

"Karri's Flight From Danger"

Chapter 1

After landing back on the Searcher, all Hawk could think about was Karri and Saleena. His mind was soon set at ease when he sensed happiness from Karri. "My love for her is stronger than I thought. I haven't been able to sense any feelings after I lost my beloved mate Koori," he thought to himself.

Hawk made his way to the bridge. Admiral Asimov smiled as he entered the bridge.

"How is Karri doing?"

Hawk smiled. "She's doing all right, she has a new sister," Hawk replied.

"A new sister? Did Lola have a baby?" Asimov asked with a surprised look on his face.

Hawk smiled.

"No sir, it turns out that there was another one of my people on this planet. A young girl by the name of Saleena. She now lives with Karri and her adoptive family," Hawk replied.

"That's wonderful Hawk, I'm very happy for you. But why do you look so sad?"

"I just hate to leave them, sir. They're my family. I don't like leaving family behind," Hawk said with a sad expression on his face.

"Because of what happened on Throm, after you and Koori left?"

"Yes sir, but that was different. I had control over it. This one I have no control at all. I have no choice, but to leave them behind," Hawk said.

The Admiral shifted his eyes to the floor. "I understand, Hawk."

"Admiral, when do you think we'll be returning to Serenity?"

"I really don't know. If we're lucky, maybe a year from now," Asimov replied.

Hawk nodded, hung his head and left the bridge.

"How could I just leave them?" he said to himself as he walked down the corridor to his quarters.

The Admiral gave the command to leave the planet. The Searcher headed out to a new destination.

Hawk entered his quarters and went to the portal and gazed down at the planet. His eyes started to fill with tears. He watched as the planet of Serenity got smaller and smaller, then it was gone. "I will be back, this I swear," he said with tears running down his cheeks.

A soft knock came on the door. "Enter," he said wiping the tears from his face.

The door opened and Buck entered. "How are you holding up?" Buck asked.

Hawk turned and stared back out the portal. "I feel like I'm going to die, like my beating heart was torn out of my chest," Hawk replied.

“Well, maybe this will cheer you up a little, my friend. When I was talking to Saleena’s adoptive mother in town, she said that Saleena told her that some of your people said something about going to a planet not far from here. So I’ve talked to the Admiral, and he has ordered the Searcher to set course for there now,” Buck said with a smile.

Hawk turned back around and looked at Buck.

“Are you sure there are more of my people on this other planet?” he asked.

Buck looked into Hawk’s eyes. “Yes, that’s what she told me,” Buck replied.

Hawk turned and looked back out the portal.

“I just pray to Make-Make there are,” Hawk said staring out at the stars.

Buck walked over and stood next to his friend.

“Can you feel Karri’s feelings right now?” Buck asked.

Hawk closed his eyes. “Yes, I feel happiness, and love,” Hawk replied. He opened his eyes and glanced at Buck. “But, that doesn’t make me feel any better. I still belong on that planet with Karri and Saleena, or they belong up here with me,” Hawk said.

Buck nodded. “I know, my friend. We should be at that planet in about 24 hours, try to get some rest,” Buck said.

Hawk nodded, and kept staring out the portal. Buck shook his head and walked out the door.

“Oh, my beloved Koori, what should I do? I have found some of our people and now I have to leave them behind. They are young and orphaned. But the part that is killing me the most is one of them is family. She is your sister’s daughter,” Hawk buried his face in his hands and wept.

Chapter 2

On the peaceful planet of Serenity it had been about two months since Hawk had to leave Karri and Saleena behind. Since then Karri and Saleena had gotten much closer. They'd become more like sisters than friends. They both worked in the restaurant after school. The townspeople of Serenity didn't have any trouble accepting them. Even the men that were ordered by Mr. Finney to do his dirty work had no problems with them or Lola and Marc.

"Karri, Saleena, would you please come in here," Lola called out from the kitchen.

Karri and Saleena looked at one another, then they both went into the kitchen.

"Yes mother?" Karri said.

"I want you two to go get your father from the field and tell him dinner is almost ready," Lola said with a smile.

"All right mother."

Karri and Saleena left the house and headed for the north field, where Marc was working the field.

"Father, mother said it's almost time for dinner, time to come in," Karri said with a smile.

"Okay, I'll be there in a few minutes, I have to finish this row first. Not unless you girls would like to do it for me?" Marc said jokingly.

The girls giggled and shook their heads. "No, thank you father. We were wanting to ask you and mother if we may go up to the mountain after dinner," Karri said with a pleading expression on her face.

"We'll see, now go tell your mother that I'll be there shortly."

"Please father, we would really like to go up there tonight."

"Do what you are told, Karri. I'll talk to your mother about it over dinner, now get going," Marc said.

Karri gazed at her father with a confused look on her face. As the girls were walking back to the house Karri turned to Saleena.

"He's never told me to do what I was told, before. I think we better talk to mother before he gets home," Karri said.

Saleena nodded.

"It does seem that father has something on his mind. I hope it has nothing to do with Mr. Finney," Saleena said in a concerned voice.

"No, I don't think so. Ever since they came back from town yesterday, they've both have been acting strange," Karri replied.

As they drew closer to the house they could hear Lola singing. They looked at each other with a confused expression on their face.

"Sounds like mother is in a good mood. We'll talk to her first. Then maybe, she'll talk dad into letting us go up to the cave tonight," Karri said with a smile.

Just as they were about to enter the house, something caught Saleena's eye.

“What was that?” she asked pointing in the direction of the bushes.

“What was what?” Karri replied looking at Saleena.

“I thought I saw movement, over there in the bushes.”

Karri glanced toward the bushes. “I don’t see anything, are you sure you saw something?” Karri asked.

“I could have sworn I saw something or somebody move. Maybe it was just my imagination,” Saleena said.

Karri looked at Saleena. “You thought you saw somebody?” Karri asked.

“Yes,” Saleena replied still looking over towards the bushes.

“That’s strange, I’ve had the feeling that somebody has been watching us for some time now. Ever since Hawk left,” Karri said looking towards the bushes.

“Do you think we should tell mother and father?”

“No, like you said, it’s probably our imagination,” Karri said.

As they entered the house Lola stopped singing. “Is your father coming?” she asked with a smile.

“Yes mother, he said he wanted to finish the row he was on first, then he’d be in,” Karri replied.

“Mother, may Saleena and I go up to the cave tonight after dinner?” Karri asked in a pleading voice.

“I don’t see why not. You girls are off tomorrow, and you need a break from here. Besides, I’ll bet your friends are wondering where you’re at,” Lola said.

“Oh, thank you mother.” The girls ran over to her and wrapped their arms around her. “Mother, are you gaining weight?” Karri asked.

“Just a little, I think I’ve been eating to much lately. We’ll wait till your father comes home then we will ask him if it’s all right for you to go up there,” Lola said.

The girls glanced at each other. “Mother, is something wrong with father? When we went out to the field to let him know dinner was ready, I asked him if we could go up to the cave. He said he would talk to you about it, then he told me to do what I was told. Then, when we were walking up to the house you were singing. Is everything all right?” Karri asked with concern.

“Everything is just fine, honey. Don’t worry. Your father got some news yesterday that surprised him that’s all,” Lola replied.

“Do you think dad will let us go up to the cave tonight?” Saleena asked.

“I’m sure he will. Now you girls go set the table, dinner is about ready,” Lola said with a smile on her face.

Karri and Saleena nodded and left the kitchen. They walked into the dining room to finish setting the table. “Do you think we should tell mother and father about the movement in the bushes?” Saleena asked.

“No, maybe it was an animal of some kind. No use in getting mom and dad worried. Besides I think I know why mother and father are acting so strange,” Karri replied.

Saleena looked across the table at Karri. “Well, tell me!” she said.

Just then the front door opened.

Chapter 3

Marc entered the house.

“What are you ladies talking about?” Marc asked while he went over to the sink to wash his hands.

The girls quickly went into the dining room to set the table.

“Nothing honey, we were just talking about dinner, and the weight I’ve gained,” Lola said with a smile.

Marc turned his head and gazed at Lola and smiled. “Is dinner ready?” he asked.

“Yes dear, we were just getting ready to put it on the table,” Lola replied.

“Good, I’m hungry. Working in the field all day gets a person hungry,” Marc said, still smiling at Lola.

“Honey, could you please reach up and get me those glasses off the top shelf?” Lola asked.

Within seconds Marc moved across the kitchen floor and reached up to grab the glasses.

“Thank you,” Lola said.

“Anything else?” he asked softly.

“No, that’s it,” Lola said as she gave him a kiss on the cheek.

Marc smiled and started to rub her stomach.

The girls walked back into the kitchen just in time to see Marc rubbing Lola’s stomach. They giggled.

“Let’s finish putting dinner on the table,” Lola said.

They finished putting the rest of the dinner on the table, and sat down.

“Honey, it’s such a beautiful evening. I was thinking about letting the girls go up to the cave tonight. They don’t have to work tomorrow. What do you think?” Lola asked with a smile.

Marc glanced over at the girls and smiled. “I think that’s a wonderful idea,” Marc replied.

“Mother, father, we’re concerned. Is everything all right?” Karri asked.

Lola and Marc smiled.

“Yes, everything is just fine. You girls don’t need to worry. Karri, Saleena, I’m sorry I got a little angry with you earlier. I was tired and hungry,” Marc said.

“It’s all right father. We should have waited till you came home to ask you,” Saleena said.

Marc smiled.

“You know Saleena, that is the first time you’ve ever called me father. I really like the sound of it,” Marc said.

Saleena started to blush.

"I'm sorry, I didn't even ask you if it would be all right for me to call you father," Saleena said lowering her head.

"Now, what did Hawk say about lowering your head?"

Saleena lifted her head up, and looked at Marc. "Never lower our heads," she said.

"That's right, and I would be very proud if you called me father," Marc said.

Karri and Saleena smiled and got up from the table, they went over and stood on each side of Marc. They both then gave him a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

Marc started to blush.

"Okay girls, eat your dinner. Then sooner you get done the sooner you can head for the cave," Lola said giggling.

Karri and Saleena went back to their seats and sat down. After everyone had eaten, Lola started to clear the table.

"Mother, should you be doing that?" Karri asked with concern in her voice.

"What do you mean?" Lola asked.

"Well the way father has been acting, and when we hugged you earlier, I felt movement in your stomach. Mother are you going to have a baby?" Karri asked.

Lola and Marc smiled.

"I told you we couldn't hide anything from her. Yes Karri, we are going to have a baby," Marc said in an excited voice.

Karri and Saleena got up and ran over to Lola and embraced her. Saleena looked at Lola.

"Is it going to be a boy or a girl?" she asked.

"We don't know yet. We have to wait and find out. What do you think it will be?" Lola asked.

"I have a sister, so I'd like it to be a boy. So I can have a little brother," Karri replied with a smile.

"Well, that makes two of you. Your father wants a boy also. How about you Saleena? What would you like it to be?"

"I think, I'd like a brother also. That way father doesn't feel out numbered," Saleena said laughing.

Everyone laughed.

"Okay girls, go get your things ready. If you leave within 10 to 15 minutes, you should have enough time to gather everything you will need for a fire and bedding. Your mother and I will pack you some food for in the morning," Marc said.

The girls started to get up from the table, Karri looked over at Lola. "We'll do the dishes first, then we'll leave. Are you going to be all right mother? We can stay if you want us to?" Karri said.

"No, your father and I will do the dishes. You girls go ahead and get ready, you need to get out and have some fun, I'll be just fine. I'll have your father here if I need anything," Lola replied.

Karri nodded and left the table. The girls went into the bedroom and started to pack.

“Don’t forget to pack something warm, it’s going to get cold tonight,” Lola called out.

“We will,” they replied from the bedroom.

Lola and Marc got up and went to the kitchen to prepare some food for the girls to take along with them.

A few moments later the girls came out from the bedroom. “We’re ready.”

Lola and Marc handed them fruit, bread and cheese.

