*BOND*: Idiot!!!

(Bond instinctively ducked under the flailing claw. Cole wasn't so lucky.)

*KASIRA*: No!!!

(Desperate to avoid the razor sharp claw, Cole leapt from the ground, only to smashed against the embankment by the beasts giant paw. As he slid back down, barely conscious, the beast turned in his direction.)

*BOND*: No way!!!

(Feeling the influence of his empowerment, Bond raced over to the beast, being chased by Dakuri and Kasira.)

*BOND*: You'll have to get past *me* first!!!

(With that, he let out a yell and high-kicked at the beasts paw. Barely feeling his attack, the creature ignored him as he fell back to the ground.)

*BOND*: Damn it!

(Looking worried, Dakuri stepped up to him.)

*DAKURI*: What did you do that for?

*BOND*: I felt the fight could do with a futile gesture! Why do you think???

*KASIRA*: Cole!!!

(Fearing for his safety, she started to run to him, only for Dakuri to throw her back.)

*DAKURI*: Don't be foolish!

(As the creature neared a dazed and disorientated Cole, it raised its paw again then yelped out in pain.)

*DAKURI*: My sword!!!

(Angrily it spun in Dakuri's direction as he tried in vain to pull his sword back out of its thick skin. With his sword out of reach, Dakuri raised his fists as the furious beast stomped towards him. Seizing the opportunity, Kasira ran to retrieve Cole. As she helped him struggle to one side, the beast changed its tactics. Bowing its head towards them, it proceeded firing bolt's of yellow liquid from its gills.)

*BOND:* Look out!!!

(He dived to the ground as the slimy liquid splattered into a rock behind him and instantly dissolved it.)

*BOND:* Acid???

*DAKURI:* I need my sword!!!

(With the rocks around them being dissolved to nothingness by the acid, Kasira was quickly running out of places to hide the incapacitated Cole. Panicking she looked around, then ducked as more yellow slime whizzed over her head.)

*KASIRA:* Now what???

(Rubbing his head, Cole looked up.)

*COLE:* Maybe we can go behind it, while they distract it!

(He attempted to climb to his feet but his legs buckled again.)

*KASIRA:* You're going nowhere!

(Frantically, Bond and Dakuri, continued to narrowly avoid the acid, when suddenly it stopped. The two men looked nervously at each other as the beast slowly raised its head and seemed to grin at them.)

*BOND:* It's taunting us!

*DAKURI:* What do you suggest we do?

*BOND:* As long as Kasira's safe, It doesn't matter!

(He suddenly looked baffled.)

*BOND:* Did I really say that?

(As they continued to try and think of a solution to their nightmare, the beast stamped its front leg down, causing the ground to shake. Fearing its next move, Bond and Dakuri started to edge back, when suddenly the filthy killer charged at them intent on destruction. Struggling for traction on the wildly vibrating earth, Bond and Dakuri attempted to turn and to flee.)

*DAKURI:* Run, Bond!!!

*BOND:* But, Kasira?

(Noticing Epsilon baring down on them at great speed, he flinched.)

*BOND:* I see your point!!!

(Tripping and struggling to make headway, Bond and Dakuri knew it was only a matter of time before Epsilon caught up with them. Panicking as the beast gained ever closer, Dakuri looked around for another way, when suddenly he spotted a figure on the embankment above them. Ignoring the stranger he looked to the ever nearing beast.)

*DAKURI:* Bond, just get Kasira out of here!!! Leave Epsilon to me!

(Certain it was the only way, Dakuri stopped running, grimaced and awaited the painful death that Epsilon would bring him. Trembling, he fell to his knees and whispered a blessing then looked up with anger at the merciless beast closing in on him.)

*DAKURI:* For the chosen one!!!

(Suddenly, there was a loud explosion and a bright light filled the air all around.

Shielding his eyes, Dakuri tried to look but saw nothing. Seconds later as the smoky light

dimmed he saw Epsilon lying dead before him, its head torn into two. Shaking his head in disbelief, Dakuri approached the corpse and looked up to see, Bond doing the same, followed by Kasira struggling to help Cole along.)

*DAKURI:* What... what happened? I was prepared to die!

(Bond shrugged in silence.)

*KASIRA:* How did you do that?

*DAKURI:* I didn't!

(Holding his painful side, Cole coughed and looked bewildered.)

*COLE:* Then who did?

*VOICE:* Maybe I can answer that!

(They looked up to the top of the embankment to where a lady in her mid thirties, clad in dirty brown leather, was standing with her hands on her hips. While the others gazed up at her in bewilderment, Bond smiled.)

*BOND:* We thank you!

(The lady smiled back and slid down the embankment to them.)

*HAYKIE:* The names Haykie, and it was a pleasure!

*BOND:* What *was* that?

(She shrugged.)

*HAYKIE:* A lightning bomb!

(Snapping out of his shock induced trance, Dakuri bowed to her.)

*DAKURI:* Miss Haykie, we owe you!

*HAYKIE:* Yeah, you do, they're expensive!

*COLE:* We're lucky you were here!

*KASIRA:* Yeah, thanks again, you saved us!

(She smiled.)

*HAYKIE:* Like you said, you owe me!

(Barely able to remove his eyes from her cleavage, Bond spoke to her in his smoothest voice.)

*BOND:* So, Haykie, what are you? Some kind of beast hunter?

(She smiled.)

*HAYKIE:* No, no!

(Then, out of the blue, she ripped Kasira's bag out of her hand with lightning reactions and took off down the path towards Solstice.)

*HAYKIE:* I'm a thief!!!

*KASIRA:* My bag!!!

(Weary from battle, they were all too slow to react as the scantily clad thief disappeared from sight.)

*KASIRA:* The dagger!!!

*DAKURI:* Worry not, I have the dagger!

(Kasira looked mortified.)

*KASIRA:* Oh no, my hairbrush was in there!!!

*BOND:* Oh dear, aren't we all going to miss that!

*DAKURI:* Forget the bag, we have been lucky, we must head for Solstice and get some first aid for Cole...

*COLE:* I... I'm alright!

*DAKURI:* Even so, we must proceed!

(Under no illusions about their lucky escape, Dakuri retrieved his sword then they headed on down the mountain path, thanking their lucky stars as they went. Worrying how they'd fare against Necronema, if they couldn't even defeat Epsilon, they walked in silence, apart from the odd groan of pain from Cole. They didn't even speak to acknowledge Micalov when he finally caught them up.)

It wasn't long before they reached the bottom of the hill and entered the bustling township of Solstice. A bitter place, Solstice made Port Amanti seem positively friendly. Receiving unwelcome stares at every foot step, they kept a cautious eye open. Feeling unsure as to the extent of Cole's injury, they stopped at the fountain in the centre of town and slumped to the ground for a well earned rest.)

**MICALOV:** So far so good, I got us this far!

**BOND:** Yeah well, don't go congratulating yourself just yet!

(Dakuri leant towards Cole and looked long and hard at his eyes.)

**COLE:** What are you doing, stop that!

(He tried to raise a hand before his face, but yelped with pain as he lifted his arm.)

**COLE:** Ouch!!!

(Dakuri rubbed his chin.)

**DAKURI:** Hmm, you are not well, Cole Fishman!

**COLE:** You had to stare at me that long to tell?

**DAKURI:** Someone should wait with him while we get our supplies!

**KASIRA:** That'll be me!

(Dakuri didn't look over keen on her suggestion.)

**DAKURI:** Okay, but Bond, you will wait too!

(He stood up.)

**DAKURI:** Micalov, you will come with me to find supplies!

(Micalov leapt to his feet, excitedly.)

**MICALOV:** Leave it to me Dakinda! I know *just* where to buy the best stuff!

(Dakuri stared coldly into Micalov's eyes, making him cower.)

**DAKURI:** My name is Dakuri, if you ever call me Dakinda again, your parents will have a new daughter!

(Micalov pleaded desperately.)

**MICALOV:** No... please, don't rape my mother!!!

(Dakuri's icy stare continued.)

**DAKURI:** No wonder your parents disowned you!

(Micalov looked to the floor.)

**DAKURI:** Come, I will insult you no more... there isn't a lot of point!

(With that he spun around and walked away, followed by a depressed looking Micalov.

Bond watched them go and turned to Cole.)

**BOND:** Are you going to be able to continue?

(Cole turned his head to him.)

**COLE:** I don't know if it's just the empowerment making me say it, but yes, I don't feel I have a choice!

(Kasira shook her head.)

**KASIRA:** Yes you do, if you carry on and something horrible happens, what'll we do?

(He looked into her eyes.)

*COLE:* You'll go on, you'll defeat Necronema, you can never give up!

(Bond tutted.)

*BOND:* Why are you talking like that? Nothing's going to happen to you!

*COLE:* I know, I'm just reassuring Kasira!

*KASIRA:* Then promise me you're okay!

(Cole smiled.)

*COLE:* I'm okay, I just need some rest!

*KASIRA:* You need a *lot* of rest, we practically had to drag you down the hillside!

*COLE:* Kasira, I'll be fine!

*KASIRA:* Then promise me!

(He smiled.)

*COLE:* I promise!

(She sat back.)

*KASIRA:* I needn't worry then!

*BOND:* Hey, now that's sorted out, what do you really think of Dakuri?

*COLE:* What do you mean?

*BOND:* Now, he isn't here, what do you really think of him?

(Kasira sat forwards and frowned.)

*KASIRA:* He's okay, why?

(Bond shook his head.)

*BOND:* Come off it, it's not like he can hear you!

*KASIRA:* Seriously, he's cooled down a bit, I thought he'd be a pain, but he's okay!

*BOND:* You're no fun! Cole?

*COLE:* I agree with her, he's fine!

(Bond sat back.)

*BOND:* You too are dull!

(Following a quick sigh, he sat up again.)

*BOND:* What about Micalov?

(Failing desperately in his attempts to strike up a conversation, Bond was only too glad to see Dakuri and Micalov returning. He climbed to his feet as they approached carrying bags, swelling with supplies. Nodding, he looked at Dakuri.)

*BOND:* Look's like you've enough food for an entire army!

*DAKURI:* I have also brought medical supplies!

(Brushing him aside, Dakuri knelt before Cole.)

*COLE:* Are you going to stare at me again?

*DAKURI:* Don't be ridiculous, I'm trying to decipher your ills!

*KASIRA:* Can you do that?

*DAKURI:* I can try, Cole, where does it hurt?

(Cole looked somewhat irritated.)

*COLE:* Why, what are you going to do?

*DAKURI:* I want to help you!

*COLE:* I'm fine! Now leave me alone!

(Shrugging, Dakuri looked at Kasira then quickly tried to pull Cole to his feet. Letting out a loud yelp of pain, Cole grimaced.)

*COLE:* You clumsy fat fuck, what did you do that for??? Excuse my language, Kasira!



(As Dakuri put him back down, he laid on his side groaning. Kasira knelt over him and looked up at Dakuri.)

*KASIRA:* What did you do that for???

(Dakuri knelt.)

*DAKURI:* Cole, you are not fine at all, if you do not let me help you, we'll have to leave you here!

*KASIRA:* Then you'll have to leave me here too!

(The giant Dakuri spammed his forehead.)

*DAKURI:* Now what?

(After a little thought he continued.)

*DAKURI:* Kasira, this man is injured, but you still have your destiny to fulfil!

*KASIRA:* Fuck my destiny, I aint going to abandon a friend, he's sick damn it!!!

*COLE:* Kasira, I'm fine, I can make it!

(He tried to get to his feet when the voice of an old lady behind them, made them spin around.)

*OLD LADY:* Sick is he? Maybe I can help?

(Doubting the hooded old woman before him, Dakuri raised an eyebrow.)

*DAKURI:* Old hag, what can *you* do?

*OLD LADY:* Let me see...

(She knelt before a sceptical looking Cole.)

*OLD LADY:* ... and don't call me a hag, fatso!

(Dakuri looked hurt.)

*DAKURI:* This... this is all muscle!

(The frail woman looked into Cole's eyes, then nodded.)

*OLD LADY:* I see, this must be painful!

(Cole nodded.)

*OLD LADY:* Leave it to me!

(With that she placed her hands on Cole's side.)

*COLE:* What are you doing?

(The old lady didn't answer. As she held her hands to his side, he shivered all over, then his eyes bulged with immense pain.)

*COLE:* Ouch!!!

*KASIRA:* What are you doing???

(Again, she didn't answer. She climbed to her feet and nodded.)

*OLD LADY:* Up you get!

(Cole looked bewildered.)

*COLE:* The pain, the pain...

*KASIRA:* You really hurt him!!!

*COLE:* The pain has completely gone!

(Kasira gasped.)

*KASIRA:* I stand corrected!

(Cole rose to his feet as the others looked on wide mouthed. Grasping the old lady's hands he tried to see into her hood.)

*COLE:* How can I ever repay you?

(The old lady chuckled.)

*OLD LADY:* Like this...

(Suddenly, she ripped Cole's bag out of his hand and ran off down the street as fast as she could. Having initially stood there looking baffled by her actions, Dakuri, yelled out.)

*DAKURI:* After her!!!

(Snapping out of their respective trances, they all took off in pursuit of the not so frail old lady. Dashing along the busy dusty paths between crumbling stone buildings, they chased after her with a determination not to be mugged twice in one day. As the hooded old lady rushed headlong through the bustling market, the wind generated by her speed, blew her hood off.)

*BOND:* It's Haykie!!!

*KASIRA:* That bitch stole my hairbrush!!!

(Seemingly possessed by her rage, Kasira overtook them all and started to gain on Haykie.)

*DAKURI:* Surely no woman can run that fast!

*BOND:* I've seen it all now!!!

(As they dashed from the market into a quiet side alley, Kasira noticed a door slam to one of the houses. When she looked around, Haykie had gone. Once the others caught her up, she pointed to the door and sneered.)

*KASIRA:* She went in there!

(Running a furious arm across her face she immediately strode towards the door. Dakuri pulled her back.)

*DAKURI:* Careful!

*KASIRA:* Dakuri, it's okay for you, it wasn't your hairbrush!

*COLE:* Let it go, Kasira!

(She shook her head.)

*KASIRA:* I can't... sorry!

*DAKURI:* Okay, but I'll go first!

(With that he barged through the door, followed by the others. Seeing the poorly furnished white room before her, Kasira scratched her head.)

*KASIRA:* I'm sure she's in here somewhere!

(Just then, she noticed a foot sticking out from behind a chair.)

*KASIRA:* There she is!

(Realising the game was up, Haykie climbed from behind the chair and stood grinning innocently at the four unimpressed faces before her.)

*HAYKIE:* Um... hello again!

*KASIRA:* You stole my hairbrush!!!

(Before Haykie could reply, Micalov rushed in, puffing and panting.)

*MICALOV:* There you are!

(Ignoring him, Kasira strode up to Haykie.)

*KASIRA:* Give me my bag!

(Haykie grimaced and shook her head.)

*HAYKIE:* I guess that's fair!

(She breathed out heavily and leant on the chair beside her.)

*HAYKIE:* But, before I do, I want you to know, you're not going to turn me in!

*BOND:* Oh, and why's that?

*HAYKIE:* Just believe it!

(Dakuri stepped forward.)

*DAKURI:* Haykie, we owe you much, please, just return what is ours, and we can be on our way!

(Haykie nodded.)

*HAYKIE:* Very well!

(Delving behind the chair again, Haykie produced two bags.)

*HAYKIE:* Here!

(Almost apologetically, she threw them over to Dakuri.)

*DAKURI:* I thank you!

(Not as quick to forgive, Kasira checked through hers immediately, breathing a sigh of relief when she spotted her beloved hairbrush.)

*KASIRA:* Phew, I thought I'd lost it forever!

(As Cole nodded to indicate that the contents of his bag were also intact, Dakuri bowed to Haykie.)

*DAKURI:* We bid you farewell!

(Haykie looked a little confused.)

*HAYKIE:* And that's it? You're just going to leave?

*DAKURI:* We must go! We do not have time to waste!

(And with that he lead Bond, Kasira and Micalov out of the door. Sneering as she went, Kasira then turned her head abruptly and minced out of the room. Standing in the same place as he had been before, Cole stared at the thief before him and mumbled.)

*COLE:* Um... thank you...

(Haykie nodded.)

*COLE:* I don't know how you did it, but...

(Suddenly he felt himself being dragged towards the door by his collar.)

*KASIRA:* Don't talk to her!!!

(Struggling to breath, he reiterated his gratitude before disappearing out of the door, leaving Haykie a tad baffled. Stroking her chin, she muttered to herself inquisitively.)

*HAYKIE:* There's something odd about that lot!

(Stocked up and eager to get going, Micalov lead them from the township of Solstice and into the valley beyond. Clearly happier to be out of the city, surrounded by trees and greenery they picked up the pace as they discussed what had just occurred.)

*BOND:* Well, I think you're talking out of your...

*KASIRA:* You don't have to be rude!

*BOND:* I wasn't, you rudely butted in before I could be!

(She shrugged.)

*BOND:* I mean, are you really trying to suggest she's evil?

*KASIRA:* She stole my hairbrush!!!

*BOND:* I give in!

*COLE:* I'm not going to slate her, she cured me, I don't know how, but she did!

*DAKURI:* And she saved us from Epsilon!

*KASIRA:* But she stole my hairbrush!

*BOND:* Kasira, please, look at the big picture!

*KASIRA:* I am, and she stole my...

*BOND:* Shut it!!!

(She glared at him angrily.)

*BOND:* You and your bloody hairbrush!

*DAKURI:* Anyway, that is behind us now, we should be grateful for the luck we've had, but we must not forget what we came here to do!

*COLE:* We haven't!

(Relenting his evil stare, Bond looked away from Kasira.)

*BOND:* Is it far now, Micalov?

*MICALOV:* Well, that depends what you mean by far!

(He rolled his eyes.)

*BOND:* I meant far, as in how far is it, pillock!

(Displeased by the cleric's tone, Micalov stood up for himself.)

*MICALOV:* I'm not a pilchard!

(Bond threw up his arms in defeat.)

*BOND:* It's not like you'd have a clue, anyway!

(Trying not to laugh, Kasira turned away. Suddenly, wearing a look of horror she yelled out.)

*KASIRA:* It's her!!!

(Stopping dead, they all faced her.)

*DAKURI:* It's who?

*KASIRA:* Haykie, she's following us!

(She pointed towards the sloping embankment way to their left. They all looked over immediately.)

*DAKURI:* Where?

*KASIRA:* She was right there!

*BOND:* That's a tree, Kasira!

(Angered by his sarcasm, she retorted.)

*KASIRA:* She was there, I tell you!

(Bond shook his head.)

*BOND:* Kasira, you're weird!

(As she stood there trying to think of a sarcastic riposte, she was horrified to see them start to walk away again.)

*KASIRA:* Oi, what about Haykie???

*COLE:* Come on, Kasira, let's go!

(She growled.)

*KASIRA:* You too, eh?

*COLE:* Let it go, will you?

(Reluctantly, she walked on.)

*KASIRA:* She was there, I swear!

(They only managed to travel another 30 feet or so, when Kasira repeated her protest.)

*KASIRA:* I saw her again!!!

(Not even beginning to entertain her hysteria, they ignored her and continued. Fuming like a raging inferno, she yelled and ran in the opposite direction.)

*KASIRA:* Fine! I'll prove it!!!

(Disturbed by her actions, they all raced after her in desperation to catch her up.

Convinced she had lost her marbles, they were shocked to see Haykie leap out from behind a fledgling bush and hold her hands in the air. Spotting this, Kasira stopped and pointed at her.)

*KASIRA:* See? Now who's weird?

(As they caught her up, she got the reply she deserved.)

*BOND*: Still you!

(As they raced to face Haykie, the leather clad thief walked over to them completely unfazed. Upon reaching her, Dakuri faced up to her.)

*DAKURI*: Explain yourself, Haykie!

(Shrugging nonchalantly she began.)

*HAYKIE*: Simple, I was following you!

(Taken aback by her honesty, they looked to one another for an answer.)

*HAYKIE*: You seemed shocked, I thought you knew I was following you!

(Standing tall, as to impose an intimidating aura on himself, Dakuri folded his arms and stared into her.)

*DAKURI*: You think we have something worth stealing?

*HAYKIE*: No. Well, not yet anyway!

*DAKURI*: What do you mean?

(Haykie loosened her already relaxed stance and shook her head.)

*HAYKIE*: Do I look like an idiot? I've seen your type before!

*BOND*: What type's that?

*HAYKIE*: You're treasure hunters, aren't you?

*DAKURI*: Treasure?

*HAYKIE*: Don't play the innocent with me, you're going after something big!

*BOND*: Well, she's right about that, we are going after something big!

*HAYKIE*: See, and when you find it, I plan to relieve you of it!

*DAKURI*: I hate to disappoint you Haykie, but what we have come to claim, you can not have!

*HAYKIE*: And how will you stop me?

*DAKURI*: You don't understand, we have come to claim the life of the beast!

(She scratched her head.)

*HAYKIE*: Hmm, is that some kind of artefact?

*DAKURI*: I get the feeling that you won't believe me, no matter what I say!

(He turned away from her.)

*DAKURI*: Come, let her follow, ultimately it is her who will be disappointed!

(He started to walk away.)

*HAYKIE*: If you speak the truth, then let me walk with you!

(Looking peeved, Dakuri paced back.)

*DAKURI*: We have nothing to hide, nor do we need a thief in our midst!

*HAYKIE*: Hey, that's ancient history now...

(Kasira's glare begged to differ.)

*HAYKIE*: Besides, I killed Epsilon for you, didn't I? And I cured this guy!

(She gestured to Cole.)

*DAKURI*: This is true, yet why would you want to come, if not to steal from us?

*HAYKIE*: I told you, I want to steal the artefact, so if you're *not* treasure hunters and there *is* no artefact, why not let me join you? I could come in handy!

(Feeling unsure, he looked to the others.)

*DAKURI*: What do you think?

(Bond wasn't slow in answering.)

*BOND*: Great, lovely, superb, I'm all for it!

*COLE:* Sure, as long as she don't pinch our bags again!

*HAYKIE:* You have my word!

*DAKURI:* Why should we believe the word of a thief?

*HAYKIE:* Let's just call it the one you owe me!

(Dakuri mused for a moment.)

*DAKURI:* Very well, but I'll be watching you!

(Previously dormant, Kasira's voice suddenly sprung to life.)

*KASIRA:* Oi, she aint coming with us, surely? You've got to be joking?

(Haykie turned to her.)

*HAYKIE:* Look, sorry about stealing your bag! I just wanted evidence of what you're after!

*KASIRA:* I don't care why you did it... you stole my hairbrush!

*HAYKIE:* And I'm sorry!

*DAKURI:* Enough time wasting, the great lake will not come to *us*.

(He started to head off.)

*HAYKIE:* The great lake? The great lake's that way!

(She pointed to the left of where Micalov had been leading them.)

*KASIRA:* Why should we trust *you*?

(Without even conceding embarrassment Micalov instantly heeded her directions and started to head where she pointed.)

*MICALOV:* We tried listening to *me*, and look where that got us! Who am I to argue?

(With a shrug, Dakuri followed him.)

*DAKURI:* If you are lying Haykie...

*HAYKIE:* If I'm lying and I run off with your bags, I wont get that artefact will I? I'm not that dumb!

*DAKURI:* Very well, but don't say we didn't warn you! There is no artefact!

*HAYKIE:* Then you've got nothing to worry about, have you?

*BOND:* Excellent, now that's established, let's get going shall we?

(Despite Kasira's obvious and well voiced reservations about Haykie, they set off once again. Pacing meaningfully through the unspoilt terrain around them brought a smile to Bond's face. As he watched some birds fly overhead he sighed happily.)

*BOND:* Such a beautiful place, yet the people seem so troubled!

*COLE:* It *is* a strange place, I agree!

*HAYKIE:* It's not so bad once you've lived here for a while!

(Kasira sneered.)

*KASIRA:* It'd probably be even better if it wasn't for thieves like you!

(Haykie looked at her from the corner of her eyes.)

*HAYKIE:* You see me as no more than a thief? I didn't choose to be a thief you know, it was either that or starve!

(Kasira didn't answer, choosing to snub her instead.)

*HAYKIE:* You know your problem, girl? You've had it easy, and it shows!

(Angrily, Kasira retorted.)

*KASIRA:* Easy? Easy? I spent my entire life getting beat up at school everyday for being a 'slanty-eyed freak', then going home to hear how my parents had been racially abused, you call that easy?

*HAYKIE:* Were you ever hungry?

*KASIRA*: No, but...

*HAYKIE*: Then you've had it easy!

*KASIRA*: What do you know?

(She looked away.)

*HAYKIE*: Look, Kasira is it? I don't want to argue!

*KASIRA*: Stop talking shit then!

(She walked ahead, leaving Haykie looking unimpressed. Noticing this, Bond coolly glided to her side.)

*BOND*: So, Haykie, that's a nice outfit you're wearing!

*HAYKIE*: Yes it is, it's sexy too!

*BOND*: You're telling me!

*HAYKIE*: Yes, I am.

(She smiled at him warmly.)

*HAYKIE*: By the way, if you're coming on to me, it seems only fair to warn you, I'm more women than you could ever handle!

*BOND*: You'd be surprised, you wanna try me?

(Haykie looked him up and down.)

*HAYKIE*: Hmm, if all the men on Dezara's Plateau die suddenly, I'll put you at the bottom of my shortlist!

(Ego destroyed, his face creased with anger.)

*BOND*: You're probably a lesbian anyway!

(Next thing he knew, Haykie had him by his collar, holding him inches from the ground.)

*HAYKIE*: How did you know that???

(While Bond panicked in desperation for an answer, she put him down and chuckled.)

*HAYKIE*: I'm kidding!

(She laughed out loud.)

*HAYKIE*: You should have seen your face!

(Grimacing angrily for a moment, bond suddenly laughed too.)

*BOND*: You're the roughest, rudest woman I ever met, yet... I like you!

(And still they marched on across the seemingly endless terrain. As evening approached, the conversation's died a bit as tiredness became a factor. Seizing the opportunity to speak with Haykie, Cole sidled in her direction.)

*BOND*: Don't bother Cole, she'll turn you down flat!

(Ignoring him, Cole strode alongside her.)

*COLE*: Um... Haykie?

*HAYKIE*: Yes?

*COLE*: I just want to thank you for what you did!

*HAYKIE*: It was nothing, I want your artefact. It's in my interests for you all to be fit and healthy!

*COLE*: You say it coldly, but I think there was more to it than that!

*HAYKIE*: No, no... it was purely selfish!

(Cole shrugged.)

*COLE*: Anyway, I don't know quite how you healed me... but thanks again!

(Before Haykie could reply, an angry looking Kasira stepped between them.)

*KASIRA*: What are you talking about?

(Haykie grinned as Bond pulled Kasira away.)

*KASIRA:* Get off... what are you trying to do?

*BOND:* You're making a fool of yourself!

*KASIRA:* No I'm not!

*BOND:* Kasira, nothing is more likely to drive a bloke away than a jealous woman!

(Kasira looked annoyed, then sad.)

*KASIRA:* But, you know how I feel about him, if he went off with her...

*BOND:* He won't!

*KASIRA:* Won't he?

(She gave half a smile.)

*BOND:* Of course he won't... at least I hope not!

(Having undone all his good work, Bond dropped back, leaving her angrily glaring at Cole and Haykie talking. With her eyes angrily transfixed on the pair in question, she didn't notice a huge tree in front of her. Letting out a painful yelp, she leapt up and down holding her nose, after pacing aggressively straight into it.)

*KASIRA:* Ouch, ouch, ouch!!!

(Cole raced straight over.)

*COLE:* Kasira, you okay?

(Noticing he was away from Haykie, she threw her arms around him and closed her eyes.)

*KASIRA:* Ooh, the pain!

(Milking it for all she was worth, she opened one eye to glare at Haykie, and received quite a start.)

*KASIRA:* What the???

(They all turned swiftly to follow her eye line. As if from nowhere, a well built lady and a gang of about 20 soldiers had assembled behind Haykie. Somewhat startled Dakuri glared at her.)

*DAKURI:* Haykie? What is the meaning of this?

(Having initially feared it was a trap, Dakuri could immediately tell from the look on her face that Haykie was no more pleased to see them than he was.)

*HAYKIE:* That's a good question, Dakuri!

(And with a face like thunder she immediately paced up to the aggressive looking warrior woman opposite and snarled through gritted teeth.)

*HAYKIE:* Amanzia!

(Mocking Haykie's aggression, Amanzia laughed.)

*AMANZIA:* Haykie, Haykie, Haykie, this is an unexpected bonus, it's been a long time!

(Bond leant to Cole.)

*BOND:* What's going on?

*COLE:* Dunno, bandit's possibly, I'm not sure, but it doesn't look good!

*MICALOV:* Looks like they're after Haykie, if you ask me!

*KASIRA:* Told you she'd be nothing but trouble!

*BOND:* Yeah well, you walk into trees, why should we listen to you?

*KASIRA:* Up yours!

(Also curious, Dakuri walked to Haykie's side.)

*DAKURI:* What's going on?

*AMANZIA:* Wow, somebody up there must really love me, there I am, planning another random ambush and what do I find... my old rival, Haykie!



(While Amanzia seemed to revel in their meeting, Haykie fumed and said nothing.)

*AMANZIA*: What's wrong sister? Surprised to see me?

*HAYKIE*: Not surprised, disappointed... and you're not my sister!

*AMANZIA*: Nonsense, we're both thieves aren't we?

*HAYKIE*: I'm a thief, you're a murderer!

*AMANZIA*: On the contrary, I'm going to steal all your belongings as well, I guess I'm a jack of all trades!

*DAKURI*: Yet, master of none?

(Amanzia grinned impressively.)

*AMANZIA*: He's quick!

(Haykie shook her head.)

*HAYKIE*: This is between the two of us Amanzia, let these people go!

(Amanzia grimaced.)

*AMANZIA*: Sorry, I can't do that! I need to prove I'm the better thief, and do that, I must kill you!

*DAKURI*: How does that work?

*HAYKIE*: It's her twisted logic!

*AMANZIA*: You and I are the same, Haykie!

*HAYKIE*: I never killed anyone!

*AMANZIA*: And you won't be starting today!

(She clicked her fingers, causing her twenty or so men to raise their staffs before them, ready to do battle.)

*BOND*: Hmm, it looks like a fight is inevitable!

*COLE*: I'm ready!

*KASIRA*: Wouldn't it be a shame if I accidentally hit Haykie!

(They glared at her.)

*KASIRA*: I won't obviously!

*MICALOV*: You don't mind if I hide behind a tree do you?

*BOND*: Be our guest!

*MICALOV*: Thank you!

(And he was gone.)

*COLE*: Right!

(With that, Cole, Bond and Kasira marched to Dakuri's side.)

*BOND*: We're with you Dakuri!

(Dakuri nodded.)

*DAKURI*: Omki Saan warned me this was bandit country, I expected this to happen sooner or later!

*HAYKIE*: Yeah? But, why'd it have to be her?

*AMANZIA*: Are we going to talk or are we going to fight?

*DAKURI*: I'll give you one last chance to step aside and let us pass!

(Wearing the worlds most contemptuous expression, Amanzia ignored his request and pointed an angry finger towards Haykie. Screaming like dying hyenas, Amanzia's army of lightly armoured muscle men charged towards them. Reacting swiftly, Dakuri yanked his sword from its sheath and charged them back. Bond, Cole and Kasira adopted defensive stances, and awaited an attack, while Haykie raced up to Amanzia.)

*HAYKIE*: You and I, Amanzia, one on one!

*AMANZIA:* That suits me fine!

(Immediately, Amanzia threw a lightning quick punch at Haykie, sending her flying to the floor.)

*AMANZIA:* Haykie, you're even weaker than I thought!

(Not wanting to look inferior, she leapt straight back to her feet.)

*HAYKIE:* I slipped!

(Amanzia gave a cruel laugh.)

*AMANZIA:* That's what they all say!

(Meanwhile, Dakuri was getting to use his sword skills in combat for the first time, and thoroughly enjoying it! Having sent his blade through two torsos already, he spun around.)

*DAKURI:* So, who's next?

(He prepared his stance as two men raced at him, twisting their staffs. With his mind focussed and his senses aroused, Dakuri swung his sword before him with perfect timing, chopping both their staffs in half.)

*DAKURI:* Now it's your turn!

(With that he leapt forward and skewered one with his sword while punching the other under his chin, sending him crashing to the ground.)

*DAKURI:* For the honour of Enaki!!!

(With a devilish intent in his eyes, he ripped the sword back out of his enemies torso and leapt knee first onto the other one's neck, breaking it in two.)

*DAKURI:* Fools!

(As mere novices, Bond, Kasira and Cole weren't quite as confident in their own ability as Dakuri, so worked together as a team. Using their newly acquired fighting skills they combined their efforts to great effect.)

*BOND:* That's two!

*COLE:* Excellent chop, Bond!

*BOND:* Don't thank me, Kasira kicked him to me!

*KASIRA:* My pleasure!

(Too busy congratulating themselves, they didn't notice another warrior charge at Cole from behind.)

*BOND:* Fancy another?

*KASIRA:* I'd love one!

*BOND:* Cole?

*COLE:* Don't mind if I do!

(With amazing speed, he spun around and ducked, kicking out a leg at the advancing foe. With a yelp, he flew over Cole and straight into Bond's fist.)

*BOND:* Kasira...

(As the man staggered, punch drunk, from side to side, Bond continued.)

*BOND:* Get rid of this for me!

*KASIRA:* Pleasure!

(With the reflexes of a young cat, she high-kicked him in the face, sending his nose gristle through his brain, killing him instantly.)

*KASIRA:* Now, where were we?

(With empowerment behind them, the fight was proving too easy for them. Haykie on the other hand, was not having as much success in her personal duel.)

*AMANZIA*: No wonder you're only half the thief I am, you're weak!

(Staring hard at her, Haykie tried to remain focussed.)

*HAYKIE*: Thievery isn't about strength, it's about skill!

(Amanzia scoffed.)

*AMANZIA*: It's about profit!!!

(Like so many times, Amanzia followed her words up by punching Haykie. Barely retaining her balance, she staggered backwards and protested.)

*HAYKIE*: Stop this Amanzia, I'm warning you!!!

(Sensing an easy, imminent victory, Amanzia came forward and punched her in the face again.)

*AMANZIA*: I always thought we'd be an even fight, I was wrong!

(And again, she mercilessly thrust a fist into Haykie's face, this time sending her thudding to the turf. While she lay gasping for breath, Amanzia stood over her.)

*AMANZIA*: I waited a long time for this but you really weren't worth it!

(With a vile glint in her eye, Amanzia drew back her fist to strike a deathblow to Haykie's neck.)

*AMANZIA*: Sleep well, Haykie!!!

(Suddenly a fantastic gust of wind swept Amanzia back over 20 feet. Gaping with horror, she looked up to see Haykie, glowing blue, with blinding yellow light in her eyes. Edging backwards along the ground, Amanzia tried to scream but nothing came out. As she desperately tried to scramble to safety, Haykie thrust her hand towards her and released a sonic boom of electricity from her fingers, blowing her into a million tiny fragments. Turning in a trance, she saw everyone else, allies *and* foes, running for their lives in all different directions. Grimacing violently, she singled out Amanzia's men and blew them all to smithereens with deadly accurate lightning bolts. Scared stiff, Dakuri, Cole, Kasira and Bond, took refuge behind a nearby tree and watched her finish them off, before collapsing in a heap.)

*DAKURI*: I... don't know what to say!

*KASIRA*: I told you she was odd!

*BOND*: That must be how she killed Epsilon!

(Cole gave him a funny look.)

*COLE*: You think?

*BOND*: Don't get funny with me!

*DAKURI*: I think we should go out there!

*KASIRA*: *You* can, mate!

*COLE*: I agree with Dakuri, if she was gonna kill us, we'd be dead by now!

*BOND*: That's true, I suppose!

(As they looked to see where she was again, Micalov came into view from behind another tree, looking lost and bewildered.)

*COLE*: There's Micalov!

*BOND*: Let's get out there then, he probably thinks we've gone without him!

(Slowly and cautiously, Bond crept from behind the tree.)

*BOND*: Come on!

(Following his example, they all stepped out from the safety of the thick tree trunk and headed towards the prostrate Haykie. Nervously, they approached her silently, tip-toeing and straining their necks as they got closer.)

*MICALOV*: Did you win?

(Having not noticed him, they all got quite a start.)

*BOND*: Micalov, you tit!

*MICALOV*: I only asked!

*DAKURI*: She's alive!

(Bond, Cole, Kasira and Micalov looked down and saw Dakuri kneeling to nurse her head.)

*BOND*: And she's not blue anymore!

(Opening her eyes, Haykie seemed shocked.)

*HAYKIE*: Dakuri?

(She sat up.)

*HAYKIE*: You're all here!

*KASIRA*: Unfortunately!

*HAYKIE*: I thought you'd run away!

*BOND*: We didn't run, we hid! Actually that's a lie, we did both... just not at the same time!

(Feeling somewhat disorientated, Haykie climbed to her feet, using Dakuri as a support.)

*HAYKIE*: I guess you all saw what happened?

*BOND*: Yeah, what *was* that?

(She bit her lip.)

*HAYKIE*: I suppose it's not like I can keep it a secret anymore... I'm a witch!

*COLE*: Yeah, but witches are only pretend!

*BOND*: Really Cole, expert are we?

*KASIRA*: We'll *you* shouldn't believe in them, you're a priest!

*BOND*: No, I'm not!

*KASIRA*: Reverend then!

*BOND*: Anyway, regardless of that, I think Haykie's little demonstration proves her point, don't you?

(Kasira nervously looked at her.)

*KASIRA*: You're not evil... are you?

(Haykie shook her head.)

*HAYKIE*: No, I've always tried to help people, I've always tried to get by without my magic too. I like to keep my witchcraft a secret... but, now my secret's out, I guess!

*BOND*: No it's not, your secret's safe with us!

(Bond glanced at Micalov.)

*BOND*: Well... we can't speak for him, but it's safe with *us*.

(Cole looked thoughtful and glance to Micalov.)

*COLE*: What about you, Micalov? Is her secret safe with you?

*MICALOV*: Sorry, I wasn't listening!

*DAKURI*: Did you even *see* the fight, Micalov?

*MICALOV*: No!

*DAKURI*: Then your secret is safe with him too!

*MICALOV*: What secret?

*DAKURI*: Never mind, we must go!

*MICALOV*: Yeah, but what secret?

*DAKURI*: Micalov!!!

*MICALOV*: Fine!

(Reluctantly, Micalov began to lead them away.)

*BOND*: Who was that woman anyway?

*HAYKIE*: Just a thief I used to work with, she decided it was more fun to kill and rob people... we fought... then I didn't see her for years, until just now!

*DAKURI*: It seems she didn't forget you!

*HAYKIE*: No, it's just like her to be bitter!

*BOND*: Well, whatever the past Haykie, you're a welcome member of the team!

(With Haykie slipping Micalov directions, they felt sure that the great lake couldn't be far. As darkness fell, however, they still hadn't arrived. Determined not to panic, Dakuri tried to start a conversation.)

*DAKURI*: So, trees are nice.

(He received some odd looks.)

*HAYKIE*: So, Kasira, did you say you used to get bullied?

(Dakuri shook his head.)

*KASIRA*: Yeah, it was horrible!

*DAKURI*: Fine, ignore my topic!

(Almost as if Dakuri was silent and invisible, Kasira continued.)

*KASIRA*: Only one girl in the whole school would talk to me!

*COLE*: Who was that?

*KASIRA*: Cheyanne!

*COLE*: I always thought you were quite popular, girls were always approaching you!

*KASIRA*: Only to insult my eyes, bloody racists!

*BOND*: Technically their not racists actually!

*KASIRA*: How did you figure that out?

*BOND*: Well, they're not aware of the Enaki race in Sudereva. They didn't know your eyes are like that because you're from a different race, they just thought you were ugly!

*KASIRA*: Hey!!!

*COLE*: Bond!!!

*BOND*: You know what I mean!

*KASIRA*: Bastard!

(Bond shrugged and skulked to the back, well aware of his error.)

*HAYKIE*: So, you never had any friends then?

*KASIRA*: I used to, before I went to school I played with the girl from across the road, we were good friends!

*COLE*: What happened?

*KASIRA*: Well, someone invented school and passed a law to pick on Kasira! She never played with me again after that!

*COLE*: You should go and see her when we get back to Sudereva, she might have changed!

*KASIRA*: I doubt it, it was Suzina!

*COLE*: Oh, well forget that then!

(As they chatted, Micalov suddenly and inexplicably slumped to his knees and threw his fists in the air.)

*MICALOV*: I've done it!!!

(Running to catch him up, their hearts skipped a beat as a giant lake came into view, sparkling in the moonlight. Having stopped to briefly examine the giant body of water and the mountain in the centre, they picked up the pace and trotted excitedly towards the waters edge. Moments later, slowing to a standstill they all looked around themselves as they reached the bank of the lake.)

*DAKURI:* At last, we are here!

(Breathing heavily and gasping with relief, Bond sat down and ran his hand down his face.)

*BOND:* Finally!

*COLE:* It's beautiful!

*DAKURI:* There's plenty of time to admire it Cole, for now, we must set up camp and rest! Come daybreak, we fight to the death for the very survival of mankind.

(Chilled to the bone by his coldly accurate assessment, the serenity of the lake was soon lost on them as they contemplated the seriousness of their situation. The talking would soon be over and the next step along the journey could be the last they'd ever take.

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With an abundance of trees and bushes dotted around the reeds at the edge of the clear water, finding wood for the campfire was a simple task. As a result, it was only a matter of minutes before a fire was built and a spit erected over it. Ten minutes later, with hunger in all their eyes, everyone sat around the flames watching their meat slowly brown on the spit. Licking his lips, Bond leant to Dakuri, unable to take his eyes off of the food.)

*BOND:* I'm having the big one!

(Dakuri, also hypnotised by the food, thought otherwise.)

*DAKURI:* Do you want to fight me for it?

*BOND:* You had the biggest bit last time!

*DAKURI:* You could have fought me for it then too!

*BOND:* Selfish git!

(There were no complaints, however, when the food was handed out. Scoffing it back like half starved pigs, nobody said a word. Upon finishing his piece first, Micalov stretched and laid back.)

*MICALOV:* I've done it, I've finally got a good days work behind me and a full tummy to boot. Marvellous!

(Chewing his last mouthful, Dakuri turned to him.)

*DAKURI:* You know, you are free to go now!

*MICALOV:* What? On my own, you must be joking, I'd get lost!

*HAYKIE:* Lost? I thought you were a guide!

*MICALOV:* I don't wanna talk about it!

*HAYKIE:* Suit yourself!

(Unlike the others, Kasira shuffled uneasily where she sat, having barely touched her food.)

*KASIRA:* Um... Dakuri? How do we kill this beast tomorrow?

(Dakuri shrugged.)

*DAKURI:* When the time comes and we need to know, our empowerment will give us the knowledge we need!

(She looked a little more unsure.)

*KASIRA:* So, we already know... but our brains won't tell us yet?

*DAKURI:* That is correct!

*KASIRA:* That's annoying!

(Suddenly, Cole sat bolt upright and dropped his last piece of meat. Staring straight ahead looking shocked, he put his hands on his head, clearly in some considerable distress. Worried by his demeanour, Kasira and Bond leant over to him.)

*KASIRA:* Cole, you okay?

*BOND:* Um, are you going to eat that?

(As Cole shook his head in a trance, Bond grabbed the meat and sat back.)

*BOND:* Superb!

(Kasira, in the meantime, was still trying to make sense of Cole.)

*KASIRA:* Cole, what's up? Speak to me!

(Turning his head swiftly towards her he spoke in a soft voice.)

*COLE:* Just, give me a minute, will you?

(Reluctantly, she sat back and watched him with worried eyes. Stroking his chin, Dakuri nodded to himself.)

*DAKURI:* I think, maybe his knowledge has filtered through!

(Chewing happily, Bond looked at him.)

*BOND:* What are you talking about?

*DAKURI:* Look at Cole, he's tensed up!

(Bond threw a glance in Cole's direction then looked back.)

*BOND:* Maybe Kasira accidentally touched his knee! He always does that!

(As the next few minutes ticked by, everybody sat in silence. While Haykie, Micalov and Bond relaxed by the fire, Dakuri and Kasira eagerly watched a seemingly traumatised Cole. Suddenly, Dakuri sat up tall.)

*DAKURI:* Bloody hell!!! It has come to me too!

*KASIRA:* What has?

*DAKURI:* I know how to defeat Necronema!

(Bond sat up.)

*BOND:* You do?

*DAKURI:* No wonder Cole is traumatised!

(Clearly sick to the stomach with worry, Kasira pleaded with Dakuri.)

*KASIRA:* Tell me!!! Why's he gone like this? Dakuri?

(Dakuri raised his palm towards her.)

*DAKURI:* Calm yourself, Kasira, I will tell!

(Looking solemnly into her eyes, he began.)

*DAKURI:* Necronema is strong, he has no visible weakness at all. The only thing that can kill him, is the sacred dagger, and as you know, the only person who can use it is you!

(The others hung on his every word as he continued to speak directly into Kasira's worried eyes.)

*DAKURI:* You must impact the dagger into a red ring of flesh between his eyes, anywhere else and you will not even dent his skin. Unfortunately, Necronema is over 12

feet tall and only bows down to feed. And when he feeds he closes his eyes, this will be your opportunity!

*KASIRA*: I have to wait until he feeds?

*DAKURI*: Yes, then you make your move!

*KASIRA*: So what's wrong with Cole?

(Suddenly it hit her.)

*KASIRA*: No, no, no... that's obscene, no way, surely even Omki Saan wouldn't expect him to do that? You're lying Dakuri!

(Breaking from his stare, Cole turned to her.)

*COLE*: It's true Kasira, Necronema must feast on *me*! For the good of mankind!

(Bond covered his mouth with disbelief while Kasira just repeatedly shook her head, refusing to accept it.)

*BOND*: Tough break, Cole!

*COLE*: If I don't do this, Necronema will grow to wreak havoc on the world, this is a small price to pay!

*BOND*: You're braver than I am Cole, I'd have taken to the hills by now!

*COLE*: If I wasn't empowered, I probably would have too!

*KASIRA*: Shut up!!!

(They looked up at her as she jumped to her feet and threw her arms about randomly, too distressed to keep still.)

*KASIRA*: There has to be another way, you can't die, you can't!!!

*COLE*: Kasira, I don't want to, this is something I have to do!

*KASIRA*: No you don't, you're empowered!!! You can run, you can get away!

(She stopped and rubbed her eyes.)

*KASIRA*: No you can't... you can't run any more than I can, we *have* to do it!

(She looked at the sky with tears running down her face.)

*KASIRA*: Damn you, Omki Saan!!!

(With that, she turned and ran towards the lake.)

*DAKURI*: Kasira! That lake may be dangerous!!!

*HAYKIE*: Let her go, the lake's perfectly safe!

*DAKURI*: You are sure?

*HAYKIE*: I'm positive, let her go, a girl needs to be on her own now and again!

(Clearly disagreeing, Cole got to his feet and started to walk after her.)

*DAKURI*: Cole! Stay away from her!

(Cole turned and sneered.)

*COLE*: What if I don't? What are you going to do? Kill me?

*DAKURI*: She is upset!!!

*COLE*: Up yours Dakuri, you don't even know her, she needs a friend right now, and that friend is me!

(He walked away leaving an angry Dakuri behind.)

*DAKURI*: He defies me... yet what can I say?

(Bond shook his head.)

*BOND*: Now I know why Omki Saan didn't want us to know how to kill Necronema.

This empowerment sucks Dakuri, we've just been kept in the dark!

*DAKURI*: I don't know what to say to you, reverend Bond!



*BOND:* I don't want your words, I just hope you and Omki Saan can live with yourselves after this!

*DAKURI:* I assure you, Bond, I knew nothing of Cole's sacrifice!

*BOND:* I don't want to hear any more from you Dakuri, I'm seriously pissed off!

(Haykie sat up looking embarrassed.)

*HAYKIE:* You really *aren't* treasure hunters are you?

(Dakuri sighed.)

*DAKURI:* Forget it, Haykie!

(While she lay down, deep in thought, Micalov turned to Bond.)

*MICALOV:* What going on? Why does Cole have to die?

(Bond shook his head and spoke angrily.)

*BOND:* Because he's been empowered to do it!

*MICALOV:* Empowered?

*BOND:* Look, no offence Micalov, just shut up, I don't want to talk to anyone right now!

Especially some chimp who won't understand a bloody word I say.

(He sat with his head in his hands as a heavy silence fell over the encampment.)

Meanwhile, a good 100 metres or so away, Cole was searching along the lake's edge for Kasira. Contorting his neck to peer over the reeds as he went, he suddenly spotted her up ahead of him. Wondering what he was going to say, he scratched behind his ear then started to approach her. Facing away from him, with her skirt hoisted up to her knees, she sat upon the bank with her feet in the water, holding her head in her hands. Not wanting to alarm her, Cole slipped off his shoes and pulled up his trouser legs, before gently slipping his feet into the water and sitting beside her.)

*COLE:* Um... hi!

(Tilting her head towards him, she tried to speak but couldn't. Desperate to do something, she threw her arms around his neck and burst into tears. Instinctively, he responded by holding her as tight as he could.)

*COLE:* Please, Kasira, Don't cry!

(Struggling to speak through her tears, she spoke in broken steps.)

*KASIRA:* But Cole... you don't understand... I love you... I really do... I love you so much it hurts, Cole... I can't lose you... I just can't...

(Still holding her, a stunned Cole muttered erratically.)

*COLE:* So, Bond wasn't lying?

(She sniffed and said nothing.)

*COLE:* You... the girl with the beautiful eyes from the back of the class... my student...

(She pulled back from his grasp and looked into his eyes.)

*KASIRA:* That was then, I'm a woman now... you aint much older than me...

(Cole interrupted.)

*COLE:* I never saw you as a kid anyway!

(As their eyes met, Kasira smiled and looked away shyly.)

*COLE:* Wow, you really *are* beautiful!

(Without looking up, she murmured softly.)

*KASIRA:* I don't want to live the rest of my life, not knowing how it felt to have you kiss me, or run your fingers through my hair...

(She looked him dead in the eye.)

*KASIRA*: I want to know how that feels, Cole!

(Smiling warmly at her, Cole raised his hand and gently felt the skin on her cheeks.)

*COLE*: And I don't want to die a virgin!

(She turned her head slightly.)

*KASIRA*: What?

(Feeling incredibly awkward, not to mention stupid, he moved a little closer.)

*COLE*: What I mean to say is, if I have to die tomorrow, I want you to know... I'm falling in love with you too!

(Kasira's eyes seemed to sparkle.)

*KASIRA*: Really?

*COLE*: Kasira? What's not to love about you?

(Fearing she'd make a list, he answered his own question.)

*COLE*: Nothing, that's what. I've felt this way about you since Enaki forest and I'm certain! I love you.

(Again he ran his hand down her cheek, when suddenly, she pounced on him, thrusting her lips to his. Taken by surprise, he flapped his arms desperate for air, and quickly pulled away.)

*KASIRA*: What? What's wrong?

*COLE*: Patience Kasira, my lips aren't going anywhere!

(With that, he pulled her close gently, and softly applied his lips to hers. As he pulled back, Kasira felt as if she was floating.)

*KASIRA*: Oh, my!

(Instantly addicted, she pulled him to her and kissed him again. While the others sat silently around the fire feeling sorry for them, Kasira and Cole ended up naked in the lake together, barely able to let go of one another. Standing there, up to their necks in the shallow water, Cole pulled her ever closer and looked seriously into her eyes. With a smile and a nervous nod she moved closer into him. Following a little underwater adjustment, he penetrated her and she let out a tremendous groan of pleasure.)

*KASIRA*: Wow, that feels good!

(The delighted expression on Cole's face as he thrust into her suggested he agreed.)

*KASIRA*: If only Suzina could see me now?

(Cole froze.)

*COLE*: Don't even joke about...

*KASIRA*: Hey, don't stop!

(With his hands gripping her hips tightly, he resumed thrusting. Holding onto his shoulders, Kasira leant back and groaned some more, inspiring Cole to thrust even harder. Back at the encampment in the meantime, the conversation was a sorrowful one.)

*BOND*: She loves him you know, and he's going to die, that sucks! I'd hate to be going through what those two are going through at this time!

*MICALOV*: They must be going through hell!

*HAYKIE*: Absolute mental torture!

(Dakuri nodded.)

*DAKURI*: I agree, I wouldn't like to be either of them, right now!

(While depression set in around the fire, Kasira and Cole were delirious. Never wanting the lovemaking to end, Kasira had pulled herself up close to Cole, her chest pressed up against his. With bright red faces, decorated by ecstasy, they continued to writhe

together until neither could take it anymore. With a many screams of delight, they let themselves go and climaxed like they'd never climaxed before. Moments later, trying to catch her breath, Kasira puffed and panted then suddenly giggled and planted a kiss on Cole's face.)

*KASIRA:* That was incredible!

(Cole smiled.)

*COLE:* Why, thank you!

(Feeling fulfilled to say the least, Kasira lifted her legs and floated on her back.)

*KASIRA:* I'm happy!

*COLE:* Me too!

(With that, he joined her in floating.)

*KASIRA:* I'm going to find a way to save you, you know that don't you?

(Wearing a doubting expression that was thankfully hidden from her view, Cole reached for her hand.)

*COLE:* Of course you will!

(As the lovers continued to enjoy the moonlit water, the others continued to get themselves more and more depressed.)

*BOND:* Are you sure there's no other way to kill Necronema?

*DAKURI:* All I know is, this way was set by thousands of years of tradition. I'm sure that other ways must have been tried!

*BOND:* Poor Cole, I know he's a bit of a wally, but I like the guy!

*MICALOV:* He's a wally?

*BOND:* Well, not compared to you!

*DAKURI:* Please Bond, what is a wally?

*BOND:* Well...

(His words were interrupted by a giggling sound coming from the lake.)

*DAKURI:* What is that?

(Fearing bandits, Dakuri drew his sword and crept to the waters edge.)

*MICALOV:* What's he doing?

*BOND:* Shush! He heard something!

(Scouring the area, Dakuri saw some ripples appear on the water and ducked down. Moments later, he couldn't believe his eyesight when Cole and Kasira floated past him on their backs, as naked as the day they were born.)

*KASIRA:* Do you think the others will approve?

*COLE:* I doubt it, if Dakuri could see us now...

(Leaping to his feet, Dakuri bellowed, red with rage.)

*DAKURI:* If Dakuri could see you now, what???

(Letting out terrified screams, they sunk their feet to the bottom of the water and crouched down, covering their bits and pieces with their hands. While they gaped in horror, Bond, Haykie and Micalov strolled over and joined Dakuri at the lakeside.)

*HAYKIE:* Hi guys!

*MICALOV:* They've got nothing on!

*BOND:* Haykie? Did you steal their clothes?

(While the three of them grinned wildly, Dakuri was less than amused with the shamefaced twosome.)

*DAKURI:* You have dishonoured the chosen one!!!

(Trying to protest, Cole stammered awkwardly.)

*COLE:* Yes... b-but... s-see...

*DAKURI:* And as for you Kasira, you have brought shame to the Enaki!

(She tried to use a sweet grin to melt Dakuri's heart but failed miserably.)

*DAKURI:* Where are your clothes???

(Using his free hand, Cole slowly pointed in the direction they'd appeared from while wearing a pathetic grin.)

*DAKURI:* Go and get them!!!

(Looking embarrassed he waded away apologetically.)

*DAKURI:* You too Kasira, then come straight back here!!!

(She too minced away through the water looking as if she wanted to die.)

*DAKURI:* You have three minutes!!!

(Moments later, both Cole and Kasira found themselves sitting around the fire together receiving a morality lecture from Dakuri. With long faces they listened to him drone on about decency and the sanctity of the human body for what seemed an eternity until salvation arrived from an unlikely source.)

*BOND:* Oh, hark at the crap your spouting Dakuri!!!

(Dakuri spun around to see Bond holding his head.)

*BOND:* Your giving me a headache!

(Dakuri was miffed.)

*DAKURI:* What?

(Bond stood up and gestured to Cole.)

*BOND:* The man's going to die tomorrow, do you really think it matters to him whether Haykie and Kasira saw his willy?

(The girls tried not to laugh, while Cole hid his face.)

*BOND:* Get a sense of perspective, man!

(Dakuri fumed silently.)

*BOND:* There, I've said my piece!

(As he sat back down, Dakuri took a deep breath and did the same.)

*DAKURI:* Under the circumstances... I suppose you are right!

(He shook his head.)

*DAKURI:* But in Enaki culture, only married couples may see each other naked!

*BOND:* Maybe if they'd known that Dakuri, they'd have respected it!

(Dakuri nodded and sat back.)

*HAYKIE:* Strange!

*BOND:* What is?

*HAYKIE:* Well... I've met reverends before and you're nothing like they were!

*BOND:* Really?

*HAYKIE:* Yeah, most of them would have agreed with Dakuri!

*DAKURI:* No, Bond was right, even I don't agree with Dakuri... and I'm he!

(Not even bothering to give Dakuri a sideways glance, Haykie continued.)

*HAYKIE:* So what gives, Bond?

(Bond looked horrified.)

*BOND:* Hey, this isn't about me!

(Seeing an opportunity to change the subject away from him and Kasira, Cole spoke up.)

*COLE:* She's got a point Bond, you really don't seem like a reverend at all sometimes, what's with that?

(Bond sucked his lip and sighed.)

*BOND:* You don't want to hear about me!

(Hearing spontaneous disagreement from all around him, he looked up to see them all awaiting him to speak. Realising they were all genuinely, interested he shrugged and began.)

*BOND:* It's nothing really... well, actually it is, see, my father was a carpenter... a good one too, my twin brother and I...

*KASIRA:* You have a twin?

*BOND:* No, my life's so dull, I'm making it up!

*MICALOV:* I do that!

*BOND:* Of course, I have a twin!

*KASIRA:* I only asked!

*BOND:* Anyway, we both wanted to follow in my fathers footsteps, my brother and I, only he was better at it then me. It got me down a bit so I went to ask my local vicar for advice... he suggested the church!

(He twisted to make himself comfortable, then continued.)

*BOND:* So, I read all about the church and about god, until I became obsessed. I was certain that this was my calling. Well, time moved on and before I knew it I was made reverend of that church in Sudereva. I loved it, helping people and spreading the word of the good book...

(His face suddenly dropped.)

*BOND:* Then one day the head of the diocese came to see me. He said one of his flock had strayed and he asked me to talk to him. He said my faith was the strongest, he might listen to me...

(Noticing they were still hung on his every word, he smiled.)

*BOND:* Well, I went to see him. It was the most eye opening day of my life. Every time I asked him why he no longer believed, he gave me a great answer... and as always I could only answer him in cheesy clichés!

*COLE:* Like what?

*BOND:* Well, for example, when he asked about all the suffering in the world, I could only say the lord moves in mysterious ways, I mean, what a cop-out!

*KASIRA:* Yeah, I never did like that one!

*BOND:* Then he pointed out all the different religions, and how you only follow the local belief. He pointed out that I'd be a different religion if I was born elsewhere. He also said it was arrogance beyond belief to claim you have all the answers to life, and he was right!

*COLE:* So you became an atheist?

*BOND:* No, far from it. I just realised that I'd never had an open mind about it. And when I started to think about it, hardly anything in the good book made any sense. It's full of contradictions. One minute it tells you to be meek or god will make you suffer the consequences, the next it says that god is all forgiving. I couldn't figure out how I hadn't noticed it before. It was then that I realised something, my faith wasn't the strongest...

(He hung his head.)

*BOND:* It was the blindest!

*KASIRA*: So you're an atheist then?

*BOND*: No, now I believe...

(He nodded.)

*BOND*: I'm certain there's something out there, but I won't claim to have the answer.

Blind faith is akin to ignorance. Nowadays I keep an open mind.

(He smiled.)

*BOND*: So, no, I'm not an atheist. I believe there's something up there, I just don't pretend to know what. And you know, just knowing or feeling that there's a divine presence upstairs brings me joy.

(Dakuri nodded.)

*DAKURI*: You know, a wise man once said, "The only true wisdom lies in knowing you know nothing", I think this applies to you!

*MICALOV*: I don't know anything either! Does that mean I'm wise?

*DAKURI*: Silence, stupid! I'm talking in holy terms!

*BOND*: I think that about sums it up actually Dakuri, so now you know why I'm the not very reverend Bond!

(Feeling a little more comfortable with himself for telling them, he laid back and rested his head.)

*BOND*: So that's me!

(Cole gave out a stifled laugh.)

*BOND*: What's so funny, you?

*COLE*: There's me, a teacher for all the wrong reasons, Micalov wanting to be a guide, you, Bond, the reverend who doesn't agree with religion, Kasira's whole life was just a lie, and Haykie's a thieving witch. Dakuri's the only honest one here!

*BOND*: And he's probably a woman!

(Everyone laughed, except Dakuri that is.)

*DAKURI*: I can assure you, I am not a woman!

*COLE*: Alright, Dakuri, he was joking!

*DAKURI*: I don't care, I am a man, perhaps you would like me to show you, Mr Bond?

(Bond cringed.)

*BOND*: Don't even think about it!!!

(He rolled on his side.)

*BOND*: You keep away from me, I'm going to sleep!

(Folding his arms, Dakuri nodded.)

*DAKURI*: This is a good idea, we should all sleep now!

(Wrapping their bags around themselves so that Haykie couldn't steal them in their sleep, they all settled down to rest for the night. After a long, gruelling days journey, the tired party found no difficulty in drifting off to sleep, with the exception of Kasira. With her hand firmly gripping Cole's she stared up at the stars desperately trying to think of a way to save her new love. Getting more and more tired by the minute, she too eventually nodded off.)

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(As the first glimpse of the morning sun, cast its yellow aura above the treetops, Bond opened his eyes and immediately felt the warmth of the still burning fire. Propping up

his head he yawned and let his eyes come into focus. As he did so, he noticed Kasira sitting opposite him, cross legged, staring into the flames. Noticing her hair was already brushed he scratched his head and puffed out his cheeks.)

*BOND:* Blimey Kasira, you're keen!

(With a long face, she broke from her stare and looked across at him.)

*KASIRA:* I've been awake for ages!

(Bond nodded.)

*BOND:* A lot on your mind, huh?

*KASIRA:* I'm the chosen one, right?

*BOND:* Well... yeah, so we're told!

*KASIRA:* In that case, we can't kill Necronema without me!

*BOND:* That's what we were told, yeah!

(He turned his head suspiciously.)

*BOND:* What are you planning, Kasira?

*KASIRA:* I've had an idea, that's all!

*BOND:* Care to share it with me?

(She shook her head.)

*KASIRA:* Wait until Dakuri wakes up!

(Bond shrugged.)

*BOND:* That's up to you, love!

(He offered her a reassuring smile.)

*KASIRA:* He won't like it, but I can't just let him die!

(She looked down at Cole snoring rampantly.)

*KASIRA:* I won't just let him die, you understand, don't you?

(Bond nodded.)

*BOND:* Sure I do, but then I'm not Dakuri!

(A short while later, everyone was awake and preparing for the difficult task ahead.

While Cole fumbled around nervously like any condemned man would, Kasira stared at Dakuri. Her refusal to take her eyes off of him for a second, made him feel extremely uncomfortable until finally, he had to say something.)

*DAKURI:* Kasira? Why do you stare?

(Rather than picking her moment, she nervously blurted out what she had to say.)

*KASIRA:* We're gonna do this my way, there has to be another way to distract Necronema!

(Dakuri stood tall and placed his hands on his hips in an attempt to intimidate her.)

*DAKURI:* Say that again?

(Determined not to be intimidated by him, she rambled on.)

*KASIRA:* Haykie is a witch, if she can set fire to Necronema, it'll distract it, then I can attack it with the dagger!

(Angrily, Dakuri stepped forward.)

*DAKURI:* Do you think Omki Saan is a fool? Don't you think if there was another way, he'd of told us?

*KASIRA:* Maybe he doesn't know!

(Disgusted by her attitude, Dakuri stepped closer again and raised his voice.)

*DAKURI:* Kasira, you are being foolish!!!

*COLE:* Oi, don't talk to her like that, you big oaf!

(He turned to Kasira.)

*COLE*: I appreciate the gesture Kasira, but really, I'm ready!

(Kasira begged with her eyes.)

*KASIRA*: Don't you want to be with me?

*COLE*: I'd like nothing more, but...

(Standing tall, she folded her arms and looked Dakuri dead in the eye.)

*KASIRA*: That's settled then! I'm the chosen one Dakuri, not you, not Omki Saan, Me!

So we're gonna at least try it my way, I'm not asking you, I'm telling you!

(As she stood firm, Bond placed his hand on her shoulder.)

*BOND*: I'm with you toots!

(She smiled.)

*HAYKIE*: I'm a witch, I've got phenomenal powers, I say let's see what I can do!

(She nodded to Kasira.)

*MICALOV*: It would make sense I suppose...

(A look of fear suddenly crossed his face.)

*MICALOV*: You're a witch?

(Gaping, he crept towards her like a grovelling minion.)

*MICALOV*: I'm on your side!

(Dakuri shook his head.)

*DAKURI*: And you Cole?

(Cole looked at Kasira's determined expression and nodded.)

*COLE*: Don't get me wrong Dakuri, I'm not afraid to die, but I *am* afraid of letting Kasira down! She deserves better!

(Dakuri shook a disappointed head and sat down.)

*DAKURI*: But tradition dictates...

(Kasira knelt before him.)

*KASIRA*: Forget tradition Dakuri, imagine what a hero you'll be if you discover a new way!

(Bewildered, he couldn't answer.)

*DAKURI*: But...

*KASIRA*: Accept it, Dakuri!

*DAKURI*: What if we fail? What if this new way fails and the beast lives?

*COLE*: If we fail, Dakuri, then we'll have to revert to the old way. I'll do my duty, like I said, I'm not afraid!

(Dakuri gave a resigned nod.)

*DAKURI*: Very well!

*KASIRA*: Nice one, Dakuri!

*DAKURI*: Please, do not misunderstand. I do not want Cole to die either, I did not know what it meant to have friends, until I met you all! But our mission is important!

*KASIRA*: We know Dakuri, we know!

*BOND*: Well, now that's solved, how the hell are we going to get to the mountain? It's way over there!

(While the others looked at the daunting sight of the mountain, way out in the centre of the lake and scratched their heads, Haykie took positive action. Within minutes, they were all heading across the lake in a rowing boat.)

*BOND*: Nice one, Haykie!



*COLE:* I didn't see a boat laying around, where'd you find it?

(Haykie grinned.)

*HAYKIE:* I acquired this boat, much the same way as I acquire most things!

(There was a brief silence.)

*KASIRA:* You pinched it???

(Haykie smiled and faced the edge of the lake where a furious man leapt up and down, gesticulating to them.)

*HAYKIE:* Well, it's not like we intend to keep it, is it?

(Everyone chuckled inwardly. Humour, however, was not on the agenda as they neared the forbidden mountain. With deadly serious looks on all their faces, they alighted the boat and headed up a brief strip of sand, towards the giant peak. Looking carefully around them as they went, the very first thing they came too was a small archway at the foot of the mountain.)

*DAKURI:* This must be the entrance!

*BOND:* Well, what are we waiting for?

(As Bond attempted to stroll past, Dakuri thrust out a hand to stop him.)

*DAKURI:* Wait, it could be a trap!

*MICALOV:* Are you coming?

(They turned and saw Micalov, standing with his hands on his hips, the other side of the archway.)

*BOND:* Not a trap then!

(With that, he too proceeded through the arch-shaped stone structure.)

*BOND:* Come on, how much proof do you need?

(Shrugging, Dakuri and the others followed suit. Having warned Micalov not to wander off in front, they continued marching purposefully along the clearly defined path ahead of them. Not far down the trail, Bond made an observation.)

*BOND:* Am I imagining things, or is the path getting thinner and that drop to our left getting sheerer?

*COLE:* Well, this *is* a mountain!

(Bond tutted.)

*BOND:* Yes, thanks for pointing that out to me!

(Looking increasingly nervous, Micalov pointed over the edge.)

*MICALOV:* I wouldn't want to fall down there!

*BOND:* Quite a day for stating the obvious, I see!

*KASIRA:* I hate heights!

*HAYKIE:* Just look straight ahead Kasira, that's what I do!

*KASIRA:* Are you afraid of heights too, then?

*HAYKIE:* Terrified!

*DAKURI:* I always wanted to lead a brave band of warriors some day, and perhaps one day I will!

*COLE:* Hey, what's that meant to mean?

*DAKURI:* Three of you are afraid of heights, Necronema is going to have a field day!

*BOND:* Well, well, what an inspirational speech that was. Thank you, Dakuri. We were nervous before, but that speech raised our spirits no end!

(With tension mounting, the nervous pack soldiered on up the pathway, until it opened out onto a grassy verge. Looking around for another route, Dakuri pointed to the mountain side.)

*DAKURI:* There!

*BOND:* Where? I don't see anything!

*DAKURI:* Follow me!

(He lead them to what looked like a doorway in the rock face, blocked by a solid stone door. His first instinct was to try and push it. While the others looked on unimpressed, the giant man thudded himself, shoulder first into it.)

*DAKURI:* Yeow!!!

(As he stood there rubbing his arm, the others looked thoughtful.)

*COLE:* Well, barging it won't work!

*DAKURI:* You don't say!

*HAYKIE:* Maybe this is the wrong way!

*BOND:* Well, whatever you say, there's a lovely view from up here!

(He looked out at the birds flying above him, then out to the lake below.)

*BOND:* Marvellous!

*DAKURI:* Bond, will you pay attention?

(He turned.)

*BOND:* Sorry? What?

*DAKURI:* Everybody, look around, maybe there is some kind of clue!

(Kasira yelled to them from several feet along the rock face.)

*KASIRA:* There's something over here!

(Dakuri looked over to her and saw her start sinking slowly into the ground.)

*KASIRA:* What the???

(Desperate to grab hold of her, they all raced over to where she'd been standing only for her to disappear into the ground.)

*DAKURI:* Kasira!!! We've lost Kasira!!!

*COLE:* Do something!

(He looked down to where she'd stood and saw a gold metallic plate lying on the ground.)

*COLE:* She was here!

(Anxious to find her, he leapt onto the plate. The clanging of his landing caused some nesting birds to release their shrill cries and fly away.)

*COLE:* Come on, move!!!

(Feeling devastated at losing the chosen one, Dakuri flapped with desperation.)

*DAKURI:* We have to find her!!!

(Suddenly, the solid rock door in the mountainside, eased to one side. As they watched it in anticipation of trouble, Kasira strolled out looking confused.)

*DAKURI:* Kasira!!!

(Feeling overwhelmed with delight, he ran over and hugged her tightly.)

*KASIRA:* Dakuri, you're squashing me!

*COLE:* Kasira, what happened?

*KASIRA:* Dakuri???

(Regaining his composure, Dakuri went bright red and released his grip.)

*DAKURI:* Forgive me, I feel quite the fool!

*COLE:* Whatever, Dakuri! What happened, Kasira?

*KASIRA:* Dunno, I stood on that metal thing and I started to sink!

*DAKURI:* And how did you get out?

*KASIRA:* I walked up some steps and there was another metal plate. I stood on it and this door opened!

(Dakuri nodded.)

*DAKURI:* Ah, so that is the way in!

*COLE:* Shouldn't our empowerment have told us that?

*DAKURI:* I don't know, maybe all this is new since the last chosen one was here!

*COLE:* I guess so!

*DAKURI:* Let's go, but be careful, there may be other puzzles inside!

(With eyes on stalks, they made their way tentatively through the open door and into the dimly lit passageway inside. Keeping a sharp eye out left and right, they took small steps as they slowly forged ahead. Not wanting to bring any attention to them, Dakuri spoke in a whisper.)

*DAKURI:* Necronema must be in here somewhere!

*BOND:* I won't be too sad if he isn't!

(Saying no more, they continued on, bunched up in a nervous group until the lead man, Dakuri stopped dead and caused a pile up behind him.)

*BOND:* Ow!

*MICALOV:* Ouch!

*KASIRA:* Sorry!

*COLE:* Dakuri, why have we stopped?

(Dakuri turned around and then gestured to the floor in front of him with his eyes.)

*BOND:* Oh, I see!

(They all stared ahead to where there were five small pits, one after another, all filled with sharp spikes, spreading from one wall to the other. Dakuri ran frustrated fingers through his hair as he gazed at the evenly spaced gaps between each trench.)

*HAYKIE:* Ooh, nasty!

*KASIRA:* We can jump them can't we?

*BOND:* Yeah, it's just like a series of small hurdles!

*DAKURI:* Hmm, I'm not so sure, maybe this is a trap!

*KASIRA:* Of course it is, but we spotted it!

*MICALOV:* Have them wires going across got anything to do with it?

*DAKURI:* Wires?

(They looked again and noticed thin wire, strung out across the flat ground between the pits.)

*DAKURI:* Trip wires!

*BOND:* Oh, I see... and what do they do?

*MICALOV:* Maybe them spikes in the ceiling have something to do with it!

(Looking somewhat daunted they all looked up to the ceiling above the pits. Sure enough, there were spikes carpeting the ceiling.)

*BOND:* Well spotted, Micalov!

(Cheered by his words, Micalov smiled heartily.)

*BOND:* You're not as stupid as you come across!

*MICALOV:* Hey, that was mean!

*DAKURI:* Never mind that, we have a booby trap ahead of us! We need a plan!

*COLE:* Simple, we're all fit, and thanks to the empowering, we're all damned agile! I say we jump across, avoiding the wires as we go!

*BOND:* Don't be silly, one mistake and we're screwed!

*COLE:* Have you got a better idea?

*BOND:* Actually I have!

(Cole shook his head.)

*COLE:* Typical, always got to try and out do everyone!

*BOND:* I don't have to try, your idea was ridiculous!

*COLE:* Oh, really... oh, really?

(Nostrils flaring with anger, Cole turned to face the trap ahead.)

*COLE:* We'll *see* if my plan was stupid shall we?

(With that he charged towards the spiked trenches.)

*KASIRA:* Cole!!!

*DAKURI:* Don't be a fool, Cole!!!

(Ignoring their pleas, he leapt the first trench, skidding as he landed just short of the trip wire on the other side. Deep in concentration, he then leapt the trip wire and regained his balance the other side.)

*COLE:* There's one!

*BOND:* Come back you fool!

*COLE:* No way, chummy, I've got a point to prove!

(He then leapt the second gap and rolled under the next wire.)

*COLE:* Ha!

(And with the reflexes of a gymnast, he negotiated the next two trenches with sublime athleticism.)

*COLE:* One more, Bond!

(Bond covered his eyes.)

*BOND:* I can't watch!

*KASIRA:* Why's he doing this?

*DAKURI:* I have no idea, I don't understand Caucasians!

(Grimacing with fear for Cole's safety, they could barely watch as he sprung majestically over the final set of spikes and somersaulted the trip wire. Racing clear of the spiked ceiling he turned and jumped up and down merrily.)

*COLE:* See, Bond, my idea doesn't seem so ridiculous now does it?

(Bond grinned.)

*BOND:* Oh no?

(With a rye smile, he plucked a stick from his bag and threw it onto a trip wire.)

*DAKURI:* What are you doing?

*BOND:* You'll see!

(As the stick twanged into the wire, the roof began to shudder.)

*BOND:* Watch!

(He beamed with delight as the spiky ceiling crashed down over the pits, leaving a perfectly straight path for them to walk down.)

*BOND:* There. Wasn't difficult was it?

(Wearing a more than conceited smile, Bond lead the others in marching towards a rather irritated looking Cole. As the smiling cleric approached him, Cole glared dead into his eyes.)

*COLE:* Not a fucking word, you!

*BOND:* I wouldn't dream of it mate!

(As the others gained, Cole suddenly turned to Bond and laughed.)

*COLE:* You're a sod!

(Bond grinned back, acknowledging their truce.)

*DAKURI:* Cole, you must be more careful!

*COLE:* Oh, belt up Dakuri!

(He turned to Bond.)

*COLE:* Let's go, shall we!

*BOND:* After you!

*COLE:* Why, thank you!

*BOND:* Delighted!

(As they all proceeded onwards, with caution still at a maximum, Dakuri stayed back, glared at Bond and Cole and clenched an angry fist.)

*DAKURI:* Necronema, if *you* don't kill them...

(He shook his head.)

*DAKURI:* What am I saying?

(Then he too continued on after them, ever alert for another trap. They hadn't got much further down the narrow passageway, when a bright light appeared at the end. Realising that the end of the tunnel was near, Dakuri implored them to stop.)

*DAKURI:* Wait, wait!

*BOND:* What's up, Dakuri?

(A serious looking Dakuri looked around their dimly lit faces and quietly uttered his words with importance.)

*DAKURI:* He's here, I can feel it!

*COLE:* Are you sure?

*DAKURI:* I feel it in my heart!

(Absorbing his words, they returned his serious looks with interest.)

*DAKURI:* If I'm right, then we must be prepared for anything, especially you Haykie!

*HAYKIE:* Hey, I'm always ready!

*DAKURI:* If any of you are scared and want to back out, now's the time to do it!

(There was silence.)

*DAKURI:* Micalov?

*MICALOV:* What? I aint waiting out there by myself!

*DAKURI:* Okay, let's do it then!

(Inspired by his words, they marched purposefully towards the light, unconsciously picking up the pace as they went. As the light neared, their hearts began to beat faster and the adrenaline began to flow. Determined not to let each other down they continued undaunted and didn't even begin to slow as they reached the end of the corridor.

Completely forgetting about hidden dangers and booby traps, they marched straight into the wide open space at the end of the corridor, only for Dakuri to bundle them behind a rock in the opening.)

*COLE:* Dakuri?

*BOND:* What are you doing?

*DAKURI:* First rule of battle, get a good vantage point and assess your enemy!

*KASIRA:* Well we can't see anything from behind this rock!

(Suddenly the air was filled with the sound of a deep booming voice.)

*NECRONEMA:* So, you have come for me!

(Chilled to the bone, they all looked at one another and tried not to panic.)