“Now you girls be careful. And don’t worry, your mother will be fine. You just have some fun,” Marc said.

“Mother are you su...,

“Yes, I’m sure,” Lola replied before Karri could finish what she was going to ask her.

“All right, you girls better get going. It’ll be dark in a little while. And you still have to find your bedding and some firewood,” Marc said.

Karri and Saleena walked over to Marc and Lola and gave them both an embrace and a kiss on the cheek. “We’ll be home early,” Karri said as they started to walk out the door.

Marc and Lola followed.

“Bye girls, have fun, and don’t worry,” Lola and Marc called out while waving to the girls.

Karri and Saleena turned around and waved back.

“I don’t know about this,” Karri said turning back around and looking at Saleena. “I feel like I’m abandoning her,” Karri said.

Saleena looked at Karri. “I know, we don’t have to go,” Saleena said.

Karri gazed at Saleena. “You wouldn’t mind?”

“No, ‘cause to tell you the truth, I’m worried about her too,” Saleena replied.

The girls stopped. They turned around and started to walk back to the house.

“Marc, they’re coming back. I wonder what’s wrong?” Lola said.

“I know why they’re coming back.” Marc stepped off the porch and ran up to the girls.

“You girls need to go up to the mountain, spend some time up there with your friends. I know you two are worried about your mother, don’t be. She’s going to be just fine,” Marc explained to them.

“Father, it feels like we’re abandoning her. We can always go up the cave some other time,” Karri said with tears starting to form in her eyes.

“No, it will be harder next time. She’ll be further along, so it will be more difficult,” Marc replied.

“Are you sure, father?” Saleena asked.

"I'm sure. You girls need this," Marc said in an reassuring voice.

"All right father, but we'll be back early in the morning," Karri said.

"Okay, now get going, you're losing daylight," Marc reminded them.

The girls gave their father another hug and a kiss on the cheek and turned to leave again.

Marc walked quickly back to Lola's side. "Is everything all right?" she asked.

"Yes, they were worried about you. They didn't want to leave. I explained to them that it would be more difficult next time due to you being further along," Marc said to Lola.

The girls turned around again and this time only waved.

Lola and Marc waved back, then started to go into the house when Marc got a feeling somebody was watching them. He took Lola into the house and then returned to look around. After not seeing anyone he went back in.

The mysterious person watched as Karri and Saleena disappeared into the small forest at the base of the mountain.

"I'll be back also," the mysterious person said in a low voice.

Chapter 4

The girls made their way up to the cave and arrived just before sunset. They were greeted by the wolves and the bear cub. They then left to retrieve leaves for their bedding and branches for the fire.

At the house, Marc and Lola were having a peaceful night at home when all of a sudden there was a crash at the door.

“What was that?” Lola asked in a startled voice.

“I don’t know. Stay here, I’ll go look,” Marc said as he reached for his weapon on the way to the door. He slowly opened the door and looked outside. He looked down and on the porch, he saw a rock with a note attached to it. He picked up the rock and took the note off.

It read, “I overheard some men talking in town about kidnapping your daughters. Please be careful...”, signed “A friend.”

Marc walked out onto the porch and looked around. He then walked around the house checking all the windows and looking towards the trees. Not seeing anything he put the note in his pocket and went back inside.

“What was it honey?” Lola asked.

“Nothing, it was probably a bird hitting the door. It’s so dark out there, that the poor thing probably lost its way,” Marc replied.

“I hope the girls are all right,” Lola said.

“They’re fine, they are probably sitting around a fire like we are, talking about the baby,” Marc said touching Lola’s stomach, but still thinking about the note.

“How long has Hawk been gone?” Marc asked.

Lola looked at him.

“About 5 months now, why do you ask? Is there something wrong? Marc, I need to know. Is someone after our girls again?” Lola asked with fear in her voice.

The look on Marc’s face told it all, the look of worry.

“Someone is after the girls, who is it? Is it Mr. Finney? Oh Marc, what are we going to do?” Lola said starting to weep.

Marc put his arms around her.

“I don’t know if it’s Finney or someone else. I found this note tied to a rock. The rock was what hit the door,” he said handing the note to Lola.

Lola read the note.

“It’s from a friend, I wonder who wrote it?” Lola asked.

“I don’t know,” Marc replied.

“I wish Hawk was here,” Lola said.

“So do I honey, so do I,” Marc replied.

They sat there quietly for a while. "I'm going into town tomorrow and try to send a message to Hawk," Marc said.

"Do you think he'll get it?" Lola asked.

"I hope so. But in the mean time, not a word about this note to the girls. They are already nervous enough with the baby coming. The last thing they need to on their minds is this note. If it's true, I think it would be best if we send the girls up to the cave for a while. At least they'll be safe up there. I have a feeling it might be Finney. And if he wants something bad enough, he usually gets it. And it appears he wants our girls. He'll do anything, no matter what the cost or the pain it will cause to somebody else. We have to make sure those girls stay safe honey, no matter what," Marc said.

"Marc, the girls will know if something is wrong. We'll have to tell them eventually," Lola replied.

"I know. But in the meantime, we'll act like nothing is wrong. Till we can figure out what to do," Marc said.

Lola nodded. "All right dear."

Up on the mountain the girls were having a good time talking about the baby, and playing with the wolf pups and the bear cub. After a while, Karri stopped playing with the animals, and started to look around.

"What's wrong?" Saleena asked.

"I don't know. I keep getting a feeling that something is wrong," Karri replied.

"You're probably worried about mother and the baby," Saleena replied.

"That might be it," Karri said.

"We should get some sleep. It's getting later, and you told father that we would be back early," Saleena said with a smile.

"You're right. Besides I am getting a little tired," Karri replied.

The girls put more wood on the fire and curled up next to it. "Good night, Saleena," Karri said.

"Good night, Karri," Saleena replied.

It didn't take long for them to drift off to sleep. Next to them were the wolf pups and the bear cub.

The next morning they were both up bright and early. They started packing their belongings. Karri looked over at the wolves. "I'm sorry my friends, but it's time for us to go home. We'll come back up to see you as soon as we possibly can," Karri said petting the wolf pups, and bear cub.

The girls started down the mountain side.

Marc was getting ready to leave for town. "I'll be back as soon as I can. Remember, don't say anything to the girls about the note. I'll try to get a message through to Hawk," Marc said heading towards the door.

"Hurry back dear, the girls should be home soon," Lola said.

"I love you, wife," Marc said kissing Lola good-bye.

"I love you too, dear," Lola replied returning his kiss.

Marc closed the door behind himself, and looked across the field towards the mountain.

“I love you, my daughters. Please, be safe,” he said to himself as he headed towards town.

Chapter 5

Lola watched nervously out the window for the girls to return. "Where are you," she thought to herself.

After a short time she saw the girls coming out of the wooded area north of the house and into the clearing. "Okay, now stay calm, don't let them know anything is wrong," Lola kept saying to herself.

Lola opened the front door, went outside, and waved at Karri and Saleena.

"Something is wrong," Karri said with concern.

"What do you mean? Mother is all right. Father is... not in the field or standing next to her. You're right, something is wrong," Saleena said with concern in her voice.

Both of the girls started to run towards the house. As they approached the house, Karri stopped and started to look towards the tree line.

"What's wrong?" Saleena asked.

"I saw something move over there," she replied pointing towards the trees.

"We better get to the house, and find out where father is," Saleena said as she grabbed Karri by the arm and started to pull her towards the house.

Karri couldn't take her eyes off the tree line. "I know I saw something move," Karri said.

"I believe you, but we need to get to the house," Saleena said.

The girls finally got into the house. "Mother, where is father?" Karri asked.

"Your father had to go into town to get a few things. He should be back shortly," Lola replied, trying desperately to keep from showing fear.

"Mother, father wouldn't go into town this early unless something was wrong. Mother, please, tell us," Karri begged.

Lola sat down on the sofa. She looked up at Karri and Saleena. "Last night, while your father and I were sitting here. We heard something hit the door. Your father got up to see what it was. He came back a few minutes later, saying nothing was wrong. After a while he told me about this note," Lola said handing Karri the note.

"Mother, where did father go?"

"He went into town to try to send a message to your uncle," Lola said with tears forming in her eyes.

"Is it Finney?"

"We don't know, we can only assume it is," Lola replied.

"How long has father been gone?"

"About two hours, he left at first light," Lola said as she hung her head and wept.

"Mother, don't worry, father will be home soon, and he will get that message to uncle," Karri said holding Lola in her arms. Saleena sat on the other side of Lola holding Lola as well.

Saleena stood up and motioned for Karri to join her in the kitchen.

“Mother, I’m going to get you a glass of water, I’ll be right back,” Karri said.

Lola nodded.

Karri got up and went into the kitchen.

“I’m going to town to try to find father, I’m going to tell him about the movement we’ve seen by the tree line,” Saleena said.

“No, I think it would be better if we stayed together,” Karri said softly.

“I’m worried about father. What if Finney does something to him while he’s in town, or on his way home,” Saleena said.

“Father knows how to take care of himself. Right now I’m more worried about mother, and that movement I saw as we got closer to the house,” Karri replied.

The girls gazed into each others eyes for a moment. “We should go in and be with mother right now,” Karri said.

“All right, but you better get her a glass of water first,” Saleena replied.

Karri retrieved a glass from the shelf and filled it with water, they both went back into the living room.

Lola had moved from the sofa, to the chair that was sitting by the window. As she was looking out of the window. A strange expression came to her face. “Girls, did you see anyone near the house this morning when you came home?” Lola asked.

Karri and Saleena looked at one another. “Yes mother, I saw a movement by the tree line when we came home this morning, Saleena saw a movement yesterday. Why do you ask?” Karri asked.

“I could have sworn I saw somebody come out from the bushes by the tree line and walk to the north side of the house,” Lola said with concern.

The girls walked over and stood next to Lola. They were just getting ready to look out the window, when the front door started to open.

Lola, Karri, and Saleena held each other and were about ready to scream, when Marc walked in.

“Father!” Karri cried running and throwing her arms around his neck.

Marc embraced Karri for a moment, then rushed to Lola’s side. “Are you all right? What’s wrong?” he asked.

“Oh Marc, I saw somebody come out from the tree line and come towards the house. We don’t know who it was. Was that you?” Lola asked weeping.

“No, I came from town. How long ago did you see this movement?” Marc asked with concern.

“About thirty to forty minutes ago. Marc, did you get the message sent to Hawk?” Lola asked.

“Yes, But I don’t know how long it will take for him to get it. In the meantime, I’m not leaving your side again,” Marc turned and looked at the girls. “Your mother told you, didn’t she? Did you girls see this movement also?” Marc asked.

“Yes, father, we know about the note. And father, we’ve seen movement by the tree line several times ourselves,” Karri replied.

Marc looked at Saleena.

“Saleena, did you see this movement also?” Marc asked.

“Yes, father, I thought it might have been an animal. That’s why I didn’t say anything about it. But when Karri told me she’s seen movement over there also, that’s when we figured out it wasn’t an animal,” Saleena replied.

“Well, it was a good idea for me to go to town then. After I sent the message to Hawk, I went to the store to get some supplies, just in case. Well, at the store I met a ‘friend’,” Marc said with a smile on his face. Marc walked back over to the door

Lola stood up and walked over to Marc. “The friend from the note?” Marc smiled.

Marc opened the front door.

“Won’t you come in,” he said. In walked a person with a long dark cape with a hood on it. Marc smiled. Karri and Saleena stood next to Lola and watched as this person removed the cape.

Chapter 6

Saleena squealed with delight. "Mother!" she cried out. Saleena ran and threw her arms around her.

"Oh Saleena, I've missed you so much," she said with her arms around Saleena. "I'm sorry if I frightened you last night, Lola. I didn't want anyone to know who I was. When Marc came to town, he told me what happened with the rock, and I had to confess that it was me. I told him everything I knew about what those men were talking about. I asked Marc, if there was anything I can do to help. We talked for a few minutes. He went to send the message to Hawk, then he did some shopping and I brought it over. That way nobody knew what was going on," she said.

Saleena was still holding her mother. "Was it you we saw in the tree line?" Saleena asked.

"No dear, but I do know that Finney is behind it. So we have to get you girls to safety. But where could you hide till your uncle gets here?" she asked.

Marc and Lola looked at each other and smiled. "We know just the place. Nobody will ever find them. Except Hawk, he'll know where to look for them. You girls go and get your things ready, just in case you have to leave quickly. In the meantime, your mother, or should I say your mothers and I will pack you some supplies," Marc said.

"All right father, come on Saleena, we have some packing to do. I think we know the place that father is talking about. We'll need to pack a lot of warm clothing and blankets," Karri said.

"Are you sure the girls will be safe, in this place you know?" she asked.

"Believe me, nobody will ever find this place, but if someone did stumble across it. They'd better be fast runners," Marc replied with a smile.

"Why, what's up there? Are you going to send our daughters to a dangerous place?"

"The only danger will be to anyone that goes there to try to hurt those girls. They've accepted Hawk, the girls, and Lola and myself. Believe me, no-one will be able to get anywhere near them," Marc said.

"I trust you, Marc."

Lola and Marc and Saleena's mother went into the kitchen to get the supplies ready.

"Lola, how is the baby?"

"Getting bigger," Lola chuckled.

"Did you find out if it's going to be a boy or a girl?"

"No. We would like a boy. But if it's a girl, we'll be just as happy, right Marc?" Lola said.

"Right," Marc said smiling and patting Lola's stomach.

Karri and Saleena came out from the bedroom. "All right father, we're all packed. Where do you want us to put it?" Karri asked.

"That's great girls, I want you to go put it by the tree line, it will be easier to grab and nobody will find it, except you," Marc replied.

"Marc, wouldn't it be better if they took it up there now? That way it will be there for them, they won't have to worry about trying to find it in the dark," Lola said.

Marc gazed at Lola with love in his eyes. "You're right dear, it would be better. You girls better get going. I don't want anyone to see you leave the house or what direction you are going. If it starts to get to dark before you head back, I want you to stay up there for the night. Try to come home from a different direction. If anybody is watching, he or she will not know what direction you are really coming from. And girls, please be careful," Marc said.

"Marc, would it be okay if I went up with the girls?"

"I don't think that would be wise, not right now anyway. If something should happen, Hawk will know where to find them. And if something should happen to you. If they happen to find out that you've helped us, you could be in danger also," Marc said.

Marc gazed at Saleena's mother. "You know, we don't even know your name," Marc said.

"Oh my, I guess we never had the chance to be formally introduced. My name is Starleen," she said with a smile.

"Well Starleen, it's nice to meet you. You know my name and my wife's name," Marc said.

They laughed for a few minutes. The girls came back into the living room. "We're ready to go, father. We've packed extra stuff, just in case," Karri said.

"All right girls, you better leave. Karri, do you remember the route you took when Hawk and Buck first got here? I want you to use that way tonight. Even Hawk had a little trouble tracking you in the dark," Marc said with a smile.

"I remember, father. Come on Saleena, we have to go."

Karri went over to Lola and Marc. "I love you mother, I love you father," as she gave them both a hug and a kiss. "We'll be back early in the morning. Just before daylight," Karri said with a smile.

Saleena walked over to her mother.

"Don't worry mother, we'll be fine," she said, then she gave Starleen a hug and a kiss. She then went over to Marc and Lola. "I love you both very much," she said as she gave them both a hug and a kiss.

Marc and Lola embraced Saleena as a parent would.

Karri walked back over to her father and put her arms around his neck. "Father, I feel something is wrong," she whispered.

"What is it Karri? What's wrong?" Marc asked in a whisper.

"Don't trust her," Karri said softly. She gave Marc a kiss on the cheek. "Let's go Saleena," Karri said.

The girls went into the bedroom. "I thought they were leaving?" Starleen asked.

"Umm, they will in a few minutes, they forgot something," Marc replied.

Lola glanced over at Marc, and Marc shook his head. "Yes, they probably forgot something that they really wanted to take. You know teenage girls," Lola said smiling.

"Could I offer you some coffee?" Lola said.

"That would be great," Starleen replied.

“How long will it take for the girls to get where they are going?” she asked still watching the bedroom door.

“I’m not sure how long it will take, I know it takes a while though,” Marc replied.

Marc noticed that Starleen was continuously watching the girls’ bedroom door.

“So Starleen, how long have you lived on Serenity?” Marc asked trying to break her concentration from the girl’s door.

“Oh, umm.. about 3 years now I think,” she replied.

“Here’s your coffee,” Lola said handing her a cup.

“Thank you.”

“How long does it take for the girls to get what they need?” Starleen asked.

“I don’t know, I better check on them,” Marc said.

He slowly walked to the bedroom door and knocked. “Karri, Saleena, are you in there?” Marc slowly opened the door and peeked inside.

He closed the door and walked back out into the living room. “It looks like they went out the window,” Marc said.

“Out the window? Why would they go out that way?” she asked.

“I really don’t know,” Marc replied

“Well, I guess I better start heading back to town. Thank you for the coffee Lola. Marc, please keep me posted on the girls, won’t you?” Starleen said.

“Of course.”

Starleen stood up, and walked out the door.

“Marc, what is going on? Are the girls really gone?” Lola asked.

Marc looked out the window and saw that Starleen had started heading for town. He went across the living room and opened up the bedroom door. “Come on out girls, she’s gone,” he said.

Karri and Saleena walked out of the bedroom.

“What is going on here?” Lola asked.

Chapter 7

“Mother, when Starleen came in I felt something was very wrong. I talked to Saleena while we were in the bedroom and found out that Starleen is Finney’s sister, and they are very close,” Karri said.

“Saleena, is that true? Is Starleen and Finney related?” Marc asked.

“Yes, I think so. I’ve heard them talking several times and they’ve always called each other brother or sister.” Saleena hung her head. “I’m sorry. If you want me to leave your home I will,” Saleena said.

“Child, why would we want you to leave our home? You are not related to them by blood or marriage,” Marc said. Marc walked over to Saleena. “Saleena, what did Hawk say about hanging your head?” Marc asked gently lifting Saleena’s head and looking into her eyes.

“He said, Never hang our heads, and be proud of who and what we are,” Saleena replied.

“That’s right. Are you proud of who and what you are?” Marc asked.

“Yes, I’m very proud,” Saleena replied with her head held high.

“That’s what I wanted to hear. Now you girls better get going. I don’t trust Starleen, she might get her brother to try something tonight. You stay up there, do not come down for anything. Do you understand?” Marc asked.

“Yes father, I understand,” Karri replied.

Marc gazed at Saleena. “Do you understand, Saleena?”

Saleena looked at Marc and Lola. “Yes, I understand. Before we leave, may I ask you a question?”

“Of course, what is it?”

“May I still call you mother and father?” she asked.

Lola walked over Marc.

Marc and Lola gently put their arms around Saleena and Karri. “Yes, we wouldn’t have it any other way. No matter what, you and Karri are still our daughters,” Marc said.

“Now, you better go. Remember, do not come home for anything. Hawk or I will come get you.”

The girls embraced their parents one more time and went back into the bedroom. Saleena watched Karri as she started to climb out the bedroom window. “Why are you climbing out the window?” she asked.

“This is the way I left when Hawk first came here. He couldn’t track me very well. Only this time nobody is going to be able to track us,” Karri said with a smile.

“Oh,” Saleena replied as she climbed out the window after Karri.

Marc and Lola stood at the window. They watched as Karri picked up a branch that was laying on the ground and started to erase their tracks by sweeping the branch back and forth on the ground as they walked away from the house.

“Now, nobody will be able to track us,” Karri said.

The girls started to run towards the mountain, being ever so careful not to break any branches or limbs along the way.

“Marc, I know I worry about them too much. But, will they be all right up there? If they have to stay up there for a long time?” Lola asked with tears in her eyes.

“Yes, they’ll be all right. I just hope they do what they are told, for once,” Marc said with concern.

Karri and Saleena were watching for any movement around them as they headed for the mountain base. They were about ready to start up the mountain, when Karri stopped and turned around. She looked at Saleena with tears in her eyes. “I can’t leave them, not now,” she said as she started to run back to the house.

“Karri! Stop, please,” Saleena called out.

But Karri didn’t listen. She kept running. Saleena dropped her pack and started to run after her.

At the house, Lola and Marc heard some noise out front. “Stay in the bedroom, I’m going to see who is out there,” Marc said.

Just as Marc was about to open the front door, it burst open.

Chapter 8

“Where are they?” the stranger yelled.

“I don’t know who you’re talking about. Get out of my house,” Marc shouted.

“Where are the female birdpeople? If you tell us where they are, we won’t hurt you.”

Marc reached for his weapon. Just then a shot rang out.

Marc fell to the floor, his weapon dropped from his hand. “Karri, Saleena, I love you. Please forgive me,” were the last words Marc spoke. Lola came running out from the back bedroom and threw herself over Marc’s lifeless body, crying.

“Marc!... Marc!” she cried out.

As she looked up into the stranger’s face, another shot rang out.

Karri, hearing the shots, stopped at the tree line and watched. As she was watching the strangers at the house, she didn’t realize that a stranger was creeping up behind her. As Karri got up and started to turn around to run, the mystery person grabbed her, but before the person could cover her mouth, she screamed out a warning to Saleena.

“Saleena...Run.”

Saleena stopped about 100 feet from Karri and the stranger. She hid among the trees, listening and watching.

“Now you belong to me,” the stranger said as he grabbed Karri by her arms.

“What have you done to my parents? They never did nothing to you,” she cried out.

“Marc knew too much. I couldn’t have him spoiling my plans, not now. But you, my beautiful birdwoman are an extra bonus. Now I want your friend, where is she?” he said looking around.

“I’m not telling you anything, you monster.”

“Very well, we’ll find her soon enough,” he said. He looked at Karri. “I know you want to know who I am, don’t you?” he said. He reached up and pushed the hood off the top of his head.

“FINNEY!” she cried out, knowing Saleena was not far away.

“Yes, my pretty birdlady. Now let’s go check on your family.”

He dragged her by the arm towards the house. When they got to the house a couple of men came out. “All right Finney, we want our money. You know what Hawk will do to us if he finds out who did this,” one of the men said with fear in his voice.

“Don’t worry, Hawk is long gone. He hasn’t showed his face around here for all most 8 months now. And besides, he won’t do anything, I have his precious niece. He knows I’ll kill her in a heart beat if he tries anything. I’ll give you the money, after we get back to town. There’s still one more out there, find her. And bring her to me. I’m going to love having a matching set,” Finney laughed looking at Karri.

As they were about to leave, Karri glanced into the house. There on the floor laid Lola and Marc in a pool of blood. She doubled over in pain at the sight of her dead parents. “NO!....” she cried out.

On the Searcher, Hawk was on the bridge when all of a sudden he doubled over in pain.

“Hawk, are you all right? What’s wrong?” the Admiral asked with concern.

Hawk stood up and looked at the Admiral.

“Admiral, Karri’s in pain. Please sir, I have to go to her,” Hawk pleaded with tears forming in his eyes.

“Go, we’ll be there as soon as we can,” the Admiral replied.

“Thank you sir.”

Hawk left the bridge and was on his way down to the hanger when Buck stopped him.

“What’s the hurry Hawk?” Buck asked.

“Karri’s in trouble,” Hawk replied without stopping.

Back on Serenity, Finney stopped and gazed at Karri. “That’s what we did to yours and Saleena’s real parents. They ruined everything for me,” Finney said.

“You murdered our parents? Why? What did they ever do to you? They just wanted to live in peace, be accepted by the humans here,” Karri said with tears in her eyes.