*DAKURI:* He has sensed us!

*BOND:* M-maybe he saw us!

*DAKURI:* Hmm...

(They all watched nervously as Dakuri popped his head out from around the rock.)

*DAKURI:* Fuck me, he's huge!

(Taken aback by Necronema's appearance, he gaped uncontrollably and popped his head back in.)

*DAKURI:* He's disgusting!

*BOND:* What do you mean?

*DAKURI:* Imagine the ugliest, nastiest beast you ever saw!

*COLE:* You mean Epsilon?

*DAKURI:* Similar, only twice as big and twice as ugly!

*BOND:* Surely you exaggerate!

(With that Bond popped his head around the edge of the rock.)

*BOND:* What the?

(Bond could hardly believe his eyes as he stared in horror at the several tons of muscle that was Necronema. Like a primate with thick scaly skin and a dragons head, the vile creature sent a chill down Bond's spine.)

*BOND:* That's him... that's the coming of the evil!

*COLE:* You mean...

(Not sure whether he wanted to know what Bond meant, Cole stopped.)

*DAKURI:* Whatever he is, he needs to be destroyed, now listen well!

(Fearing for their safety if they didn't, they listened hard.)

*DAKURI:* This room is like a giant dome, Necronema is over on the far side. Apart from him, there is just a few rocks and five one-foot high, glass pods in here. Before you ask, I don't know what the pods are! Now... Haykie?

*HAYKIE:* Yes?

*DAKURI:* Are you ready?

*HAYKIE:* I'm ready!

*DAKURI:* But, you're not blue?

*HAYKIE:* I only go blue when I'm angry or I need extreme magic!

*DAKURI:* I've seen him, believe me, the bluer the better!

(Haykie nodded and closed her eyes.)

*DAKURI:* Kasira?

*KASIRA:* Yeah?

(He reached inside his attire and pulled out a dagger.)

*DAKURI:* Take this!

(Slowly she plucked the dagger from his palm and nodded.)

*DAKURI:* Now, be prepared!

*KASIRA:* I am, Dakuri!

*DAKURI:* Okay, then we should go!

*COLE:* What about us?

*BOND:* You leave me out of this, I'm quite happy here!

*DAKURI:* You two... cover Kasira!

*COLE:* What with?

*DAKURI:* I mean help her get to Necronema!

*COLE:* Oh!

*BOND:* Pillock!

*COLE:* Like *you* knew!

*DAKURI:* Stop it you two, remember Cole, if this goes pear-shaped...

(Cole nodded.)

*COLE:* I'm prepared!

(Bond offered him a grin in consolation.)

*DAKURI:* Okay...

(Before he could continue, Necronema's voice echoed around the room again.)

*NECRONEMA:* I sense your presence weak ones, show yourself!

(Dakuri waved his hands in front of himself, gesturing for them to keep silent.)

*NECRONEMA:* I'm impressed. Defeating the mirror demon I sent to destroy you is no simple task. I, on the other hand, will devour your very souls!!!

(The allies looked to one another nervously.)

*NECRONEMA:* Very well, then I shall destroy which ever rock it is you hide behind!

(Without thinking, Bond leapt into Necronema's view, receiving much displeasure from the others.)

*COLE:* Bond!!!

*DAKURI:* Come back you fool!

(Ignoring their comments, Bond paced forwards and shrugged.)

*BOND:* So, Necronema? Were you in an accident, or were both your parents that ugly?

(Spamming his forehead, Dakuri also came from hiding and stood next to Bond. The others took this as a signal and followed him.)

*COLE:* Wow, he really is that ugly!

(Feeling incredibly daunted by Necronema's sheer bulk, they bunched together, gaining a modicum of solace from there being strength in numbers. Snarling back at them, Necronema bared his awesome teeth and bellowed down to them.)

*NECRONEMA:* Puny fools, how dare you insult me with your presence???

*BOND:* Well I tried insulting you with an insult, but you didn't even flinch!

*NECRONEMA:* You sicken me, pathetic human filth!

*DAKURI:* Necronema, you are evil, good always triumphs over evil, you should know that!

*NECRONEMA:* Human scum know nothing!

(Without removing his eyes from Necronema, Dakuri spoke through the corner of his mouth.)

*DAKURI:* When you're ready, Haykie!

*HAYKIE:* Okay, give me a second or two!

*NECRONEMA:* I shall waste no more time on you insignificant mortal nothings, may your souls perish at my whim!

(Suddenly the five, twelve inch high pods that were dotted around the room, started to glow white and a cast a barrier around Necronema. Sensing that this was their chance, Dakuri yelled to Haykie.)

*DAKURI:* Now!!!

(With that, Haykie leapt forward, glowing blue as she had done before. Holding her right arm steady, she fired a lightning bolt from her hand straight at the barrier.)

*COLE:* Go on!!!

(With a crack, the bolt of electricity flashed back towards them off of the barrier.)

*HAYKIE:* What?

*BOND:* Look out!!!

(They all dived for cover as the lightning bolt crashed into the ground.)

*KASIRA:* Is everyone okay?

*COLE:* Micalov's fainted!

*DAKURI:* The rest of you?

(Although relieved that none of them had been hurt, they were all deeply disturbed by Necronema's barrier. Before they could even begin to discuss it however, Necronema folded his giant arms and laughed an evil laugh.)

*NECRONEMA:* You can't hurt me, but I can hurt you!!!

(Immediately the pods that were generating the barrier, began to spin.)

*HAYKIE:* What the hell?

(Suddenly, random fireballs gushed across the ground from the pods at immense speed. With nowhere to hide, it seemed like their only option was to run. Desperate to avoid the stinging heat, they darted in and out of the flames, stuck for what to do next.)

*COLE:* What now, Dakuri?

*DAKURI:* Avoid the flames!!!

(Running around in circles, leaping left and right, Cole yelled back.)

*COLE:* Avoid the flames? Is that the best you can do???

*DAKURI:* Have you got a better idea?

(Narrowly avoiding a fireball, Bond dived to the floor and rolled over to Haykie.)

*BOND:* Go for the pods!!!

*HAYKIE:* I'll try!!!

(Taking her eyes off the flames, she aimed for a pod.)

*KASIRA:* Look out!!!

*HAYKIE:* Uh?

(As she turned to face Kasira, a jet of hot fire, splashed up her back, sending her flying to the floor.)

*BOND:* Haykie???

(Ignoring his own safety, Bond raced over to her and threw himself on top of her to douse the flames with his body.)

*HAYKIE:* Thanks, Bond!

*BOND:* That's okay, any excuse...

(He shook his head.)

*BOND:* I mean any *time*!

*HAYKIE:* I know what you meant!!!

*DAKURI:* This is no time for a conversation!!!

*BOND:* We know!



*HAYKIE:* We were going to go for the pods!!!

(Dakuri looked at her with hope in his eyes.)

*DAKURI:* It's worth a try!!!

*KASIRA:* Just don't get too close, if one of them hits you close up...

(Suddenly, Cole had an idea.)

*COLE:* Bond?

*BOND:* What?

*COLE:* Bend over!

*BOND:* What? No! You're not my type! Beside that, there's a time and a place for that sort of thing!

*COLE:* Yeah, like making crap jokes!!!

(With that he charged at Bond.)

*BOND:* What are you doing???

*COLE:* Trust me!!!

(Bond shrugged and watched him charge closer.)

*COLE:* Bend over!!!

(Checking for flames as he did so, Bond reluctantly turned and bent over while a laughing Necronema looked on.)

*COLE:* Here goes!!!

(Bond braced himself as Cole leapt onto his back and used him as a spring board. The others looked on curiously as he flew threw the air towards a pod.)

*KASIRA:* You be careful, Cole!!!

*DAKURI:* Look out!!!

(With that, he pushed her over as a ball of flames whooshed past her.)

*KASIRA:* Whoa! Thanks, Dakuri!

(She looked up just in time to see Cole flying towards a pod. She hunched her shoulders in anticipation of him crashing, then looked away.)

*COLE:* Break damn you!!!

(He then forced out his feet with a venomous grimace on his face. As he hit the pod with all his might, there was a deafening tingle of breaking glass as it shattered into tiny fragments. Landing with a thud, Cole punched the air.)

*COLE:* Got the bugger!!!

(Noticing his success, Kasira raced at Dakuri.)

*KASIRA:* Duck, Dakuri!!!

(Noticing her advance, he crouched accordingly.)

*DAKURI:* Go for it, Kasira!!!

(Unfortunately, they hadn't considered their glaring size difference. With a determined look on her face, she leapt at his back, catching her foot on his buttock. With a yelp, she flipped over and crashed head first over Dakuri's shoulder.)

*DAKURI:* What did you do that for?

(Rubbing her painful head, she sat up.)

*KASIRA:* You moved!!!

(Suddenly, a second loud smashing sound made her turn her head. This time, Bond was standing by a broken pod, dancing a victory jig.)

*BOND:* Who needs Dakuri with us two around? Eh, Cole?

*COLE:* Ha, ha, exactly!!!

(As the two happy men scoured everyone else's faces they suddenly stopped grinning.)

*BOND*: Um... sorry Dakuri!

*COLE*: Yes, sorry Dakuri!

(Disinterested by their apologies, Dakuri yelled out.)

*DAKURI*: Watch it!!!

*COLE*: We said sorry!

(Suddenly, Bond threw him out of the path of a raging fire ball.)

*BOND*: He meant, watch it!!!

(Just then there was the sound of a third pod smashing. Turning around rapidly, they saw their bright blue ally, Haykie, blowing her fingers.)

*HAYKIE*: I'm an amazing shot, don't you think?

(With less active pods to throw out the fireballs, it became easier and easier to knock out the others. With extreme ease, Haykie blew up the next pod, then turned to the final one.)

*HAYKIE*: Allow me!

(Without a word, she raised her hand towards the glowing white sphere, only for it start spinning wildly.)

*KASIRA*: What the hell? This isn't good!

(Sure enough, Kasira was right. The final pod proceeded to fire almost constant fireballs at three times the strength of before. Once again, Kasira and her allies could do no more than run for cover as Necronema laughed his wretched laugh.)

*NECRONEMA*: You will die, fools, my will is non-negotiable!!!

(Barely able to take their eyes off the non stop stream of flames that were beginning to choke the room, everybody ducked and dived in desperation, hoping that someone would think of a plan.)

*COLE*: This heat is getting unbearable!!!

*DAKURI*: Maybe if we could keep still long enough, we could get a shot at it!

*BOND*: How? The flames are everywhere... ouch!!!

(He slapped his backside.)

*BOND*: That burnt!!!

*KASIRA*: It's getting harder to breath!!!

*DAKURI*: Careful, Kasira!!!

(As a fireball raced at her, she leapt back swiftly and fell over the horizontal Micalov.)

*KASIRA*: Ouch!!!

(As she hit the ground, a sudden realisation crossed her face.)

*KASIRA*: Lay down, you lot!!!

*BOND*: Bit forward your woman, Cole!

*DAKURI*: Never mind joking!

(He threw Bond down.)

*DAKURI*: Do as she says!

*BOND*: Don't you man-handle me!

*DAKURI*: Shut up!

(Not wanting to aggravate Dakuri as Bond had, Cole and Haykie also dived beneath the sea of flames.)

*KASIRA*: See? The fire isn't down here!

(Haykie nodded.)

*HAYKIE*: Yeah, but I can see the arse end of the pod!

*COLE*: Kasira, you're a genius!

(She blushed.)

*BOND*: Hurry up and shoot it Haykie, before those two make me throw up!!!

*HAYKIE*: Consider it done!

(Adjusting her body to face the pod, she aimed her hand towards it. Lying there like a commando in the long grass, she fixed her sights on the target as a million flames whizzed overhead.)

*BOND*: Hurry up!

*HAYKIE*: Don't rush me!

*BOND*: A man could grow a beard while waiting for *you*!

(Ignoring the impatient man beside her, she released a blinding pulse of electricity from her fingers while the others squinted or shielded their eyes. With the inevitable crash of the pod disintegrating, Bond barely waited for the last few waves of fire to fade, before leaping to his feet and turning to Necronema.)

*BOND*: Ha, ha, so much for that, you big poof!

(Quickly joining him to face their nemesis, they watched with glee as Necronema's barrier disappeared to nothingness.)

*DAKURI*: I told you, good always triumphs over evil!

(Shaking with pure rage, Necronema stood tall.)

*NECRONEMA*: You still have to defeat *me*, you worthless imbeciles!

(Bond turned to Dakuri.)

*BOND*: He has a point!

(Dakuri nodded.)

*DAKURI*: Yes, but we have Haykie!

(Taking that as her cue, Haykie charged forwards, pummelling Necronema with bolts of lightning.)

*DAKURI*: Get ready, Kasira!!!

(Bracing herself to run at Necronema as soon as he bowed his head, Kasira watched with trepidation as lightning bolt after lightning bolt thudded into Necronema's scaly Torso.)

*KASIRA*: Bow, you little shit, bow!

(Unfortunately for her, Necronema stood tall and seemed to absorb every bolt. Worn out and breathing heavily, Haykie ceased her assault, and stood there looking bewildered.)

*HAYKIE*: Damn you, Necronema!!!

*NECRONEMA*: Now it's my turn!!!

(With that, the heartless beast, opened its mouth and thrust its neck forward, sending all Haykie's bolts of lightning straight back at them. As they scrambled in desperation, to escape the onslaught, Necronema twisted his neck to follow Kasira with the lightning bolts. While she screamed in terror, Cole raced to Haykie.)

*COLE*: Do something!

(Looking flustered and desperate, Haykie pointed her hand at Necronema again, this time pounding him with sharp splinters of ice.)

*HAYKIE*: This has to work!!!

(Much to their relief, Necronema ceased his attempts to destroy Kasira as he absorbed the ice.)

*DAKURI*: Are you okay, Kasira?

(Running back to them with terrified eyes, she waved dismissively to signify she was okay.)

*COLE:* This is ridiculous!

(Necronema scoffed and reacted to his words with a hateful snarl.)

*NECRONEMA:* That was nothing!!!

(Following a brief cackle, Necronema again, stretched out his neck, this time firing a combination of sharp icicles and lightning bolts towards them. In a mass panic, they all headed for the huge rock they'd previously hid behind, only for Necronema to blow that too, to smithereens.)

*DAKURI:* There is no escape, this thing is invincible!!!

(Suddenly, Haykie's screams made them swing around to face her.)

*DAKURI:* Haykie!!!

(This time, the beast had singled *her* out for treatment. As Necronema fired her own magic back at her with tremendous force, she dived from side to side narrowly avoiding his wrath. Desperate for a way to save her, Dakuri ran towards the beast.)

*DAKURI:* Eat this, you filthy bastard!!!

(With a look of hate burnt into his face, he threw his sword with all his remaining might at the magic-spitting killer before him. With barely a flinch, Necronema desisted with his assault on Haykie and snatched Dakuri's sword from the air.)

*NECRONEMA:* Is that all you have?

(He then snapped the sword in two as if it were a pencil.)

*DAKURI:* Damn you, Necronema!

(Turning to face him, the beast tipped back its head and laughed hysterically, mocking their every move. Looking on, with venomous anger chiselled into his expression, Cole shook an angry head.)

*COLE:* We tried Kasira, I know what I have to do!

(Realising what he was trying to say, Kasira stood in his way and tried to force him back, tears streaming down her face.)

*KASIRA:* No, please you can't, I love you!!!

*COLE:* I love you too Kasira, but this is how it has to be!!!

(Watching them, Bond shook with anger.)

*BOND:* Cole!

(He approached the determined looking Cole and placed his hand on his shoulder, shaking with sincerity.)

*COLE:* Don't try to stop me, Bond!

(Bond shook his head.)

*BOND:* I want you to understand something. I've spent my whole life preaching about good and evil, 20 years of telling people about the afterlife...

(He stepped back.)

*BOND:* If anyone's going to find out the truth about life after death, it's gonna be me!!!

(With that he about turned and ran at Necronema. Almost leaping out of his skin, Cole tried to give chase, but tripped over Kasira. As he lay on the ground, he looked up in angst at Bond heading for the mouth of the evil and yelled in desperation.)

*COLE:* No, you can't do this!!!

(Twisting slightly as he ran, Bond shouted back.)

*BOND:* Take care of Kasira, Cole...

(Facing the beast again, he continued.)

**BOND:** Always!!!

(In full knowledge of what was about to happen, the others all seemed to yell a simultaneous “no!!!”, as he stepped up to Necronema.)

**BOND:** Here I am, you fat fuck!!!

(With its eyes bulging with joy, the disgusting fiend swooped with its huge jaws, ripping Bond in two. As it instinctively bowed down and closed its eyes to devour his flesh, Kasira charged forwards with the dagger, spurred on by her empowerment and her determination to avenge her friend. With a killer hatred sparkling in her eyes, she plunged the dagger deep into the soft spot on Necronema’s forehead and stepped back trembling with rage.)

**KASIRA:** You sick, sick bastard!

(She watched on as the anger continued to swell inside her at the sight of Necronema staggering back, screeching with pain. Unable to move her feet, Dakuri had to drag her back as they watched the beast flop onto its hands and knees.)

**DAKURI:** Okay, it’s over now!

(Sitting on the floor, with his head in his hands, Cole shook his head and mumbled through tearful eyes.)

**COLE:** Why, Bond? Why? It had to be me!

(Suddenly, Necronema glowed a blinding shade of red and released a scream of agony, causing the roof to shake and some rocks to fall from the ceiling.)

**DAKURI:** Come, we must leave this place!

(In total agreement with his sentiments, They all staggered to their feet and headed tiredly for the door, only for a rock to thud down and block their path.)

**NECRONEMA:** Fools... if I die... you die!

(With one last feeble gasp of his disgusting laugh, Necronema shook violently, then with a deafening boom, exploded into shrapnel.)

**HAYKIE:** Duck!!!

(As they threw themselves to the floor, what seemed like a million tiny pieces of Necronema flew in every direction, causing the already unstable ceiling to crack some more. As the pieces of the evil Necronema, continued to lash the ground around them, the allies could only cover their heads and hope for the best, Kasira was by now, getting hysterical.)

**KASIRA:** Make it stop!!!

(Once the pieces of Necronema finally stopped flying over their heads, Dakuri breathed a sigh of relief and looked up. His face at first, bore an expression of terror, then he sighed and shook his head before speaking in a saddened voice.)

**DAKURI:** It looks as if our luck has finally run out!

(Slowly they all followed his eye line. Sure enough, the ceiling was cracking up and quaking, surely on the verge of falling.)

**COLE:** My god!

(Seemingly accepting their fate, they all stared upwards as if waiting for it to happen.)

**COLE:** I guess we’ll be seeing Bond sooner than we thought!

(Kasira cuddled into him.)

**KASIRA:** Hold me Cole, I know how I want to go!

(Dakuri for his part, knelt before his broken sword.)

*DAKURI:* I will face an honourable death!

(And before another word was said, a loud thud echoed around the room as the ceiling collapsed inwards in all its glory. With one deafening crash after another, the rocks from above pelted the ground around them. Awaiting the inevitable rock with their name on, they all looked down as they braced themselves. Moments later, however, the thudding suddenly subsided and sunlight filled the room. With bewildered expressions, they all looked up slowly feeling there must have been some mistake. As their eyes slowly rose up, they were shocked to see Haykie, glowing blue and holding her hands above her head, encasing them in a protective shield. Opening her bright yellow eyes, she lowered her hands and the shield faded away. Trying to smile, she coughed back a tear.)

*HAYKIE:* We couldn't let that thing win... we couldn't!

(Offering her half a smile in gratitude, Dakuri stood up.)

*DAKURI:* Our work here is done!

(Looking miserable, Cole and Kasira also struggled to their feet.)

*COLE:* Let's get out of here!

(And slowly, they headed for where the roof caving in had disintegrated the boulder that blocked the door. Without a word, they stepped gingerly forth across the rocks, deep in thought, when Cole thought he spotted something amongst the rubble.)

*COLE:* What the?

(He bent down and reached for a thin strip of white cloth. Picking it up, he sighed and shook his head.)

*COLE:* Bond's dog collar?

(Not knowing what to say, they all forced unconvincing smiles, then continued on to the door, Cole slipping the dog collar in his pocket as he went.)

*HAYKIE:* Wait a minute, where's Micalov?

(They all looked around.)

*KASIRA:* I dunno, he fainted at the sight of Necronema and we didn't see him again until I fell over him!

(They all looked to the spot where Micalov had been and saw it buried under three feet of rock.)

*KASIRA:* Oh my god, not him too!

(She covered her mouth.)

*COLE:* This gets worse!

(Shaking a sorrowful head, Dakuri turned for the exit again.)

*DAKURI:* There's nothing we can do for him now!

(With that they made their way towards the gap, never speaking and never smiling.)

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(Following the short trip back out through the passageway, they emerged onto the sunlit grassy verge outside, still in a deep depression.)

*DAKURI:* I lived my whole life for this day... and it means nothing! How can saving the world mean nothing?

(Cole shook his head.)

*COLE:* It's like Bond... died for nothing!

(He sighed.)

*COLE:* It should have been me!

(Just then, an excited looking Micalov, skipped over.)

*MICALOV:* You took your time!

*KASIRA:* You're alive!!!

(She ran up and hugged him.)

*MICALOV:* Yeah, I came round and I saw Haykie shooting at it. I thought, sod this, and I came out here!

*KASIRA:* We thought you were dead!

*MICALOV:* Nah, not me, we cowards live forever!

(He looked at Cole.)

*MICALOV:* Hey, your alive!!!

(He grinned insanely.)

*MICALOV:* So, the plan worked?

(Cole sighed and said nothing.)

*MICALOV:* Hey, where's Bond?

(Shrugging him away, Cole walked to the cliff edge where Bond had earlier admired the view.)

*MICALOV:* Did I say something?

(While Haykie, explained everything to Micalov, Dakuri stepped up next to Cole.)

*COLE:* I just can't take all this in, Dakuri!

(Uncharacteristically, the big man, thrust what was left of his sword on the ground and covered his welling eyes.)

*DAKURI:* That's because it doesn't make sense!

(Offering him a friendly smile, Kasira picked up his broken sword and handed it back to him.)

*KASIRA:* Here, you'll be needing this!

(Nodding in appreciation of her kind gesture, he slipped the sword back in its sheath and stared down the mountain towards the beautiful crystal lake.)

*DAKURI:* Come... let's go home!

(And in a shocked silence, he lead them back slowly, down the mountain trail to the waiting rowing boat. Their hearts intent on leaving this ill-fated plateau behind, forever.)

3 MONTHS LATER – Enaki forest...

(Looking stunning in a beautiful, white silk dress, Kasira sat staring into the mirror of a vanity table, gently making a few final adjustments to her hair. Feeling quite alone, she put down her hairbrush and muttered under her breath.)

*KASIRA:* I wish you could be here, Bond!

(Trying to put her feelings behind her, she raised her head again, and flicked the ends of her hair with her fingers. Checking her face again, she smiled and reached for her veil, when a sudden knocking on the door gave her quite a start. Before she could even move to see who was there, the door burst open and the callers rushed in excitedly.)

*ROSE:* Baby!!!

*RUFUS:* Hey, there me little girl!

(Her eyes glowing with delight, Kasira leapt to her feet and threw her arms around them, fighting back tears of joy, as not to ruin her make-up.)

*KASIRA*: Mum, Dad... I didn't think you'd come!

(Rufus smiled.)

*RUFUS*: And miss our little girl getting married? No way!

*ROSE*: I always knew you'd find a husband!

(Letting her smile say it all, Kasira looked joyously into their eyes.)

*ROSE*: Darn it girly, I aint never seen you look so happy!

*KASIRA*: He's everything I ever dreamt about, mum!

(Rufus grinned.)

*RUFUS*: Man, you're yellow, your parents are black and now you're marrying a whitey...

I shudder to think what colour you children will be!

(As Rufus chuckled to himself, Rose glared at him.)

*ROSE*: Why you got to say something stupid Rufus?

(Ceasing his grin, he looked annoyed and mumbled to himself.)

*RUFUS*: I'm just grateful to get a word in edgeways!

*ROSE*: Anyway girl, I hope your cooking's up to scratch, now you getting hitched!

(Kasira gave a shy grin.)

*KASIRA*: It's not my cooking he loves me for! If you know what I mean?

(Under the weight of Rufus and Rose's unimpressed glare, Kasira's initial blush transformed into a shameful grimace.)

*KASIRA*: How embarrassing!

(Suddenly Rose laughed.)

*ROSE*: Never mind girl, let those without sin cast the first stone, eh Rufus?

(Rufus stared back at her furiously.)

*RUFUS*: You made me wait 'til we were married!!!

(Rose's eyes bulged.)

*ROSE*: Oh me god, dat weren't you!!!

(While Rufus fumed and Rose hung her head, Kasira gave them both another hug.)

*KASIRA*: Won't be long now, very soon I'll be Mrs Fishman!

(Turning from a furious scowl to a sincere smile, Rufus held her hand.)

*RUFUS*: Sweetheart, if the two of you are even half as happy as your mother and I, you'll be just fine!

(Both Rose and Rufus gave her a loving glance.)

*KASIRA*: Um... I'll bare that in mind!

(In the chapel at the meantime, Cole was standing next to his best man, Dakuri, looking more than a little anxious. With Omki Saan standing before them waiting to conduct the ceremony, Cole leant over to his giant friend.)

*COLE*: How long now?

*DAKURI*: Only a matter of minutes, be patient!

(While he paced up and down on the spot, Omki Saan beckoned Dakuri closer. Nodding, he approached him.)

*DAKURI*: Yes, master?

*OMKI SAAN*: Before you guard these two on their honeymoon, I ask you again... please reconsider, Dakuri?



*DAKURI:* Omki Saan, father, I have made up my mind. I do not want to be one of your monks, I could never condone how you treat people!

*OMKI SAAN:* But Dakuri...

*DAKURI:* My decision is made, I am going to enjoy my life... as my friends showed me how! You've deprived me of having a life for far too long, now it is time I turned my back on both you and your ways!

*OMKI SAAN:* You are making a big mistake!

*DAKURI:* I think not, now if you'll excuse me, Cole needs me!

(Stepping back to his side, he gave Cole a funny look.)

*DAKURI:* Cole, you look constipated!

*COLE:* Quite the opposite Dakuri!

*DAKURI:* There is no need, look!

(He turned him around to look out into the congregation.)

*DAKURI:* See, all your friends are here!

*COLE:* No, all *your* friends are here, all mine are in Sudereva, and I can't go back there ever!

*DAKURI:* Why not?

*COLE:* I'm marrying my pupil, that's a capital offence in Sudereva!

*DAKURI:* Hmm, best you stay here then!

*COLE:* Yeah, I'll get used to the round eyes jokes, I suppose!

(Dakuri shook his head.)

*DAKURI:* As I was saying... you know *her*!

(He pointed to a pretty lady in a pink dress.)

*COLE:* Is that Haykie?

*DAKURI:* It is! She scrubs up quite well, don't you think?

(Noticing them watching her, Haykie offered a friendly wave.)

*COLE:* Is Micalov coming, then?

*DAKURI:* He was sent an invitation... and a map!

*COLE:* I can't see him!

*DAKURI:* Maybe he got lost!

(Sure enough, 50 miles away in another part of the forest, Micalov was stumbling through the treetops, holding a map upside down and looking completely bewildered. Feeling flustered and dejected, he slumped against a tree.)

*MICALOV:* I'll never make it there now!

(He was right. While he sat there, lost in the wilderness, Cole and Dakuri's conversation was interrupted by the sound of music echoing through the chapel rafters.)

*DAKURI:* This is it!!!

(He spun around to face the front.)

*DAKURI:* Cole!

(Staring at his beautiful bride being lead down the aisle by a beaming Rufus, he offered no reply.)

*DAKURI:* Face front!

(With that, he spun Cole around.)

*COLE:* What did you do that for?

*DAKURI:* You have to face this way... don't you?

*COLE:* I don't know!

(As Kasira reached the front of the chapel, Omki Saan stepped forward. Removing her veil, she stepped up to her smiling intended.)

*KASIRA:* Hi!

*COLE:* Wow, you look great, I wish I had to kiss the bride first!

*KASIRA:* Plenty of time for that Cole, plenty of time!

(With a sexy glint in her eye, she turned to face Omki Saan.)

*OMKI SAAN:* Ready?

*KASIRA:* I've never been so ready, Omki Saan, this is just the beginning!

(As she exchanged vows with her beloved, Kasira knew her life would never be the same again. For the first time in her life, she felt good about herself and optimistic about the future.

As soon as the ceremony was complete, the newlyweds raced from the chapel, and into a waiting horse drawn carriage. Before they left on their honeymoon, however, they made a point of stopping briefly to salute Bond's dog collar, that flew proudly from the spire of the building, where it would remain as a testimony to Bond's brave sacrifice. Or at least that was the plan. Unfortunately, a freak gust of wind took it in the night and it was never seen again. Therefore, there would be no living memory of the great things that Bond had given them, except for in the heart and minds of those he helped to fulfil...

**Kasira's Destiny.)**

**THE END.**

The Kasira Project Part One - Kasira's Destiny.

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**The Kasira Project Part II - Kasira's Run.**

Caressing the south coast of Vitazoe's northern continent, the vast city of Sudereva with its cobbled streets and sprawling rows of quaint housing, was a glorious place to live... for some. While the rich enjoyed all the trappings of the thriving economy inside its city walls, masses of poor folk struggled to survive in their broken down lodgings just outside them. The rich people inside the walls enjoyed a fruitful existence while the unfortunate majority scraped by, scavenging for what little they threw away. One city, two very different worlds.

*Thursday night, six months to the day since Kasira's defeat of Necronema...*

As the candlelight from the windows illuminated the pavements of Sudereva's cobbled thoroughfares, only the distant sounds of the ocean could be heard. With the city's children already curled up in their beds, their well to do parents either read or romanced by the light of their candles. As the towns inns and hostelrys ejected the last few drunken stragglers, and closed their doors for the evening, pretty soon the candles too started to snuff out one by one. It wasn't long before only the dim glow of the moon, cast any glimpse of light upon the blackened streets of the sleepy city. As silence reigned supreme in the darkness there was suddenly the sound of desperate feet pounding along a side road. Gasping desperately for air, with a face filled with terror, a panic stricken man appeared from the moons shadow. Looking around him desperately, he put his head down and fled in a panic towards the city gates. As he headed away intently, a hoard of young warriors wearing horned helmets, dashed around the same corner bearing torches, bows and swords. They too, looked around hurriedly.

MORTEN: There he is!!!

ANDERS: Hurry!!!

(Quite aware that he'd been spotted by his pursuers, the man frantically tried to race away. Digging his heels in firmer, he sprinted away around a corner with terror in his eyes as his pursuers chased harder.)

MORTEN: He went down there!!!

ANDERS: We've got him now, that's a dead end!!!

(Determined not to let him go, the six horned warriors also sped up as they approached the corner, drawing swords as they went. With his satisfied grin illuminated by the torchlight, the leader of the warriors, slowed to a walking pace, encouraging his men to do the same.)

ANDERS: Okay men, relax, he isn't going anywhere!

(With the blackened alleyway that the man had carelessly ran in to, lit up by the bright torches of his pursuers, the desperate man trudged slowly into their light from his temporary sanctuary of the darkness, resigned to being captured. Trembling with terror, he stepped up to the well armed assembly before him and mumbled with a voice full of fear.)

EDWIN: I... I can explain...

(Before he could continue, Anders butted in confidently.)

ANDERS: Edwin, Edwin... you don't have to explain yourself to me, it's the king who wants you, I merely came to collect you!

(Edwin looked baffled.)

EDWIN: I don't...

ANDERS: Of course you don't. See, we're bounty hunters, I don't care if you *are* a thief, I only care about the reward!

EDWIN: Bounty hunters?

ANDERS: That's right!

(He smiled.)

ANDERS: Take him away men!

(Edwin stepped back.)

EDWIN: No wait!

(Anders held out his arm to stop his men.)

ANDERS: You have a suggestion, Edwin?

(Sweating heavily, he pleaded desperately.)

EDWIN: H-how much is the king paying you? I'll double it... just name your price!

(Anders stroked his chin.)

ANDERS: Hmm... how much do you have?

(Desperately searching himself, he muttered erratically.)

EDWIN: I've got... it's here somewhere...

(As the bounty hunters watched on curiously, he pulled a pouch from his pocket.)

EDWIN: Here... please... take it, let me go!

(With that, he threw the pouch to Anders.)

ANDERS: How much is there?

EDWIN: A small fortune... now please...

ANDERS: What do you think, Morten?

(He handed the pouch to his right hand man.)

MORTEN: Feels, like a lot...

(With a greedy smile, he pulled the top of the pouch open and stared inside.)

MORTEN: Gold!

ANDERS: Really?

EDWIN: Like I said, a small fortune!

(Anders nodded.)

ANDERS: Very well, you can go... but never set foot in Sudereva again!

(Edwin drew a breath of relief and nodded.)

EDWIN: Thank you... thank you!

ANDERS: Now go, thief, get out of my sight!

(As the warriors parted, Edwin strode between them, gasping desperately for air.)

ANDERS: Go on, run, get out of here!

(Feeling desperately lucky to be spared, he obliged immediately. Mopping the sweat from his brow as he sprinted away, he patted his spare pouch and drew another sigh of relief. As they watched him dash down the middle of the road before them, Anders turned to one of his men.)

ANDERS: Pal, what does that look like to you?

(Raising his bow and arrow towards Edwin, Pal smiled heartily.)

PAL: It looks like he's resisting arrest!

(And with a nod from Anders, he fired his arrow through the back of the fleeing man's head. As his body crashed to the floor, Anders turned to his men.)

ANDERS: Tarquin, Stefan, Jan... tidy that up! We'll meet you back at the castle!

(With that, he lead Pal and Morten away.)

ANDERS: So who does that leave?

MORTEN: Just Cole Fishman!

ANDERS: Just?

MORTEN: Yup, then we'll have captured everyone on the wanted list!

PAL: Captured?

MORTEN: Or killed!

PAL: That's better!

ANDERS: So, what is he wanted for?

MORTEN: Kidnapping! He was a teacher at a finishing school for girls, he just went missing one day, and so did one of his pupils!

ANDERS: Pervert, eh? Or a co-incidence?

MORTEN: No, no... they were spotted together the day she went missing!

ANDERS: I see... do we have any clues to his whereabouts?

(Morten mused for a moment.)

MORTEN: Well... not really, but there is one thing that strikes me as odd!

ANDERS: And what's that?

MORTEN: The missing girl... her parents didn't report her missing, the school did, three days later!

ANDERS: That's strange!

(He nodded.)

ANDERS: I think we should pay her parents a visit, don't you?

PAL: If you think it'll help?

ANDERS: It's worth a try. The king promised us enough gold to keep our families in comfort for years to come, *if* we can clear the wanted list! Now all that stands between *us* and our fortune is this Cole Fishman. Whatever it takes men... we'll hunt *him* down too!

(Nodding in solidarity with their leader, Pal and Morten followed him back into the darkness from whence they came.)

---

(Many miles south of Sudereva, deep in the Enaki forest, Kasira, Cole, Dakuri and Haykie were enjoying a late night drinking session down by the moonlit river, which flowed majestically through Namki Village.

Enjoying the tranquillity of the serene forest, Cole lay on his side by the river bank with the giant of a man, Dakuri, watching Kasira and Haykie dip their toes in the water. Taking a swig from his earthenware flagon, Cole turned to face his numb looking friend.)

COLE: What's up Dakuri?

(Dakuri looked back at him.)

COLE: Cheer up, will you?

DAKURI: I'm fine!

COLE: If you say so!

(He turned to face Kasira.)

DAKURI: Um... Cole?

COLE: Hmm?

DAKURI: Nothing!

(Cole turned to face him again.)

COLE: What is it, Dakuri?

(Dakuri paused for a moment then spoke up shyly.)

DAKURI: How can you make a woman like you?

(Cole seemed stunned.)

COLE: Eh?

(With a quick glance at Haykie and Kasira, he looked him in the eye.)

COLE: You mean Haykie?

(Dakuri sat tall.)

DAKURI: No!!!

COLE: Don't be embarrassed!

DAKURI: Forget I said anything!

COLE: Come of it Dakuri!

DAKURI: Forget it!!!

COLE: Okay, have it your way!

(He relaxed again.)

DAKURI: I mean women, generally... I've never had the chance to be around them!

COLE: Just be yourself Dakuri, you can't *make* a woman like you!

DAKURI: But... how do I make... a gesture, maybe?

COLE: Dunno, flowers... dinner maybe, I'm no expert!

DAKURI: Yet you have married the most beautiful woman in the world!

(Cole swung himself around to eye up Kasira.)

COLE: Yeah... and she came to *me*, I guess I'm just lucky!

(He watched her prance around in the water, wearing a miniscule top and a mini-skirt and afforded himself a smile.)

COLE: She's damn sexy too!

(Dakuri moved up next to him.)

DAKURI: You should know, what you find sexy, causes great offence to the elders of Enaki. They think she cheapens our entire race with her short skirts and barely significant tops. As far as they're concerned she may as well be naked!

(Cole smiled.)

COLE: She looks great naked too!

DAKURI: I'm just warning you... personally, I like the way they dress... Haykie too!

COLE: What the elders have got to remember Dakuri, is, she wasn't raised an Enaki.

This is the way Sudereva's women dress and in her heart that's what she is!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: I agree... and I know Kasira wants to return there someday!

(Cole frowned.)

COLE: I know, but we can't... I feel bad about that!

DAKURI: Why?

COLE: Well... 'cause she can't go back because of me!

DAKURI: Why not?

COLE: I was a teacher... she was my pupil... our relationship would be considered illegal!

DAKURI: Surely, under the circumstances they'll forgive you?

COLE: I aint gonna risk it, the penalty for interfering with a pupil is beheading!

(Dakuri rubbed his neck.)

DAKURI: Nasty!

COLE: Exactly!

DAKURI: So you'll stay here in the forest forever?

COLE: I guess so...

(At this point, Kasira and Haykie returned to them from the river.)

COLE: The only trouble is, nobody wants a round eyed white man!

(Kasira knelt and gave him a hug.)

KASIRA: I do!

(Cole smiled and turned to face her.)

COLE: Thing is Kasira, I want a job. I'm going mad sitting around here!

HAYKIE: Try teaching again then!

COLE: Thanks for the suggestion Haykie, but I don't think so!

DAKURI: Why not?

(Cole shook his head.)

COLE: Don't you think I didn't try that? The children took one look at me and burst out crying, my round eyes frighten them apparently!

(He looked up at Dakuri wearing an annoyed scowl.)

COLE: Are you grinning at me?

DAKURI: No, I wouldn't dream of it, there is nothing amusing about a teacher who frightens children!

(Cole shook his head.)

DAKURI: Maybe they're worried you'll try to marry *them* too!

COLE: Hey!

(He looked away angrily to see Kasira and Haykie chuckling.)

COLE: Bastards...

(He leapt to his feet and squared up to Dakuri.)

COLE: I'd kill you all, if it wasn't for the fact I need Kasira's income, Haykie's a witch and you're bigger than me!

(He turned away smiling.)

KASIRA: That's a relief, I thought you were gonna hit him then!

COLE: Give me *some* credit girl!

KASIRA: Anyway, cheer up, you'll find work soon! And if not, I earn enough for both of us.

COLE: Even so, I don't want to be a kept man, it's humiliating.

HAYKIE: What do *you* do for a living then, Kasira?

(She beamed.)

KASIRA: I'm personal assistant to Horatio Subaru!

HAYKIE: Who?

DAKURI: He is the greatest actor in the whole of Enaki Forest!

KASIRA: That's right!

HAYKIE: So, what do you do for him?

KASIRA: Everything, I'm his assistant!

(Cole growled under his breath.)

COLE: Tosser!

DAKURI: I take it, Cole, you are not his biggest fan!

COLE: I hate the bloke!

DAKURI: Why?

KASIRA: Here we go!

COLE: Wouldn't any bloke hate someone who's after their wife?

KASIRA: He isn't after me!

COLE: Look, why can't you see him for what he is?

KASIRA: Why can't you???

DAKURI: Haykie, if they're going to argue, we should go home!

HAYKIE: And miss it? You're insane!

COLE: We're not gonna argue... it's just something we can't agree on!

KASIRA: Yeah... we'll work it out!

(They held each others hand and squeezed tight.)

HAYKIE: Oh well, it's getting late anyway, let's go home Dakuri!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Farewell, Kasira, Cole!

COLE: Don't leave it so long next time!

HAYKIE: We won't, see ya!

(As Dakuri and Haykie headed away over the embankment, Kasira cuddled up to Cole.)

KASIRA: Everything will be fine!

(Cole nodded.)

COLE: Yeah, I know, I'll find work eventually!

KASIRA: Of course, and one day the Enaki people will learn to love you as I do!

COLE: Except platonically!

KASIRA: Obviously! Don't forget, I grew up as a minority of *one*... the only Enaki, with black parents in a white town, and I'm okay!

COLE: Yeah... 'cause you moved *here*!

KASIRA: Yeah, I hadn't thought of it like that!

COLE: I suppose wherever we go we'll find ignorance and racism!

KASIRA: We will!

(She gave him a loving glance.)

KASIRA: But we're bigger than that!

(Nodding in agreement, he pulled her closer and placed his lips to hers. Both of them, determined not to let anything ruin their evening.)

*Friday Morning, City of Sudereva, central west residential area...*

(As the busy city centre streets bustled with activity, and the air all around was filled with the sound of horses and haggling marketers, way out in the suburbs, only the sound of bird song could be heard. The peaceful silence of the fenced off neighbourhood, rarely disturbed by the odd passer-by.



Outside one particular dwelling in the central west area of the city, however, the gang of bounty hunters had gathered. Breathing mist into the cold morning air, they formed a line before their leader and listened as he briefed them on the day ahead.)

ANDERS: Okay men, just one fugitive to go!

(He turned to face the house.)

ANDERS: He kidnapped these people's daughter... but I've got a feeling they know more than they're letting on!

(He turned to Morten encouraging him to speak.)

MORTEN: Their names are Rose and Rufus Ashford, the young girl's foster parents. Now, when we get in there, let Anders and I do the talking, okay?

(His comrades nodded.)

ANDERS: Okay, let's do it!

(With that, he spun around and marched purposefully to the doorway of the abode, followed keenly by his allies. Upon reaching the solid oak door, he hammered upon it three times.)

STEFAN: I hope they're in!

ANDERS: Silence, Stefan!

(Just then, the door creaked open and a 40 year old black woman poked her head around it.)

ROSE: What you want?

ANDERS: My comrades and I...

ROSE: You sellin' shit? Because, I don't want nothin'!

(With that, she attempted to slam the door, only for Anders to barge into it and force it open. With a scream, Rose crashed to the ground under the weight of the push. With a terrified look in her eyes, she scrambled to her feet.)

ROSE: Rufus!!! Have you been gambling again???

(Wearing a menacing expression, Anders stepped up to her, towering down like a mountain over her.)

ROSE: H-How much does he owe you?

(Anders scoffed.)

ANDERS: We haven't come for your masters money, we seek information!

(Rose's fear seemed to disappear and be replaced with anger.)

ROSE: My master? You think because I is black, I don't own this place???

ANDERS: You're Rose Ashford?

ROSE: At your service, you white...

(At this point, Rufus raced into the overcrowded hallway.)

RUFUS: What's all da commotion?

(Seeing the six warriors before him, he gaped and paced back.)

RUFUS: I already paid the casino everything!

(As Rose strode angrily to his side, Anders paced up to them.)

ROSE: Stop right there boy, we already pay you, now got out da house!

ANDERS: I told you, I didn't come for money!

RUFUS: Den what?

(Anders smiled then ripped his dagger from his sheath and grabbed Rufus in a headlock. As he tried to struggle, he held the knife to his throat and glared at Rose. While she shivered with fear, Rufus suddenly kept very still.)

ANDERS: Shall we talk?

ROSE: Yeah... okay... just don't hurt Rufus!

ANDERS: If you're good little darkies I won't have to, now come on let's take this into the living room, shall we?

(With her obvious alarm etched into her face, Rose lead them through to the living room, fearing for Rufus all the way. Having slowly lead Rufus into the room with the knife permanently at his throat, Anders began.)

ANDERS: There, see this is better, more civilized!

ROSE: Please, take whatever you want, just don't hurt him!

(Anders looked to his comrades.)

ANDERS: First it was debt collectors, now she thinks we're thieves!

(As the others laughed quietly, Rose clasped her hands together and begged.)

ROSE: Please, I do anything!

ANDERS: Good!

(Suddenly, he pulled the knife tighter to Rufus's throat and glared right though her, before roaring angrily.)

ANDERS: Then tell us where to find Cole Fishman!!!

ROSE: Cole Fishman?

(Desperate for an answer, she tried to think quickly, while Rufus stared down nervously at the knife.)

ROSE: Cole Fishman? That bastard kidnapped our little girl!!!

(Anders shook his head.)

ANDERS: Do we look like idiots?

(Then Morten stepped forward.)

MORTEN: Why didn't you report her missing then?

ROSE: Um... we did... but they ignored us 'cause... 'cause we're black!!!

MORTEN: No, there'd still have been a record. I agree, they wouldn't have bothered to look, but there's no record of you reporting it at all!

ROSE: Um... see, there was no point, they'd only ignore it!!!

ANDERS: Don't you care if your husband lives?

ROSE: I tell the truth, I don't know anything... at all... not even slightly...

RUFUS: For god sake woman, he got a knife at me throat, lie convincingly!

(Losing his patience quickly, Anders bellowed violently.)

ANDERS: I'll kill you both and burn down your house!!!

(Rose felt her hair in a panic.)

ROSE: Look, I don't know...

(Suddenly she looked confused.)

ROSE: What's the point in killing us *then* burning the house down?

RUFUS: What the hell are you talking about woman???

(Clenching his free fist, Anders spoke through gritted teeth.)

ANDERS: I'll ask you one more time...

ROSE: I don't know where they is!!!

ANDERS: Right!!!

(Suddenly he paused.)

ANDERS: They?

ROSE: Um, yeah... him and my little girl... who he kidnapped!

(Anders nodded.)

ANDERS: You're right Morten, they do know more than they're letting on!

RUFUS: Oh shit!

ANDERS: Now, are you going to tell me?

(Clearly stressed and anxious, Rose hung a tearful head and spoke in a whimper.)

ROSE: Sorry Rufus, I can't betray Kasira, I just can't!

(Anders looked baffled.)

ANDERS: What?

ROSE: I'd rather die and see Rufus die, than let you near my little Kasira!

(Rufus was by now sweating so much that he dripped on the carpet.)

RUFUS: What are you doing Rose? Lie to him, say anything!

(Rose shook her head.)

ROSE: Why are you doing this?

ANDERS: I don't have to tell you anything!!!

ROSE: Please?

ANDERS: Okay, Cole Fishman is a wanted felon, the price on his head is reason enough!

ROSE: Please, *we* can give you money!

ANDERS: Listen bitch, I've got a knife to your husbands throat!

(Again, Rose shook her head.)

ROSE: I know, but you'll never hold one to Kasira's!

ANDERS: We're not after Kasira!

ROSE: Like I'm going to trust you... now do what you have to do!

(As she hung her head and started to sob wildly, Rufus braced himself.)

RUFUS: If I meet you in heaven Rose... I'm gonna boot your arse for this!!!

(Anders, however, just shook his head.)

ANDERS: What a wally, what was I thinking?

(With that, he threw Rufus to the floor and in one swift movement grabbed a hold of Rose in a similar fashion. Spotting this, Rufus's eyes almost popped out of his head.)

RUFUS: No, no... this aint right!

(Rose shivered and tried to shake her head.)

ROSE: Tell them nothin', Rufus, I'd rather die!

ANDERS: Well, Rufus? Where is he?

ROSE: He'll tell you nothing!

(Scared stiff at the thought of losing Rose, Rufus couldn't help but blurt out panicked words.)

RUFUS: There was no kidnapping... Cole... he marry Kasira! Please? Let her go...

(Anders laughed.)

ANDERS: He married his pupil? That's a crime in itself!

(His watching Comrades laughed along, as Rufus trembled with horror.)

RUFUS: But can't you see...

(Before he could utter another word, Anders grabbed a terrified Rose tighter.)

ANDERS: Say goodbye to her, Rufus, you're too late!

(Fearing he'd imminently slash her throat, Rufus tensed up and blurted out everything he knew.)

RUFUS: I know where they is, they live together in the Enaki Forest!!! The south continent!!!

(He gasped for breath.)

RUFUS: In Namki village!!! I swear, that's the truth... please?

(With a grin, Anders dropped Rose to the floor.)

ANDERS: There it is, the truth at last. Simple, always threaten the wife, women have so much more resolve than us men... it's embarrassing really!

(With that, he slipped his dagger back in its sheath and grinned as Rufus ran over to comfort Rose.)

ROSE: Fool, you told them everything!!!

RUFUS: I'm sorry, Rose!

ROSE: How could you do that to Kasira?

(Anders looked down and mocked.)

ANDERS: Go easy on him Rose... he's weak!

MORTEN: Do you think he was telling the truth?

ANDERS: Weak fool was too scared to lie!

(Still clutching his terrified wife, Rufus looked up.)

RUFUS: What happens now?

ANDERS: Now we're going to go to this forest and get him... we'll probably kill him!

(He smiled.)

ANDERS: We'll probably kill Kasira too!

RUFUS: No, please... I beg you!!!

ANDERS: Worthless Negro, let's go men!

(He about turned and headed for the door, once again his faithful men followed suit. As he reached the doorway, he turned.)

ANDERS: Oh, if you were lying, when we eventually find them, we'll torture them in your honour!

(Rufus climbed nervously to his feet.)

RUFUS: Please, it was the truth... they're in the enchanted forest, only it isn't really enchanted!

ANDERS: You said, the Enaki Forest!

RUFUS: That's its real name, we call it the enchanted forest... there's a whole country in them woods!

(Rose grabbed his arm.)

ROSE: Why are you telling them everything???

RUFUS: Sorry Rose, I can't let them torture her!

ANDERS: Wise move, old man, wise move!

(And again, he headed for the door.)

PAL: Do I get to kill them now?

(Anders shook his head.)

ANDERS: No, leaving them to fear for Kasira's life will be much worse!

(Pal gave an evil grin, then followed Anders out of the house.)

ROSE: You betrayed her... our little girl!

(Rufus looked down at her and held out his arms.)

RUFUS: Rose... you forget... Kasira is the chosen one... the Enaki will guard her with their lives... she's in no danger at all... them six fools will be coming home in boxes!

(Shaking her head, unable to think properly, Rose also climbed to her feet.)

ROSE: I hope you're right... you are right... aren't you?

(He held her tight and squeezed her to prove she was still alive, to which she responded in kind. Shaking uncontrollably from the incident, they didn't let go of each other for a full fifteen minutes, by which time, the bounty hunters had returned to their quarters within the royal castle.)

*City of Sudereva, King Melmero VII's castle, guest quarters, Friday midday...*

(As noon rapidly approached, the gang of bounty hunters began packing for their trip to the south continent. Feeling confident to the point of arrogance, they chatted as they filled their packs with supplies. Despite leaving the luxury of the castle for a journey into the woodland, the thought of the king's handsome reward spurred them all on greatly.)

PAL: You know, I heard the wood there was haunted!

STEFAN: That's an old wives tale!

TARQUIN: Some people really believe it!

MORTEN: Yeah well, some people are called Tarquin!

(They all laughed at him.)

TARQUIN: I hate my parents for that!

JAN: Seriously though, what if it *is* haunted?

ANDERS: That's hardly likely, Jan. No doubt the indigenous people spread that rumour themselves to keep foreigners out of their woodland!

JAN: So all the talk about ghosts is bullshit, you reckon?

ANDERS: You heard Rufus? The forest isn't really enchanted he said.

PAL: Yeah, but what if he lied?

ANDERS: Nah, I can tell when people are lying! Besides I've got something to vanquish any ghost!

(They all stopped what they were doing and stared at him.)

MORTEN: What do you mean?

ANDERS: The king said we could use him if we needed to...

PAL: You mean?

(Anders nodded to the astonished faces around him.)

ANDERS: That's right, Alero the summoner!

(An uneasy silence followed.)

MORTEN: The summoner?

STEFAN: Is that really necessary, boss?

ANDERS: Are you questioning me, Stefan?

STEFAN: No, I never would...

ANDERS: Guys, you all seemed stunned!

MORTEN: It just seems a little extreme, that's all!

ANDERS: Morten, Morten, you seem to forget, we're going into uncharted territory here, these Enaki people may be tougher than you think!

MORTEN: Yeah, but a summoner?

ANDERS: Look, we're going into potentially hostile territory, if they decide to resist we need to be prepared!

MORTEN: I suppose you're right!

JAN: But boss, can't summoned demons kill thousands at a time?

ANDERS: Give the summoner some credit Jan, the beast will obey his word!

JAN: Well, okay... only we don't want to start a massacre!

PAL: You speak for yourself, I can't wait!

ANDERS: Patience my psychotic friend, as soon as Alero arrives, we can get going!

(Suddenly there was a loud thud on the door.)

ANDERS: Speak of the devil!

(Walking tall, he bounded to the door and yanked it open.)

ANDERS: Ah, Alero!

(On the other side of the door stood a stumpy midget wearing a green and orange hoop patterned sweater and a matching bobble hat. With a toothless grin, he ambled into the room and looked around, before speaking in a weird gravelly voice.)

ALERO: Afternoon gents, I'm Alero!

(He received no reply as they all burst into hysterical laughter. With a dagger expression on his wrinkled, pointy face, Alero turned and stormed towards the door.)

ALERO: I'll see *myself* out!

(Before he could move, however, Anders grabbed his arm. Wiping the tears from his eyes, he knelt before the diminutive summoner.)

ANDERS: We apologise Alero... we just didn't expect you to speak...

(Unsuccessfully forcing back a snigger, he continued.)

ANDERS: Sorry, please... you are the greatest summoner who ever lived, we've been looking forward to meeting you!

(Alero shrugged and sat upon a bed.)

ALERO: You do realise how dangerous it can be to mess with summoned beasts, don't you?

ANDERS: Well... sure we do, but you're a master aren't you?

ALERO: Like you said, I'm the best!

ANDERS: So, there won't be a problem!

ALERO: I'm just saying, should I need to summon a beast, stay out of the way!

ANDERS: Fine, no problem!

PAL: So, um... what can you summon then?

(Alero looked proud.)

ALERO: I can summon the beastly three!

(Trying to hide his obvious amusement at Alero's voice, Pal covered his mouth with his hand.)

PAL: What three's that then?

ALERO: 'Solaris', 'Aquaria' and 'Arctica'. If you're trying to capture someone, I recommend the latter, he's very good at freezing things!

PAL: If I had my way, you'd summon them all!

ALERO: There'd be a blood bath!

PAL: Exactly!

(Anders smiled.)

ANDERS: You'll get used to him, Alero, he's a bit crazy!

(He then stood tall and paced to the centre of the room.)

ANDERS: Okay men, this is it... I hope you've all finished packing, it's time to go!

(With a loud cheer, the band of bounty hunters slung their packs over their shoulders and headed for the door. Alero followed the happy pack of well armed men out of the room and down the corridor of the castle, trying but failing to join in their excited banter as he

went. A minute or so later, they all headed out of the castle. Their search for Cole Fishman had begun.)

*Namki village amphitheatre, Enaki forest, late Saturday afternoon...*

(This particular Saturday afternoon was a bit of a red letter day for Kasira. Just south of Namki Village, built into an ancient crater, lay the Namki village amphitheatre. She sat in the front row, next to her unimpressed husband Cole, watching the culmination of her work as Horatio Subaru's personal assistant. While he pranced around the stage, projecting his voice and selling his character to the crowd, Kasira nodded and clapped along, enjoying the play immensely. Cole on the other hand, stared at Horatio with a bitter sneer on his face.)

COLE: Does this crap go on for much longer?

(Kasira was so into the play, she didn't even hear him.)

COLE: Load of rubbish!

(He looked down at Kasira's black and gold dress and forced a grin.)

COLE: Hey, Kasira, do you want to get out of here?

KASIRA: What? No... shush!!!

COLE: Come on...

(He placed his hand on her knee.)

COLE: That's a damn fine dress you're wearing!

(Kasira swept his hand from her knee and glared at him.)

KASIRA: What's the matter with you???

(Cole shrugged.)

COLE: Pardon me for breathing!

(Kasira just shook her head and returned to watching the play.)

COLE: God, I'm bored!

(He rested his chin on his hand and groaned, before also looking up onto the stage and sneering at Horatio as he finished his scene.)

HORATIO: Tis true, that I shall never again run the gauntlet of love, when that gauntlet will never be filled by you're sweet hand!

(With that, he collapsed and died, receiving a deafening ovation from the packed amphitheatre. One by one, they rose to their feet and applauded as Horatio leapt to his feet to lap up all their adulation. The cheering continued on for a solid five minutes, with the entire audience roaring their approval of his fantastic performance... except one.)

COLE: Rubbish!!! Get off!!!

KASIRA: Stop it, don't you dare embarrass me!!!

COLE: He's a tosser!

KASIRA: If you don't like it, go home!

COLE: And leave you with *him*?

KASIRA: Well, shut up then!

(As the rest of the audience headed for the exits at the back of the theatre, Kasira lead her reluctant husband along the front of the stage, before escorting him around it and into the VIP area backstage. As soon as they entered the euphoric area, Cole could only watch on angrily as Horatio immediately paced over to Kasira and gave her a hug.)

HORATIO: Kasira, darling... how was I?

KASIRA: You were...

HORATIO: I was simply divine, marvellous... I know!

(Kasira nodded.)

HORATIO: Kasira, I want you to know, I could of done it without you, but I didn't have to!

KASIRA: Um... thank you?

(The conceited thespian, then looked across to Cole.)

HORATIO: So, who's the round eyed Neanderthal?

KASIRA: Oh, this is my husband, Cole!

(Horatio reached forward to shake his hand, Cole reluctantly complied.)

HORATIO: Nice to meet you, Charles!

COLE: It's Cole!

HORATIO: Whatever!

(He turned back to Kasira.)

HORATIO: This calls for champagne!

KASIRA: Ooh, lovely!

HORATIO: Go fetch it then, off you go!

KASIRA: Oh, okay!

(Immediately she headed away, leaving Cole and Horatio staring at each other.)

HORATIO: Did you enjoy the play, or was it a little difficult for you to follow?

COLE: Difficult to stomach, maybe!

HORATIO: Touché old boy... so, um, Kasira looks lovely!

COLE: Yes she does!

HORATIO: I knew that dress would suit her, that's why I bought it for her!

(Cole's eyes bulged.)

COLE: You bought it???

HORATIO: Of course, I know what woman like!

COLE: Poofa, eh?

HORATIO: On the contrary Cole, you'd better be careful, there's no woman alive that I can't woo!

COLE: You git!!!

(With that, he clenched his fist and grabbed Horatio by the throat.)

COLE: Listen, you twisted...

(Unfortunately for him, Kasira picked this very moment to come back.)

KASIRA: Cole!!!

(Spotting her, he let go of Horatio and gave her a cheesy grin.)

COLE: Oh, hi love!

HORATIO: Hooligan!!! Security!!!

KASIRA: I knew you'd ruin it for me!!!

COLE: He admitted it!!! He's after you!!!

KASIRA: Stop it!!! You're driving me mad with your jealousy!!!

COLE: He admitted it!!!

KASIRA: Enough!!!

(She waved her angry arms erratically.)

KASIRA: Just get out, go home!!!

(Cole sneered and shook his head.)



COLE: Fine!

(He turned and headed for the exit.)

COLE: I'm really going!

KASIRA: Good!

COLE: Fine!

(Swearing like a trooper under his breath, he stormed out of the amphitheatre. Watching him go, Kasira shook her head and sighed with sorrow. Spotting this, Horatio stepped up to her side.)

HORATIO: Don't worry Kasira, I'll comfort you!

(He gave her a consoling hug. As she sniffed back a tear in his arms, the arrogant actor offered his security men a smarmy grin and winked.)

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(Meanwhile, the bounty hunters had arrived just outside Enaki forest. Looking nervous to say the least, they stood in a line sizing up the vast expanse of woodland before them.)

ANDERS: Right, after you Morten!

MORTEN: Okay, go on then Pal, I'll follow you!

PAL: I aint going first!

ANDERS: Don't be scared!

JAN: You go then!

ANDERS: I'm the leader, I'll say who goes first! Alero, after you!

ALERO: Why me?

ANDERS: Because... you're the smallest!

ALERO: What's that got to do with anything?

ANDERS: Well...

ALERO: Why can't Stefan go?

STEFAN: Leave me out of this!

TARQUIN: Well, I'm not going first, I saw an Enaki person once, their eyes scare me!

ANDERS: What?

TARQUIN: They look evil!

ANDERS: Don't be weak!

JAN: What if they actually *are* evil?

(Anders sighed heavily then attempted to take control of matters.)

ANDERS: Look, let's all go in together shall we?

MORTEN: Good idea!

ANDERS: Okay, on three!

PAL: Right!

ANDERS: One, two, three!!!

(With that, they all proceeded to march side by side into the darkened forest.)

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(Deep inside the forest at this time, Kasira was still at the after show party. Looking incredibly glum she sat beside Horatio, pouring out her troubles on his shoulders.)

KASIRA: It's been tough... what with me working and him... not!

HORATIO: Well, Kasira, some men just don't understand women!

KASIRA: Really?

HORATIO: I understand of course!

KASIRA: Yeah, you've been a good friend!

HORATIO: The one thing I don't understand is how any guy could treat a great lady like you so badly!

KASIRA: He doesn't... he just doesn't trust... you!

(Horatio nodded.)

HORATIO: Ah, jealousy eh? You know, a man who worries his wife might be lead astray, is usually likely to be lead astray himself!

KASIRA: Really?

(She looked worried.)

HORATIO: He's mad, if you were *my* wife, I'd never stray!

(He sat forward excitedly.)

HORATIO: I tell you what would cheer you up!

(Kasira looked up sadly.)

KASIRA: What's that?

HORATIO: Come on tour with me, I could use an assistant while I'm away!

(Stunned by his suggestion she said nothing.)

HORATIO: What do you say?

KASIRA: But... Cole?

(Looking suddenly sincere, he held her hand in front of him and looked into her eyes.)

HORATIO: Kasira, my love, perhaps this is the chance you've been waiting for...

KASIRA: Eh?

HORATIO: You and I, Kasira, we'll be great together, forget this Claude chap...

KASIRA: His name's Cole!

HORATIO: Whatever, that's ancient history now my love!

(As realisation crossed her face, Kasira stood up angrily.)

KASIRA: Oh my god, he was right, you *are* after me!!!

(Horatio stood tall.)

HORATIO: And I shall have you, my love!

KASIRA: I thought you liked me!!!

HORATIO: What can I say, your body's smoking!

KASIRA: Bastard!

(With that, she thrust the table in front of her forwards and stormed towards the door.)

KASIRA: You wait 'til my husband hears about this!

(Wearing a rye smile, Horatio nodded to his three bodyguards then watched with glee as they grabbed Kasira in a headlock and thrust her to the floor.)

KASIRA: Ow!!!

(As she struggled to free herself from their grasp, Horatio slowly ambled over to her.)

HORATIO: Silly girl!

KASIRA: Stop it!!! What are you doing???

HORATIO: Sorry it had to be this way, Kasira, but Horatio Subaru always gets what he wants!

KASIRA: Let me go!!!

HORATIO: Okay men, put her in our carriage, the next show's in Chenoa village, let's get going!

(As Kasira desperately tried to twist and contort in an attempt to free herself from the three big men, Horatio walked behind, lighting a cigar.)

HORATIO: This is the life!

(Blowing out smoke rings as he burst from the stage entrance towards his carriage, he stopped and grabbed a lung full of the fresh forest air.)

HORATIO: Marvellous... right, tie her up before you stuff her in the carriage, men!

(Before his men could even begin their task, however, a voice from beside the carriage made them spin around in dismay.)

COLE: What the fuck are you doing? Excuse my language, Kasira!

(Having been waiting outside the stage entrance for Kasira, Cole couldn't believe what he was seeing.)

COLE: Unhand my wife, this instant!

(As Cole snarled at the men with a furious expression on his face, Kasira stared back at him in desperation from the headlock she was in.)

KASIRA: Help me, Cole!!!

(Giving Cole a contemptuous look, Horatio rolled his eyes.)

HORATIO: Carry on men, I'll deal with *this* idiot!

(As his bodyguards shrugged to one another then attempted to bind Kasira's wrists with rope, Horatio stepped back into a martial arts stance.)

HORATIO: I'm going to enjoy this... men, make sure Kasira can see how weak her man is!

(Cole shook his head.)

COLE: You're one twisted cock sucker Horatio! Sorry, Kasira!

KASIRA: Stop apologising and hit the cunt!

(Cole nodded and also adopted a martial arts stance.)

BODYGUARD: Need our help boss?

HORATIO: No, no, I'm a master of unarmed combat!

(He performed a high kick in the air and then grinned at Cole.)

HORATIO: You really don't want to mess with me!

COLE: Yes I do!

(With that, Cole immediately thrust a high kick in Horatio's direction. Much to their amazement, the over-confident thespian threw himself to the floor and covered his head.)

HORATIO: No, don't hurt me! I only know the starting pose and the kick, I'm an actor, not a fighter!!!

(The bodyguards were so flummoxed by what they saw, they all stopped what they were doing and gaped, accidentally releasing Kasira.)

KASIRA: A-ha!!!

(Immediately, she scrambled to Cole's side.)

KASIRA: Thank god you came!

(She hugged him hard. Looking furious, Cole gently pushed her away and snarled at Horatio and his men.)

COLE: Just a minute Kasira, I need to teach these thugs a lesson!

(He took one step in their direction, however, and Horatio and his bodyguards all scrambled in different directions, screaming like little girls. Looking bewildered, Cole scratched his head as he watched them go.)

COLE: Bizarre!

(Kasira rolled her eyes.)

KASIRA: Forget them Cole, I need a hug!

(Cole smiled and held out his arms to willingly obliged.)

KASIRA: Sorry I didn't believe you about him!

COLE: And I'm sorry I'm such a twat sometimes. Sorry... I can't stop swearing!

KASIRA: It's okay, it doesn't bother me!

COLE: Fancy a walk?

KASIRA: And a talk?

COLE: I think we need one!

(Kasira nodded.)

KASIRA: Damn, I left my jacket in there!

COLE: I'll get it!

(As he ran to fetch her jacket, she watched him go and smiled.)

KASIRA: I'm a lucky woman!

*Namki Village, North Bank of Namki river, Saturday, early evening...*

(Having made their peace with each other, Cole and Kasira strolled hand in hand alongside the beautiful river that weaved its way through Namki village. Ignoring everyone around them, they headed away from the village, following the rivers path southwards. As they took pigeon steps alongside the river bank, they chatted intimately about what the future held for two young lovers in a strange land.)

COLE: No matter how tough things get, it's a great feeling just knowing that I have you!

KASIRA: That's how I feel; it *is* a great feeling isn't it?

(He nodded.)

COLE: I know feelings won't put food on the table, but being with you inspires me to keep trying!

(She smiled.)

KASIRA: So we'll never give up?

COLE: We've no reason to!

(Swinging his hand as she skipped in front, Kasira tipped her head towards him and spoke in a loving voice.)

KASIRA: I used to dream about times like this!

COLE: Yeah?

KASIRA: Yeah... at the back of the class... I never thought they'd come true!

COLE: So that's why your grades started to slip?

KASIRA: Hey, I'm trying to be romantic here!

COLE: Sorry!

(With a giggle, she took his arm.)

KASIRA: I used to have this horrible nightmare that Suzina would eventually seduce you!

(Cole shivered.)

COLE: Did you have to mention her?

KASIRA: Sorry!

(She bit her lip shyly.)

KASIRA: So... um... weren't you ever tempted?

(Pausing for a moment, Cole looked a little uneasy.)

COLE: Honestly?

(He started to scratch his arm nervously.)

COLE: I was worried she'd seduce me too, she was very persistent!

KASIRA: Oh!

(She looked down at the dirt feeling a little confused. Noticing this, Cole spoke up.)

COLE: If you'd been as persistent as her, I'd have definitely given in!

KASIRA: Really?

COLE: Too right, I'm only human after all and you were by a clear mile, the most beautiful girl in the class!

(She blushed.)

KASIRA: Stop it, you're embarrassing me!

COLE: Okay!

(He thought.)

COLE: Nice weather we've been having!

KASIRA: No don't stop, I was trying to be modest!

COLE: Eh? Why?

KASIRA: Don't you know anything about women? We love all the compliments!

COLE: That wasn't a compliment, it was true, you're well tasty!

KASIRA: Tasty?

COLE: You know what I mean!

(She grinned.)

KASIRA: It's weird, no matter how course the compliment, we still love it!

COLE: Really? I'll have to tell Dakuri that!

KASIRA: Dakuri?

COLE: Yeah, you remember him, big chap with a sword!

KASIRA: Yeah, yeah, don't be funny, what about him?

COLE: Nothing, it's just something he asked me about!

KASIRA: What was?

COLE: Women!

KASIRA: Really?

(Her mind started working overtime.)

KASIRA: Hey, do you think he likes Haykie?

(Cole groaned.)

COLE: I knew I shouldn't have said anything!

KASIRA: Eh?

COLE: One thing I do know about women, Kasira, is that they read something into anything!

KASIRA: No we don't!

COLE: Oh, I think you do!

(She shook her head.)

KASIRA: Haykie *has* been lodging with him for three months, it must be her!

COLE: Yes dear!

KASIRA: I wonder if she likes him back?

COLE: Anyway Kasira, what was the point of this walk again?

(She smiled.)

KASIRA: Just a romantic stroll!

COLE: Exactly!

KASIRA: But, really, wouldn't it be great if Dakuri and Haykie...

(Cole shook his head then pulled her towards him.)

COLE: This ought to shut you up!

(With that, he grabbed her in a romantic clinch and caressed her lips with his. As her eyes sparkled with delight, all thoughts of Dakuri, Haykie and anything else, exited her head immediately to be replaced with one thought. And one thought only. With a sexy glint in her eye, she grabbed Cole's hand and started to drag him back towards the village.)

KASIRA: Come on, I'm feeling randy!

(With a bright smile enlightening his face, Cole scooped her up and charged along the river bank.)

COLE: I don't need asking twice!

(As he dashed excitedly towards the village with Kasira in his arms, she lifted her head and whispered in his ear.)

COLE: You bet I would!!!

(With that, he accelerated through the woodland, jumping bushes and bashing through the low branches. Determined to get them home as soon as possible, he ran from the bushes and onto the top of Namki village's main thoroughfare. As soon as the main village came in sight, however, he stopped what he was doing and immediately set Kasira down. Mortified by what they were seeing before them, the two of them stood gaping in dismay.)

KASIRA: What the hell?

(All along the main street there was chaos as the gang of bounty hunters from Sudereva, barged and pushed their way through the village. A few homesteads blazed in the distance as they rushed along yelling while they kicked, punched and pushed people into the river.)

COLE: I aint standing for this!!!

KASIRA: Me either!

(As Cole rolled up his sleeves, Kasira stood firmly by his side.)

KASIRA: Ready when you are!

COLE: Let's kick their arses!

(They barely took a single step forward, however, when the village elder, Omki Saan raced up to them looking flustered.)

OMKI SAAN: You two, thank god I found you first!

KASIRA: What's up, Omki Saan?

(Gasping for breath, the old man replied swiftly.)

OMKI SAAN: Run, get out of the village, they have come for *you*!

KASIRA: Us?

(She sneered.)

KASIRA: We can take 'em!

OMKI SAAN: They outnumber you, they have a vast arsenal, you must run, go!

KASIRA: But...

(Suddenly, a voice yelled out from behind them.)

ANDERS: There he is!!!

(They looked and saw the heavily armed warriors charging towards them.)

OMKI SAAN: Go!!! Run!!! I'll send Dakuri to find you!!!

(Terrified by the sight of the angry warriors bearing down on them, Cole grabbed Kasira's hand and turned to flee. As they raced away, Omki Saan yelled out.)

OMKI SAAN: Take the Neitama trail!!!

(Not stopping to acknowledge his words, Cole and Kasira didn't see the gang of bounty hunters barge past Omki Saan and violently thud him to the ground. As Omki Saan struggled back to his feet then raced back into the village, Cole and Kasira raced through the trees in a panic.)

KASIRA: What the hell's going on???

COLE: I dunno, just keep running!!!

KASIRA: But who are they?

COLE: I don't know!

(As they ducked and dived through the low grass between some trees, their pursuers began to gain.)

ANDERS: This is going to be easier than I thought!

PAL: Boss, I can take them out from here with my bow!

ANDERS: I want to take them alive, the reward's higher!

PAL: Killjoy!

(Noticing they were losing ground, Cole yelled out to Kasira.)

COLE: Sprint damn it, they're gaining on us!!!

KASIRA: I'm going as fast as I can!

COLE: Shit!

(Looking around her desperately, Kasira started to veer to the right.)

KASIRA: Head for the thick trees, it'll be easier to lose 'em!!!

(Cole nodded and raced side by side with her into the dense trees to the side of them, while the bounty hunters continued to catch up.)

ANDERS: Where are they going?

JAN: This must be the Neitama trail!

MORTEN: Like that old geezer told them to take?

ANDERS: In that case get a move on, we don't know anything about this trail!

STEFAN: On the contrary boss, while we were in the village, I pinched a map!

TARQUIN: Thieving git, well done!

(As Kasira and Cole raced and dodged around the closely growing trees, the pursuers started to lose eye contact.)

ANDERS: It's getting hard to see them!

MORTEN: If we keep going, they're bound to run out of cover eventually!

ANDERS: I want to catch him *now*!

PAL: What about the girl?

ANDERS: Sod the bitch, the price is on *his* head!

(With the familiarity of surroundings to their advantage, Cole and Kasira slipped further and further ahead, much to Anders displeasure. It wasn't long before the gang from Sudereva had lost sight of them completely.)

ANDERS: Damn them, Damn them!

(He slowed to a jog.)

ANDERS: We'll never find them in these woods!

STEFAN: Wanna bet?

(He approached Anders grinning.)

STEFAN: Look!

(He held up the map he'd stolen and pointed.)

STEFAN: See, the Neitama trail's on the map, it leads straight to Neitama village!

(Anders nodded.)

ANDERS: Excellent work Stefan, their entire route is mapped out already!

(He smiled.)

ANDERS: Okay men, march on, I'd rather we caught them out here in the wild, before they can seek help in this Neitama village, but either way, we can't lose them!

(Feeling confident of their ultimate success, the gang marched on at a breath-taking pace while Stefan deciphered the route. Kasira and Cole, on the other hand, had no intention of slowing just yet. Checking behind them as they raced on with fear in their hearts, neither of them even thought of stopping.)

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(Back in Namki village in the meantime, Omki Saan had just made it to Dakuri's house, almost having a heart attack from all the activity. He thumped on the door and slumped to his knees exhausted. Looking more than slightly irritated, Dakuri thrust open the door and stepped outside angrily.)

DAKURI: Yes?

(Omki Saan looked up, exhausted.)

OMKI SAAN: Dakuri!

DAKURI: Not now, father, I've just made Haykie a special meal!

(Omki Saan spoke up in the loudest voice his tiredness would allow.)

OMKI SAAN: Kasira and Cole... are in danger!

(Looking horrified, Dakuri knelt by his weakened father.)

DAKURI: What do you mean?

OMKI SAAN: Some white men have come... they look for Cole... and I think Kasira... they have fled from the village!

(He gasped for air.)

OMKI SAAN: They have taken the Neitama trail... you must go... help them!

(Feeling a strong sense of duty, Dakuri stood tall.)

DAKURI: I'll get my sword!

(With that, he stormed back into the house, leaving Omki Saan to recover outside. As Dakuri paced inside to grab his sword, he noticed Haykie tucking into her food.)

DAKURI: Sorry, I must go, Kasira and Cole are in trouble!

(Haykie looked baffled.)

HAYKIE: Trouble?



DAKURI: I can not explain, I have to go!

HAYKIE: I'll help!

(Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: You? How can *you* help?

(She shrugged.)

HAYKIE: Well... I'm a witch! I turn blue and scare people!

DAKURI: Good answer, let's go!

(With extreme urgency, the two of them headed for the door.)

DAKURI: We will take the Neitama trail. Some white men have come for Kasira and Cole!

HAYKIE: Neitama trail? I take it that's where they went?

DAKURI: So I am informed!

(As he paced from his house, he look down at Omki Saan as the old man continued to regain his breath.)

DAKURI: Omki Saan, father, you say they've run down the Neitama trail and these men have gone after them?

OMKI SAAN: That's right! Six of them... and a midget!

(Dakuri nodded at first then suddenly looked bemused.)

DAKURI: A midget?

(Omki Saan shrugged, too weak to do anything else.)

DAKURI: We must hurry to the Neitama trail, come Haykie!

HAYKIE: I'm right with you, Dakuri!

(She smiled to Omki Saan.)

HAYKIE: Nice to meet you again!

DAKURI: Never mind *him*... run!

(And with that, they too raced to the end of the village and disappeared into the thick woodland. Knowing that the evening was wearing on and darkness was soon to fall, both Dakuri and Haykie said nothing as they jogged briskly, desperate to catch the pack of men, before they caught Cole and Kasira.)

*Enaki forest, Neitama trail, Saturday, dusk...*

(With their hearts pounding wildly, Kasira and Cole continued their desperate escape. Staying as close together as they could, they sprinted for all they were worth, slaloming through the maze of trees ahead.)

KASIRA: This is crazy!

COLE: I know, we can't just run away!

KASIRA: What choice is there?

COLE: Dunno... who the hell are they anyway?

KASIRA: They were white!

(Cole looked a little anxious as he continued to race along.)

COLE: You don't think they were from Sudereva, do you?

KASIRA: Maybe, but...

(She too looked anxious.)

KASIRA: They must have come to arrest *you* for marrying me!

COLE: That's what I'm afraid of!

KASIRA: Someone must have told ‘em about us!