“A long time ago, your kind lived here. In peace with everyone. That’s why nobody minded you being what you are. I created a deadly illness to get rid of those that went against me, I wanted everything. But most of all, I wanted to kill your kind off. As it turned out your people had a cure. So they saved the other humans as well. Ever since then I’ve hated your kind. Except this time my beautiful bird, no one will stop me. Not even your uncle. Enough of this, come on,” he said pulling Karri.

The men that did the killings stood and watched as Finney dragged Karri off.

“I don’t like this, he never said anything about taking Karri or Saleena. I’m not going to look for Saleena. Hawk is going to be mad enough when he finds out that Finney took her. Let alone killing Lola and Marc. I’m out of here,” one of them said.

“I agree, I wouldn’t want to be Finney when Hawk comes back. You know, he’s also going to be looking for us, for killing Marc and Lola. And what’s even worse, is that Lola was about ready to give birth to their first child. He can keep the money, I’m out of here.”

The men took off in different directions.

Saleena sat by the tree line crying.

“What am I going to do?” she cried. She slowly got up, picked up the packs and headed for the mountains, like she promised Marc, and Lola.

As Saleena reached the cave the wolves came out to greet her as they always had in the past. But this time something was different. The Alpha female walked up to Saleena and started licking her hand. “What am I going to do, wolf? Finney has taken my sister, he had Marc and Lola killed. And I don’t know if Hawk got the message,” Saleena said with tears running down her cheek.

Back at the house there came a soft moan from inside the house.

Chapter 9

A mile west of town, Finney arrived at his home with Karri. He took her into the study, and closed the sliding doors behind him. He turned and gazed at his prize. "Welcome home, my pretty ladybird," Finney said.

Karri still weeping from the loss of her adoptive parents. "Hawk will find me and when he does, he'll kill you for what you've done. I bet you even had something to do with murdering all our people on Throm, didn't you?" Karri said with tears still falling down her cheek.

Finney smiled.

"You are a very beautiful and smart lady. Yes, I did have something to do with what happened on Throm. But it didn't turn out quite the way I wanted it to. All of your kind should have been killed off. But I guess the men that I hired didn't get it right. After all, your uncle is still alive," Finney said with an evil grin.

"He will find me," Karri replied.

"I don't think so. See, I know Marc didn't have time to send a message to him. Besides, he didn't even come into town. I also know he doesn't have a radio in the house," Finney said laughing.

Karri started to smile.

"What are you smiling about?" Finney asked.

"You're wrong Finney. My father came into town this morning. Ask your sister," Karri said.

"That's impossible, I would have known. My sister tells me everything," Finney replied.

"Apparently, she doesn't tell you everything. Did she tell you she talked to my father this morning? She even brought food out to the house. She knew we were getting ready to hide from you. Did she tell you that? That's why we were not at the house when you got there. Saleena told us that you two were related. You forgot she lived with your sister for about 3 years."

Karri hesitated for a moment. "Or maybe, Starleen was keeping her away from you for as long as possible. Waiting for the right moment to show the townspeople. After all, you didn't even know about Saleena, did you? I bet, right now Starleen is talking to somebody about what you've done," Karri said with a smile on her face.

"She wouldn't do that. I know my sister."

Finney started to think of why his sister might betray him. Then there was a light knock on the study door. Finney glanced over at Karri. "Don't say a word, or else," he said pointing his finger at her.

Finney opened one of the sliding doors and saw that it was Marie, his maid.

"Yes, Marie?"

"I'm sorry for the intrusion sir. But, is there anything special you would like for dinner this evening?" she asked with a smile.

"Yes Marie, I would really enjoy having some of your homemade stew," he replied with a smile.

Marie was in just far enough to see that Finney was not alone. She could see that there was a young woman with him. But then something caught her eye. Through the crack, she could see that this woman had feathers. She knew right

away that it had to be Karri or Saleena. She looked at Finney again. "Would you like anything else with that, sir?" she asked.

"No, Marie. That will be all," Finney said while sliding the door closed.

"How are you going to explain to the people that Lola and Marc have been murdered? And how are you going to explain me being here, with no Saleena?" Karri asked.

Finney thought for a moment.

"I have that already figured out. You came to me because, I'm the only one you can trust. And Saleena had gone back to live with Starleen. Besides, nobody will know that you are here," Finney replied.

Finney got a big grin on his face.

"Better yet, Hawk killed your parents, he then took you and Saleena with him. He didn't want no human raising his niece, and another birdwoman. He killed them because he wanted you and Saleena all to himself," Finney said with a evil grin.

"That is really sick. Only a sick human would think of something like that. Everyone knows we do not believe in inbreeding, like some humans," Karri said.

"You know that, and I know that. But these ignorant people in this town don't. So you see my little bird, no-one will ever know you are even here."

Little did Finney know that somebody did know that Karri was here. Marie was standing outside the door before she knocked, listening to every word that was said. After she knocked on the door and confirmed that Karri was in there, she hurried over to the main office.

"I have to send a message to the Searcher, right away," she said.

"What's wrong Marie?" Cathy asked. Marie told Cathy what she had heard.

"What! Are you serious? Finney is holding Karri against her will? What does he intend to do to that poor girl? What did he do with Saleena? He also had Marc and Lola killed?" Cathy said with an angry look on her face.

"Please Cathy, could you send the message for me? I really need to let Hawk know, please," Marie pleaded.

"Of course, I'll send it right now." With-in a few minutes another message was sent to the Searcher.

"I'd hate to be Finney when Hawk gets these messages. You know, Marc was in here just this morning sending a message to Hawk," Cathy said.

"He did? Do you remember what he said in it?" Marie asked.

"Let me think, it said something about Finney and that the girls were in danger. I'm sorry Marie, that's all I can remember," Cathy said.

Chapter 10

Up at the cave, Saleena sat and cried, wondering what was going to happen to her. The female wolf walked over and laid down next to her. The wolf put her head on Saleena's lap. Saleena began to pet the wolf, but being so exhausted, she soon fell asleep.

Some of the wolves sensed something was wrong. Leaving the cave, they headed down towards the house. A short time later the wolves arrived at Marc and Lola's. They stopped, sniffed the air, and cautiously entered the home. They soon left the house for the smell of death was in it. They made their way up to the cave. They went back inside and gathered around a sleeping Saleena, as if to protect her.

Up on the Searcher, Hawk was getting more and more frustrated, unable to leave the Searcher right away due to a refueling problem. He still had the feeling of fear that he felt on the bridge.

A few moments later, Buck came running into the hanger.

"Hawk! We just received two messages from Serenity. One was from Marc, the other from somebody by the name of Marie," Buck said with a concerned look on his face.

"Let me see them," Hawk said taking them from Buck's hands.

Hawk read both messages. "I have to get down there, NOW."

"What do they say?"

"One of them reads; Hawk, the girls are in danger. Please come as soon as you can, Marc." The other one says that Karri is being held against her will by, FINNEY...signed Marie.

Hawk's face started to turn red with anger.

"I'm going to kill him. If he does anything to hurt her. I swear, with Make-Make as my witness, I will kill him," Hawk said anger in his voice.

Buck got on the intercom.

"Buck to bridge."

"Go ahead Buck."

"Admiral, Hawk's ship is not fueled yet. Permission to take him down to Serenity in one of the fighters?" Buck asked.

"Permission granted."

Buck looked at Hawk. "Well, are you coming or not? We can't stand around here all day," Buck said.

"Why are you going? I can fly a fighter just as good as you can, if not better," Hawk snapped at Buck.

Buck looked at Hawk with understanding eyes.

"Because my friend, she's part of your family and you are part of mine," Buck replied.

Hawk gazed at his friend.

“I’m sorry Buck, I know you are just trying to help. It’s just that I’m mad, and also frightened for Karri and Saleena right now. Forgive me?” Hawk said.

“There’s nothing to forgive, my friend. I would have been the same way if it was my relative,” Buck said.

“Let’s go get Karri and Saleena,” Hawk said.

Just as they were climbing into the fighter, one of the maintenance crew ran up waving his arms.

“Tell Hawk the WarHawk is fueled and ready to go.”

Before Buck could turn his head to tell Hawk, Hawk was out of the fighter and heading for his ship. Hawk patted the man that gave him the news on his shoulder. “Thank you,” he said.

Hawk stopped, turned and looked at Buck. “You’re still coming aren’t you?” Hawk asked.

Buck nodded.

“You couldn’t keep me away,” Buck replied smiling.

Buck and Hawk took off from the Searcher, and met each other on the outside.

On the way down to the planet, Buck could see the stress his friend was under.

“They’re going to be all right, Hawk. Karri is a survivor, remember how well she hid the tracks on you. Saleena should be close by the house. I don’t think she would wander far,” Buck said trying to reassure his friend.

“I know, but I still have that scared feeling. It’s coming from Karri. I’m more attached to her than I thought I was,” Hawk said.

As they got closer to the planet, Hawk and Buck were talking about where they were going to land.

“I’m landing right in the front of the house,” Hawk replied.

“I’ll be right beside you,” Buck said.

As they got closer to the house, Hawk was getting more and more nervous.

They finally had the house in sight. Buck and Hawk landed in the front yard. As they got out of their fighters, Hawk called for Marc and Lola. There was no answer. Hawk noticed the front door was open. He knew something was wrong right away. Marc would never leave the door open. He used to say that he didn’t want the critters coming into the house.

Buck looked over at Hawk.

“I’ll go check the back,” Buck said.

Hawk nodded.

Hawk slowly walked up towards the front door, pushed it open the rest of the way. He couldn’t see anything at first.

He slowly walked inside.

Chapter 11

As Hawk walked around the sofa in the house he saw what appeared to be two bodies lying on the floor. He rushed over and found Marc lying in a pool of blood, with Lola's body draped over him.

He gently turned Lola's body over and held her. "NO!...." he cried out.

Buck came running into the house.

"Hawk, what is it?"

As he got closer he could see Hawk kneeling next to two bodies, holding Lola in his arms.

Buck went to his friend's side.

"I'm sorry, my friend," Buck said putting his hand on Hawk's shoulder.

Just then they heard a very light moan. Hawk looked down at Lola. She slowly opened her eyes, only for a few seconds then closed them again.

"Hawk?" she said softly opening her eyes again.

"She's alive! I have to get her up to the Searcher right away for help," Hawk said with tears running down his cheek.

Hawk picked Lola up ever so gently and carried her out to the WarHawk.

"Go. I'll tend to Marc," Buck replied.

Hawk didn't acknowledge what Buck said. He put Lola's body into the WarHawk and started the engines. Within seconds he lifted off.

"Hawk to Searcher."

"Go ahead Hawk."

"I'm bringing up a seriously injured pregnant woman. She needs medical help right away. Please, have the medical team waiting for me in the hanger bay," Hawk requested closing his eyes to hold back the tears.

"Hawk, who is it? It's not Karri or Saleena is it?"

Hawk closed his eyes again. "No, it's Lola, Marc's dead," Hawk replied.

"Understood, I'll have the medical team and Dr. Goodfellow standing by in hanger bay 3. Hawk, we're sorry to hear about Marc and Lola. Is there any sign of the girls?" Asimov asked.

"No. We just found Marc and Lola. Buck is still on the planet. But, I think I know where they would have gone, if they're still alive," Hawk said.

"Understood....Searcher out."

Hawk looked back to check on Lola.

"Hang on Lola, we're almost there," Hawk assured her.

“Hawk, where’s the girls?” she asked softly.

“Don’t worry about them right now. Worry about yourself and the baby right now. The girls will be fine,” Hawk said.

Hawk finally landed on the Searcher. It felt like it took forever for him to get there. Even though it had only been about twenty minutes.

The medical team and Dr. Goodfellow came out to meet Hawk as he carried Lola’s body out of the WarHawk.

“We’ll take her from here, Hawk,” Goodfellow said patting Hawk on the back.

Hawk stayed at Lola’s side all the way to the sick bay. After they were inside, Dr. Goodfellow looked over at Hawk.

“My dear boy, I know you want to stay with her. But I need to run some tests, and check to see if the baby is still alive. Do me a favor. Leave for a little while. I’ll let you know how she and the baby are doing as soon as possible,” Dr. Goodfellow said with his hand on Hawk’s shoulder.

Hawk nodded, he walked over to Lola and stood by her side. He gently picked up her hand and held it for a few moments, he leaned over and kissed Lola gently on the forehead.

“I swear Lola, I will find the girls, and I will find out who did this,” Hawk said softly.

Lola moaned softly, as if to acknowledge what Hawk said.

Hawk slowly backed away as the medical team approached. He turned and looked at the doctor. “Please, help her,” Hawk said with tears in his eyes.

“We’ll do our best dear boy. Now, if you would kindly leave for a while. I’ll call when we’re done. All right?” Goodfellow said with a smile.

Hawk looked back over at Lola, then at the doctor.

“All right doctor. I’ll be right outside,” Hawk said.

Goodfellow nodded.

After Hawk had left the sick bay, Nurse Simpson looked over at Goodfellow and signaled for him to come over.

“Listen to this doctor. Tell me what you hear,” Simpson said with a concerned look on her face.

Goodfellow looked at the nurse.

“What seems to be the problem? What do you hear?” he asked.

The nurse handed the doctor the monitor and smiled.

Dr. Goodfellow put the monitor on Lola’s stomach, listened for a few seconds, then moved it to another spot. He looked up at the nurse and smiled.

“Let’s get her stabilized, quickly,” Goodfellow said.

They worked on Lola for almost an hour.

“It’s not going good. Get Hawk in here, he’s right outside the door,” the doctor said.

Nurse Simpson nodded

“Wait... I’ll get him,” Goodfellow said.

The doctor slowly walked up to the door, sighed, and opened the door.

“Hawk? You can come in now. But... I want to talk to you before you go over to Lola,” he said with a sad expression on his face.

Hawk walked into the sick bay and stood before the doctor.

“How is she? Is the baby all right?” Hawk asked quickly.

“Hawk, I’m afraid Lola is not going to make it. The damage is too extensive, I’m sorry. But, my dear boy come over here a moment,” Goodfellow said motioning Hawk to come over to Lola’s side. “Listen to this.”

Chapter 12

The doctor put the monitor down against Lola's stomach, and a heart beat came over the speaker. The doctor then moved the monitor again to another spot. Again, another heart beat.

Hawk looked at the doctor.

"Is that what I think it is? The baby is alive?" Hawk asked with a smile.

Goodfellow smiled.

"Oh, my dear boy, the baby is more than all right. Both of them are doing just fine," he said with a big smile on his face.

Hawk looked at the doctor with a confused look.

"Both? Did you say both babies are doing just fine?" Hawk asked with a puzzled expression on his face.

The doctor nodded.

"Yes, that's what I said. Both babies are doing fine. Hawk, Lola is going to have twins," Goodfellow said with a smile.

Hawk stood there for a few moments. "Twins? are you sure?" he asked.

Goodfellow and Nurse Simpson both smiled and nodded.

Hawk took Lola's hand, leaned over and whispered the news. "Lola, you're going to have twins," he said softly as he kissed her on her forehead.

"Hawk?" came a very soft and weak voice.

Hawk stood up and gazed at Lola. "Yes Lola, I'm here," he said softly.

"Hawk, where are my girls? You have to save my daughters, please Hawk," Lola said in a very weak voice.

Hawk turned and looked at Goodfellow. "How long does she have," he whispered softly.

"We have fluids going into her, I'm giving her medication for the pain. I can probably keep her alive for, about 24 hours, with-out endangering the babies. Hawk, I need to know something. If something goes wrong, does she want me save the babies? I need to know right away. I know what her answer is going to be, but I need to have witnesses, to verify. I hope she understands. I'm not trying to be cruel. I will do my best to save the babies, if that's what she wants," Goodfellow said.

Hawk leaned over and started to talk to Lola.

"Lola, did you hear what the doctor said? He needs to know what you want him to do," Hawk asked his eyes swelling with tears.

Lola slowly opened her eyes, and gazed at Hawk. "Call him over here. I'll tell him," she said softly.

Hawk motioned for the doctor and all the nurses to gather around Lola's bed.

"Lola, he's here, and so are the witnesses."

Lola gazed up at Goodfellow, and then looked at each and every one of the nurses and assistants.

“Hawk tells me you are the best. Hear me now doctor. I want you to do anything and everything humanly possible to save my babies,” she said then she closed her eyes again.

Hawk looked at Goodfellow and nurses. “That is what she wants,” he said.

“All right, then that’s what she’s going to get. Get things set up for an emergency cesarean section. Get it ready now,” Goodfellow ordered.

“Hawk, you should leave now. There are two more responsibilities down on that planet that are waiting for you. They need you more right now, than I do. Go dear boy, go find your niece and her sister,” Goodfellow said patting Hawk on his shoulder.

Hawk nodded.

“Thank you, doctor. I’ll be back as soon as I possibly can, with the girls. Please, do all you can to keep her alive till I return with Karri and Saleena,” Hawk pleaded.

“I will, my dear boy. I will.”

Just as Hawk opened the door of the sick bay to leave, the Admiral walked in. “How is Lola doing?” he asked.

Hawk looked at him. “She’s not going to make it sir. I’m sorry, I have to leave. I have to find Karri and Saleena, before it’s too late,” Hawk said as he walked out the door.

Hawk ran back to the hanger and climbed into the WarHawk.

“Hawk,” someone yelled.

Hawk looked around. At first he didn’t see anyone, till out from the entry way walked out 4 pilots.

“We’re coming with you,” McGregor said with a smile.

Hawk looked at McGregor and the other pilots. “By who’s order?” he asked.

“By mine, and the Admiral’s orders,” another voice rang out.

Out from in back of the other pilots, Wilma walked out.

Hawk smiled. “It’s good to have friends,” Hawk said.

“Let’s go get you niece and Saleena,” McGregor said.

Hawk, Wilma, and the other four pilots climbed into their fighters. Within seconds they were on their way to the planet surface.

Chapter 13

Down below, Buck had just finished with Marc's grave.

"I'm sorry Marc, but this is going to have to do for right now. We have to find your daughters and take care of Lola first. Then we can give you a proper burial," Buck said.

He just threw the last of the dirt on the shallow grave when he heard the fighters approaching.

Hawk, Wilma, and the other fighters landed not far from where Buck had dug the grave for Marc. They exited their fighters and walked over to him.

"Looks like you brought the army again," Buck said with a smile.

Hawk looked at him and nodded.

"We have to hurry. Lola's not going to make it. We have to find Karri and Saleena as fast as possible. Then I'll take care of Finney," Hawk said.

"How is her baby?" Buck asked.

"The babies are doing okay. But we still have to find the girls and get them up there as fast as we possibly can, so they can say good-bye," Hawk replied.

Buck looked at Hawk with a surprised look on his face. "Did I hear you say babies?" Buck asked.

"Yes, Lola is going to have twins. Goodfellow said that he can keep her alive for about twenty-four hours without endangering the babies. That's why we have to hurry. I'm going up to the cave. I pray that the girls are up there. I'll be back as soon as I can. I told the girls to go up to the cave if anything should happen while I was gone; to use it as a safe house," Hawk replied.

"Do you want me to come with you?" Wilma asked.

"No, thank you. The wolves might not take to strangers too well if they think the girls might be in danger. I'll be back soon," Hawk said.

Hawk climbed up into the WarHawk. The engines started and he headed for the mountain.

On the way up to the mountain, all Hawk could think about was Karri and Saleena, how they were going to react to the news that their father was killed and their mother is dying. His thoughts then turned to Lola. "Twins, and soon to be orphaned. Just like their sisters," he thought to himself. As he landed in the field, he saw two of the wolves run in the direction of the cave. He still had that feeling of fear that he felt earlier. "They should know I'm here by now. Maybe they're sleeping. Or they're not here at all," Hawk said to himself.

Hawk exited the WarHawk, and made his way up the narrow path to the opening of the cave. He was about to enter the cave, when all of a sudden before him stood a full grown bear. He drew his weapon. The bear stood on its hind legs and growled. From somewhere in the cave came a bark, then a few more barks and growls. The bear calmed down and walked back into the cave.

"Karri, Saleena, it's Hawk," he yelled.

There was no answer at first, then out from the shadows Saleena came running out.

"Uncle!" she cried as she ran out from the cave, throwing her arms around Hawk's neck.

Hawk put his arms around Saleena and held her tightly, kissing her on the top of her head. He backed up a step, placed his fingers under Saleena's chin and lifted gently, he looked into Saleena's eyes. "Saleena, where's Karri? Is she with you?" he asked.

"No, he took her," she cried.

"Who took her? Saleena, tell me who took Karri?" Hawk asked.

"Finney!" she said crying harder.

Hawk looked at Saleena. "Are you sure it was Finney?" he asked.

"Yes, she yelled out his name after he grabbed her," she said with tears rolling down her face.

"Come on, Buck and Wilma are down at the house. They will take care of you. On second thought... you'll be safer up here in the cave." Hawk thought for a moment. "I'm going to have Wilma come up here and stay with you. Do you think the wolves or bear would harm her?" he asked.

"No, I don't think so. Uncle, where's mother and father?" she asked.

All Hawk could do was hold her. "How can I tell her?" he thought to himself.

"Uncle, I remember something else. When Karri and I were getting ready to come up here, my other mother came over; she helped Marc carry the food from town when he sent you the message. Karri got a feeling that something was wrong. Then I told her that Starleen was Finney's sister. That got Lola and Marc to thinking that my other mother was in on it. But, why didn't she turn me over to Finney right away," Saleena said with tears in her eyes.

"Starleen is Finney's sister? I know that you'll be safer up here. I'll send Wilma up here. Make sure the bear and wolves don't harm her. Then when I get your sister back, I'll bring her up here to you, then I'll take care of Finney, and his sister," Hawk said.

"Please, don't leave me uncle," Saleena cried.

Hawk gazed into Saleena's eyes.

"I'll never leave you or your sister again, that I swear. But, I do have to leave you now, just for a little while. I have to go find Karri," Hawk said.

"Uncle, please, take me with you. I'm afraid that if you leave me this time, I'll never see you again," Saleena cried.

Hawk thought for a moment.

"Yes, it would be safer if you came with me. But you stay close to Wilma, Buck, or myself. Do you understand?" Hawk asked.

"Yes uncle, I understand. Uncle, where is mother and father?"

Hawk turned away, then looked at Saleena again.

"I'm sorry Saleena. Marc is dead, and Lola is in very serious condition. That's why we have to hurry and find your sister," Hawk said lowering his head.

"Father is dead? Is mother going to make it?"

"I'm afraid not. Come on, we have to go."

Hawk helped Saleena into the WarHawk, then he climbed in himself.

"Uncle?"

"Yes, Saleena."

"Is the baby going to be all right?"

"Yes, as soon as we get your sister back, I have to take you both up to the Searcher."

Hawk started the engines and headed for the house.

"Hawk to Buck."

"Go ahead Hawk, did you find the girls?"

"I've got Saleena, Karri was taken by Finney."

"Understood..... Buck out."

Chapter 14

Back in town, Finney was confronting Starleen.

“Why didn’t you tell me that Marc was in town yesterday morning, and that he had sent a message to Hawk?”

“I’m sorry, you were all ready on your way out to the house, by the time I got back,” Starleen said.

“All you’ve caused me is trouble. Now Hawk will come running to save his precious niece and Saleena. Well, I’ve got news for him. By the time he gets here, I would have gotten rid of the evidence. Namely Karri and Saleena. I don’t want there to be any witnesses, of any kind. And that means you, my dear sister,” Finney said with hatred in his eyes.

“What do you mean? You wouldn’t, I’m your sister.”

“On the contrary. You, my dear sister are the only witness left. The others are gone, I’ve paid them off. But, when they get to their new home, someone will be waiting to take care of them,” Finney said with an evil grin.