COLE: Who? Only your mum and dad knew!

(Kasira suddenly stopped and flapped in distress.)

KASIRA: Oh, my god, do you think they’re okay?

(Grabbing her arm and forcing her to continue, Cole tried to be positive.)

COLE: They’ll be fine, it’s not them they were after, it’s me!

KASIRA: But...

COLE: Come on, run!!! Stop panicking. Either they know we’re married or they think I kidnapped you, either way, if they’re from Sudereva it’s *me* they’re after, nobody else!

KASIRA: Then why am *I* running?

COLE: Dunno... maybe you should double back and get Dakuri!

(She shook her head.)

KASIRA: No way, we don’t know for sure if they’re after me or not!

COLE: Good point!

KASIRA: And besides, we’re in this together!

COLE: Yeah, but if something happens to you...

KASIRA: For better or for worse, Cole, we’re in this together!

COLE: Okay!

(And so they continued to weave their way through the thick mass of trees before them.)

KASIRA: Omki Saan said take the Neitama trail!

COLE: What the hell’s the Neitama trail?

KASIRA: How would I know? I’ve lived here as long as you have!

COLE: Isn’t Neitama that town with the giant statue?

KASIRA: I think so!

COLE: Let’s head there then!

KASIRA: Do you remember the way?

COLE: I’m not sure!

KASIRA: Well let’s just keep going! Whoever them people are, we can’t let ‘em catch us that easily!

(As they sprinted forth, puffing and panting, Kasira grabbed Cole’s hand.)

KASIRA: If we get separated... promise me you’ll look for me!

COLE: Of course I will, whatever it takes!

(She smiled.)

KASIRA: I knew you would!

COLE: Uh-oh!

(His concerned tone caused her to look across at him nervously. Looking to the sky as he ran, Cole grimaced with displeasure.)

COLE: It’s gonna be dark soon Kasira, this is no time to be stuck the forest!

(She looked up also.)

KASIRA: Oh hell!

(The sight of the ever blackening sky, flickering above the leaves and branches as they dashed along, brought a sinking feeling to her stomach. Looking terrified she squeezed Cole’s hand tighter.)

KASIRA: Get me out of here, Cole!

(Seeing her fear, he squeezed her hand back.)

KASIRA: Ow!!!

COLE: Sorry, I just wanted to reassure you!

KASIRA: By breaking my fingers?

(She shook her painful hand in front of her.)

COLE: Come on, just stick with me, we'll be fine!

(Nervously looking over her shoulder as she ran, she mumbled to herself.)

KASIRA: Please be gone!

(Seeing only trees behind her, she looked to Cole.)

KASIRA: I can't see them... maybe they've given up!

(Cole shook his head.)

COLE: I doubt they'd come all this way then give up!

(Unable to disagree, she shook her fists.)

KASIRA: Who are they Cole? What do they want?

COLE: Don't go to pieces Kasira, keep it together, we can do this!

(She nodded defiantly.)

KASIRA: Yeah... be strong Kasira, be strong!

(As they continued to speed their way through the dense woodland, unsure who was chasing them, Haykie and Dakuri were still bringing up the rear. Jogging along at an Olympic pace, they too could only speculate as to who the offending intruders could be. Striding along side by side, with seriousness etched into their faces, it wasn't long before they started to become increasingly worried.)

HAYKIE: Are you sure this is the right way?

(The big man beside her, raised a curious eyebrow.)

DAKURI: You think Omki Saan was lying?

HAYKIE: No, but we've been running for ages and there's no sign of anyone!

DAKURI: Well, this is the Neitama trail, as he told us!

HAYKIE: Maybe he was mistaken!

DAKURI: Omki Saan is never mistaken!

HAYKIE: I didn't mean to question him, Dakuri, I just get the feeling he was mistaken!

DAKURI: He wasn't mistaken, but I wouldn't put it past him to lie!

(She suddenly felt a sense of bitterness coming from the giant beside her. Putting on a sensitive voice she tried to open him up.)

HAYKIE: You don't trust your father, do you?

(Dakuri ignored her and paced on.)

HAYKIE: You can tell me!

(Again he said nothing.)

HAYKIE: It's nothing to be ashamed of, I hate my mother!

(Starting to get irritated, Dakuri shook his head.)

HAYKIE: So, did you two ever get on?

(He sneered and retorted angrily.)

DAKURI: When is your period due???

(Deeply offended by his actions, she scowled and pointed an angry finger at him.)

HAYKIE: How can you ask me...

DAKURI: Now you know how it feels!!!

(Taken aback by his anger, she slowed and shook her head.)

HAYKIE: Wow!

(She then picked up the pace and ran back to jog alongside him.)

HAYKIE: Sorry, I didn't mean to be intrusive, I just thought it might help!

(Dakuri stared straight ahead.)

DAKURI: That's okay... I apologise too!

(She smiled.)

HAYKIE: So... do you really think Omki Saan lied?

(He shook his head.)

DAKURI: No... I was just being foolish, he has no reason to lie!

HAYKIE: Then why haven't we caught them up yet?

DAKURI: Patience Haykie, we will!

HAYKIE: Soon I hope, my legs are starting to ache!

DAKURI: We'll catch them when we catch them, they had a long head start!

HAYKIE: The sooner the better, Dakuri, it's getting dark!

(As they hurried along the dusty path between the dense trees that was the Neitama trail, Dakuri's mind started to wonder back to his last visit to Sudereva.)

DAKURI: White men... they must be from Sudereva!

HAYKIE: Not necessarily!

DAKURI: Why else would they come in search of Kasira and Cole?

HAYKIE: Hmm, that's true!

DAKURI: Maybe they've heard about their wedding!

HAYKIE: You reckon, it seems a little trivial to me!

DAKURI: Trivial?

HAYKIE: Yeah, who'd send a small army to catch a teacher for marrying his pupil?

She's eighteen for heaven sake, and he aint much older!

DAKURI: Maybe in Sudereva, the law is the law, with no exceptions!

(Haykie looked uncertain.)

HAYKIE: It doesn't make sense!

DAKURI: You can think of another reason?

(She shrugged, then stumbled.)

DAKURI: Careful!

(As quick as a flash, he thrust out an arm to stop her from falling.)

HAYKIE: Thanks, Dakuri!

DAKURI: That's okay!

(She smiled.)

HAYKIE: Never shrug while you're running, Dakuri!

DAKURI: I didn't, that was you!

HAYKIE: Yeah, thanks!

(They grinned to each other.)

DAKURI: Now let's hurry, as you say, it will be dark soon! The sooner we can catch these people, the sooner we'll find out who they are!

(With that they hurried on down the dusty track ahead, worrying how their friends would cope with being pursued into a strange wilderness in the dark.

Somewhere in-between the fleeing couple and the chasing twosome of Haykie and Dakuri, the bounty hunters marched purposefully ahead, following their map to the letter. Also keeping one eye on the sky, Anders and his men were growing ever cautious of the

shadows that were appearing in the darkening woods. Pretending not to be scared, they desperately tried to out bravado each other.)

JAN: I love the forest at night!

TARQUIN: Me too!

MORTEN: Are you sure we can't use our torches, Anders? It's getting dark.

ANDERS: Don't be a wimp. If we use our torches they'll spot us from miles away!

MORTEN: Yeah, but... what if we get lost, that's all I'm worried about!

(Anders grinned.)

ANDERS: Really? Anyone would think you were scared!

MORTEN: Me? Huh, I don't know the meaning of the word!

(Suddenly, something brushed his thigh.)

MORTEN: Argh!!!

(He leapt sideways and shivered with fear.)

MORTEN: What was that?

(Their laughter cut him to the bone.)

MORTEN: What was it?

ALERO: That was my hat!

(Feeling somewhat stupid, he glared at the midget.)

MORTEN: Why do you have to be so small???

(Alero shrugged off the comment and headed on, mumbling under his breath.)

ALERO: Like it's my fault he's scared of the dark!

MORTEN: I heard that!

(Seeing his men's nerve begin to slip, Anders spoke up.)

ANDERS: Keep your spirits up men, if they've taken the Neitama trail as they were told, we're bound to catch them sooner or later!

JAN: But boss, it's getting really dark, you can hardly see!

ANDERS: Good, then if we march as a quiet disciplined unit, they won't see us coming!

(There was a moment of silence.)

STEFAN: Anders, it's getting difficult to see the map!

(Anders rubbed his chin.)

ANDERS: At last, a valid complaint!

(With that, he called his men to a halt and approached Stefan.)

ANDERS: Show me!

(Stefan turned and pointed the map towards him. Squinting, he attempted to read it.)

ANDERS: Hmm... can't see shit!

(Tarquin's eyes lit up.)

TARQUIN: Can we light a torch then boss?

ANDERS: No! I thought I already explained that to you!

TARQUIN: But...

ANDERS: Listen Tarquin...

(He shook his head.)

ANDERS: Couldn't your parents think of a boys name?

(Tarquin hung his head while his comrades laughed at him.)

ANDERS: I don't know what you're laughing at Janet!

(The man in question was most indignant.)

JAN: It's Jan! Jan! You pronounce the J as a Y!

STEFAN: Um, boss? The map?

ANDERS: Yeah, yeah!

(He scrutinized it closer.)

ANDERS: I can see the trail... just... what's that?

(As he placed his finger on the map, Stefan put his face to it and tried to decipher it.)

STEFAN: Hmm, looks like some sort of crevice!

ANDERS: A crevice?

STEFAN: Yeah!

(He stood tall and pointed down the dusty track.)

STEFAN: About a mile in *that* direction!

(Bearing an aura of extreme urgency, Anders also stood tall.)

ANDERS: Right men, sod the dark, stop being such babies, they're only shadows...

(His men all looked to each other before spontaneously denying any fear.)

JAN: I wasn't scared!

PAL: Me either!

MORTEN: None of us were!

(Anders shook an amused head.)

ANDERS: Whatever you say men, right... put your heads down chaps. If we put in a good solid march now, we should be able to catch them at the crevice!

ALERO: But my legs ache!

MORTEN: Wimp!

ALERO: I've got little legs!!!

(Anders raised his voice angrily.)

ANDERS: Enough!!!

(There was silence.)

ANDERS: That's better, now unless they took a route not on this map, we should be able to catch them... then we can go home. Now let's march!

(Spurred on by the thought of escaping this alien environment, the six warriors and the summoner midget, proceeded to march on the double. Not wanting to spend a moment longer than they had to in the darkness of the thick forest, they silently headed forward, marching almost at a jogging pace, while Alero ran to keep up.)

*Enaki forest, Neitama trail, Saturday night...*

(With any trace of daylight long gone, Kasira and Cole wearily continued to run as best as they could through the pitch black of the forest. Barely avoiding trees as their legs carried them forth, they were only too glad to see moonlight appear up ahead. Gaining a second wind almost, they hurried past the last clump of trees and out into the clearing.)

KASIRA: Light!

COLE: Great, where in the hell are we?

KASIRA: Look out!!!

(She grabbed his collar and pulled him over, half strangling him in the process.)

COLE: Hey!!!

(As he hit the ground, Kasira stopped and drew a sigh of relief. Climbing to his feet, Cole questioned her actions angrily.)

COLE: What did you do that for?

(Saying nothing, she gestured with her eyes to the deep crevice in front of them.)

COLE: What the?

KASIRA: Exactly! Now what?

(Silently, they both inspected the gaping crevice in front of them with their eyes, their faces both suddenly wearing dejected expressions. Feeling his hair with despair, Cole stepped up to the edge.)

COLE: How the hell do we cross this?

KASIRA: There's probably a bridge or something!

(Cole shook his head.)

COLE: If there is one, I can't see it!

(Looking terrified, Kasira began to panic.)

KASIRA: What the hell are we going to do?

(She started to tremble uncontrollably.)

KASIRA: Don't just stand there, we've gotta do something!

(In an attempt to calm her down, Cole pointed along the edge of the crevice.)

COLE: Let's go this way!

KASIRA: A-alright!

(Putting an arm around her as they went, Cole lead her hurriedly away along the edge of the sheer drop. Looking all around for danger all the while, Kasira suddenly yelled out.)

KASIRA: There, it's there... I see it!

(Cole looked at her erratically shaking finger as she tried to point.)

COLE: Where? Calm down, Kasira!

KASIRA: There, you idiot!

(In a blinding hurry she raced along the edge of the crevice. A confused looking Cole followed on curiously when suddenly she stopped and pointed over the edge.)

COLE: What is it?

(Shaking her head in annoyance, she pointed harder and glared.)

KASIRA: Look!

(Making a point of looking at Kasira first, he peered over the edge.)

COLE: Oh, perfect!

(Three feet below them, there was a thin natural walkway spreading from one side of the crevice to the other.)

COLE: Shall we, darling?

(Kasira lowered herself over the edge then slipped down onto the walkway.)

KASIRA: We shall!

(As he jumped over the edge to join her, Cole smiled.)

COLE: Nice spot, I'd never have seen this walkway in this light.

(Helping him straighten up from his landing, Kasira forced a smile.)

KASIRA: Before we cross, I need a hug! This thing is really thin and I hate heights.

(With that, she wrapped her arms around him and held him tight. Sensing her fear, he kissed her head and hugged her back.)

COLE: We'd better go!

(She held him firm.)

KASIRA: Just a bit longer!

(Feeling incredibly nervous as he held her in the moonlight, where all could see, he started to force her off of him.)

COLE: Kasira, we've got to go, we're like sitting ducks out here!

(Kasira tried to hold on to him.)

KASIRA: But I'm scared Cole!

COLE: I know, but what if...

(His words were suddenly interrupted by the sound of a single laugh from the nearby trees. Looking up like frightened rabbits, Cole and Kasira immediately sped off across the walkway.)

KASIRA: They're here!

(As they reached the other side of the ledge they were confronted with a four foot high bank.)

COLE: You go first!

KASIRA: I can't! You go and pull me up!

(In too much of a hurry to argue, he quickly scrambled up the embankment as the bounty hunters strode from the woods. Spotting them immediately, Anders yelled to his men.)

ANDERS: There they are!!!

(Hearing this, Cole dived to the top of the embankment and swung himself around to pull Kasira up.)

COLE: Grab my arms!!!

(With her heart in her mouth, she grab hold of him and turned to face the bounty hunters with terror in her eyes.)

KASIRA: Get me up!!! Get me up!!!

(Screaming like the hoard of savages they were, Anders and his men, leapt onto the walkway and charged towards her.)

ANDERS: I want him alive!!!

(As they gained ever closer, an arrow thudded into the bank near Kasira's head.)

ANDERS: Pal?

(Pal grinned.)

PAL: Just a warning shot!

(While Kasira stared at the arrow and screamed, Cole desperately tried to haul her up to him. With tired arms, he grimaced as he struggled to lift her.)

COLE: Dig your feet in, Kasira! Push!!!

(Breathing heavily as sweat poured from her forehead, she tried desperately to gain momentum from her feet.)

KASIRA: I can't get a foot hold!!!

(Going bright red, Cole continued to pull with all his weight, as the veins in his neck started to bulge.)

COLE: They're gaining!!!

(Sure enough the pack of bounty hunters were almost upon her. Arriving first, Morten reached forward to grab her and pull her back down, only for her to slide through his arms as she finally gained a foot hold.)

KASIRA: Pull, Cole!!!

(Looking more determined than ever he dragged her towards the top of the bank. Not wanting to be outdone, Morten swung his hand up to grab her foot.)

MORTEN: Gotcha!!!

(In a terrified frenzy, Kasira panicked and thrust down with her other foot, kicking Morten full in the face.)



MORTEN: Bitch!!!

(As he let go of her and thrust his hands to his paining mouth, Cole swiftly dragged her to the top. With Kasira successfully yanked over the embankment, Cole grabbed her hand.)

COLE: Go!!!

(Instantly they took off like rockets into the woodland the other side. Seeing them disappear back into the darkened forest, Anders bellowed furiously.)

ANDERS: Useless bastards!!! Get after them!!!

(One by one, his men scrambled up the embankment to give chase. Morten spitting out several teeth as he scrambled forth.)

ANDERS: Come on, arrest the bastard!

(Determined not to let him down, they rushed from the top of the embankment into the woods opposite in pursuit of the two fugitives. Bringing up the rear, Jan had to physically throw the midget, Alero to the top of the embankment.)

ALERO: Ow!!!

JAN: Quit complaining!

ALERO: You threw me!

JAN: I'm sorry, would you rather I drop kicked you?

(With that, he too scaled the bank. Dusting himself down Jan raced towards the woods to join his comrades, just as Haykie and Dakuri emerged into the clearing, across the crevice. Spotting him, Haykie raised her hand to fire a magic spell towards him, only for him to disappear into the woods.)

HAYKIE: Damn it!

DAKURI: Don't panic, we're getting close!

HAYKIE: Come on then, let's get our arses across this crevice and go after them!

DAKURI: I'm way ahead of you!

(With that, he leapt over the edge of the crevice onto the walkway. Having not seen the walkway below, Haykie ran forwards with her arms out, yelling with anxiety.)

HAYKIE: Dakuri!!!

(Staring back at her in bewilderment from the walkway, a baffled Dakuri replied.)

DAKURI: What?

(Haykie held her chest and puffed out her cheeks.)

HAYKIE: There's a ledge down there?

(Dakuri scratched his head.)

DAKURI: Did you think I just leapt into the crevice?

(Haykie looked innocent.)

HAYKIE: Maybe!

(She looked across the walkway.)

HAYKIE: Never mind that Dakuri, let's get after the bastards!

(Dakuri nodded and raced to the other side. Haykie followed on gingerly, not allowing her fear of heights to bother her, then they too raced into the woods the other side.

Feeling more than a little relieved at their narrow escape, Kasira and Cole raced away into the darkness, feeling the lack of visibility would give them the chance to escape. With the sound of the chasing pack still audible, however, they said nothing as they charged on hand in hand into the pitch black wilderness. Once the sound behind them started to fade slightly, Kasira spoke in almost a whisper.)

KASIRA: I'm still spooked Cole!

(He said nothing.)

KASIRA: Cole, you okay?

COLE: Sorry, did you say something?

KASIRA: I said I'm still spooked!

COLE: Speak up love, I can't hear you!

(She raised her voice slightly.)

KASIRA: I thought they'd got me then!

COLE: It was too close!

KASIRA: I'm shitting myself still!

(Upon hearing the fear in her voice, he tried again to gee her up.)

COLE: Well don't, we're okay... as long as we can reach Neitama under the cover of the darkness, we'll be fine!

KASIRA: What if we don't?

COLE: Don't say that!

KASIRA: But Cole...

COLE: Hey, stop it Kasira, you're the chosen one remember? This isn't the Kasira Ashford I know!

KASIRA: What are you saying?

COLE: I know they frightened you just now, but once again you came through it! You're strong Kasira, don't forget it!

(At first she said nothing, then suddenly she spoke with renewed confidence.)

KASIRA: You're right you know, I'm okay now!

(She smiled.)

KASIRA: Besides... it's Kasira Fishman!

COLE: And don't ever forget it!

KASIRA: Never!

(Feeling a little more confident, they hurried on.)

KASIRA: It *is* you they're after!

COLE: Yeah, I heard him! "Take him alive" he said!

KASIRA: Then one of them yelled "Arrest him"!

COLE: Weird. They weren't Sudereva police or military uniforms!

KASIRA: Then who the hell were they?

(There was silence.)

KASIRA: I wish I knew what they wanted!

COLE: Well I aint gonna stop and ask them!

KASIRA: Who arrests people apart from police and army?

COLE: I don't...

(Suddenly it hit him.)

COLE: Bounty hunters!!!

KASIRA: Bounty hunters?

COLE: Yeah, them bastards would do anything to catch ya!

KASIRA: Anything?

COLE: Yeah, literally, let's get a move on!

KASIRA: I can't go any faster!

COLE: Sorry, but now it's my turn to shit myself, if you'll excuse my language!

KASIRA: Look, like you said to me, don't panic!

COLE: That was before I realised they were bounty hunters, now I say panic!!!

(Inexplicably, she slapped him on the arm.)

COLE: Hey!

KASIRA: Stop it! At our wedding you promised to protect me forever and you can't do that if you start panicking and making mistakes!

(Cole took a deep breath and nodded sternly.)

COLE: Yeah, you're right Kasira, sorry!

KASIRA: It's alright!

COLE: But let's hurry anyway!

(Daunted by the prospect of being apprehended by notoriously lawless men, they soldiered on further and further into the darkness.

Someway behind Kasira and Cole, the chasing bounty hunters begin to slow from a run to a quick walk. Feeling incredibly disheartened, the merciless band of mercenaries began to blame each other for their failure.)

PAL: If you'd just have let me put an arrow in him!

ANDERS: Hey, it's not my fault you're all incompetent!

MORTEN: Don't be like that, I nearly had her!

ANDERS: Yeah, 'til she kicked three of your teeth out!

JAN: It wasn't my fault either, I was stuck at the back with this idiot!

(He thumped Alero on the top of his head.)

ALERO: Ow!!! Stop being mean!

TARQUIN: We *nearly* caught the girl!

ANDERS: I don't care about the girl, I want Cole Fishman!

MORTEN: And anyway, Tarquin. *We?* *We* nearly caught the girl?

TARQUIN: Yes we!

MORTEN: You were nowhere to be seen!

TARQUIN: You liar!

MORTEN: It's not your fault I suppose, how could we expect a bloke with a name like Tarquin to be any use?

TARQUIN: Hey, at least I didn't get beat up by a girl!

(Morten flapped wildly.)

MORTEN: You take that back!

STEFAN: He's got a point Morten, she whooped ya, man!

MORTEN: I'll beat the crap out of all of you in a minute!

ANDERS: Relax Morten, they're only playing with you!

MORTEN: Look, I lost a load of teeth 'cause of that bitch!

PAL: Don't worry about her, Morten, next time we catch up with her, *we'll* protect ya!

MORTEN: You asshole!!!

(With that, he swung a fist at Pal and punched him to the ground. Scrambling furiously to his feet, Pal charged back and Morten and the two of them commenced the punch up from hell. Their comrades merely stopped and watched as the two men knocked seven bells out of each other.)

MORTEN: See how *you* like losing ya teeth!!!

PAL: See how *you* like losing ya life!!!

(As they continued to kick, punch and elbow for all they were worth, Anders turned to Stefan.)

ANDERS: My money's on Pal!

STEFAN: I think you'll find all the money's on Pal!

TARQUIN: Um... I hate to be a kill joy, but while those two try to kill each other, Cole Fishman's getting away!

(Anders looked his way and sighed.)

ANDERS: I suppose you're right Tarquin!

JAN: Bloody poof just hates violence!

(He was most offended.)

TARQUIN: I do not!!! And don't call me a poof!

JAN: Why? What are you gonna do? Try to bugger me?

(Tarquin sneered violently.)

TARQUIN: Right, that's done it, just 'cause I'm called Tarquin you think you can give me shit, well I've had it!

(Realising what was to ensue, Anders stepped between them.)

ANDERS: Enough!!!

(As they stood down, giving each other angry looks, Anders stepped up to the battling twosome of Morten and Pal. Grabbing Pal's arm to stopping him punching Morten into a tree, he yelled angrily.)

ANDERS: What the hell's this? We're supposed to be a disciplined unit!

(They both hung their heads.)

ANDERS: Stefan's the only pro amongst you!

(Stefan beamed.)

ANDERS: And he's hopeless!

(As the smile disintegrated from Stefan's face, Pal and Morten stood to attention.)

ANDERS: Now let's get out of here, we've got a fugitive to catch!

(Pal saluted.)

PAL: With respect sir, if you'd just let me kill him when we had the chance...

(Anders interrupted, his face red with rage.)

ANDERS: Listen soldier, the reward is higher for capturing them alive, we only kill them if they pay us off! That way we get more money and there's no evidence! We don't just kill them for fun!

PAL: Sir! But surely, dead or alive, with him we'll make a fortune anyway!

ANDERS: Are you questioning me?

(Pal mumbled.)

PAL: No sir!

ANDERS: Good! Now we've lost enough time already, let's just get on with it, capture this arse hole and go home shall we?

(As he glared around at them looking extremely official, his men fell into line almost apologetically.)

ANDERS: Right, that's better, lead on Stefan!

STEFAN: May I just check our bearings, sir?

ANDERS: Go on then!

(As Stefan held the map before him, he turned to let the moonlight reflect on it.)

STEFAN: Hmm, okay...I think I know where we are!

ANDERS: Right then, let's move out shall we!  
(Immediately, they proceeded to march forth.)

Unbeknown to the party of bounty hunters, their delay had allowed Dakuri and Haykie to gain fast. As the two of them scampered through the darkened trees, the silhouettes of Anders and his men came into view. Upon sighting them, Dakuri whispered to Haykie and crouched down.)

DAKURI: It's them!

(Crouching beside him, Haykie whispered back.)

HAYKIE: Then what are we waiting for?

(Dakuri stared straight ahead as he answered.)

DAKURI: We must not be gung-ho, Haykie, with the darkness as our shield, we shall use stealth and make a surprise attack!

HAYKIE: Okay... so what's the plan?

DAKURI: Simple. We will sneak up to them and we will both attack at the same time. With my sword and your magic, they won't know what's hit them!

HAYKIE: It'll be the bloodbath they deserve.

DAKURI: Make sure to attack the ones furthest from me and take out the one with the crossbow first.

HAYKIE: Okay. You lead, then when you give the signal, I'll start blasting 'em with magic!

(Having entered warrior mode, Dakuri nodded and slipped his sword from its sheath.)

DAKURI: There is no time to lose, follow me!

(With that, he sprung forwards and raced towards the bounty hunters with his head ducked low. Following just behind, Haykie rubbed her hand and prepared to fire her spells. Quietly weaving around the undergrowth as to not make any unnecessary sounds, they approached the silhouettes of the enemy, stalking them like hunting lionesses. Confident it would soon be time to make their charge, Dakuri stood tall and gave a thumbs up to Haykie. Maintaining silence, they then began to run at the enemy. With an intent to kill engraved into Dakuri's face, he raced forth, looking forward to seeing the whites of their eyes. Just he gained on his foe's in readiness to begin his attack, however, a strange blackened figure, suddenly crossed his path.)

DAKURI: What the?

(Desperately trying to avoid a collision with the stranger, Dakuri tried to veer to the right, only for the man to move the same way. With a terrific thud, the inevitable happened. Both of them crashed to the ground in a heap. Looking mortified, Haykie raced over to him with a baffled look on her face. Completely bewildered, Dakuri sat up and grabbed the stranger by his collar.)

DAKURI: Fool! Who the hell are you???

(Sounding utterly relieved, the stranger stuttered with excitement.)

MICALOV: D-Dakuri? Is that you? Thank god!

(He hugged him.)

DAKURI: Stop it!!!

(Pushing him away, Dakuri leapt to his feet.)

MICALOV: Thank god I found you!

(Dakuri looked to Haykie urgently.)

DAKURI: I have no time for this, come Haykie!

(As he went to head on towards the bounty hunters, a desperate Micalov, dived at his feet and rugby tackled him spectacularly.)

DAKURI: What?

MICALOV: You aint leaving me here! I've been lost in these woods for three months or more!

(Kicking him away, Dakuri attempted to struggle on.)

MICALOV: Don't do this to me!

(With that, he leapt to his feet then jumped on Dakuri's back.)

MICALOV: I'm coming with you!

DAKURI: Haykie, get this fool off of me!

MICALOV: Haykie's here too?

(With that, he jumped off and hugged her instead.)

HAYKIE: Hey!!!

MICALOV: I'm so relieved, I thought I'd be stuck here forever!

(Furious with the uneducated idiot, Dakuri raced back and yanked him off of Haykie, then thrust him to the ground.)

DAKURI: Fool! Kasira and Cole are in danger!

(He looked over towards the bounty hunters and saw nobody there.)

DAKURI: What the?

(Feeling his hair with anxiety, he stepped in their direction.)

DAKURI: They've gone!

(Haykie looked down.)

HAYKIE: Shit!

(Shaking with fury, Dakuri paced back and held his sword to Micalov's neck as he lay on the ground.)

DAKURI: If anything happens to them...

(Shaking like a leaf, Micalov tried to defend himself.)

MICALOV: Hey, *you* ran into *me*!

(Relenting his stance, Dakuri shrugged to Haykie.)

DAKURI: Now what?

HAYKIE: Now we try to catch them up I suppose!

(Hearing this, Micalov leapt to his feet.)

MICALOV: I didn't mean to endanger anybody!

(Dakuri turned to him and scowled.)

DAKURI: What are you doing here anyway?

MICALOV: I told you... I'm lost, I came here for Kasira's wedding and I got horribly lost!

HAYKIE: That was three months ago!

MICALOV: It's a big forest, it all looks the same!!!

(Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: You earn your living as a guide!

MICALOV: Not anymore, I know I've got no sense of direction, these days I'm a...

(He looked sadly to his feet.)

MICALOV: I'm unemployable!

(He shook his head.)

MICALOV: There, I said it... happy now?

(Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: Come on Haykie, we have no time for this idiot!

HAYKIE: Just head west Micalov, we've gotta go!

MICALOV: Which way's west?

(Ignoring him, they started to head off into the darkness.)

MICALOV: I aint staying here by myself!

(As Dakuri and Haykie paced onwards, Micalov ran alongside.)

DAKURI: Go away!

MICALOV: Please, let me come with you?

DAKURI: We have important business, get lost!

MICALOV: I won't be any trouble!

DAKURI: You already have been, now go!

MICALOV: Then I won't be any more trouble!

HAYKIE: Come on Dakuri, give him a break, he's been stuck out here for months!

(Dakuri gave her a doubting glance.)

DAKURI: You really think we can afford to baby-sit this fool?

MICALOV: I won't get in the way!

HAYKIE: Have a heart, Dakuri!

(Dakuri looked in her eyes and sighed in defeat.)

DAKURI: Very well, if you can keep up, you can come!

(Looking deliriously happy, Micalov hugged him again.)

MICALOV: Thank you, Dakuri!

(Dakuri shuddered and thrust him off.)

DAKURI: Do that one more time, and I'll garrotte you with my bare hands!

(Haykie grinned.)

HAYKIE: If you can do *that* Dakuri, you really ought to cut your fingernails!

DAKURI: Oh good, humour!

(He shook his head.)

MICALOV: Seriously Dakuri, thanks!

DAKURI: Don't thank me, I'm only doing this for Haykie!

MICALOV: Thanks, Haykie!

(She nodded.)

DAKURI: But be warned, if anything happens to Kasira or Cole because of you...

(He ran his finger across his neck, merely serving to confuse Micalov.)

MICALOV: You'll kill yourself?

(Giving him a disbelieving look, Dakuri sped up, mumbling under his breath as he went.)

DAKURI: Why couldn't Necronema have eaten *him*?

(And so, they rushed on in search of the bounty hunters, Dakuri feeling bitter at Micalov all the while. As they searched quietly for the illusive sight of the darkened silhouettes, Micalov started to feel a heavy responsibly weighing around his neck. Keeping his torment to himself, he trotted alongside Dakuri, hoping he could somehow atone for his error.

Meanwhile, unaware of events behind them, Kasira and Cole had no idea that they'd opened up quite a lead over their pursuers. As a result, they continued to desperately

charge forth, checking behind them as they went. In their determination to get away, they hadn't noticed the slight incline beneath their feet. As they soldiered on however, it soon became hard to be oblivious to the increasing gradient before them.)

COLE: Um, Kasira?

KASIRA: Yeah?

COLE: Unless I'm very much mistaken, this is mount Yusu!

(Kasira nodded.)

KASIRA: I thought that too, I just didn't wanna say anything!

COLE: You gonna be okay? You're hardly dressed for mountain climbing!

KASIRA: Hopefully we can get around it!

COLE: Hopefully!

KASIRA: Let's just keep going shall we? We'll be okay... I hope!

(As they continued on up the mountain trail, the dirty track beneath their feet turned to rock. Getting ever steeper, it was only a matter of time before they found themselves racing along a rocky mountain ledge.)

COLE: We're a bit exposed up here, Kasira!

KASIRA: I know, the sooner we get over this and back down into the forest the better!

COLE: I wish the moon wasn't so bright, we stand out a mile!

KASIRA: Come on, I've got the creeps, hurry up!

(With that, they picked up the pace in a determined effort to cross the mountain as soon as possible. Unfortunately for them however, Cole got his wish. As they continued to ascend along the rocky path, clouds began to block out the moon and a wind started to whip up and lash towards them. Just when they thought it couldn't get any worse, it then proceeded to spit with rain.)

COLE: This is a nightmare!

(Trying to force their way ahead against the wind, they both ran with their heads down, trying to block out the gale.)

KASIRA: I can hardly walk a step!

COLE: Keep trying babe, we can't stop now... or ever!

KASIRA: This is fucking futile!

COLE: That rain isn't helping!

(As if someone was having a lend at them from above, the skies then opened up in a torrent of driving rain.)

COLE: Shit!!!

(Barely able to make any headway against the conditions, they held each other tight and tried to force themselves forward, all the while getting wetter and wetter.)

COLE: I can hardly see!

KASIRA: What?

(Realising he'd have to shout to be heard, he reacted accordingly.)

COLE: You okay???

KASIRA: No!!! I'm cold, I'm wet, I'm hungry and I can't see!!!

COLE: Yeah, but other than that?

(Almost drained of any spirit, the last thing they needed was the thunder and hailstones that then proceeded to pummel the mountain.)

KASIRA: What next?

COLE: Don't give up, Kasira!



KASIRA: Moonlight doesn't seem so bad now, does it?

COLE: It'll be okay!

KASIRA: Knowing our luck, this mountain will turn out to be a volcano!

COLE: Calm down!

(Barely moving at a snails pace as they struggled forth into the elemental nightmare, Kasira's legs started to give way. Slipping as she tried to step through the torrent of water that raced down the mountainside, she started to flop onto Cole's side.)

COLE: Kasira?

(Almost too tired to speak, she looked up at him as they tried to force their way through the rain. While the lightning flashed across the sky, lighting all around them, she slipped to the ground and laid in a puddle, closing her eyes. Without thinking for a second about his own tiredness, Cole lifted her from under her arms and dragged her to some rocks at the side of the mountain pass.)

COLE: Wake up Kasira, come on!

(Too weak to say anything, she just shook her head.)

COLE: Shit, we've got to get you out of here!

(With that, he picked her up and placed her over his shoulders.)

COLE: Damn... I need strength!

(With the pain etched on his face, he struggled onwards down the path, desperately hoping to find some kind of shelter. It wasn't long however, before his own legs started to show the strain as he slipped and stumbled along. Becoming increasingly weary, he closed his eyes as he stepped painfully forth into the desperate conditions, the burden of carrying Kasira soon becoming too much for him. Passing out, he dropped to his knees and the two of them landed in a heap in the pouring rain and started to get washed away by the torrent of water that swept down the mountain.

As he came to, Cole grabbed hold of Kasira and attempted to stop the water from carrying them away. With what little energy he had left, he reached for some rocks, only to find that they too were being swept away. Holding Kasira tighter, he braced himself to see where they'd end up. Moments later, too weak to fight back, he could do nothing to prevent them both being swept over the side of the mountain by the swiftly cascading waters.)

COLE: Shit!!!

(With eyes bulging in terror, he clung onto Kasira and stared downwards in absolute horror. Seeing a river below, he held Kasira tight and braced himself. Moments later, the two of them splashed into it as rocks and logs crashed into the water around them. With Kasira his only concern, Cole swiftly grabbed her under the neck and allowed the current to sweep them ashore.

As soon as they washed up on the river bank, the exhausted Cole took Kasira under the arms again and dragged her under a tree. Flopping to the ground next to her, devoid of energy, he looked up at the waterfall they'd just tumbled down and turned to face Kasira.)

COLE: Kasira, open your eyes Kasira!

(Stirring slightly, she opened her eyes.)

KASIRA: Cole? What's happening?

(Breathing a sigh of relief, he stroked her hair.)

COLE: We fell off the mountain!

(Too exhausted to question him, she placed her head on his lap.)

KASIRA: We okay?

COLE: Yeah, we're okay, we're back in the forest I think!

(He looked up and saw ripped pieces of their clothing snagged on the rocks at the top of the waterfall, being lit up by the lightning.)

COLE: Our clothes are ripped to shreds!

(He shook his head.)

COLE: Oh no, them bits of material are gonna be a like a road sign to them bounty hunters!

(Struggling to sit up, Kasira leant on his side.)

KASIRA: What?

COLE: Don't worry darlin', let's get some rest shall we?

KASIRA: I'm cold!

(Remembering what he learned at teacher training, he huddled up to her and held her tight.)

KASIRA: That's nice!

COLE: Body heat, we gotta keep warm!

(And so as they sat shivering together under the cover of the giant tree, Cole looked up at the ripped pieces of cloth and shook his head. Knowing they wouldn't be able to rest long, he encouraged her to keep her muscles moving and kept her talking, in an attempt to help her regain some energy. He was very much aware that their lives depended on it.

Some way back down the mountain trail, the bounty hunters had sought refuge beneath a ledge. As they looked out at the impossible conditions before them, the midget summoner Alero sat down and let out an enormous belch.)

ALERO: Sorry!

(Anders smiled down to him.)

ANDERS: Hey, not bad for a little guy!

ALERO: I'm not proud of it!

PAL: You should be, a belch is the mark of a man!

ALERO: I always belch when I'm nervous!

ANDERS: You're nervous?

ALERO: Yeah... see, I hate storms!

PAL: Don't be weak!

MORTEN: He's got a point, I aint seen a storm this bad since... well, ever!

ANDERS: Funny how the best one's always come at night!

STEFAN: Yeah, but being stuck here isn't helping much!

ANDERS: Don't worry, they won't get far in this weather!

(Just then, the sky flashed a brilliant white.)

ANDERS: Whoa, look at that one!

TARQUIN: I agree with Morten, this is the worst storm ever!

(Much to his annoyance, Alero chuckled.)

MORTEN: What's so funny, midget boy?

ALERO: You've obviously never seen Solaris!

(They all turned to face him.)

ANDERS: Solaris?

(Alero nodded.)

ALERO: The summon beast of fire and lightning!

MORTEN: Good is he?

ALERO: Good? He can create a storm 10 times worse than this!

(Pal looked excited.)

PAL: Show us!

ANDERS: He won't be doing that Pal!

PAL: Spoilsport!

ALERO: No, Anders is right, you should never summon a beast lightly! It requires total control and concentration!

ANDERS: Has a summoning ever gone wrong?

(Alero shook his head.)

ALERO: Never, but that's only because of we summoner's dedication!

(He beamed.)

ALERO: Not just anyone can become a summoner you know!

JAN: Why's that?

ALERO: You need a special kind of temperament, and a strong sense of what is right!

ANDERS: What is right, you say?

ALERO: Yup!

ANDERS: So how do you feel about our quest? Is it right?

ALERO: He's a criminal, isn't he?

ANDERS: Well... sort of!

ALERO: Sort of?

ANDERS: Yes, yes he is!

ALERO: Then 'Arctica' will bring him to justice!

PAL: And what does this 'Arctica' do?

ALERO: He freezes things... and people!

ANDERS: Hopefully it won't come to that, but it's a handy thing to have, should he prove difficult to apprehend!

(Morten looked bemused.)

MORTEN: Difficult to apprehend? Look as us stuck half way up a mountain in the pissing rain!

ANDERS: That's because we haven't caught up with them yet!

MORTEN: I nearly had them!

ANDERS: Yes we know, then your teeth fell out!

(They all chuckled quietly.)

MORTEN: Go on, have your fun, but when we catch them, the bitch is mine!

(With that, they resumed watching the rain, hailstones and lightning punish the mountainside, awaiting it to subside, before they could continue their pursuit.

A little way even further back down the track, Haykie and Micalov found themselves sitting beneath an alcove in the mountainside, watching Dakuri pace up and down.)

DAKURI: Stupid weather!

HAYKIE: Relax Dakuri, take a seat, we can't do anything at the moment!

(He turned swiftly.)

DAKURI: How can I relax? My friends might die!

MICALOV: If you go out there, *you* might die!

DAKURI: Did I ask your opinion?

(Micalov looked sheepishly away.)

MICALOV: No!

DAKURI: Exactly, like I told you, you can come as long as you promise not to speak!

MICALOV: You never said that!

DAKURI: I'm saying it now!

HAYKIE: Dakuri, relax will you!

(Dakuri looked down.)

DAKURI: I can't relax, Kasira and Cole need me!

(She climbed to her feet and slowly approached him.)

HAYKIE: Yeah, Kasira and Cole need you relaxed, you're no good to them all tense and angry!

(He nodded.)

DAKURI: This is true!

HAYKIE: So, come... sit down!

(He nodded and walked over to Micalov. With a sigh, he sat himself down and looked at him.)

DAKURI: Why were you born?

(Micalov looked baffled.)

MICALOV: Eh?

(Dakuri looked away and gritted his teeth.)

DAKURI: I feel useless sitting here!

(Haykie put a caring hand upon his shoulder.)

HAYKIE: As soon as it subsides, Dakuri, we'll be straight back out there!

(Feeling worthless and dejected, the three of them stared out at the merciless storm that wreaked havoc on the mountain and hung their heads. With no sign of any immediate end to the relentless thrashing of the heavy rain, and the blinding flashes of lightning, they too could only watch and wait.

Almost an hour passed, and still the elements took out their wrath on the mountainside. Feeling a little rejuvenated by their break, Kasira and Cole sat beneath the thick tree and tried to give each other confidence. As they chatted positively, the incessant whistle of the howling wind suddenly faded.)

KASIRA: Hey, the wind's died down!

(Cole climbed to his feet.)

COLE: It seems that way!

(Seconds later, the driving rain that had swept them off of the mountain, turned to a relative patter.)

KASIRA: Is the storm over, do ya think?

(Cole nodded.)

COLE: I say we risk it!

(He spun round and offered Kasira his hand. With a nod, she reached out for it and allowed him to pull her to her feet.)

KASIRA: Run for it?

(She turned and reached for his other hand.)

COLE: Let's go!

(And with that, they charged past the trees they'd used as a shelter, and found themselves heading along a grassy verge overlooking the forest.)

KASIRA: You said we were in the forest!

COLE: I thought we we're!

KASIRA: The forest is down *there* and it's a sheer drop!

(She pointed over the steep cliff to the side of her.)

KASIRA: How the hell will we get down?

COLE: The drop might be a bit shallower further on, let's keep running on!

(With the storm having ceased as quickly as it began, the gang of bounty hunters also restarted their march, as did Dakuri, Haykie and Micalov. With the moon's reappearance from behind the clouds, visibility on the mountainside increased immensely. As a result, the snags of torn clothing where Kasira and Cole had been swept over the mountainside, clearly indicated their path. As Kasira and Cole dashed along the grassy verge in search of an easier way down, the gang of bounty hunters arrived at the scene of their fall and spotted the torn clothing immediately.)

ANDERS: Look!

(He raced over to where the snagged and torn pieces of Kasira's dress blew in the breeze.)

ANDERS: They must have gone down there!

(They all looked over the cliff edge at the river running below.)

MORTEN: Do you think they jumped?

(There was silence.)

ANDERS: Maybe it's a trap!

JAN: Eh?

ANDERS: Maybe, they want us to *think* they went down there!

(Tarquin shook his head.)

TARQUIN: I doubt it, look!

(He pointed to the river bank below.)

ANDERS: What is it?

TARQUIN: The muddy trail! You can see where they scrambled out of the river.

(Pal nodded.)

PAL: Yeah, and there's fresh muddy footprints leading into the trees too.

ANDERS: So there is! Nice detective work, men.

(Stefan nodded.)

STEFAN: So they headed down there? Why?

MORTEN: And how?

ANDERS: They either fell or climbed. Either way, they definitely went over this cliff edge!

ALERO: Which begs the question, how are *we* going to get down there?

TARQUIN: Guys, look!

(They turned and saw him pointing down an embankment.)

TARQUIN: We can get down here easily!

ANDERS: Let me see!

(He raced over to Tarquin.)

ANDERS: Where?

(He looked down at where the mountainside formed natural steps down to the river bank below.)

ANDERS: Well spotted Tarquin, let's go!

(And in no time at all, they made their way down to the river bank and headed through the trees to the grassy verge the other side. Spying the trees beneath the verge, Anders frowned.)

ANDERS: There's a sheer drop down to the forest!

MORTEN: What should we do, boss?

ANDERS: Keep going, there's no way they went down there! It might get less steep further on.

(And so they headed off across the verge. Some distance ahead, Kasira and Cole were still racing along the edge of the verge in search of an easier way down. Being careful not to slip in the darkness, they kept their eyes wide open for a less steep area to climb down. Anxious to get to the bottom of the cliff and back into the forest, Cole looked to Kasira and puffed out in frustration.)

COLE: This is crazy, it hasn't got an shallower and we've been running for ages!

KASIRA: What do you suggest?

COLE: I say we climb down as soon as possible!

KASIRA: Not 'til it's safe!

(Fearing their luck might run out if they didn't attempt to descend soon, Cole tried to remonstrate with Kasira.)

COLE: We'll have to risk it!!!

KASIRA: No, it's too steep!

(Turning to face her as he ran, Cole held out his palms in desperation.)

COLE: What if it doesn't get any *less* steep? We're just wasting time and energy running along this verge!

(Watching for Kasira's reply, Cole was delighted to see her slow to a walk. Convinced she'd seen things his way, he smiled at her warmly.)

COLE: That's my girl.

(With that, he slowed his run and jogged straight into a cliff face. Shocked and disorientated, he staggered backwards and fell on his backside.)

COLE: What the?

KASIRA: You okay?

(Cole looked up at her as she tried not to laugh.)

COLE: It's not funny!

(She could only whimper to avoid laughing.)

COLE: You walked into a tree once, in daylight!

(She shrugged.)

KASIRA: I hoped you'd forgotten about that!

COLE: Well I haven't!

(Suddenly, something dawned on him.)

COLE: Shit, we've run out of verge!

KASIRA: No shit. Why do you think I stopped running?

(Cole climbed to his feet and nodded firmly.)

COLE: Looks like we're going down then.

(Looking incredibly daunted, they both then peered over the cliff edge.)

COLE: Holy crap!

(Kasira turned and looked at the cliff face that Cole had run into.)

KASIRA: How did we not notice that cliff face sooner?

(Cole shrugged.)

COLE: Well, it's dark and we were concentrating on not falling off this verge.

KASIRA: True.

(She looked back over the ledge then up at the cliff face again.)

KASIRA: We're trapped, Cole!

COLE: Not we're not!

(Buoyed by his confident words, Kasira's eyes filled with hope.)

KASIRA: You've had an idea?

COLE: Yeah, we're gonna *climb* down there obviously!

(As he pointed over the edge, the hope drained from her eyes as quick as it had arrived.)

COLE: Let's go!

KASIRA: Forget it, you're mad! I'm not made for rock climbing!

COLE: We don't have any choice! It's not like we can go back!

KASIRA: No? Watch me!

(As she attempted to go, he grabbed her arm.)

COLE: Come on, Kasira!

(She shook her head rigorously.)

KASIRA: I'm scared!

COLE: I'll be with you!

(She gave him a nervous glance then peered over the edge.)

KASIRA: Promise?

COLE: I swear. Like Bond's last request, I'll take care of you always!

(She nodded nervously.)

COLE: Okay, let's go!

(With that, he sat on the edge of the verge and looked down for a foothold.)

COLE: Hmm, there's a gradient, we could slide!

KASIRA: Yeah, to our deaths!

COLE: Kasira! Don't!

KASIRA: I can see the tree tops... we're above them!

COLE: So?

KASIRA: That must be over 70 feet!

COLE: If we take it slowly and hold on tight to the rocks, we can do it!

KASIRA: I don't want to!

COLE: Or we can stay here and let the bounty hunters catch us!

KASIRA: I want that even less!

(With that, she sat herself on the edge of the verge and swung her feet over to dangle from the top.)

COLE: Don't look down, Kasira!

KASIRA: I don't intend to!

(She then proceeded to slowly lower herself down the rocks while Cole watched on and nodded.)

COLE: That's it, Kasira!

KASIRA: Don't watch *me*. Start climbing!

(Cole looked horrified.)

COLE: What? Down there? You must be crazy, it's dangerous!

(Kasira's ensuing tone of voice, not to mention her use of profanity, suggested she wasn't amused.)

COLE: It was a joke!!! I'm coming, I'm coming!

(And he too, lowered himself over the edge and started to slowly find a path down the steep cliff. In dead silence, they felt around the rock face before them looking for a hold as they slowly descended. It wasn't long before Cole reached the bottom and leapt off. Shaking a triumphant fist he looked up at Kasira. Still some ten feet off the ground, she suddenly lost her nerve.)

COLE: Nearly there, Girl!

(She didn't reply.)

COLE: Kasira?

(He turned his head to listen then furrowed his brow.)

COLE: Are you crying, Kasira?

KASIRA: I'm stuck!

(He scratched his head.)

COLE: Stuck?

(Annoyed at his lack of action, she raised her voice angrily.)

KASIRA: Yes, stuck!!! What are you deaf???

COLE: I'm only saying!

KASIRA: Oh shit, I'm slipping!!!

(Desperate to help, he raced beneath her and looked up.)

COLE: Get a foothold!

KASIRA: Are you looking up my dress?

(Cole was dumbfounded.)

COLE: Is that what you're worried about right now???

KASIRA: No... I'm slipping, I'm gonna...

(Before she could say it, she slipped and fell away from the wall. Not knowing quite what to do, Cole attempted to catch her as she swore like a trooper.)

KASIRA: Shit, Bugger, F...

(With a crash, she landed on Cole. He just managed to cushion her landing slightly and stop her hurting herself badly... but not completely.)

KASIRA: Ow, shit, shit, shit... I've twisted me ankle!

COLE: You okay?

KASIRA: I just answered that didn't I?

(She sat on the ground and held her sore ankle.)

KASIRA: It hurts!

(Cole knelt beside her.)

COLE: You did it Kasira, I knew you could!

KASIRA: Don't patronise me, you made me hurt my foot!

(Cole muttered under his breath.)

COLE: Yes, that was me!

(He shook his head.)



COLE: We'd better go!

KASIRA: Wait, just let the pain ease off, give me a minute or two!

COLE: Okay!

(He smiled and put his arm around her.)

COLE: Take your time!

KASIRA: Thanks, Cole!

(At this time, Dakuri, Haykie and Micalov had reached the point of Cole and Kasira's fall from the mountainside. With no difficulty at all, they also managed to figure out the trail immediately. As the three of them headed down towards the riverbank, the bounty hunters were nearing the end of the grassy verge. Checking for a place to climb down, they too looked cautiously over the edge of the steep cliff as they jogged forth.)

ANDERS: They could have gone down anywhere!

MORTEN: Yet nowhere!

ANDERS: I dunno, if they were extremely careful they'd have been able to climb I think!

PAL: You don't think they climbed down already do you?

(Anders shook his head.)

ANDERS: I don't see it, they're running scared, they'd have kept going I reckon!

JAN: So you think they're still running on this verge?

ANDERS: More than likely! Which means we'll keep going too. With any luck there'll be an easy way down.

STEFAN: Here's hoping!

(He then stopped dead and pointed straight ahead in defeat.)

STEFAN: So much for hope!

(Having reached the end of the grassy verge, with a collective gasp, they all stopped and looked up at the cliff towering above them.)

STEFAN: How annoying is that?

(Anders scratched his head and looked puzzled.)

ANDERS: Damn it! So they must have climbed down already!

TARQUIN: Must have done, they definitely came this way!

MORTEN: Question is, where did they climb down?

(Anders grimaced and shook his fist.)

ANDERS: Bollocks!!!

(Trying not to lose his temper, he took out his frustration on the ground, and kicked the turf beneath his feet.)

ANDERS: Now what?

(As grass and small pebbles flew over the verge, he shrugged despondently. At the bottom of the verge, the pebbles he'd kicked crashed to the dirt, one of them rolling towards Kasira as she nursed her painful ankle. Looking shocked and horrified, she spoke in a stifled tone to Cole.)

KASIRA: Did you see that?

(Cole looked up with a serious glint in his eye.)

COLE: Shush, Kasira, listen!

(Turning their ears towards the cliff, they listened intently for any kind of sound.

Immediately, they heard the faint rumbling of a man blaspheming.)

COLE: Did you hear that?

KASIRA: It's them, they're at the top of the cliff!

(Not prepared to take any chances, Cole leapt to his feet.)

COLE: We've gotta split, your foot gonna be alright?

(Also leaping to her feet, she nodded.)

KASIRA: My foot's fine, I just wanted a rest!

COLE: Right, let's...

(He stopped and gave her a filthy look. Kasira merely shrugged.)

KASIRA: What? I was tired!

(He gave her one last dissatisfied scowl, then grabbed her hand.)

COLE: Let's go!

(And with no more ado, they took off into the darkened forest. Way up at the top of the cliff above them, the bounty hunters were still stuck for their next move.)

ANDERS: What if they climbed down immediately, I mean right back where the verge starts?

TARQUIN: I think... hold on... listen!

(He waved his arms around gesturing his allies into silence.)

PAL: What's with him?

TARQUIN: Shush!

(They all listened hard.)

ANDERS: I can't hear anything!

PAL: Nor can I, all I know is that if you ever shush me again...

ANDERS: Belt up, Pal!

(He turned to Tarquin.)

ANDERS: What are we listening for?

TARQUIN: I swear, I heard footsteps...

(He pointed to the treetops below.)

TARQUIN: Down there!

ANDERS: You sure?

TARQUIN: I've got incredible hearing! Trust me!

(The wrinkled midget by his feet, agreed.)

ALERO: I heard it too!

TARQUIN: See!

ALERO: We midgets have phenomenal hearing!

PAL: I'm not surprised, your ears are big enough!

(Ignoring the insult, he continued.)

ALERO: In fact, I can still hear footsteps, they're getting fainter though!

ANDERS: They're running!

(Swinging into action immediately, he pulled a rope from his pack.)

ANDERS: Let's go!

(He threw it to Jan, who immediately banged a peg into the ground and attached the rope to it.)

JAN: Done!

ANDERS: Okay. let's go!

(Hardly making any attempt to remain inconspicuous, one by one, they grabbed the rope and started to descend the cliff. First, Morten, then Anders, Pal, Stefan and Tarquin, until only Jan and Alero remained.)

JAN: Right, after you Alero!

(Alero shook his head and shivered.)

ALERO: What? On my own? No way, Jose, forget it!

JAN: What?

ALERO: I'm a summoner, not a mountaineer, I aint doing that!

(Jan held up his hands.)

JAN: Fair enough, you're right... now, calm down!

(Alero stopped shaking and took a deep breath.)

JAN: See!

(With that, Jan coshed him savagely over the head.)

JAN: Why do I keep getting saddled with this pillock?

(With a sigh, he bent down and scooped him up. Making no attempt to retrieve the midgets bobble hat as it slipped from his head, Jan slung the midget over his shoulders and then he too made his way down the rope. On arriving at the bottom, Tarquin relieved him of his burden, allowing him to jump free of the rope.)

ANDERS: Good work Jan, frightened was he?

(Jan nodded as he tried to regain his breath.)

ANDERS: Okay, Tarquin, do your stuff!

(Without hesitation, Tarquin took a fire lighter to the rope and ignited it.)

ANDERS: Now, let's find them!

STEFAN: I can't find us on the map still, this isn't the planned route, the Neitama trail doesn't go this way!

ANDERS: Okay, the most important thing is, we're still on Cole Fishman's trail...

MORTEN: And his bitch!

(They all smirked in his direction.)

MORTEN: What? Stop that!

ANDERS: Come on, next time we find a land mark, we can compare it to this mountain and we'll know where we are! As long as we're still on the bounty's trail, it doesn't really matter though!

(He turned towards the blackened mass of conifers.)

ANDERS: Here we go again!

(As the rope continued to disintegrate into ashes behind them, they resumed marching into the woodland. Although glad to have left the mountain behind, they couldn't help but feel an element of 'out of the frying pan, into the fire', with the woods being as foreboding as they were. They hadn't marched long in their renewed search for Cole and Kasira when Alero woke up. As he bounced along on Jan's shoulders, he gave a baffled look then felt his head.)

ALERO: Where's my hat???

(With alarm etched on his face, he struggled uncontrollably, making Jan drop him. With a thud, he landed flat on his face and struggled to his feet, only to be gagged by Anders' hand.)

ANDERS: Quiet, stupid, you'll alert them!

(Toning down his wild gesticulating, he pulled Anders' hand from his mouth and spoke in a quiet, yet anguished voice.)

ALERO: Where's my lucky hat, where is it?

(They all looked at each other and shrugged.)

ALERO: Who stole my hat?

(Jan gave him a sorry smile.)

JAN: Sorry mate, it fell off your head!

ALERO: Where? We've got to go back!

JAN: It's at the top of the cliff, sorry!

(Almost in tears, he looked to his feet.)

ALERO: You're mean!

JAN: Sorry, mate, it's gone forever!

(Swaying with sorrow, he looked up at Jan.)

ALERO: I loved that hat, I really did, you know?

(He sniffed then threw his arms around Jan's midriff.)

ALERO: There'll never be another one like it!

(With that, he burst into tears.)

ALERO: Why Jan, why???

(Looking bewildered, Jan shrugged to Anders for advice. Trying not to laugh at the tiny man's sorrow, Anders patted him on the head.)

ANDERS: Don't worry midget, when we get back to Sudereva, I'll get the Mrs to knit you a new one!

(Alero lifted his head from Jan's midriff and looked hopeful.)

ALERO: You promise?

(He shrugged.)

ALERO: Sure, if it makes you feel better!

(Sniffing back a tear, he smiled then placed his head back near Jan's groin.)

ANDERS: You know what Jan, if any bloke put his face that close to my doodah, I'd kill the bugger!

(Looking grossly offended, Jan stepped back and pushed Alero to the floor.)

ALERO: Hey!

JAN: Yes... well...

(Going bright red, he started to march on.)

JAN: You lot coming?

(Chuckling to themselves as they did so, they continued on into the darkness, Alero following behind looking as if his whole world had collapsed around his ankles. At the front, Stefan and Anders tried their best to look assured, despite the fact that finding anyone in this thick forest at night would be like looking for a needle in a haystack.

Regardless of the night's obvious hindrance, they soldiered on determinedly in search of Cole and Kasira.

While the hunted pair in question scrambled desperately through the forest, barely able to see their feet in the darkness, Dakuri, Haykie and Micalov continued their desperate attempt to catch them up. Hurrying quicker than ever, they raced along the grassy verge, clueless to the whereabouts of their friends. Never one to doubt his judgment, Dakuri took a firm lead, bounding along with an intent, while Haykie and Micalov ran to keep up.)

HAYKIE: Slow down Dakuri, I'm getting a stitch!

DAKURI: Then cure yourself!

MICALOV: I'm knackered!

DAKURI: Did I say you could speak?

(He looked away.)

DAKURI: That's better!

HAYKIE: Dakuri, we're not as fit as you!

DAKURI: Then don't hold me back!

(Angered by the insinuation, Haykie's nostrils flared.)

HAYKIE: How dare you?

(Dakuri looked ahead as he streamed forth, completely unmoved.)

DAKURI: I dare!

HAYKIE: I can't believe I was starting to have feelings for you!

(Dakuri slowed and a look of discomfort washed over him.)

DAKURI: Feelings?

(Haykie gave no reply.)

DAKURI: Let's hurry!

(Taking off like a frightened Gazelle, he left Haykie and Micalov looking bewildered in his wake. They looked at each and shrugged.)

HAYKIE: I didn't mean to tell him that!

MICALOV: He ran away!

(Haykie gave him a sideways look.)

HAYKIE: Yeah... I saw!

(She shook her head.)

HAYKIE: We'd better catch up!

(With that, they too, ran ahead. With Dakuri having disappeared in the darkness, several disturbing thoughts filled their heads. Would they find him again? Would they be lost in this vast wilderness forever? Thankfully, moments later, he appeared into view, kneeling and looking over the edge of the cliff with Alero's hat in his hand. As the two of them gained, Dakuri scratched his chin.)

DAKURI: They went down there!

(As he nodded over the cliff edge, both Haykie and Micalov stepped up to it and looked down.)

HAYKIE: Down there?

(She stepped back and shuddered.)

MICALOV: How?

(Blanking him completely, Dakuri stood up and faced Haykie.)

DAKURI: You're afraid of heights, aren't you?

(She nodded and licked her lips nervously.)

MICALOV: Can I speak?

DAKURI: No!

(With that, he placed his hand nervously on Haykie's shoulder and looked into her worrying eyes, then spoke in a gentle tone.)

DAKURI: Don't be a chicken shit!

HAYKIE: What?

DAKURI: Kasira did it, and she shares your ridiculous fear!

MICALOV: So do I!

DAKURI: Well you would!

(Looking flabbergasted by his rudeness, Haykie stepped back from him and gritted her teeth.)

HAYKIE: We'll see who's chicken shit, shall we?

(And without another word, she leapt off of the cliff. With their eyes bulging in a panic, Dakuri and Micalov dived towards the edge in a futile attempt to grab her. As she disappeared into the darkness below, they looked at each other and gaped.)

MICALOV: Is she? Why did...

DAKURI: Haykie???

(Suddenly a voice yelled up from the darkness.)

HAYKIE: What are you waiting for? Are you chicken? Jump!!!

(The two men looked at each other.)

MICALOV: J-jump?

DAKURI: You can't even see the bottom... how did...

(He suddenly grinned.)

DAKURI: She's a witch, that's how she did it!

(He yelled over the edge.)

DAKURI: Are you going to catch us?

HAYKIE: Yes, now come on!

(Dakuri nodded and immediately leapt off the cliff.)

DAKURI: You'd *better* catch me!!!

(All alone at the top, Micalov looked terrified.)

MICALOV: I'm on me own again!

(He bit his nails nervously.)

MICALOV: Um... Dakuri?

(His voice rose from the darkness as Haykie's had.)

DAKURI: Jump, stupid, or we'll leave you here!

HAYKIE: Go on Micalov, leap of faith!

(He yelled back with fear in his voice.)

MICALOV: I haven't got any faith!

(He listened for a reply.)

HAYKIE: No we can't just leave him there, Dakuri! Go on, Micalov!

(As he shivered uncontrollably in fear of the cliff, something dawned on him.)

MICALOV: If I don't jump, I'll be lost again!

(With that, he immediately dived over the edge.)

MICALOV: Geronimo!!!

(As he rapidly approached the ground, he shut his eyes tight and screamed.)

HAYKIE: Face first? Impressive!

(Seconds later, when he opened his eyes and found himself standing on the ground.)

MICALOV: Eh? How?

(Haykie grinned.)

HAYKIE: I'm a witch, I froze you in mid air!

(He gave her a confused look.)

MICALOV: I'm saying nothing!

DAKURI: Good, keep it that way for the rest of the journey and I won't have to kill you!

(With that, he headed into the woods.)

DAKURI: Come, we've lost enough ground already!

(He glared at Micalov, who merely hung his head.)

HAYKIE: Come on Micalov, he doesn't mean it!

(And so, the three way chase resumed.

Back in Namki village at this time, Omki Saan was agonising over what could have happened. Looking up at the sky to assess the time, he leant against a tree and turned to speak with his fellow Enaki master, Boka Saan.)

OMKI SAAN: Midnight has come and gone, Boka Saan, yet there is no sign!

(Boka Saan nodded as he looked up the track towards the forest.)

BOKA SAAN: It's not a good omen!

OMKI SAAN: Kasira may not be the model of Enaki woman, yet she is the chosen one... I fear for her!

(Boka Saan shook his head.)

BOKA SAAN: Omki Saan, my brother, I feel your loyalty is misplaced!

OMKI SAAN: What do you mean?

BOKA SAAN: White men have destroyed 4 homes and 7 people have been injured, our thoughts must be with *them*!

OMKI SAAN: Make no mistake, Boka Saan, my heart goes out to all of them, but Kasira, Cole, Haykie and my son, Dakuri, survived the defeat of Necronema! Only one person ever returns from defeating the beast, yet this time... only one of them perished! I think a greater destiny may await Kasira than we thought... she is important, as are her friends.

BOKA SAAN: Their survival at the hands of Necronema was merely luck, the witch broke protocol to protect them!

(Omki Saan shook his head.)

OMKI SAAN: I disagree.

BOKA SAAN: And even if you are right, Omki Saan, there is nothing we can do for her right now anyway!

OMKI SAAN: This is true. I just hope Dakuri can save her in time!

BOKA SAAN: In the meantime Omki Saan, we must decide what to do about these white men!

OMKI SAAN: What *can* we do?

(Boka Saan stood tall.)

BOKA SAAN: Without any concern for our culture or our people, these men from the North Continent have entered our great nation and tormented and harmed our citizens!

This, Omki Saan, is no less than an act of war!

OMKI SAAN: War? Thanks to the cover of the forest, the white man is largely ignorant of our existence. This was an act of ignorant individuals, not an act of war by any nation. I mean, why would they seek a war with a race they do not even know exists?

BOKA SAAN: They know we exist now!

OMKI SAAN: Even so... war is not the answer!

BOKA SAAN: It has been decided Omki Saan, it is only for me to tell you!

OMKI SAAN: Decided? Decided by whom?

BOKA SAAN: The elders agree... should any of our citizens be killed by these rampaging savages... we will be forced to exact our revenge on the North Continent!

(Omki Saan gaped.)

OMKI SAAN: Why was I not informed?

BOKA SAAN: You would merely be the one dissenting voice, it was unanimous... the white man of the north continent will pay dearly for this insolence!

OMKI SAAN: When was this decided?

BOKA SAAN: While you stood here and did nothing, we convened!

(Omki Saan hung his head.)

OMKI SAAN: I will respect your decision!

(Boka Saan bowed.)

OMKI SAAN: Don't get me wrong, Boka Saan, I pray that no-one will be killed and we can merely bring these individuals to our divine justice! I fear that war may result in our ultimate destruction!

BOKA SAAN: You underestimate our warriors, Omki Saan?

OMKI SAAN: No, but I fear you underestimate white man's barbarity!

(As Omki Saan hung his head, Boka Saan walked away towards the hall of the chosen. With a tinge of prayer in his eyes, Omki Saan looked up and held his shaking hands to the sky.)

OMKI SAAN: Dakuri, my son... our fate is in your hands!

(He then hung his head and closed his eyes as he continued in prayer.

Many miles away, somewhere the other side of mount Yusu, Kasira and Cole were still making their weary dash through the forest, never forgetting the importance of reaching Neitama before sunrise. Fearing they'd be easy prey in daylight, they swayed and tripped as they soldiered forth, hand in hand, their ever tiring legs struggling to keep them upright. Breathing heavily, a thoroughly exhausted Kasira pulled on Cole's hand as she started to slow.)

KASIRA: I can't keep this up much longer!

COLE: What choice do we have?

KASIRA: But we've been running all night, I'm dead on my feet here, Cole!

COLE: If we stop we'll be even... deader!

(He shook his tired head.)

COLE: Deader? Good job I teach maths!

KASIRA: Actually, "deader" *is* a word.

COLE: It is?

KASIRA: I know, I couldn't believe it either.

COLE: I didn't know that.

(He puffed out.)

COLE: Wow. It really *is* a good job I teach maths.

(Kasira looked to him and pouted sorrowfully.)

KASIRA: I hate this! We're exhausted, soaking wet, our clothes are full of holes... and don't get me started on my hair!

COLE: Trust me, I won't!

KASIRA: It's all knotted and straggly!

COLE: Once we get to Neitama, you can wash it, brush it... set fire to it if you like, until then forget your hair, we've got more important things to worry about!

KASIRA: But, Cole...

(Her words were interrupted by the sound of a marauding hoard behind them in the darkness.)



COLE: Oh shit!

(They looked back into the dense trees behind and saw some silhouettes approaching rapidly from the darkness. Without a moments hesitation, they squeezed hands tighter and ran, hell for leather, in the opposite direction.)

COLE: Don't they ever give up? This never ends!

KASIRA: I'm gonna scream in a minute!

COLE: Don't be stupid, Kasira, what good would that do?

KASIRA: Hopefully, it'll stop you crushing my fingers!!!

COLE: Sorry!

(With an apologetic smile, he released his grip on her hand.)

KASIRA: That's better! Man, you're really tense!

COLE: Can you blame me?

KASIRA: No, not... hey, what's that?

(They stared ahead as they ran.)

COLE: Which way?

KASIRA: Either, both, I don't know!

(Looking flustered and indecisive, they slowed down and scoured all around them. In front of them was a large cliff face and a choice of two directions. In front of them, there was what looked like a tunnel heading into the cliff face, and to their right, there was a gouged out channel through some rocks, with high walls either side and steep rocky banks above them. The channel appeared to lead around the side of the cliff face.)

COLE: What the hell's this?

KASIRA: Rocks? I dunno, must be a hill or something!

COLE: Tunnel or that gouged out path?

(She flapped her arms in a desperate panic.)

KASIRA: I dunno, the path, no...I don't know!

COLE: The tunnel might be quicker.

KASIRA: Yeah but the path looks safer!

(Suddenly a voice echoed from the blackened woodland behind them.)

ANDERS: There they are!!!

(Spinning round like startled animals, Cole and Kasira spotted the bounty hunters charging towards them. Without a second thought, they sprinted off down the tunnel, not looking back for an instant. As they raced along the enclosed passageway, they noticed small sparkling gems sticking out from the rocks, lighting their path.)

COLE: What the hell's *this* place?

KASIRA: Who gives a shit, they're right behind us!!!

COLE: These rocks...

KASIRA: They're Kinichi stones, okay? Now run for fuck sake!

COLE: I *am* running, stupid, I'm ahead of you!

KASIRA: Don't call me stupid, you're the one who didn't know what Kinichi stones were!

COLE: You made it up anyway!

KASIRA: No I didn't, my real father used to mine them for a living, Omki Saan told me and he showed me some!

(They ran on in silence.)

COLE: Okay, you win! Oh, and... thanks for not saying 'so there'!

KASIRA: Shut up and run, I can't believe we're having this conversation!

COLE: I was curious!

KASIRA: Well concentrate, or you'll get us both killed!

(Before Cole could reply, he noticed a choice of directions up ahead.)

COLE: Straight ahead or turn right?

(As Kasira veered to the right, Cole rolled his eyes.)

COLE: Right it is then.

(As they charged on deeper into the labyrinth, the bounty hunters stopped and assembled behind Anders in the entrance, anxious to give chase.)

MORTEN: Why have we stopped? I wanna get 'em!

JAN: Yeah, what gives, Anders?

(The tall leader faced his men, head on.)

ANDERS: Idiots, this is the Kinichi caves according to the map...

(Stefan nodded.)

ANDERS: There's only one way in and one way out!

(Enlightenment filled his men's faces.)

TARQUIN: I get it!

ANDERS: Good for you!

(He turned to face the entrance.)

ANDERS: They're not going anywhere!

(He smiled.)

ANDERS: Pal, you guard the doorway, the rest of you... let's bag us a villain!

(Following a small cheer of excitement, they started to head inside, while Pal tapped his crossbow and smiled to himself.)

PAL: Leave it to me, Anders!

(Spotting his enthusiasm, Anders stopped dead.)

ANDERS: On second thoughts Pal, you come with us, Tarquin can guard the door!

(Pal looked bitterly disappointed.)

PAL: Hey, that's not fair!

ANDERS: Sorry Pal, but that crossbow of yours has a habit of accidentally going off in your hand!

PAL: You always spoil my fun!

ANDERS: Belt up! Tarquin?

TARQUIN: I'm there, boss!

(As Tarquin stood to attention in the entrance, Pal sulked along behind the others as they made their way hurriedly along the first passageway.)

STEFAN: What are these stones in the wall?

JAN: Dunno!

(A little voice spoke up from around his waist.)

ALERO: These are Kinichi stones, stones of light to you and I!

JAN: How do *you* know that?

ALERO: These things are quite common where I come from!

STEFAN: Then how come we've never seen them before?

ALERO: They're not indigenous to the north continent!

JAN: Where are you from then?

ALERO: I'm from Dezara's Plateau originally!

STEFAN: Where?

ANDERS: Less chat men, they've got to be around here somewhere!

(Ignoring the right turn that Cole and Kasira had taken, they charged straight on.)

ANDERS: Remember, nobody get carried away when we eventually catch them up. We want to take Cole alive.

(Pal sneered.)

PAL: That comment was aimed at *me* wasn't it?

ANDERS: Specifically, no. But, yes!

PAL: You make out like I'm some kind of psycho.

STEFAN: You are!

JAN: You are!

ANDERS: They're right!

PAL: Fair enough.

ANDERS: Now shut up and keep your eyes peeled.

(As they fell silent to concentrate on the job in hand, Kasira and Cole suddenly rushed across the face of them from a crossroad in the passages. Screaming into action, the bounty hunters took off in pursuit.)

ANDERS: Get 'em!!!

MORTEN: Remember, the bitch is mine!!!

(As they yelled like savages down the passageway, neither Kasira nor Cole bothered to even look behind them. With face's strewn with desperation, they sprinted with all they had.)

COLE: I can't believe we ran to *them*!

KASIRA: But we kept to the same path, how did that happen? We didn't double back on ourselves!

COLE: I know!

(He groaned angrily.)

COLE: This isn't a short cut *at all*! It's a cave, not a tunnel!

KASIRA: And it's like a bloody maze!

COLE: Yeah and we just ran round in a pointless semi-circle, right into their path.

(As beads of sweat dripped from their every pore, they noticed another fork in the path ahead.)

KASIRA: Which way?

(As it rapidly approached, Cole wiped the sweat from his forearm and thought hard.)

COLE: I know, we can confuse 'em!

KASIRA: What?

COLE: Split up!!! You go left!!!

(Looking uncertain, she nodded.)

KASIRA: Um... okay!

(As they reached the fork, Cole yelled out.)

COLE: Go!!!

(With that he leant over and darted down the right fork, followed by Kasira.)

COLE: What are you doing???

KASIRA: Splitting up was a stupid idea!!!

COLE: But we agreed...

KASIRA: I was humouring you, we didn't have time to argue!

COLE: You... manipulative...

(He looked behind him and spotted their pursuers race round the bend towards them. Abandoning his speech, he grabbed Kasira's hand and encouraged her to run faster.)

KASIRA: I'm doing the best I can!!!

(Being a great deal fitter, the bounty hunters were having no trouble at all as they continued to gain.)

ANDERS: Any time now, men!

(With that, he held back his head as he raced along the dimly lit passageway.)

ANDERS: Cole Fishman!!! Give it up, Cole Fishman!!!

(Not even about to consider the idea for a split second, Cole yelled back.)

COLE: Piss off!!!

(He faced Kasira, who rolled her eyes.)

KASIRA: Don't apologise!!!

(As the chase continued, Anders tried again.)

ANDERS: Stop, villain!!! You're under arrest...

(He was interrupted by Kasira yelling back.)

KASIRA: No, he isn't, you are!!!

(Cole gave her an odd look.)

COLE: He's under arrest?

KASIRA: I couldn't think of anything to say!

COLE: Yes... it showed!

(The voice piped up again.)

ANDERS: You're wanted for the kidnap of Kasira Ashford!!! Give yourself up!!!

(Again, Kasira yelled.)

KASIRA: He didn't kidnap anyone!!!

(Anders yelled back.)

ANDERS: Who cares? The Sudereva wanted list says he did, so he did!

COLE: So you only care about the reward? What about the truth?

(Anders laughed and turned to Morten as he charged forth.)

ANDERS: Doesn't he know anything about bounty hunters? Truth? Next thing you know he'll be expecting justice!

(Cole continued.)

COLE: Well? Unless your only goal is money, desist and leave us alone!!!

(And so, the chase went on.)

COLE: It was worth a try!

(With the superior fitness of the bounty hunters beginning to tell, the gap between the hunter and the hunted began to decrease. Well aware of the possibility of imminent capture, Kasira tried desperately to think of another solution as they approached another fork in the road.)

KASIRA: Um... maybe we *should* split up this time!

COLE: I think so! You go left.

KASIRA: Okay... good luck Cole... I love you!

(Cole tried to force a smile.)

COLE: Right back at you, darling, good luck!!!

(With that, they raced up to the fork and let go of each others hands. Hoping their tactic would pay off and confuse the enemy, they were most dismayed to find that the fork was

in fact merely a stalactite. Looking somewhat bewildered, they ran either side of it and met up behind it.)

COLE: Eh?

KASIRA: Great! That went well!

(As the bounty hunters clattered around both sides of the stalactite, Kasira and Cole found themselves approaching a huge circular room at the end of the passageway.)

COLE: What the hell?

KASIRA: Looks like a dead end!!!

COLE: We're screwed!

(Kasira looked around desperately then glared at Cole.)

KASIRA: I've had an idea!!!

(Preparing their weapons as they raced along the passageway, the bounty hunters stared straight ahead, ready to implement their capturing techniques.)

STEFAN: Who's got the foot clamps?

JAN: That'd be me!

STEFAN: Excellent!

(Anders squinted ahead, looking almost confused.)

ANDERS: Looks like a round room ahead!

MORTEN: Hey, where'd they go?

ANDERS: Straight ahead probably, just keep going!

PAL: Yeah, but we could see 'em a minute ago!

ANDERS: They can't have got far!

(With that, they charged from the passageway into the circular area ahead.)

ANDERS: It's a dead end!!!

(Looking completely stumped, they turned back to face the passageway.)

ANDERS: Bastards!!!

(They were not amused to see Kasira and Cole racing away, having hidden either side of the passageway entrance waiting for them to charge past. Fuming like a wild beast, Anders pointed at them and bellowed.)

ANDERS: Get them!!!

(Feeling like a pack of jackass's, Anders and his men raced after them yelling obscenities. Kasira and Cole, on the other hand, were only too relieved to have survived another close shave.)

COLE: I can't believe they fell for that!

KASIRA: Of course they did, men are stupid!

COLE: Hey!

KASIRA: Except you, of course!

(Cole waved an angry finger towards her.)

COLE: I'll show *you* who's stupid!!!

(With that he banged his head on low lying stalactite.)

COLE: Ow!!! Man, that hurt!

KASIRA: At least you got to show me who was stupid!

COLE: It's a good thing you're pretty!