“I was just kidding, I would never hurt you. You and I are the only ones left of our family,” he said looking into her eyes. Finney walked closer to Starleen. He acted like he was going to embrace her, when he slipped his hands around her throat and started to squeeze tighter and tighter. She looked at him with pleading eyes, reaching up trying to free herself from his grip. But it was no use, his grip took its toll. Just as she was ready to take her last breath, he kissed her on the forehead. “Tell mother and father hello for me,” he said laughing. He released her throat after it was over. Starleen fell to the floor. “I’ll get rid of her body tonight. No one will even know she was here,” he said.

Little did Finney know, there was an unexpected visitor outside the door.

Marie had been listening. She heard, and saw everything that was said, and the killing of Starleen. She quickly ran out of the house. Not knowing where to go, she started to run for Marc’s and Lola’s house. “I can hide there till Hawk comes back.” Not knowing Hawk and Buck were all ready. “If he can kill his own sister, he wouldn’t hesitate to kill me,” she thought to herself as she ran.

Karri sat in a dark, locked room at the top of the stairs. She heard somebody walking up the stairs. A moment later a key turned the door knob and the door opened. She took a deep breath and waited to see who was coming in. She was hoping it was the maid, Marie. But her hopes were soon shattered, in walked Finney.

“Well, my little song-bird. How are you doing?” he asked as he checked her binds.

“My uncle will find me, and he will kill you for what you’ve done to our people, Marc and Lola,” Karri said.

Finney laughed.

“Your uncle doesn’t know where you’re at. And none of those idiots in town know either. I’ve just killed the last one that knew anything about it. My dear sweet sister, Starleen,” Finney said laughing.

“You killed your own sister? What kind of monster are you?”

“A monster that always gets what he wants. As soon as those other idiots bring me Saleena, my set will be complete,” Finney said with an evil grin on his face. “Now my little bird, I have some business to take care of. Marie should be up with your dinner soon. Come to think of it, I haven’t seen Marie for a while now. She’s probably gone to the market. She knows how much I love beef stew,” Finney said with a smile.

“Your men will never find my sister,” Karri said loudly.

“On the contrary, my beautiful little bird. They will,” he said as he shut the door behind him as he left.

Karri hung her head and began to weep softly.

“Oh uncle, where are you? I’m so afraid,” she said softly to herself.

At Marc’s and Lola’s house, Hawk, Buck, Wilma and the rest of the search party were about to leave with Saleena when Hawk noticed a woman running towards them. She got within a few feet then collapsed from exhaustion. Hawk ran over to her and lifted her head.

“I must find Hawk. Karri’s in danger,” she said gasping for air.

“I am Hawk. Woman, what do you mean by Karri’s in danger?”

“Thank god. My name is Marie, I sent you a message. You must hurry Hawk, he’s gone crazy. He just killed his own sister, Starleen. I’m afraid what he might do to that poor girl. I must tell you something first. I heard him say that he was responsible for the deaths of Marc, Lola, and all of your kind on Throm and here on Serenity. He also admitted to killing Saleena’s and Karri’s real parents. He told your niece that he started a deadly illness here, and the birdpeople saved a lot of the humans, something about a cure they developed. He was so furious that he started to murder anyone that got in his way. It didn’t matter who it was, including his own sister. He was very mad at her for hiding Saleena from him. He strangled her right there in his study. I saw it with my own eyes. Please Hawk, hurry!” Marie said with tears streaming down her cheek.

“Where is Karri right now?” Hawk asked.

“She’s locked up in a room at the top of the stairs. He has her hands and feet tied. I can take you to her,” she said.

Hawk stood up, looked towards town.

“No Marie, thank you for your help. But, you’ll be safer here,” Hawk replied.

“Hawk, how do you want to do this?” Buck asked gazing at his friend with concern.

Hawk was silent for a few moments then he turned and looked at Marie.

“Marie, how well do you know the townspeople?” Hawk asked.

“I know them all really well, why?”

“Would you like to help?”

“Hawk, if it’s going to help you save Karri. Yes,” she replied.

“What do you have in mind, my friend?” Buck asked.

Hawk looked at Buck and the rest of the crew and smiled.

“I think I know how we can do this without getting anyone hurt, except Finney,” Hawk replied.

Chapter 15

“Marie, could you please go back to town. Start telling the townspeople what happened. Tell them everything, how Finney massacred all the birdpeople on Throm, and the few on Serenity because of his hatred towards them. Because they made a cure for that deadly illness that he started. Also tell them that he killed Karri’s and Saleena’s real parents, Marc, and Starleen, his own sister,” Hawk said.

“Hawk, what about Lola?” Marie asked.

Hawk smiled for a few moments.

“Lola is still alive, for now anyway. She’s up on our ship being taken care of.”

“She’s still alive? Oh, thank god. How is the baby?”

“The babies are doing fine. But, we don’t have much time.”

“Did you say babies?”

“Yes, Lola is having twins.”

“Hawk, is Lola going to be all right?”

Hawk hung his head.

“No, I’m afraid not. That’s why we don’t have much time. I have to get the girls up to the Searcher before it’s too late. Two of my men will go with you to make sure Finney doesn’t try to stop you, or hurt you in any way,” Hawk said.

“Hawk, we’ll go with this lady,” a voice said coming from behind Hawk.

Hawk turned, he saw McGregor and Murphy walking towards him. “We’d be more than happy to escort her,” McGregor said smiling.

Hawk nodded his head in approval.

“While you’re talking to the townspeople, I get into the house and get Karri.” Hawk looked at Marie. “Marie, are you sure you can do this?” Hawk asked.

“Yes Hawk. My house is just before we get to town. We’ll stop there. These men can change their clothing, to blend in more. I don’t think it would be wise for them to go into town with those clothes on, would you?” Marie asked.

“You’re one smart lady, Marie. That would be a good idea. Finney would be able to see our uniforms,” Hawk replied.

Saleena who was standing back with Wilma walked over to Marie. “Is Karri all right?” she asked.

“Yes child, she’s all right,” Marie hesitated for a moment. “Hawk, before we go I just wanted to say how sorry I am at the lost of your people. I’ve lived here all my life. I was here when they first came to Serenity. They were very special. They worked with the townspeople. They contributed so much to our town. If it wasn’t for them coming up with the cure, I would have lost my only child, for that I am deeply grateful.” Marie hung her head, “I owe you, and them a lot,” she said.

Hawk put his arms around Marie.

“I wanted to say thank you again for your help Marie, It means a lot to me, Karri, and Saleena,” Hawk said.

“Hawk, we don’t have much time left. We need to go, what is your plan?” Buck asked.

Hawk looked at Buck, Wilma and the rest of the crew.

“I want Finney. No matter what it takes, he’s mine.”

Buck studied his friend’s face for a few moments. He could see Hawk’s anger swelling inside him.

“Uncle, may I go with you? I can’t stay here. I want to help. Is there anything I can do?” Saleena asked with tears in her eyes.

Hawk gazed at Saleena.

“As a matter of fact, yes, there is something you can do. Can you talk to the wolves and the bear like Karri does?” Hawk asked with a smile on his face.

“Yes, I think so, why?”

Hawk turned to Buck and Wilma. “Could you fly her up to the cave?” he asked.

“Yes Hawk, why? What do you have in mind?” Wilma asked with a confused expression on her face.

“We can use all the help we can get to flush out Finney. If he learns I’m here he’s going to run, or turn on Karri. We might be able to track him for a little while. But, if we should happen to lose him, the wolves could pick up the scent and lead us right to him,” Hawk said.

“I see where you’re going with this,” Buck replied.

Hawk smiled.

“Saleena, when you get up to the cave talk to them, let them know Karri is in danger. Ask them for help. Then I want you to stay up there. I know you want to help, but I don’t want anything to happen to you. You’ll be safer up there. Wilma will stay with you. I promise, I will come get you as soon as I take care of Finney and get your sister, all right?” Hawk asked.

“But uncle, I...”

“Saleena, do what I ask, please,” Hawk said with a concerned expression on his face.

Saleena knew it was for her own good.

“I promise uncle, I’ll stay up at the cave. But, please bring my sister back,” she said with her eyes still swelling with tears.

Hawk embraced her, then gently kissed her on the top of her head. “I will, now you better get going. It will take about an hour for McGregor and Murphy to reach town. I’m going to take the WarHawk into the valley about a mile from town and walk in. That way he will not know I’m here. Marie, tell everyone you see what happened, all right? Do you think the townspeople will back him if they find out what he did?” Hawk asked.

“No, the townspeople loved the birdpeople. When they find out what he did to all those birdpeople, Marc, and Starleen, he will wish he was never born,” Marie said.

“Good, we better get going. I’ll see all of you in town,” Hawk said.

“Come on Saleena, I have to get you up to the cave. So you can tell the wolves what’s going on,” Wilma said.

“We better go as well. We have a walk ahead of us,” McGregor said.

Buck looked at Hawk.

“Be careful, my friend. I’ll see you in town in about one hour,” Buck said.

Hawk nodded. “I’ll see you there.”

Hawk climbed into the WarHawk, then started the engines. Looking out he could see Saleena waving at him, weeping. He waved back and smiled. A moment later the WarHawk took off. A few moments after that, Wilma and Saleena climbed into the fighter and took off as well. Buck stood there and watched as McGregor, Murphy, and Marie started to walk down the road that would lead them to town. Buck walked over to his fighter, stopped and looked at the house where Lola and Marc lived before this terrible man ended their lives.

“Marc, I promise, we will get the man responsible for all this, I swear,” Buck said softly.

Buck turned, climbed into his fighter and started the engines. Still looking at the house, tears started to swell in his eyes. A moment later, Buck lifted off and headed for the outside of town.

Chapter 16

Marie, McGregor and Murphy were about at Marie's house when Marie's son came running up.

"Mother, Mr. Finney came by wanting to know where you were. I told him you were probably at the market. He seemed like he was really worried about something. Mother, is everything all right?"

"Yes dear, everything is fine."

"Mother, who are these men? Are they from that fighter that flew over a while ago?"

"Yes, these men are here to help us. Now, I would like you to do me a favor. Could you please go into the shed, and bring out that box of clothes your father left. Then bring them into the house for me," Marie requested.

"All right mother."

"How old is your son, Marie?" McGregor asked.

"He'll be 11 next week. That's why I really want to help Hawk. If it wasn't for his people coming up with a cure for that illness, I would have lost him 3 years ago," Marie said with love in her eyes.

As they got closer to the house, McGregor said, "I'm sorry to be asking this. But, where is his father?"

Marie hung her head.

"He was one of the first of many to die from that terrible illness," Marie said with tears forming in her eyes.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Marie."

"You have to make Finney pay for what he's done to a lot of families. I'm not the only one that lost a husband or child to that illness. Starleen, Finney's own sister lost her only child to it as well."

"Starleen had a child?"

"Yes, a little girl. The poor little thing never had a chance. She came down with it about 2 days after my husband got it. But, she died two days later. As for my husband, he died about a week later," Marie explained.

They finally got to the house. Outside her son was trying very hard to carry the large box to the house.

"What is your son's name?" Murphy asked.

"His name is Bryan, after his father," Marie replied.

Murphy walked over to the boy and asked if he would like some help.

"Oh, no thank you sir. I can handle it," Bryan said straining to lift the box.

Murphy smiled.

Bryan finally got the box into the house.

"Here's the box of dad's clothes, mother."

"Thank you, Bryan. Let's see what we can find to fit you gentlemen," Marie said.

Marie started to rummage through the box of clothes. "These should do nicely. Go try these on," she said holding up some pants and shirts.

McGregor and Murphy took the pieces of clothing and went into the back room. They soon came back out wearing the clothing.

"They fit pretty good," McGregor said.

"Good, now we can go."

She turned and looked at Bryan.

"I want you to stay here son. I shouldn't be gone to long. I have some business to take care of in town," Marie said with a smile.