(As the two of them raced away, the bounty hunters again, began to catch up. Safe in the knowledge that the two of them couldn't run forever, they confidently sprinted forth to within a few metres of their terrified targets.)

ANDERS: You might as well quit now!!!

(Looking at each other, with desperation etched into their faces, Kasira and Cole sped up.)

KASIRA: You'll never take us alive!!!

PAL: That's too good an invitation to turn down!

(With that, he began to raise his crossbow.)

ANDERS: Stop that!

(Forcing Pal to relent as he did so, Anders offered them another chance.)

ANDERS: This is your last opportunity to give yourselves up...

COLE: Then you'll leave us alone?

ANDERS: Fine, have it your way!

(As they belted down the poorly lit passage, Kasira looked towards Cole with terror in her eyes. With the enemy only a few feet behind and an endless stretch of corridor in front, she realised the game was up. With resistance becoming more and more futile, she suddenly grabbed hold of Cole's arm and ordered him to stop.)

KASIRA: Cole!!! Time to stop running!!!

(Hearing her seriousness, Cole nodded and the two of them screeched to a halt.)

COLE: You're right!

(Looking dejected, they turned to face the rapidly advancing bounty hunters.)

KASIRA: Now!!!

(With that she dived to the floor, leaving Cole looking bewildered.)

COLE: Eh?

(In their sheer determination to be the one to make the arrest, the bunched up pack of bounty hunters went flying over the top of the prostrate Kasira as they reached out for Cole. Thrusting himself against the wall, Cole watched as one by one they reached for him then whizzed past him and landed in a heap. Jumping to her feet, Kasira turned to Cole.)

KASIRA: Come on!!!

(And just like that, they took off back the way they'd came.)

KASIRA: It worked, that was great!

(Cole said nothing, his confused expression said it for him.)

KASIRA: Why didn't you duck?

COLE: You never told me what you were gonna do, I thought we were surrendering!

KASIRA: Yeah, as if!

(She then pouted and rubbed her painful side.)

KASIRA: I got trampled on.

COLE: Well, of course you did!

(By now, the men from Sudereva were furious. Quickly climbing to their feet, they dusted themselves down and looked along the passage at the two of them racing away.)

ANDERS: No more, Mr nice guy!

(With a sneer, he drew his sword and yelled.)

ANDERS: Charge!!!

(With that, he and his embittered warriors, charged after them in fits of rage.)

ANDERS: We've been foolish!

MORTEN: Yes, we have!

ANDERS: We underestimated them Morten, they're good!

PAL: Can I kill them now?

ANDERS: Maybe... no, still no!

(He shook his head.)

ANDERS: We've made ourselves look like amateurs, we showed them no respect... next time, we'll do it properly! Like professionals!!!

(Feeling confident of their potential to escape the cave and avoid capture, Kasira and Cole set a blistering pace as they raced along the passageway. All that stood between them and the exit was geography.)

KASIRA: Which way?

COLE: I think it was left!

KASIRA: Okay!

COLE: But then it could have been Right!

KASIRA: Make your mind up!

COLE: Left, left, let's go left!

(As they raced through the endless labyrinth of identical passageways, they slowly became more and more confused.)

KASIRA: We've been here before!

COLE: No we haven't!

KASIRA: You sure?

COLE: No!

KASIRA: Great!

COLE: Don't panic, let's just keep going!

(With that they raced down another passageway.)

KASIRA: Hang on, this seems familiar!

COLE: Yeah, I see what you mean!

(They raced from the passageway into another circular room.)

KASIRA: This is no bloody good, it's a dead end!

COLE: Perfect, come on!

(They turned swiftly, receiving quite a start. Much to their horror, the gang of bounty hunters were lined up before them. Looking in no mood to be trifled with, they stared angrily at the young lovers before them. Feeling utterly dejected, Kasira hung her head and huddled up to an angry looking Cole. As Anders' expression turned from an angry frown to an arrogant smile, he placed his hands on his hips and chuckled.)

ANDERS: Well, well, it looks like we've finally got your attention!

(Cole scowled back.)

COLE: What do you want?

ANDERS: You know damn well what we want!

(He smiled.)

ANDERS: So, does your wife know about this little tramp you're with?

COLE: This little tramp *is* my wife!

KASIRA: Oi!

COLE: You know what I mean!

ANDERS: What happened to the girl you allegedly kidnapped?

KASIRA: That was me!

(Anders chuckled.)

ANDERS: You must think I'm a complete idiot!

KASIRA: Very much so!

ANDERS: Hey!!!

(He stepped forward and shouted.)

ANDERS: You're in no position to get cocky, you fucking mouthy bitch!

COLE: Um, could you not use language like that around my wife?

(Anders shook his head.)

ANDERS: So where's the black girl?

COLE: Black girl?

ANDERS: Don't be funny, the Ashford girl!

KASIRA: I'm Kasira Ashford!

(Anders looked baffled.)

ANDERS: But... you're a slanted-eye!

KASIRA: And you're a...

(Cole placed his hand over her mouth and gave a cheesy grin.)

COLE: Forgive her she's tired... ow!!!

(He let go of Kasira and shook his painful finger.)

COLE: Why'd you bite me?

KASIRA: You gagged me...

ANDERS: Enough!!!

(Silence filled the room.)

ANDERS: Amazing, I thought you'd be black, I had no idea you were one of these slanted-eyed things!

STEFAN: I expected her to be white, seeing as she was adopted and lived in Sudereva.

(The glare he was receiving from Anders sent him into immediate silence.)

ANDERS: Well, it's hardly relevant now... you'll be returned to Sudereva, Cole Fishman... as for you Kasira, she's all yours Morten!

(Morten grinned and took a step forward, when a deep growl filled the room, causing it to vibrate.)

ANDERS: What was that?

(Looking terrified, they all scoured the room with their eyes.)

ANDERS: It was nothing... carry on men!

(Before they could move, however, it happened again.)

JAN: I don't like this!

(Looking terrified for so many reasons, Kasira huddled back into her husband.)

KASIRA: Don't let them hurt me, Cole!

(Clearly upset by Kasira's anguish, Cole glared at Anders only to see him staring back, gaping like a fish.)

COLE: What's the matter with you?

(Offering no reply, Anders and his men about turned and scarpered down the passage way. As they screamed in terror, Cole looked curiously over his shoulder.)

COLE: Oh, I see!

(He turned back to face the passageway.)

COLE: Kasira?

KASIRA: Yeah?

COLE: There's a nasty looking beast behind us, with huge teeth and razor sharp claws!  
(She looked up into his eyes.)



KASIRA: Shall we run like fuck?

(Cole nodded gently.)

COLE: I think we should!

(With that, they took off like rockets down the passageway. Releasing a deafening roar, the beast reared up on its hind legs and gave chase.)

Without even the slightest inkling of which way to go, Kasira and Cole very quickly found themselves chasing after the fleeing bounty hunters. Causing the walls to shake as it bounded after them, the beast started to gain at a tremendous rate. Running just behind Anders and his men, Cole turned to Kasira.)

COLE: I don't suppose you brought the holy dagger?

KASIRA: Oh, silly me, I usually take it with me to the amphitheatre religiously!

COLE: I only asked!

(As the vicious looking creature contained to gain, they were only to relieved to see the exit up ahead. Putting their heads down, the bounty hunters and their two targets sprinted for all they were worth. Not about to miss out on a good meal, however, the beast did likewise.)

ANDERS: Almost there!!!

(As they reached the exit, Tarquin smiled to welcome them back.)

TARQUIN: How did it go, guys?

(He looked completely baffled as they continued to speed past him. Shrugging with bewilderment, he looked inside the cave.)

TARQUIN: Fuck that!!!

(And he too, joined them in sprinting from the cave towards the forest. Bringing up the rear, it wasn't difficult for Kasira and Cole to figure out who were most likely to become the beasts meal.)

KASIRA: It's gonna eat us!!!

COLE: It might give up!!!

KASIRA: Even if it does, we're still in deep shit... we're chasing the bounty hunters!

(They looked at each other, catching a glimpse of the beast breathing down their necks in the corner of their eyes.)

BOTH: Shit!!!

COLE: Sorry!

(As the beast gained, they knew they were running out of time. Looking desperate for inspiration Kasira suddenly seemed enlightened.)

KASIRA: Fork off?

COLE: Excuse me?

KASIRA: Fork. Against the wall!

(Cole looked deeply disturbed for a moment until he suddenly realised what she was getting at.)

COLE: Oh right, I get you!

KASIRA: Finally! On three... one, two, three!!!

(With that, they both dived to one side and thrust themselves against the cave walls.

With a veritable feast of human flesh still in front of it, the beast raced on out of the cave in pursuit of the bounty hunters instead. Looking mightily relieved, Kasira and Cole laughed.)

KASIRA: That ought to keep them busy!

COLE: I should imagine so!

(He put his arm around her.)

COLE: Come on, we've got to get to Neitama!

(Cheered by the sight of the silvery moon, they rushed around the front of the cave entrance and headed down the gouged out channel. Like a pathway cut into the hillside, the channel's steep walls with high rocky banks above would offer little chance of escape if cornered. Bearing this in mind, they sprinted on with concentration etched into their faces. In the meantime, the beast was still bearing down on the bounty hunters.)

ANDERS: It's gaining men!!!

MORTEN: Summon something, Alero!

ALERO: Um... okay!

(Just then, the beast swept a paw towards Stefan.)

STEFAN: No!!!

(Seeing his comrade in trouble, Pal immediately reached for his loaded crossbow.)

PAL: Not in this lifetime!!!

(With that, he fired a thick iron bolt towards its head.)

PAL: Come on, let's teach this fucker a lesson!!!

(As the bolt crashed deep into the beast's cranium, it reared up in agony.)

PAL: Fancy another???

(With blood and pieces of its shattered skull jetting from its head, Pal fired another bolt.)

PAL: Ha, ha!!! Not so fierce now, are ya?

(Thudding to its death beneath a tree, the beast continued to send jets of blood from its gaping wounds, splashing all around. Enjoying himself immensely, Pal reached for another bolt.)

ANDERS: Pal, it's dead, Pal!

PAL: I'm taking no chances!!!

(Before he could reload, however, Anders grabbed the crossbow.)

PAL: Hey!!!

ANDERS: Stop it, you fuckin' loony!

PAL: But...

ANDERS: Stop it!

(He hung his head and complained under his breath.)

ANDERS: Okay, nice work Pal, but we've gotta get back after Cole!

STEFAN: Thanks, Pal, you're a... pal!

ANDERS: Come on, we've got a shit load of catching up to do!!!

(Determined to recapture them, they immediately ran back towards the gouged out channel. Feeling very much cheated by Cole's escape, they were only certain of one thing, he wouldn't be so lucky next time.

As the bounty hunters charged back towards the Kinichi caves, Dakuri, Haykie and Micalov were gaining fast. Although unaware of their close proximity to the bounty hunters, Dakuri especially, felt confident of catching them. Micalov for his part, was becoming increasingly riddled with guilt about previous events, largely because of the guilt trip Dakuri had sent him on since they'd bumped into him.)

DAKURI: Surely we'll catch them up soon!

HAYKIE: It's long overdue, Dakuri!

DAKURI: Maybe if this fool wasn't slowing us down...

(He gestured towards Micalov.)

MICALOV: I'm not slowing...

DAKURI: Silence! You may only speak when spoken to!

(He hung his head.)

HAYKIE: You know, you're really mean Dakuri!

(Dakuri looked hurt.)

DAKURI: Mean? Me? Why do you say this?

HAYKIE: You've treated poor Micalov like dirt!

(Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: Forgive me, Micalov is not worthy of dirt!

HAYKIE: See? There you go again!

DAKURI: My friends are in danger because of this fool, do you expect me to thank him?

HAYKIE: No, but it was an accident! You could at least try to be civil!

(He raised an eyebrow.)

DAKURI: Very well, I'll try... but only to please *you*, Haykie!

(She smiled.)

HAYKIE: Thank you, Dakuri, I knew you weren't a *complete* asshole!

DAKURI: Thank you!

(He suddenly looked baffled.)

DAKURI: What's that supposed to mean?

HAYKIE: Don't get me wrong, you've been great to me these last three months, but tonight I've seen a side of you I...

(She bit her lip.)

HAYKIE: I really don't like!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: I see!

(They ran on in silence.)

HAYKIE: I haven't hurt your feelings have I?

DAKURI: No, only sissies have feelings!

(She grinned.)

HAYKIE: Is that so?

DAKURI: You doubt it?

HAYKIE: Dakuri... if you don't wise up soon, you might just die a lonely virgin!

(Desperate not to be left out of the conversation, Micalov butted in.)

MICALOV: *I'm* a lonely virgin!

(Dakuri seethed.)

DAKURI: Don't speak!!! Especially not to compare me to you!!!

(With a flinch, Micalov allowed himself to fall back.)

DAKURI: Haykie, you make no sense to me!

HAYKIE: All I'm saying is, Dakuri, women want a real man, one who's comfortable enough with his own sexuality, to open up and express his feelings! Without worrying if it might make him look less of a man!

DAKURI: You think I'm not comfortable with my own sexuality?

(He swung his head at her.)

DAKURI: Are you calling me an arse bandit???

HAYKIE: No... look, forget it!

DAKURI: But, Haykie...

HAYKIE: Look, all I'm saying is, Dakuri, men with feelings get the women!

(He still looked baffled. With a sigh, Haykie tutted and put it simply.)

HAYKIE: A man without feelings is like a man without a soul! No woman wants that!

(Dakuri frowned.)

DAKURI: Hmm, I think I understand!

(She shook her head in disarray.)

HAYKIE: You really *are* a Neanderthal!

(Again, Micalov tried to gain acceptance.)

MICALOV: Do you think we'll catch them blokes up?

(Before Dakuri could yell at him, Haykie butted in.)

HAYKIE: I hope so Micalov, trouble is, it's hard to see in the dark!

DAKURI: Now be quiet!

(As they raced on through the night time forest, Micalov tried desperately to think of a way to redeem himself. Moment's later, he had an idea.)

MICALOV: A tree!!!

(He received a pair of strange glances.)

DAKURI: Well spotted Micalov, you don't see many of those in a forest!

(He turned away.)

DAKURI: Pillock!

HAYKIE: Tree, Micalov?

MICALOV: Yeah, I'm good at climbing trees...

DAKURI: That's because you have the brain of a monkey!

(Looking hurt, he mumbled bitterly to himself.)

MICALOV: Say's that big ape!

HAYKIE: Micalov?

(He looked up.)

MICALOV: Oh, yeah... I could climb one and see if I can spot them!

(Dakuri sneered.)

DAKURI: Only a fool would even consider it!

HAYKIE: That's a good idea actually!

(Dakuri grimaced.)

DAKURI: Like I said, only fools and intelligent witches would even...

HAYKIE: Shut up, Dakuri!

DAKURI: I like that idea!

(With that, they slowed to a halt at the foot of a tree.)

HAYKIE: Go on then, Micalov!

(She looked around her.)

HAYKIE: Micalov?

(Much to her surprise, she then heard a rustling of leaves above her.)

HAYKIE: Surely not!

(She looked up and sure enough, Micalov was scaling the tree at a blistering pace, even Dakuri seemed impressed.)

DAKURI: Credit where credit's due... No, I can only hate the man!

(Like a squirrel, he reached the extremely narrow point of the treetop in next to no time. Holding tight onto the treetop, he scanned the darkness in front of him. Seeing this, Haykie yelled up.)

HAYKIE: Any sign?

(Shaking with excitement, Micalov yelled back immediately.)

MICALOV: They're there!!! About thirty feet in front of us!!! They're heading down some channel thing!!!

(Upon hearing this, Dakuri turned to Haykie.)

DAKURI: Thirty feet? Let's go!!!

(Haykie yelled up to Micalov as she raced after Dakuri.)

HAYKIE: Nice one, Micalov!!!

(Eager to watch Dakuri and Haykie in action, Micalov held firm in the tree and watched them race towards the entrance of the Kinichi cave. Turning his head to watch the bounty hunters race through the channel beside it, he suddenly felt the tree start to bend forwards.)

MICALOV: What? Eh? Uh-oh!!!

(Spotting the bounty hunters disappear into the channel, Dakuri turned to Haykie.)

DAKURI: This time, nothing can stop us!

HAYKIE: Let's do it! Let's kick some arse!

(As they raced towards the channel, they spotted a tree top bend from out of the forest towards the channel in front of them.)

DAKURI: What's the idiot doing now?

(As they ran, they stared up in amazement at Micalov clinging to the treetop for dear life. Screaming like a little girl as the tree continued to bend under his weight, he closed his eyes and prayed not to hear a snapping sound. Not even considering helping Micalov as an option, Dakuri raced into the channel.)

DAKURI: If he falls on me, I'll kill him!

(Luckily, as the tree bent over the channel, it dumped Micalov on the rocky embankment above it, then pinged back into the woods like a spring. Almost in tears and sweating heavily, Micalov whispered a silent prayer of gratitude, when suddenly, he felt the ground move beneath him.)

MICALOV: Argh!!!

(As Dakuri and Haykie raced into the channel, Haykie looked up at Micalov.)

HAYKIE: Is he all right, do you think?

DAKURI: Like I care!

HAYKIE: Hang on!!! Stop, Dakuri!!!

(Determined to catch the bounty hunters as soon as possible, Dakuri ignored her and raced on.)

HAYKIE: Dakuri!!!

(With horror on her face, she watched Micalov start to slide down the bank towards the channel, screaming for his mother as he tobogganed on the boulders.)

HAYKIE: Dakuri!!! Stop!!!

(Sensing the panic in her tone, Dakuri slowed and turned to face her.)

DAKURI: We don't have time to stop!!!

(With that, he turned round and stood there helpless as a cascade of rocks crashed down into his path, blocking the channel in front of him. Placing his hands on his head in

despair, he looked up at the embankment and saw the cause of the rockslide, Micalov, sliding down the bank riding a giant boulder like at a rodeo.)

MICALOV: Mummy!!! I'm gonna die!!!

(Trying desperately to kick with his feet and slow himself down, he was most relieved when the giant rock came to a halt on top of all the others. Gasping for breath as tears rolled down his cheeks, he turned and looked down to a fuming Dakuri.)

MICALOV: Um... hi, Dakuri!!!

(With the channel completely blocked by the rocks, Dakuri flapped wildly and tried to climb over.)

DAKURI: But, we were so close!!!

(Slipping back, every time he tried to climb, he finally relented and sat on the floor holding his head. Sharing his pain, Haykie placed a caring hand on his shoulder, while Micalov looked down, his bottom lip almost touching his chin.)

MICALOV: I'm sorry!

(Dakuri raised his saddened head.)

DAKURI: You? Are you a curse?

MICALOV: I'm really sorry!

HAYKIE: Hey, sulking isn't going to help, let's get shifting these rocks!

(Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: What for? We're jinxed!

(With an angry sneer, she then kicked his ankle.)

DAKURI: Was that supposed to hurt?

HAYKIE: Yes!!!

DAKURI: Good thing you've got magic then!

(Haykie shook her head.)

HAYKIE: Well, well, Dakuri, I never took you for a quitter! How wrong I was!

(With that, she started to dig the rocks out of their way.)

HAYKIE: You sit there and sulk, I'll save Kasira and Cole!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Sorry! What was I thinking?

(Buoyed by her enthusiasm, Dakuri joined her.)

MICALOV: I'll help!

(Dakuri looked up angrily.)

DAKURI: While you're up there, you might as well jump down the other side and run... because when I get hold of you...

(He shook his fists.)

MICALOV: It was an accident!

(By now almost overwhelmed with guilt, Micalov ignored Dakuri's threat to kill him, and helped to clear the rocks he'd filled the channel with. As they worked silently and swiftly, it wasn't too long before they could climb over. At this point, Micalov turned and fled down the channel being chased by Dakuri.)

DAKURI: I'm gonna slaughter you good and proper, you little...

(Haykie raced on behind, desperate to avoid any bloodshed.)

HAYKIE: Dakuri, remember to breathe!!!

(With Dakuri's incredible fitness, it was only a matter of minutes before he caught Micalov. Thrusting the terrified imbecile against a tree, he yanked his sword from its sheath.)

DAKURI: Twice Micalov, twice you have stopped us from saving Kasira and Cole!

(Blubbering like a baby, Micalov tried to appeal to Dakuri's better nature.)

MICALOV: I'm an orphan!

(Dakuri gritted his teeth.)

DAKURI: You've already told us about your parents!!!

MICALOV: Oh... I'm going to die soon, Dakuri!!!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Sooner than you think!!!

(With that, he thrust his sword with full force towards Micalov's neck.)

MICALOV: Mummy!!!

(With a loud thud, the sword bounced off of him and sent a vibration back down the handle.)

DAKURI: Ow!!!

MICALOV: W-w-what?

(While Dakuri continued to vibrate, Haykie put her hands on her hips.)

HAYKIE: Dakuri, I've cast a protective shell on him! Now leave him alone!

(Dakuri looked seriously narked.)

HAYKIE: I can't believe you were actually going to kill him!

(Dakuri grinned sheepishly.)

DAKURI: Nonsense, I knew you'd cast a shell on him... I just wanted to scare him!

HAYKIE: Lying bastard!

(Hoping nobody would notice the wet patch in his trousers, Micalov pointed towards the end of the channel.)

MICALOV: Um... this way?

(Haykie nodded.)

HAYKIE: Come on Dakuri, Kasira needs us!

(And once again they headed off in search of the bounty hunters. Feeling frustrated to the point of wanting to scream, Dakuri headed forth in total silence, staring straight ahead. Haykie and Micalov ran along behind him as they came out of the channel and headed back into the darkened forest.

By now, thanks to the events inside Kinichi cave, Kasira and Cole had managed to put a good distance between themselves and their pursuers. Leaning on each other as they stumbled forth with exhaustion, they constantly checked behind them for bounty hunters. Keeping an eye out for any sight of a rising sun, they wearily maintained their forward momentum, desperately hoping that Neitama village would appear into view.)

KASIRA: Surely, it can't be much further!

COLE: I hope not!

KASIRA: You don't think we've gone past it, do you?

(Cole shivered.)

COLE: I don't want to even think about that!

KASIRA: It's possible, we've been running all night!

COLE: Yeah, but this is a damn big forest!

(She nodded.)

KASIRA: Yeah, with crevices, mountains and caves... and who knows what other obstacles?

COLE: Well, hopefully we're almost there now!

(She looked up at him with a sincere face.)

KASIRA: I know you're only saying that to comfort me!

(He shrugged in denial.)

KASIRA: Truth is, you haven't got a clue *where* we are! Have you?

(Not wanting to dishearten her, he stared ahead.)

COLE: Come on, we can make it!

(She smiled.)

KASIRA: I thought as much!

(Sensing her dwindling enthusiasm and rapidly evaporating energy levels, Cole tried to psyche her up.)

COLE: Kasira?

(She looked up at him with glazed eyes.)

KASIRA: Hmm?

COLE: You know what would be the biggest disaster that could happen now?

(She shook her head.)

KASIRA: An earthquake?

COLE: No, not at all...

KASIRA: What then?

COLE: For us to have come this far, and get caught now!

(She looked thoughtful.)

COLE: After all we've been through, the close calls, the energy we've used, it doesn't bare thinking about!

(She smiled half-heartedly.)

KASIRA: That'd be awful! But, no-one could say we didn't give it our best!

(Cole shook his head.)

COLE: No, no, no... you're supposed to say, damn right, there's no way I'm gonna let 'em catch us now!

KASIRA: Oh... okay! Damn right, there's now way I'm gonna let 'em catch us now!

COLE: Are you humouring me again?

KASIRA: Of course!

COLE: Great!

(He looked thoroughly rattled.)

KASIRA: Don't misunderstand me Cole, I'm gonna give it everything I've got left, and it'll be a total shit if we get caught, but let's face it, every step is a bonus!

COLE: A bonus?

KASIRA: Yeah, we're being hunted by proper soldier types! Even if they are a bit slipshod, this is what they do for a living!

(Cole nodded thoughtfully.)

COLE: Yeah, I see your point, every step *is* a bonus!

(The slight cheer they'd gained from their new perspective, however, quickly evaporated into thin air as they raced from the cover of the trees onto the bank of the Great Enaki River. Almost collapsing with horror, they slowly came to a halt and gaped in



despondency across the wide moonlit river. Placing her head in her hands, Kasira sunk to her knees and started to cry.)

KASIRA: One thing after another... this is too much!

(Cole continued to stare at the opposite river bank and sighed.)

COLE: I don't suppose you brought a boat, did you?

(Angrily staring up at him, Kasira suddenly laughed.)

KASIRA: I left my canoe in my hand bag!

(Chuckling in defeat, Cole knelt beside her as they continued to giggle for a while.)

COLE: We're screwed!

(They laughed out loud as if slowly going mad.)

KASIRA: Do you fancy a screw before they catch us?

(Cole chuckled harder as Kasira's face fell dead straight.)

KASIRA: Hey, I was serious!

(Fearing he'd upset her, he apologised unreservedly.)

COLE: Sorry, sorry, I thought you were...

(Unable to maintain a straight face, she cracked up with laughter.)

COLE: What? Oh! Good one!

(He too started to laugh.)

KASIRA: What idiot left a river there?

COLE: Of all they places to put it, eh?

(They chuckled insanely at any little comment, until tears started to roll down their faces.)

KASIRA: It's not a complete disaster, if we grab an owl, we could hitch a ride!

(Cole chuckled some more.)

KASIRA: We could, or maybe we get a mole to tunnel under it!

(Cole held his aching sides.)

COLE: Next you'll suggest swimming across!

(With a single synchronised laugh, they suddenly looked dead serious.)

KASIRA: Can you swim?

COLE: Not one bit! You?

KASIRA: Not even slightly!

(With that, they ran for all they were worth into the water ahead.)

KASIRA: If I start to drown...

COLE: You're not about to ask me to save you, are you?

KASIRA: You could try!

COLE: Okay, but it works both ways!

(Having waded and splashed until they were up to their waists, they then attempted to swim across. Floating on her back and kicking her feet to create momentum, Kasira hadn't spotted Cole, doing what could only be described as a doggie paddle for amputees. Almost doing a kangaroo impression with his arms, he tried to thrash with his elbows, as a result, he kept sinking or going around in circles. Having almost drowned twice, he popped his head up and saw Kasira floating confidently on her back. Remembering their float together in the forbidden lake, he too laid on his back and kicked his way across the water. With his macho pride as an inspiration, he soon found himself floating past Kasira.)

COLE: This is fun!

KASIRA: No it's not, this water's freezing!

COLE: At least it isn't raining!

KASIRA: I just wish I could see behind me!

(Cole thought.)

COLE: Yeah, we can't tell how far it is, like this!

KASIRA: That's not a problem, I'm more worried about... creatures!

(Cole's eyes bulged.)

COLE: Creatures???

(With the thought of water beasts on his brain, Cole suddenly learned to swim like a fish. In a matter of moments he found himself climbing up the river bank. Shaking a victorious fist, he took a deep breath and turned to face Kasira.)

COLE: Kasira?

(As he looked out for her, all he could see before him was the calm tranquil water flowing softly by. Looking more than slightly concerned, he stepped up to the waters edge and yelled.)

COLE: Kasira???

(As he desperately scanned the river for a sign, Kasira suddenly splashed up to the surface screaming for help. Without a second thought for his own safety, he raced into water and swam desperately towards her. With terrified eyes she yelled out.)

KASIRA: Snake!!!

(And again she disappeared under the water. Running purely on adrenaline, Cole dived beneath the surface to see Kasira being dragged under by some kind of serpent. Without a clue what to do next, he swam towards her and grabbed a hold of her hands. While she flapped in a panic with the serpent wrapped around her waist, Cole could only try to yank her to the surface. Going red in the face as he battled against the serpents will, Kasira started to kick her feet as best she could. Moments later, they broke the surface with a chaotic splash.)

COLE: You okay???

(In a choked voice, she screeched out.)

KASIRA: It's squeezing the piss out of me!!!

(Realising that drowning wasn't the only danger, Cole gave the aquatic beast a deft chop with the blade of his hand as soon as a part of it rose from the water.)

COLE: Bastard!!!

(With that, he did it again. Obviously feeling some discomfort from Cole's attacks, the creature released its tight grip on Kasira's waist. Not needing a second invitation, she immediately attempted to swim away as best she could.)

COLE: Damn it!!!

(He watched with horror as the serpent circled in the water then gave chase again.

Swimming for all he was worth, he put himself between Kasira and the creature, only for it to swim through his legs and target Kasira specifically.)

COLE: What the?

(Almost reaching the river bank, she climbed to her feet and desperately tried to wade out when suddenly, the disgusting serpent grabbed her boot in its jaws.)

KASIRA: Argh!!! Get off!!!

(As she struggled to pull her foot away, Cole rushed from the water and proceeded to use his best martial arts moves. With two swift punches and a venomous kick, the beast

screeched in a high pitch tone and retreated swiftly to the river, leaving a sharp fang in the sole of Kasira's boot. As she gaped in shock at the water, Cole grabbed her hand and lead her to the relative safety of the river bank, where she slumped to her backside. With her shock and distress clearly visible, Cole put his arm around her as she stared ahead.)

COLE: Okay darlin' it's over now!

(Her lips quivered as she spoke quietly.)

KASIRA: I thought I was gonna die!

(He held her tighter.)

COLE: No way, there's no way I'd let you die!

(She placed her head on his shoulder.)

KASIRA: You saved me!

COLE: Yeah, I'm a hero!

KASIRA: Yes, yes you are!

COLE: If them damned bounty hunters didn't have so many weapons, I'd save you from them too!

(She looked up at him.)

KASIRA: You know, that's actually true!

(He nodded.)

KASIRA: If they took us on in a fist fight, we'd kick the shit out of them!

COLE: I know, but unfortunately for us, they *do* have all those weapons!

(She hung her head.)

KASIRA: Our luck has to run out sooner or later, you know that don't you, Cole?

COLE: No! I've got the feeling we might fluke it all the way to Neitama!

KASIRA: You reckon?

(He climbed to his feet.)

COLE: Only one way to find out!

(He offered her his hand. Looking up, she smiled and let him pull her to her feet.)

KASIRA: I don't know why Cole, but you give me confidence!

COLE: Like you said, I'm a hero!

(And with that they left the moonlit river behind and headed straight into the woods, chatting with renewed hope.)

KASIRA: Hero, eh?

COLE: It's true!

KASIRA: You're not going to be slow in mentioning it from now on either, are you?

COLE: I might bring it up once or twice, maybe!

(As they disappeared into the blackened wilderness, the bounty hunters emerged from the woodland the other side of the river. Hardly hesitating, Anders pointed to Jan.)

ANDERS: Help the midget, Jan!

ALERO: I have a name, you know!

JAN: But Anders, why do I keep getting stuck with him?

ANDERS: Sorry?

JAN: I had to baby-sit him at the crevice, lift him down the cliff and carry him out of the cave, can't someone else do it?

(Anders looked a tad peeved.)

ANDERS: When I give you a job Jan, I expect you to carry it out!!!

(Jan hung his head.)

JAN: Sorry guv!

(And with no more ado, they marched straight into the water and started to swim across as if it was no big deal. Sitting on Jan's back, the summoner midget Alero, looked all around at the calm moonlit water and the endless stretches of trees either side and sighed a peaceful sigh.)

ALERO: This country is beautiful, I have to say it!

(He looked up at the silhouettes of the hills and mountains and smiled again before squinting at some ripples in the water nearby.)

ALERO: What's that?

(Swimming along at a decent pace, Jan replied in a temper.)

JAN: I'm too busy to look right now!!!

(As Alero continued to watch the ripples, a look of fear filled his face.)

ALERO: S-serpent!!!

(As his few remaining hairs stood on end, he grabbed Jan tighter.)

ALERO: Serpent!!!

(While he continued to panic, Pal stopped his swim.)

PAL: Leave it to me!

(With that, he disappeared under the water.)

ALERO: W-what's he doing?

JAN: Don't worry about it, Alero!

(As he watched nervously, Pal resurfaced.)

PAL: Ah, I enjoyed that!

(As Pal continued to resume his swim, Alero was stunned to see the serpent emerge from beneath the water, pouring with blood.)

ALERO: He killed it!

JAN: Like I said, don't worry about it!

(Moments later, completely unfazed by the incident, they arrived at the other side of the river.)

ANDERS: Good job, men!

(And with no fuss whatsoever, they raced into the woods. Having found the river no obstacle at all, they had gained good ground on Kasira and Cole. Displeased with their previous failings, they then marched forth like a well oiled machine at an excellent tempo, determined not to fail again.

Up ahead of them, Kasira and Cole, continued to push themselves to the limit, feeling buoyed by their, so far, exceptional fortune.)

KASIRA: I'm sick of the sight of trees!

COLE: Me too!

KASIRA: I miss Sudereva!

COLE: I know what you mean, oh for a concrete jungle, eh?

(She looked full of wonder.)

KASIRA: Filthy streets, piles of litter...

(Cole's eyes glazed as he reminisced with her.)

COLE: Dogs peeing in the street...

KASIRA: The foul stench of the texture mills...

COLE: Muggers and pickpockets...

(They gave each other a warm smile.)

KASIRA: I love trees!

COLE: Me too!

KASIRA: They just look funny at night!

COLE: That's 'cause you can't see 'em!

KASIRA: We'd probably appreciate it more, if we weren't being hunted down like common sheep!

COLE: Eh? Nobody hunts sheep!

(She sneered.)

KASIRA: You know what I mean!

(He grinned.)

COLE: Do you realise Kasira, if we'd just hid the first time they lost sight of us, we could have let 'em go past us and doubled back to Namki village!

(She screwed up her face as she absorbed his words.)

COLE: Then we could have got Dakuri and none of this would have happened!

KASIRA: It's easy to be wise after the event!

COLE: Isn't it just?

KASIRA: Maybe we should hide *now*!

(Cole shook his head.)

COLE: What? And go back to Namki village?

KASIRA: Yeah!

COLE: That's crazy talk Kasira, Neitama's nearer now!

(She gave him a filthy look.)

KASIRA: Did you call me crazy?

COLE: No!

KASIRA: Good! Better not have!

COLE: I just said you were *talking* crazy, it's further to go back than it is to keep going!

(As they ran, she slapped him around the head.)

KASIRA: That's for calling me crazy!

(Rubbing his head, he gave her a scornful glance.)

COLE: Hitting me proves you're not, does it?

(Following an exchange of angry expressions, they both smiled and ran on, grinning.)

Thanks to the delay caused by Micalov, Dakuri's party were by now someway behind and desperate to catch up. Giving it a concerted effort, Micalov gamely kept up as Dakuri and Haykie raced from the woods and finally arrived at the Great Enaki River. Taking a long look at the extremely wide waterway before them the three of them expressed very different views.)

MICALOV: We'll never be able to cross that!!!

HAYKIE: We might be able to! I've got an idea!

DAKURI: You two think about it, I'm crossing the river!

(With that, he strode towards the water.)

HAYKIE: What are you doing?

DAKURI: I'm swimming for it!

(Micalov looked alarmed.)

MICALOV: But, I can't swim!

(Dakuri turned and spoke with a dead straight face.)

DAKURI: Oh dear, what a shame, oh well, I guess this is where we part company!

(He turned to Haykie.)

DAKURI: Come Haykie, I know *you* can swim!

(And without another word, he turned and raced into the river. Hanging his head,

Micalov spoke quietly.)

MICALOV: He's right, I've held you back enough!

(He wiped away a tear.)

MICALOV: Go Haykie, do what you have to do, don't worry about me... I'll be okay!

(He turned and ran a distressed arm across his forehead and looked up to the sky. Placing her unimpressed hands on her hips, Haykie shook her head.)

HAYKIE: If you were on stage I'd be throwing tomatoes by now!

(He turned and tried to look innocent.)

MICALOV: I've got no idea what you mean!

HAYKIE: Don't play the martyr with me! You know damn well I won't leave you here!

(He gave her a pathetic toothy grin.)

MICALOV: Was it that obvious?

HAYKIE: Just shut up and stand still!

MICALOV: What? Why?

(Not bothering to answer, she fired magic at him. Closing his eyes and cowering into a ball, Micalov shivered in fear.)

HAYKIE: You can open your eyes now!

(Nervously, he opened one eye.)

MICALOV: Eh?

(He stood up straight and looked bewildered.)

MICALOV: What's this?

(Haykie stepped up to him and smiled.)

HAYKIE: I've encased you in a protective bubble!

MICALOV: A bubble?

HAYKIE: Yes, don't tell me you don't know what a bubble is!

MICALOV: Of course I do!

HAYKIE: Well, with that and the protective shield you're wearing, you'll be fine!

(He shrugged and tried to speak.)

MICALOV: I... I...

HAYKIE: Don't get it?

MICALOV: Precisely!

HAYKIE: All will be revealed, Micalov, now relax!

(With that, she ran towards him with her arms outstretched. Under the mistaken idea that he was getting lucky, Micalov held out his arms too.)

MICALOV: Finally, a woman who wants me!!!

(Suddenly, his feet flew off of the ground and the bubble started to roll towards the river.)

MICALOV: What the hell's happening???

(With a splash, he landed in the river.)

HAYKIE: Now do you get it?

(He looked bewildered as he lay in the bubble, floating upon the water.)

MICALOV: Are you gonna swim and push me?

(Haykie grinned and shook her head.)

HAYKIE: No way, it's gonna be far quicker than that!

(Immediately she flicked her fingers and climbed into the bubble with him.)

MICALOV: You're coming with me?

HAYKIE: Sure! It beats swimming!

(She reached her hand out of the bubble and pointed it at the river bank they'd just been standing on.)

HAYKIE: Ready?

MICALOV: For what?

(She grinned the widest of grins.)

HAYKIE: For the ride of your life!!!

(With that, she fired a lightning bolt from her fingers, sending the bubble flying across the river like a formula one powerboat. As Haykie, screamed with excitement, Micalov screamed for salvation and cried. In a matter of seconds, the speeding bubble, whizzed past a swimming Dakuri and took off as it hit the opposing river bank. With a thud, it demolished a tree as it came to a halt just inside the forest. Removing the magic bubble, Haykie ran out to the river bank and danced up and down.)

HAYKIE: Yeah!!! I never get tired of doing that!!!

(Following her like a drunken goose, Micalov waddled from the trees and fell over in a daze.)

MICALOV: That was bloody horrible!

HAYKIE: You loved it!

(Moments later, a furious Dakuri climbed from the river and approached her angrily.)

DAKURI: Stupid woman, you could have killed me!

(Haykie shrugged, still in a state of high spirits.)

HAYKIE: Don't be like that Dakuri, just because we beat you!

DAKURI: It's not because...

HAYKIE: And we're bone dry!

(He shook his head.)

DAKURI: You're like children... let's go, it'll be daylight soon... if anyone cares!

(Still furious, he headed into the woods. Helping Micalov to his feet, Haykie shook her head angrily.)

HAYKIE: He's got a nerve!

(With that, she chased after him, allowing Micalov to fall back down.)

MICALOV: Hey!!!

(As he climbed to his feet to go after them, Haykie ran alongside Dakuri, remonstrating with him angrily.)

HAYKIE: What's your damn problem, Dakuri?

(He paced on, ignoring her.)

HAYKIE: I'm talking to you!!!

(Again he soldiered forth.)

HAYKIE: Don't ignore me, Dakuri!!!

(With that she pushed him, causing him to stumble. Giving her an icy scowl, he stopped and retorted angrily.)

DAKURI: Don't!!!

(Still fuming, she waved her arms around as she bawled him out.)

HAYKIE: I don't know who the fuck you think you are...

(Matching her fury, Dakuri stepped up to her and yelled back.)

DAKURI: I *know* who the fuck I am!!!

HAYKIE: Yeah, so do I, some oversized bully who thinks he can push people around!!!

(Shaking his head with contempt, Dakuri resumed walking away.)

DAKURI: If that's how you see me, fine!

(Haykie shook her head and followed.)

HAYKIE: What else am I supposed to think? You've turned into an ogre since we left Namki village!

(Dakuri sighed.)

DAKURI: I didn't force you to come!

HAYKIE: No, but I wanted to... 'cause I thought... I thought you were a nice guy!

(Giving her a slightly less icy stare, Dakuri raised a curious eyebrow.)

DAKURI: Really?

(Haykie shrugged.)

HAYKIE: You were really nice... you took me in... let me share your home... you treated me like I mattered, you're the first guy who's ever done that!

(He shrugged.)

HAYKIE: But now... I can't believe you even tried to murder Micalov!

DAKURI: Since when did *he* matter?

HAYKIE: To me, everybody matters, Dakuri, even him! I thought that's how you felt too!

(Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: I don't know what to say, maybe I haven't been myself!

HAYKIE: Then why? Why the transformation?

(Looking straight ahead, Dakuri sighed.)

DAKURI: Okay... it's very simple... I have to save Kasira...

(He grimaced angrily and spoke through gritted teeth.)

DAKURI: If anything happens to her...

HAYKIE: We all want to save her Dakuri, you don't reserve the right to feel anxious you know!

(Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: I knew you wouldn't understand!

HAYKIE: Then try me!

(Looking a little unsure, Dakuri refused to look at her as he spoke.)

DAKURI: Kasira, the young Kasira... ever since I was a small boy, I trained to one day guard the chosen one... out of over thirty candidates, I was chosen...

(Haykie nodded along to his words, while Micalov skulked behind pretending he wasn't paying attention.)

DAKURI: Through my late childhood and into my teenage years, I spent every given minute dedicating myself to being her guardian. On the day she was born, my work began in earnest... but after only six months, I had to save her from two followers of evil, and as a result, she was exiled to Sudereva...

HAYKIE: Bummer!



DAKURI: I didn't see her again until her eighteenth birthday approached... as you know, she completed her destiny and killed the beast... and my life's work was over without me even doing anything...

HAYKIE: I think I understand!

DAKURI: Now, when she finally needs me... I can do nothing...

(He shook an angry fist.)

DAKURI: I swear, if anything happens to her...

(With a sympathetic smile, Haykie gave him a hug.)

HAYKIE: I know it's tough Dakuri, but getting angry isn't helping!

(He nodded.)

DAKURI: I know, it's just that, I feel so frustrated... and I... don't know how to react...

HAYKIE: Hmm, Omki Saan really screwed you up emotionally, eh?

(Dakuri looked baffled, then forced a smile.)

DAKURI: He was a shit father!

(Haykie just hugged him tighter.)

HAYKIE: It's okay, now we understand you! Protecting Kasira's almost instinctive!

DAKURI: Thank you, then you understand why you must keep Micalov away from me?

HAYKIE: Sure!

(He nodded.)

DAKURI: By the way, the hug... it's nice!

(Pulling away from his arms, Haykie turned to Micalov.)

HAYKIE: Let's go, Micalov!

MICALOV: I'm coming... oh, and Dakuri... again, I'm sorry!

(Dakuri sighed.)

DAKURI: It's okay... just keep away from me!

(And with that, they resumed running into the woods. With Dakuri feeling a little calmer for airing his frustrations, he became much easier to travel with. So with their heads down, they raced on confidently, keeping a permanent eye open for the bounty hunters as they sprinted on into the darkness.)

*Enaki Forest, Neitama Trail, Sunday Morning, Sunrise...*

(As Kasira and Cole plodded onwards, zigzagging around the plethora of trees in their path, the darkness that had offered them such good cover, suddenly began to lift. Looking more than a little worried they raced onwards as the blackness around them turned into a hazy grey mist. Suddenly, the murky cold air around them exploded into a sea of warmth as the sun raised its head from over the horizon, illuminating patches of the forest floor like spotlights. Morning had broken. Fearing the worst, Cole lead Kasira into the shade of a tight pack of trees.)

KASIRA: Where we going?

COLE: Try and stay in the shade!

KASIRA: Okay!

(She sighed.)

KASIRA: So much for reaching Neitama before daybreak!

COLE: Well we can't be far away!

KASIRA: Yeah, I know, but nor can the bounty hunters be!

COLE: Stay calm, Kasira, this is just another piece of bad luck to add to the pile!

KASIRA: I *am* calm, never thought I'd be sad to see the sun though!

(Without the cover of night to protect them, their race through the forest took on a new sense of urgency, not to mention desperation. As they scrambled desperately ahead looking increasingly anxious, the last thing they needed was to stumble across a tall, grass covered pyramidal building blocking their path. Staring up at the high stepped Inca style structure, they shrugged at each other and began to panic.)

COLE: What the hell's this thing?

KASIRA: How the fuck should I know?

COLE: Which way?

(They quickly scoured the building for the quickest way around it. Grabbing Kasira's hand, Cole started to race to his left.)

COLE: This way!!!

(As if made of cast iron, Kasira held firm and pulled her hand back, sending Cole thudding to the ground.)

KASIRA: There's a doorway!!!

(Looking bewildered, Cole climbed to his feet.)

COLE: Since when were you that strong?

KASIRA: There's a door! Let's go inside!

COLE: After what happened at the Kinichi caves? Are you mad?

(Ignoring him, she headed for the square, stone doorway to the mysterious building.)

COLE: Kasira, what are you doing?

(He raced up to her and pulled her arm.)

COLE: Stop it, we've gotta get out of here!!!

(Raising her voice, she swatted him away as if he was a fly.)

KASIRA: Get off me!!!

(Down on his knees, feeling rather weak, Cole scratched his head.)

COLE: What the hell's got into you, Kasira?

KASIRA: I want to go in there!

COLE: We haven't got time!

(Again, he got to his feet and tried to drag her away via her arm.)

COLE: You'll get us caught!

(This time, Kasira swung her free arm and punched him on the chin. As he crashed to the ground, Kasira disappeared inside. Climbing to his feet, Cole raced to the door and yelled inside.)

COLE: Why are you hitting me, Kasira? What's wrong with you?

(He listened for an answer and heard nothing.)

COLE: Be like that then!

(He folded his arms and sighed angrily, when a distant noise made him pin back his ears and stand tall. Searching with bulging eyes, in the direction of the noise, he spotting the top of a horned helmet marching towards him. Exploding in action, he turned and raced into the pyramid.)

COLE: Kasira!!! They're coming!!!

(As he raced down the narrow passage, the pyramid opened up into a massive room, with an altar to the left and another way out opposite. Taken aback by the sheer beauty of its

painted stone décor, Cole stared wide-mouthed as he paced slowly over to Kasira. Standing solemnly in the centre of the room, Kasira faced the alter and said nothing.)

COLE: Um... you okay Kasira?

(She nodded.)

KASIRA: I didn't mean to hit you, sorry!

(He sneered.)

COLE: Yeah well, we'll talk about that later, in the meantime we've gotta go, the bounty hunters are right behind us!!!

(Still staring ahead, Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: I was drawn to this place, I had to come inside!

(Cole tried to grab her arm.)

COLE: I forgive you, now let's go!!!

(Before he could lay his hand upon her, there was suddenly a blinding flash of white light. Covering her eyes, Kasira looked away.)

KASIRA: Shit!!!

(As the brilliant light faded away, she turned back and squinted towards the alter.)

KASIRA: What was...

(She turned to face Cole and received quite a start. Like a statue, he stood frozen to the spot, reaching for her arm. In a state of disbelief and shock, she touched his face and her lips quivered.)

KASIRA: Cole?

(Suddenly, a female voice filled the room, speaking softly with a hint of an echo.)

VOICE: Do not be afraid Kasira!

(Looking terrified, she spun towards the alter and gaped at the sight of a dazzling white figure levitating before her. Frozen to the spot with fear, she said nothing.)

VOICE: Welcome to the temple of Dietyawa!

(With her heart thumping, she tried to respond.)

KASIRA: T-temple?

(The kindly voice replied.)

VOICE: The temple of Dietyawa welcomes you, Kasira!

KASIRA: You know my name?

VOICE: That is correct, Kasira Fishman!

(Nervously, she gestured at Cole as a shiver shot down her spine.)

KASIRA: What's happened to my Cole?

VOICE: Time has stopped Kasira, he will be fine!

KASIRA: Time has stopped? Who are you?

VOICE: My name is Cigna, keeper of the temple!

KASIRA: W-what do you... I'm scared!

VOICE: Fear not, Kasira, I bring you a gift!

KASIRA: A g-gift?

(From out of Cigna's brilliant white apparition, a small transparent orb floated towards her.)

KASIRA: What's this?

VOICE: A necklace!

(She looked baffled.)

KASIRA: A necklace, what's this for?

VOICE: When all else fails, Kasira, call upon me!

KASIRA: I don't understand!

(Suddenly, the figure started to fade away.)

VOICE: Use the necklace, Kasira!

KASIRA: Wait!!!

(With another blinding flash, Cigna disappeared into thin air. As if nothing had just occurred, Cole grabbed Kasira's arm.)

COLE: Come on!!! They're coming!!!

(Looking baffled, Kasira shook her head and allowed him to drag her towards the opposite exit. Slipping the necklace on as she went, she shook her head.)

KASIRA: Did I imagine that?

COLE: No! They're really coming!

KASIRA: But, Cigna?

COLE: Eh?

KASIRA: Time stopped... I saw a figure!

(Cole stopped and stared into her eyes.)

COLE: Kasira, I know you're tired, but try and keep it together!

(She screwed up her face.)

KASIRA: It's the truth!

COLE: Let's just get the f... I mean, the hell out of here and we can argue about it later!

KASIRA: And we will too!

COLE: Fine, now let's run for it!!!

KASIRA: I'm running, I'm running!!!

(Like bullets from a gun, they sprung from the temple into the bright sunlight.

Squinting as they raced away, they emerged from the woods onto a dirt track about 100 feet in front of the bounty hunters. Spotting them immediately, the bounty hunters offered a war cry and gave chase. With a scream, Kasira and Cole took off as quick as their feet would carry them.)

COLE: I told you not to go in that stupid temple!!!

KASIRA: I couldn't help it, I was attracted to it!!!

COLE: If I used that excuse to snog Haykie, you'd thump me!

KASIRA: I'll thump you anyway, in a minute!!!

(As they raced away from the chasing bounty hunters, Kasira spotted something behind the trees in front of them.)

KASIRA: There's that giant statue!!!

COLE: Neitama village! It's the other side of these trees!!!

KASIRA: We can do it!!!

(Spurred on by the sight of the next village, they picked up the pace and put their heads down for one final push. Gaining ground, thanks to their extraordinary fitness, the bounty hunters sprinted after them, determined to reach them before they could get help from the people of Neitama village.)

ANDERS: This is it, lads!!!

PAL: Can I shoot 'em?

ANDERS: No!!! There's no need, they won't get away this time!!!

JAN: Damn right!

(With nowhere to hide, Kasira and Cole knew, their only chance was to make it into the village, even then, they'd have to find help.)

KASIRA: They're gaining on us!!!

COLE: We can make it!!!

(She looked over her shoulder.)

KASIRA: No we can't!!!

COLE: Well, we're damn well gonna try!!!

(Digging in their heels, they tried to pick up the pace as the bounty hunters gained swiftly.)

ANDERS: Prepare your weapons men!!!

PAL: Now you're talking!

ANDERS: As a deterrent, stupid!

PAL: Of course!

ANDERS: I mean it, if you kill either of them...

PAL: Yeah, yeah, I hear ya!

MORTEN: Don't forget, I want that bitch's front teeth as a souvenir!

(Pal smiled.)

PAL: I'll help you pull 'em!

ANDERS: Okay lads... pincer time!!!

(Immediately, Stefan and Jan took off to the right and Tarquin and Morten darted to the left, while Pal and Anders continued in pursuit.)

PAL: Why do I get lumbered with you?

ANDERS: So that I can keep an eye on ya!

(Looking back as they made their gallant sprint for Neitama village, Kasira looked confused.)

KASIRA: There's only two of them!

COLE: Maybe we wore them out!!!

KASIRA: Maybe!

COLE: Look!!!

(As he pointed in front of them, Kasira looked and smiled heartily.)

KASIRA: We're gonna make it!!!

(As if on the final leg of a victorious relay, they raced out between the last few trees.

With only a small field between them and the village, Cole clenched a triumphant fist.)

COLE: We did it, girl!

KASIRA: We sure did!

(As they smiled in anticipation of reaching the village ahead, Stefan and Jan suddenly jumped out in front of them from the left.)

COLE: What the?

(Before they could even attempt to veer to the right, Tarquin and Morten appeared there. With Pal and Anders arriving from behind, followed by a midget almost dying from exhaustion, Kasira and Cole had no option but to screech to a halt. Their valiant attempt to escape had come to a dire conclusion.

Looking furious and unwilling to accept their capture, they both raised their fighting fists and circled each other, back to back. Having formed their own circle around them, the bounty hunters watched and scoffed, more than delighted with the outcome.)

ANDERS: Look at 'em, you've gotta admire their spirit!

STEFAN: On the other hand, you've gotta say, some people don't know when to give up!  
(Staring coldly, Cole replied.)

COLE: We'll never give up!

(Anders chuckled.)

ANDERS: My, my, how terrifying...

(He raised his hand.)

ANDERS: Well, *I'm* shitting myself, anyone else?

(Grinning insanely, Tarquin and Stefan raised their hands.)

COLE: You think I'm kidding?

ANDERS: No, I think you're over optimistic though!

MORTEN: So near yet so far, eh Cole?

KASIRA: Why don't you fuck off and leave us alone?

(Anders scratched his chin.)

ANDERS: Hmm, I'll put it to a vote, Kasira, shall I?

(He smiled.)

ANDERS: All those in favour?

(His men all grinned at one another.)

ANDERS: Nobody? Oh, well Kasira, we won't be doing that then!

(Cole shook his head bitterly.)

COLE: Then what are you gonna do?

ANDERS: Well, soon we're gonna put you in shackles and take you back to Sudereva, but first my friend Morten has a score to settle!

(Morten looked over at a grinning Anders.)

ANDERS: She's all yours, Morten!

(Morten rubbed his hands with glee, while Cole and Kasira stood in the centre of the circle looking thoroughly dejected.)

MORTEN: I've been looking forward to this!

(Pounding his fist, he strode up to Kasira.)

MORTEN: You bitch!!!

(Before Cole could react, he threw a powerful fist towards Kasira's face. Without flinching, she caught his fist and started to squeeze.)

KASIRA: What was that supposed to be?

(As Morten went bright red and started to grimace, his comrades pointed and laughed.)

ANDERS: Whoa, you *sure* told *her*, Morten!

JAN: Yeah, watch yourself Kasira, there's plenty more where that came from!

(Shaking her head in contempt for the man, Kasira threw him to the floor.)

KASIRA: Faggot!

(Fuming, he scrambled to his feet and reached for his sword, only for Anders to yell at him.)

ANDERS: If you even think about it Morten, I'll let Pal loose on you!

(And so as his comrades mocked him, he fell into line looking furious.)

MORTEN: Bitch!

KASIRA: If you didn't have all those weapons, we could kick the living shit out of all of you!

(Anders nodded.)

ANDERS: Maybe, but the fact remains... we do have all these weapons, and even if you'd reached Neitama village, we have a back up plan!

COLE: What? Run away?

ANDERS: Hardly!

(He pointed to the exhausted Alero.)

ANDERS: A summoner!

(Kasira and Cole looked shocked.)

KASIRA: A summoner?

COLE: Just to catch *me*?

ANDERS: Cole, don't be surprised, by catching you alive, we get twice the bounty, plus it'll mean we've cleared the Sudereva wanted list...

(He couldn't help but smile.)

ANDERS: And that's worth a fortune to us! We weren't gonna take any chances!

JAN: Yeah, now after all that struggling to look after the squatty little gonad, it looks like we won't be needing him!

ALERO: Hey, who are you calling a gonad?

ANDERS: Enough of the chit chat men, let's take this pillock back to Sudereva!

MORTEN: What about the bitch?

(Anders looked thoughtful.)

ANDERS: Hmm...

(He nodded.)

ANDERS: Let's take her with us. Once we're out in the wilderness, we can kill her and leave the body where it'll never be found!

(Cole and Kasira held each other tight.)

KASIRA: I love you!

COLE: Sorry Kasira, I let you down!

KASIRA: No you didn't!

ANDERS: Come on men, chain them up!

(With that, Stefan and Tarquin approached them with clamps and shackles.)

STEFAN: This won't hurt!

TARQUIN: Well, it won't hurt *us*, at least!

(As they reached out to them, Kasira nodded to Cole.)

COLE: Wanna bet?

(With that, he spun around and kicked the shackles out of Stefan's hands. Reacting likewise, Kasira, kicked Tarquin in the face.)

TARQUIN: Argh!!! My teeth!!!

(Seeing them desperately trying to escape, all the bounty hunters raced in at once and bundled them both to the floor. Subdued by the weight of people on top of them, both Kasira and Cole stopped struggling.)

ANDERS: Pin 'em down!

(While two of them pinned each one down, face first in the grass, Anders paced up and down blazing red with anger.)

ANDERS: I've had enough of this, we don't need the bitch!

(He turned to Pal.)

ANDERS: Go on, Pal, enjoy yourself!

(Pal's eyes lit up.)

PAL: About fucking time too!

(Grinning with complete delight, he loaded a bolt into his crossbow.)

PAL: I'm going to enjoy this!

(In no doubt as to what was about to happen, Kasira and Cole desperately tried to struggle themselves free. Although barely able to move, they weren't about to give up without a fight.)

PAL: There!

(With Pal's weapon loaded, Anders stepped up to Cole and grabbed his hair. With a single yank, he lifted Cole's head to face Kasira.)

ANDERS: There, now you've got a perfect view!!!

(He turned to Pal.)

ANDERS: Kill her!

(As tears streamed down Kasira's terrified face, Cole desperately tried to struggle free.)

COLE: No!!! Don't!!! Please!!!

(With his crossbow aimed squarely at Kasira's face, Pal smirked mercilessly.)

PAL: Too late!!!

(With a loud bang, the crossbow, along with half of Pal's arm, flew across the field on the end of a lightning bolt.)

PAL: Argh!!!

(In a state of horrified shock, the bounty hunters spun around to see where on earth the blast had come from. While Pal fell to the earth, bleeding to death, they gaped at the sight of a bright blue witch coming their way.)

ANDERS: What the fuck is that???

(Climbing to their feet, Cole and Kasira gave each other a brief hug, then took full advantage of the confusion to race past their captors and up to Haykie. With a smile as wide as the Great Enaki River, Kasira beamed smugly.)

KASIRA: I'd like you to meet Haykie!

(In a blind panic, the bounty hunters immediately reached for their projectile weapons. Shaking like leaves, they desperately strung their bows or loaded their crossbows and opened fire at her. Like casually swatting flies, Haykie deflected every single one with ease.)

COLE: If I were you, I'd surrender!

(Terrified to the core by the power of the witch, they all immediately placed their hands on their heads and stood perfectly still, while the midget crept away unnoticed.)

ANDERS: Please don't hurt us!!! We surrender!!!

(While Alero hid, the bounty hunters he'd travelled with, froze to the spot in sheer terror at what Haykie might do to them. Acknowledging their surrender, Dakuri and Micalov stepped up from behind her.)

DAKURI: Finally, we've caught you!

ANDERS: Who are you?

(Dakuri shook his head in dismay.)

DAKURI: We pursued them so well, they didn't even know we were there!

(Kasira ran up and hugged him.)

KASIRA: You're here now, that's the main thing!

(Knowing that the game was up, the bounty hunters stood silently awaiting their punishment, feeling almost traumatised by what had proven to be a futile pursuit. Too



exhausted to move almost, Kasira and Cole rested beneath a tree, leaving it to Haykie and Dakuri to tease the terrified bounty hunters.)

KASIRA: All's well that ends well Cole!

COLE: Yup, but it was a little too close for my liking!

KASIRA: Haykie and Dakuri must have been following us all night!

COLE: Yeah, and talk about perfect timing! I thought I was gonna lose you then!

KASIRA: Yeah... but it's over now!

(They looked into each others eyes.)

COLE: You're the greatest thing that ever happened to me!

(With that, they embarked on a long lingering kiss.)

MICALOV: Gross, tongues!

(They both swung their heads in his direction.)

COLE: Micalov? What are *you* doing here?

MICALOV: I've been running after you two all night!

(Kasira stood up and gave him a hug.)

KASIRA: Nice to see you again, hey, why didn't you come to the wedding?

(He shrugged.)

MICALOV: I don't wanna talk about it!

(Placing his hands in his pockets, he wondered off.)

KASIRA: Strange bloke!

COLE: Hmm, isn't he just!

(Sitting back down beside him, she leant against his shoulder and breathed out.)

KASIRA: As soon as Dakuri and Haykie have finished, let's find an inn and go to bed!

COLE: I won't argue with that!

(As a small group of curious villagers gathered nearby to watch the white men, Haykie stood with her lightning hand poised while Dakuri gathered up all their weapons.

Determined to make them suffer, he paced up and down taunting them while they shivered in fear of Haykie's magic.)

DAKURI: So, Haykie, what do you want to do? Turn them into vermin, maybe?

(Haykie cackled, deliberately stereotyping her being a witch. In a fake evil voice, she joined in the verbal torture.)

HAYKIE: I could always shrivel their penises!

(Dakuri laughed.)

DAKURI: Don't be silly!

(He suddenly looked dead serious.)

DAKURI: When I have finished with my sword, they won't have penises to shrivel!

(As they gulped in unison, Haykie shook her head.)

HAYKIE: Wouldn't you rather I turned them into something edible?

(As sweat poured from their faces, they all shook their heads and silently implored her to spare them.)

DAKURI: Fools, she is only teasing!

HAYKIE: Exactly, I'm actually going to melt you!!!

(Overcome with terror, Anders fell to his knees.)

ANDERS: Please, spare us!!! We meant no harm!!!

(He gestured to Pal's blood splattered body.)

ANDERS: You've already killed one of us... please, let us leave!

(Dakuri stepped up to him and grabbed his collar.)

DAKURI: Fool!!! You will go to prison for your crimes!

ANDERS: Prison?

DAKURI: Yes, prison! Where people like you belong!

(With that, he angrily thrust Anders, to the ground. Before he could even begin to bind them in their own shackles however, a loud roar filled the morning sky. Reacting immediately, Dakuri stood tall and faced in the direction of the village.)

DAKURI: What the fuck?

(Stunned into action, they all stared in horror as an enormous white primate climbed from the sea and stamped into the village, firing shards of ice at everyone it saw.)

DAKURI: Haykie???

(As he turned to face an equally distracted Haykie, the bounty hunters took the opportunity to take to their heels and run off into the woods.)

ANDERS: So long, suckers!!!

(Seeing them running away, he covered his head with his hands.)

DAKURI: Bastards!!!

(With Kasira safe, he watched them disappear into the woods and turned to face the enormous furry white gorilla that was ripping up the town.)

DAKURI: First things first, we must destroy that thing!

KASIRA: What the hell is it?

(While they all stood and shrugged, the summoner midget Alero emerged from the nearby bushes, gaping like a condemned man.)

COLE: It's that midget!

KASIRA: The summoner?

(Putting two and two together, Kasira grabbed hold of his neck.)

KASIRA: What have you done?

(He stammered in shock.)

ALERO: The evil witch, he's supposed to attack the evil witch...

HAYKIE: I'm not evil!

(Alero covered his head.)

ALERO: What have I done? I can't control it!!! It'll kill us all!!!

KASIRA: Twat!

(Angrily, she threw him aside.)

KASIRA: Now what?

(Dakuri stood tall.)

DAKURI: Now, we do what we can!

(Nodding, Haykie stepped up beside him.)

HAYKIE: Count me in!

KASIRA: I don't know what use we'll be, but *we're* in, aren't we Cole?

(Staring straight at the beast, he nodded.)

COLE: Definitely!

(Almost desperate for forgiveness, Alero raced over to them.)

ALERO: I can help, I can summon my other two beasts to kill it!

DAKURI: Then who'll kill them?

ALERO: But I might be able to control the other two!!!

(Kasira grabbed his collar and threw him aside again.)

KASIRA: Twat!

DAKURI: Ready, everyone?

HAYKIE: Hold on... where's Micalov?

MICALOV: I'm right here!

(They all looked dumbfounded.)

KASIRA: You're gonna help?

(Micalov nodded sternly.)

MICALOV: It's time I became a man!

(In an almost carbon copy of Kasira and Alero, Dakuri grabbed hold of Micalov and threw him aside.)

DAKURI: Twat!

(Haykie gave him a scornful stare.)

HAYKIE: That was nasty!

DAKURI: Be honest Haykie, this will be difficult enough without *him* in the way!

(Micalov climbed to his feet.)

MICALOV: Actually, I hoped someone would object!

(And with that he ran and hid behind a tree.)

MICALOV: Whenever you're ready!

(As they looked across the small grassy area in front of them and into the town beyond, all they could see was people being frozen and houses being destroyed by the angry snarling primate. With faces bathed in seriousness, Kasira, Cole, Dakuri and Haykie stood in a line sneering aggressively towards the giant monster. Then, with one simple word from a battle ready Dakuri, they all starting racing in a line towards the village.)

DAKURI: Come!

*Enaki Forest, Neitama village, Sunday Morning...*

(As they crossed the field and entered the chaos of the town, terrified people raced towards them, desperate to escape the beasts ferocious carnage. Dodging in and out of the terrified townsfolk, they raced on through what was quickly starting to look like a war ravaged ghost town. While thatched roofs caved in on top of ranges, causing uncontrollable infernos, the beast 'Arctica' continued to pound the buildings with its colossal icicles. Whether they were too tired to be scared or merely determined to do the right thing, Kasira and her allies raced on regardless. Desperate to put an end to the carnage as soon as possible, they raced deeper in the quickly deserting township, arriving in the empty village square.)

DAKURI: He's almost destroyed everything!

COLE: This place seems relatively unharmed though!

(Hearing a tremendous crunch, they all looked urgently to their right.)

KASIRA: Holy shit!

(As they stared across to where the beast had put its enormous hairy fist through a second storey roof, Kasira gasped and covered her mouth with her hands.)

KASIRA: Look at the size of that thing!!!

(As it smashed its way through the building, the entire square shook. Using each other to maintain their balance, Kasira yelled across to Haykie.)

KASIRA: Use fire!!! It's an ice beast!

(Haykie looked baffled.)

HAYKIE: It don't seem very nice from where I'm standing!

KASIRA: I said ice!!!

HAYKIE: Oh!

(She grinned.)

HAYKIE: I thought you said 'nice'!

DAKURI: So did I!

COLE: Yeah, me too!

(Kasira bellowed angrily, struggling to be heard over the sound of the demolition.)

KASIRA: Never mind what you thought I said, use your bloody magic!!!

(Haykie shook her head and yelled back.)

HAYKIE: No, it's best if I use fire!

(As Kasira spammed her forehead in defeat, Haykie stepped forward.)

HAYKIE: I just hope it's powerful enough!!!

(With that, she proceeded to release a sortie of fireballs in the beasts direction. While the others prayed for success, the fireballs crashed into the creature's muscular upper body and petered out spectacularly without even singeing its fur.)

DAKURI: Bugger, it isn't working!!!

KASIRA: That's a shit, that's all we had!

(As Haykie gave up the ghost and lowered her arm, 'Arctica' stopped what it was doing and turned to face them.)

KASIRA: Uh-oh!

COLE: Um... maybe it'll think we were joking!

DAKURI: I doubt it!

(As they stood there staring up at the angry beast, it seemed to smile at them.)

KASIRA: What's it doing?

DAKURI: I dread to think!

(Haykie shook her head.)

HAYKIE: It's acknowledging our challenge!

COLE: What?

HAYKIE: It's accepting our offer of a fight!

DAKURI: I hate to say it, but I think we should make like a Micalov and run for it!

KASIRA: How will that help?

DAKURI: We're fast runners!

COLE: That's ridiculous, it'd catch us no time!

HAYKIE: Cole's right, our only hope is to kill it!

DAKURI: And how do you propose we do that?

HAYKIE: I never claimed I knew how! But I can do one thing!

(With that, she closed her eyes and threw her arms in the air, immediately turning blue.)

KASIRA: I'll never get used to that!

(Turning to face them, Haykie cast a protective shield on them all.)

HAYKIE: That'll give us *some* protection, how much depends on how strong the beast is!

(Watching it rip the roof off of another building, Cole grimaced.)

COLE: Is that strong enough for you?

(With a roar, the foul creature beat its chest then suddenly threw the roof in their direction. Scrambling in all directions across the square, Dakuri, Cole and Haykie raced clear. Kasira on the other hand, could only dive to the ground as the wooden structure crashed over her.)

COLE: Kasira!!!

(Ignoring the danger, he raced towards the tent shaped roof, desperate to see if she was okay. Sensing a kill, 'Arctica' also started to approach, intent on flattening it and Kasira with it. While Dakuri and Haykie looked anxiously on, Cole raced up to the roof.)

COLE: Kasira???

(Spotting a way in, between the cobbles and some thatch, he dived to the ground and crawled inside it.)

COLE: Kasira? Where the...

(Spotting her sitting on the ground looking severely dazed, he raced over to her.)

COLE: Come on, let's get the fuck out of here!!!

(As he tried to pull her up, she giggled.)

KASIRA: You swore!

(Seeing she was obviously delirious, he scooped her up and headed for the gap as the ground started to shake.)

COLE: It's coming!!!

(Kasira giggled again.)

KASIRA: You're really handsome, you are!

COLE: Thank you!

(With that, he placed her back on her feet beside the gap.)

COLE: Go, crawl out!

(Ignoring him, she turned and gave him a seductive look.)

KASIRA: I wanna do it, right here, right now!

(As the crash of the footsteps grew louder, Cole started to sweat.)

COLE: Go on, get going!!!

(She shook her head.)

KASIRA: Not until you tell me you don't love Suzina!

(He flapped.)

COLE: What's she gotta do with it???

(Suddenly, there was a loud crash as Arctica thrust its huge hairy fist through the roof. As debris crashed and bounced around them, Cole bundled Kasira to the floor.)

COLE: Damn it!

KASIRA: No, I like it rough!

(As she tried to straddle him, he desperately attempted to force her through the gap.)

COLE: Come on!!!

KASIRA: Patience!

(Realising, she'd make no sense no matter what he did, he wrapped himself around her and tried to climb through the gap *with* her. Wearing an urgent expression, he pushed their heads though then tried to kick off the ground to get the leverage he needed force their bodies through the gap.)

COLE: Lady luck, I hope you're watching!!!

(With a crash, the beast stamped on the other end of the roof, causing splintered wood to fly all around. Not about to wait for the structure to collapse on them, Cole grimaced and started to force their bodies through the gap harder.)

COLE: We're too wide!!! We're stuck!

(With Kasira trying to writhe as he struggled to push them through, Cole scraped his back against the sharp edge of the wood.)

COLE: Argh!!!

KASIRA: You like that huh?

(As she straddled him tighter, Cole managed to start sliding them out. Going red in the face and pushing with all his might, he suddenly started to panic as he saw the wooden external beam above him start to loosen. Realising they could be crushed by half a tonne of solid oak, he kicked desperately.)

COLE: Come on, I'm getting nowhere!!!

KASIRA: No wonder... I've still got me knickers on!!!

(To make matters worse, as he stared in horror at the loose beam, Arctica's foot came into view. Knowing it was now or never, he pulled his body tight and kicked for all he was worth. At first, his foot slipped, then suddenly they started to slide.)

COLE: I'm sliding!!!

KASIRA: Wee!!!

DAKURI: Let me help!

(Just as Dakuri yanked them out of the hole, the external beam suddenly slipped and crashed down where they'd just been laying.)

COLE: Close!!!

DAKURI: Look out!!!

(Ignoring the roof, Arctica thrust out an enormous foot to stamp on them. Once again, they scrambled in all directions, Cole scooping up the delirious Kasira on the way. Barely racing clear of the foot as it thundered into the ground, they were all sent flying by the vibration. Thinking only of Kasira, Cole leapt straight to his feet and carried her to Haykie.)

COLE: Haykie!!! She's delirious!

(She gave Haykie a filthy look.)

KASIRA: Haykie? What's she doing here? I keep telling you, Cole, a threesome's out of the question!

(As he beamed red, Haykie held her hand to Kasira's head.)

COLE: Can you heal her?

(Haykie nodded.)

HAYKIE: Easy!

(Seconds later, a confused looking Kasira, looked into his eyes.)

KASIRA: Why are you carrying me? What's going on?

(Hearing the thud of Arctica throwing a horse trough at Dakuri, she turned her head and it all came flooding back.)

KASIRA: Put me down!

(As he did so, she raced towards Dakuri.)

COLE: Where's she going?

HAYKIE: I Dunno!

(She grinned at him.)

HAYKIE: She's right you know, a threesome is definitely out of the question!

(Looking completely flustered and embarrassed he protested vehemently.)

COLE: She was delirious, I've never suggested anything like it!!!

(As Kasira reached the running Dakuri, she yelled to him.)

KASIRA: Dakuri, I've had an idea!

DAKURI: Me too, keep running!

(While a seemingly amused Arctica continued to throw things at Dakuri, the big man could do nothing but dodge them. Roaring and beating its considerable chest, the huge fluffy white ape, bellowed out in an unintelligent voice.)

ARCTICA: Arctica kill puny human!!!

(As it picked up another projectile, a terrified Dakuri tried to shoe Kasira away.)

DAKURI: Get away from me Kasira!!! Talk to me when this thing stops...

(Suddenly, he thrust them both to the floor as a bench flew over their heads.)

DAKURI: Go Kasira, I'll keep the thing busy!!!

(As they both scrambled to their feet, Kasira ran back to Cole and Haykie.)

KASIRA: I've had an idea!

(Watching Dakuri suffer, both Cole and Haykie turned to her.)

COLE: What is it?

KASIRA: We can use the bounty hunters weapons, some of them crossbow bolts were huge!

(Haykie looked thoughtful.)

COLE: That's a good idea in theory, unfortunately, we didn't bring them!

KASIRA: Dakuri picked up two of the crossbows, I saw him!

HAYKIE: Yeah, unfortunately, he seems a bit busy right now!

KASIRA: Then it's up to us to get him out of the rut!

(Both Cole and Haykie looked at her.)

COLE: How?

KASIRA: I don't know!

(Looking extremely adventurous, Haykie galloped forwards.)

HAYKIE: Leave it to me!

(With that, she proceeded to pummel the hairy beast with bolts of lightning.)

HAYKIE: I'm over here you fat fuck!!!

(Shocked by her impertinence, the giant killer turned to face her. Spotting the opportunity, Kasira and Cole raced over to an exhausted Dakuri.)

KASIRA: Dakuri, the crossbows!

(Gasping for air, the tall man nodded.)

DAKURI: I forgot about that, good idea!

(Standing upright, he delved in his pack then passed a crossbow to Cole.)

DAKURI: Go for the eyes!

(He then passed him a couple of bolts.)

COLE: Gotcha!

(While Kasira waited for a crossbow, Dakuri nodded to Cole.)

DAKURI: Let's go!!!

KASIRA: Hey, what about me?

DAKURI: You're just a girl!

(Cole grimaced and sloped away.)

COLE: I'll let *you* explain that one!

DAKURI: What?

(Kasira stood before him, fuming angrily.)

DAKURI: Kasira, your nostrils are flaring!

(With that, he eased her to one side and loaded the crossbow.)

KASIRA: Bastard, it was *my* idea!

(Suddenly, Haykie let out a loud scream.)

HAYKIE: Someone!!!

(They spun around and saw the beast thumping the ground either side of her with its enormous hands, slapping its palm in front of her every time she tried to run.)

KASIRA: Do something!!!

(Dakuri stood tall.)

DAKURI: The fiend is playing with us!

(He yelled to Cole.)

DAKURI: Let's fix this thing!!!

(Cole nodded back and aimed his crossbow at the beast.)

COLE: Say your prayers, mother fucker!

(He shook his head.)

COLE: I can't believe I'm fighting a monkey!

(With that, he fired the two inch bolt into the air and watched with horror as it disappeared into the distance.)

COLE: Eh? What's wrong with this thing?

(Shaking her head in disbelief, Kasira snatched the crossbow from him.)

KASIRA: Give me that!

COLE: Hey!

KASIRA: Watch and learn! I'll teach this overgrown teddy bear!

(With that, she nonchalantly set the bolt in place and aimed at Arctica.)

KASIRA: Take that, baboon bum!!!

(And she too sent the bolt flying over the buildings and out of sight.)

COLE: Oh, so that's how you do it, is it?

(She sneered.)

KASIRA: You were right, it's faulty!

(Seeing Haykie in some considerable distress, Dakuri crept closer, determined to make sure he didn't miss. Using all the stealth skills he had, he stopped just behind it and aimed for the back of its head. Kasira and Cole held hands and hoped for the best as he released the first bolt.)

COLE: Go on!!!

(They looked on horrified, as the bolt flew at lightning speed into the back of the beast's head and crumpled before falling to the floor.)

DAKURI: Uh-oh!

(In a fit of rage, it spun around and fired a thick shard of ice in his direction. As he dived to safety, it then spun towards Haykie and did the same.)

DAKURI: Look out!!!

(Fortunately, Haykie had already started to run, knowing that a moving target was harder to hit. Looking terrified to say the least, she ran up to Cole and Kasira.)

HAYKIE: I think we've pissed it off!



COLE: You don't say!

KASIRA: So, now what?

(Their conversation was interrupted by the whooshing of a large blade of ice, flying towards them. As they dived for cover, Arctica suddenly went into overdrive, angrily firing its enormous razor sharp icicles with both hands, one after another. All Kasira, Cole, Haykie and Dakuri could do was run around the square avoiding them.)

KASIRA: It's gone mad!

HAYKIE: Damn that bloody midget! Damn him to hell!

KASIRA: Look out!!!

(They both dived backwards as a huge icicle flashed between them. As he helped them to their feet, Cole shouted over the chaos to Dakuri.)

COLE: What can we do? Sooner or later one of us isn't gonna be quick enough!

(Dakuri tried to think as he kept his feet moving.)

DAKURI: Sorry Cole, this thing has got me beat!

COLE: Don't apologise Dakuri, even Haykie's powerless!

(With destruction and chaos all around them, they kept narrowly avoid impaling by inches. Knowing that their luck was overdue to run out, Kasira chased after Cole.)

KASIRA: Cole?

(Stopping, he raced back to her.)

COLE: What's up, darling?