"Please be careful, mother."

Marie gave her son a hug.

"I love you, Bryan," Marie said while embracing Bryan.

"Don't worry Bryan. We won't let anything happen to your mother," McGregor replied.

"Mother, is this about the birdwomen? Did Mr. Finney do something bad to them?" Bryan asked.

"Yes, Bryan. And we have to help them. Now stay here, I'll be back soon," Marie said.

Bryan watched as his mother, McGregor, and Murphy walked out the door and down the road heading towards town.

Finney had gone back to the house after searching for Marie. He made his way up the stairs. He unlocked the door to the room that he was holding Karri in.

"Well, my little songbird. It looks like we won't be getting dinner till late. Marie is not back from the store yet. I wonder why she's taking so long. She usually goes to the store in the early afternoon. Maybe she's planning a special surprise for us tonight," Finney said.

"I think she's telling everyone what you've done. You killed my real parents, Marc and Lola, Saleena's real parents. And who knows who else. I'm going to enjoy watching my uncle kill you," Karri said loudly.

Finney's smile turned to anger. He walked over to Karri and wrapped his hands around her throat. Finney raised his arm and slapped Karri across the face. "I can kill you so easily. Just like I killed Starleen. But I have different plans for you and your so called sister," Finney said with anger in his voice. He walked out of the room. Leaving Karri crying and curled up in the corner.

Hawk had landed the WarHawk about a mile west of town. As he was walking he got a sudden feeling Karri was in pain and frightened. He started to run.

"I'm coming, little one," Hawk said as he ran towards town.

Chapter 17

Marie, McGregor and Murphy had just arrived in town when a friend of Marie's approached them.

"Where have you been? Finney was going crazy trying to find you."

"Did he say why he wanted to find me?" Marie asked.

"No, but he looked upset, for some reason. Who are these men?"

"They're friends of Hawk's. We need to talk to everyone. Finney is holding Karri captive in his house. He killed Marc, and left Lola for dead. She is still alive, but she is n't going to make it. He even killed Starleen. I need your help," Marie said.

"He killed Marc, and his own sister? What a monster. How can I help?"

"Tell everyone what I've told you. Hawk will be here shortly to deal with Finney. Please, help us?" Marie begged.

"Oh Marie, you know I'll help you. You are a very dear friend of mine, I would do anything for you. Come with me, we'll go to the square, you can speak from there. That way everyone will hear you, but Finney won't."

"Thank you," Marie replied.

"Who is this lady?" McGregor asked.

Marie smiled.

"She's my sister-in-law. We've gotten very close since that illness took her husband and mine. But, she lost all of her children. She's hated Finney for so long now. She knew he probably had something to do with everything, including the disappearance of the birdpeople, but she never had any proof. But, now we do," Marie said.

They made their way to the square. Along the way they told everyone that they could find what Finney had done, and that he was holding Karri against her will. They got to the square, and Marie got up on the platform.

"Friends, may I have your attention please. I have some important news to tell you."

The townspeople started to gather around the platform.

"Finney killed Marc. And I saw him kill his own sister Starleen. He also left Lola for dead. She's not expected to live very much longer. I have no news about the babies she is about to give birth to. You all remember the birdpeople that used to live here in peace with us. Well, one of them is in danger right now as we speak. Finney is holding Karri against her will in his house right now. All of you know of that deadly illness that took so many lives here not too long ago. The birdpeople saved a lot of us, but some of us did lose our husbands and children. Finney is responsible for that illness. He hated the birdpeople so much after that, that he had them killed. Among them were Karri's and Saleena's real parents. Now, he's turned on us. If he can kill his own sister, who will be next? None of us are safe. Hawk, Karri's uncle is on his way here right now. These men are from the Searcher, they're here to help Hawk and Buck. I need your help, we need to draw Finney out of his house so Hawk can rescue Karri. A lot of you are probably wondering why draw him out of the house? That way Hawk can get Karri out of the house safely. He doesn't want to confront Finney in the house with Karri still in it. I'm asking, will you please help us?" Marie said with tears in her eyes.

"How can we get Finney out of the house?" a voice asked from the crowd.

"I don't know. Does anyone have a suggestion," Marie asked.

“I do,” that same voice said.

“What do you have in mind? Can you come forward so I can see who’s talking to me,” Marie asked.

A man walked through the crowd. “I know how to get Finney out here,” the man said.

“But, before I tell you, I want to tell you all something.”

The man turned around and looked at the townspeople.

“A while back, Finney paid me and a few others to go out to Marc’s and Lola’s house. He wanted us to kill Marc and Lola, and take the girls. We did not kill them. When we got there, Hawk and some other people were waiting for us. I know what I did was wrong. I’m not trying to weasel my way out of that. But, I know Finney. If he finds out that I’m here, he will come out,” he said.

“I remember you. I was one of the men that arrested you that night,” McGregor said.

“You know I’m telling the truth then, right?”

“Yes, you are telling the truth. But, why do you want to help?” McGregor asked.

“I learned a great deal from Karri and Saleena. Now with Marie telling us about this, and finding out that Finney was responsible for that deadly illness -- I lost my wife to that illness. I have to help. Please, allow me to do this,” he begged.

Marie lowered her head.

“I knew your wife very well, she was a good woman. All right, how do you plan on getting Finney to come out?”

“Like I said, if he sees or hears that I’m here, he’ll come out after me. He thinks he’s killed all of the witnesses. He knows I know what happened. He’ll come after me next. That should give Hawk time to get in and get Karri out of there. I just need a messenger to let him know I’m out here,” he said.

“I can do that. I have to go in and check on Karri. Make sure she’s all right. I’ll tell him I ran into you at the market. That should get him to come out looking for you. You know you’re putting yourself in danger, don’t you? He won’t stop till all the witnesses are dead. That includes you,” Marie warned him.

“I know, I owe it to Marc, Lola and the rest of the people he killed. By the illness or by murder.”

“Hawk should be here any time now, we need to get started. Are you ready?” Marie asked.

“Yes, I’m ready.”

Chapter 18

Marie just barely got in the door when Finney approached her.

“Where have you been? I’ve been waiting for dinner the past three hours. You better have a good excuse for being gone this long,” Finney said with anger in his voice.

“Oh, I’m so sorry sir, you didn’t get my note?” Marie said.

“What note? I didn’t see any note.”

“Sir, I left it on the kitchen counter. I’ll show you where I left it,” Marie said.

As they walked into the kitchen Marie reached into her pocket and pulled out a prewritten note. “I left it over on that counter sir,” she said pointing to the far counter.

Finney walked over to the counter. “I don’t see any note. Are you sure you wrote me and note and placed it on this counter?” Finney asked.

“I’m sure of it sir. I wrote it while I was standing right here and placed it on... oh my. I’m so sorry sir, I placed it on this counter,” Marie said holding up the note.

Finney walked over and took the note from her, and read it.

“I’m sorry I doubted you Marie. I’ve been under a lot of pressure these past few days,” Finney said.

“It’s all right sir. I’ll have dinner ready in just a little bit,” Marie said.

“Oh sir, I was at the market just a little bit ago, guess who I saw there? An old friend of yours,” Marie said with a smile.

“Oh, who was that?”

“Mr. Norton.”

Finney looked over at Marie. “Are you sure it was Norton?” he asked with a surprised look on his face.

“Oh yes sir, he asked how you were. I told him he should stop by sometime for a visit. That you would love to see him again. I hope you don’t mind sir?” Marie said.

“No, of course not. How long ago did you see him?”

“About fifteen minutes ago sir.”

“Marie, can you hold dinner for a little while? I’d like to go see Mr. Norton,” Finney said.

“Of course sir, I’ll wait till you come back. Then I’ll start your dinner,” Marie said with a forced smile.

“Thank you Marie, I won’t be gone long.”

Marie watched as Finney walked over to his desk, opened the drawer and removed a weapon, then hiding it under his jacket. She watched as he put on his hat and walked out the door. She went right away to the back door, opening it to

see if she could see Hawk anywhere. Hawk was just coming up the ridge when she opened the door. "Hawk, hurry... she's up the stairs, first door on your right," Marie said.

"Where's Finney?"

Don't worry about Finney right now; go get Karri. Finney will be busy for a while, chasing the only witness there is left alive," Marie said.

Hawk ran up the stairs. At first he was confused from all the doors. He started to yell. "Karri! Karri! It's Hawk. Do you hear me?" It was silent for a few moments, then out of the room in front of him came a soft cry. Hawk went up to the door and listened. "Karri?" A second later he heard a soft call.

"Uncle? Uncle is that you?"

"Yes little one, it's me. Stay away from the door, I'm coming in."

Hawk took a few steps back and ran fully into the door. Knocking it off its hinges. He looked around in the dark room. There in the corner, curled up was Karri. Hawk walked swiftly over to her.

"Karri? Are you all right?" he asked placing his finger tips under Karri's chin and lifting her head gently.

Karri lifted her head and gazed at Hawk. "I want to go home, uncle," she said softly.

Hawk looked at Karri's face, there on the right side of her cheek was a cut, and her face was black and blue. "Karri, did Finney do this?" Hawk asked with anger in his voice.

Being so weak, all she could do was nod.

Hawk heard someone coming up the stairs. He pulled his weapon and was ready to kill who ever walked through that door.

"Hawk, did you find her?" Marie asked softly.

"Yes Marie, thank you for all your help."

Marie walked into the room and went right over to Karri. She looked at Karri's face and saw all the cuts and bruises. "Oh my poor child, when did he do this?" she asked, gently trying to clean Karri's face.

"He did it this afternoon. After you left to go to the market."

"I am so sorry. If I'd known he would do this I wouldn't have left." Marie said with tears in her eyes.

Hawk looked at Marie. "Marie, if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't have found Karri in time. You had no way of knowing he was going to do this," Hawk said holding Marie's hand.

"Let's get her out of here. The townspeople are waiting in the square, along with Finney," she said with a smile.

Hawk looked at her and smiled.

"You are one smart lady. Come on little one. We have an appointment to keep," Hawk said smiling.

Hawk and Marie helped Karri walk down the stairs and out the front door, where some of the townspeople were waiting, including the town doctor.

"I'll take care of her Hawk. Go take care of Finney," he said.

Hawk looked at the doctor and Marie and smiled. "I'll be back soon, little one," he said, lightly touching Karri's cheek

Hawk started to walk towards the square.

"He's going to pay for all the pain he has caused me and my people. He's going to pay for the lives he took, and he's going to pay for the lives he's taking right now. But, he's really going to pay for the injury he did to Karri," Hawk said to himself.

The town doctor was tending to Karri. "There you go little lady. How do you feel?" the doctor asked.

Karri glanced up at him.

"I want to be with my uncle. Please take me to him," she pleaded.

The doctor looked over at Marie. "Well, she can go, if you want to take her over to Hawk," the doctor said with a smile.

Marie took Karri by the hand. "I'll take you to your uncle, Karri."

Karri took her hand and together they started to walk towards the square.

Hawk just walked around the corner of the square when he saw Finney.

"Finney!" Hawk called out.

Finney turned and saw Hawk coming towards him. "Hawk, when did you get back?" Finney asked.

"Where is my family?" Hawk asked.

"Hawk, I am so sorry. This morning I went out to visit Lola and Marc. And they told me that somebody kidnapped Karri and Saleena. I was just about to send you a message," Finney said.

"You're lying! You killed my parents," a voice came from behind Finney.

Finney turned around to see Karri standing with Marie. He started to walk over to Karri when two men got between him and Karri. Finney stopped, looked at the men and then turned back around to look at Hawk.

"I swear Hawk, I don't know what she's talking about. I would never hurt her or Saleena," he said looking around the crowd of people looking for a way out.

"I don't believe you Finney. I know for a fact that you killed Marc, Starleen, and a number of other innocent people from the deadly illness you created. And I also know that you had something to do with the slaughtering of my people on Throm. But, there's one person you forgot: Lola. She's still alive," Hawk said.