KASIRA: Maybe we should get Alero after all. Perhaps his other summons *can* defeat it, like he suggested!

COLE: It's too late now, he'll be miles away if he's got any sense!

KASIRA: Look out!!!

(With eyes bulging, she yanked him to the ground as a huge icy missile exploded near their feet.)

COLE: Ow!!!

(Kasira leapt up immediately and stood over him anxiously.)

COLE: I'm okay!

(He climbed to his feet with blood trickling down his forehead.)

KASIRA: Did it hurt you?

COLE: Not much, I'll be fine!

(Angry at the sight of her loved one bleeding, Kasira shook her head and sneered.)

KASIRA: Look, we've got to do something, I'm gonna find him!!!

COLE: No, Kasira!

(As he turned to grab her arm, Arctica suddenly stopped its relentless destruction and an eerie silence fell over the square. Stopping what they were doing, they all looked across nervously at the growling giant.)

KASIRA: Why has it stopped shooting?

COLE: I don't know!

(Looking equally as daunted, Dakuri and Haykie walked over to them, not removing their eyes from the hairy fiend once.)

DAKURI: Are you two okay?

KASIRA: Cole's hurt!

COLE: I'm fine, it's just a cut!

(Transfixed by the beasts inaction, Haykie spoke with a choked voice.)

HAYKIE: What's it doing? I don't like this!

(Dakuri offered her a reassuring arm around her shoulder.)

DAKURI: Be calm, Haykie!

(As they watched, hypnotised by the beast growling as it stared straight back, they couldn't remove their wide eyes from its angry face. Sensing its evil intent they very rapidly became increasingly distressed.)

KASIRA: Why is it just standing there?

COLE: We should run!

DAKURI: Where to? It would only follow!

(Still in an emotional state, Haykie chewed her finger nails.)

HAYKIE: It's taunting us, I know it is!

(Wearing almost a smile, the beast stood and sneered at them a little longer, then thrust its hands into the air. Thoroughly daunted by the gesture, they all started to back track.)

KASIRA: It's gonna do something, I know it!

(Sure enough, as the beast held its powerful arms high in the air, its hands started to fill with ice. With a deafening roar, it grinned down at them.)

ARCTICA: Arctica squash puny ones!!!

(Gaping in absolute helplessness as they all stared up at his giant gorilla like head, even Dakuri shook with fear.)

HAYKIE: What's it doing?

COLE: I dunno, but I don't like it!!!

(As the hairy fiend continued to hold its pose, it levelled a mocking sneer in their direction, leaving them in no uncertainty of its barbaric intent. While it stood there, bitterly locked in a face to face display of mutual hatred with the humans before it, the ice in its hand started to form the shape of an icicle, 20 feet wide and over 60 feet tall.)

DAKURI: Surely not!!!

KASIRA: And it's still growing!!!

COLE: If it throws that, the whole village will be destroyed!!!

HAYKIE: And everybody killed!

(Feeling utterly useless, they continue to stare at the beastly killer as the icicle in its hands grew into almost a glacier. Sensing defeat, Dakuri hung his head and sighed dejectedly to himself.)

DAKURI: Maybe, it wasn't meant to be!

(While they all continued to stare in bitterness at the merciless giant before them, Kasira's necklace started to glow. Looking baffled, she held it out and went cross-eyed trying to look at it. Unnoticed by the others, she slipped it off of her neck and held it before her, looking confused.)

KASIRA: Cigna?

(Suddenly with a roar, the psychotic ape-like beast shook the giant pack ice above its head and gave them a twisted, evil stare. Feeling his throw was imminent, Haykie covered her head and Cole turned swiftly to Kasira, then froze to the spot. Like in the temple of Dietyawa, time stood still and Cigna appeared before her.)

KASIRA: Cigna? You came!

(In her soft voice, Cigna replied.)

CIGNA: When all else fails Kasira, call upon me!

(As Kasira smiled, Cigna disappeared in an instant and time began again.)

COLE: Brace yourself!!!

(With a deafening crash, the virtual iceberg in Arctica's hands inexplicably exploded.)

DAKURI: It blew up!!!

HAYKIE: Take cover!!!

(As they dived behind an upturned horse trough to avoid the pieces of ice that rained down on them, the sky began to rumble and turn very dark. Peeking out from behind their refuge, Dakuri noticed the beast looking skywards with terror in its eyes.)

DAKURI: There's something odd happening here!

(Just then, the sky sprung into violent action as a deluge of lightning bolts one after another flashed down in quick succession from the sky, hammering into Arctica. As Kasira, Cole and Haykie joined Dakuri in peering over the top of the trough, they were stunned by the phenomenon before them. As they stared in wide-mouthed horror, the sky continued to issue its incessant wrath on the, by now, terrified, defenceless beast. Seemingly endless fizzles of electricity lit up the sky time after time pummeling the colossal primate into the ground. Breaking from her disbelieving stare, Kasira slipped her necklace back on and patted it lovingly.)

KASIRA: I don't know who you are Cigna, but I love you!

(With the ceaseless noise of the deafening lightning keeping up its assault, the air soon started to fill with the smell of Arctica's burning flesh. When suddenly, as quickly as it began, the Arial assault ended. The sky instantly turned blue again and the ape-like menace evaporated before their very eyes. As if there'd been no Arctica, and no strange phenomenon, the sound of bird song filled the air once more. Unfortunately, the foul creatures considerable destruction remained. Climbing to their feet, still wearing amazed expressions, Cole, Dakuri and Haykie looked at one another.)

DAKURI: What the fuck was that???

(Still too flabbergasted to speak, they just looked at him. Just then, there was a crash as a supporting beam to a nearby building gave way. With a tremendous thud, the upper floor folded and caved in upon the floor below. Giving it a quick glance, they all largely ignored it and returned to staring at one another in a daze.

Not sure whether to be stunned or overjoyed, Kasira clasped one hand to her necklace and bent forwards tiredly to rest the other on her knee. Looking thoroughly wasted, she lifted her head towards Cole.)

KASIRA: There's some freaky shit going on here!

(Breathing heavily, Cole turned his stunned head in her direction.)

COLE: Yeah...

(He shook his head.)

COLE: Sorry Kasira, I'm speechless!

(Looking just as confused, Dakuri threw his arms in the air.)

DAKURI: What the fuck happened? Did it just give up and commit suicide?

(They shrugged.)

HAYKIE: Maybe the midget stopped it!

(They all looked thoughtful.)

DAKURI: That would be the only logical explanation!

(Kasira on the other hand, looked around as the wind carried smoke from the carnage and debris surrounding them, and afforded herself a smile.)

KASIRA: It can do all this, and I whooped it!

(Hearing her, Cole gave her an odd look.)

COLE: *You* whooped it? You delirious again?

(She gave him an annoyed glance.)

KASIRA: No!!!

COLE: Okay, I only asked!

(She shook her head and approached her three friends in an animated fashion, gesturing with open palms for them to believe her,.)

KASIRA: Guys, it was *me*!!! *I* did it!

(They all looked at her as if she was mad.)

COLE: Did what, Kasira?

(She remonstrated further.)

KASIRA: *I* did it! I killed Arctica!

(Dakuri turned his head, looking sceptical.)

DAKURI: No Kasira, you killed Necronema!

(Starting to looking angry, she waved her arms around as she remonstrated.)

KASIRA: Why won't you believe me? I've got a special power!

DAKURI: Kasira, we were there, you did nothing!

KASIRA: Yes I did! I used an angel or something! Why can't you believe me?

DAKURI: An angel?

KASIRA: You heard me!

(Cole put his arm around her.)

COLE: I believe you!

(She smiled warmly and hugged him.)

KASIRA: Thank you, Cole!

(As soon as she turned her back however, he mouthed "not really", to Haykie and shrugged. Fearing for his friends sanity, Dakuri spoke softly to Kasira.)

DAKURI: Kasira, you're tired, maybe you're imagining things! Angels Indeed.

(The scathing look she gave Dakuri defied belief.)

KASIRA: You calling me a fruit cake???

(The big man leant back as she stepped forward and poked his chest with an angry finger.)

KASIRA: Bloody patronise me again I'll stick your sword right up your...

COLE: Calm down, Kasira!

(Angrily, she turned on him.)

KASIRA: Don't tell me to calm down!!!

(Cole held up his hands.)

COLE: Whoa, Kasira, less of the crazy woman!!!

(Throwing up her arms furiously, she paced up and down between them, then stopped and placed one hand on her hip, leaving the other free to gesticulate wildly. Looking seriously narked, she gestured towards the rubble and destruction around them.)

KASIRA: Look at it, just look at it!

(Like naughty children, they looked around at the rubble, then faced her quietly.)

KASIRA: That thing was so powerful that those who didn't flee the village... died in all the rubble!

(Switching to her other hip, she continued.)

KASIRA: For fuck sake, that thing was a psycho... you all saw it...

(She stared at them to gauge their reactions and continued with a shake of the head.)

KASIRA: It took something special to kill that thing, is it so hard for you to believe, that I might have been behind it???

(Sick of being talked down to, Dakuri stepped forward.)

DAKURI: If you're so positive it was you, why don't you tell us how?

(She looked at the floor, shaking angrily and biting her lip.)

KASIRA: I haven't finished!

DAKURI: Yes you have, you claim to have caused a cosmic phenomenon, then you get upset because we don't believe you, can you blame us?

(Haykie nodded.)

HAYKIE: He's right, where's your proof?

(She shook her fist and looked bitterly to the ground. In contrast, Cole suddenly looked enlightened and placed his hands on Kasira's shoulders.)

COLE: You missed her point!

(He turned his head towards Dakuri.)

COLE: She *can* blame us for not believing her...

HAYKIE: Why?

(He looked at the top of Kasira's head.)

COLE: Because, her word should be good enough!

(As Kasira looked up lovingly, he continued.)

COLE: If she says she did it, then she did it!

(Looking relieved, she hugged him tight and closed her eyes. While they embraced, Dakuri whispered to Haykie.)

DAKURI: He's only saying that to keep her sweet!

(Haykie nodded.)

HAYKIE: I know!

(As they started to walk wearily from the scene of the battle, into the streets of an abandoned Neitama, Dakuri looked thoughtful. While Kasira and Cole propped each other up, Haykie turned to him and yawned.)

HAYKIE: God, I'm tired!

(Dakuri said nothing as he watched Kasira, wearing a curious expression.)

HAYKIE: You okay, Dakuri?

(Snapping out of his trance, he shook his head.)

DAKURI: Sorry, what did you say?

HAYKIE: I said, are you okay?

DAKURI: Sure... I just need to ask Kasira something!

(With that, he dropped back and walked beside her.)

DAKURI: Kasira?

KASIRA: What?

DAKURI: You mentioned an angel!

KASIRA: And?

DAKURI: Please, I am curious!

(She closed her eyes and took a deep breath.)

KASIRA: I'm too tired to explain it, Dakuri!

DAKURI: But you must!

KASIRA: I can't, I'm not sure exactly what happened myself!

DAKURI: But what of the angel?

(She shrugged.)

KASIRA: Cigna, her name's Cigna!

(Dakuri looked thoughtful and bit his lip.)

DAKURI: Kasira, be honest... did you meet her in a temple?

(Looking suddenly alive, she turned to face him.)

KASIRA: Yes, that's exactly it!

(Dakuri looked dumbstruck.)

KASIRA: I met her in a temple in the forest!

(Cole looked doubtful.)

COLE: When?

KASIRA: That temple, when I told you time had stopped, and I met Cigna...

(She frowned.)

KASIRA: You didn't believe me!

(He nodded.)

COLE: I remember the building... but nothing happened!

KASIRA: That's because time stopped and you were frozen, the same thing happened just before Arctica was destroyed!

HAYKIE: That's a bit far fetched, Kasira!

KASIRA: Fine, I don't care if you don't believe me!

(Dakuri nodded firmly.)

DAKURI: I believe you!

(They all looked at him in amazement.)

DAKURI: Cigna, from the temple of Dietyawa?

KASIRA: That's right!

(Cole shrugged.)

COLE: So what's what here, Dakuri? What do you know?

DAKURI: Only what Omki Saan, has told me!

KASIRA: Which is?

(Seeing three pairs of curious eyes waiting for an answer, he held out his hands and began.)

DAKURI: Omki Saan once told me, that a chosen one who survives her encounter with the forces of evil, may experience strange phenomena. He spoke of visions, such as the temple of Dietyawa and a mysterious angelic apparition, know as Cigna!

(He paused for breath as they hung onto his every word.)

DAKURI: Until now, no-one has known what this meant, maybe you Kasira, will change all that!

(A brief silence ensued as they absorbed his words.)

DAKURI: The last chosen one to survive the battle with evil, was over 600 years ago, she disappeared once for over 20 years and returned having travelled to places in this world we are still yet to discover... a year later, she disappeared again, this time... forever!

(Placing his hand across his chin, Cole looked worried.)

COLE: Disappeared, you say?

(Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: So history has written!

KASIRA: Relax Cole, I'm not going anywhere!

(With that, Dakuri clapped his hands together and rubbed them intently.)

DAKURI: And that's all I know, now, who wants some breakfast?

(Waving away his suggestion, Kasira faced Dakuri looking uncertain.)

KASIRA: So, what does it mean Dakuri? Even if Cigna was an apparition, the temple was certainly real!

DAKURI: Maybe it was!

KASIRA: It was!

(She turned to Cole.)

KASIRA: You saw it, didn't you Cole?

(He nodded.)

COLE: I was *in* it Kasira, the temple's for real!

(Although he desperately wanted it to be true, Dakuri was sceptical.)

DAKURI: When we return to Enaki village, you must show me!

KASIRA: Okay, no problem!

DAKURI: Only, I have lived here in the forest all my life, and I've never seen it!

COLE: It's for real Dakuri, you'll see!

(With a smile, Kasira gave her husband a loving hug and they continued on towards the edge of town.)

HAYKIE: Let's find somewhere to kip soon!

KASIRA: Definitely!

(As they headed along in a tired trudge down the main street of the almost decimated township, some of the citizens started to return from hiding in the woods. As they returned to find their homes destroyed or damaged, many broke down in tears, while others stared silently like broken souls at their very personal disasters.

Trying not to let it get to them, the allies continued on, until a small overweight gentlemen with a long white beard, raced over to them. Seeing he was dressed like Omki Saan, they knew he was an elder. Looking sincerely worried he instantly begged them for answers.)

CHENZU SAAN: Young ones, what transpired here?

(He faced Dakuri.)

CHENZU SAAN: Dakuri? Is that you?

(Dakuri bowed.)

DAKURI: How are you Chenzu Saan?

CHENZU SAAN: How do you think? Look at the village!

DAKURI: Yes, yes I know!

(Almost in tears, the old man clasped his hands together.)

CHENZU SAAN: Dakuri, tell me this wasn't down to you!

(Dakuri stood tall.)

DAKURI: No! It was far from down to me!

CHENZU SAAN: Then what occurred here? Please?

(Dakuri sighed.)

DAKURI: White men came from the north continent, they brought with them a summoner!

CHENZU SAAN: A summoner?

DAKURI: My friends and I, we destroyed the beast!

(Chenzu Saan bowed.)

CHENZU SAAN: And for this I'm grateful!

(He gestured towards Cole and Haykie.)

CHENZU SAAN: Are these the white ones responsible?

(Dakuri looked most offended.)

DAKURI: No! These are my friends, together we fought your beast!

CHENZU SAAN: I apologise!

DAKURI: So you should, Haykie is a dear friend, as is Cole... he is also the spouse of the chosen one, Kasira!

(She leant forward to shake hands.)

KASIRA: Pleased to meet you!

(He acknowledged her likewise then continued to pester Dakuri for information.)

CHENZU SAAN: Then what of these white infidels, is their threat lifted?

(Dakuri started to nod then suddenly looked horrified.)

CHENZU SAAN: What is it, Dakuri?

(Gaping, he turned towards Haykie.)

DAKURI: The bounty hunters!!!

HAYKIE: Relax, they cleared of to...

(Suddenly it hit her.)

HAYKIE: They retreated!!!

DAKURI: Exactly, the only route they know takes them back through Namki village!

(Cole stepped forward to try to calm them.)

COLE: But they're unarmed now!

KASIRA: Oh, fucking hell, if they get any grief at Namki village...

DAKURI: Exactly, the summoner may be with them!

HAYKIE: Surely they wouldn't!

DAKURI: They've done it once!

COLE: But didn't they leave the summoner behind?

DAKURI: What if he caught them up, do you really want to risk that?

(Seeing them begin to panic, Chenzu Saan butted in immediately.)

CHENZU SAAN: What are you saying, is there still a danger?

DAKURI: Possibly!

(Looking deadly serious he faced the old man.)

DAKURI: Do you have a horse?

(Chenzu Saan shrugged.)

CHENZU SAAN: Doesn't everyone in Neitama village?

DAKURI: I need to use it, as long as Alero's out there, we're not safe!

CHENZU SAAN: If you need a horse Dakuri, take one!

(He gestured to the meadow at the end of the village.)

DAKURI: I'll be right back!!!

(Before he could run an inch, Kasira grabbed his arm and raised an impassioned voice.)

KASIRA: What are you going to do?

DAKURI: Kill them, now let me go!

KASIRA: And if they summon?



DAKURI: Then I'll panic!

KASIRA: No Dakuri, let Haykie and I go!

(He stood tall.)

DAKURI: Don't talk stupid!

KASIRA: I'm not!!! They're terrified of Haykie and I can kill the summons!

(Suddenly relenting in his determined expression he looked thoughtful.)

DAKURI: Suddenly it makes sense! Haykie and Kasira should go!

(Haykie frowned.)

HAYKIE: Volunteer me, why don't she? What have I ever done to her?

(Cole gave her a knowing glance.)

COLE: You stole her precious hairbrush!

HAYKIE: And I've paid for it ever since!

(As she stood there trying to look hard done by, Kasira suddenly started to drag her away.)

KASIRA: Let's go, Haykie!!!

COLE: Kasira, be careful!!!

(As they raced towards the meadow to collect a horse, She turned back and yelled.)

KASIRA: I'll be fine, I've got a guardian angel!

(As the two ladies raced away, Dakuri bowed to Chenzu Saan.)

DAKURI: When I see Omki Saan, I'll give him your regards!

(The bearded elder nodded defiantly.)

CHENZU SAAN: No need, I'll get my own message to him today!

(With that, he turned and headed into the mess of the once proud village. As he left, Dakuri and Cole shrugged to one another.)

DAKURI: And now we wait!

(Moments later, streams of fleeing villagers poured into the village from their temporary exile. As they filed past looking dejected and upset, they all seemed to give Cole murderous looks, so much so that Dakuri had to take evasive action. Standing with his arms out to the side, he paced to and fro in front of his white friend.)

DAKURI: Keep moving please... nothing to see here... move along now...

(While Dakuri and Cole waited impatiently for their return, Haykie and Kasira were thrusting through the woods on a tall black stallion. While Haykie forgot about her tiredness and revelled in every second as the wind raced through her hair, Kasira held on for dear life, refusing to open her eyes, or indeed, stop screaming.)

HAYKIE: This is the life, yes!!!

KASIRA: Slow down!!!

HAYKIE: Open your eyes, Kasira!

KASIRA: Shut your face... I hate you!

HAYKIE: Don't be such a baby!

KASIRA: Shut up, I feel sick!

(As they continued to hurtle through the woodlands at immense speed, leaping fallen trees and tree stumps, Haykie smiled and absorbed a relaxing sense of freedom. She was almost disappointed therefore, when she spotted the horned helmets of the bounty hunters. Turning to alert Kasira, she slowed the horse to a canter.)

HAYKIE: Kasira, I've found 'em!

(Turning greener by the minute, Kasira raised her sickened head and opened her bloodshot eyes.)

KASIRA: I'm gonna puke!

(Ignoring her, Haykie looked again at the retreating party from Sudereva.)

HAYKIE: He's with 'em, I hoped he would be!

(Hanging off of the horse, looking like death, Kasira threw up.)

HAYKIE: Ooh, lovely!

(Wiping her mouth, Kasira raised her head.)

KASIRA: Who's with 'em?

HAYKIE: The summoner!

KASIRA: Oh... yeah, I suppose it would be!

HAYKIE: Oh dear, you're a mess, we'd better get this over with!

(With that, Haykie galloped forth, almost making Kasira fall. As she approached the weary looking men from behind, she yelled out.)

HAYKIE: Halt!!!

(All at once, the bounty hunters spun in her direction.)

ANDERS: The witch!!!

(In a blind panic, they fell to their knees and started to bow down before her.)

ANDERS: Please great one, we'll do anything!

(Like a veteran horsewoman, Haykie leapt from the horse and stood before their sorry looking display. As Kasira fell off of the horse, Haykie stepped up to Alero.)

HAYKIE: Oi, summoner?

(The frightened midget, looked sadly into her eyes.)

HAYKIE: Arctica's dead!

(As he hung his head, Morten tried to speak.)

MORTEN: Please, it wasn't our fault, we were following orders!

(Jan sat up and pointed at Anders.)

JAN: Yeah, his orders!!!

HAYKIE: Silence!!!

(Scared to death by her demeanour, they kept silent.)

HAYKIE: As for you Alero!

(She grabbed him by the back of his collar.)

ALERO: No, please don't kill me!!!

HAYKIE: It's either you or your summons!

ALERO: My summons?

(She clicked her fingers towards Kasira. Stumbling over like a drunkard, she approached Haykie.)

KASIRA: Don't click your fingers at me!!!

HAYKIE: Whatever, just get ready!

(While the bounty hunters remained bowed down, too terrified to even move, Haykie slapped Alero around the head.)

HAYKIE: Summon the other beasts!

ALERO: What? But... why?

(Again she slapped him.)

ALERO: Ow!!! What was that for?

HAYKIE: Do it!!!

ALERO: But, it's dangerous!

(Shaking her head, she spoke through gritted teeth.)

HAYKIE: They're only dangerous if they're alive for pricks like you to summon!!!

ALERO: But...

(As she went to slap him once more, he covered his head and gave in.)

ALERO: Okay, okay!

HAYKIE: Make sure you do!

(As she stood over him, Haykie turned to Kasira.)

HAYKIE: Your up!

(Sneering back, she took off her necklace.)

KASIRA: I'm ready!!!

(With a nod, Haykie slapped the midget again.)

HAYKIE: Hurry up!

ALERO: I'm doing it, I'm doing it!!!

(Not having the slightest idea what summoning entailed, they were quite shocked and a little disappointed, to see Alero merely hold his hands in the air and chant the beasts names three times.)

ALERO: Solaris, Solaris, Solaris... Aquaria, Aquaria, Aquaria...

(As he lowered his hands, the vertically impaired summoner, shook his head and looked at Haykie with fear in his eyes.)

ALERO: Happy now? You've created Armageddon!!!

(Giving him a disdainful look, she clumped him again.)

HAYKIE: That's for being cheeky!

(Then once again.)

HAYKIE: That was for fun!

(Suddenly, the air was split by the sound of deafening roars in the trees behind them.)

HAYKIE: Kasira?

KASIRA: I've got it!!!

(Clasping her necklace, she whispered for Cigna then closed her eyes. Moments later, she opened them and smiled.)

KASIRA: All done!!!

(As they turned to the direction of the loud roaring, the sound of trees collapsing vibrated throughout the woodland. Trembling with fear, the bounty hunters looked up to see the sky darken and the two beasts suffer the same fate as Arctica. Despite the fact that only the tops of the creatures heads were visible over the treetops, the sight still made them feel visibly sick. Watching them die a slow painful death, Alero hung his head and mumbled to himself.)

ALERO: My life's work... gone!

(Sneering with contempt for all the men around her, Kasira shook her fist and also mumbled as she gave them all the evil eye.)

KASIRA: If only you lot could be struck down as well!

(As soon as she finished talking, thick streaks of lightning flashed through the trees above them. With a scream, Kasira and Haykie edged back against a tree, barely able to watch as First Alero, then Morten, Jan, Tarquin, Stefan and finally Anders were blown to pieces by the thick bolts of electricity. As pieces of their diced bodies splattered all over them, Kasira threw up again then joined Haykie in jumping up and down screaming.

As the lightning continued to punish the two giant beasts beyond, a thoroughly disgusted twosome of Kasira and Haykie climbed back on the horse. Looking pale and exhausted, they galloped away from the scene. As the horse made its way hurriedly back to Neitama village, Kasira's mind wondered back to the bounty hunters deaths. Looking confused, she took a deep breath, when suddenly she heard a voice inside her head.)

CIGNA: Kasira... be careful what you wish for!

(Nodding to herself, to acknowledge the message, she tapped on Haykie's shoulders.)

HAYKIE: What? I'm going slow already, aren't I?

(Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: Well don't, I wanna get back as soon as possible!

(And so she braced herself and held on tight as Haykie made the horse rocket ahead, back to Neitama village and Cole and Dakuri.

Upon arriving back at the village, Haykie and Kasira immediately disposed of the horse and returned to their friends. Walking bow-legged with exhaustion, they were amazed to see the people of Neitama already starting to rebuild. As they soldiered on, fit to drop, they came upon Cole and Dakuri talking to a gathered group of townsmen and women. As they approached them, Cole looked up and waved.)

COLE: There they are!

(As if they were heroes, the friendly pack of locals, turned and greeted them with warm smiles. Grinning all over, Cole stepped up to Kasira and they threw their arms around each other, receiving a cheesy 'aw' from all around them. A little confused, Kasira whispered to him as they cuddled.)

KASIRA: Who *are* these people?

COLE: They live here!

KASIRA: And?

COLE: And they think we're heroes, they want to feed us and offer us a bed!

(Looking deliriously happy, she held him tighter.)

KASIRA: A bed... I so want to go to bed!

(As she mused happily, Cole spoilt it.)

COLE: In exchange we're going to help them rebuild the village!

(Putting an immediate end to the cuddle, she stepped back.)

KASIRA: When you say "we"?

(He shrugged.)

COLE: Sorry love!

(With a sigh, she shook her head.)

KASIRA: Where's this bed? I'll scold you later!

(In response to her request, the friendly towns people showed them to the local hostelry. Although the top floor had been virtually destroyed, the rooms on the ground floor were more than adequate for a good sleep and a clean up. Following a decent meal supplied by the women of the town, the 'two couples', as they naturally assumed, were shown to their rooms. While Haykie and Dakuri stood outside their room door arguing about who was having the bed, Kasira and Cole snuggled up together under the covers for a well earned sleep.)

COLE: Night, Kasira, I love you!

KASIRA: Night Cole!

(As they started to doze off almost immediately, Kasira suddenly sat bolt up right.)

KASIRA: Hey? What the hell happened to Micalov?

(Yawning, Cole shrugged.)

COLE: Who cares?

(Also shrugging, she laid back down.)

KASIRA: Yeah... who cares?

(Sure enough, having missed all the excitement, Micalov was fast asleep against a tree in the meadow outside the village. Having slept against trees for the last three months, he was quite at home.)

*Enaki Forest, Namki Village Travellers Rest, Sunday Evening...*

(Having been running all night only to end up in battle, sleeping through the light of day and the constant banging of rebuilding work, wasn't a problem. Having snored away most of the morning and the entire afternoon, the evening began to wear on with still no sign of waking from either Kasira or Cole. Laying face to face with Cole, their foreheads merely inches apart, Kasira nuzzled into the pillow as she snoozed, when something made her open her eyes.)

KASIRA: Uh?

(Receiving quite a start, she grabbed the covers and lifted her head.)

KASIRA: What the fuck do you think *you're* doing???

(She looked horrified at the sight of Dakuri leaning against the wall on Cole's side of the bed.)

DAKURI: Forgive me, Kasira!

(Roused by the sound of voices, Cole opened his eyes and turned on his back.)

COLE: Dakuri?

(Looking baffled, he pulled himself up and sat with his back against the headboard.)

COLE: What's going on? Hi, Haykie!

(He waved towards the door. Sitting by the door, Haykie smiled and waved back.)

HAYKIE: Morning... or should I say, evening!

(Looking thoroughly peeved, Kasira held the covers tighter over her and scowled.)

KASIRA: What are you doing? Get out!!!

(Much to her surprise, Dakuri moved.)

KASIRA: Bloody cheek!

(Unfortunately, Dakuri only moved in between Haykie and Cole.)

DAKURI: Cole, your chest is exposed!

(Cole rubbed his tired head.)

COLE: So bloody what? What are you doing here?

DAKURI: Your chest!

HAYKIE: It's okay, Dakuri!

DAKURI: No it isn't, I'm not moving 'til...

(His words were interrupted by an indignant Kasira.)

KASIRA: Piss off, go on, piss off!!!

(Dakuri held out his hands.)

DAKURI: But Kasira, we've brought you information!

KASIRA: I don't care, you can't barge into our room...

DAKURI: We didn't barge anywhere, we've been here half an hour!

(The pitch of Kasira's voice turned almost glass shattering.)

KASIRA: What???

COLE: Whoa, damn, woman!

(As he tried to syringe his ear with his finger, he looked up at Dakuri.)

COLE: Just tell us this information will you?

(Kasira lay flat on her pillow.)

KASIRA: Yeah, then piss off!

(Looking a bit miffed by their attitude, Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: Very well, the townspeople have organised a midnight feast for us at the

beach, and tomorrow morning we will start to help them rebuild their homes!

(Waiting for him to finish, Kasira and Cole said nothing.)

DAKURI: There, that's all!

COLE: What? You woke us up to tell us that???

(Kasira started to swear under her breath.)

COLE: You'd better go! She's going to explode in a minute!

(Backing away, Dakuri continued to speak.)

DAKURI: Very well, but you must know, Micalov has disappeared...

(Laying flat on her back still, Kasira yelled towards the ceiling.)

KASIRA: Don't make me use Cigna!!!

DAKURI: I'm going, I'm going!!!

(He turned and hurried to Haykie.)

DAKURI: Let's go, we are obviously not welcome!

(Looking hardly surprised, she opened the door for them.)

HAYKIE: Can you blame them?

DAKURI: Yes!!!

(As they passed through the door, they continued.)

HAYKIE: The last thing anyone wants when they wake up, is you standing over them!

DAKURI: It's not my fault they've slept all day!

HAYKIE: So would I have, if you hadn't broke the bed!

DAKURI: I only sat on it!

(As they closed the door firmly behind them, Cole chuckled to himself and looked down at Kasira.)

COLE: They'd make a lovely couple!

(Looking up at him, she smiled.)

KASIRA: Probably!

(Resting one hand behind his head as he sat up higher against the headboard, he ran his fingers through her hair and watched her smiling face as she looked up at the ceiling.)

COLE: You look so happy laying there!

KASIRA: I am, we survived to fight another day!

COLE: Fight?

KASIRA: You know what I mean!

(He nodded.)

COLE: Yeah, talk about hard to kill!

KASIRA: We're invincible!

(Cole chuckled.)

KASIRA: Seriously, we are! With Cigna to protect us, we can travel around, work our way around the world maybe, no-one will be able to hurt us, what do you think?

(She looked up at him, her eyes requesting an answer.)

COLE: Sure, I was getting bored in Namki village anyway!

KASIRA: Great, then when we've helped fix *this* village up, we can collect our stuff from Namki village and get going!

(Cole nodded.)

COLE: Yeah, like one big adventure, only safe!

(Staring straight up again, she smiled the widest smile.)

KASIRA: Today, Cole, is the first day of the rest of our lives!

(Nodding as he continued to sit up and stroke her hair, Cole's expression suddenly turned to one of eager anticipation. Smiling excitedly he gestured down his body with his eyes.)

COLE: So, um... Kasira... seeing as you're down that way...

(Giving him an evil look, she turned onto her stomach.)

KASIRA: You're an animal!

(He shrugged innocently and tried to think of a response. Kasira, however, beat him to it.)

KASIRA: Luckily for you, so am I!

(With that, she disappeared under the covers, leaving Cole grinning like the cat who got the cream.)

With Cigna to protect her, Kasira knew that from this day forth, her life would be one of exceptional adventure. With the man she loved at her side, she could now look forward to experiencing joys and freedoms that most others could only dream about. As she said herself, this truly was the first day of the rest of her life.

## **THE END.**

The Kasira Project Part Two - Kasira's Run.

The storyline and all characters are a creation of the artist, the artist reserves the right to this story and everything within.

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Completed 30/09/02.

**The Kasira Project Part III - Kasira's Mission.**

Following the devastation and destruction of their homes and the deaths of friends and family at the hand of Sudereva's bounty hunters, the survivors of the appalling tragedy in Neitama village tried desperately to remain optimistic. Not allowing the catastrophic events to destroy them inside, they set about rebuilding the village immediately. Determined never to be seen as victims, the rebuilding was swift and precise. Anxious to get on with their lives, they put the incident behind them and tried to move on. Unbeknown to them, however, the powers that oversaw their Enaki civilization, were nowhere near as forgiving.

*Outskirts of Sudereva, North Continent, four days later...*

As was the case with any Thursday morning in the shanty towns outside Sudereva's city walls, the air was filled with the bustling sounds of scavengers waiting impatiently for the city's waste to be dumped over the wall. Ready to fight to the death for any sign of a scrap of metal or a small piece of cloth, the unwashed peasants growled like animals as they protected a patch to hunt through. The longer the rubbish took to arrive, the greater the potential for violence. This particular 'Trash Thursday', the garbage from inside the city was unusually late. Hoping this meant richer pickings, a few fist fights had begun to take place. As two big men, rolled around in the dirt, desperate to claim the prime site, they became oblivious to the fact that they could be buried under the garbage should it fall any time soon. Ignorant of this, they continued to fight like wildcats, when suddenly the thundering of many hooves, made them both climb to their feet. Along with the rest of the scavenging fraternity, they watched, open-mouthed as a troop of large oriental horsemen, galloped between them, en route to the city gates.

Barely acknowledging the scrapping peasants, the well turned out horsemen continued on towards the well guarded gates of the city. Looking regimented and organised, they slowed their horses to a halt and the warrior at the front leapt down to approach a guard at the gate.

GUARD: State your business, foreigner!

WARRIOR: I have come to see your king!

GUARD: And you are?

WARRIOR: I represent the confederation of Enaki peoples!

GUARD: Is he expecting you?

WARRIOR: No!

(Eyeing up the warrior's demeanour and his fine looking horses, the guard nodded.)

GUARD: Very well, you may enter the city walls, when you reach the castle another guard will greet you!

(The warrior bowed.)

WARRIOR: Very well, I thank you for your courtesy!

(And with no more ado he headed back to his horse. As the city gates cranked open, the impressive Enaki warriors hurriedly rode through.



With a quick glimpse upwards to locate the castle that dominated the skyline, they galloped on in a two by two formation, through the suburbs and markets of the upper class cobbled inner city. As the smartly dressed and well fed people of the city stopped to stare at them cantering by, the band of warriors couldn't help noting the stark contrast between them and the people outside. Upon arriving at the kings breathtakingly beautiful, not to mention vast castle, the warriors were once again stopped by a guard.)

GUARD: State your business, foreigner!

WARRIOR: We have come to see king Melmero the seventh!

GUARD: Regarding?

WARRIOR: We have official business to conduct on behalf of the Enaki people!

GUARD: Very well, I will see if his majesty will grant you an audience!

WARRIOR: He will!

(He gestured to the warrior at his side.)

WARRIOR: Just tell him general Rikido is here!

GUARD: Like I said, I'll find out!

(As the guard headed inside the castle, the front two warriors in the troop dismounted from their horses and stood arms folded, patiently awaiting the guards return. Staring straight ahead, the two warriors conversed as they waited.)

WARRIOR: This place is strange, General Rikido!

RIKIDO: This place disgusts you?

WARRIOR: Well, yes, outside the city walls is like hell on earth, yet...

RIKIDO: Inside is like a different world?

WARRIOR: Exactly!

RIKIDO: Worry not, young warrior, this is just one of many strange quirks of the white man! They are a race without conscience!

WARRIOR: I see that now!

(It was only a matter of moments before the guard returned to escort them to the kings royal chambers. While the other warriors in their troop waited outside, Rikido and his young prodigy marched inside purposefully. Admiring the beautiful décor and many fine artworks along the walls, the young warrior struggled to keep side by side with his general. He was still looking somewhat starry-eyed when the two of them entered the royal throne room.)

SERVANT: Announcing General Rikido of the Enaki peoples!

(Looking extremely comfortable with an arm resting across the back of his throne and one foot on a pouffe, the king turned to face his aide while the two visitors marched purposefully towards him.)

KING: Where did you say they hail from again?

AIDE: The south continent sire!

(The king nodded.)

KING: That'd explain the eyes! And why do I have to grant him an audience?

AIDE: International relations sire, it's an agreement we have!

KING: Hmm, remind me to cancel this agreement, I hate missing massages!

(Upon reaching the throne, Rikido and the young Enaki with him, bowed. Rolling his eyes the king tutted and raised his voice.)

KING: Yes, yes, yes, that's all very nice, but you kneel before me, not bow!

(Standing tall and folding his arms, Rikido looked the king in the eye.)

RIKIDO: I kneel before no man!

(Looking curious, the king scratched his chin.)

KING: Interesting, yet fool hardy!

(Rikido continued to stare unmoved.)

KING: My, my, angry fellow isn't he?

RIKIDO: I did not come all this way for pleasantries, king Melmero!

(With a sneer, the king replied coldly.)

KING: Then why *are* you here, it'd better be good, I cancelled a massage to listen to you!

RIKIDO: I bring a message from the Enaki elders!

KING: This should be interesting!

RIKIDO: We seek compensation, for the rebuilding and restoration of Neitama village!

(The king looked baffled and turned to his aide.)

KING: Neitama village?

AIDE: It's an Enaki settlement sire!

KING: What's it got to do with me?

AIDE: I have no idea sire!

(The king shrugged towards Rikido.)

KING: Nothing to do with me!

(Unmoved, Rikido continued.)

RIKIDO: Last weekend a group of bounty hunters from here in Sudereva destroyed Neitama village with the use of a summoned beast, and you claim this has nothing to do with you?

KING: Bounty hunters you say?

(The king looked thoughtful.)

KING: I was using some bounty hunters from a city in the north, they borrowed the royal summoner in an attempt to clear the wanted list! If it was them then I apologise, but it wasn't down to me!

RIKIDO: These men destroyed a town and killed hundreds of innocent people, all to capture one man. You sent them, you will pay compensation!

(The king wriggled uneasily in his seat.)

KING: Are you threatening me?

RIKIDO: No! Like I said, I bring a message from the elders, either you pay for the damage or a state of war must exist between us!

(A stunned silence filled the room. Resting his chin on his fist, the king nodded thoughtfully.)

KING: War you say?

RIKIDO: That is correct!

KING: This world hasn't had a good war in decades, not since the darkies in Bahuthu tried to knock seven bells out of each other! War sounds okay to me!

(Rikido bowed.)

RIKIDO: Then war it must be!

KING: Well, given the choice of paying you or killing you... there could only really be one answer!

RIKIDO: Then as general of the Enaki armies, it is my duty to arrange a battle with you!

(The king shook his head in surprise.)

KING: You're serious?

RIKIDO: Deadly so!

KING: But we'll annihilate you!

RIKIDO: We'll see!

(Clearly thrilled by the idea, the king leant to his aide.)

KING: Once we've wiped the slanty-eyed freaks off the map, our empire will double in size!

(He nodded to himself and leant towards Rikido.)

KING: Let's talk business, shall we?

(He gestured for Rikido to take the seat next to him.)

RIKIDO: I will stand!

KING: Suit yourself!

RIKIDO: I will not allow myself to be comfortable in the presence of the sick killer of my people!

(The king grinned.)

KING: You take it so personally. If you hadn't been hiding a fugitive from justice the bounty hunters wouldn't have had to go to your Neitama village, now would they?

RIKIDO: Enough talk, we will do battle on the south continent...

(Before he could continue, the king interrupted angrily.)

KING: On your turf? You must think me a right fool!

RIKIDO: No, I think you an arse hole!

(Trying not to lose his temper, the king spoke through gritted teeth.)

KING: We'll do battle on neutral ground!

(Rikido nodded.)

RIKIDO: Where do you suggest?

KING: How about Bahuthu?

RIKIDO: Bahuthu?

KING: The valley of stones, it's where the Bahuthu civil war ended!

(Rikido looked thoughtful.)

KING: The battle site there is well marked out already, the Bahuthu people have preserved it as it was when war ended!

(Rikido nodded.)

RIKIDO: Very well, Thursday, two weeks from today, we shall meet at dawn?

KING: Agreed!

RIKIDO: If we win, you must compensate us for Neitama!

(The king shrugged.)

KING: Like that's gonna happen!

RIKIDO: Then you agree?

KING: I might as well! But if...or should I say, when *we* win, you must hand your civilization over to me!

RIKIDO: What?

KING: You heard me, if you lose then the Enaki nation will join my empire!

(Rikido stared at him silently for a moment.)

RIKIDO: Very well!

(The king rubbed his hands.)

KING: Excellent, now get out of my sight!

(Not wanting to spend any more time in his company, Rikido and the young warrior turned and marched towards the door. Watching them go, the king turned to his aide.)

KING: There's no need for them both to go!

(Nodding, his aide clicked his fingers at a guard and pointed to the young warrior.)

AIDE: You heard the king!

(Immediately, the guard raced towards them as they marched away. Grinning an almost satanic grin, the king raised his voice to them.)

KING: Oh, and this is for disrespecting my kingdom!!!

(As the guard pulled a dagger and reached for the young warriors back, Rikido spun around and grabbed his arm. Almost in a flash, he spun him around and threw him on his back before balancing his foot over the guards neck.)

RIKIDO: Fools!

(While the guard sweated into his armour, praying Rikido would spare him, the king and his aide looked at each other in bewilderment.)

RIKIDO: This time, I'll spare your foolish warrior... in two weeks time however, I will not rest until each and every one of them is dead!

(He bowed and took his foot from the guards neck.)

RIKIDO: I bid you farewell!

(As they headed out of the door the king turned to his gobsmacked aide.)

KING: I want every available soldier ready for battle, we're gonna destroy them slanty-eyed, yellow freaks if it's the last thing we do!

(And so, the battle was arranged. The white north continent and the oriental south were engaged to lock horns in only two weeks time. It didn't take long for news of the impending battle to spread around the world. In every town and every city of both continents, barely a single household was unaffected. While the men prepared themselves to fight and came to terms with the possibility of dying, the women wept as they busied themselves with the labour of war. The nightmare had begun.)

*Enaki Forest, Neitama Village, Ten days later, Sunday Sunrise...*

(While the rest of the world, involved or not, seemed to be well informed about the impending war, Neitama village and its people had been kept in the dark. Due to the hardship already being faced there, the Enaki elders considered it best not to burden them further. As a result, the people had gone about the rebuilding looking forward to a bright and peaceful future.

As the sun appeared from the night sky on the Sunday before the battle, Kasira, Cole, Dakuri, Haykie and Micalov had assembled in the shadows outside of the Neitama inn where they'd stayed. With the buildings essential to Neitama's everyday existence restored to their former glory, they looked forward to returning to Namki village. For Dakuri and Haykie it would be a return to their everyday lives and for Micalov it would be a chance to find his way out of the forest at last. For Kasira and Cole, however, this was going to be a new beginning. With the mysterious guardian Cigna for their protection, they couldn't wait to gather their belongings and travel the world together. With their packs firmly on their backs, they all took one last look at the restored buildings around them, then Dakuri faced the rising sun and nodded in satisfaction.)

DAKURI: We can return to Namki village today with our heads held high, we've done Neitama proud!

(He looked at Micalov.)

MICALOV: I'm not apologising again! It was any easy mistake to make!

(Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: Easy for you, maybe!

(Micalov shrugged.)

DAKURI: Demolish the ruins, that's all you had to do!

MICALOV: And that's what I did, I demolished the beams!

DAKURI: You demolished the beams we spent two days erecting!!!

MICALOV: Anyone can pick the wrong building!!!

DAKURI: No! Only *you* could have done it!!!

(Watching them argue made Kasira smile. Holding Cole's arm she chuckled to herself.)

KASIRA: Come on Dakuri, let's make a move! Namki village won't come to *us*!

(Dakuri stared at a sheepish Micalov while he replied.)

DAKURI: Good idea!

(Taking a final satisfied glance at the new buildings, they headed off down the street.)

KASIRA: I can't wait to get back into my own clothes!

COLE: You look great in anything!

(Haykie groaned.)

HAYKIE: What a creep!

COLE: Hey, it's true!

KASIRA: No it aint, I feel like a dork in this creepy get up!

(She held out her arms, displaying the long dark blue dress she'd been given by the Enaki elders.)

KASIRA: This thing is so naff, it hurts!

(Spying the split in the dress that travelled right up to her thigh, Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: There was no need to vandalise it!

KASIRA: You reckon? Do you realise how tight this was before I cut it? I could hardly walk!

DAKURI: Would you rather they left you with only that ripped thing you arrived in?

(Kasira shrugged.)

KASIRA: Frankly, yes!

DAKURI: Ingrate!

HAYKIE: Ignore him Kasira, his sense of style is on a par with Micalov's sense of direction!

(Dakuri frowned.)

DAKURI: I resent that!

(Not wishing to discuss the matter further, he paced ahead.)

HAYKIE: He makes me laugh sometimes!

(Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: So what's going on with you two?

(Going slightly red, Haykie looked at Cole.)

COLE: Hey, I'm not here okay!

(Letting his phobia of girl talk shine though, he grabbed Micalov and ushered him ahead to catch up with Dakuri.)

HAYKIE: Where's he off to in such a hurry?

KASIRA: Never mind that, Haykie, what's the score with you and Dakuri?

(Haykie gave her a sideways glance.)

HAYKIE: Oh, I get it! You think because we're both women, I'm gonna tell you all my personal details!

(Kasira look confused.)

KASIRA: Well... aren't you?

(Haykie shrugged in resignation.)

HAYKIE: I suppose I am!

(Rubbing her hands with glee, Kasira nodded for her to begin.)

HAYKIE: What? Now?

KASIRA: Well, duh!

HAYKIE: Okay... there's not a lot to tell, Kasira!

KASIRA: Then embellish it, make stuff up if you want, just talk to me!

(Haykie nodded.)

HAYKIE: About Dakuri?

(Kasira nodded excitedly.)

HAYKIE: Nothing to tell, we're friends... he's not ready for anything else!

KASIRA: Meaning?

HAYKIE: Meaning?

(She gave her a unimpressed look.)

HAYKIE: You don't give up, do ya?

KASIRA: I aint even started!

(Smiling to herself, Haykie shrugged.)

HAYKIE: Let's just say... he's never had a relationship... you know how he is, he needs to lighten up a bit, in fact a lot!

KASIRA: He has come out of his shell a bit!

HAYKIE: And I intend to help him with the rest, but until he becomes less regimented and stuffy... friends is all we can be!

(Kasira looked disappointed.)

HAYKIE: I told you there was nothing to tell!

KASIRA: And I told you, you could lie!

(Haykie shrugged.)

KASIRA: I tell you all *my* sordid secrets with Cole!

(Haykie suddenly took on a deadly serious demeanour. Holding Kasira's arm, she spoke softly to her.)

HAYKIE: Um... Kasira?

KASIRA: What? What's up, Haykie?

HAYKIE: There is one thing...

(She then shook her head and released Kasira's arm.)

HAYKIE: Forget it, it's nothing!

KASIRA: No, tell me... please?

HAYKIE: It's nothing really, just a curse!

(Looking shocked, Kasira raised her voice in horror.)

KASIRA: A curse???

HAYKIE: Shush!!!

KASIRA: Sorry!

HAYKIE: Dozy bint, it's a secret!

KASIRA: Like I said, I'm sorry!

(With a smile Haykie continued.)

HAYKIE: It's no big deal, just a curse all witches have to live with!

(Eager for information, Kasira implored her to continue.)

HAYKIE: I'm of baron stock... all witches are!

KASIRA: Baron stock? I thought you were from Dezara's Plateau!

HAYKIE: No! Baron stock! I can't bare children!

KASIRA: Nor can I!

(Haykie looked surprised.)

HAYKIE: Really?

KASIRA: No, I hate the little fuckers, but what's that got do with anything?

(Haykie looked bamboozled to say the least.)

HAYKIE: You left school far too soon, Kasira!

KASIRA: What's that supposed to mean?

HAYKIE: Baron stock, I can't have children... I'm physically unable to!

KASIRA: Oh... I see!

(She gave her a sympathetic smile.)

HAYKIE: It's just that... seeing you and Cole so happy and spending all this time with Dakuri... makes me think of it a lot! I'm never gonna have that... who wants a baron woman?

(She forced a chuckle.)

HAYKIE: Even Micalov would reject me if he knew!

KASIRA: Not necessarily!

(Haykie looked miffed.)

HAYKIE: What do you mean? Not necessarily? Cheeky cow!

(Kasira shrugged, stuck for what to say.)

HAYKIE: So, there... happy now?

KASIRA: It bothers you a lot, doesn't it?

(Haykie nodded.)

HAYKIE: Yes it does... but you'll never see me cry!

KASIRA: Do you hide when you cry then?

HAYKIE: Yes!

KASIRA: Thought so!

(Just then, their conversation was interrupted by Cole.)

COLE: Sorry to butt in, ladies, but if you keep walking at that pace it'll take all bloody week to get back!

HAYKIE: We're coming!

COLE: Well can you go a little faster? Dakuri's getting angry and I've left him with Micalov!

(As they hurried to catch up with Dakuri and Micalov, Kasira winked to Haykie receiving a smile in return.

HAYKIE: Thanks for letting me get that off my chest, Kasira.

KASIRA: You're welcome, Haykie.

(Once they finally caught up with them at the edge of the village, they found Dakuri staring towards the forest thoughtfully with Micalov sitting quietly on the cobbles at his feet.)

KASIRA: Sorry about that! Didn't mean to keep you waiting.

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: It's okay!

HAYKIE: Why are you sitting there Micalov?

(Micalov raised his head.)

MICALOV: Dakuri told me to!

(Haykie shook her head.)

HAYKIE: Dakuri!

DAKURI: I'm just keeping him out of harms way!

HAYKIE: Eh?

DAKURI: He should think himself lucky that I didn't make him put his hands on his head!

HAYKIE: You're mean!

(Dakuri turned to her.)

DAKURI: This idiot breaks everything he touches, I was just keeping him safe!

(He turned to Kasira.)

DAKURI: On the way there you're going to show me this temple you found, right?

(She nodded.)

KASIRA: Sure!

DAKURI: Then let's go, Namki village awaits!

(Before they could advance a single step, however, a voice, vaguely familiar to Kasira, piped up from behind them. They turned to see a tall black man approaching.)

KASIRA: He sounds like my dad!

(As the man reached them he offered a brilliant white smile and reached out a welcoming hand towards Dakuri.)

ZIMFASU: So glad I found somebody, the place is dead this time of the morning!

(Shaking his hand, Dakuri responded.)

DAKURI: What did you expect?

ZIMFASU: Fair comment!

DAKURI: What can we do for you, Mister...

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: Call me Zimfasu!

DAKURI: I'll call you a lot of things if you don't state your business!!!

(Zimfasu stepped back, clearly daunted by the big man's tone.)

ZIMFASU: Sorry man, didn't mean to upset ya!

(Shaking her head in contempt for Dakuri's actions, Haykie stepped forward.)

HAYKIE: Excuse his rudeness, he's very protective of us!

ZIMFASU: Okay!

HAYKIE: What can we do for you?

ZIMFASU: I'm a merchant, I just spent the last three weeks at sea... I got a delivery for Neitama village from Bahuthu see, but I've also got this small package to deliver to a friend in Namki village!

(He held out a small parcel.)



ZIMFASU: Thing is, I got to deliver it in person and... I aint got a clue where to go!

HAYKIE: You want directions?

ZIMFASU: Please!

(At this point, Kasira stepped forward.)

KASIRA: We're going to Namki village, why don't you come with us?

(He smiled.)

ZIMFASU: Aint you a pretty one!

(She turned to the others.)

KASIRA: What do you think?

(Dakuri and Cole looked at each other.)

KASIRA: The poor guy hasn't got a clue where to go!

(Dakuri leant to Cole.)

DAKURI: I'll tell him where to go in a minute!

COLE: No wonder you find it hard to make friends!

(He looked at Kasira.)

COLE: Fine by us!

DAKURI: Nobody ever listens to me!

HAYKIE: Your more than welcome, you'll get used to Dakuri!

(Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: Let's go then! Come on... what was your name again?

ZIMFASU: Zimfasu!

KASIRA: Let's go Zim... far... can we call you Zim?

ZIMFASU: Not twice!

(And with that they headed into the forest towards the temple of Dietyawa on their way back to Namki village.)

*Bahuthu, Near Imzalla, Sunday morning...*

(In a field just outside of Zimfasu's hometown, 'Imzalla' on the south coast of the black nation of Bahuthu, at this time, a tall army general marched up and down in front of a large tribe of spear wielding soldiers. Shaking an angry fist he fed his men an impassioned speech.)

GENERAL: Men... the time has come for our proud black race to stand before the world and be counted!

(He stopped marching and placed his hands on his hips.)

GENERAL: These people, these disrespectful infidels, without a thought for us here in Bahuthu, they think they can dance on the graves of our fallen!

(He shook his raised fist in the air.)

GENERAL: They wish to take out their anger on each other on the graves of our dead, with no respect for our sacred site!

(As he spoke his men looked angrier and angrier.)

GENERAL: A sacred site, preserved as a memorial to those who gave their lives in Bahuthu's glorious civil war... and they plan to decimate it with their own battle!

(He started to pace again, becoming more and more animated.)

GENERAL: This my people, is just another sign of the disrespect and ignorance of the rest of the world... they think they can just come here and walk all over us!!!

(He wielded his spear high in the air.)

GENERAL: If the Enaki and whitey wish to kill each other, let it be... but if they think they can do it on the graves on the Bahuthu... we will turn the sacred grass red with their blood!

(Stopping for breath, he looked around at his men's angry faces and spoke in a softer tone.)

GENERAL: I can see it in your eyes, you are ready... ready to march to the sacred battle site in the valley of stones and defend the honour of our fallen...

(Suddenly, he thrust both fists in the air and yelled.)

GENERAL: Death to the infidels!!!

(As he shook with pride in his words, his men all cheered and started to repeatedly bang their spears into the turf. Heeding their unity, the general stood tall and nodded as he watched his men.)

GENERAL: Who would give their life for Bahuthu???

(They all cheered.)

GENERAL: Who will kill for the honour of our homeland???

(Again they cheered.)

GENERAL: Let's march!!!

(Upon his command, they immediately headed forth across the field, carrying heavy packs, spears and dragging supplies behind them. Like the well disciplined fighting unit they were, they chanted in unison as they headed towards the horizon.)

*Enaki Forest, Sunday Morning...*

(With the trip home finally underway, Kasira and her companions chatted excitedly about their future plans. Dakuri, on the other hand, was keeping a watchful eye on Zimfasu, and only hearing half of the conversation. His distrust making Zimfasu feel uneasy as they headed for the temple.)

COLE: I bet the trip back's gonna be easier than the trip here!

KASIRA: It'd bloody better be!

ZIMFASU: Why? What happened?

(Before she could answer, Dakuri leant over and whispered in her ear.)

DAKURI: Tell him nothing!

(She gave him an odd look.)

KASIRA: Why not? It's hardly a state secret!

DAKURI: Even so, trust no-one, Kasira!

(Looking somewhat miffed, Zimfasu challenged Dakuri.)

ZIMFASU: You got a problem with me, Dakuri?

(Dakuri shrugged.)

ZIMFASU: You got a problem with black people?

(Dakuri turned to him angrily.)

DAKURI: Do not even suggest this! My problem with you is personal!

ZIMFASU: You don't even know me!

DAKURI: Exactly!

(Zimfasu frowned, somewhat defeated by his logic.)

ZIMFASU: That's up to you, man!

(Feeling sorry for the new guy, Haykie spoke quietly to him.)

HAYKIE: Don't let it bother you, Zimfasu, as a bodyguard he's trained to be untrusting!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: I kinda guessed that, I'll keep out of his way!

(Having heard the whole thing, Dakuri begged to differ.)

DAKURI: On the contrary, Zimfasu, you'll stay right where I can see you!

(Confused by it all, Micalov piped up.)

MICALOV: You usually tell *me* to stay where you *can't* see me!

(Clearly losing his temper, Dakuri turned on Micalov.)

DAKURI: That is because, I know you are just a harmless idiot! We know nothing of this Zimfasu!

(Too dim to notice the insult, Micalov beamed.)

MICALOV: Does that mean you trust me?

(Ignoring him, Dakuri paced aside Zimfasu.)

DAKURI: I'll be watching you!

(Thoroughly embarrassed by Dakuri's distrustful attitude, Cole and Kasira had wandered ahead.)

COLE: What the hell's got into Dakuri?

KASIRA: He's only doing what comes natural!

COLE: What? Being rude?

KASIRA: No, he was raised to watch out for me, it's just left him a bit...

(She bit her lip.)

KASIRA: What's the word?

COLE: Socially Inept?

KASIRA: That's two words!

(Cole grinned.)

COLE: Are you being facetious?

KASIRA: Depends, what does facetious mean?

COLE: Never mind!

KASIRA: Don't worry, when Dakuri realises that Zimfasu means no harm, he'll lighten up!

COLE: I hope so, I feel sorry for Zimfasu, Dakuri can be intimidating!

(Kasira shrugged.)

KASIRA: I know, but what can you do?

(Suddenly, she stopped walking and pointed ahead.)

KASIRA: Look, there it is, the temple!

(Cole nodded and turned to face her.)

COLE: Hopefully, Dakuri can shed some light on what exactly Cigna is!

KASIRA: Even if he can't, it doesn't matter!

(As the others slowly caught up, Kasira again, pointed at the temple before her.)

KASIRA: There it is, the temple of Dietyawa!

(Wearing a look of pure unadulterated awe, Dakuri stepped to the front.)

DAKURI: It's... it's incredible!

(As his eyes scanned the tall, stepped pyramid, he shook his head in disbelief.)

DAKURI: All my life I have lived in this forest, yet I have never set eyes on this before!

(Sharing his wonderment, Haykie turned to Kasira.)

HAYKIE: It's incredible... amazing even!

DAKURI: Let's go inside!

(Unable to hold himself back, Dakuri rushed ahead forgetting all about Zimfasu.)

ZIMFASU: What is that pyramid thing?

KASIRA: It's a temple!

ZIMFASU: A temple? Is it safe?

KASIRA: Of course it is, take a look if you like!

(And with that, they all headed for the large stone entrance and disappeared inside. Apart from Cole and Kasira, who'd been there before, they all entered slowly and looked around in amazement at the breath-taking décor of the large room inside. Intrigued by Dakuri's amazement, Cole approached him while Kasira stood before the altar.)

COLE: So, Dakuri, what do you think?

(Too awestruck to speak, Dakuri nodded and said nothing.)

COLE: Do you understand any of it?

(Continuing to stare at the portraits and ancient scripts on the walls, Dakuri responded in a slow, stunned voice.)

DAKURI: This script... it's ancient Enaki!

COLE: What does it say?

(Dakuri stood tall and gave him an icy stare.)

DAKURI: How the hell should I know?

(Cole shrugged and tried to think of a response.)

COLE: But you're...

DAKURI: Do I look like an ancient Enaki to you?

(Cole shrugged.)

COLE: You're Enaki!

DAKURI: An Enaki and an ancient Enaki are too different things, halfwit. The ancients wrote in symbols, for one.

(Cole scoffed, more than a little put out by his tone.)

COLE: Fine, you're not an ancient then.

(As Cole rolled his eyes, Zimfasu paced over smiling.)

ZIMFASU: Ancient, no! But he's no spring chicken!

(Seemingly immune to humour, Dakuri spun around and paced towards the terrified looking Zimfasu.)

DAKURI: Who said you could enter here???

(Backtracking with a look of terror in his eyes, Zimfasu protested vehemently.)

ZIMFASU: Please Dakubu, I only try to break the ice!!!

DAKURI: Dakubu???

(Zimfasu gave a cheesy grin.)

ZIMFASU: Dat aint your name is it?

(Spotting Dakuri's anger, Haykie raced over and stood before Dakuri.)

HAYKIE: Stop it will you? He was trying to be friendly!

DAKURI: By insulting me?

HAYKIE: It was a joke!

DAKURI: Jokes are supposed to be funny!

ZIMFASU: I never said it was a *good* joke!!!

(Ignoring the argument behind her, Kasira stood before the alter silently. With one hand on her necklace, she reached her hand out to the alter table and caressed the cloth with her finger tips. Smiling in gratitude, she closed her eyes to offer a thankful prayer to Cigna for appearing to her from that very alter and ultimately saving their lives. As she opened her eyes, she turned to see if the others were still arguing, only to find them frozen in time.)

KASIRA: What the?

(Sensing movement from the alter she turned back to it nervously, uncertain what to expect. With a worried look engraved on her face, she grabbed the necklace tight with both hands, when suddenly, the brilliant white apparition of Cigna appeared before her. In the same soft feminine voice as before, the glowing ivory figure spoke slowly and gently.)

CIGNA: Kasira, it is a pleasure to see you again!

(Nervous as always, Kasira smiled and spoke up in a little voice.)

KASIRA: Hello... Cigna!

CIGNA: You seem nervous pretty one, there's no need to be afraid!

KASIRA: I... I know!

CIGNA: Tell me Kasira, do you know why you're here?

KASIRA: Um... I'm going home... I was just passing through... Dakuri wanted to see the temple!

CIGNA: You are mistaken, Kasira!

KASIRA: M-mistaken?

CIGNA: Yes, you are here, because fate determined that you would be!

KASIRA: Fate?

CIGNA: You Kasira, she of the three surnames, the chosen one, a great destiny awaits you!

(Looking confused Kasira shrugged.)

KASIRA: But... I fulfilled my destiny!

CIGNA: Sorry Kasira, killing Necronema was only the first step, the consequences of that day caused you to come to me!

KASIRA: What... what do you mean, Cigna?

CIGNA: You were chased through here as a result of your disappearance from Sudereva, this was not co-incidence Kasira!

(Becoming lost and confused by Cigna's revelations, Kasira stepped back and shook her head.)

KASIRA: No... you're lying... I fulfilled my destiny!

CIGNA: Stay calm Kasira, I have no reason to lie to you!

(Rapidly becoming more and more frightened, she froze to the spot and tried to protest.)

KASIRA: Cigna... I don't want a destiny... I want to be free!

CIGNA: And free you will be Kasira, the reward for completing your mission in life is a great one!

KASIRA: But... I'm happy now!

CIGNA: This is nothing compared to the greatness that awaits you!

(Curious by nature, Kasira put her fear to one side for a moment.)

KASIRA: So... what is my mission in life?

CIGNA: It is simple... when light and dark become one Kasira, your mission will be complete!

KASIRA: Light and dark? As in day and night?

CIGNA: The riddle is simple Kasira, it is with you everywhere you go?

KASIRA: Even now?

CIGNA: Especially now!

KASIRA: But... I don't get it? Cigna?

CIGNA: When all else fails Kasira, call upon me!

(And in a blinding flash, Cigna was gone. Immediately, time unfroze and the argument behind her continued. Kasira, however was still in a daze. Looking baffled and upset, she paced around the alter.)

KASIRA: Cigna? Cigna, come back!

(She threw her hands in the air.)

KASIRA: I don't understand, Cigna!

(Noticing her torment, the others stopped arguing and raced to her side, Cole placing his hands on her shoulders.)

COLE: Kasira? What's up, darling?

(She looked into his eyes, with a bewildered look on her face.)

KASIRA: I don't get it!

COLE: You saw Cigna again, didn't you?

DAKURI: Aren't you the smart one!

COLE: Shut up, Dakuri!

KASIRA: Oh, Cole! It was horrible!

(She threw her arms around him and shivered with fear. Holding her tight in return, Cole stroked her arm and tried to comfort her.)

COLE: It's okay darling, it's okay!

(Stepping back from him, she went very pale.)

KASIRA: Just get me out of here!

(With comforting his loved one his only priority, Cole immediately lead her outside into the forest, while the others followed on, looking baffled. As they emerged into the sunlight, Kasira slunk down against a tree and placed her head in her hands, Cole and Dakuri immediately knelt before her.)

COLE: Kasira? What happened?

(Looking through her fingers, she spoke softly.)

KASIRA: I've got a new destiny... well, not a destiny... a mission!

DAKURI: Cigna told you this?

(She nodded.)

KASIRA: Time froze again... you probably guessed that... and she told me I had to make light and dark become one!

COLE: What does that mean?

KASIRA: I don't know!

DAKURI: So, she wants you to solve the riddle?

KASIRA: I guess so!

(She looked up.)

KASIRA: It was weird, she spoke to me like I was an old friend... and she called me she of three surnames!

COLE: Three surnames?

KASIRA: It's true, I have had three surnames, but why did she... I don't get it!

DAKURI: When we reach Namki village, I'll speak with Omki Saan... he may know something!

(Suddenly, Kasira climbed to her feet.)

KASIRA: No way, there's no need!

DAKURI: What?

KASIRA: Come tomorrow, Cole and I are out of here for good, there's no way I'm cancelling our plans!

DAKURI: But Kasira...

(Taking her by the hand, Cole nodded.)

COLE: If that's what she wants Dakuri, then that's what'll happen!

(She gave him a loving smile.)

KASIRA: It is!

COLE: Then let's get going, the sooner we're back in Namki village, the sooner we can start packing!

(And with that, he lead her away. Dakuri shrugged and started to follow as the others also resumed their walking. As they headed away from the temple, Zimfasu approached Dakuri.)

ZIMFASU: Um... can I have a word, Dakuri?

(Dakuri glared at him coldly.)

DAKURI: No!

ZIMFASU: Just a minute of your time!

(Shaking his head, the big man relented.)

DAKURI: Very well, just one minute!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: That's all I ask!

DAKURI: Clock's ticking!

ZIMFASU: Okay, okay... look, I just wanted to say, I'm only travelling with you because we're going the same way. I won't interfere with anything you do and I won't get in your way!

DAKURI: You'd be wise not to!

ZIMFASU: I know, but I want you to realise something, if I meant anyone any harm I'd have done it when you went into the temple, you can trust me!

(Dakuri looked uncertain.)

DAKURI: I don't know!

(Zimfasu grimaced.)

ZIMFASU: I tried, I don't expect you to like me, I just want you to know I can be trusted. I'm a hard-working man, Dakuri, I'm not out to cause trouble!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Very well, I admit I've been harsh, but my very instinct is not to trust anybody, no matter who they claim to be!

ZIMFASU: Fair enough!

DAKURI: Zimfasu, you've surprised me. I respect the fact that you chose to speak to me man to man, I feel I can trust you now!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: Thanks Dakuri, that means a lot!

(Dakuri smiled.)

DAKURI: Now, as for your little joke about my age, I'm afraid I'm going to have to beat you up a little bit!

(Zimfasu sidled away looking worried.)

DAKURI: Now *that* was funny!

(Zimfasu grinned and shook his head.)

ZIMFASU: Good one, Dakuri, you're alright!

*Ocean, Near Port Amanti, Dezara's Plateau, Sunday Morning...*

(Covering the ocean like a swarm, a huge fleet of small ships departed from the Dezara's Plateau township of Port Amanti. The continent known for its sheer number of petty criminals and thieves had found itself its own niche in the impending war. With the Bahuthu army throwing their hats into the ring, the opportunity for a crime spree was far too good to miss. From raiding unprotected homes to scavenging the bodies of the dead, the list of potential illicit gains was simply irresistible to those unscrupulous citizens of this undesirable land. On one such ship, bound for the soon to be crime wonderland of Bahuthu, two unshaven thieves looked out to sea, fantasising over the size of the potential booty. Supping from their beer bottles they chatted in a boisterous manner.)

RYNADO: We're gonna make a fortune, Cyril!

STAG: I thought I told ya, call me Stag!

(Rynado laughed.)

RYNADO: Stag? You'll sound like a right tosser!

STAG: Yeah, 'cause Cyril sounds *so* manly!

RYNADO: Good point!

STAG: Cyril indeed, what were my parents thinking of?

(Rynado looked curious.)

RYNADO: Is that why you killed 'em?

STAG: Nah, they had money!

RYNADO: Really?

STAG: Yeah... of course, I've spent it all now though!

(Rynado nodded.)

RYNADO: Don't worry, where there's war, there's money to be made, mate! After this little excursion we're gonna be rich beyond our wildest dreams!

(Stag nodded excitedly.)

STAG: Yeah, then we can buy whatever we want!

RYNADO: Women, horses... the high life!

STAG: And I can get my name changed officially!

(Rynado chuckled to himself.)

RYNADO: It really bothers you, don't it?

STAG: Wouldn't it, you?

RYNADO: Nah, not really, once we've finished in Bahuthu people will be calling us sir!

STAG: Yeah, and bowing to us!

RYNADO: We'll live in big houses, with a butler!

STAG: We could open a strip club!



(Rynado gave him a funny look.)

STAG: I mean... if we wanted to...

(He shrugged.)

STAG: I mean... like, I wouldn't, but if, say... we wanted to...

RYNADO: If you wanna open a strip club, go ahead mate!

STAG: No, no... I was just saying... if!

(Rynado looked upwards, starry-eyed.)

RYNADO: Whatever Cyril... sorry, Stag, come tomorrow afternoon when we arrive in Bahuthu, we're gonna start making a fortune!

STAG: A day and a half at sea, small price to pay!

RYNADO: Even smaller when you consider we're stowaways!

(With a hearty laugh, they knocked their beer bottles together and took a giant swig before staring excitedly out to sea again.)

*Enaki Forest, Namki Village, Late Sunday Night...*

(Following the long and exhausting walk back from Neitama Village, the sight of Namki village appearing through the trees, had been like a blessing from heaven. Weary and almost asleep on their aching feet, the tired party stopped outside Kasira and Cole's converted shed of a cabin. Rubbing her eyes, Kasira smiled and leant on Cole.)

KASIRA: Home at last!

(Dakuri frowned.)

DAKURI: Are you sure I can't convince you to talk to Omki Saan before you leave?

KASIRA: I've made up my mind, Dakuri! Come tomorrow morning, we're off round the world!

(Dakuri sighed.)

DAKURI: Very well, at least let us see you off!

KASIRA: Of course!

DAKURI: That would be the least you could do!

(Haykie shook her head.)

HAYKIE: What he means is, he's going to miss you!

(Luckily for Dakuri, the darkness of the night hid how red he'd turned.)

KASIRA: We'll miss you too, Dakuri!

(Looking thoroughly embarrassed, he started to walk away.)

DAKURI: Are we going to stand here chatting all night?

(Seeing nobody else move, Dakuri stopped.)

DAKURI: Damn it!

(Haykie grinned and turned to Kasira.)

HAYKIE: You intend to leave at sunrise, right?

COLE: Definitely!

HAYKIE: Okay, we'll come over then!

KASIRA: Okay, see you tomorrow!

(And with that, she opened the door and went inside. Still standing there, Cole shrugged.)

COLE: We'll only get a few hours sleep, but it's better than nothing!

HAYKIE: Of course. Good night then!

(Before he could reply, Kasira's arm came from the open doorway and yanked him inside. As their door slammed shut, Haykie smiled to Dakuri.)

HAYKIE: Let's go home!

DAKURI: I already was, you stopped me!

(Looking rather sheepish, Micalov piped up.)

MICALOV: Um... where am I gonna sleep?

(Dakuri stroked his chin.)

DAKURI: I know the perfect place, see them trees behind the long pavilion?

(Micalov nodded.)

DAKURI: Pick one! Goodnight!

(As he went to turn, Haykie intervened.)

HAYKIE: We can't leave him out here all night!

DAKURI: Wanna bet?

(Micalov looked sad.)

MICALOV: I'll be okay!

HAYKIE: And what about you, Zimfasu?

(Zimfasu shrugged.)

ZIMFASU: I hadn't thought about it!

HAYKIE: Well you can't deliver your package this time of night!

ZIMFASU: I guess not!

DAKURI: Problem solved, you can keep Micalov company under the trees!

(Again, he went to turn for his house but failed to take a single step.)

HAYKIE: Have a heart, Dakuri!

DAKURI: I knew you'd object, very well...

(Zimfasu and Micalov smiled.)

DAKURI: They can sleep on my porch!

(This time he turned and kept going.)

HAYKIE: Oi, Dakuri... don't walk away from me!

(Looking thoroughly fed up, he stopped again.)

HAYKIE: Just let them sleep over tonight, eh?

(Dakuri threw his hands in the air.)

DAKURI: We left Neitama at dawn, now it's gone midnight and we still aren't home!

I'm too tired to argue! Come, we have an early start tomorrow!

(Looking thoroughly relieved, Zimfasu and Micalov stepped forward.)

ZIMFASU: Thanks man, you won't regret this!

DAKURI: I'd better not!

MICALOV: You're a great man, Dakuri!

(Just then, Kasira appeared in her doorway looking tired and angry.)

KASIRA: Will you lot keep the fuckin' noise down, some of us are trying to sleep!

(As she hurried inside, slamming the door, the others beat a hasty retreat towards Dakuri's place.)

HAYKIE: There's a foul mouth on that girl!

DAKURI: I don't blame her, if you'd just have left when I did...

HAYKIE: Whatever, Dakuri!

(Turning towards Zimfasu and Micalov, Dakuri stood tall and made his feelings known.)

DAKURI: Before you enter my home, I want you to know... I have a few house rules!

ZIMFASU: Naturally!

DAKURI: If you steal anything, I'll kill you... if you wake me up, I'll kill you... if you make a mess...

ZIMFASU: You'll kill us?

DAKURI: You catch on quick, Zimfasu!

MICALOV: I'd better sleep on the porch then, you know me... I'm bound to break something!

DAKURI: I won't argue with that, Micalov!

(Haykie looked annoyed.)

HAYKIE: Dakuri?

DAKURI: What? He's choosing to sleep on the porch! Who am I to stop him?

HAYKIE: Micalov, you'll sleep in the warm, with the rest of us!

MICALOV: Thanks, Haykie!

DAKURI: Fine... but let's go before you invite the whole village to sleep over!

HAYKIE: Grow up, you big lump, grow up!

(And finally, they all headed off for Dakuri's house. It wasn't long before the four of them joined the rest of the village in trying to get some shut eye. For Dakuri, it would be a long night, knowing the one he'd been raised to protect would be leaving the village for good in the morning. Having walked from sunrise 'til midnight, Kasira and Cole slept like logs, leaving their packing for the morning and the sound of the cock crowing.)

*Enaki Forest, Namki Village, Monday sunrise...*

(As the first glimpse of the night's demise appeared in the sky, and the tree's became enshrouded in mist instead of darkness, Kasira and Cole were very much awake.

Having grabbed only a few hours of sleep thanks to Kasira's insatiable Libido, the two of them blundered and staggered around as they packed their things into boxes ready for the trip ahead. As Kasira disappeared back into the bedroom, a half asleep Cole, reached into a cupboard and pulled out some mouldy fruit. Looking as if he'd be sick, he threw it out of the open window and scratched his head when Kasira suddenly came back in looking smart in a tight grey top and matching skirt. As a curious expression covered his face, he rubbed his hair and mustered one tired word.)

COLE: Why?

KASIRA: Why what?

COLE: The nice clothes!

KASIRA: I thought we'd visit Bond's memorial before we leave... if that's okay?

(He nodded.)

COLE: Sure, good idea!

(Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: Do I look nice?

(Straining his blurred vision, he scrutinized her with his eyes.)

COLE: Sure you do!

(Letting out an extremely wide yawn, he shook his head and rubbed his eyes again.)

COLE: Next time you wake up feeling randy in the night, use your hand!

(As he sat at the table, a stunned Kasira paced up to him.)

KASIRA: That's a disgusting thing to say!

(Stretching in an attempt to wake himself up, Cole looked confused.)

COLE: Eh?

(Suddenly it dawned on him.)

COLE: I meant to wake me! Don't just straddle me in my sleep, I was so shocked when I woke up I banged me head on the headboard!

(He sighed.)

COLE: I've got a stinging headache, now!

(Kasira suddenly chuckled.)

KASIRA: "Use your hand". I can't believe you said that.

COLE: Yeah alright, it's not *that* funny!

(She couldn't answer him for giggling.)

COLE: Maybe it is then!

(As he joined her in a childish giggle, there was suddenly a loud knocking on the door.)

KASIRA: That'll be Dakuri and Haykie, probably!

COLE: Uh-huh!

(Getting wearily to his feet, Cole approached the door.)

COLE: I hate farewells!

(With that, he pulled open the door and Dakuri strode inside.)

DAKURI: Morning. I trust you slept well!

KASIRA: Not too bad!

(He looked at the yawning Cole.)

DAKURI: It's pretty clear that *you* didn't!

COLE: You can say that again!

(Seconds later, Haykie made her way through the open door, turning to look back outside as she did so.)

HAYKIE: Come on!

(She stepped back and pulled the door open wider allowing Micalov and Zimfasu to bundle their way inside.)

MICALOV: Morning!

ZIMFASU: Hi! Don't mind me, it's too early to do my delivery but Dakuri insisted I came with him. Just pretend I'm not here!

(Seeing everyone was present, Kasira smiled and a tear ran down her cheek.)

KASIRA: I'm so glad you came, I'm gonna miss you guys, so much!

(Pushing the door closed, Haykie bit her lip and forced back her own tears.)

HAYKIE: We'll miss you too, won't we Dakuri?

(Looking slightly unnerved, Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: I guess so!

MICALOV: You won't miss *me* though, will ya?

DAKURI: Obviously!

(As her tears continued, Kasira threw her arms up in the air.)

KASIRA: Sod it!

(Allowing her emotions to prevail, she ran up and hugged Dakuri, making him extremely uncomfortable.)

KASIRA: You take care of yourself you big uncouth oaf, and take care of Haykie!

(He nodded as he pushed her away.)

DAKURI: I will!

(As she gave him a friendly smile, Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: Sod it, I might as well ask! Now that you've slept, are you still certain that you want to abandon this mission of yours?

(Fed up with repeating herself, Kasira sighed.)

KASIRA: I'm positive. I don't get the clue and I don't really care... I just want to live my life and be happy! Nothing can stop us going on this trip, nothing!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Very well. Then let me give you one piece of valuable advice before you walk out of my life forever. Call it my farewell gift to you. My advice to you is simple. No matter what you do, no matter what happens in life, regret nothing Kasira! When you go, don't look back and always stand by your decisions.

KASIRA: I will Dakuri, I will!

HAYKIE: That's good advice. Good luck, Kasira!

(And she too, gave Kasira a hug.)

HAYKIE: Take care, sweetheart!

KASIRA: I will!

(Looking deadly serious, Dakuri turned to Cole.)

DAKURI: If *you* try to hug me, I'm leaving!

(Cole smirked.)

COLE: I don't think I'll be doing that somehow, Dakuri!

DAKURI: Damn right you won't!

(Grinning insanely, the two men approached and shook hands sternly.)

DAKURI: Take care of Kasira for me!

COLE: Count on it!

(Incredibly, Dakuri then gave him a brief friendly hug and slapped his back.)

KASIRA: What the?

HAYKIE: But... that's a human emotion???

(As he released Cole, Dakuri stood tall and watched him gasp for air.)

DAKURI: What's the matter with you?

COLE: You almost crushed my ribs! I'll have to travel the world in pain, now!

DAKURI: Drama queen!

(Chuckling as she approached him, Haykie reached her head forward to kiss Cole on the cheek.)

HAYKIE: Bye then, Cole!

(Spotting this, Kasira's hair stood on end and her nostrils started to flare.)

KASIRA: Don't you dare...

(Her words were then interrupted by another pounding on the door. Giving Haykie dagger looks, Kasira walked over to it and yanked it open angrily.)

KASIRA: What???

(Before her stood an anxious looking Omki Saan, the proud leader of the village elders and Dakuri's father. Obviously in a panic, the bearded old man barged past Kasira and stopped dead upon sighting his son.)

OMKI SAAN: Dakuri, I thought that was you I saw... thank the gods, you're okay!

(Less than impressed by his intrusion, Dakuri scowled.)

DAKURI: Senile old fool, you have no business here!

OMKI SAAN: But I thought you may have gone off to war!

(Everyone looked baffled.)

DAKURI: Against who? Mister Chan's cattle?

(Quite startled by his reply, Omki Saan gaped.)

DAKURI: Why the carp impression, Omki Saan?

(Suddenly, Omki Saan looked enlightened.)

OMKI SAAN: You've been in Neitama village all this time, haven't you?

DAKURI: What of it?

(As Omki Saan turned pale, Zimfasu pulled up a chair for him. Needing no second invitation, Omki Saan slunk into it looking incredibly uneasy, much to Dakuri's displeasure.)

DAKURI: Don't encourage him, Zimfasu!

(Ignoring Dakuri's lack of compassion, Zimfasu held out his hands.)

ZIMFASU: The old guy don't look well, man!

DAKURI: Don't defy me...

(Noticing Omki Saan's discomfort, Cole spoke up.)

COLE: Enough, Dakuri!

(Dakuri glared at him furiously.)

COLE: What gives, Omki Saan? You look like you've seen a ghost!

(Muttering randomly, Omki Saan looked around with glazed eyes.)

OMKI SAAN: You've been in Neitama, of course you don't know. At least you're all safe...

(Becoming increasingly concerned for his father's sanity, Dakuri leant over him.)

DAKURI: What don't we know? What are you babbling about, Omki Saan?

(As seriousness engulfed his expression, Omki Saan suddenly stopped babbling and looked Dakuri in the eye.)

OMKI SAAN: Those men destroyed Neitama village...

DAKURI: Yes, but we killed them and the village is nearly rebuilt!

(Omki Saan shook his head.)

OMKI SAAN: Neitama had enough problems as it was, they agreed not to inform Neitama village and worry the people further!

(As everyone looked on with curiosity, Kasira grabbed her hairbrush and sat down to listen.)

OMKI SAAN: A terrible thing has happened, Dakuri!

(Growing impatient with his father's warbling, Dakuri started to get angry.)

DAKURI: Tell us, you old fool!!!

(Gasping for breath, the old man spat out his words then hung his head in shame.)

OMKI SAAN: We are at war, Dakuri!!!

(As an icy cold silence filled the room, even Kasira stopped brushing her hair to stare at the shame-faced elder. With his mouth wide open, Dakuri stepped back from his father and shook his head in contempt.)

DAKURI: War?

(Looking up with tearful eyes, Omki Saan continued.)

OMKI SAAN: I tried to stop them, but I was the only elder opposed to it!

(Pitying Omki Saan, Cole paced up to him and spoke gently.)

COLE: Who are you at war with?

OMKI SAAN: The council of Enaki elders have declared war on the north continent!

(Dropping her hairbrush, Kasira stood up looking mortified.)

KASIRA: My parents!!!

OMKI SAAN: Kasira, the war will not be held on the north continent!

KASIRA: Then where?

(Looking at Zimfasu, Omki Saan sighed apologetically.)

OMKI SAAN: I'm sorry...

ZIMFASU: Zimfasu!

OMKI SAAN: I'm sorry, Zimfasu, they have arranged an almighty battle in Bahuthu!

(Almost hitting the roof in a panic, Zimfasu staggered backwards.)

ZIMFASU: This can't be true!

(He held his head in anguish.)

ZIMFASU: Tell me they aint going to Imzalla, please? Tell me!!!

OMKI SAAN: The battle won't be in Imzalla!

(As he drew a sigh of relief, he implored Omki Saan to continue.)

ZIMFASU: Then where?

(Drawing another sigh of dejection, he replied.)

OMKI SAAN: The battle site is the valley of the stones!

(Gauging Zimfasu's reaction, everyone realised something was very wrong.)

HAYKIE: What's up, Zimfasu?

(Cole grabbed another chair.)

COLE: Do you wanna sit down, mate?

(Grabbing the chair to sit down before he fell down, Zimfasu looked as if he was about to throw up.)

ZIMFASU: The valley of stones? The old battle site?

OMKI SAAN: I'm sorry Zimfasu, you must believe me, I tried to speak out against this war, they mocked me as if I was a crazed do-gooder!

ZIMFASU: The battle site is a sacred piece of land, our army will defend it to the death!

DAKURI: So this will be a three way war?

(Omki Saan nodded.)

OMKI SAAN: A three way massacre!

(As the atmosphere in the room thickened, Kasira grabbed a hold of Cole.)

KASIRA: Did this war start because them bounty hunters attacked Neitama village?

OMKI SAAN: Yes, and because of their violence here in Namki village!

KASIRA: So...

(She buried her face in Cole's sleeve.)

KASIRA: This war's all our fault?

(Leaping to his feet, Dakuri raised his voice at her.)

DAKURI: No!!! You're an innocent party in this Kasira, never forget that. If these fools want war, there is nothing you can do! Go on you trip with your conscience clear!

OMKI SAAN: Many people are going to die Dakuri, I'm just glad that none of you will be involved!

ZIMFASU: Want a bet?

(Like a first class athlete springing from the blocks, he headed for the door.)

ZIMFASU: I must defend my homeland!

(Without even thinking about it, Dakuri stepped in his way.)

DAKURI: Do you really want to die?

(Struggling in vain to push the big man aside, Zimfasu protested.)

ZIMFASU: I must protect my family!

DAKURI: By getting yourself killed?

ZIMFASU: You don't understand, the white man is barbaric, every time I deliver to the north they threaten to beat me and call me 'darkie'! These people are coming to my homeland, Dakuri! Move!!!

(Still not budging, Dakuri's face suddenly bore a look of enlightenment.)

DAKURI: Darkie!!!

(Thoroughly offended, Zimfasu reacted.)

ZIMFASU: What did you call me???

(And with that, he punched Dakuri in the stomach, hurting his hand.)

ZIMFASU: Yow!!!

DAKURI: I wasn't calling you a darkie, I've figured it out!

(He received six curious looks.)

COLE: Figured what out?

(As he continued to restrain Zimfasu, he explained to their awaiting ears.)

DAKURI: Kasira, Cigna said about light and dark becoming one, right?

KASIRA: That's right!

(Looking amazed, Omki Saan spun to face him.)

OMKI SAAN: Did you say, Cigna?

DAKURI: You know of Cigna?

OMKI SAAN: The goddess of spiritual harmony?

KASIRA: Spiritual Harmony?

(Omki Saan nodded.)

OMKI SAAN: What do you know of Cigna?

KASIRA: She's my, like guardian!

(Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: Wrong, Kasira!

KASIRA: Wrong?

DAKURI: Cigna isn't acting merely as your bodyguard. She wants you to help her unite the races! When she talked about light and dark becoming one, she meant skin!

(As they absorbed his words, even Zimfasu stopped struggling.)

KASIRA: Me? She wants *me* to help her?

DAKURI: You are the one she chose, are you not?

(Looking as if she was about to cry, Kasira hid behind Cole.)

KASIRA: Leave me alone!

(While Cole gave her a consoling cuddle, Zimfasu shrugged at Dakuri.)

ZIMFASU: What's going on? Who's this Cigna?

DAKURI: It's a long story!

ZIMFASU: Okay, but did you say she wants to unite the races?

DAKURI: Correct, why?

ZIMFASU: Maybe she can stop this war!

DAKURI: That's exactly my point, I think this is why she chose Kasira!

(Wearing a filthy look, Kasira glared at him from Cole's arms.)

KASIRA: Stop talking about me, leave me out of it!

DAKURI: But, Kasira...



KASIRA: But nothing!

DAKURI: She of the three surnames, Chen-Kai was your Enaki birth name, Ashford was the name of your black foster parents and now you have your white husbands name, Fishman! It all makes perfect sense!

(Flapping in an angry rage, Kasira retorted.)

KASIRA: I know it does!!! But I don't have to be happy about it!!!

(Feeling a little rattled by it all, Cole set Kasira aside and stepped to the centre of the room, waving his arms about.)

COLE: Wait, wait... what's happening here? This is too much information!

HAYKIE: Yeah, what's going on?

(Rising from his chair like a phoenix from the flames, Omki Saan stood tall.)

OMKI SAAN: It is perfectly clear. Cigna has chosen Kasira to stop this war and bring unity to the races! You must head for Bahuthu immediately!

(As if he'd just suggested an orgy, a deafening silence filled the air and everybody stared at him in utter disbelief. Hanging her head a sniffing back another tear, Kasira slowly trudged towards Cole and placed her head on his chest.)

KASIRA: I don't have a choice do I?

(Looking down at the top of her head, Cole sighed.)

COLE: I don't think so, darling!

(Looking confused, Zimfasu shrugged.)

ZIMFASU: So... Cigna wants you to go there and do what exactly?

(Dakuri placed his hand on his shoulder.)

DAKURI: Whatever she can!

(Zimfasu looked twice as baffled.)

ZIMFASU: Right!

KASIRA: And if all else fails, I'll call upon her!

ZIMFASU: And she'll come?

(Kasira nodded sadly.)

ZIMFASU: Then what are we waiting for? If we can put a stop to the world killing itself, we should get going!

(Stepping from Cole towards the door, Kasira sighed.)

KASIRA: We? It's *me* Cigna chose to shit all over!

(Racing to grab her arm, Cole shook his head.)

COLE: *Us*, Kasira, wherever you go, I go!

DAKURI: Me too!

(He stood tall.)

DAKURI: Well... obviously not everywhere!

(Approaching Kasira with a smile, Haykie nodded.)

HAYKIE: You know *I'll* help!

DAKURI: I mean, I don't follow you to the toilet, for one!

(Giving Dakuri and sideways glance, Zimfasu beat his chest once.)

ZIMFASU: I'll show you where to go, I've also got some horses we can use!

DAKURI: And you'd be a bit pissed off if you found me in your bed!

HAYKIE: All right, Dakuri, we get the point!

(Just then another small voice piped up.)

MICALOV: Um... can I come?

DAKURI: No!

OMKI SAAN: Dakuri, he must go with you, it is not safe for a white man in this forest at this time!

(Dakuri frowned.)

DAKURI: Do I have to kill him to get rid of him?

OMKI SAAN: Please, my son? Take him with you!

DAKURI: Very well, hopefully someone there will kill him!

ZIMFASU: Um... Omki Saan?

OMKI SAAN: Yes, Zimfasu?

ZIMFASU: When exactly is this battle?

(Worried how they'd react, Omki Saan paced back and replied.)

OMKI SAAN: That's the problem... Thursday!

(Getting the reaction he expected, Omki Saan sat down and tried to act frail and helpless.)

DAKURI: Three days time???

KASIRA: We'll never make it!

OMKI SAAN: At dawn on Thursday... sorry!

HAYKIE: What are we gonna do?

ZIMFASU: Calm down, you lot!

(He turned to Omki Saan.)

ZIMFASU: Is there a ship we can use?

(Omki Saan nodded.)

OMKI SAAN: Yes, all the fastest merchant ships are empty, all the sailors have gone off to fight!

ZIMFASU: Excellent, if we leave now, we should be in Imzalla by nightfall, then if we travel on horseback there'll be plenty of time!

DAKURI: You're sure?

ZIMFASU: Positive!

DAKURI: Then there's no time to waste, we must gather as much food and supplies as we can and get going as soon as possible!

(Upon his words, Haykie followed him out of the door to fetch some supplies. Eager for them to leave and try to halt the hostilities, Omki Saan gave Micalov and Zimfasu instructions on where to find medical supplies for the trip, then turned to Kasira. Shaking like a leaf, she was clinging onto Cole like a barnacle.)

OMKI SAAN: Don't just stand there, you two!

(Ignoring him, Kasira spoke softly to her loving husband.)

KASIRA: So much for our journey together!

(Sharing her disappointment, Cole squeezed her tight.)

COLE: It'll happen, Kasira, you'll see!

KASIRA: I hope so!

(Stepping back from his embrace, she threw her arms up angrily.)

KASIRA: Why can't I just live a normal life, Cole?

(Stepping in to hold her, Cole said nothing.)

KASIRA: It isn't fair!

(She sighed.)

KASIRA: It just isn't fair!

(Feeling as if the whole world was conspiring against her, Kasira was finding it hard to concentrate on the preparations for the trip, feeling it was best to leave it to Dakuri. Struggling to accept having to cancel her journey with Cole, she sat down on a chair and tried to concentrate on what might lay ahead in Bahuthu. Flustered and disappointed, her motivation drained as she resigned herself to going on this dangerous and unwelcome excursion.)

*Bahuthu and surrounding waters, Monday morning...*

(The bright sun-kissed waters surrounding the continent of Bahuthu, known for their calmness and serenity, were by now filling with ships as far as the eye could see. From almost every direction, vessels of various sizes and shapes approached the Bahuthu coastline. Filled with everything from soldiers to artillery and weaponry, the relentless stream of traffic made a daunting sight. While the soldiers of Bahuthu, slowly dragged their heavy burdens towards the battle site, in readiness for war, their two enemies continued to pour forth from the sea, like the entire population of Vitazoe, converging in one place to kill each other. With soldiers from every side feeling one extreme or the other, from fear to excitement, they all shared one common emotion, tension. The aura of war in the atmosphere filling the air with the stench of death. Only one thing was for certain in this ugly scenario, it was too late to go back.)

*Enaki Forest, Namki village port, Monday Morning...*

(Still dazed by the mornings revelations, Kasira followed like a sheep as her allies loaded a ship with their essential supplies. Looking pale and disorientated, she clung onto Cole by the side of the ship, while Dakuri spoke with Omki Saan. Giving the ships controls the once over, Zimfasu and Haykie discussed the journey ahead, while a curious Micalov looked on. Feeling a strong sense of urgency, Dakuri checked his sword blade and made his farewell to Omki Saan as half-hearted as it was hasty.)

DAKURI: Okay, we've got everything. Once Kasira, Cole and I get aboard, we'll be gone!

(He nodded to his sorrowful looking father.)

DAKURI: Right, bye then!

(He went to turn when Omki Saan grabbed his arm. Thrown by the gesture, he looked him the eye.)

DAKURI: What do you want?

(Suddenly looking sincere, Omki Saan stepped closer.)

DAKURI: If you're going to kiss me goodbye, I'll drown you!

(Shaking his head, Omki Saan spoke in a saddened voice.)

OMKI SAAN: Dakuri, my son... I wish to apologise!

(Amazed to hear such a thing from Omki Saan, Dakuri did a double take in his direction.)

DAKURI: Excuse me?

(With sincerity in his eyes, Omki Saan looked to his son.)

OMKI SAAN: You heard me correctly Dakuri, I apologise!

(Wanting to be anywhere else but here, Dakuri glanced about himself nervously.)

DAKURI: You're... apologising?

OMKI SAAN: I know it's long overdue my son, but you are right to be angry at me!

DAKURI: I know!

OMKI SAAN: I wasted your life making you follow my dream, making you follow the path that *I* chose you!

(He sighed.)

OMKI SAAN: Your mother was right, you have grown to resent me for it!

DAKURI: That is not the issue, father!

OMKI SAAN: It isn't?

DAKURI: No! Don't apologise to me when you don't even know why I am angry!

(Omki Saan hung his head.)

OMKI SAAN: I thought you were angry at me for your formative years. When other children were making friends or playing, I made you train. When other teenagers were dating, I made you train...

DAKURI: And this I am grateful for. You made me a better warrior.

OMKI SAAN: Then why are you angry?

(Dakuri sighed and shook his head.)

DAKURI: You may have taught me to fight, but you did not teach me about life.

(Omki Saan looked nervously from side to side.)

OMKI SAAN: Life?

DAKURI: Yes, life.

(He clenched his fists.)

DAKURI: I know only how to fight and protect the chosen one. Beyond this, you left me clueless. In a conversation, I am inept. Jokes go straight over my head and when it comes to meeting women...

(He turned red and hung his head.)

DAKURI: Even Micalov knows more about women than me!

(Omki Saan looked stunned.)

OMKI SAAN: He does?

DAKURI: Well, maybe not Micalov. Bad example, but you know what I mean.

(He sighed.)

DAKURI: You were a great battle trainer, but a lousy father.

(Omki Saan nodded sorrowfully.)

OMKI SAAN: Everything you say is true. I always thought you'd follow me into the hall of the elders, I did not expect you branch out and try to make a life away from the teachings... this is why I didn't prepare you for an ordinary life.

(Dakuri sighed in disdain.)

DAKURI: You have failed as a father.

OMKI SAAN: It is true.

(Dakuri looked stunned.)

DAKURI: You agree?

OMKI SAAN: I can not deny what is undeniable.

(Dakuri looked thoughtful.)

DAKURI: For the first time in my life Omki Saan, I sense humility in you!

OMKI SAAN: What can I say, Dakuri? I was a poor father to you and I apologise.

(Dakuri sighed forgivingly.)

DAKURI: Father, do not punish yourself with guilt. As you always taught me, I regret nothing about the past. Protecting the chosen one and fighting for the Enaki way of life has been a pleasure. I am grateful to you for giving me that opportunity. As for the future, I will find my own way. I am a grown man, you must not worry about me. I will learn all the life lessons you never taught me as I go along. It won't be easy but I *will* learn to integrate with ordinary people, whatever it takes. So do not worry about me, I will be fine.

(Omki Saan nodded.)

OMKI SAAN: I know... you are strong!

(Nodding, Dakuri turned towards the ship.)

DAKURI: I'm glad we had this chance to talk!

(Not satisfied that he'd said enough, Omki Saan paced behind him.)

OMKI SAAN: Son, I just need you to know, whatever happens, whatever path you chose to walk... I'm proud of you!

(Stopping dead, Dakuri turned to face him.)

DAKURI: You are proud of me?

OMKI SAAN: Very much so!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: That means a lot to me, father... I thank you!

(With a respectful bow, Dakuri then made his way towards the gang plank of the ship, gesturing to Kasira and Cole as he passed them.)

DAKURI: Let's go, there is no time to lose!

COLE: Yeah, we're coming!

(As Cole headed up the gang plank behind Dakuri, Kasira held onto his arm, allowing him to lead her onto the deck. As she took a seat quietly at the back of the ship, Zimfasu set it in motion, and in no time at all, the vessel was heading out to sea, away from Enaki forest and into the great blue yonder.)

*Ocean, Near Namki Village, Monday Morning...*

(First, Omki Saan, then the entire port disappeared from view as Dakuri and Haykie sat in the bridge listening intently to Zimfasu's quick explanation of seafaring and how ships work. Micalov, looking uncomfortable and sea sick, sat behind them wishing he was somewhere else. Kasira, in the meantime, remained in her seat out on the deck looking downhearted while Cole tried to lift her spirits.)

COLE: Come on darling, say something!

(Hanging her head, she remained silent.)

COLE: Your not sea sick again, are you?

(Without looking up, she shook her head, silently.)

COLE: Then, what is it?

(Again, silence.)

COLE: Are you scared, Kasira?

(As she looked up slowly, tears rolled down her face like a waterfall. Spotting this, Cole slumped to his knees and threw his arms around her.)

COLE: Sorry darlin', I had no idea you were this scared!

(Hugging her tighter, he continued.)

COLE: Don't worry, I'll take care of you, I promise!

(Pulling back from his hug, Kasira wiped her tears and shook her head.)

KASIRA: You don't understand, do you?

(Cole shrugged.)

COLE: Don't I?

KASIRA: No! I'm not worried for *me*!

(Looking flustered for a reply, Cole said nothing.)

KASIRA: Do you remember when Omki Saan made me wear that horrible outfit with the huge yellow bow?

(Cole looked confused.)

COLE: The one you fought Necronema in?

KASIRA: Yeah!

COLE: Sure... but, what... eh?

(Shaking with emotion, she got to her feet and leant over the edge of the ship.)

KASIRA: You said I looked nice!

(Stepping beside her, Cole still looked baffled.)

COLE: Are you upset because I said you look nice?

(Ignoring the stupidity of his question, she continued.)

KASIRA: Bond didn't, he laughed at me!

(She sighed.)

KASIRA: That's what I miss!

COLE: You miss being laughed at?

(Turning to face him, she raised her voice.)

KASIRA: Will you just listen???

COLE: Sorry!

(Looking out to sea again, she softened her voice.)

KASIRA: It wasn't the laugh, it was the look in his eyes... he wasn't laughing at me...

COLE: Yes he was!

KASIRA: Stop it!!! No, he wasn't, he was just laughing... I'll never forget it!

(Fearing having his head bitten off again, Cole said nothing.)

KASIRA: Those eyes, there was a person in there, Cole! There was a soul beyond those eyes that we'll never see again!

(Nodding, Cole put an arm around her.)

COLE: Yeah... I miss him too... but, he wouldn't want us to spend the rest of our lives crying over him, he'd hate that!

(Shrugging his arm off angrily, Kasira shouted at him through tears.)

KASIRA: You still don't get it!!!

(Throwing her arms around like a lunatic, she continued.)

KASIRA: Last time I got dragged off on some stupid crusade, Bond died... gone forever!!! Who's it gonna be this time, eh? You? Why have I got to lose people I care about??? If anything happens to you Cole, what am I gonna do???

(As she broke down in tears, Cole forced his way into her arms and struggled to stop her thrusting about in a fit, until eventually she calmed herself and poured out her heart on his shoulder. Letting her take as long as she needed, it was a good few minutes before she pulled away to wipe her eyes.)

KASIRA: Sorry, I'm just so scared of losing you. Why do I have to do this?

COLE: Don't apologise Kasira, I understand... eventually, eh?

(She forced a smile.)

COLE: That's better, and anyway... we've got Cigna to protect us... and Haykie!

KASIRA: I guess so!

COLE: I know it isn't fair that you keep getting dragged off to fulfil other peoples desires, but maybe that's because you're special!

KASIRA: But I'm not, I'm really not, I'm just an ordinary girl!

COLE: Yeah, an ordinary girl who couldn't figure out the light and dark clue...

(Kasira looked peeved.)

KASIRA: What do you mean by that?

COLE: The reason you didn't figure it out, Kasira, is because you don't think of people as colours, you're above that! You don't see a white man, a black man or an Enaki man, you just see a man.

(She said nothing.)

COLE: So, let's look forward to the day when everyone thinks like you do. You could achieve true racially harmony, Kasira. Let's focus on that instead of going into this worrying about dying.

(He shrugged.)

COLE: Besides, with some of the shit, excuse my language, that we've been through, I'm beginning to think we're invincible!

(As a semi-smile returned to her face, Kasira grabbed his arm and lead him across the deck.)

COLE: Where are we going?

KASIRA: Just for a stroll round the deck, you've cheered me up, Cole, you're right, there's no point focussing on the negative side. My perspective was all wrong, I was being a wally!

(Cole nodded.)

COLE: Yes, you were!

KASIRA: Oi, you're my husband, you're supposed to patronise me!

(Cole grinned.)

COLE: Of course. My bad. Let me try again.

(He nodded firmly.)

COLE: How's this? You weren't being a wally at all. Now let's have a nice cup of tea and forget about it, there's a good girl!

KASIRA: That's much better!

(They smiled at each other.)

KASIRA: Come on, I'm all psyched up and ready now, let's see what the others are doing!

(As she raced away from him towards the bridge of the ship, Cole paced after her feeling pleased with himself. Having regaining her enthusiasm, plus, so it seemed, that of six other people, Kasira entered the bridge wearing an excited smile.)

KASIRA: Are we nearly there yet?

ZIMFASU: Give over girl, we only been sailing for half an hour!

KASIRA: God, hurry up! Can't this old wreck go any faster!

(Giving her a funny look, Haykie turned to her.)

HAYKIE: How come *you're* so bloody keen?

KASIRA: Why shouldn't I be? We're gonna stop the war!

DAKURI: You sound confident, I like that!

(She shrugged.)

KASIRA: With you and Cigna, Haykie, what can go wrong?

DAKURI: You forget, we also have Micalov!

MICALOV: Hey! That was uncalled for!

DAKURI: Hey, where did Cole go?

KASIRA: He's just coming!

(As he held the wheel, Zimfasu spoke, still looking ahead.)

ZIMFASU: So, is anyone gonna tell me about this Cigna?

(They all looked at each other.)

DAKURI: Like what?

ZIMFASU: Like, where is she?

KASIRA: I can summon her!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: I see!

HAYKIE: I know it's hard to believe...

ZIMFASU: No, not really! I believe her.

(They all looked amazed.)

ZIMFASU: Why the silence?

DAKURI: You're very trusting, Zimfasu!

(He nodded.)

ZIMFASU: Well... she's Enaki. Enaki never lie!

DAKURI: I'm sure we do!

KASIRA: I do! I tell Cole all sorts of whoppers to get him to do stuff...

(Unfortunately for her, he was standing in the doorway.)

KASIRA: Oops!

(Entering with a shrug, he stood beside her.)

COLE: Did you think I didn't know that?

(She grimaced with embarrassment.)

KASIRA: I'll be on the deck if anyone needs me!

(And with that, she slipped out of the bridge.)

DAKURI: And *did* you know it?

COLE: Didn't have a clue, Dakuri! I do now though!

ZIMFASU: Anyway, you miss my point! Couples always feed each other these little white lies, that's a fact of life! But as a rule, if an Enaki tells you something, it's generally true!

HAYKIE: Really? I suppose you notice these subtle culture differences when you travel around!

ZIMFASU: Subtle? The difference in cultures is more than subtle, Haykie!

COLE: He's right! I can only speak about the north and south continents, but the two are poles apart!

DAKURI: Almost literally!

HAYKIE: And anyway, you say you believe Kasira because she's Enaki, well she's not *really* an Enaki!

DAKURI: Yes she is!



HAYKIE: You know what I mean! She's of the Enaki race, sure, but in her heart she's something else entirely.

ZIMFASU: Like what?

(Haykie and Dakuri shrugged at one another.)

HAYKIE: She's like... a fusion of things!

DAKURI: A mixed bag!

(Cole shook his head.)

COLE: What they mean Zimfasu is, Kasira is Kasira!

DAKURI: Smart arse!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: Well, whatever peoples differences, hopefully this Cigna can teach the world a little tolerance!

HAYKIE: That's the plan, Zimfasu, that's the plan!

(Feeling passionate about Kasira's involuntary cause, they chatted with enthusiasm for the rest of the trip across the ocean. Geeing themselves up and filling themselves with the confidence to achieve their desires, they were overjoyed when darkness fell, meaning Bahuthu couldn't be far away. As the night wore on and the temperature dipped a fraction, the ship began to approach Bahuthu's coastline.)

*Continent of Bahuthu, Off the coast of Imzalla, Monday Night...*

(Despite the fact that midnight wasn't far away, the temperature in the tropical paradise of Bahuthu was still quite stifling. As sweat poured down their foreheads, the allies stood upon the deck as Zimfasu steered the ship towards the seriously overcrowded Imzalla marina. With ships from all over the world moored at the quayside, getting ashore would be no mean feat. As they sailed slowly past the many docked ships, mostly from Dezara's Plateau, Zimfasu suddenly spotted an opening between two barges. Slowing the boat down, he turned and looked to Dakuri.)

ZIMFASU: There's a gap but it looks a bit tight. I don't want to risk getting into trouble with the port authority for colliding with other vessels.

DAKURI: Then keep going and find a gap we *can* fit in.

ZIMFASU: Well... we could do that...

DAKURI: Or?

ZIMFASU: Or you guys could leap ashore by hopping across those moored barges and let me know if the coast is clear. If there's nobody around I'll risk it.

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Sounds like a plan.

ZIMFASU: Excellent. I'll pull up next to another ship, you lot can jump across it then leap onto the quayside!

(Acknowledging his words, Dakuri turned to the others.)

DAKURI: You heard the man!

MICALOV: I aint ship hopping, I'll fall!

DAKURI: Yes, you probably will!

MICALOV: I'm staying with Zimfasu!

ZIMFASU: When you get ashore, make sure there's no security at the portside then give me the thumbs up.

DAKURI: Consider it done.

(With that, Zimfasu edged as close to a moored barge as he could. Satisfied he was as close as he could get to it without a collision, he nodded firmly and looked Dakuri in the eye.)

ZIMFASU: Go for it!!!

(Needing no further encouragement, Dakuri immediately raced out of the bridge and leapt onto the adjacent ship then somersaulted off the other side towards the quay. Following a tremendous splash, he climbed onto the quayside and stood there defying anyone to laugh. Somehow managing to contain herself, Haykie then leapt onto the other moored barge and took a running jump, followed by Cole. As he landed, he rose to his feet and grinned at a soaking wet Dakuri.)

DAKURI: Not a fucking word, Cole Fishman!

COLE: Who? Me?

(Not wanting to let the side down, Kasira then followed suit, screaming every time she jumped. As she landed on the quay, Cole helped her to her feet.)

COLE: Okay?

KASIRA: Yeah, I'm fine! It was a bit hair-raising!

(Striding up to her like an angry sergeant major, Dakuri snarled.)

DAKURI: What's with the screaming, are you trying to draw attention to Zimfasu?

(Putting a cocky hand on her hip, Kasira retorted.)

KASIRA: Ooh, temper, temper!

DAKURI: We must check the coast is clear, we don't have time for this!

KASIRA: We didn't have time to stop and go swimming either, but that didn't stop you! (Unable to think of an amusing reply, Dakuri turned and paced away from the docks, towards the town. Trying not to laugh, the others followed on grinning insanely.

Following a brief, hurried look around the quayside, satisfied there was nobody around, Dakuri returned to the waters edge and gave Zimfasu the thumbs up. Acknowledging Dakuri's actions, Zimfasu then tried to steer the ship into the tight space. With a nervous glint in his eye, he grimaced and concentrated hard.)

MICALOV: Will it fit?

ZIMFASU: If it don't, there's gonna be one hell of a crunch!

(As he continued to concentrate, Micalov bit his nails.)

MICALOV: I should have gone with the others!

ZIMFASU: Damn it, I can't see much from here!

(He turned to face Micalov.)

ZIMFASU: Hold the wheel steady Micalov, I'm just gonna take a look outside!

(As his hair stood on end, Micalov blubbered.)

MICALOV: But, but... what do I do???

(As he headed swiftly from the bridge, Zimfasu sent him a curt reply.)

ZIMFASU: Just hold the wheel steady and stop panicking!!!

(And with that, he raced onto the deck to eye up the gap between the barges. On land in the meantime, eager to make sure the coast remained clear for Zimfasu to park the boat, Dakuri lead Cole, Kasira and Haykie away from the water's edge to double check for security men.)

KASIRA: This place is like a ghost town!

COLE: Well, it is late!

DAKURI: Even so, I'd expect a dock area to be a hive of activity, even in the dead of night!

KASIRA: Why's that?

HAYKIE: Well, at night, docks are notorious for...

(Not wishing to get into a conversation about such matters, Dakuri intervened.)

DAKURI: People working late!!!

KASIRA: Like prostitutes, you mean?

DAKURI: No, I'd never discuss such a subject with a lady!

(Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: You're worse than Cole!

COLE: Nothing wrong with being a gentleman!

DAKURI: Exactly!

(Just then, he stopped and looked around himself. With a shrug he then looked to Cole.)

DAKURI: Forget this, there's nobody around. Let's go back.

(Moments later as they returned to the waterside their attention was immediately drawn to two men fighting on the quayside. Eager to intervene, they rushed ahead only to find it was Zimfasu repeatedly slapping an apologetic looking Micalov. With Dakuri enjoying the sight, it was left for Cole to pull them apart.)

COLE: Hey, hey, enough!!! What's all this about then?

(Flapping like a itchy albatross, Zimfasu, stared at him wide eyed, and pointed to the gap in the barges while his voice climbed several octaves higher.)

ZIMFASU: What's it about??? What's it about??? That idiot sunk the bloody boat!!!

(As they gaped in horror at the watery space where their boat should have been, Micalov protested his innocence.)

MICALOV: You told me to do it!

ZIMFASU: I only told you to hold the wheel steady!!!

MICALOV: You said, turn right!

ZIMFASU: I said, we should fit alright!!!

MICALOV: Hey, you can't go changing your story, willy-nilly!

(Desperately trying to restrain Zimfasu, Cole attempted to mediate.)

COLE: Look, the main thing is, everybody's safe!

(The sound of a fuming Zimfasu disagreeing could have been heard miles away.)

ZIMFASU: That idiot steered into the barge and sunk our boat... along with all our supplies!!!

(Upon hearing this minor detail, it was then down to Haykie to restrain Zimfasu, Cole, Dakuri and Kasira from murdering Micalov. Casting a protective bubble around the terrified imbecile, she watched patiently as their futile attempts to lynch him died down. Once they seemed calm enough, Haykie began.)

HAYKIE: Right, now we're all feeling relaxed, let's go shall we?

DAKURI: Without supplies? It'd be futile!

HAYKIE: I'm a thief by trade, I'm sure I can get some more!

ZIMFASU: You're a thief? I thought you were a witch!

HAYKIE: How did you know?

ZIMFASU: That protective bubble was a bit of clue, actually!

HAYKIE: Oh, yeah, I suppose it was!

KASIRA: And it didn't freak you out?

ZIMFASU: No man, I'm cool! I've seen witches before!

HAYKIE: Where?

ZIMFASU: I've travelled the world Haykie, it takes a lot to make me lose my cool!

DAKURI: Yet five minutes with Micalov, and bingo!

ZIMFASU: Exactly!

COLE: Yeah, I hate to break up this happy conversation, but we need supplies!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: It's okay, there's plenty of time, let's head to my house! We can get some supplies, a good nights sleep and leave on the horses in the morning!

KASIRA: Horses? Great! I hate horses... and they hate me back!

MICALOV: What's wrong with your back?

(Like a flash of lightning, Kasira spun around and punched him on the chin, sending him sprawling. Realising the protective bubble had worn off, Haykie quickly cast another one.)

HAYKIE: That was out of order, Kasira!

(Having made a friend for life in Dakuri, Kasira shrugged and headed from the dockside.)

KASIRA: You lot coming?

(And with that, Zimfasu lead them through the deserted streets of an eerie Imzalla to his stylish wooden cabin overlooking the coast. As they approached his front door, they all seemed to look back at the street behind them, sensing something in the silence wasn't right.)

*Bahuthu, Zimfasu's House, Imzalla, Monday Midnight...*

(Clearly relieved to be home, Zimfasu thrust open the front door of his home to be greeted by his anxious looking wife. No sooner than he'd taken three steps through the door, she threw her arms around him.)

ZIMFASU: Hey, Kajice baby!

(Midway through hugging him however, she opened her eyes and caught sight of two Enaki people and three white people in the doorway. With a terrified scream, she leapt back and raced to grab a fire poker.)

ZIMFASU: Chill baby, what gives?

(Staring at the doorway, she raced aside him wielding the fire poker aloft.)

KAJICE: Intruders!

(Putting his arm out to stop her, Zimfasu turned to face the door.)

ZIMFASU: Come in, guys!

KAJICE: What?

ZIMFASU: They're with me!

(Gaping uncontrollably, Kajice questioned her husband sternly.)

KAJICE: What you doing fraternising with the enemy?

(She faced them as they started to enter.)

KAJICE: You stop right there!!!

(Respecting her home, they silently obliged.)

KAJICE: Have you gone insane, Zimfasu?

ZIMFASU: Have you?

KAJICE: I'm not the one inviting trouble into our home!

ZIMFASU: Them no trouble, Kajice, chill girly!

KAJICE: But...

ZIMFASU: Hey, I wear the trousers in this house, if I invite my friends in, you're gonna be nice to them, you got that?

(Giving him a filthy look, she stepped into his face.)

KAJICE: I'd rephrase that, if I was you!

(Clearly embarrassed, he looked at his feet.)

ZIMFASU: Um... can I have some friends over, please?

KAJICE: Better!

(She stepped back and scrutinized them.)

KAJICE: I suppose you'd better come in!

(Fearing the scary woman before them, Dakuri lead Kasira and the rest in shuffling sideways into the room and standing against the wall. As they stood there silently, Kajice continued to give them the once over, then suddenly bawled at them.)

KAJICE: Take your damn shoes off!!!

(Immediately, they all did as they were told, except Kasira.)

KAJICE: Walking dirt over my nice clean floor, how dare they?

(Lowering himself into an easy chair, Zimfasu looked up at her.)

ZIMFASU: Don't be so unpleasant woman, these guys have come to stop the war and I'm going to help them!

KAJICE: Oh, so you heard about the war then?

(She shook her head.)

KAJICE: I'm surprised you came back! Gallivanting around the world like you own the place, while the rest of us suffer!

(She scrutinized Kasira and Haykie.)

KAJICE: Are these two whores conquests of yours?

(Not standing for such comments, Dakuri stepped forward.)

DAKURI: Despite their clothing, these women are not whores, you will apologise!

HAYKIE: What do you mean, despite our clothes?

KASIRA: Yeah, Dakuri!

(He looked confounded to say the least.)

DAKURI: I was standing up for you!

KAJICE: Hey, did I say you could step forward?

(Dakuri looked down.)

DAKURI: I apologise!

(He immediately stepped back.)

KAJICE: Now, Zimfasu, tell me again why you're inviting these infidels into my home?

ZIMFASU: I told you, we intend to stop the war, and it's *our* home!

KAJICE: Our home, is it? You're never here!

(Looking annoyed, he climbed to his feet.)

ZIMFASU: Look you ungrateful cow, I work hard to give you a decent home...

KAJICE: What did you call me?

ZIMFASU: Let me finish!

KAJICE: I said, what did you call me???

(As Zimfasu shrugged at his irritated spouse, Kasira stepped from the wall and made her self comfortable in an armchair, much to Kajice's disgust and the horror of the others.)

KASIRA: He called you an ungrateful cow. Now if you've finally stopped complaining, we've got a busy day tomorrow and we'd like to get some rest!

(Too stunned to say another word, Kajice just stared at her.)

KASIRA: Are you lot just gonna stand there all night?

(Following Kasira's lead, they all stepped from the wall.)

KAJICE: Wait a damn minute!

(And then they stepped back.)

KAJICE: I don't know who you think you are, young lady...

KASIRA: The name's Kasira!

KAJICE: Well look here, Kasira...

KASIRA: Look, Zimfasu invited us in, we're his guests!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: She's right you know!

KAJICE: Who asked you?

(Clearly resigned to losing any argument they'd ever have, Zimfasu sighed and sat back down.)

KAJICE: Now where was I?

KASIRA: You were just apologising for insulting me and Haykie, then you were gonna fetch us all a coffee and make us feel welcome!

(Kajice was stunned.)

KAJICE: What?

(Suddenly, her scornful stare turned into a smile.)

KAJICE: I like this girl, she as hard headed as me!

(She turned to Zimfasu.)

KAJICE: Okay, your friends are welcome to stay!

(He nodded.)

KAJICE: Though you'd better explain why you're hanging around with the enemies of Bahuthu, you owe me that much!

(Finally, thanks to Kasira's stand, they were all able to relax in comfort for a while.

Slumped in gloriously easy chairs, they sat around the dormant fireplace, explaining the situation to Kajice. Looking less than convinced, she pretended to be interested as she poured them all an extra large coffee.

KAJICE: There you go. Enjoy. If you want another someone will have to fetch some wood for the stove. I can't boil water without fire, and I can't make fire without wood, I'm not a miracle worker.

(She smiled then looked to Dakuri.)

KAJICE: You we're saying?

(Having been brought up to speed on the situation, Kajice nodded and added a few revelations of her own.)

KAJICE: I hope you succeed, but to be honest, this Cigna sounds like it's crazy talk!

DAKURI: I'm not surprised you're sceptical!

KAJICE: I'm not sceptical, I'm way beyond sceptical!

ZIMFASU: It has to be worth a try though!

KAJICE: I won't argue with that, if you can stop this war, maybe the town will return to normal!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: Yeah, I noticed it was damn quiet out there!

KAJICE: That's because people are afraid to go out!

COLE: Why?

KAJICE: Thieves!

ZIMFASU: Thieves?

KAJICE: Hundreds of the light-fingered little shits!

ZIMFASU: Have they tried to steal from you?

KAJICE: No, I've been lucky, but a lot of people have been mugged and burgled!

(Kasira looked confused.)

KASIRA: What's that got to do with the war?

KAJICE: What? You simple or something?

KASIRA: No I'm not! Don't be so rude!

KAJICE: Then don't ask stupid questions!

KASIRA: I didn't!

DAKURI: Kasira, everybody knows that when there's a battle, it attracts scavengers!

KASIRA: I'm sure not everybody knew that! Who knew that?

(She watched downheartedly as everybody gestured as if it was common knowledge.)

KASIRA: You just don't want to admit it!

HAYKIE: Don't feel bad Kasira, why would you know about war anyway?

COLE: Yeah, you're too nice a person!

(Kasira glared at him.)

KASIRA: Why don't you just pat me on the head and buy me an ice-cream?

COLE: Eh?

KASIRA: You treat me like a child sometimes!

COLE: No I don't!

(Quickly averting a lovers tiff, Dakuri butted in.)

DAKURI: Suffice to say, Kasira, a battle of this scale must have attracted thieves from the world over, and with homes in Bahuthu left empty by soldiers going to war, their homes make soft targets!

(Waving her hand at him in ignorance, Kasira continued to glare at Cole.)

KASIRA: Who cares? We've moved on from that! I want to know why Cole here keeps talking down to me!

COLE: I don't!

KASIRA: Yes you do!

(He sighed.)

COLE: Okay, I do then!

(He looked away.)

KASIRA: Oi, you aint getting out of it that easily!

(He ignored her.)

KASIRA: Oi!

(Angered by his disinterest, she poked him in the side.)

COLE: Oi, what did you do that for?

KASIRA: Because you're horrible!

COLE: Grow up, Kasira!

KASIRA: You're always treating me like a child, so I'm acting like one!

(Kajice grinned.)

KAJICE: Feisty little thing, isn't she?

(Zimfasu shook his head, embarrassed by the row.)

ZIMFASU: I'm going to fetch some wood for the stove!

(As Kasira continued to nag him, Cole stood up.)

COLE: I'll go Zimfasu, anything to get away from whining Winnie here!

ZIMFASU: Good idea, if you go through the door in the back, there's a lean-to at the bottom of the garden, it's in there!

COLE: Gotcha!

ZIMFASU: If you hear noises and feel like you're being watched, it's because you are... my horses are in the next field!

COLE: I won't be long!

(As he started to head out of the room, Kasira leapt to her feet and paced after him wagging her finger and nagging all the way.)

KASIRA: If you'd stop treating me like a five year old...

(Trying not to explode, he walked on, desperately trying to ignore her.)

KASIRA: You treat me feel like a worthless schoolgirl...

(As his rage boiled over, he spun around and yelled into her frightened eyes.)

COLE: When you wanted a damn good shagging last night, did I treat you like a schoolgirl then???

(Immediately becoming aware of the room, full of startled and frankly, disgusted people, he turned and bolted, followed swiftly by an equally disturbed Kasira. As they raced out of the door into the fresh summer air of Zimfasu's midnight garden, Cole turned to her looking considerably distressed.)

COLE: I can't believe you made me say that!

(Looking just as flustered, Kasira retorted angrily.)

KASIRA: Me?

COLE: Yes you, it was your incessant whining that did it!

KASIRA: Well you shouldn't have patronised me like that!

COLE: I didn't!

KASIRA: Yes you did, you made me look two feet tall!

COLE: Yeah well, now I've made us look like a pair of sex crazed deviants!

(She hung her head.)

KASIRA: I can't go back in there, what must they think of us?

(Cole nodded.)

COLE: I agree, I think we should chuck 'em some firewood and kip out here in the shed!

(Kasira rolled her eyes and replied sarcastically.)

KASIRA: Yeah, that's a good idea!

COLE: Are you being sarcastic?

KASIRA: What do *you* think?

(Allowing her frustration to boil over, she threw her arms in the air.)

KASIRA: What did you have to say something stupid like that for?

(Responding in kind, he replied.)

COLE: Because you could win an award for your nagging! I just lost it!

(Furious at one another, they stood face to face and said nothing for a few moments.)

COLE: Come on, let's grab some wood anyway!

(Kasira nodded and followed him down the garden.)



KASIRA: It's spooky out here!

COLE: Yeah, Zimfasu implied as much!

KASIRA: Still, Enaki forest was worse!

COLE: Far worse!

KASIRA: Stop correcting me!!!

COLE: I was agreeing with you!

KASIRA: Even so! Whatever, I'm annoyed with you!

(Giving each other the silent treatment, they continued on to the bottom of the garden towards the wooden lean-to.)

COLE: Are you just following me, or are you gonna carry some wood?

KASIRA: Oh, shut up, I'm not talking to you!

COLE: Whatever!

(As he reached the lean-to, he bent down to grab some wood, while glaring back at Kasira. Grabbing a log and placing it behind him he reached out for another with his other hand, when suddenly the log moved.)

COLE: What the?

(Before he could react, two men leapt up from where they'd been dossing amongst the logs. Acting swiftly, they bundled Cole to the floor. While a panicking Kasira screamed, they raced past her knocking her to the ground, instinctively snapping the necklace from around her neck as they did so. As a dazed Cole leapt to his feet and raced over to Kasira, the two startled intruders made their getaway leaping over a fence yelling at each other.)

RYNADO: Which way?

STAG: I dunno, just head for the battle site!!!

(As they disappeared into the darkness, Cole knelt over Kasira desperately.)

COLE: You okay?!

(Sitting up holding her head, she nodded.)

KASIRA: I think so!

COLE: Come on, we'd better tell the others!

(As he helped her to her feet, she felt her neck and released a deafening scream, causing Cole to drop her on her behind.)

KASIRA: Ow!!!

COLE: What? What's up?

(Gaping in some considerable distress, she looked at Cole with terror filled eyes.)

KASIRA: My necklace, they took the necklace, they've got Cigna!

(Equally as horrified, Cole held his head.)

COLE: Shit, sorry, fuck, excuse my language... oh, hell!

KASIRA: Come on!

(She leapt to her feet.)

KASIRA: We've gotta tell Dakuri!!!

(And with no more ado, they raced back towards the house and bundled inside, both talking in panicked voices at once.)

COLE: They've got Cigna!

KASIRA: They took her!!!

(Receiving appalled stares for earlier events, everyone shunned them.)

KASIRA: Oh, for fuck sake, belt up, we're married we're *supposed* to have sex!

(Having grabbed their attention, Cole tried again.)

COLE: Dakuri, they've taken Cigna!!!

(Looking mortified, Dakuri leapt to his feet.)

DAKURI: Who has?

COLE: Thieves, they mugged Kasira!

(Zimfasu also leapt to his feet.)

ZIMFASU: Thieves, in my garden?

KASIRA: They were dossing in your lean-to!

ZIMFASU: There were thieves in my garden???

KASIRA: Yes, Zimfasu! They took Cigna and ran away!!!

COLE: One of them yelled something about heading to the battle site!

KASIRA: Let's go after them!!!

(Zimfasu nodded urgently.)

ZIMFASU: Damn straight! If they headed towards the battle site then they must be travelling west!

DAKURI: Then what are we waiting for?

ZIMFASU: Precisely my point, let's get after them.

(As they hurriedly put their shoes back on their feet, Kajice quizzed them vehemently.)

KAJICE: What you doing? This is crazy!

DAKURI: We need that necklace!

KAJICE: So I understand, but the place is crawling with thieves!

HAYKIE: They'll be no match for me!

DAKURI: Nor me!

KAJICE: You crazy, it's dangerous out there!

DAKURI: What do you suggest? That we wait here and do nothing?

(He then looked to Kasira.)

DAKURI: Haykie and I will go and search for them, the rest of you wait here!

(With that, he and Haykie rushed out of the front door.)

KASIRA: No, wait for me!!!

(As she tried to go, Cole held her arm.)

COLE: Wait Kasira, you heard what he said!

KASIRA: But Cigna!

COLE: If they're out there still, Dakuri and Haykie will find them!

KASIRA: And what if they don't?

COLE: Um...

KAJICE: Then when you get to the battle site, you'll find them anyway!

(With that, Kasira stopped struggling.)

KASIRA: I guess you're right!

(She sneered.)

KASIRA: Then Haykie will make them pay!

(Hardly a word was spoken from that moment on as they waited nervously for Dakuri and Haykie to return. Twiddling her thumbs and biting her lip, Kasira leant her head on Cole's shoulder and sighed as Cole tried to comfort her. Zimfasu and Kajice, kept watch at the window, while Micalov sat perfectly still, desperately hoping he wouldn't break anything. As tension mounted to fever pitch, Zimfasu and Kajice turned to the door as

Dakuri and Haykie burst through it. Too scared to even ask, Kasira waited for someone else to speak.)

COLE: Well?

(Dakuri shook his head.)

HAYKIE: Not a sign!

(Kasira turned and faced the dormant fireplace, her heart filling with despair. Leaving her to her sorrow, Dakuri approached Cole.)

DAKURI: Would you recognise them again?

COLE: Definitely!

DAKURI: Then we should stick to the plan!

(Cole nodded.)

COLE: I agree!

DAKURI: We will leave on horseback at dawn, once we reach the battle site, I'll kick some arse until we find the Cigna necklace!

HAYKIE: Count *me* in on that!

(Dakuri turned to Kasira.)

DAKURI: Sorry Kasira, we did our best, but worry not... we will get it back!

(Absorbing his words, she continued to stare motionlessly into the flames.)

ZIMFASU: I think we should all try to get some sleep, this has added a new dimension to our journey!

DAKURI: I agree, the sooner we sleep, the better we'll be rested by morning!

KAJICE: Is that an Enaki pearl of wisdom?

(Dakuri gave her a sideways glance.)

DAKURI: No, I was stating the obvious!

(While Kajice busied herself fetching blankets for all their guests, Zimfasu secured the doors and windows. It wasn't long before everyone was ready to try to sleep, all except a sad looking Kasira. As she looked through vacant eyes into the empty fireplace, Cole approached to put his arm around her. Giving him an uncertain smile, she rested her head on his shoulder and continued to stare like a broken soul and fear the worst.)

*Bahuthu, Outside Imzalla, Small Hours of Tuesday Morning...*

(Running excitedly into the wooded wilderness towards the battle site, the two thieves who'd so casually mugged Kasira, laughed with pleasure at their latest acquisition.

Slowing to a jog, the holder, Stag, held it out in his palm and squinted at it in the darkness.)

STAG: 'Ere, this thing looks bloody expensive!

RYNADO: Let's 'ave a butchers!

(He too, squinted at it as Stag held his palm towards him.)

RYNADO: Jewel encrusted, definitely solid gold, nice!

STAG: Yeah, this is bound to fetch us a decent score!

RYNADO: Who was that you pilfered it off? The queen of Sudereva?

(Stag sniggered.)

STAG: Shouldn't think so, she was oriental!

RYNADO: Bullshit, the geezer I flattened was as white as we are!

STAG: Well the wench I nicked this of weren't!

RYNADO: Must've been, what'd a white bloke be doing with an oriental bint?

STAG: She was oriental I tell ya!

RYNADO: Did she have slanty eyes?

STAG: Any more slanty, they'd have been vertical, mate!

RYNADO: Strange!

STAG: Nah, there's a war on!

RYNADO: So?

STAG: Don't you know nothing? Prostitution's rife in war time, mate!

RYNADO: Come off it, how can a whore afford a necklace like that?

STAG: Dunno... maybe she's good!

RYNADO: Good? She'd 'ave to be phenomenal, mate!

STAG: Well, whatever, I pilfered this off a slanty-eyed bint!

RYNADO: Maybe I was wrong then!

STAG: Who cares, it don't matter if she was white, black, yellow or bright purple, the main thing is, this necklace is gonna make us a fortune!

(As they jogged on into the night, they couldn't help but feel more than a little delight at the start to their weeks thieving. Feeling sure this was just the beginning, they disappeared into the night, laughing all the way.)

As the warm summer's night wore on, the clouds lifted causing the air to become stifling in its closeness and humidity. For most who attempted to sleep through the night, this would prove to be a sweaty and ultimately futile undertaking.

Kasira and her friends were far from exempt to the excesses of the unrelenting heat, and were only too relieved when the morning arrived. Having spent the night grabbing intermittent short snoozes before waking up sweating, they couldn't wait to freshen up and begin their journey. Unable to stop herself worrying about the necklace, Kasira slept worse than most, rendering her quiet and submissive.)

*Bahuthu, Zimfasu's Garden, Backing onto Plain lands, Tuesday, Dawn...*

(Having enjoyed a hearty breakfast, and replenished their stock of supplies from his pantry, Zimfasu lead them out to his pasture behind the house. Looking extremely pleased with himself, he gestured towards his collection of horses and ponies and beamed all over.)

ZIMFASU: There you go, a finer equestrian selection, you will not see!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: You've got some fine stallions, Zimfasu!

ZIMFASU: I got it all, man!

DAKURI: Then what are we waiting for?

HAYKIE: I was gonna say that!

(With no shortage of enthusiasm, Haykie, Dakuri and Zimfasu approached some horses.

Kasira, Cole and Micalov, however, didn't seem so keen.)

DAKURI: What's with you two?

(Kasira looked at Cole and Micalov.)

KASIRA: Three!

DAKURI: There's no point in that idiot coming!

(He pointed at Micalov.)

MICALOV: That's bloody nice, aint it?

ZIMFASU: Sorry Dakuri, but he can't stay here, if people find out that Kajice is harbouring a white man, they kill him!

DAKURI: And that is a bad thing?

ZIMFASU: Yeah man, they'll kill Kajice too, as a traitor!

(Dakuri hung his head.)

DAKURI: So we're lumbered with him again?

ZIMFASU: Afraid so!

(While Dakuri blasphemed under his breath, Zimfasu urged the reluctant trio forward. Pretending not to be nervous, Cole stepped forth followed by a silent Kasira, Micalov trudging behind looking pale and nervous.)

ZIMFASU: Okay, I'll fetch the saddles and we can get going!

(Moments later, Haykie and Dakuri sat proudly upon two noble stallions, anxious to begin the trip. While they waited impatiently for the others, Zimfasu tried to help Micalov onto his smallest horse. With a hand resting on Zimfasu's shoulder, Micalov lifted his foot from the ground to allow Zimfasu to give him a boost. Following a short count of three, Zimfasu raised his hands and threw Micalov clean over the top of the horse.)

MICALOV: Ow!!! You did that on purpose!

ZIMFASU: You were supposed to hold the reigns!

MICALOV: You never said!

ZIMFASU: I told you a hundred times!

MICALOV: Well, you must have whispered then!

(Not allowing the mentally deficient buffoon to rattle him, Zimfasu tried again. As before, Micalov rested his hands on Zimfasu's shoulders as he put his hands together to boost him.)

ZIMFASU: Ready?

MICALOV: I think so!

(And again, on three, Zimfasu raised his hands high, this time throwing Micalov over his shoulder. As he landed in a heap, nowhere near the horse, Zimfasu put his hands on his hips and tried to keep his cool.)

ZIMFASU: Well, this obviously isn't working!

MICALOV: Too right, you're not very good at this, are you?

ZIMFASU: Me?

(As Zimfasu closed his eyes to count to ten, Dakuri turned to Haykie.)

DAKURI: Why is he still with us?

HAYKIE: Don't worry, as soon as we get a chance to leave him somewhere safe, we will!

DAKURI: When will that be? Never, at this rate!

HAYKIE: I admit, we have been curiously stuck with the idiot, but it won't be forever!

DAKURI: Good, he's holding us all up!

(He gestured to where Kasira sat nervously on her horse, then gestured again to where Cole sat with a bright red nose and puffy eyes, upon the horse next to her.)

DAKURI: By the time we get there, the war will be over!

(Moments later, however, they were all saddled properly upon their steeds. Dakuri, Haykie and Zimfasu astride three of the tallest and most noble stallions, Kasira and Cole nestling on the saddles of decent thoroughbred mares, while Micalov brought up the rear, looking nervous and uneasy on a moth-eaten miniature pony. Having never seen a steed so small before, Dakuri couldn't believe his eyes.)

DAKURI: What the hell happened to that horse? Where's the rest of it?

ZIMFASU: It's a miniature pony. Everything else was too high for the clumsy buffoon to get on, even with help!

DAKURI: I see.

ZIMFASU: So, it was either that or let him ride pillion!

DAKURI: Will it be able to keep up?

ZIMFASU: It'll be fast enough for the speed we need to go!

DAKURI: Damn it!

HAYKIE: Anyway, let's go shall we?

(And with no more ado, they got the horses moving and started to trot out of the paddock.)

MICALOV: Wait for me!!!

(They turned to see his tiny pony chewing the grass and refusing to move.)

DAKURI: This is a disaster!

HAYKIE: Don't fret, we'll be fine!

(Sure enough, they were soon heading out of the ghost town of Imzalla towards the meadows to the west. Dakuri, Haykie and Zimfasu looked very much assured as they trotted on high in the saddle. Kasira, on the other hand, was clinging desperately to the horses neck, scared stiff and screaming every now and then. Trying to calm her down, Cole rode along next to her, sneezing so much he couldn't complete a single sentence, while Micalov bounced along on his pony, looking terrified.)

DAKURI: We're not going to make it, are we?

ZIMFASU: Plenty of time, man, we'll make it to the battle site if we can keep this pace up!

DAKURI: I hoped we could get there early and take a look at it first!

ZIMFASU: Well, that aint gonna happen, not the speed them three are going!

(Dakuri shook his fist.)

DAKURI: I expected better of Cole and Kasira!

HAYKIE: Hey, Kasira's scared of horses, it aint her fault, and Cole can't help being allergic to them either!

DAKURI: Allergic?

HAYKIE: Yeah, look at him!

(He turned as saw Cole sneezing, his nose running and his eyes red and swollen.)

DAKURI: He looks awful!

HAYKIE: Good job Kasira's too scared to look at him!

DAKURI: She needs to look where she's going!

ZIMFASU: Don't worry, these horses are well trained, they'll follow!

DAKURI: That's good!

(He sighed.)

DAKURI: It still doesn't help us to sneak a look at the battle site though!

ZIMFASU: I know roughly how to describe it!

DAKURI: Roughly is no good!

HAYKIE: Maybe one of us should gallop ahead and take a look then!

(Dakuri mused.)

DAKURI: It would seem logical, but who would go?

HAYKIE: Who's the only one who can guarantee they'll be able to defend themselves?

(Dakuri nodded and held his head high.)

DAKURI: Okay, I'll do it!

HAYKIE: Not you! Me!

(As a sheepish expression crossed his brow, Dakuri mumbled quietly.)

DAKURI: Yes, yes... that's what I meant!

HAYKIE: It makes sense Dakuri, I'm a witch, I kick arse!

DAKURI: Yes, no need to rub it in!

HAYKIE: Sorry, you're a great warrior Dakuri, but I'm the only one who...

DAKURI: I get the point!

(Giving him an apologetic smile, she turned to face Zimfasu.)

HAYKIE: If anything happens to Micalov, I'll hold you all directly responsible!

ZIMFASU: He'll be fine!

HAYKIE: I'll be off then, I'll keep a look out for Kasira's necklace on the way!

ZIMFASU: Okay, we'll meet you in Zimtambo!

HAYKIE: Where?

ZIMFASU: Zimtambo, it's a large town on the way, we should reach there by tomorrow!

HAYKIE: Okay, and you reckon I'll be able to make it to the battle site and get back there by then?

ZIMFASU: On that horse, you could do it backwards!

HAYKIE: Okay, thanks... I won't, but thanks!

(With that she galloped ahead, yelling over her shoulder.)

HAYKIE: Don't be too long! I'll report back in Zimtambo then!

(As she galloped ahead at a blinding pace, Micalov looked up and saw her disappear into the distance. Starting to panic as he bumped up and down on his saddle, he yelled to Cole.)

MICALOV: Haykie ran away!!! Who's gonna protect me from Dakuri???

(Looking at him through half closed eyes, Cole sneezed and said nothing.)

MICALOV: Why me?

(As the ride continued at a gentle yet steady pace, Kasira began to relax a bit. Still clutching the horse's neck, she turned to Cole.)

KASIRA: Shit, you look ill!

COLE: I feel...

(He sneezed.)

COLE: I'll!

(He rubbed his eyes and then raised a curious eyebrow at Kasira.)

COLE: Why are you cuddling the horse like that?

KASIRA: Leave me alone!

(Looking back at Kasira, Cole and Micalov struggling along, Zimfasu chuckled to himself.)

DAKURI: What's so funny?

ZIMFASU: Your friends, they aint naturals at this horse riding, are they?

DAKURI: It shows, huh?

ZIMFASU: Just a bit!

(Looking serious, Zimfasu gave Dakuri a interested look.)

ZIMFASU: Hey Dakuri, tell me something!

DAKURI: What?

ZIMFASU: What's with this Kasira?

DAKURI: What do you mean?

ZIMFASU: You say she's some kind of chosen one?

DAKURI: Correct!

ZIMFASU: Then what's so special about her?

(Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: I don't know, but then it is for the gods for decide who is their chosen one, not us!

ZIMFASU: It's just that, she doesn't seem like you'd imagine a chosen one!

DAKURI: This is true, she is not an enthusiastic chosen at all!

ZIMFASU: So, what gives?

DAKURI: For all I know Zimfasu, I think Kasira just wants a normal life. To her being chosen is nothing more than a burden!

ZIMFASU: I see!

DAKURI: It has already cost her a dear friend!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: So, is that why she's so grumpy?

DAKURI: She isn't normally this grumpy. I think the pressure of her burden is beginning to get to her.

ZIMFASU: That makes sense! Having a destiny to fulfil must be stressful, especially when it's something as massive as stopping a war and uniting all the races of the world.

DAKURI: Then you understand, you must try to tolerate her temper!

ZIMFASU: No sweat man, it's not me she takes her anger out on anyway!

(He nodded towards her. Sure enough she was clutching the horse and talking at Cole with an angry look on her face.)

DAKURI: Sucks to be Cole! You know, what with you and your Kajice and Kasira and Cole as an example, I'm glad I'm not married!

(Zimfasu grimaced.)

ZIMFASU: You're a lucky bastard, Dakuri!

(While Zimfasu went on to desperately explain what he meant by 'bastard' to a furious Dakuri, Kasira continued to pull an angry face as she interfaced with Cole.)

KASIRA: God, this saddle's uncomfortable!

COLE: That'd explain the grimace!

KASIRA: My bum hurts like hell!

COLE: Hey, when we stop I'll rub oil on it for you, if you like!

KASIRA: You bet!

(She gave a stifled shrug as she clung onto the horses neck.)

KASIRA: I'll be alright, it's been sorer!

(Cole frowned.)

COLE: You said you liked doing that!

KASIRA: Not like that, you pervert, I was referring to the old school chairs!



COLE: Oh! Sorry!

KASIRA: So you should be, it was you who used to make me sit in 'em!

COLE: Well I could hardly ask you to sit on my knee, could I?

KASIRA: I guess not!

(She grinned.)

KASIRA: Hey, could you imagine what Suzina would have done if you had?

COLE: Did you have to mention her?

(Kasira giggled.)

KASIRA: That girl had an even bigger crush on you than *I* did!

COLE: A crush? The way she stalked and sexually harassed me went way beyond a crush, Kasira!

KASIRA: You loved it!

(Before he could even begin to defend himself, there was a loud thud behind them. As they spun around, they saw Micalov laying face first in the dirt next to his pony.)

COLE: Wait everyone!!!

(As Cole leapt from his horse, Dakuri and Zimfasu slowed and looked back, both pulling contemptuous expressions. While the pony bowed down to chew the grass, Cole grabbed Micalov from under the shoulders and helped to pull him up.)

COLE: You okay?

MICALOV: I fell off!

COLE: You don't say!

MICALOV: Stupid blooming animal, why did I have to get a donkey?

COLE: Um... it's a pony, Micalov!

(He looked confused.)

MICALOV: Is it?

COLE: Oh dear... look, just get back on and we can get going!

MICALOV: Yeah alright... um... give us a hand!

COLE: What?

MICALOV: It's too high, I need a boost!

(Cole looked stunned.)

COLE: It's shorter than you are!!!

(He shrugged.)

MICALOV: I'm not very good at...

(Before he could finish his sentence, Dakuri rode up and lifted Micalov by his collar. In one swift movement, he dumped him back in the saddle.)

DAKURI: Now... let's go!

(Holding his neck, Micalov stuck out his tongue and gasped for air.)

MICALOV: Try to choke me, why don't you?

DAKURI: Don't tempt me!

(Looking ahead at Zimfasu, Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: We're going to make it, even if I have to baby-sit you!

(Before they could advance an inch however, there was suddenly a deafening cheer to the right of them. As they all spun to face the noise, they were greeted by the sight of twelve or so sword wielding bandits charging towards them. Without a moments hesitation, Dakuri, Kasira and Zimfasu dismounted their horses and joined Cole in awaiting the

advancing bandits. While Micalov hid behind his pony, they all took up fighting stances.)

COLE: Bandits?

DAKURI: No doubt about it!

KASIRA: Great, where's Cigna when we need her?

COLE: And Haykie!

DAKURI: Relax, nobody's gonna steal from us while I'm around!

(And with that, he charged at the bandits with his sword poised. Inspired by Dakuri's positive stance, the others raced forwards with their hands ready to deal some serious damage. With no sign of fear from either side, Dakuri met the first bandit head on.)

DAKURI: Fool!!!

(As the bandit lashed his sword towards him, Dakuri blocked it with his own, then with lightning quick reactions, lashed his sword across the front of himself, cutting the bandit almost in half with it. As he slumped to the ground, Dakuri moved onto the next one. Having forgot none of the unarmed combat skills they'd been empowered with, both Kasira and Cole found no problem in dodging flashing blades and dealing fatal blows to their opponents necks. Zimfasu on the other hand, was beginning to learn that the noble art of boxing was pretty hopeless in a no rules scenario. Having cheated death twice, thanks to his impressive agility, he stepped back and threw his hands in the air.)

ZIMFASU: They don't fight fair!!!

(Without even facing him, Cole yelled back.)

COLE: Nor do we!!!

(And with that, he broke another one's neck.)

COLE: Pathetic!

(Making enough noise for all of them, Kasira was also in fine fighting form. Leaping to avoid a low sword, she stamped down on the blade end, causing the bandit to drop it. As he looked up in horror, she yelped and performed a first class high kick to his chin, killing him instantly. Stepping back to sense her surroundings, she realised there were already only a few left alive.)

KASIRA: Bloody poofs!

(Having been completely outclassed by what they'd considered a soft target, the few remaining bandits took to their heels and fled.)

DAKURI: Come back and fight!!!

COLE: Leave it Dakuri, they weren't even worth the bother!

DAKURI: This is true, they were cowards!

KASIRA: And weak ones at that!

DAKURI: Let's go back.

(With that, they about turned to head back to their horses and immediately froze in horror. One of the fleeing bandits had slipped past them, grabbed Zimfasu and was holding a sharp blade to his throat. Looking desperate to say the least, the bandit spoke in a frightened voice.)

BANDIT: Don't come any closer!!!

(He started to sweat, as did Zimfasu.)

ZIMFASU: You heard the guy!

BANDIT: Now... um... if you promise to let me go... I won't harm your friend!

(As the bandit continued to shake like a leaf, Dakuri looked down and mumbled quietly.)

DAKURI: Damn that foolish thief!

(Suddenly, he threw his head up and yelled at the top of his lungs.)

DAKURI: Boo!!!

(Scared witless, the bandits eyes bulged and he instantly dropped his blade and fled.

Thankful to be alive, Zimfasu leant over and breathed a sigh of relief.)

ZIMFASU: Thanks man!

DAKURI: It was a pleasure!

(He turned and saw Kasira and Cole, also gasping for breath.)

DAKURI: What's with you two?

(Kasira gave him a filthy look.)

KASIRA: You shit the life out of us, that's what!

(Dakuri grinned.)

DAKURI: Don't worry about it!

KASIRA: It aint funny, Dakuri!

DAKURI: Who's laughing?

KASIRA: Arsehole!

(As they returned to remount their horses, Micalov peered over his pony.)

MICALOV: Did we win?

DAKURI: We?

(And with that, he lifted him back onto his pony, again half strangling him.)

MICALOV: Will you stop doing that???

DAKURI: Pardon?

(Micalov grinned and shrunk down.)

MICALOV: Um... thank you!

DAKURI: That's what I thought you said!

(As Zimfasu passed Kasira on the way to his mount, he grinned and patted her on the back.)

ZIMFASU: You quite some lady, you know that?

(She smiled.)

KASIRA: Thanks!

ZIMFASU: And when you did that high kick, the whole world could see your knickers!

(Unfazed, Kasira shrugged and climbed onto her horse.)

KASIRA: Good job I'm wearing some today then, isn't it?

(Embarrassed by her cool riposte, Zimfasu said nothing and looked down as he hurried back to his horse. As Zimfasu eased himself into his saddle, Dakuri looked around.)

DAKURI: Is everyone ready?

KASIRA: Wait a minute!

(She leant forward and clung on to the horses neck.)

KASIRA: Okay, ready!

(And with a nod, they continued on their way. Picking up the pace as they did so, Micalov again started to bounce up and down, while Kasira shut her eyes and Cole's feverish symptoms returned. Satisfied that this would be their travelling speed, Zimfasu and Dakuri continued to converse, completely at home on horseback.)

ZIMFASU: So, bandits eh? I suppose this is what this journey's gonna be about!

DAKURI: It looks that way, let's just be glad they didn't have crossbows... swords we can handle!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: And I suppose them bandits weren't the ones who stole Kasira's necklace?

DAKURI: She'd have said!

ZIMFASU: I guess so!

(Nodding to himself, Zimfasu smiled and looked behind at Kasira, Cole and Micalov struggling forth on their mounts.)

ZIMFASU: You know, I've never seen anything like those three! They're pretty amusing to watch.

(Biologically unable to see the funny side, Dakuri gave him a dissatisfied scowl.)

DAKURI: Because they're so slow, Haykie has had to ride ahead rather than riding with us. I fail to see how losing Haykie's valuable assistance because of their shortcomings is amusing! In the event of a crossbow attack, she was the only one capable of defending us all. Every unscrupulous rogue in Vitazoe has converged on these lands and all we can do if we're subjected to a crossbow attack is pray they miss. How is that funny?

(Zimfasu scowled back at him.)

ZIMFASU: I was only saying they're an amusing sight!

DAKURI: Not to me! All I see is failure, a failure that has cost us Haykie's help.

ZIMFASU: Well there's no point in feeling bitter about it. It's happened. Haykie's gone. What's done is done, Dakuri!

DAKURI: Yes, and once again I suffer from what is done by someone else!

(Zimfasu shook his head.)

ZIMFASU: If this journey is a quest for worldwide tolerance, Dakuri, it wouldn't hurt you to show a little!

DAKURI: A little what?

ZIMFASU: Tolerance, for gods sake!

DAKURI: Easy for you to say, you weren't trained as a great warrior, only to have others holding you back!

(Zimfasu shrugged.)

ZIMFASU: True, but I'm sure you weren't trained as a great warrior, expecting everyone else to match your standards!

(Having initially looked angered by those words, Dakuri suddenly nodded thoughtfully.)

DAKURI: You know, as much as it pains me to admits this, you may have a point, Zimfasu!

(Not knowing what to say, Zimfasu stared ahead.)

DAKURI: I should try to accept other peoples flaws more readily!

ZIMFASU: It can't hurt to try!

DAKURI: Except Micalov, of course, he's flawed at everything!

ZIMFASU: So it would seem, Dakuri, so it certainly would seem!

(As they all kept a constant eye out for trouble, the two in front, three straggling desperately behind, formation, quickly became the natural order. As they headed across the tall grass of the picturesque meadows and through the little snatches of woodland, this formation showed no sign of changing.)

*Bahuthu, Midland Wilderness, Tuesday afternoon...*

(As what would have normally been lunchtime, came and went, Dakuri and Zimfasu continued to lead the others through the stunning greenery, showing no sign of stopping. As her stomach began to rumble uncontrollably, Kasira yelled ahead to make a point about the importance of sustenance. Aware of her loudening complaints, but unable to hear her probably, Dakuri and Zimfasu slowed down to listen.)

DAKURI: What's she complaining about now?

ZIMFASU: Search me, man!

(Having allowed the straggling trio to catch them up, Dakuri looked to Kasira as she let go of her horse's neck and sat up.)

DAKURI: What are you complaining about *this* time?

KASIRA: When are we having our lunch?

(Dakuri frowned.)

DAKURI: You stopped us to ask *that*?

KASIRA: Well, I'm hungry!

DAKURI: Kasira, we're on a journey to bring peace to the world, and all you can think of is food?

(With that, she growled and raised her voice.)

KASIRA: Like I said, I'm hungry!

DAKURI: There'll be plenty of time for eating, Kasira!

COLE: Come off it, Dakuri, she's got a point!

DAKURI: Yes she has, but not a valid one!

KASIRA: Who put you in charge of the food anyway?

DAKURI: Nobody, but if you'd like to fight me for it...

(She turned to Cole.)

KASIRA: Go on, love!

(As his eyes bulged, he started to gape uncontrollably.)

COLE: What? Eh? Me?

DAKURI: Hmm, I didn't think so!

(Kicking his horse to set it in motion again, Dakuri nodded ahead.)

DAKURI: Another 20 or so miles, and we'll stop then!

(With a shrug, Zimfasu re-joined Dakuri, leaving Kasira fuming. With a look of pure evil, she glared at Cole.)

KASIRA: You we're a fat lot of help!

COLE: What?

KASIRA: You heard me!

COLE: Did you seriously expect me to fight Dakuri?

(Relieving him of her scorn, Kasira looked ahead.)

KASIRA: I guess not!

(And with no more ado they continued on. They hadn't got very far, however, when Dakuri's horse suddenly reared up and started to step backwards. As he struggled to control the beast beneath him, he looked to Zimfasu.)

DAKURI: What's wrong with this creature?

(Having stopped dead, Zimfasu shook his head.)

ZIMFASU: Nothing, man! It's my fault, I forgot about this!

DAKURI: Forgot about what?

(With a regretful sigh, Zimfasu looked him in the eye.)

ZIMFASU: It's snake season!

(Bearing a look of sheer horror, Dakuri stared back.)

DAKURI: Snakes?

ZIMFASU: Bloody things are rife around here and the valley ahead!

DAKURI: And let me guess, the horses are afraid?

(Zimfasu nodded.)

DAKURI: Perfect, that's all we need!

(As he glanced back at Kasira, Cole and Micalov slowly advancing, he spammed his forehead, then shook a worried fist.)

DAKURI: Whatever you do, don't mention snakes to Kasira!

ZIMFASU: She's afraid of snakes?

(He nodded.)

DAKURI: Along with heights, darkness, confined spaces, spiders and cheese!

ZIMFASU: Cheese?

(He scratched his head.)

ZIMFASU: You sure she's the chosen one?

(Dakuri suddenly looked alarmed.)

DAKURI: Silence, she's here!

KASIRA: What do you mean, silence she's here?

(He grinned innocently as Kasira stared angrily at him from her saddle.)

KASIRA: Well?

(He looked nervously from side to side then widened his innocent grin.)

DAKURI: Um... you misheard! I said "silence round here"!

(She gave him a doubting look.)

DAKURI: I did!

KASIRA: Seriously, Dakuri, you couldn't tell a lie if your arse was on fire!

DAKURI: But Kasira...

(Stopping to absorb her words, he suddenly looked baffled.)

DAKURI: How would lying help me if my arse was on fire?

KASIRA: Don't be smarmy with *me*, it's a common enough phrase!

DAKURI: It is?

COLE: Is it?

ZIMFASU: I've certainly never heard it before!

KASIRA: Huh!

(She scoffed and gave them all a condescending glance.)

KASIRA: And you lot consider yourselves travelled!

(As she started to trot away indignantly, Dakuri raised his finger in readiness to challenge her. Before he could even begin however, Cole grabbed his hand and shook his head, then spoke in almost a whisper.)

COLE: We both know she made it up Dakuri, so let's just give her that one, eh?

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: I suppose it would be wise!

(Leaning closer to him, Dakuri offered him a tip in return.)

DAKURI: Don't tell Kasira, it'll only spook her. The valley ahead is strewn with snakes!

(Tensing up and starting to tremble, the already sick looking Cole, turned even paler. Having given Dakuri one final horrified stare, he then looked to Kasira and yelled out in a panic.)

COLE: Look out Kasira, there's snakes round 'ere!!!

(Her scream could have been heard from Sudereva. Feeling it best to delay chastising Cole for his slip-up, Dakuri yelled to her.)

DAKURI: Don't panic, Kasira, just ride on!!!

(He was already too late. Looking scared half to death, Kasira had wrapped both her arms and legs around the horse's neck and sat there shivering and sweating. While she cried like a baby, Dakuri glared at Cole.)

DAKURI: Good move!

(He then did a double take at the sight of Cole doing the same.)

DAKURI: What the hell's got into you?

COLE: I 'ate snakes!

(Having only just caught up, Micalov heard the word 'snakes' and turned to Zimfasu.)

MICALOV: Did he say snakes?

ZIMFASU: Don't *you* start!

MICALOV: Huh, I ain't scared of snakes!

(Dakuri turned to him.)

DAKURI: Then why are you standing on the saddle?

MICALOV: Um... there's a better view from up here!

ZIMFASU: Never mind that, there's a valley full of snakes ahead and two of us are too terrified to move, what we gonna do?

(Silence suddenly descended as Dakuri realised the size of their dilemma.)

DAKURI: It'd be too far to go back around, I suppose!

ZIMFASU: Miles too far!

DAKURI: Hmm, I wonder if Haykie came this way!

ZIMFASU: She's a witch, one protective bubble and she's laughing!

DAKURI: This is true!

(As he looked across the valley, Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: There's no doubt, we have to cross it!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: The horses would be alright to sprint it, but how will we get Kasira and Cole moving?

(Having released the horse from its headlock, due more to his allergy than a bout of bravery, Cole looked across the valley.)

COLE: Look at her, she's like an unmovable object when she does that!

ZIMFASU: It's happened before?

COLE: Yeah, tiniest glimpse of a spider and she straddles *me* like that!

ZIMFASU: Around the neck?

(Ignoring the ridiculous remark, Cole turned to Dakuri as he spoke.)

DAKURI: So what do you do?

COLE: I get rid of the spider, obviously!

ZIMFASU: That's fucked that then, there's no way we can remove all the snakes, man!

(Again they pondered their dilemma in silence.)

DAKURI: The only other thing I can think of is to terrify her horse into bolting!

ZIMFASU: Yeah, but what if she falls?

COLE: With the grip she's got on that horse? No chance!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: That's settled then!

(Looking deadly serious, he wrapped the reigns of his stallion tightly around his wrist.)

DAKURI: You gonna be okay to sprint?

(Cole nodded.)

COLE: I can't see shit through these puffy eyes, but I'll give it a go!

DAKURI: Micalov?

MICALOV: What?

(He gave an angry sigh.)

DAKURI: You ready to sprint for it?

(Micalov gaped.)

MICALOV: You want us to get off our horses and run?

(As Dakuri gave up, Cole intervened.)

COLE: He meant make the horses sprint!

(Looking enlightened, Micalov chuckled.)

MICALOV: I was gonna say, that'd be ridiculous!

DAKURI: Give me strength!

(Turning his head to throw one last determined look in their direction, Dakuri nodded defiantly.)

DAKURI: Okay, you follow me, I'll give Kasira's horse the slapping of a life time!!!

(And with that, he galloped off at a devil's pace towards Kasira. Following his lead, Zimfasu, Cole and Micalov raced after him. While Kasira clung on to her steed trembling, totally oblivious to their plan, Dakuri raced beside her and kicked her horse on the buttock with all his might. Much to his delight Kasira's horse immediately shoot forwards and sprinted forth at a blinding speed. Barely able to see where he was going through his puffy eyes, Cole squinted ahead and could barely make out the blur of Kasira's horse bolting away towards the other side of the valley. Hearing her, however, wasn't a problem. In fear for her life, she screamed and turned the air blue.

With the frenetic pace they'd set as they sped across the valley, the horses trampled and squashed every snake in their path. Even Micalov's pony was giving it everything as its legs went like the clappers. Such was their speed, it wasn't long before Kasira's horse emerged from the valley, followed only moments later by Dakuri, Zimfasu and surprisingly Micalov. Feeling more than a little relieved Micalov and Dakuri turned back to wait for Cole while Zimfasu rode on to collect Kasira. Her horse had been in such a panic it had passed through the valley and continued on at breakneck speed showing no signs of stopping with Kasira screaming for all she was worth on its neck. Having the fastest horse, Zimfasu had elected to be the one to retrieve her before the horse disappeared out of sight and she was lost forever.

Waiting back at the edge of the valley in the meantime, sitting tall on his stallion, Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Nice work, Micalov!

(Micalov looked amazed.)



MICALOV: Really?

DAKURI: No! I kind of hoped a snake would get you!

(As Micalov hung his head, Dakuri shook his.)

DAKURI: What's that idiot doing now?

MICALOV: I'm not doing anything!

DAKURI: Not you!

(He pointed into the valley.)

DAKURI: Cole!

(As Micalov looked up, he was stunned by the sight of a visually impaired Cole, zigzagging erratically in their general direction. Realising his friend was in trouble, Dakuri leapt off of his horse.)

DAKURI: I must do something!

(Before he could react however, Cole's horse reared up in severe distress, throwing him to the ground. Looking stunned but not injured, Cole leapt to his feet as his horse fell to earth. Desperately straining his eyes to regain his sight, Cole kicked his feet out in an attempt to scare the snakes. Flustered and stuck for a solution, Dakuri yelled to him.)

DAKURI: We're over here!!!

(Cole spun in his direction.)

COLE: Where?

(As he strained his eyes again, a blurred image of Dakuri came into his view over fifty feet away.)

COLE: Oh fuck, I'm in trouble here!

(Returning with Zimfasu, Kasira instantly forgot her irritation about her bolting horse and immediately began to panic about her husbands dire situation. Looking devastated, she leapt from her horse and screamed.)

KASIRA: Do something, somebody!!!

DAKURI: We can't reach him!!!

(Luckily, no longer on horseback, Cole's vision cleared up slightly. With a petrified look in his eyes, he took up a fighting stance and circled on the spot, desperate to keep the highly venomous reptiles at bay. Without looking up, he yelled again towards Dakuri.)

COLE: If anyone wants to give me a hand here, I'll be only too grateful!

(Turning to Dakuri, Kasira remonstrated passionately.)

KASIRA: Please Dakuri, he's as terrified of snakes as I am!

DAKURI: I know, but what can I do?

(Realising no-one was likely to come to his aid, Cole looked around for another way out. Seeing his horse lying dead and slowly disappearing under a sea of snakes, he knew it was now or never. Looking more than a little nervous, he yelled to Kasira.)

COLE: I'm gonna run for it, darling!

(Dakuri gave Kasira a filthy look.)

DAKURI: Did he call me darling?

KASIRA: He was talking to *me*!

(Taking a second glance at his stricken steed, Cole nodded to himself.)

COLE: Hopefully that'll keep them busy!

(And with that he started to sprint towards his comrades. With a constipated expression on his face, he took the largest strides he could, always looking at his feet. Clasp her

hands together in almost a prayer, Kasira shut her eyes and hoped for the best, while the others cheered him on.)

DAKURI: Go on, you can make it!!!

MICALOV: I can't watch!

(As Micalov and the others continued to look on, Cole came to within ten feet of them, when a petrified look filled his face. With a loud scream he kicked his leg out and sent a snake flying in the air off his boot.)

COLE: Fucking things!!!

(As Cole almost reached safety, the snake flew towards his allies. Instinctively, Micalov caught it and let out a scream of his own then threw it back at Cole.)

MICALOV: It was horrible!!!

COLE: Shit!!!

(As his eyes bulged, he just managed to duck under it and race to the safety of his allies. Breathing deeply in utter relief, he hugged Kasira while the others looked on gasping. Knowing he was lucky, Cole shook his head and looked to the skies.)

COLE: I owe you one!

(With Cole safe, they all allowed themselves a moment to regain their composure and thank their lucky stars, when Kasira spotted Zimfasu through her tears of joy. Looking heartbroken, he stared into the valley and shook his head.)

ZIMFASU: Man, she was a fine, fine animal!

(Feeling his pain, Kasira approached his side.)

KASIRA: Sorry, Zimfasu!

(He nodded in appreciation of the gesture.)

ZIMFASU: Thank you, Kasira, you're alright!

(He shook his head.)

ZIMFASU: It's my own fault, I gambled and the horse paid dear!

KASIRA: Yeah, but we made it and if I'm successful in stopping this war, that could be priceless!

ZIMFASU: I hope so!

(He gave her a smile.)

ZIMFASU: Priceless is definitely the word. There's a lot riding you, Kasira, isn't there? (She grimaced.)

KASIRA: I wish it wasn't so, Zimfasu, I really do!

ZIMFASU: Well don't. Embrace your destiny, girl, because if your heart isn't in it Kasira, you're gonna fail... and if *you* fail, the whole world's gonna suffer!

(Kasira pouted at him sorrowfully.)

KASIRA: No pressure then?

(Realising his inspirational words may well of backfired, Zimfasu turned and slowly walked back towards his horse, whistling innocently.)

ZIMFASU: Come on, we got a war to stop!

(As he attempted to mount his steed, however, Cole raised an interesting point.)

COLE: How? I aint got a horse!

(As Kasira climbed back on her horse, Dakuri turned to Micalov and offered up what he considered the perfect solution.)

DAKURI: Idiot, you give Cole your pony, you can walk!

MICALOV: But I'll get left behind!

DAKURI: Oh dear, never mind, won't that be a tragedy!

(He sneered.)

DAKURI: Now give!

(As he glared at a sad looking Micalov, he heard Cole's voice and his heart sunk.)

COLE: I'm okay, Dakuri!

(He looked over and saw Cole mounting Kasira's horse then holding onto her waist.

Hanging a disappointed head, he returned to his stallion.)

DAKURI: Am I doomed to be stuck with him for the rest of eternity?

(He sighed then looked across at the others.)

DAKURI: We should get going. Zimfasu, hand out some sandwiches, we can eat while we ride!

(Kasira looked greatly relieved.)

KASIRA: Food, thank heavens.

(Moments later, having received some sandwiches from Zimfasu, Kasira leant forward to hold onto her horses neck while she ate. Tucking into his, Cole grabbed her hip with his free hand and the journey began again. As the trotted forth with Zimfasu looking sombre and upset, Dakuri turned to him as he gulped down his sandwich.)

DAKURI: Your horses mean a lot to you, don't they?

(Zimfasu replied with a sigh.)

ZIMFASU: They're an expensive hobby, Dakuri, but they mean the world to me, yes!

DAKURI: No offence, Zimfasu, but that's weird!

ZIMFASU: What?

DAKURI: How can you have such feelings for a beast?

(Zimfasu gave him a filthy glare and shook his head.)

ZIMFASU: I pity you, Dakuri!

DAKURI: Why? I'm not the one almost in tears because of a horse!

ZIMFASU: Whatever you say, man!

DAKURI: I mean, it's not like you ever invited them into your home for tea and biscuits over a meaningful conversation, is it?!

ZIMFASU: Just drop it, Dakuri, you've got no soul, man!

DAKURI: Wrong, I have a soul, but I also have priorities!

ZIMFASU: No man, you only have priorities, you're the most blinkered, narrow-minded man I've ever had the displeasure of knowing!

(Dakuri sneered.)

DAKURI: As you're upset, regardless of how ridiculous the reason, I'll let that slip for now!

(Before Zimfasu could respond, Cole suddenly raised his voice.)

COLE: Hey, there they are, they're the ones who stole Cigna!

(Immediately, Dakuri and Zimfasu twisted in his direction and Kasira opened her eyes to see where he was looking.)

DAKURI: Where?

(Gesturing to them as if they were stupid, he pointed ahead.)

COLE: Right in front of us, dickhead!

(As they turned swiftly to where he was pointing, Dakuri nodded at the sight of a band of bandits jogging, someway ahead of them.)

DAKURI: Are you *sure* it's them? You've been barely able to see since we set out!

COLE: My eyes are fine at the minute. I tell you it's them!!!

DAKURI: As long as you're sure...

(He then turned to face Zimfasu.)

DAKURI: I'll go on ahead, you make sure the others hurry up!

ZIMFASU: Right!

DAKURI: Then when we've finished with them, Cole can explain calling me a dickhead!

ZIMFASU: He was just telling it like it is, Dakuri!

(Dakuri was furious.)

DAKURI: What did you say?

ZIMFASU: Don't chastise me, Dakuri, aint you supposed to be riding ahead?

DAKURI: Hmm, we'll discuss this later!

(And with that, he galloped off ahead.)

ZIMFASU: Okay everybody, as quick as you can!!!

(As the others picked up the pace, Kasira started to scream again and Micalov bounced up and down on the saddle like a rubber ball. Holding tightly onto his beloved, Cole just prayed the horse went in the right direction, as his eyes started to puff up again. Gaining quickly on the band of Caucasian thieves ahead, Dakuri looked closely to see if any of them had crossbows. Of the twenty or so men in the pack, he could only see swords and scabbards. Feeling certain that they didn't possess anything projectile, he came up behind them and yelled.)

DAKURI: Stop right there or suffer the consequences!!!

(Swiftly spinning around, the unwashed assembly before him laughed hysterically.

Unfazed by it, Dakuri leapt from his steed and folded his arms.)

DAKURI: Something amuses you?

(Still chuckling, the tallest one stepped forward.)

FOYLE: Sure it does... you!

DAKURI: And that's because?

FOYLE: Well, only an idiot takes on twenty men!

DAKURI: Who says I'm alone?

(As he spoke, the others began to gain.)

DAKURI: There are four of us!

(Foyle looked and grinned.)

FOYLE: Five, mate!

DAKURI: The fool on the pony doesn't count!

FOYLE: Whatever, you slanty-eyed cock, it still doesn't even the numbers!

DAKURI: Enough!!!

(Not even slightly fazed by Dakuri's aura, Foyle turned to his group.)

FOYLE: What do you think? Ignore the idiot or kill him?

(While they commenced a slight discussion about it, Dakuri was joined by the rest of his party.)

DAKURI: About time!

(Wearing a baffled expression in his bloodshot, puffy eyes, Cole scratched his head.)

COLE: Who the hell are these people?

DAKURI: The bandits, obviously!

(Cole looked even more bamboozled than he had been.)

COLE: They aint the ones who nicked the necklace!

DAKURI: What?

COLE: The ones I saw were on horseback, there was only two of them!

DAKURI: Then why'd you point over here?

COLE: I didn't!

(Looking over her shoulder, Kasira gave him a sympathetic look.)

KASIRA: You can't see a fuckin' thing, can you?

COLE: I can... and I did!

(Dakuri spanned his forehead.)

COLE: I saw the two thieves I tell you!

DAKURI: I don't dispute that, but then you pointed over here!

(Cole rolled his eyes.)

COLE: They *were* over this way when I pointed! They were on horseback, they've galloped past these people and carried on, obviously!

(Dakuri sighed to himself in frustration.)

DAKURI: Great!

(Wearing a cheesy grin, Dakuri interrupted the band of thieves, midway through their discussion.)

DAKURI: Hey, bandits!

(Foyle turned.)

FOYLE: Bandits?

DAKURI: Yes, bandits!

FOYLE: We prefer to be called thieves, it's far less gay!

DAKURI: Well, whatever... it seems there's been a tiny mistake, you may go!

(As if he'd made the worlds funniest joke, they all erupted into hysterical bouts of laughter. Dakuri frowned and shrugged to his allies, then stepped forward.)

DAKURI: What's so funny?

(With tears rolling down his cheeks, Foyle chuckled as he tried to respond.)

FOYLE: We? We can go?

DAKURI: That's what I said!

(Foyle chuckled some more.)

FOYLE: You actually thought... 'ha' ...that you'd captured us?

(Dakuri drew his sword.)

DAKURI: What of it?

FOYLE: Sorry to disillusion you mate, but we'd already decided to kill you, we were just deciding which one of us was gonna rape ya bitch first...

(He pointed at Kasira.)

DAKURI: What???

(Like a man possessed, Dakuri immediately lashed Foyle's head clean off off his shoulders, his lifelong duty to protect Kasira, clearly coming to the fore. As the rest of Foyle's gang ripped their swords from their sheaths, the poorly sighted Cole leapt from Kasira's horse and also came out fighting. Sent into a rage by the threat to rape Kasira, he was out for blood. Terrified by the thought of him getting hurt, Kasira swiftly dismounted and raced to his side. Again, knowing he'd be no match for a swordsman, Zimfasu looked on anxiously while Micalov slid off his pony and hid.

As a true master with his sword, Dakuri once again found no difficulties in killing or permanently maiming any foe who came his way. As he sliced through them with the greatest of ease, however, Kasira was struggling. Protecting Cole every time he attempted to hit someone and missed, she was quickly becoming overwhelmed. Spotting this, Zimfasu felt his collar and sneered.)

ZIMFASU: That can't be right!

(With that, he too leapt from his mount then leapt into the fray, punching people to the ground, all the while avoiding lashing sword blades. As Cole's vision started to clear, the threat made towards his beloved Kasira, spurred him on greatly. Like a seasoned unarmed combat veteran, he performed a high kick with both legs, almost doing a mid air splits, and broke two men's necks at once. Upon landing, he then raced over to Dakuri grabbing a bandit who was attempting to sneak up on him.)

COLE: Present for ya!!!

(As if the man weighed next to nothing, he threw him towards Dakuri's sword. Nodding gratefully, Dakuri skewered him immediately.)

DAKURI: Cole, you shouldn't have, I didn't get you anything!

(Ignoring him, Cole then raced back to Kasira.)

COLE: You okay?

(More than a little gob smacked by his incredible performance, Kasira shrugged.)

KASIRA: I'm fine! Who *are* you?

COLE: I'm the same man you married, only angrier!

(As she blushed, more than a little excited by his words, Cole raced up to two swordsmen as they bared down on Zimfasu. Without even hesitating, he grabbed one's sword hand and snapped his wrist in one simple move, causing him to drop his weapon. As the man cried out in pain, he then proceeded to snap the neck of the other.)

ZIMFASU: Thanks, man!

COLE: You're welcome!

(By the time the enemy numbers had been reduced to a mere five, even Dakuri had lowered his weapon to watch Cole in action. Standing with the others looking completely confounded by Cole's endeavours, he glanced to Kasira with his mouth wide open.)

DAKURI: He has... been practising?

(Standing silently, Dakuri's words drifted over her head as she stared at Cole like a love sick schoolgirl. Releasing a romantic sigh, she held her hands to her heart and fluttered her eyelashes.)

KASIRA: I'm a lucky woman!

(Not paying attention, Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Me too!

(While they continued to watch Cole take on all comers, he continued not to disappoint. As the few remaining bunched together to charge him, Cole raced forth and then slid to the ground to spin through three hundred and sixty degrees and knock three of them flying. As he leapt to his feet, the other two ran for their lives.)

COLE: Cowards!!!

(With that, he jumped on two of those he'd knocked down, snapping their necks. As the other one scrambled to his feet and fled, Cole stood tall and sniggered.)

COLE: Huh, bloody amateurs!

(As he turned around he was more than a little startled to receive an enthusiastic ovation from his friends. Looking embarrassed he waved them away as Kasira ran up and hugged him in a sexy manor, before whispering in his ear. As her words entered his head, his eyes bulged.)

COLE: What??? Here? Yes, please!!!

(Kasira furrowed her brow at him and spoke harshly to him through the corner of her mouth as not to be overheard.)

KASIRA: I said, if *they* weren't here I would!

(Cole looked enlightened.)

COLE: Oh... it was a nice idea, though!

(Returning to the horses with a smile, Dakuri tapped Cole on the shoulder.)

DAKURI: Cole?

COLE: Yeah?

DAKURI: Very few men in this world have ever impressed me...

(Cole nodded in gratitude of his sentiments.)

DAKURI: So don't feel bad that you didn't impress me either!

COLE: Eh?

(Dakuri smiled.)

DAKURI: I'm joking, you fought like a master warrior today, in fact better!

COLE: Thanks Dakuri, I appreciate that!

(Before another word could be said, however, a tired and bedraggled bandit, staggered before them, as if from nowhere. With a look of hate, chiselled into his features, he stared at Cole holding a crossbow. Set on edge, Kasira and her allies, took a step back looking apprehensive to say the least. With the crossbow aimed squarely at him, Cole gave him a curious look as the bandit stared back with unabated fury.)

COLE: What's this?

(Fighting for breath, the bandit sneered.)

BANDIT: My friends... you killed my friends!

(Shaking in a rage, he then fired the crossbow bolt straight at him. Fearing the worst, Kasira screamed and tried in vain to push him out of the way, while Dakuri reached for his sword, knowing he could do nothing to help. As the bandit sneered in anticipation of being killed for his act, he suddenly gaped in horror. As Kasira screamed again and looked away, Cole somehow snatched the crossbow bolt out of the air.)

BANDIT: But... it can not be!!!

(As everyone looked on amazed, Cole shrugged and threw it back at him, straight into his open mouth. As the bandit's body hit the floor, Kasira turned and ran straight up to Cole, throwing her arms around him. There then followed a baffled silence as they tried to comprehend what had just happened. Breaking the silence, Zimfasu approached the dead man's body and grimaced.)

ZIMFASU: Right in the kisser... man, that's gotta hurt!

(Giving Cole an uneasy smile, Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: How did you do that?

(Looking equally as miffed, Cole screwed up his face.)

COLE: Did I just catch a crossbow bolt?

(Not caring about the circumstances, Kasira squeezed him tight.)

KASIRA: Who cares? As long as you're alive!

COLE: But... I threw it at him!

(Dakuri nodded in a daze.)

DAKURI: With enough force to stick!

(Shuddering to think what could possibly have come over him, Cole tried to regain his composure.)

COLE: Um... we'd better go, there's been enough delays as it is!

(In total agreement, Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: This is true!

(He turned to Kasira.)

DAKURI: And these are definitely not the ones who mugged you?

(Ignoring him, she nuzzled her head tighter into Cole's chest.)

DAKURI: I'll take that as a no!

(Seeing the fight was over, Micalov returned from behind a bush and the journey got underway once again. Fearing that too many delays would cost them dear, Dakuri urged them to go a little faster. Sensing he had a point, they obliged. And so, they continued on across the beautiful Bahuthu wilderness. Dakuri and Zimfasu taking the lead, while Micalov brought up the rear. As always, Kasira held tight to the horses neck, while Cole held on behind her.

With the great battle less than 48 hours away, the area around the battle site had transformed from a peaceful memorial to a sprawling mess of bustling encampments. To one side, the many battalions of the vast Enaki army and to the other, the heavily armed legions of Sudereva. With the well trained spear units and many militia men of Bahuthu, gathered to defend their honour somewhere in between, the scene was becoming set for a massacre. Although only too aware that this battle would be Vitazoe's worst ever humanitarian disaster, neither side was in a mood to back down. With every side guilty of feeding its soldiers on a diet of lies and propaganda about the opposition, all claimed to have the moral high ground.

As soldiers of every nation, polished and sharpened their weaponry, and those who had uniforms made sure they were perfect, all the talk in the encampments was based on numbers of kills. With showing mercy considered a weakness, every man was prepared for a bloodbath.

With numbers constantly swelling on all sides as more soldiers arrived from the sea or other towns in Bahuthu, the encampments continued to grow. It would be no exaggeration to say that, if numbers continued to grow at this rate, the whole west side of Bahuthu would be swamped, not only with soldiers, but with prostitutes and thieves. The prostitutes would make a lot of money on the eve of the battle and then the thieving scavengers would make hay as soon as it was over. These would be the biggest winners in what looked set to become the biggest and bloodiest battle in the history of mankind.)

*Bahuthu, Zimtambo Township, Tuesday Evening...*



(As the afternoon wore into evening, the travelling pack of Kasira and her allies had begun to pick up the pace. Although making steady progress across Bahuthu, they were, by now, some distance behind Haykie.)

Looking a bit worn out from the sheer speed of her gallop across the land, Haykie's horse started to wither and slow. Fortunately, the days efforts had brought her to the edge of Zimtambo Township. As she sat upon her weary stallion at the edge of town, she could see trouble in the streets ahead. With a mixture of Dezara's Plateau's undesirables and angry Bahuthu security men, not exactly mixing well in her eye line, she proceeded with caution. Being from Dezara's Plateau herself, she knew there could be trouble. Cautiously looking all around her, she lead the horse into the centre of town, being watched all the while by suspicious locals. Looking forward to putting the angry township behind her, she lead the horse to a drinking trough in the corner of the main square and kept a wary vigil while the thirsty horse, lapped up its treat. As she impatiently tapped her leg, waiting for the horse to have its fill, she spotted an ageing black lady coming her way. Hoping the old lady wouldn't start any trouble, Haykie offered her a smile as she closed in on her. Stopping just short of her, the old lady looked into Haykie's wary eyes, clearly understanding her apprehension.)

OLD LADY: Don't mind me, young lady!

(Raising an eyebrow, Haykie said nothing.)

OLD LADY: I'm just admiring that stallion!

(With a smile, Haykie realised this old lady meant no harm and turned her back to tighten the saddle.)

HAYKIE: Magnificent, isn't she?

(The old lady nodded.)

OLD LADY: Yes she is!

(As Haykie continued to fiddle with the saddle, the old lady then said something that made her spin around in amazement.)

OLD LADY: You must have a noble heart, horses normally bolt from a witch!

(As Haykie spun round and gaped, the old lady continued.)

OLD LADY: You seem shocked, young one!

(Looking all around her in the hope that nobody overheard, Haykie sneered.)

HAYKIE: What? How do you know? Explain!

(The old lady laughed.)

OLD LADY: Don't worry child...

HAYKIE: Child? I'm 33!

OLD LADY: Well we witches can live to a ripe old age you know!

(Haykie nodded, clearly uncomfortable.)

HAYKIE: I know!

OLD LADY: My, my Haykie, you seem troubled!

HAYKIE: How do you know my name?

OLD LADY: I just do, dear!

(Standing tall, Haykie looked suspicious.)

HAYKIE: Who *are* you?

OLD LADY: A witch... like you!

HAYKIE: But, how do you know I'm a witch? And how *do* you know my name?

OLD LADY: As an elder witch Haykie, I can sense things. Your name, your fears, your hopes and dreams... I can sense them. Skills of an elder witch that you yourself might possess some day.

(Haykie gave her a sideways glance.)

HAYKIE: I might?

OLD LADY: Of course... unless you're lucky!

HAYKIE: Lucky?

OLD LADY: Yes, lucky!

HAYKIE: I don't follow!

OLD LADY: Haykie, like all witches, there is a purpose for your powers, if you're lucky enough to find out what, you can break the curse!

HAYKIE: Curse?

OLD LADY: Don't pretend like you don't know. I speak of the curse of infertility! I've grown into a lonely old hag, often used but never loved because I couldn't bare any man a child!

(Haykie looked stunned.)

OLD LADY: I hope you find your purpose Haykie, so that you can be a normal woman!

HAYKIE: You mean... I can do that?

(She bit her lip.)

HAYKIE: But... I kinda like being a witch!

OLD LADY: So did I when I was your age, but as time passed the curse of infertility cut me deep!

(Haykie thought.)

HAYKIE: Actually, I'm beginning to feel that too!

OLD LADY: I sensed that, young Haykie, that's why I implore you... find your purpose and lift the curse that being a witch brings!

(She smiled to her warmly.)

OLD LADY: Become and normal woman and live!

(Looking flustered, Haykie shrugged.)

HAYKIE: But... where do I begin?

(Without even a flash or a puff of smoke, the old lady then vanished into thin air.)

HAYKIE: Huh?

(Looking more than slightly spooked, Haykie looked around in disbelief.)

HAYKIE: Hey... old lady?

(As she looked up, a gentleman crossed the square with his friends. As his friends stood behind him laughing, he spoke to her in a belittling tone.)

MAN: Do you always talk to yourself like that?

HAYKIE: But... I was talking to the old lady!

MAN: Yeah, all right fruit loop, we've been watching you for the last couple of minutes, talking to yourself.

(He nudged his friend.)

MAN: Come on, let's get out here, she's one serious loony!

(As the highly amused group of friends disappeared from sight, the dumbstruck Haykie, grabbed her horse's reign and shook her head.)

HAYKIE: Did I imagine that?

(Receiving more strange glances as she lead the horse away from the trough, she suddenly became very self conscious. Snagging her skirt on the saddle in her desperate scramble to get back on her horse, she then galloped out of the other side of Zimtambo in a blinding hurry. Without the slightest idea of what had just happened, she stared straight ahead trying not to let the old hags words get to her, as the horse sprinted into the woodlands the other side of the town. Thoroughly spooked by the strange occurrence, she couldn't wait to put some distance between herself and the town. It was at the back of her mind all the while, however, that she'd have to return there eventually to meet the others.)

*Bahuthu, Wilderness, Tuesday night...*

(Long after the sun had disappeared over the horizon, to be replaced by a bright silvery moon, Kasira and her allies were still making their way across Bahuthu. Having been a while since they'd last eaten, they were finally beginning to slow down as tiredness set in. With Dakuri and Zimfasu leading the way, Cole sat behind Kasira with an uneasy look on his face. Grimacing through bloodshot eyes, he looked down at where his groin had been softly rubbing against Kasira's bottom for several hours and bit his lip. Thoroughly aroused by the sensation, he glanced around nervously at Micalov. Satisfied that Micalov hadn't noticed the bulge in his trousers from where he bounced along behind, he turned back and gave out a nervous puff of air then mumbled to himself.)

COLE: *Piss off, you stupid erection!*

(Looking over her shoulder as she hugged the horses neck, Kasira gave him an amused glance.)

KASIRA: *Stupid what?*

(Acting innocent, on the grounds that she wasn't supposed to have heard, he grinned.)

COLE: *I didn't say anything!*

KASIRA: *Yes you did!*

(Realising he'd been rumbled, Cole sighed apologetically.)

COLE: *Sorry, darling! It just sort of happened a minute ago. It'll go away in a minute hopefully.*

(As he let out a sneeze, Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: *I didn't happen a minute ago!*

(Cole looked away, clearly embarrassed.)

KASIRA: *It's been rubbing against the crack of my bum for the last few hours!*

(Cole looked stunned.)

COLE: *You knew?*

(Becoming flustered, he apologised profusely.)

COLE: *Sorry darling, I'm so ashamed! Seriously, I don't know what's wrong with me!*  
(She smiled.)

KASIRA: *Don't apologise, I like it!*

COLE: *You do?*

KASIRA: *Yeah, why do you think I didn't say anything? It's kind of erotic, actually.*

(Greatly alarmed by her assessment, Cole's hair practically stood on end.)

COLE: *Erotic? We're in full view of everybody! How can that not bother you?*

(Always keen to tease him for his prudishness, Kasira smiled as an idea sprang into her head.)

KASIRA: Cole?

COLE: What?

(Saying nothing, she lifted her bottom slightly and wiggled it against his erection.)

COLE: Don't do that!!!

(To make matters worse, another light bulb appeared over her head. Suddenly feeling brave, she swung her leg over the horse's head to sit side saddle.)

COLE: What are you doing?

(Without answering she then swung herself round, lifting her leg over the horse to sit facing him.)

COLE: What are you up to?

(Having not looked where she was going since the minute they set out, Kasira ignored the fact she was riding backwards and slotted her groin towards Cole's.)

COLE: Kasira?

(As she pressed her femininity against him, she looked into his eyes, enjoying the tortured expression on his face. Knowing he'd be thoroughly embarrassed but enjoying it too much to stop her, she ran her finger down his face and moved her lips closer to his.)

COLE: You're an evil cow, sometimes!

KASIRA: And you love it!

(As she moved in for the kiss, Cole turned his head.)

COLE: Stop it, this isn't fair!

(She faked a saddened look as she replied in a sexy voice.)

KASIRA: Don't you want me, Cole?

COLE: Stop it! You know I can't resist those eyes!

(Up ahead in the meantime, Dakuri and Zimfasu were deep in discussion.)

DAKURI: Have we made good time?

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: We're doing well Dakuri, we should be there by... if we set up camp soon... this time tomorrow!

DAKURI: Perfect, then we'll have a whole night to hunt down Cigna. I don't care if we have to kill every thief we see to do it either!

ZIMFASU: When I say "this time tomorrow", that's a rough estimate. Don't hold me to it! It really depends if we get into many fights along the way!

DAKURI: I suppose it would!

(As his eyes caught sight of a bridge over a stream up ahead, Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Once we're over the bridge, maybe we should set up camp for the night!

ZIMFASU: Okay, that sounds fine to me!

(As they approached the thin wooden footbridge, Zimfasu and Dakuri both slowed to a halt.)

DAKURI: After you!

ZIMFASU: No man, you a guest in my country, after you!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: You're a gentleman, Zimfasu!

ZIMFASU: I try!

(Preparing to get his horse moving again, Dakuri's attention was suddenly distracted by something in the corner of his left eye. As he quickly glanced towards it, he was shocked to see it was Cole and Kasira, so engrossed in a passionate kiss that their horse was about to walk into the stream. Flapping angrily he yelled at them, almost making them bite each others tongues.)

DAKURI: Stop that!!!

(Almost having a heart attack, Cole glared at Dakuri furiously.)

COLE: Shit, Dakuri... pardon me, Kasira!

(Suddenly, he looked panic stricken.)

COLE: Bollocks!!!

(Reacting like a speeding bullet, he reached for the reigns and just about managed to stop the horse from walking into the stream.)

COLE: Phew! And sorry about saying Bollocks!

(He wiped the sweat from his brow.)

COLE: And sorry for saying it a second time!

(As Kasira chuckled, Dakuri looked seriously narked and glared at her.)

DAKURI: When we cross the stream, we'll veer away from the beaten track and then set up camp! Then you've got some explaining to do! You *and* that husband of yours.

(Feeling he was being unfair, Kasira threw a dismissive hand in his direction.)

KASIRA: Oh, lighten up Dakuri!

DAKURI: Don't talk to me!

(As he headed over to the bridge, Kasira shrugged at Cole and gave him a naughty grin.)

KASIRA: That was funny!

(Clearly disagreeing, Cole shook his head.)

COLE: You reckon? We must have looked a right pair of...

KASIRA: A right pair of what?

(He sighed.)

COLE: Nothing!

KASIRA: You need to lighten up too, you really do.

(Once safely over the thin bridge, Dakuri found a decent place to set up camp downstream and immediately set about building a fire. With the horses tied up securely in reach of water, they all then sat around the fire as soon as it was lit while Dakuri placed some meat on the spit.

Having got a decent meal inside her, Kasira sat swaying from side to side in the heat of the fire, as if enjoying the adventure, unable to understand the subdued atmosphere being created by the others around her. None of them had spoken a word since they'd finished eating, opting instead to stare silently into the flames. Shrugging it off, she looked around at the way the fire reflected in everyone's face then glanced up at the moon.)

KASIRA: Don't the moon look nice?

(Receiving no reply from the four firewatchers around her, she shrugged.)

KASIRA: What's got into *you* lot?

(Peering angrily around the flames, Dakuri challenged her with a sneer.)

DAKURI: Are you really going to pretend you don't know?

(Genuinely shocked by his scolding demeanour, she shrugged and said nothing.)

DAKURI: Kasira, I know you're not stupid!

(Hoping someone would defend her, she looked to the others, only to find them staring back at her, awaiting an answer.)

KASIRA: What? What have *I* done?

(Staring coldly into her eyes, Dakuri replied.)

DAKURI: Constructively Kasira, you've done nothing!

(Giving a nervous laugh, she stared back, a tad miffed.)

KASIRA: What?

DAKURI: Don't you care about what you're trying to achieve?

KASIRA: Of course I do... what are you on about?

DAKURI: Then why are you fucking about?

(At this point Cole intervened on his wife's behalf.)

COLE: I don't think the language is really necessary, Dakuri!

(Holding a hand in Cole's direction, Kasira interrupted.)

KASIRA: No, no, fuck the language! What are you trying to say, Dakuri?

DAKURI: Do you think this is a game, Kasira?

KASIRA: No!

DAKURI: Then why aren't you taking this seriously?

(She looked down and bit her lip, clearly incensed.)

KASIRA: Don't start on me, Dakuri!

DAKURI: We're all risking our lives to help you achieve something, Kasira, the least you can do is act as if it matters to you!

(Swinging her head in his direction, she raised her voice as she snarled back at him.)

KASIRA: You think I don't get it, Dakuri? Is that what you're saying?

(He nodded sternly.)

KASIRA: Fuck you, Dakuri! Fuck the lot of you!

(As she angrily stared away, shaking with rage, the others stared at her looking thoroughly shocked.)

DAKURI: You have a foul mouth, Kasira!

COLE: Stop it, Dakuri! Can't you see she's upset?

DAKURI: I just want to know why?

(Looking up again, with a face as black as thunder, Kasira restarted her rant.)

KASIRA: I'll tell you why! Cigna's gone if you hadn't noticed, what use are we gonna be?

DAKURI: We'll find the necklace, don't you worry about that!

KASIRA: But if we don't we're screwed!

DAKURI: But, we will!

KASIRA: And if we don't?

(Before he could answer, Kasira continued.)

KASIRA: What difference will it make? Let 'em have their fucking war, I say! Why should *I* have to stop them?

DAKURI: You have been chosen...

KASIRA: Stop saying that, I'm sick of hearing it! Without Cigna I'm just an ordinary girl, do you realise that, Dakuri? I'm eighteen years old, I don't want all this crap hanging round my neck!

(As she looked away again, clearly upset, Cole tried to put his arm around her.)

COLE: It'll be...

(As soon as he made contact, she shrugged him off and climbed to her feet.)

KASIRA: Just leave me the fuck alone, all of ya!

(With Dakuri, Zimfasu and Micalov looking on, she attempted to storm off dramatically only to be physically restrained by Cole. Struggling to escape his arms, she wriggled and writhed looking seriously cheesed off.)

KASIRA: Get off me!!!

(Annoyed with her trying to scratch him, Cole suddenly squeezed both her forearms tight and yelled.)

COLE: Belt up!!!

(As if she'd been shot with a tranquilliser dart, she suddenly stood very still, looking into his eyes with a shocked expression on her face. Calming himself down, Cole took a deep breath and spoke to her softly.)

COLE: Now, let's take a walk shall we? Just you and me?

(Following a brief angry stare, she nodded and spoke up in a small voice.)

KASIRA: Okay!

(Giving her a warm smile, he took her hand and started to lead her away. Giving them a suspicious look, Dakuri yelled over to them.)

DAKURI: If you're just using this as an excuse to sneak off and do the filthy... I won't be very happy!

(As they walked away, Cole turned his head.)

COLE: Two things Dakuri, firstly, like we'd tell you, and secondly, it's none of your business!

(Kasira also turned.)

KASIRA: And thirdly, go fu...

COLE: Kasira!!!

(Kasira sighed apologetically.)

KASIRA: Yeah, alright.

(As he lead her out of sight, Dakuri turned to Zimfasu. Zimfasu was looking at Micalov, sleeping like a baby.)

DAKURI: Zimfasu?

(Zimfasu turned his way.)

ZIMFASU: Hmm?

DAKURI: Kasira isn't ready!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: You want my opinion, Dakuri?

(Initially looking sceptical, he nodded.)

DAKURI: Okay, it can't hurt!

ZIMFASU: A girl her age, newlywed and just starting out on life, of course she isn't ready.

DAKURI: But she's been through all this before!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: I know I can't speak about what you guys have been through before, but it seems to me that Kasira thought it was all over!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: We all did!

ZIMFASU: It wasn't over though, was it? I mean, now she's expected to head into the mother of all battles and end a war!

DAKURI: I admit, it sounds harsh...

ZIMFASU: Harsh? It sounds positively cruel, Dakuri! I mean, she's just an ordinary teenage girl, for pity's sake.

DAKURI: You don't understand. Kasira's *not* an ordinary teenage girl! She was chosen by the gods!

(Zimfasu shrugged.)

ZIMFASU: That may be so, but try seeing it from Kasira's point of view!

(Dakuri mused as he consumed Zimfasu's words.)

ZIMFASU: She probably thought her life was her own, you know? Destiny fulfilled and she was free! Now she has to fulfil another one and without Cigna she doesn't have a clue how she's going to achieve it. There's no wonder she isn't focussed, she must feel totally disheartened.

(Dakuri nodded thoughtfully.)

DAKURI: You know, I've always put my duty first, that's how I was raised. Kasira, however, she wasn't raised to do that! Sometimes I forget this. I've been expecting her to be dedicated to her duty regardless of the situation... I forget... she isn't like me.

(She shook his head solemnly.)

DAKURI: It's only just sinking in, Zimfasu. Kasira is just an ordinary girl.

ZIMFASU: Exactly.

(He puffed out.)

ZIMFASU: Having said all that, she's gotta get focussed soon, the whole world's relying on her.

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: So what's the answer?

ZIMFASU: I dunno! I guess all we can do for now is give her all the support she needs, hopefully she'll soon get with the programme!

DAKURI: You're right!

ZIMFASU: Her heart may not be in it at the moment Dakuri, but if we're patient with her she'll see the light in the end, hopefully!

DAKURI: I hope so too, the world is depending on her!

ZIMFASU: Yeah, that's another thing, it might be best not to say that kind of thing in front of her!

DAKURI: She's under enough pressure already, huh?

ZIMFASU: Exactly!

DAKURI: In the meantime, I hope Cole can get through to her!

(Zimfasu chuckled.)

ZIMFASU: Get through to her? Get inside her perhaps!

(As he laughed, Dakuri gave him a fearsome glare.)

DAKURI: What did you say?

(Shrinking down, Zimfasu mumbled an apologetic reply.)

ZIMFASU: Um... nothing!

DAKURI: I didn't think so!



(A short distance away at this time, Kasira was sitting beside the stream, staring into it silently. While thoughts of happier places filled her head, Cole knelt in front of her and glanced into her empty eyes. With a glum face, she looked to the ground beside her.)

COLE: Come on, darling, it can't be that bad!

KASIRA: Yes it can!

COLE: What's wrong?

(Looking into his eyes, she continued.)

KASIRA: Don't you know?

COLE: Well, not specifically! I know there's a lot on your mind, but...

KASIRA: I don't see the point, Cole!

COLE: Of what?

KASIRA: Of any of this. I've lost Cigna and yet we're *still* heading off to the battle!

COLE: We'll find her!

KASIRA: You don't know that! Without her, I can't do a thing!

COLE: Crap, you're a master of martial arts, woman!

KASIRA: Fat lot of use against thousands of heavily armed soldiers!

(Cole stood and looked down on her saddened head.)

COLE: Look, if you want to go back home, we'll go back home!

(She looked up excitedly.)

KASIRA: Really?

COLE: Of course, no-one can force you to do this!

(She nodded.)

KASIRA: You're right!

(Suddenly a sad look returned to her face. She looked down and sighed.)

KASIRA: Then why do I feel like I have to?

(Suddenly, something occurred to Cole. Kneeling to look into her eyes again, he spoke firmly.)

COLE: Kasira, tell me the truth!

KASIRA: I will!

COLE: Do you really feel like you *have* to do this?

(She nodded.)

KASIRA: Well, I do!

COLE: No you don't! In fact we're not going an inch further unless you decide you *want* to do this!

KASIRA: What?

COLE: Never mind Dakuri or anyone else. If you decide you want to go on, we will! If you don't want to, fine... let's go home!

(Unsure how to react, Kasira shrugged.)

KASIRA: But... where exactly is home?

COLE: Sorry?

KASIRA: Namki village has never felt like home... and Sudereva's out of the question!

(Rising to her feet, she placed a hand on Cole's chest.)

KASIRA: We've nowhere to go, have we?

COLE: We can travel!

KASIRA: Without Cigna?

(She suddenly looked thoughtful.)

KASIRA: I really want to do the travelling thing but it'd be dangerous without Cigna!

(Cole nodded firmly.)

COLE: Well then, now you know what you have to do.

(She gave him a sideways glance.)

KASIRA: I do?

COLE: You said what's the point, well now you know.

KASIRA: I repeat... I do?

COLE: Yeah. If you want to travel and we need Cigna to do that then...

(Looking enlightened, she glanced warmly into Cole's eyes.)

KASIRA: Then we need to find the arseholes who took Cigna.

(She nodded to affirm her thoughts.)

KASIRA: So, we'll keep going then.

(Cole smiled.)

COLE: That's my girl!

KASIRA: Come on, let's go back to the others. I feel better now I've got something to focus on. We've got to get Cigna back whatever it takes.

(Cole gently kissed her lips then smiled.)

COLE: Let's go.

KASIRA: I love you, Cole.

COLE: It's mutual, darling.

(With that, Kasira took Cole's arm and allowed him to lead her back towards the campsite.

(Upon returning to the campsite with Kasira finally feeling some sense of purpose, they were immediately quizzed by a distrusting Dakuri. Doubting every word they said, he sat like a big Indian chief, with his arms folded, not even giving them the chance to sit down before he started.)

DAKURI: Finally! What the hell have you been up to?

(Standing the other side of the fire, Kasira and Cole looked at each other.)

COLE: Eh?

KASIRA: Excuse me?

DAKURI: We didn't come here for a romp in the bushes!

(Kasira grinned.)

KASIRA: Good job too!

DAKURI: What?

KASIRA: You and Zimfasu would make pretty disturbing sight!

ZIMFASU: Hey, leave me out of this!

(He pointed at Micalov.)

ZIMFASU: Pick on him instead!

(Annoyed by their ignorance, Dakuri raised his voice.)

DAKURI: This is not a comedy show!

(Sitting down beside the fire with Cole, Kasira grinned.)

KASIRA: He's never been to the theatre in his life!

COLE: Yeah, I know!

DAKURI: This is not about me!!! You two should learn to be discreet!

COLE: We went for a walk, Dakuri!

KASIRA: Yeah, belt up!

DAKURI: Belt up??? You will show me respect!

KASIRA: Not until you show us some!

(Dakuri sneered.)

DAKURI: Whatever. I'm too tired to chastise you further! Just make sure you stay where I can see you both for the rest of the night!

KASIRA: Who put *you* in charge?

(Relaxing into a less authoritarian stance, Dakuri sat back and sighed.)

DAKURI: That's enough, Kasira!

(As he sat there looking thoroughly fed up, Kasira smiled to herself, clearly pleased to have put him in his place. As she sat there looking smug, Cole rolled his eyes then turned to Zimfasu.)

COLE: So, you're a merchant, are you?

ZIMFASU: Sure am!

COLE: What do you sell then?

ZIMFASU: Whatever I can, man!

(He nodded.)

COLE: Sounds fun!

ZIMFASU: It isn't!

COLE: Oh... okay!

(With a sigh, Zimfasu continued.)

ZIMFASU: It pays the bills and keeps my horses fed, though!

COLE: That's the main thing!

ZIMFASU: I just hate being at sea for weeks on end!

(With a curious expression on her face, Kasira butted in.)

KASIRA: I meant to ask you about that, actually!

ZIMFASU: About what?

KASIRA: How come it took you three weeks to get from here to the south continent, yet it only took us a day to come the other way?

ZIMFASU: We came here on a faster ship. Not to mention the fact that the ship I went to the south continent on was full of cargo! That slowed me down a lot.

KASIRA: Oh!

(She grinned.)

KASIRA: So, how does that work then?

ZIMFASU: Don't you know anything?

(Ignoring the insult, she kept listening.)

ZIMFASU: When you've got a ship full of cargo, it's so heavy it goes really slow, and with stormy seas added to the mix, carrying a full cargo takes ages!

KASIRA: I see!

ZIMFASU: I'm happy for you!

(Turning to Cole, she smiled.)

KASIRA: We should buy a boat!

COLE: What? Now?

KASIRA: No, not now, obviously, but it'd be a fun way to travel!

COLE: Fun? Didn't you hear the bit about storms?

KASIRA: Yeah, but Cigna would protect us!

COLE: Maybe!

KASIRA: I'm just looking to the future Cole, when you and I are free to travel around!  
(Wearing a contented grin, Cole put his arm around her.)

COLE: We'll think of something to do, darling!

(He gave a slight laugh.)

COLE: Something that doesn't involve sailing!

(As they sat there in the warmth of the flames, it became quite easy to drift off into a slumber. As a result it wasn't long before the allies bedded down for the night. Feeling certain that Cigna was the key to her future happiness, Kasira drifted off to sleep looking forward to finding the necklace and making the thieves pay. For everyone concerned, this was a welcome rest from their tiring quest to stop the hated war.

After the tiresome exploits of Kasira and her allies, sleeping was never going to be problem. For those they'd left behind however, sleep was barely an option. Going out of his mind with worry, Omki Saan had spent his time pacing the picturesque riverside roads of Namki village, feeling helpless and frustrated. Knowing there was nothing he could do and no way of knowing how his son and the others were faring, his heart felt like it would explode.

Back in Imzalla, the town they left behind, Kajice sat in an armchair, staring at a wooden carving that Zimfasu had bought her. Feeling very much alone, a tear ran down her cheek as she cast her mind back to the day he gave it to her. Feeling guilty about every disagreement they ever had, she prayed for his safe return, promising herself she'd be a better wife, if only he could come back safely.

Having missed Kasira since the day she left Sudereva, her foster parents, Rufus and Rose Ashford were suffering in a number of different ways. Not knowing how she was faring living with a white man in Namki village, they tore their hair out in distress while suffering severe racism themselves. Being the only black people inside the Sudereva city walls, the war had meant an end to any acceptance they'd ever had, but despite it all, their worries for Kasira took precedence.

The feelings of anguish felt by Omki Saan, Kajice, Rufus and Rose were not isolated cases however, their frustration and sorrow was merely a reflection of the feelings in nearly every Vitazoe homestead. Missing loved ones, not knowing whether they'd ever see them again, had sent the entire world into a subdued depression. With hope as their only reason for living, they clung onto it desperately.)

*Bahuthu, Wilderness, Wednesday, Sunrise...*

(Following a warm and sticky night beneath the stars, Dakuri found himself the first one to wake around the dying fire. Allowing himself a yawn, he sat up and looked at his sleeping companions and scratched his head. With a sigh, he climbed to his feet, waking Zimfasu.)

ZIMFASU: It can't be morning already!

(Adjusting his pack, Dakuri looked down and answered in a serious tone.)

DAKURI: Zimfasu, I'm glad you're awake, we need to get going!

(Sitting up quickly, the sleepy Zimfasu looked across at Kasira, Cole and Micalov, all fast asleep still.)

ZIMFASU: Damn it, Dakuri! The way you said that, you made me think I was the only one still asleep!

DAKURI: I didn't mean to rattle you. Anyway, it's good that you're one of the first up, you need to feed the horses!

ZIMFASU: Me? Anybody could do that!

DAKURI: It's best if you do it, they're your horses!

(Rising to his feet, Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: I suppose so!

(While the two of them put their sleeping things back in their packs, Kasira was beginning to stir. With blurred vision, she yawned and let out a smile as she felt Cole huddled up to her back. Giving a naughty grin, she held the hand he'd slung over her waist to cuddle her and wiggled her bottom into his groin. Allowing herself a childish chuckle, she opened her eyes wide to be greeted by the sight of Cole laying in front of her.)

KASIRA: Eh?

(Quickly releasing the hand she was holding, she span the other way and screamed.)

KASIRA: Micalov!!!

(Having almost given everybody a fatal heart attack, Cole sat up swiftly as Zimfasu and Dakuri raced over. With terror in his bulging eyes, Micalov gaped like crazy while a sickened Kasira let rip.)

KASIRA: You pervert!!!

MICALOV: I didn't do anything!!!

(Repeatedly slapping him with all her might, Kasira disagreed somewhat.)

KASIRA: He was cuddling me!!! Yuk! You sick, filthy pervert!!!

(Covering his head from Kasira's relentless slapping attack, Micalov continued to protest his innocence.)

MICALOV: Don't!!! Stop it! I was asleep! You must have dreamt it! Ow!

(While Cole and Zimfasu grinned like a pair of Cheshire cats, Dakuri took hold of the situation.)

DAKURI: Stop this!

(And with that, he picked up Micalov by his collar and threw him to one side.)

KASIRA: Hey! I hadn't finished!

DAKURI: You have now!

(Returning to his things on the other side of the fire, Dakuri glanced over at the grinning twosome of Zimfasu and Cole.)

DAKURI: I don't know why *you're* laughing Cole, you're wife just mistook *you* for Micalov!

(As if Cole had given his grin to Zimfasu, his mouth immediately flat lined and Zimfasu's grin doubled.)

COLE: Hey... yeah, Kasira?

(Making herself look small, she shrugged innocently.)

KASIRA: I'm only little!

(As Micalov climbed to his feet, Cole looked over at him.)

COLE: As for you!!!

(Before he could even begin to get medieval on Micalov, however, Zimfasu pulled him back.)

COLE: Let go of me!

ZIMFASU: No way, if anything happens to Micalov, Haykie will go nuts!

COLE: I'm willing to take that risk!

ZIMFASU: Hey, *I'm* not, she was looking at *me* when she said it!!!

(As Zimfasu let him go, Cole clenched his fists and sneered at Micalov.)

COLE: I'll let it go... for now!

(Holding his hands together in a plea of innocence, Micalov gave him a sincere look.)

MICALOV: I didn't do anything, I swear!

KASIRA: You calling me a liar???

(As she leapt to her feet and chinned him to the ground, a seriously angry Dakuri yelled so loud the birds flew from the trees and everybody froze.)

DAKURI: Enough!!!

(Slowly calming himself, Dakuri took a deep breath and made his feelings known.)

DAKURI: We've got enough to do as it is, now let's stop playing around and get ready!

(Not wanting to push him any nearer to the edge than they already had, they willingly obliged. Having fed the horses and also themselves, they packed away the camp and prepared themselves for another days ride. With Dakuri and Zimfasu mounted on their stallions, Kasira climbed onto her horse and Cole helped Micalov onto his pony. Having thrown him into the saddle he then slowly approached Kasira. Casting his mind back to the night before, Dakuri watched him with a distrusting look on his face as he approached her horse.)

DAKURI: Wait!

(Freezing as he tried to join Kasira on her mount, Cole gave him a baffled look.)

COLE: What's up?

DAKURI: After yesterday, is it wise to have you two on the same horse?

(Anticipating Dakuri's point, Cole climbed onto the horse in record time.)

COLE: I admit, rubbing against Kasira backside is an unwelcome erection waiting to happen, but if my groin is going to be rubbing up against anyone's bum, it's going to be hers, okay?

(Dakuri shuddered.)

DAKURI: I see your point!

(With that, he looked ahead.)

DAKURI: Okay, let's go!

(And once again, the journey resumed. Riding at a reasonable pace through the welcoming morning dew in the same formation as always, Kasira's mind immediately turned to Cigna. Thinking vengeful thoughts, she turned to look over her shoulder as she hugged the horses neck.)

KASIRA: Cole?

(Cole gave her a contemptuous look.)

COLE: I can't believe you confused me for Micalov!

(Not wishing to discuss it, she turned back.)

KASIRA: Fine!

(Left to her own devices, she closed her eyes and pictured the faces of the thieves who'd mugged her. With an angry face, she thought evil thoughts about what she'd do them when they caught them. She was so deeply engrossed in her maniacal thoughts, the beautiful scenery of the tropical paradise around her was completely lost on her. Dakuri on the other hand, was more than impressed. Turning his head in Zimfasu's direction as they trotted along, he smiled and gestured in front of them.)

DAKURI: The views here are magnificent, Zimfasu!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: You aint wrong there, Dakuri! This side of the continent especially!

DAKURI: Funny they should choose a peaceful place like this to kill each other!

ZIMFASU: That's mankind, Dakuri! We're a law unto ourselves!

DAKURI: You can say that again! Oh, incidentally, how far to the next town?

ZIMFASU: Zimtambo?

(He shrugged.)

ZIMFASU: Not too far man, we should be there before midday!

DAKURI: Excellent! Hopefully Haykie has some news for us!

(As they continued on into the morning, the panoramic beauty of their surroundings started to become a monotonous sight. The lush green meadows and magnificent trees soon became nothing more than endless expanses of grass and wood. This was undoubtedly a beautiful part of the world but if you'd seen one acre of it, you'd seen it all. Not allowing the onset of boredom to slow them down, however, they carried on trotting onwards until the sight of a large group of men appeared on their horizon. Turning to Zimfasu, Dakuri spoke with an urgency.)

DAKURI: More bandits?

ZIMFASU: Man, I hope not!

DAKURI: They might be the ones who have Cigna!

ZIMFASU: You reckon?

DAKURI: There's only one way to find out!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: Yeah, ask Kasira!

(Dakuri grimaced.)

DAKURI: Two ways then!

(Leaning back in their direction, Dakuri yelled towards Kasira. Opening her eyes, she looked up from the horses neck.)

KASIRA: Who called me?

DAKURI: Kasira?

(Looking up at him, she replied.)

KASIRA: Yeah?

DAKURI: Those men up ahead, are they the ones?

(As she strained her neck to see, she looked over her shoulder.)

KASIRA: Is that them do you reckon?

(Having sat there stewing all morning over her confusing him for Micalov, Cole gave a short reply.)

COLE: I dunno!

(Turning to Dakuri, she shrugged.)

KASIRA: Can't see from here!

(Looking back over her shoulder, she gave Cole a scornful look.)

KASIRA: You gonna sulk all day?

COLE: Probably!

KASIRA: Fine, be like that then, but if you're not talking to *me*, at least have another look and tell Dakuri!

(Returning her scornful attitude, he replied coldly.)

COLE: If you hadn't forgotten Kasira, I'm allergic to horse hair, I can't see a damn thing!

(Still leaning his way, she sighed.)

KASIRA: Fair enough!

COLE: Why don't you ask your boyfriend?

(He gestured to Micalov, bouncing along behind.)

COLE: Bloody confusing me for that non event of a person!

(While Kasira continued to protest her innocence, and Micalov's guilt, Dakuri and Zimfasu remained focussed on the men up ahead. As they gained slightly, Zimfasu gave a knowing hum and nodded.)

ZIMFASU: They're not bandits, Dakuri!

DAKURI: No?

ZIMFASU: They're a spear unit of the Bahuthu army!

(Dakuri's hair almost stood on end.)

DAKURI: Bahuthu army? You mean we're heading straight for the Bahuthu army?

(Zimfasu shrugged.)

ZIMFASU: Looks that way.

DAKURI: Damn it!

ZIMFASU: Don't worry, so as long as you stick with me, we should be okay!

DAKURI: Should be?

ZIMFASU: Hey, I'm black right?

DAKURI: Well spotted! Nothing gets past you I see!

ZIMFASU: Don't be facetious man, this is important! If we let them think I'm in charge, we'll be fine!

(He gulped.)

ZIMFASU: Just as long as they don't think I'm a traitor guiding white people and Enaki folk to the battle site, we'll be fine.

DAKURI: Are they likely to think that?

ZIMFASU: I guess we'll find out in a minute.

(As they continued along their route it was only a matter of time before they caught up to the forty or so heavily armed Bahuthu soldiers. Gesturing for them to slow down, one of the soldiers stepped in their path. Looking more than slightly nervous, Zimfasu ordered Dakuri, Kasira and Micalov to stop their horses. Feeling incredibly wary, everyone except Micalov pulled their horses to a halt. Screaming like a little girl, he bounced through the middle of them towards the Bahuthu soldiers, quite unable to stop. With Dakuri, Zimfasu, Kasira, Cole and the entire Bahuthu army unit watching on in amazement, Micalov blundered straight through the soldiers ranks before falling off on the other side. Wearing a baffled expression, the leader of the soldiers turned to Zimfasu.)

SERGEANT: Is that idiot with you?

ZIMFASU: Well...



(He hung his head.)

ZIMFASU: Yeah, man!

SERGEANT: Fair enough!

(Standing tall, the soldier before them suddenly folded his arms and looked Zimfasu in the eye.)

SERGEANT: State your business!

(Looking a tad daunted, Zimfasu replied nervously.)

ZIMFASU: Um... we're going to Zimtambo!

(Unflinching, the sergeant continued.)

SERGEANT: I said, state your business, not your destination!

ZIMFASU: We're... going to meet somebody!

SERGEANT: Who?

ZIMFASU: A friend!

SERGEANT: I see!

(He stepped forward.)

SERGEANT: Why aren't you with an army unit?

ZIMFASU: I'm no soldier!

SERGEANT: Nor are most of our men, but when the call went out for men to defend our land, every man in Bahuthu should have signed up!

(Zimfasu sighed.)

ZIMFASU: I was overseas at the time!

(The sergeant gave him a belittling glance.)

SERGEANT: I see! How convenient.

(Hating the insinuation that he'd avoided being drafted into the army like some sort of despicable coward, Zimfasu was quick to state his case.)

ZIMFASU: If you're trying to say I deliberately avoided being called up, you're wrong! I'm no coward! On the contrary, I'm doing *more* than my bit for Bahuthu.

(He nodded sternly.)

ZIMFASU: We intend to stop them doing battle and desecrating our nation's sacred ground. We're going to stop the war!

(The entire soldier unit looked at one another.)

SERGEANT: Stop the war?

ZIMFASU: That's right. And bring peace to the world!

(Trying not to laugh, the sergeant continued.)

SERGEANT: So how you gonna do that then?

ZIMFASU: The young lady here, she's the chosen one, she can summon a goddess...

(As the soldiers all fell about laughing, Zimfasu stopped.)

ZIMFASU: What?

(He thought to himself.)

ZIMFASU: Man, I must sound like a right fruitcake!

(Turning to face his men, the sergeant chuckled.)

SERGEANT: Let them pass, they're obviously harmless lunatics!

(As they stepped to one side to let them through, Zimfasu shielded his face to hide his embarrassment. Laughing as they watched them disappear out of sight, the sergeant turned to his right hand man.)

SERGEANT: They closed that asylum in Zimtambo and now the lunatics just roam the land it seems!

(As Kasira and her allies continued on towards the township of Zimtambo, ever alert for the sight of thieves, Kasira turned to Cole.)

KASIRA: You cheered up, yet?

(Following a slight silence, he answered her softly.)

COLE: Yeah, I'm fine!

KASIRA: Good, 'cause I'm worried!

COLE: About what?

KASIRA: That bloke asked us how we were going to stop the war...

(She sighed.)

KASIRA: Well, if we can't get Cigna back, how *will* we stop the war?

COLE: I don't know what to tell you, Kasira.

KASIRA: I can't stop a war without her. I don't think asking them nicely will do it!

(Cole mused for a moment.)

COLE: Hopefully we'll think of something!

KASIRA: I really doubt that, Cole.

(She sighed.)

KASIRA: I'm worried.

(Trying hard to reassure her, Cole gave her a consoling squeeze around her hips.)

KASIRA: Ooh, that felt nice!

COLE: Really? It wasn't meant to be sexual!

KASIRA: Nor are a lot of things, but they are!

COLE: Look... I was thinking Kasira, nothing's changed. The only thing we know is that we *need* Cigna. That was always the case anyway.

(Kasira looked thoughtful.)

KASIRA: That's true.

COLE: So, forget about stopping the war. Let's just focus our efforts on getting Cigna back.

KASIRA: Like we we're supposed to be doing anyway?

COLE: Yeah.

KASIRA: I hear you.

COLE: Stuff the war. Without Cigna we can't do anything anyway so let's not worry about it.

KASIRA: That's right. Thanks, Cole.

(Reassured, she shut her eyes again as she clung onto the horse neck. Delighted that he'd managed to ease her worries again, Cole took a deep relaxing breath then squinted ahead as the five of them continued on towards Zimtambo.)

*Bahuthu, Zimtambo Township, Wednesday, Midday...*

(With the midday sun scorching down on them from above, the sight of Zimtambo township and the chance to stop for a well earned drink of water did much to raise the spirits. Riding slowly into the angry and somewhat edgy township, they quickly noticed the same feeling of distrust in the atmosphere that Haykie had. Dismounting from their

horses, they lead them towards the town square and the drinking troughs, looking all around them as they went.

Nervously stepping forth on the dusty ground, Kasira clung onto Cole's arm as they reached a trough and stopped to water the horses. Looking around at the buildings and the unhappy people, Dakuri stroked his chin and shook his head.)

DAKURI: Not a happy place!

ZIMFASU: You aint wrong there, man!

DAKURI: I hope Haykie won't be long!

(Cole nodded.)

COLE: They probably think we're another bunch of thieves, come to steal their belongings!

(Unusually, Micalov offered a comment.)

MICALOV: I've seen a lot of these people before, they're from Port Amanti!

COLE: Your hometown?

MICALOV: Yeah! People there are mean! They've tried to kill me twice!

DAKURI: So have I, and you're still not dead!

(He hung his head.)

ZIMFASU: I hope Haykie's okay, I don't want to be hanging around here for long!

COLE: She might even be waiting somewhere else in the town!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: One of us should take a look!

COLE: I'll go!

DAKURI: Okay!

COLE: Come on, darling!

(As he started to leave with Kasira on his arm, Dakuri protested.)

DAKURI: It doesn't take two of you!

(They looked at each other and chuckled.)

KASIRA: Actually, Dakuri...

DAKURI: Too walk, I mean!!!

ZIMFASU: Maybe it would make sense if they both went. This place is crawling with angry locals and thieves, there could be trouble and four fists are better than two!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Very well! But no funny business!

(Not even contemplating entertaining the suggestion, Kasira and Cole headed through the dusty streets and into a bustling market area. Clinging tightly to each other, they looked all around for any sight of Haykie, while checking the face of every white man, hoping they'd find the thieves. As they concentrated hard, Kasira's attention was suddenly snatched away by a market stall. Looking thoroughly excited, she tried to drag Cole towards it.)

KASIRA: My god, look, there!

COLE: We aint got time for shopping!

(Continuing to pull him, she remonstrated further with a desperate look in her eye.)

KASIRA: No, look, look!

COLE: For gods sake, woman! What is it with you and marketplaces?

(Finally relenting, he allowed her to drag him to the front of a jewellery stall, through a crowd of people. As he looked back apologising profusely to the people they'd barged through, Kasira pointed at an item.)

KASIRA: There!!!

(Turning his head to look at the vast array of jewellery set out before him, he scanned it with his eyes and shrugged.)

COLE: What?

(Rolled her disdainful eyes, Kasira pointed to a necklace near the back.)

KASIRA: There! See it?

(As his eyes almost popped out of his head, he turned to Kasira.)

COLE: That's... that's Cigna!

(Determined not to delay, Kasira reached for the necklace only to have her hand slapped.)

KASIRA: Ow!

(Standing round the other three sides of the stall were three of the biggest muscle men she'd ever seen. Giving an innocent grin, she looked one in the eye.)

KASIRA: Um... how much is that necklace?

(Folding his arms, the giant stallholder replied.)

SELLER: How much you got?

(She turned to Cole.)

KASIRA: How much have we got?

COLE: We're skint!

KASIRA: Right!

(She turned back to the stallholder.)

KASIRA: We're skint!

(Without so much as a flinch, the seller replied.)

SELLER: Then get your white arses away from my stall!

KASIRA: Hey, that's racist!

(Realising Kasira wasn't above making a scene, Cole dragged her away as she continued her protests.)

KASIRA: And besides, I'm not white, I'm oriental... so there!

(As he dragged her back to the relative safety of the crowd, she struggled free of him and gave him a dirty look.)

KASIRA: What did you drag me away for?

COLE: You'd have got us lynched!

KASIRA: I wanted to haggle!

COLE: With what?

(Knowing she didn't have a reasonable answer, she grabbed his arm.)

KASIRA: Come on, let's tell the others!

(Immediately they raced back the way they'd came. Looking excitable and over anxious, they arrived back to find Dakuri and the others looking bored out of their minds.

Desperate to tell them about their find, they both spoke at once as they pointed up the road.)

KASIRA: The necklace!

COLE: We found Cigna!

KASIRA: Come on!!!

(Rising from where he'd rested his behind on the trough, Dakuri implored them to slow down.)

DAKURI: What? Stop talking at once, calm down!

(As they caught their breath, Cole let Kasira do the talking.)

KASIRA: There's a market stall, with jewellery... Cigna's on it?

DAKURI: You're joking!

KASIRA: Do I look like I'm joking?

DAKURI: No!

KASIRA: My necklace, it's there!

DAKURI: Did you buy it?

(She gave him a funny look.)

KASIRA: What with?

DAKURI: Good point! So how much were they charging?

KASIRA: They wouldn't say!

DAKURI: Then it must be a lot!

(With that, he started to head up the road.)

COLE: Wait up!

(Turning with an angry look on his face, Dakuri replied sternly.)

DAKURI: They have our property, I'm stealing it back!

(Convinced it was a ridiculous idea, Zimfasu strode up to him.)

ZIMFASU: Don't be a fool, if you even try that, they'll kill us, man!

DAKURI: Many have tried!

ZIMFASU: Ever been lynched by 200 angry men before? You're a foreigner here, you try anything like that and ever local will swarm on you like locusts, man.

(Scratching his chin, Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Then what shall we do?

(Following a brief pause for inspiration, Zimfasu raised a finger.)

ZIMFASU: Maybe!

(He shook his head.)

ZIMFASU: No, stupid idea!

DAKURI: Look, whatever happens we need Cigna... I say we appeal to his better nature, if that fails, we'll just have to steal it and run!

(With the absence of a better idea, they all agreed.)

DAKURI: Okay, Kasira, you come with me, the rest of you, get the horses ready!

KASIRA: What? Why me?

DAKURI: It's your necklace, I need you identify it, obviously!

(She hung her head.)

KASIRA: Fair enough!

DAKURI: Let's go!

(As Zimfasu and Cole helped Micalov onto his pony and prepared for a quick exit, Kasira lead the giant Dakuri back to the market stall. Being watched like hawks by the equally sizeable men behind the counter, Kasira again pointed to the necklace.)

KASIRA: That's the one!

(He nodded and raised his head to the muscle bound marketer.)

DAKURI: Where did you get this?

(Looking thoroughly displeased with the question, the giant seller sneered as his three assistants moved slowly round the stall towards them. Not showing any signs of being daunted, Dakuri continued.)

DAKURI: This necklace belongs to my friend, you will return it!

(Leaning forwards, the seller replied in an angry growl.)

SELLER: I don't think so, do you?

DAKURI: Yes I do! Where did you get this?

SELLER: Wouldn't you like to know?

(With that, he nodded to his muscle bound helpers. Realising some serious violence was to ensue, Dakuri reached his lengthy arms forwards and snatched the necklace from the stall.)

DAKURI: Run!!!

(Before he could move however, two of the men grabbed his arms.)

DAKURI: Shit!!!

(Seeing his dilemma, Kasira instinctively kicked one of the men in the groin allowing Dakuri to free his arm as the man bent double. Dakuri then swung his free fist to punch the other captor. Having disorientated the sizeable helper, he then struggled free of his grasp and urged Kasira forward.)

DAKURI: Leg it!!!

(As they raced away, a loud cry of "thieves", filled the air. Within seconds, nearly ever black man in Zimtambo was chasing after them, baiting for blood. As they charged back into the main square towards their allies, people from all over town raced to join the angry mob.)

KASIRA: We're gonna die!!!

(As the huge gang of assailants, hell bent on killing them, started to gain, they caught sight of Zimfasu, Cole and Micalov up ahead.)

KASIRA: Save me!!!

DAKURI: Me too!!!

(Spotting Dakuri and Kasira scrambling desperately towards them, Cole's eyes bulged.)

COLE: Fucking hell!!!

ZIMFASU: Mount up, Cole, I'll help Kasira!!!

(As Cole clambered onto his horse, expert horseman, Zimfasu galloped towards Kasira with a determined glint in his eye. Passing Dakuri, he scooped her up and turned swiftly.)

ZIMFASU: Go!!!

(Upon reaching his horse, Dakuri, leapt onto its back without even breaking his stride, then kicked the beast into action and joined Cole and Zimfasu in speeding towards the top of town. Not wanting to let what they considered the scum of the earth go, every Zimtambo local who had a horse available, gave chase. Looking back while Kasira screamed as she lay over his lap, Zimfasu yelled in a panic.)

ZIMFASU: Where's Micalov???

(Looking equally as terrified, Cole yelled back.)

COLE: He's long gone!!! He rode off as soon as we saw them!

ZIMFASU: Figures!

(As they rode at a blinding pace out of the township, a huge pack of furious horsemen gave chase. Yelling obscenities about defiling and dismembering them, they waved

swords and spears in the air. Scared half to death as they raced into some trees, Kasira looked back from where she lay.)

KASIRA: They're gaining on us!!!

(Looking the other way, she gulped and started to tremble even more.)

KASIRA: Don't bang my head on a tree!!!

ZIMFASU: Don't worry, Kasira, I'm an expert rider!

(As the relentless chase continued, they spotted a terrified looking man bouncing up and down on a pony, some way up ahead of them.)

DAKURI: It's Micalov!

ZIMFASU: What shall we do? They'll catch him easily on that pony!

(Despite the temptation to celebrate, Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: If that looks like happening then I suppose we'll have to fight them!

(Looking back at the wild looking pack, Zimfasu shook his head.)

ZIMFASU: Are you insane?

(Staring back, Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: I see your point!

(As they desperately headed away as fast as their horses would allow, however, the chasing pack suddenly started to give up the ghost and drift away. Watching their numbers dwindle, Dakuri rode past Micalov and allowed himself a sigh of relief.)

MICALOV: Don't leave me!!!

(Slowing to a virtual halt, Dakuri turned his horse around.)

DAKURI: There's only a few of them left!

(Stopping beside him, Zimfasu looked back.)

ZIMFASU: What do you wanna do?

DAKURI: I say we take 'em!

(Greatly relieved that he'd stopped, Kasira slipped from Zimfasu's horse and staggered over to Cole like a drunken goose. Having climbed from his horse to help prop her up, he then helped her join the others in standing in a line to await the angry mob in the middle of the open meadow. Seeing them stopped and waiting for a fight, however, the so called angry mob suddenly appeared to have second thoughts. Still some way from catching them up, they all turned and rode back towards Zimtambo.)

DAKURI: What's going on?

ZIMFASU: It's easy to be brave when you don't expect to be challenged, I suppose!

COLE: Still, no complaints!

DAKURI: Anyway... Kasira, I believe this belongs to you.

(Wearing the widest smile, Dakuri threw the necklace to Kasira. Failing spectacularly to catch it, she grimaced as the necklace missed her hands by a mile and bounced off her chest. Blaming his throw for the mishap, she gave Dakuri a dirty look then picked it up and smiled.)

KASIRA: Finally!

(She hadn't even got the chance to slip it over her neck, however, when Dakuri spotted two men swiftly racing towards them from the direction of Zimtambo. Riding stallions every bit as impressive as Zimfasu's, they were gaining swiftly.)

DAKURI: What do these two fools want?

(As the men closed in to within forty feet, Cole and Kasira stepped back in horror.)

COLE: It's them!

KASIRA: They're the ones who pinched my necklace!

DAKURI: Really?

(He drew his sword.)

DAKURI: I wonder how they like the taste of cold steel!

(Stopping to an immediate halt in front of them, the two bandits leapt from their horses being watched by Kasira and her curious allies. Smiling bitterly at all before them, they shook their heads angrily.)

RYNADO: Stealing?

(He tutted three times.)

RYNADO: That's not right!

KASIRA: You can talk!

(Holding an arm before her, Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: Don't even entertain them, Kasira!

RYNADO: That's a bit rude, especially considering you ruined our scam!

DAKURI: What?

RYNADO: We had a good deal with that stall holder, we sold it to him and he sold it on!

STAG: Yeah, so we'd nick it back and he'd sell it again...

RYNADO: And you ruined that!

STAG: So we'd pinch it again, and he'd sell it again, and we'd...

DAKURI: We get the point!

RYNADO: Now you've ruined it, you're supposed to buy it before we steal it back, there's no profit in it if *you* steal it as well!

DAKURI: Silence fools, now before I kill you...

(Before he could finish his sentence however, they both pulled out crossbows.)

RYNADO: Sorry? Didn't quite catch that!

STAG: He said...

RYNADO: I know what he said!!!

(Running his hand across his face, Rynado sneered.)

RYNADO: Now put down your sword!

(Giving him a furious stare, Dakuri did as he asked.)

DAKURI: You won't get away with this!

STAG: I think we might!

(Rynado nodded.)

RYNADO: First things first, bitch...

(He approached a trembling Kasira.)

RYNADO: Give me the necklace!

(Stepping back, she tearfully shook her head and blurted out a quiet protest.)

KASIRA: No... go away... it's mine!

(In no mood to argue, Rynado pulled back his arm to slap her silly. Flying into an immediate rage, Cole dived towards him.)

COLE: Don't even dare!!!

(Quick to defend himself, Rynado stepped back and pointed the crossbow at Cole as he tripped towards him.)

RYNADO: That was stupid, wasn't it?

(As Kasira hid behind Dakuri, Stag kept a beady eye on her. Fuming wildly at Cole, Rynado yelled.)



RYNADO: Mother fucker, you're going first!

(At this point, Zimfasu whistled.)

RYNADO: What did you do that for?

ZIMFASU: Nervous reaction! Sorry!

(Shaking his head he turned back to Cole.)

RYNADO: Any last requests?

(As Cole tried desperately to think of something clever to stall them, he noticed Zimfasu's stallion walking backwards towards Rynado.)

COLE: Um... last requests you say?

RYNADO: Times up, I'm bored of you now!

(As Rynado took aim at a trembling Cole, Zimfasu whistled again, making the horse kick out its back legs. With a tremendous thud, it kicked Rynado towards Cole, making him drop his crossbow.)

ZIMFASU: Cole!

COLE: I'm on it!

(Seeing the chaos, Stag panicked and fired his crossbow at Dakuri. Unfortunately for him, Dakuri had already decided to dive to the ground to collect his sword. While Cole leapt on Rynado and snapped his neck, the crossbow bolt, whistled through Kasira's hair making her pass out with shock. As Dakuri scooped up his sword and paced towards him, Stag fumbled desperately to reload.)

DAKURI: Put down the crossbow, stupid!

(He continued to fumble.)

STAG: Rynado? I need your help!

DAKURI: He's dead, stupid! He won't be helping you, now!

(Getting increasingly flustered, Stag continued to fumble.)

DAKURI: Put it down, fool!

(Sweating profusely, he kept trying to load the crossbow.)

DAKURI: I won't tell you again!

(Finally slipping the bolt into place, Stag looked up and screeched.)

STAG: Bastard!!!

(Reacting quicker than lightning, Dakuri grimaced and sliced Stag's head clean off. As it bounced into the long grass, Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: I told you I wouldn't tell you again!

(As he turned and slipped his sword back into its sheath, he spotted Cole, down on his knees, nursing Kasira's head. Fearing the worst, he raced over.)

DAKURI: Is she okay?

(He looked up.)

COLE: She fainted, she'll be okay!

DAKURI: She fainted? Why?

COLE: She was standing behind you when he fired the crossbow!

DAKURI: Shit! I didn't realise!

COLE: It went through her hair, she's okay!

(Opening her eyes, she gave him an annoyed scowl.)

KASIRA: That's easy for you too say! It wasn't your hair!

(Grinning up at Dakuri, Cole helped her to her feet.)

KASIRA: He shot my hair! Bastard!

(Immediately, she raced over to her pack and pulled out her hairbrush.)

KASIRA: Here it is!

(As all the men sighed in unison, she shrugged and looked away.)

KASIRA: It won't take a minute!

(As she stood there perfecting her style, the men all assembled in a circle.)

DAKURI: That was another close one!

COLE: Yeah, I'll be glad when we get Cigna back!

(Suddenly it fell silent and they all stared at Kasira.)

KASIRA: What?

(Their silence made her feel extremely uneasy.)

KASIRA: Is there something on my face?

(Shaking his head, Dakuri waved his arms in the air.)

DAKURI: Those two thieves with the crossbows?

KASIRA: What about them?

DAKURI: Why didn't you use Cigna to kill them?

(Freezing in thought, she suddenly grinned and turned red.)

KASIRA: Um... yeah...

(She giggled.)

KASIRA: I forgot!

(As everyone groaned, she stood tall on the defensive.)

KASIRA: What? You didn't remember either!!!

(Giving them a filthy look, she turned away and continued to brush her hair. Resuming their conversation, Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: I guess it doesn't matter really!

(Micalov shook his head.)

MICALOV: Someone's always trying to kill me!

DAKURI: I wonder why!

MICALOV: Because I'm with you lot! What's with you people anyway?

(Before he could answer, a voice piped up from behind them.)

HAYKIE: Fuck me! You've been enjoying yourselves, I see!

(They spun round and saw her standing over Stag's headless body.)

DAKURI: Haykie!!!

(Almost completely uncharacteristically, he stepped up to her and gave her a loving hug.)

HAYKIE: What the?

(Stepping back, he nodded.)

DAKURI: I apologise, I'm just pleased to see you're safe!

(Giving him a warm smile, she nodded.)

HAYKIE: Don't apologise, it was nice!

(Spotting Haykie's return, Kasira joined them in the circle as she brushed her hair.)

HAYKIE: What happened here, then?

COLE: These are the blokes who nicked the necklace!

(She nodded.)

HAYKIE: I guess they won't be hurting anyone ever again!

DAKURI: That seems likely!

(As they brought her up to speed on the run-ins and tribulations that they'd endured since she departed, Haykie gave them a look of total surprise. Running her fingers through her hair she breathed out and nodded with interest.)

HAYKIE: Wow, sounds like a nightmare!

ZIMFASU: What about you?

(She shrugged.)

HAYKIE: It was a pretty eventless journey, actually!

KASIRA: Oh yeah? So what happened to your skirt then?

(She pointed to the little rip where she'd snagged it on the saddle.)

HAYKIE: Oh that? It was my fault! Zimtambo was a bit weird so I left in a hurry and snagged it!

DAKURI: Weird, you say?

HAYKIE: Yeah... it was nothing!

(He nodded.)

DAKURI: A bit of a rough town, huh?

HAYKIE: Yeah, I guess so!

(Clearly keeping something to herself, she clapped her hands before her.)

HAYKIE: Shall we get going then?

COLE: Aint you gonna tell us what you saw?

(She looked flustered.)

HAYKIE: Saw?

COLE: Yeah, at the battle sight!

(Looking relieved, she nodded.)

HAYKIE: Oh right, I'll tell you later, when we set up camp!

(With that, she walked towards her stallion.)

HAYKIE: Come on!

(Giving each other curious looks, they all returned to their mounts and the journey began again. As the horses trotted away towards the battle site, Kasira slipped the necklace back over her neck and looked back at Cole. Sitting behind her, he smiled lovingly.)

COLE: Alright, darling?

KASIRA: Yeah, it's a lot more comfortable sitting here than over Zimfasu's lap!

COLE: I'll bet!

KASIRA: Yeah, and it's good to have Cigna and Haykie back!

(Giving her a sincere look, he spoke softly.)

COLE: Remember, if you change your mind, we can go back anytime!

(She nodded.)

KASIRA: Let's see how it goes!

COLE: That's my girl!

(With the safety of her guardian, Cigna, and the phenomenal magic powers of Haykie, back in the party, Kasira's spirit started to rise. For the first time since they'd left Imzalla, she rode on through the afternoon with confidence.)

*Bahuthu, Wilderness, Wednesday, Evening...*

(As the day wore on and the bright blue sky turned red, Kasira and her allies found themselves laughing and smiling together as they made their way towards the battle site.

Feeling a seriously decreased sense of danger, they picked up the pace as they gained ever closer to their destination.)

DAKURI: How far now, Zimfasu?

ZIMFASU: A few more hours, Dakuri!

(He nodded.)

DAKURI: And we've got Cigna back already!

ZIMFASU: It's going okay, man! It's going okay!

(It wasn't lost on Kasira, however, that they still had no idea how to stop the war. Putting it to the back of her mind, she yelled over to Haykie as she rode next to her.)

KASIRA: Hey, Haykie?

HAYKIE: Yeah?

KASIRA: So, Dakuri hugged you, then!

(Shaking her head in full anticipation of where Kasira was leading, Haykie waved her hand towards her face.)

HAYKIE: Oh no you don't!

(Looking innocent, Kasira replied.)

KASIRA: Oh no, I don't what?

HAYKIE: I know what you're up to! You're after a girly chat!

(She looked saddened in an obvious attempt to make Haykie feel guilty.)

KASIRA: But... you did leave me with all these men!

HAYKIE: Nice try!

KASIRA: What?

HAYKIE: Most girls would love to be left with these guys!

(She looked back at Micalov bouncing along.)

HAYKIE: Well, most of them!

(Kasira sneered.)

KASIRA: He tried to molest me last night!

HAYKIE: You're kidding!

(Seeing she was interested, Kasira nodded.)

KASIRA: I'll tell you all about it... if you tell me about Dakuri hugging you!

HAYKIE: You don't give up!

(Leaning forward, Cole intervened.)

COLE: I wish you *would* give up, Kasira!

KASIRA: Butt out Cole, this is ladies talk!

COLE: Well, can't you do it somewhere else?

(Ignoring his brainless request, she continued.)

KASIRA: Come on Haykie, how did you feel?

HAYKIE: Stop it, Kasira!

(She shrugged.)

KASIRA: Happy, nervous, wet?

HAYKIE: Kasira!!! Don't be disgusting!

KASIRA: Well if you won't tell me, I can only speculate!

(Cole nodded.)

COLE: Gotta admit it... you're good!

(Haykie sneered.)

HAYKIE: Too good! Can't you control your wife?

(He shrugged.)

COLE: I daren't try, Haykie!

(As Haykie looked ahead feeling uneasy, Kasira kept coming.)

KASIRA: Well?

(As Haykie shuddered with rage, looking as if she'd shout any minute, a gang of screaming thieves on horseback, suddenly streamed out of the woods beside them.)

ZIMFASU: Thieves!!!

MICALOV: Mummy!!!

(Clearly attempting a highway robbery, it took only seconds to completely box them in.)

COLE: What the hell???

ZIMFASU: Shit, bollocks and fuck, this is all we need!!!

(As they attempted to slow them to a halt, the leader of the thieving horseman yelled.)

LEADER: Slow 'em down!

(Despite their intimidating aura, Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: I don't think so!

(In what seemed like the blink of an eye, she grasped the necklace and whispered Cigna's name, causing a torrent of lightning bolts to strike down all at once, killing every single highwayman. Having never seen anything like it, Zimfasu trembled and stared ahead as they rode on without even slowing.)

ZIMFASU: What the fuck? Did you see that? Tell me you saw that!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: That my friend, was Cigna!

(Giving him a shocked look, he then gestured with his eyes towards Kasira.)

ZIMFASU: The girl did that?

(Dakuri nodded.)

ZIMFASU: Shit!

(Feeling pleased with herself, Kasira rubbed her chest as she hung over the horses head.)

KASIRA: Ha-hay, I'm back!

COLE: Nice one, darling!

KASIRA: Don't thank *me*, thank Cigna!

COLE: I'd love too, only, time freezes when you speak to her!

KASIRA: It didn't then, I never saw her! I said her name and she kicked arse for me!

COLE: Cool!

KASIRA: Wasn't it just?

(She smiled and looked at Haykie.)

KASIRA: Now where were we?

HAYKIE: Oh, piss off, Kasira!

(As they continued on into the evening, leaving the charred remains of the highwaymen behind, Kasira continued to probe into Haykie's mind. Avoiding the temptation to magically seal Kasira's lips, she somehow managed to tolerate her constant barrage of questions as they rode on into the night. As the darkness all around took the edge off of the stifling summer heat, Zimfasu suddenly looked enlightened as they continued to blaze their trail.)

ZIMFASU: Hey, I recognise this place!

(He pointed to the silhouette of a couple of hills in the darkness to their right.)

ZIMFASU: That's Fetabu hill!

DAKURI: Feta what?

ZIMFASU: Fetabu hill!

DAKURI: What does that mean?

ZIMFASU: What, Fetabu?

DAKURI: No, I mean, why mention it?

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: Because it means that the battle site is only a mile away!

DAKURI: A mile?

ZIMFASU: Yup, a mile!

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Not long on horseback then?

ZIMFASU: No time at all!

DAKURI: Then maybe we should set up camp!

(Zimfasu nodded.)

ZIMFASU: Why not? The battle's at dawn, we'll make it easy!

DAKURI: Then that's settled then!

ZIMFASU: Follow me, I know the perfect place. I camped out with Kajice round her once.

(He beamed.)

ZIMFASU: It was so romantic, man.

DAKURI: I don't want anywhere too romantic! Cole and Kasira are bad enough when it comes to that kind of thing without us encouraging them with romantic stop offs.

(Zimfasu rolled his eyes.)

ZIMFASU: Just follow me.

(With that, he veered to the right and lead them to a grassy area near some trees and started to slow.)

ZIMFASU: Here is good. Off the beaten track and there's everything we need.

DAKURI: Is there water nearby?

ZIMFASU: Through them trees!

(He pointed to a clump of darkened conifers.)

DAKURI: Perfect!

(With that, he slowed his horse to a halt and yelled the order to stop and set up camp. He then leapt from his horse.)

DAKURI: This is it, everyone!

(He nodded triumphantly and took a deep breath of fresh air.)

DAKURI: We've arrived!

(Within moments, everyone had dismounted and Zimfasu immediately set about leading the horses to water. In the meantime, the others set about collecting the wood from the nearby trees to make a fire. Feeling tired from what had been a long day, none of them felt any sorrow about the fact their journey was at its end. It was now however, that Kasira's fears about what lie ahead, started to trouble her most. Becoming flustered and making mistakes as she attempted to help build a fire, she ran over to Cole and threw herself in his arms.)

DAKURI: What's the matter with *her*?

(Using his lips to silence him, Cole stroked her hair and held her tight, knowing all too well what was on her mind.)

*Bahuthu, Near Battle Site, Wednesday Night...*

(It was only a matter of time before Dakuri, Zimfasu, Haykie and Micalov had taken seats around the glowing red flames of their fire. Looking increasingly uncertain and scared, Kasira was still standing up, clinging onto Cole. Looking up at the brilliant white moon as he devoured a rosy red apple in front of the fire, Dakuri sighed and lowered his head towards Kasira.)

DAKURI: She's upset!

(Giving him a disbelieving look, Haykie shook her head.)

HAYKIE: You reckon?

(He nodded, oblivious to her sarcasm.)

DAKURI: Trust me, I'm trained to spot these things!

(Staring tiredly into the flames, Zimfasu yawned.)

ZIMFASU: Someone should talk to her!

HAYKIE: Cole's with her!

(Standing a good ten feet from the others, Cole tried to break her terrified silence.

Feeling her tremble in his arms, he squeezed her tight.)

COLE: Come on darling, snap out of it!

(Slowly looking up, she gave him a nervous grin.)

KASIRA: I can't!

(As she tucked her head into his chest, he stroked her hair.)

COLE: Do you wanna go home?

(Following a short silence, she gave a muffled reply into his chest.)

KASIRA: No!

COLE: Pardon, love?

(Looking up into his eyes, she shook her head.)

COLE: Okay!

KASIRA: But I don't want to stay here either, I don't know what I want!

(Nodding, he smiled into her eyes.)

COLE: Then maybe it's time you spoke to Cigna!

(Knowing he was probably right, she nodded and stepped from his arms.)

COLE: Whatever you decide, darling, I'll support you!

(Giving him a grateful smile as she turned away from him, she walked over to the camp fire and smiled to the others. With an uncertain shrug, Cole followed suit. As they took their seats, Dakuri, Zimfasu, Haykie and even Micalov watched her, waiting for her to speak. Nervously twiddling her fingers while biting her thumbnail, however, she said nothing. Spotting this, Haykie gave her a friendly smile.)

HAYKIE: You alright, Kasira?

(Looking up at all their friendly faces, she raised an eyebrow and sighed quietly.)

KASIRA: Dunno yet!

(With that, she reached for her necklace and closed her eyes.)

KASIRA: Cigna?

(Nervously opening her eyes again, she felt relieved to see the calming bright apparition of Cigna levitating before her. Noticing her companions frozen in time, she tried to

speak to the dazzling spirit before her but couldn't find any words. Noticing the lost look in her eye, Cigna broke the silence in her comforting soft tone.)

CIGNA: Kasira... child... you seem confused!

(With a solemn nod, Kasira responded in a sad voice.)

KASIRA: I am!

CIGNA: I'm here for you, Kasira, what is it that confuses you?

KASIRA: Everything! I'm just one girl, how can I stop a giant battle? I just want to go home, but I don't want to let you down... what do I do?

CIGNA: Kasira, my beloved mortal friend, you were never to do it alone!

KASIRA: I wasn't?

CIGNA: Of course not!

(Kasira looked relieved.)

KASIRA: I was afraid that... well, to be honest, I've been pretty much afraid of everything. Failing, losing Cole... it crushes my soul just to think about it.

(Seemingly warming her aura, Cigna responded kindly.)

CIGNA: Your fear, Kasira, is natural!

KASIRA: I guess... so, I'm not just being weak?

CIGNA: Weak is one thing you've never been, Kasira.

(As Kasira forced a smile, Cigna glowed.)

CIGNA: Let me set your mind at rest, little one.

KASIRA: Please do.

CIGNA: Our goal tomorrow is to bring a new level of harmony to the races. And it's only by virtue of your pure heart that we can achieve this!

KASIRA: Really?

CIGNA: I'd never lie to you, Kasira!

(With a heartened smile, Kasira nodded.)

KASIRA: Wow!

(She could just make out the dazzling white apparition bowing to her.)

CIGNA: Kasira, it is important that you realise, when the battle begins, I will need you to open your heart to me! Do you trust me?

(Unsure by her meaning, Kasira stuttered.)

KASIRA: Open my heart? I trust you, yes... but, what do you mean?

CIGNA: Together we can put a stop to this battle if you let me inside you, with my soul and your will, we can achieve this!

KASIRA: My will?

CIGNA: Yes, a fusion of your will and my soul, this will give us the ultimate power of peace!

KASIRA: I don't understand.

CIGNA: An oriental girl with black parents and a white husband, a girl whose purity of heart and spirit makes her refuse to recognise a person by their colour. This is why I chose you, Kasira! Because, in your mind, the races are already united!

(Allowing Cigna's words to penetrate her brain, Kasira remained silent.)

CIGNA: So I ask you again, Kasira, will you open your heart to me? When battle commences will you let me inside you?

(Although she was unsure what letting her inside her entailed, Kasira nodded, wholeheartedly trusting in Cigna.)



KASIRA: I will, Cigna!

CIGNA: Thank you, Kasira.

KASIRA: Then what will I have to do? After I've let you inside me, I mean.

CIGNA: Nothing else will be expected of you, child, just open up to me and let me do the rest.

(Kasira nodded nervously.)

KASIRA: Okay... I can do that.

(Seemingly glowing brighter with joy, Cigna replied in her dulcet voice.)

CIGNA: You will be eternally rewarded for your goodness, Kasira!

(Looking uncertain, she briefly glanced at a frozen Cole and shook her head.)

KASIRA: I don't want reward, I just want to be left in peace with Cole!

CIGNA: A noble sentiment, Kasira!

KASIRA: It's not sentiment, Cigna, it's all I've *ever* wanted!

(With a brief pause, Cigna replied.)

CIGNA: Hmm, the love between the two of you is strong!

(She nodded.)

KASIRA: Then you understand why I'm scared to lose him?

CIGNA: I've always understood love, Kasira, though I'm not sure if *you* do!

(Looking baffled, Kasira stumbled over her response.)

KASIRA: What... what do you mean?

CIGNA: Kasira, do you fully appreciate the love that is felt for you, all around this campfire?

KASIRA: Well... Cole?

CIGNA: Not only from Cole, but from Dakuri and Haykie, and even Zimfasu!

(She shrugged, looking somewhat baffled.)

CIGNA: Dakuri would protect you with his life ... and Haykie looks on you like a little sister... albeit a really annoying little sister.

(Kasira blushed as Cigna continued.)

CIGNA: And Zimfasu, though he only met you a few days ago, has already placed his faith in you to stop this war! You've earned his trust and respect!

KASIRA: W-what about Micalov?

(Kasira could barely make out Cigna's godly grimace.)

CIGNA: Micalov, the poor unfortunate fool, he seems to have got himself stuck with you somehow. His attendance was never my intention!

KASIRA: Intention?

CIGNA: As I explained before, your presence with me now, Kasira, is no co-incidence! Your presence here is fate, it's your destiny. Micalov, on the other hand... heaven only knows how he got caught up in it all.

(Kasira nodded then bit her lip nervously.)

KASIRA: So, when I open up to you tomorrow and let you inside me... will I...

CIGNA: You will be perfectly safe Kasira, as will your friends!

(Looking relieved, Kasira nodded.)

KASIRA: Thank god!

(She chuckled.)

KASIRA: Sorry, goddess!

CIGNA: No offence taken!

KASIRA: Thank you, Cigna. I feel a lot easier about everything now!

(She smiled.)

CIGNA: I am glad. Now enjoy this night with your friends and go to battle on the morrow... and go in peace with yourself!

KASIRA: I will!

CIGNA: When all else fails, Kasira, call upon me!

(And in a flash, Cigna disappeared and time started again. Completely unaware of this, the others continued to look at her as they had before. As she allowed Cigna's words to truly sink in, Dakuri continued their conversation from where it left off.)

DAKURI: So when *will* you know?

(Looking up at him quickly, Kasira looked startled.)

KASIRA: Sorry, what did you say?

DAKURI: Haykie just asked you if you were okay, you said you didn't know yet!

(Suddenly, a wide smile burst onto her face. Looking almost angelic she looked into Cole's eyes.)

KASIRA: I really, really love you, Cole!

(She turned and looked round at the others.)

KASIRA: In fact, I love all of you!

(Fearing she'd lost the plot somewhere, Dakuri raised an eyebrow.)

DAKURI: What?

KASIRA: You heard me, you're always looking out for me, Dakuri!

(She looked at Haykie.)

KASIRA: And you're like the big sister I never had!

(Visibly moved, Haykie nodded.)

HAYKIE: Thank you, Kasira!

(Looking Haykie up and down, Dakuri gave Kasira a baffled look.)

DAKURI: She's not big!

(Amused at his failure to understand the common phrase "big sister", Haykie laughed.)

HAYKIE: Trust you!

(Continuing to ogle her, Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: She could lose a few pounds off her hips maybe!

(As she turned to slap him, Dakuri laughed out loud.)

DAKURI: I'm kidding, I'm kidding! Like I don't know what a big sister is!

(Stunned by his actions, Haykie raised an eyebrow and gave him a sideways glance.)

HAYKIE: Joking? You seem to have lightened up?

(He nodded.)

DAKURI: Like you keep telling me to!

(Seeing everybody suddenly become friendly and jovial together, Micalov hung his head.)

MICALOV: We're all gonna die!

ZIMFASU: What?

MICALOV: That's why everyone's being so friendly to each other, 'cause we're all gonna die tomorrow!

DAKURI: Don't be such a killjoy!

MICALOV: Then why's everyone being so nice?

(Kasira shrugged dismissively.)

KASIRA: Cigna told me to enjoy this night with my friends so I'm going to!

(As quickly as the happy atmosphere had arrived, it disappeared again as they all quietened down and looked to Kasira.)

KASIRA: What? What did I say?

(Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: You saw Cigna?

KASIRA: Yeah, so?

DAKURI: What did she say? Did she tell you how to stop the war?

(Understanding that they were bound to be curious, Kasira smiled and spoke up.)

KASIRA: It's okay, all I have to do is open up to her and we'll be safe!

(Waiting for her to continue, they all kept looking at her.)

KASIRA: What? That's it!

(As a less than convinced silence filled the air, Kasira pouted in annoyance.)

KASIRA: What?

DAKURI: That's all?

KASIRA: Yeah, so you can relax. You don't have to do *anything*!

COLE: So... that's all she said?

KASIRA: Yeah, I've got to go there and open up to her and she'll do the rest... she is a goddess after all!

(Everyone looked at one another with uncertainty.)

KASIRA: What? It's true!

(Looking up to her, Cole raised his hand to hold her fingertips.)

COLE: We believe you darling, we're just a bit stunned!

(Dakuri sighed.)

DAKURI: Personally, I'm a little disappointed... I was looking forward to a challenge!

HAYKIE: I wasn't. Not when lives are at stake, the easier it'll be... the better!

ZIMFASU: Whether it's a challenge or not, it's more than I'll ever be able to thank you for, Kasira!

KASIRA: Don't thank *me*, I'm just Cigna's puppet, really!

(Looking a tad uneasy, Cole glanced into her deep brown eyes, rubbed his chin and told her of his worries.)

COLE: One thing that worries me, Kasira, what does opening up to her mean?

(She shrugged as she stared back.)

KASIRA: I don't know, I haven't a clue!

COLE: But...

(Placing a finger over his lips as she stared lovingly back, Kasira interrupted.)

KASIRA: No buts... I trust her Cole, I really do!

(Lost in each others eyes, not another word was said as their lips met. Closing their eyes they started to slip their arms around each other, when suddenly a mysterious force pulled them apart.)

COLE: Eh?

KASIRA: Oi!

(Holding onto the back of their collars, Dakuri gave them both a scowl.)

DAKURI: That's quite enough of that, I'm all for romance, but you two make me sick!

(As he let them go and returned to where he'd been sitting, Kasira angrily stood akimbo and gave him a filthy look.)

KASIRA: All for romance? You're the anti-love!

(She glanced away nonchalantly.)

KASIRA: You're probably gay!

(As Dakuri glare back at her angrily, Cole desperately tried to gag her.)

DAKURI: What did you say?

(Resisting Cole's desperate attempts to silence her, she continued.)

KASIRA: That's why you act so macho! Overcompensating!

(Trying desperately not to blow a fuse, Dakuri pointed at her and shook his head.)

DAKURI: You Kasira, are a sex maniac! I may have inhibitions, but at least I have dignity!

KASIRA: And your virginity, you've still got that too!

(As the two of them growled at each other, Haykie looked to the heavens and shook her head.)

HAYKIE: It begins!

(Realising that, not for the first time, she was going to have to intervene, she upped and stepped between them, blocking their angry view of one another.)

DAKURI: Haykie?

KASIRA: Hi, sis!

(She pouted.)

KASIRA: Dakuri called me a tart! Harm him!

(Looking from one to the other, a big smile crossed her face.)

HAYKIE: You two are so different, yet so alike!

MICALOV: That's 'cause they've both got weird eyes!

(As Zimfasu gave him a clump around the back of his head, Haykie continued.)

HAYKIE: Kasira, so lively, so feisty, yet so feminine and insecure!

(She turned to Dakuri.)

HAYKIE: You, so big, so rugged... yet sadly, so tactless and unfeeling!

DAKURI: What's your point?

HAYKIE: Despite all your differences, you're both *so* passionate!

(Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: I am!

DAKURI: Passionate? Don't you know me at all?

(She turned to him with a warm smile.)

HAYKIE: I do actually! And all that tactlessness and being unfeeling isn't really you at all. The real Dakuri's a passionate man, he cares about things, he likes and he loves, he's just afraid to show it!

(Turning red, he screwed his face up.)

DAKURI: That's crap and you know it!

(She shook her head.)

HAYKIE: No it aint! I've seen it. I'm hoping to meet *that* Dakuri more often, I think I could really go for a guy like him!

(Trying desperately to look as if he thought she was mad, he couldn't help his lips from curling upwards at the edges.)

DAKURI: Stupid face!

KASIRA: Big nose!!!

DAKURI: I was talking to myself!

KASIRA: Oh!

(As they stared at each other, they both started to smile.)

KASIRA: Friends?

(Dakuri nodded.)

DAKURI: Deal!

(Kasira gave him a quick hug then returned to Cole, who'd sat down long before.

With peace restored, a few minutes later, the five allies and Micalov turned to Haykie as she explained what she'd seen at the battle site to them.)

HAYKIE: It's a shallow valley with large stones set on each side of the bank, about 10 feet apart!

ZIMFASU: I know that, but where are the armies based?

HAYKIE: The white army at one end, the Enaki army at the other... the Bahuthu army were assembling in the middle!

(Zimfasu rubbed his chin.)

ZIMFASU: In the middle?

HAYKIE: Yeah, either they intend a side attack or...

(She bit her lip and Zimfasu sighed.)

ZIMFASU: Or start in the middle!

(He shook his head.)

ZIMFASU: If they get attacked from both sides, they'll be slaughtered!

KASIRA: Don't worry Zimfasu, Cigna will stop it!

(Zimfasu gave her a warm smile.)

ZIMFASU: You're a great kid!

KASIRA: Seriously, she will, I really believe that!

ZIMFASU: I hope so Kasira, god I hope so!

(Looking nervous, Kasira scanned her friends face as the fire reflected upon them.

Raising a nervous finger, she spoke with trepidation.)

KASIRA: Um... where will I meet you guys tomorrow, you know, when it's over?

(They all gave her funny looks.)

COLE: What are you talking about? We're coming with you!

DAKURI: Definitely. Regardless of what Cigna has planned, there's no way I'm letting you out of my sight!

(She smiled.)

KASIRA: I hoped you'd say that!

(Yawning as he laid himself back, Micalov relayed *his* plans.)

MICALOV: Of course, I'll find something to hide behind!

(Giving him a disdainful look, Dakuri shook his head.)

DAKURI: Why are you still here?

MICALOV: Eh?

DAKURI: You heard me.

(Sitting up with a hard done by look on his face, Micalov protested.)

MICALOV: I didn't choose to come!

DAKURI: Then why did you?

HAYKIE: Don't start, Dakuri!

DAKURI: No, seriously! I'm curious!

MICALOV: I don't want to be with you any more than you want me here!

DAKURI: Then why?

(He shook his head.)

DAKURI: How many times?

MICALOV: Look at it from my point of view Dakuri, I got lost on the way to Kasira and Cole's wedding, then you bumped into me...

(Dakuri chuckled to Zimfasu.)

DAKURI: He was lost in the woods for three months, and he earns his living as a guide!

(As Zimfasu grinned, Micalov continued, angrily.)

MICALOV: It's not funny!!! You found me in the woods so I went with you to Neitama...

DAKURI: That was *your* choice!

MICALOV: Yeah, okay, *that* was, but after that I was just going to go home! First, Omki Saan insisted you took me here to Bahuthu, then Kajice insisted I came with you! It's not my fault! I just wanna go home but nobody will let me!

(Giving him a disinterested look, Dakuri shrugged.)

DAKURI: I suppose, it's not entirely your fault then!

MICALOV: Yeah... thanks!

DAKURI: As for going home, Micalov, fear not, you will! Eventually!

(Sitting the other side of him, Haykie slapped Dakuri on the arm. Looking a little annoyed he turned to face her.)

DAKURI: What?

HAYKIE: Were you just polite to Micalov?

DAKURI: No! But I wasn't impolite, either!

HAYKIE: Blimey!

(Giving Micalov a dirty look, Kasira wasn't so reserved.)

KASIRA: If he ever tries to molest me in my sleep again...

COLE: Let it go, love!

KASIRA: What?

COLE: There's a happy atmosphere, don't spoil it!

KASIRA: I won't!

(She felt her hair.)

KASIRA: But if he ever...

COLE: Right, you asked for it!!!

(With that, he pulled her backwards to the ground with him and put his hand over her mouth.)

COLE: Do I have to spank you?

(Pulling his hand away, Kasira grinned.)

KASIRA: I thought you'd never ask!

(As the two of them chuckled together, the others looked on in disgust.)

HAYKIE: They'll never change!

(Dakuri chuckled to himself.)

DAKURI: First he marries his pupil, then he wants to spank her!

(Zimfasu smiled.)

ZIMFASU: You gotta lock up your schoolgirls when Cole's in town, huh?

(As they grinned to each other, Haykie gave them both dirty looks.)

HAYKIE: You two are disgusting!

DAKURI: Who?

HAYKIE: You and Zimfasu, you don't see Micalov laughing, do you?

MICALOV: Yeah, but then *I* didn't get the joke!

(Spamming her forehead, Haykie chuckled to herself and gave up.)

Feeling confident of an easy success in their mission to stop the war, the allies felt an ease come over them as the night wore on. Becoming relaxed as their nerves disappeared, they eventually settled down for a good nights sleep. Despite the vagueness of Cigna's instructions, Kasira's trust in the goddess allowed her to doze off next to Cole without a care in the world. Safe from attacks by bandits in the night, thanks to Haykie, they'd laid themselves down trying to picture what the battle site would look like in the morning. Briefly discussing the endless rows of soldiers that were likely to arrive, they all agreed on one thing. Failure for Kasira and Cigna tomorrow, was not an option. Getting more and more tired as they discussed it, it wasn't long before all six of them were sleeping like logs beneath Haykie's protective bubble.)

*Bahuthu, Battle site, Wednesday, Midnight...*

(While the allies camped only a mile away, intent on stopping the forthcoming massacre, the vast armies of all sides continued to rapidly swell in number. As ships arrived at the shores around Bahuthu at an alarming frequency, soldiers armed to the teeth poured from them, ready to take their part in the oncoming bloodbath. As the home based soldier units of Bahuthu also homed in on the battle site, the three encampments became like small towns, bustling with the sounds of noisy preparations for war.

With ever swelling amounts of artillery being readied to kill men in numbers and blades being sharpened in their thousands, this was sure to be more than just a cat fight. As they sharpened their gleaming swords and spearheads, the frontline troops spoke mercilessly about violently disembowelling their foes, for the glory of war. Either unable to accept or unwilling to admit to the harsh reality of their likely deaths, they hid behind bravado as they prepared to be wiped from the face of Vitazoe.

Having been convinced by their leaders that victory would bring with it all the trappings of wealth and glory, many put their fears behind them under the mistaken impression, that fate was on their side.

By now, less that six hours from sunrise and the onset of hostilities, every soldier in all the encampments knew his role. Be it to charge into the enemy on the frontline or support from the rear, narrate the tactics or tend to the wounded, they were left in no doubt that no man would spared his duty.

As many of the young soldiers slept trembling alongside battle-hardened veterans, the atmosphere in their shelters changed. No longer scared half to death, the vast majority would rather fight and die for what they considered honour, than wait another minute.

For those who couldn't sleep, no matter what the reason, this would prove to be a long, difficult night.)

*Bahuthu, Near Battle Site, Small Hours, Thursday Morning...*

(With Daylight still over an hour away, Dakuri opened his eyes and immediately sat bolt upright. Desperate to make sure everyone would all be ready for the task ahead, he climbed to his feet and looked around at his sleeping allies. Seeing Haykie, Zimfasu and Micalov sleeping soundly, his eyes nearly popped out of his head at the sight of Kasira's and Cole's packs on the ground back to back, yet no sign of *them*. Hurriedly shaking Haykie awake, he rushed over and did the same to Zimfasu. With fly away hair, Haykie sat up tiredly.)

HAYKIE: Hey, Dakuri? You didn't have to be *that* rough!

(Looking deadly serious, he turned to face her as Zimfasu also sat up.)

DAKURI: Kasira and Cole are missing!

(He pointed at Micalov.)

DAKURI: Wake the idiot, I'll go and find them!

(As he stormed towards the conifer lined stream nearby, Zimfasu yawned.)

ZIMFASU: What's up with the big guy?

HAYKIE: He too highly strung... 'yawn'... they've probably just taken a walk!

ZIMFASU: I see!

HAYKIE: Come on, let's start packing ourselves away!

(While they woke Micalov and prepared to unset the camp, Dakuri stormed through the trees. Swiping a conifer branch out of his way, he heard voices in front of him.

Readying himself for a rant about responsibility, he thrust himself through the final set of branches and paced up to the edge of the stream with his pointing finger at the ready.

Before he could even begin, however, Kasira, as naked as the day she was born, spotted him from the water and screamed.)

KASIRA: Dakuri!!!

COLE: Dakuri?

(Turning red and flapping with embarrassment, Dakuri about turned and ran back through the trees towards the camp. Still covering her private regions, Kasira turned to Cole.)

KASIRA: What is it with you men?

(Amazed at her choice of words, Cole shrugged.)

COLE: Eh? I was bathing, Kasira! With you!

(Arriving back at the encampment, Dakuri stormed over to his pack wearing a look that defied anyone to speak to him.)

HAYKIE: Whoa, what's up with you?

(Ignoring her, he stared to pack furiously.)

HAYKIE: Dakuri?

(Giving her an angry scowl, he replied in with a growl.)

DAKURI: It never happened!

HAYKIE: What didn't?

DAKURI: Forget it!

(With a shrug she turned to face Zimfasu.)

HAYKIE: Sorry? What did you ask me before?



ZIMFASU: We got any food left?

HAYKIE: Should have!

(Before she could say where, she was distracted by a rustling in the nearby conifers. Seconds later, storming from the trees like a stampeding buffalo, Kasira emerged and raced towards Dakuri. With soaking wet hair and her clothes clinging tightly to her soggy body, she shook her fist at him as Cole gave chase, still pulling his sweater on.)

KASIRA: Dakuri!!! Explain yourself, ya bloody peeping tom!

(Looking thoroughly embarrassed, Dakuri stood tall and grimaced.)

DAKURI: I was... I was only trying to find you!

KASIRA: Pervert, you're worse than Micalov!!!

DAKURI: Don't compare me with him!!!

(Finally catching up, Cole pulled Kasira back.)

COLE: Don't worry Dakuri, it's all forgotten now!

KASIRA: No, it aint!

(Suddenly looking his old self, Dakuri frowned.)

DAKURI: Anyway, what were you two doing naked in the river together?

(Cole gave him an odd look.)

COLE: Washing... obviously!

DAKURI: Is that what they call it?

KASIRA: Don't chastise *me*, chummy, you were the one who hid in the trees and watched!

DAKURI: I did no such thing!!!

(Once again, it was Haykie to the rescue.)

HAYKIE: Guys, guys, stop this! For one, he wasn't gone long enough to be watching you, Kasira!

(Dakuri nodded victoriously.)

DAKURI: See? I was only coming to find you!

HAYKIE: In Kasira's defence though, it's none of your business what they were doing naked in the river together! They're allowed to bathe!

KASIRA: Thank you, Haykie!

DAKURI: Fair enough!

(He shook his head.)

DAKURI: Now, let's get ready to leave, we have a busy morning ahead!

(As they finished off the last of their fruit supply and doused the fire in readiness for the day ahead, the armies nearby were also extremely busy.

Sunrise was coming and they'd armed themselves and prepared their armour for the killing that ensued. While thousands were standing to attention in their units, many of them had already set off on the march to meet their enemy in the valley of the stones. The lone drum that accompanied their march, was the only sound and possibly one of the last they'd ever hear.

As Kasira and her allies finished off the mornings preparations, they approached their horses, giving Kasira all their attention. Making her unnecessarily nervous, they chatted warmly and patted her like a she was poodle.)

ZIMFASU: We're counting on you, girly, good luck!

COLE: You'll be alright, won't you darling?  
HAYKIE: Course she will, she's a winner!  
(Impressed by their methods, Dakuri copied.)  
DAKURI: You can do it, sweet cheeks!  
(They all gave him a funny look.)  
KASIRA: Sweet cheeks?  
(Cole grinned.)  
COLE: Get your own woman, Dakuri!  
DAKURI: What? Did I say something?  
HAYKIE: You meant well, Dakuri!  
(He nodded.)  
DAKURI: I did!  
ZIMFASU: Well, you hang in there, Kasira!  
HAYKIE: Yeah, we're all rooting for ya!  
(Shaking her head, Kasira climbed onto her horse.)  
KASIRA: Stop making a big deal out of it, will you?  
DAKURI: But, this is a big deal!  
KASIRA: Not really, Dakuri, I'm just gonna be there for Cigna! Now, are we ready?  
DAKURI: Okay, let's go!  
(As Cole climbed behind Kasira, the others approached their horses.)  
MICALOV: Um... a hand anyone?  
ZIMFASU: For the love of god, man!  
(And having helped him onto his pony, Zimfasu mounted his stallion and looked aside to Dakuri.)  
ZIMFASU: Okay, this is it!  
(Dakuri nodded as he sat tall in the saddle and stared ahead.)  
DAKURI: Let's go!  
(Upon his command, they immediately headed out from beneath the clump of trees and into the meadow ahead. Looking deadly serious, Zimfasu pointed ahead as he lead them towards the ill-fated battle site.

By now, troops from all three sides had begun to assemble in readiness for war. Standing tall as to give the impression of fearlessness, they never spoke a word, wishing to seem focussed on the job in hand, when all the while most of them were thinking of the wives and children they'd possibly never see again. Looking proud in the killing suits they liked to call uniforms, they couldn't wait to begin the battle and put the tension behind them. It would now only be a matter of moments before the three armies would come to face to face.

As the sound of the birds fell silent, on the instruction of their unit commanders, the frontline forces from all sides drew their weapons and gripped them tightly. Moments later, the frontlines of the North and South armies spotted each other on their horizons. Shortly after, as the Bahuthu army also lined up along the banks of the valley, it became clear... the time had come.

Racing across a tree lined avenue into the meadow opposite, Kasira and her companions started to slow as the giant boulders that lined the valley of the stones' embankments finally came into view. Stopping a mere thirty feet from the valley's edge, convinced they'd arrived at their final destination, Dakuri leapt from his horse and raced back to help Kasira from hers. With tension etched in his face, he held her shoulders.)

DAKURI: Will you be okay?

(Nodding nervously, she replied as he helped her to the grass.)

KASIRA: Yeah, I think so!

(Suddenly, Haykie yelled over from where she'd rode to the edge to peer into the valley.)

HAYKIE: There's no bugger here!!!

(With simultaneous words of disbelief, they all raced over to the edge.)

DAKURI: What's going on, Zimfasu?

ZIMFASU: I don't understand! This is the valley of the stones, the sacred battle site!

(As they continued to stare open mouthed into the peaceful, grassy valley below, a loud cry suddenly filled the air to the west of them. Spinning to face the noise, they all gave each other desperate looks.)

KASIRA: It's... started!

(Waving his arms randomly, Dakuri was first to break out of his trance.)

DAKURI: Don't just stand there!!!

(As they raced back to their horses, Zimfasu held his head and grimaced furiously at himself.)

ZIMFASU: I'm such an idiot!!!

HAYKIE: It's not your fault, this is a long valley!!!

(Not feeling any better about himself, Zimfasu leapt on his horse.)

ZIMFASU: Come on!!!

(Like bats out of hell, they immediately galloped towards the sound of men screaming and the clashing of steel upon steel. Even Micalov managed to mount his horse and keep up.

As if they were homing in on the kingdom of Hades itself, the growing noises of death and violent human destruction, we're simple to follow. As they raced along the valleys edge, it was only a matter of time before the merciless slaughter came into view, in the valley below. Having been galloping as close as he could to the edge to get a better view of the battle, Dakuri suddenly veered away from the embankment as soon as he was parallel to the killing. Looking determined, he pulled his horse to a halt and ordered the others do the same. While rows of bandits peered over the edges of the valley, keeping a sharp eye out for valuables to scavenge from the dead people beneath them, the allies dismounted swiftly. Showing no fear, Kasira leapt from her horse and yelled to the others.)

KASIRA: Wish me luck!!!

(Only able to see bandits and the top of the battling soldiers heads in the sunken valley, she shivered, not knowing what to expect. Thinking only of Kasira, the others raced after her towards the edge of the valley.)

COLE: Surely she hasn't got to go down there!!!

DAKURI: I hope not!!!

(As her heart beat wildly, Kasira raced closer to the pit of death before her. Seeing more and more foul, disgusting deaths as she edged nearer, she took a deep breath when suddenly time stopped. Breathing heavily, she wiped her forehead and looked around for Cigna, when suddenly a glowing red apparition appeared before her. Looking somewhat baffled, she held her hands to the side.)

KASIRA: Cigna? You're red!

(Expecting Cigna's dulcet tones, she was shocked to hear the growling evil voice that came her way.)

SANDARK: My name is Sandark, foolish human!

(Pacing backwards, Kasira shook her terrified head.)

KASIRA: No... this isn't real!

(With an evil laugh, the apparition replied coldly.)

SANDARK: No, Kasira, this is very real!

(As she trembled, he continued.)

SANDARK: Let's allow the war to continue shall we? You, your friends and I have business to attend to!!!

(As soon as he said it, everything including the sky and the ground beneath their feet seemed to bend and contort. Hiding behind her hands, Kasira screamed as the world twisted and warped before her, then flattened out again. Looking terrified, she found herself standing at the top of a dusty hill next to a ruined, pillared, marble building. Rendered speechless by her fear, she looked around with wide eyes when suddenly she heard a familiar voice behind her.)

COLE: What the hell is this?

DAKURI: Did Cigna do something? Did we die?

(While they all stood there in shock bearing looks of abject horror, a tall muscle bound warrior stepped from behind one of the pillars laughing.)

SANDARK: You'll have to excuse me, your faces are a picture!

(Stepping alongside Kasira, Dakuri spoke up.)

DAKURI: Who are you?

(Calmly scratching beneath his ear, Sandark smiled.)

SANDARK: Me? I'm Sandark, the god of war!

(Still dumbfounded, the allies looked to each other.)

HAYKIE: God of war?

ZIMFASU: This isn't good! We can't be messing about here, people are dying!

(Using his imposing demeanour to intimidate them further, Sandark stood tall.)

SANDARK: Of course people are dying! It's a war.

(He stood tall and snarled.)

SANDARK: A war that I won't be allowing you fools to interfere with!

(Dakuri looked stumped.)

DAKURI: You wish to prevent us from stopping the war?

SANDARK: That's right.

DAKURI: Then if you're a god, why didn't you just kill us?

KASIRA: Put ideas into his head, why don't you?

(Sandark laughed.)

SANDARK: Unfortunately, gods also have limits! I can't even begin to harm a chosen one or her allies... yet!

(He sneered.)

SANDARK: So I brought you here, to the realm of the gods! The one place where I can vanquish your protector Cigna...

(He gave a single laugh and followed it with a rye smile.)

SANDARK: And then kill you all!

(Almost frozen with fear, Kasira shivered as she looked him in the eye.)

KASIRA: You... you want Cigna?

SANDARK: Of course. You're under her divine protection. Once the god who chose you is vanquished, only then can even begin to physically harm you. They're the rules.

(Kasira pouted.)

KASIRA: In that case, I won't summon her.

(Sandark laughed heartily.)

SANDARK: You won't have to. She wants to end this war. I expect she'll be here any moment now to try and stop me.

(He beamed.)

SANDARK: Not that I'm any hurry for her to arrive. Time is passing and people are dying by the second down there in the mortal realm! Just as I like it.

(Just then, striding past them, giving everyone quite a start, a beautiful lady in a pure white toga approached Sandark.)

SANDARK: About time, Cigna?

(The allies stepped back in unison.)

KASIRA: Cigna? Is that you?

(Looking over her shoulder as she strode towards Sandark, Cigna nodded.)

CIGNA: I apologise Kasira, I should have foreseen this!

COLE: She's beautiful!

DAKURI: That's an understatement!

(As the men in her party found themselves unable to stop staring lustfully, Kasira crept forward.)

KASIRA: What's going on, Cigna?

CIGNA: Don't worry, Kasira, just a small blip in our plan!

(She turned to Sandark.)

CIGNA: Foolish boy!

(Sandark sneered.)

SANDARK: Keep talking Cigna, people are dying!

CIGNA: Do you really expect to get away with this?

(He started to turn red with rage.)

SANDARK: I'm the god of war, this is what I do!

CIGNA: God of war? You were the god of divine justice!

(He gave an unimpressed, sneering laugh.)

SANDARK: Until the elders decided I was too harsh, so I chose my own niche in life!

CIGNA: Gods are here to protect the planet, not destroy it!!!

SANDARK: Whatever you say Cigna, the war goes on and you're wasting time!

(Turning to face Kasira and her shell-shocked friends, Cigna smiled kindly.)

CIGNA: Make yourselves scarce, my friends. But stay close, when I've finished with this fool, we'll have work to do!

(Sensing a battle of epic proportions between the two gods before them, Dakuri wasn't slow in leading them all to crouch down behind a fallen pillar. As they all ducked down feeling confused and unsure, a tear rolled down Kasira's cheek.)

KASIRA: I'm scared! This is too much, I can't handle all this!

(As Cole tried to stop her freaking out, the others peered over the pillar with terrified eyes.)

HAYKIE: Why's he brought us here? I don't get it.

DAKURI: He just explained that.

HAYKIE: I was too busy freaking out to understand all that!

DAKURI: Oh... well, it seems that he can't fight Cigna in the mortal realm!

HAYKIE: Right, and?

DAKURI: And he can't hurt a chosen one or her allies because we're under Cigna's divine protection!

ZIMFASU: So, the only way he can stop us is to bring us all here, kill Cigna then kill *us* afterwards.

DAKURI: Exactly!

(Haykie gulped.)

HAYKIE: I think I was happier when I didn't understand.

MICALOV: I don't get it! Any of it!

(He shrugged to himself.)

MICALOV: But then I wouldn't, would I?

(As Dakuri rolled his eyes, they continued to watch over the top of the pillar with fear emblazoned all over their faces. Stepping face to face to each other, the impressive muscle bound, Sandark sneered at Cigna.)

SANDARK: You don't have a chance of vanquishing me! Battle isn't in your nature!

(Sneering back, Cigna replied.)

CIGNA: I'll fight as dirty as you like for the sake of peace!

SANDARK: Huh! Let's do it, then!

(Stepping back to take up fighting stances, the two all-powerful deities stared hatefully at one another. Without flinching, Sandark held out a hand and a colossal sword appeared in his palm. Nodding, Cigna did the same.)

SANDARK: I wish it'd been nice knowing you!

(With that, he skipped forward, lashing his sword towards Cigna's head. Ducking and weaving, she stepped back, deflecting his blade with her own.)

SANDARK: Hmm, not bad... I might even have to try!

CIGNA: You underestimate me, Sandark!

(With venom in her eyes, Cigna then charged back at him, swinging and trashing her sword in his direction. Looking slightly surprised, Sandark danced backwards as he defended her every blow.)

SANDARK: Not bad, but you're still only killing time you can ill afford.

(Not allowing him to rattle her with his cold reminder of the war still raging in the mortal realm, Cigna threw her sword away and conjured a long handled pike from thin air.)

CIGNA: Try this for size!

SANDARK: Oh yeah?

(With the flick of his wrist, Sandark sent a high voltage bolt of electricity thrashing in Cigna. While Kasira and her allies feared the worst, Cigna stood tall and gave Sandark a baffled look.)

CIGNA: Lightning?

(Sandark looked somewhat embarrassed.)

SANDARK: I forgot!

CIGNA: Keep doing that if you like, you know lightning increases a god's power and stamina!

(Giving her a defiant look, Sandark gestured to her.)

SANDARK: Now do it to me. It's only fair.

CIGNA: How stupid do I look?

SANDARK: Huh, you need all the help you can get anyway!

(With unadulterated fury, he then thrust his sword towards Cigna, yelling out with rage. In the quickness of his move, he cut the skin on her forearm. Leaping out of his way, Cigna placed her hand over the wound to heal herself, then thrust her pike in his direction. Displaying phenomenal strength, the raging Sandark merely caught the pike in his steel gauntlet.)

SANDARK: You should quit while your behind!

(With that, he snapped it in two with one hand, provoking a mortified gulp from Kasira and her allies. Stepping back, Cigna conjured another sword and shook her free fist.)

CIGNA: This isn't over by a long chalk!

SANDARK: Good, you know I'm in no hurry!

(Raging forwards with her sword twiddling like a fencing blade, she suddenly threw it at him, catching him slightly off guard. As the sword ripped the top of his shoulder, Sandark yelped and gave her a devilish glare.)

SANDARK: So, the bitch doesn't fight fair!

CIGNA: I warned you!

SANDARK: Two can play at that game!

(Looking completely merciless, he bound forth swinging his sword at her at incredible speed. Conjuring an iron shield, Cigna slung it in front of herself and was sent staggering backwards as Sandark raged forth, lashing his blade at her constantly. Moments later, he relented his onslaught and flicked his fingers at the pillar next to Cigna. With a deafening creak, the tall marble pillar tipped and started to fall in Cigna's direction. Spotting this, Kasira instinctively panicked.)

KASIRA: Cigna!!!

(Heeding the warning, Cigna leapt back as the pillar crashed down before her.)

CIGNA: Thanks, Kasira!

(Staring angrily over to her, Sandark waved his fist.)

SANDARK: Don't forget, bitch, you're next!!!

CIGNA: Not if I can help it!!!

(Wearing an extremely wide smile, Sandark scoffed.)

SANDARK: Which you can't! You'll be dead!

CIGNA: Don't bank on it, boy!

(With that, a hefty long-chained mace appeared in each of her hands.)

CIGNA: Try these for size!

(As she swung them over her head, Sandark stepped back slowly.)

SANDARK: You think those ridiculous things can harm me?

CIGNA: Yes, actually!

(Having swung the maces to gain incredible momentum, Cigna's eyes clouded over with bloodlust and she charged towards him. Not looking over-confident at this point, Sandark stepped back.)

SANDARK: Damn you!

(Not about to let her gain the upper hand, Sandark swayed to his right and lashed his sword at one of the maces. With a loud clang, the chain of the mace twisted round the sword blade.)

CIGNA: What?

SANDARK: Foolish bint!

(He lashed his sword away, forcing her to lose her grip on the maces handle.)

SANDARK: One down...

(With that, he thrust the mace off of his sword and lashed his blade towards the other one. This time, instead of the mace's chain twirling round his sword, the blade cut clean through the chain. Instinctively, both Cigna and Sandark dived for cover, praying the spiky sphere would fly off to safety. Unfortunately for Sandark, however, it flew in his direction and grazed the top of his head, drawing blood as it zoomed over him.)

SANDARK: Fuck you!

(As he leapt to his feet, he shook his fists at his sneering foe.)

SANDARK: Your luck won't last forever!

(Hardly able to believe what they were witnessing, Kasira and the others continued to stare with amazement at the titanic struggle before them.)

ZIMFASU: You wait 'til I tell my friends about this, they'll kick my head in for lying!

HAYKIE: This battle is insane!

KASIRA: At least Cigna's drawn blood!

COLE: Yeah, but so did... the other one!

DAKURI: Sandark!

COLE: Yeah, him!

ZIMFASU: Cigna aint bleeding!

COLE: She healed herself!

KASIRA: So why hasn't he?

(Haykie shrugged.)

HAYKIE: Maybe he can't!

DAKURI: He's a god, of course he can!

HAYKIE: Not necessarily, Dakuri, healing is a white magic! It's a gift to the pure-hearted and that Sandark doesn't seem very pure-hearted to me.

(He nodded.)

DAKURI: Maybe you're right! I hope you are!

KASIRA: Yeah, we'll see!

MICALOV: Well, whatever happens, one things for certain!

(They all looked into his serious face.)

HAYKIE: What's that Micalov?

MICALOV: I'm shitting myself!

(Almost forgetting the epic battle before them, they stared through Micalov instead.)

MICALOV: What? I am?



HAYKIE: Yes, Micalov! Thanks for that!

(As they turned back to face the warring gods, they were shocked to see Cigna being chased around the pillars. Looking terrified she ducked in and out while Sandark bared down on her brandishing red hot pokers.)

SANDARK: I knew these would strike fear into you!!!

(As she raced away, she conjured up a bucket.)

CIGNA: Oh, really?

(With a quick spinning turn, she threw water over one of the pokers, then turned away again. Giving a slightly inconvenienced shake of the head, Sandark conjurer another one and kept after her.)

SANDARK: Come on, Cigna? Let me kill you!

CIGNA: You'll never defeat me!

SANDARK: Come back here, will you?

(He thought.)

SANDARK: The longer you run away, the more people are getting slaughtered!

(Unwittingly sucked in by his comments, Cigna spun around and cast a water spell on the evil Sandark. Absorbing the magic power, he shook his fist triumphantly and conjured himself a pair of axes.)

SANDARK: Thanks for that!

(He sneered hatefully.)

SANDARK: Now these are gonna hurt!!!

(Fuming with rage, Cigna charged at him with a battering ram.)

SANDARK: What the???

(Desperate to defend himself, Sandark swung the axes towards her. With her far out of his reach, the axes dug into the long wooden caber as the head of the ram thudded into his chest. With a yelp, she sent him sprawling on the end of the battering ram, straight into one of the pillars.)

CIGNA: Painful enough for you?

(Severely winded, he climbed to his feet but was kicked back down by Cigna's boot.)

CIGNA: Stay where you are!

(Letting out a primal scream, Sandark suddenly leapt back up and came out fighting.

With several lefts and rights, one after the other, he punched her from one side of the ruin to the other before she could even begin to defend herself. As she eventually collapsed to her knees exhausted, Sandark availed himself of a huge mallet.)

SANDARK: You wanna know about pain, do you???

(Before he could squash her head like a tomato, however, she rolled towards his him, grabbed his legs and bundled him to the floor.)

SANDARK: Bitch!!!

CIGNA: That's no way to speak to a lady!!!

(Like a pair of crazed gorilla's the two higher beings then rolled around on the ground, getting in jabs wherever they could. Before long, however, Sandark had her pinned to the ground. With his knees on her upper arms, he pounded her in the mouth three times.)

SANDARK: This is for the battering ram!!!

(Desperate to do something, anything, Cigna kicked up her legs and threw him off.

Scrambling to her feet, she wobbled, clearly somewhat punch drunk.)

SANDARK: And now you will die, Cigna!

(Conjuring another sword, he cut holes in her toga with lightning fast reactions, then punched her to the ground. As her exhausted body hit the floor, Sandark held his sword aloft and laughed excitedly.)

SANDARK: I am the divine power!!!

(With a conceited smirk on his evil face, he then started to circle his defeated opponent.)

SANDARK: So how do you feel now, Cigna?

(He chuckled.)

SANDARK: The best man won! And the war goes on!!!

(As he continued to pace around her, punishing her mentally, Kasira and her allies watched on with horror. Sensing that defeat and death for Cigna was imminent, they spoke in down-hearted tones, clearly devastated by the outcome. Becoming increasingly tearful Kasira closed her eyes, barely able to contemplate the fate that Sandark had in store for them.)

KASIRA: What's gonna happen to us?

(There was a brief silence amongst her terrified allies.)

COLE: I dread to think!

KASIRA: Without Cigna, he'll be able to hurt us!

DAKURI: And there's nothing we can do!

(Micalov looked up.)

MICALOV: Is there really nothing you can do?

DAKURI: Like what? Fight him ourselves?

(He scoffed and shook his head.)

DAKURI: Hang on a minute!

(As hoped filled his face, he sat forward to remonstrate with the others.)

DAKURI: He can't harm us, as long as Cigna's alive he can do nothing to stop us joining in on her behalf!

(Nodding, Cole agreed.)

COLE: I'm with you, Dakuri!

DAKURI: Just don't pummel him with magic, Haykie!

HAYKIE: I won't!

(Suddenly it dawned on her.)

HAYKIE: Magic?

DAKURI: What? You've thought of something?

HAYKIE: Yeah, I have! Let's go.

(As Haykie raced towards the battling gods without sharing her idea, Dakuri, Zimfasu, Cole and Kasira raced after her. Still teasing his slowly weakening prey, Sandark laughed as he boasted about his success. Stopping his circling every now again to kick her in the face or stomach, he constantly reminded her of the continuing battle that raged in the mortal realm.)

SANDARK: Think, there'll be thousands either dead or maimed by now!

(He laughed.)

SANDARK: And you couldn't do a thing?

HAYKIE: Wanna bet?

(Looking up, he was startled by the sight of Kasira and the others charging towards him.)

SANDARK: Oh, this is comical!

KASIRA: Not really, you can't harm us, remember?

(Looking horrified, he immediately picked up his sword and held it over Cigna.)

SANDARK: Not while *she*'s alive!

(He gave an evil grin.)

SANDARK: Soon remedied!!!

(With a look that would frighten the devil, he brought the sword down with a venom, only for Haykie to blast it out of his hand with a lightning bolt.)

SANDARK: What?

(Before he could utter another word, Dakuri and Zimfasu pounced on him, punching him to the ground. They both knew they could never hurt a god, but they might be able to restrain him for a while.)

HAYKIE: Keep him busy guys, this won't take a second!!!

(Standing over the severely weakened, Cigna, Haykie let rip with all her might, sending one bolt of electricity into Cigna after another. By the time Sandark managed to battle to his feet and throw Dakuri and Zimfasu off of him, Cigna was completely revitalized.)

SANDARK: Damn you all to hell!!!

CIGNA: Thanks for the recharge, Haykie! Now this sucker's mine!!!

(Before she could move an inch however, the voice of an ageing wise man, rose from behind her.)

WISE MAN: Enough!!!

(At once, Cigna and Sandark both threw their heads in his direction. Suddenly looking overjoyed, Cigna smiled and bowed her head respectfully. Sandark, on the other hand, gaped in horror and his eyes filled with terror. Uncertain as to who this man could be, or indeed where he'd suddenly appeared from, Kasira and her party watched on agape as the wise man paced up aside Cigna.)

WISE MAN: Cigna, you have chosen your mortal well!

CIGNA: Thank you, my lord!

(Consumed by fear, Sandark fell to his knees as the wise man looked his way.)

SANDARK: Please lord, I beg you to spare me!!!

(Turning to face Cigna again, the wise man nodded.)

WISE MAN: Go Cigna, you have work to do! I'll deal with this infidel!

SANDARK: No lord!!! I beg of you!!!

(As the wise man held his hand towards the terrified Sandark, he screamed from the bottom of his lungs.)

KASIRA: What's he gonna do to him?

(Before anyone could comment, there was suddenly a blinding flash. Letting out a simultaneous protest about the brightness, they suddenly found themselves back on the edge of the battle site in the same places they'd been standing before Sandark summoned them to the realm of the gods.)

DAKURI: We're back!

(Looking utterly bewildered, they all shrugged to each other as the sounds of pain and death filled the air once more.)

COLE: Now what?

(Turning towards them, Kasira shrugged.)

KASIRA: Where's Cigna?

(No sooner than she'd finished speaking, the world fell silent and everything stopped. Letting out a sigh of relief, Kasira held her chest as Cigna's white apparition appeared before her floating in the ether.)

KASIRA: What kept you?

(As she smiled, Cigna replied gently.)

CIGNA: Are you ready, little one?

(With a confident nod, Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: Let's do it!

(Closing her eyes, with no idea what was going to happen, Kasira shivered, when suddenly she felt her body become warm. As if she was wrapped in pillows, her whole body felt comfortable and relaxed. Opening her eyes, she let out an ecstatic smile.)

KASIRA: Cigna, I feel great!

(Much to her horror, Cigna was nowhere to be seen. To make things worse, Cigna replied, via her own mouth.)

CIGNA: I'm inside of you Kasira, now leave it to me... relax!

(Feeling completely at peace, it didn't even cross her mind to question anything.)

KASIRA: Okay!

(She closed her eyes and took a deep breath.)

CIGNA: Don't close your eyes, I'm gonna need *them*!!!

KASIRA: Sorry!

CIGNA: It begins!

(As Cigna controlled her body and strode forth, Kasira relaxed and enjoyed the ride. It might have felt strange, but such was her inner peace she simply let it all wash over her. While the world remained frozen in time, Cigna lead Kasira's body towards the valley's edge. Without even pausing her stride, she then stepped over the edge and walked straight on, treading the air as if it was solid ground, looking all around her as she did so. With such an excellent vantage point, it wasn't long before she spotted what she was looking for. Deliberately left unfrozen, the three leaders of the battling armies were yelling and blaming each other for their men's inexplicable freezing. As they pushed and swore at one another, Cigna approached them, still walking on air. Upon spotting this, the three of them stopped dead still and gaped with horror.)

WHITE MAN: W-what's that?

ENAKI MAN: More of your tricks?

BLACK MAN: I d-didn't do anything!

(Allowing herself to float to the ground, Cigna approached them slowly. Shaking their heads and gaping in disbelief, they started to pace backwards.)

ENAKI MAN: What's going on?

(Looking across their three frightened faces, Cigna bowed.)

CIGNA: My name is Kasira!

(Hearing this, Kasira spoke up.)

KASIRA: *I'm* Kasira!

(Looking frightened, the three men leant back.)

BLACK MAN: Okay, okay, you're Kasira!

(Sending Kasira a subliminal message not to interrupt again, Cigna continued.)

CIGNA: I come in peace!

(Shaking with fear, the three leaders said nothing.)

CIGNA: You *didn't* come in peace, did you?

(Looking ashamed, the white leader shook his head apologetically, much to the disgust of the other two.)

ENAKI MAN: Coward!

BLACK MAN: Man, his legs have turned to jelly!

(Looking somewhat peeved, the white leader flexed his neck muscles.)

WHITE MAN: No, they aint!

(Eager to make her point, Cigna stood tall.)

CIGNA: You will end this war and return to whence you came!

(They three leaders all gave false laughs.)

CIGNA: Then, you will learn to tolerate and understand each other's cultures and respect each other's race as fellow human beings!

BLACK MAN: Fuck you bitch, these two arse holes aint human beings, they're animals!

ENAKI MAN: You're a fine one to talk!

(He turned to the white man.)

ENAKI MAN: As for you!!!

WHITE MAN: What?

CIGNA: Enough!!!

(They fell silent.)

CIGNA: Now, when I restart time, you will call a halt to the war and leave this place!

(The black man sniggered.)

BLACK MAN: There's more chance of me ordering my men to attack *your* bony arse, bitch!

(In total agreement, the other two laughed.)

CIGNA: Very well, if I can make them retreat, will you leave and seek peace?

WHITE MAN: If you can do that, I'll eat my shoes!

(The other two nodded.)

CIGNA: So be it!

(They then looked on in horror as she started to levitate.)

WHITE MAN: Why did you have to piss her off?

ENAKI MAN: Don't look at me!

BLACK MAN: Typical, blame the darkie!

(Upon reaching 20 feet, Cigna closed her eyes and time restarted. With a deafening clang the warriors laid into each other in total ignorance of the pause. To Kasira's friends on the embankment, it had looked like she just disappeared. Turning in circles, they yelled out for her.)

COLE: Kasira? Darling?

DAKURI: Where the fuck did she go?

ZIMFASU: Damn it man, she just vanished into thin air!

(Looking bewildered, Haykie paced through them pointing upwards.)

HAYKIE: Look! She's there!!!

(They followed her eye line and received the shock of their lives, Kasira levitating above the ferocious battle.)

COLE: What the hell's she doing? And how the fuck?

(Dakuri nodded with an understanding smile on his face.)

DAKURI: Cigna!

(Floating on high in Kasira's body, Cigna held out her arms and immediately proceeded to fire lightning bolts randomly about the battle site. Not knowing that she had the power to make sure they always missed people, the soldiers panicked. There was absolute chaos as many of them fled for their lives from what they thought may be an evil spirit, come to take their souls. Others fired arrows and crossbows at her, only for the bolts to bounce off her. It was a barely a matter of minutes before every soldier and every watching bandit had taken to their heels, despite the three leaders ordering them to stay. As the three leaders stood there looking gob smacked, the only people left in the valley, Cigna floated Kasira's body to the ground and stood before them.)

CIGNA: Well?

(At first too terrified to move, the three men just trembled.)

CIGNA: If there is peace between you, I won't have to do this again!

(Scratching his head, the Enaki warrior bowed.)

ENAKI MAN: If peace means that much to the gods, then peace it will be!

WHITE MAN: Gods?

ENAKI MAN: What else could she be?

(He nodded.)

WHITE MAN: Shake hands then guys?

ENAKI MAN: I agree!

(The black leader nodded.)

BLACK MAN: You gonna respect our culture from now on?

WHITE MAN: Yeah, the gods demand it!

ENAKI MAN: Unless we all want to burn in hell, then I suggest we all do!

(Cigna smiled.)

CIGNA: Then go in peace... and your hearts will prosper!

(With a series of handshakes and bows, the three leaders then set out in three different directions, leaving behind the empty memorial battle site. Rubbing her hands together with joy, Cigna then floated Kasira over to her friends. As she landed, Cole was the first to hug her.)

COLE: You did it, darling!

(Realising he was about to kiss her, Cigna quickly evaporated from inside Kasira and back into the necklace. As Cole went to sling his arms around her, however, her legs gave way and she collapsed, causing him to do a long armed clap.)

COLE: Uh?

(As her worried friends gathered round, she looked up from the ground and beamed.)

KASIRA: We did it guys, we stopped the war!!!

(Helping her to her feet, Cole nodded as he looked into her eyes.)

COLE: Nice one, darling, we can go home proud!

DAKURI: Yes, but not until I've hugged her!

KASIRA: Dakuri?

DAKURI: You're my friend, Kasira, get used to it!

(There then followed a group hug. With a joyous glow in their eyes, they bounced up and down together, unashamedly delighted with what they'd achieved. With tears in his eyes, Zimfasu bit his lip.)

ZIMFASU: I'm crying! I feel like such a poof!

(Dakuri offered him a friendly smile.)

DAKURI: There's no shame in that Zimfasu, thousands of lives have been saved!

(Looking amazed, Haykie approached him with a delighted smile.)

HAYKIE: Dakuri?

(He gave her a sexy grin.)

DAKURI: What's up, sugar lips?

(She gave him a sideways glance.)

HAYKIE: Did you hurt your head?

DAKURI: No... babe... you always said you wanted to meet the man inside that stuffy idiot, well here I am!

(She smiled again.)

HAYKIE: You wait 'til you hear what I've got planned for you, new Dakuri!

(She whispered in his ear.)

HAYKIE: And that's just for starters!

(As a blinding smile filled his face, Dakuri nodded like an eager puppy.)

DAKURI: Let's go home, right now!!!

(As they put their arms round each other and started to head away, Cole, Kasira, Zimfasu and Micalov watched them go.)

COLE: Bloody hell Kasira, you're gonna have a mountain of gossip to catch up on from the looks of things!

(She smiled.)

KASIRA: Looks that way!

(Turning back, Dakuri yelled frantically.)

DAKURI: Are you coming or what? Hurry!

(Smiling, Zimfasu shrugged.)

ZIMFASU: Let's go then!

(He turned to Kasira.)

ZIMFASU: And thanks again for saving my people!

(She shook her head.)

KASIRA: It wasn't me, thank Cigna!

ZIMFASU: It was *your* body, Kasira!

MICALOV: Are we going or what? I'm hungry and I wanna go home!

(As they started to walk, Zimfasu looked ahead at Haykie and Dakuri giggling together.)

ZIMFASU: I wonder what came over Dakuri all of a sudden!

COLE: We won, Zimfasu! I think it's as simple as that.

ZIMFASU: Then all that's left to do is to celebrate. Let's hurry up and do that!

(As they returned to their horses, every single one of them felt as if they'd achieved something extremely great. Well aware that self congratulation would be taking credit from Kasira or Cigna, however, they kept their comments to themselves.

One thing they couldn't disguise, however, was their happiness. Taking deep breaths, none of them were in any hurry to leave the site of the great achievement, except a randy Dakuri. Looking around at the peace and tranquillity of the valley as the sound of birdsong returned, they all nodded in approval at the outcome.

While the thought of the warriors, soldiers and thieves returning home, filled their hearts with joy, Micalov suddenly looked very much alive. Standing to attention, he grinned the happiest grin he'd ever grinned and turned to face the valley.)

MICALOV: I just had an idea!!!

(He beamed with unbridled joy.)

MICALOV: I'm gonna be rich!!!

(Watching him as he started to run, Dakuri yelled.)

DAKURI: No!!! We have to go!!!

(Almost skipping as he raced to the valley, Micalov yelled out.)

MICALOV: Go without me!!! I hate you lot anyway!!!

(And with that, he leapt over the edge of the valley.)

DAKURI: What the hell was that all about?

COLE: I haven't got a clue.

ZIMFASU: The boy's clearly mentally deficient!

(Haykie shrugged.)

HAYKIE: Forget him. Come on, let's go home!

(Before they'd even moved a muscle however, the temple of Dietyawa suddenly materialised around them. With time frozen, Kasira looked around at her friends in their various stationary poses and chuckled, no longer even slightly daunted by the phenomena.)

KASIRA: They look like statues!

(Appearing before her, the glowing white apparition of Cigna agreed.)

CIGNA: They do, but they also look like heroes!

(Kasira nodded as she looked at them.)

CIGNA: I'm only here today, Kasira, because of their bravery! I thank them!

KASIRA: I'll pass it on!

CIGNA: And though she doesn't realise it, Haykie has gained something special from her actions today!

KASIRA: Gossip? Do tell!

CIGNA: She doesn't know this, but any witch who saves at least 500 lives, as she indirectly did today, will lose her powers and become blessed with innocence!

KASIRA: Innocence?

CIGNA: When she wakes, she will no longer have magic powers, but will have obtained a greater one, her curse is lifted. Motherhood, one day, will be her gift!

KASIRA: Really? She'll be overjoyed!

CIGNA: She deserves it!

(Nodding in appreciation of her words, she looked at the four walls around her.)

KASIRA: So, why the temple?

CIGNA: I transported you here to keep my promise, Kasira!

KASIRA: Promise?

CIGNA: Yes, your reward! I can only grant it from here in the temple!

(She shrugged.)

KASIRA: Leaving me to live my life will be reward enough, no more destinies!

CIGNA: On the contrary, Kasira, that would be the least I could do!

KASIRA: I'm listening!

CIGNA: Kasira, I'm offering you immortality!



KASIRA: Immortality? Really?

CIGNA: Really! As my eyes and ears in this mortal realm...

KASIRA: No way, you aint possessing me again!

CIGNA: I won't have to! As my chosen one, you will be able to use my powers of immortality, you'll be indestructible and have the power to conjure!

(Looking a tad miffed, she shook her head.)

KASIRA: Indestructible? So no-one will be able to hurt me?

CIGNA: Correct!

KASIRA: And I'll be able to conjure things?

CIGNA: Everything you need!

KASIRA: Even currency and houses?

CIGNA: Everything! You will be a Vitazoe bound goddess in your own right!

KASIRA: Wow!

CIGNA: All I ask is that you travel the world, using your powers to help eradicate racism and fascism, travel in luxury if you like! And if things get difficult, you can always call upon me!

(Catching her breath at the sheer scale of the offer, she gaped, unable to find anything to say.)

CIGNA: Do we have a deal?

(Somewhat blown away by what Cigna had planned for her, she turned and looked at her beloved Cole frozen in time. Nodding as if it was clear what to do, she turned back to Cigna.)

KASIRA: Sorry Cigna, not interested!

(She nodded.)

KASIRA: Can we go now?

(Seemingly struck dumb, Cigna stuttered.)

CIGNA: Y-you're turning down an eternal life of painless luxury?

(She nodded.)

KASIRA: It wouldn't be painless!

CIGNA: Explain!

KASIRA: Watching Cole grow old and die? No thanks! I don't want to live without him, not for a minute, Cigna, you understand don't you?

(There was suddenly a flash of bright white light. Instinctively, Kasira cowered.)

KASIRA: Don't hurt me!!!

CIGNA: I wouldn't!

(As she slowly straightened up, she got a pleasant surprise.)

COLE: Whoa, is that what the apparition looks like?

(Seeing that Cole had become unfrozen, she threw herself in his arms and faced Cigna.)

KASIRA: How come he can see you? I thought only a chosen one could see you!

(Following a brief silence, Cigna explained.)

CIGNA: Only a chosen one *can* see me! You turned down godliness and chose him instead, this is seen as almost saintly!

COLE: You turned down godliness?

KASIRA: I had to choose, you won!

(He smiled.)

COLE: I love you too, darling!

CIGNA: Then let's make it eternal!

KASIRA: Sorry?

CIGNA: How about if I grant you both the powers, you as my chosen one, he as yours?

COLE: What's she talking about Kasira?

KASIRA: Making us immortal, free of pain and able to conjure anything!

(He gave her a sideways glance.)

COLE: You're shitting me? Sorry!

KASIRA: No, straight up! What do you think?

(As she stared lovingly into his eyes, almost begging of him an answer, Cole nodded.)

COLE: An eternity of pain free riches... with you on my arm?

(He smiled.)

COLE: I'd have to be a brain dead baboon with no head to turn that down! Or even worse, Micalov!

(As they gave each other and loving cuddle, Cigna flashed twice as bright.)

CIGNA: It is done... when all else fails Kasira, call upon me!

(And immediately the temple disappeared and the frozen world sprung back into life. Once again, those who'd been frozen had no idea of what had just happened.

Unable to get Haykie's words out of his head, Dakuri leapt on his horse.)

DAKURI: Hurry up, will you?

(Just then, a speck of what looked like gold dust, landed on his shoulder and disappeared.)

DAKURI: What the hell?

(As they all looked up, Dakuri gasped and Haykie and Zimfasu trembled joyously.

Kasira and Cole held hands and looked up at the sky. For as far as they could see, the land all around was being sprinkled with a light covering of golden coloured snow.

Unable to take their eyes off the phenomenally beautiful sight, a voice entered Kasira's head.)

CIGNA: United colours, Kasira. I am spreading your will for racial harmony around the world!

(As she nodded, a happy tear ran down her cheek and she leant her head on Cole's shoulder.)

KASIRA: It's my will!

(He nodded.)

COLE: I know, I heard it too!

(Feeling overjoyed to the point of being delirious, Kasira turned and nestled herself into her husbands chest. Smiling as her held her tight, she let their love breeze into each other and took a deep breath.)

KASIRA: Forget the rest of our lives Cole, today is the first day of eternity!

(As she closed her eyes and relaxed into him, the others looked around at each other feeling nothing but pride, admiration and respect for each other. Born out of nothing, their friendship and everything they'd shared, they knew, would live in their hearts forever. Thankfully, the troubles they'd faced so bravely together... were gone.)

**THE END.**

As for the future, Dakuri and Haykie went on to wed and have seven children, all of them girls. Living together in Namki village, they became a symbol of a mixed culture and were held up as an example to their community.

Going on to become an influential member of his society, dating one of Dakuri's daughters was a thankless task, and a dangerous one. On such occasions, bringing him back down to earth as always, was Haykie, the stable one.

As for Zimfasu, his dice with death inspired him to give up being a merchant and run a horse centre for children. Being free to spend more time with his beloved Kajice, he positively thrived.

Without a brain cell to his name, Micalov gathered up all the weapons that had been dropped by the frightened soldiers in the valley of stones. After taking a week to transport them to the nearest port in an attempt to ship them home to Dezara's Plateau, he went on to become Sudereva's businessman of the year, twice, having loaded the wrong ship. His weapons empire suddenly collapsed a few years later when stock ran out. Retired rich and now lives with a lady he pays to call his wife.

*Enaki Forest, Namki Village, 500 YEARS LATER...*

In the searing heat of the summer forest, the memorial to a great man, reverend Bond remained long after his death. His story was by now, the stuff of legend. School trips from around the world, always contained an excursion to see this great man's memorial. On this particular afternoon, as a crowd of excited children stepped aside, an interested young couple stepped forth to lay flowers and remember him. With a tear running down her cheek, the lady dressed in white boots, denim mini-skirt and printed crop top, hung her head and reached for her gentleman's hand.

KASIRA: I know he'd of been dead by now anyway, but I miss him still!

(Cole nodded.)

COLE: I know, we owe him everything!

(Having afforded him a minute of silence, Cole turned to face her.)

COLE: Shall we?

KASIRA: I guess so!

COLE: Let's go then!

(As they turned from the memorial, Kasira smiled.)

KASIRA: I think we've done enough good for one day, Cole, let's go home!

COLE: Okay!

(As they approached the road side, she looked up at him with a sexy glint in her eye.)

KASIRA: So? Sports car or...

(She raised an knowing eyebrow.)

KASIRA: Blacked out limo?

(Scratching his chin, Cole mused.)

COLE: Gotta be a sports car!

(Looking disappointed, Kasira nodded.)

KASIRA: Okay!

COLE: I like your thinking Kasira, but with a sports car we'll back in our nice cosy bed in no time!

(Raising both his eyebrows rapidly, he grinned.)

COLE: Comprenez?

(Nodding excitedly, she clicked her fingers and a sporty, black, two-seater appeared before them.)

COLE: I'm driving!

KASIRA: No, I'm driving!

COLE: You drove last time!

KASIRA: I'll wear that costume you like?

(He paused as his mind ran riot.)

COLE: Okay, you drive!

(And in a blind hurry, they leapt into the car and sped out of the memorial garden.)

The Kasira Project Part Three - Kasira's Mission.

The storyline and all characters are a creation of the artist, the artist reserves the right to this story and everything within.

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Completed 26/10/02.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF PATRICIA FLACK. 1932-2001.  
MAY SHE REST IN PEACE.