"Lola's still alive?" he asked with a scared expression on his face.

"Yes, she told me everything. I also got information from other people as well," Hawk said looking at Marie and the rest of the townspeople.

"Marie, why did you betray me? I've always treated you good. Why?"

“You took my husband and my son’s father. For that, I could never forgive you. Then when you killed Marc and your own sister, I found out what kind of a man you really are. A murderer,” Marie yelled.

Finney was really getting nervous by this time.

“I didn’t kill Marc,” he said.

“You didn’t kill him personally, but you did hire the men to do the dirty work for you,” another voice came out of the crowd.

Walking up from behind Karri and Marie was Norton.

Finney looked at Norton.

“Why don’t you tell him what part you had in all this,” Finney said to Norton.

“I know all about his part in it Finney. I was there when he came to the house that night, remember?” Hawk said walking towards Finney.

Finney started to back away from Hawk. Grabbing some of the people and putting them between Hawk and himself. Looking for a way out, he saw a opening between a couple of children. He went to it, grabbing one of the children on the way. Pulling his weapon out of his jacket pocket. “Don’t come any closer, or I’ll kill this child,” he said holding the gun to the little boy’s head.

Chapter 19

Hawk took a couple of steps towards Finney.

“Stop right there or I’ll kill this boy,” Finney yelled.

Hawk stopped. “You don’t want to do that Finney. You wouldn’t make it out of this square alive,” Hawk said with his hand on his weapon.

Finney got an evil smile on his face.

“Now, I can finish what I started a long time ago. To put a end to your kind, once and for all.”

Finney raised his arm and took aim at Hawk. Just as Finney was about to pull the trigger, someone grabbed Finney’s hand from behind, forcing Finney’s arm up, but not before one shot was fired. Finney turned to see Buck holding his hand and the weapon. Buck wrestled the weapon from Finney’s hand, then hit Finney in the face. Finney staggered back, he looked at Buck then started to run.

Hawk ran over to Karri. “Are you all right?”

“Yes uncle.”

“Somebody, get the doctor!” someone yelled from the crowd.

Hawk, Karri and Buck ran over and forced their way through. They got to the center of the crowd and found Marie, laying on the ground bleeding. Hawk knelt down beside her.

“Marie?... Marie?” Hawk said softly.

“Hawk, I’m all right. Go after Finney,” Marie said putting her hand on Hawk’s face.

Hawk stood up and looked at Buck. “Stay with her,” Hawk requested.

Hawk started to chase after Finney, with the help of the townspeople pointing in the direction he went. A couple of the townspeople followed Hawk.

Back at the square, Buck got on the radio.

“Buck to Wilma.”

“Go ahead Buck.”

“We have Karri, bring Saleena into town. Hawk is chasing Finney right now. Looks like they might be heading towards the mountains,” Buck said.

“All right Buck. We’re on our way in,” Wilma out.

Buck looked over at Karri.

“I have to go help your uncle. Will you be all right here?” Buck asked looking around at the townspeople.

“She’ll be fine, Captain. No one will touch her while we’re here. Go help Hawk. We’ll take care of her and Marie,” one of the men said.

Buck looked at Karri, then at the crowd.

“Go uncle, I’ll be fine,” Karri said with a smile.

Buck nodded at the men, turned and started running after Hawk.

Karri was sitting on the ground next to Marie holding her hand, when she heard a familiar noise. She looked around. On the other side of the square, she saw a fighter coming over the buildings. It landed with a light thump, the hatch opened and out climbed Saleena.

“Karri!” Saleena cried out.

She ran over to the crowd. The people parted to make a path to Karri.

Karri stood up, Saleena ran right to her. They stood there for a few minutes embracing each other, crying. The townspeople gathered around them smiling, some were crying along with them. Marie sat up with help from the doctor and a few townspeople.

“Ouch doc, that hurt,” she said as the doctor wrapped her wound.

“Where’s uncle?” Saleena asked looking around.

“Hawk, Buck and a few townspeople took off after Finney. Where are my friends?” Karri asked

“They’re waiting for you on the mountain,” Saleena replied.

Karri looked over at Wilma.

“Wilma, could you please take m....,” was all Karri could say before Wilma answered her.

“Yes Karri, I’ll take you and Saleena up to the cave.”

Karri, Saleena, and Wilma crawled into the fighter and headed for the mountain. As they got up into the mountain, Wilma noticed that there was movement on her screen.

“That must be Hawk and Finney. They’re heading for the cliffs. We have to warn your uncle,” Wilma said.

Wilma guided the fighter to the closest spot possible to where Hawk and Finney were last seen. She landed the fighter, they climbed out. Wilma looked at Karri and Saleena.

“Stay close to me. Finney is desperate right now. He’ll try anything to stay alive, including getting a hold of one of you girls,” Wilma said.

“All right Wilma.”

“Karri, how far is the cave from here?” Wilma asked.

“I don’t know. This is the other side of the mountain. I don’t know it. You said something about a cliff?” Karri asked.

“Yes, the cliff is in front of us about 250 yards.”

Soon they heard some voices coming from alongside of them. They knelt next to some trees and watched. A moment later they saw two of the townspeople running up the mountain heading in the direction of the cliff.

“Hey,” yelled Wilma.

The men stopped and ran back to them. “Karri, Saleena, thank god you’re all right. Did you see Hawk and Finney run past here?”

“No, I was going to ask you the same thing. I hope Hawk knows there’s a cliff up there in front of them,” Wilma said with concern.

“I forgot about that cliff,” one of the townspeople said. “It’s a sheer drop straight down about 500 feet, on to the rocks below.”

“We have to catch up with him, before it’s too late,” Karri cried.

They started to run up the mountain side hoping to catch up with Hawk. After about 20 minutes of running, they heard what they believed to be Hawk and Finney. They got to the top of the mountain and saw Hawk kneeling on the edge.

“Uncle!” Karri cried out.

Hawk turned and saw Wilma, Karri, Saleena, and the two townspeople running over to him. He then turned his attention to the cliff again.

“Give me your hand,” Hawk yelled reaching down as if trying to grab something.

Wilma walked up next to Hawk. “What happened?”

“He didn’t see the cliff till it was too late. He tried to stop, but he slide off.” Hawk still reaching for Finney, “Give me your hand and I’ll pull you up,” Hawk said.

Finney looked at Hawk and Wilma.

“I can’t reach...” he said trying to reach Hawk’s hand.

“I’m slipping.... God... Please help me,” he cried.

Hawk turned and looked at the townspeople. “Help me. Grab my legs and lower me down to him,” Hawk said.

The townspeople looked at each other, then looked at Hawk. They finally grabbed Hawk’s legs and started to lower him down slowly. Hawk was just about to grab Finney’s hand when Finney slid down a little more.

“Please... I don’t want to die,” he cried.

Hawk tried to reach for Finney one more time. But it was too late. The small branch that Finney was holding on to snapped.

Chapter 20

“NO!” Hawk yelled reaching out for Finney in one last attempt.

Finney looked into Hawk’s eyes with the look of a frightened child as he started to fall. Hawk couldn’t take his eyes off him, even after he was out of sight. Wilma asked the two men to pull Hawk back up. As they did, Wilma knelt down next to Hawk, she put her hand on his shoulder.

“He’s gone, Hawk. There’s no way he could have survived that fall,” she said softly.

Hawk glanced over at Wilma, then lowered his head.

“Hawk, you still have to get the girls up to the Searcher, remember?”

Hawk looked at Wilma, then he turned around and saw Karri and Saleena standing there holding each other. He stood up, walked over to them and embraced them both.

“Wilma’s right. We have to leave.”

Hawk walked over to the two men. “Thank you for all your help,” Hawk said shaking their hands.

“Hawk, my fighter is just down the hill. Take it up to the Searcher. I’ll walk back with these gentlemen. You can come back later to retrieve your ship,” Wilma suggested.

“Thank you Wilma. Let Buck know what happened, and that I’ve taken the girls up to the Searcher. Oh, tell him I said thank you,” Hawk said holding Karri’s and Saleena’s hands.

“You’re welcome Hawk. Now you better go, you don’t have much time left,” Wilma said.

Hawk nodded.

As they were walking down the hill, Karri looked at Hawk.

“Uncle, what did Wilma mean by not having much time left?” Karri asked.

Hawk looked at Karri with a sorrowful expression on his face.

“Lola is still alive. But, she doesn’t have much time left,” Hawk replied.

“Mother is alive?”

“Yes, but she’s not going to make it. The damage is too severe. Karri, there’s something else you should know,” Hawk said as they approached Wilma’s fighter.

Hawk stopped, looked into Karri’s eyes. “Lola is having twins. Dr. Goodfellow heard two heart beats,” he said.

“Twins?”

Hawk nodded. “Yes.”

Hawk helped the girls into the fighter, then he climbed in. He started the engines and lifted off.

After about 5 minutes into flight, "Hawk to Searcher."

"Go ahead Hawk, did you find the girls?"

"Yes, they're with me now. We're on our way back to the Searcher. Is Goodfellow there?" Hawk asked.

A few moments later, Goodfellow replied "Go ahead dear boy, I'm here."

"How is Lola? Is she still alive?" Hawk asked.

"Yes, but she is going down fast. How long before you can get here?" the doctor asked.

"About another 20 minutes, at least," Hawk replied.

"Very well, I'm on my way back to the sick bay. I'm going to check and see how she and the babies are doing. Bring Karri and Saleena straight to sick bay upon your arrival," Goodfellow advised.

"All right doctor, Hawk out."

The Admiral studied the doctor's expression.

"Is she that bad?"

"I'm afraid so. If she lasts another 30 minutes, it will be a miracle. Excuse me Admiral, I better get back to sick bay, check on her and the babies," Goodfellow said.

"Yes, by all means," Asimov replied.

Karri, or Saleena didn't talk till they were almost to the Searcher.

"Uncle, what will happen to us now?" Karri asked.

Hawk turned his head and gazed at them.

"You let me worry about that little ones," Hawk replied.

"What about the babies? Who is going to take care of them?"

Hawk was silent for a moment. "There are a lot of people on the Searcher. Someone will be more than happy to love and care for them. Providing they let their sisters visit," Hawk said.

The girls forced a smile.

"Is that the Searcher, uncle?" Saleena asked pointing at the Searcher.

"Yes Saleena."

"Hawk to Searcher."

"Go ahead Hawk."

"Approaching the Searcher, requesting landing bay," Hawk said.

“Approach landing bay 3, and welcome home. Searcher... out.”

“Hawk... out.”

Hawk guided the fighter into the docking bay. He set it down with a very light thump. He commenced to open the hatch. Hawk climbed out first, then he helped the girls climb out.

“Come with me,” he said taking them by the hand.

They walked down the corridors till they finally arrived at the sick bay door.

“You go ahead, I have to talk to the doctor first,” Hawk said.

Karri and Saleena walked inside, and was met by the nurse. Hawk followed a moment later. He walked over to the doctor.

“How is she?” he asked.

“My dear boy, I delivered the babies about ten minutes ago. They are doing just fine. But, Lola is not doing well at all. I’m glad you got the girls here in time,” Goodfellow said.

Hawk nodded then walked over to Lola’s bedside.

“Lola, it’s Hawk. The girls are here.”

Lola slowly opened her eyes. “Oh my darling daughters,” she said with a smile.

“Mother,” Karri cried.

“You are all right.”

“Yes mother, thanks to Hawk and Wilma. Oh mother...father is dead.”

Lola reached up and touched the girl’s faces.

“I know. But you’re safe. That’s what matters right now. Now, you both must be brave. You have a brother and sister that needs you. I want you two to remember something.”

“What is it mother?”

“I want you to remember that your father and I loved you both very, very much. Never forget that,” Lola said with her voice getting softer and softer.

“Where’s Hawk?” Lola asked.

“I’m here Lola.”

“Hawk, promise me something. That you will take care of my children,” Lola said.

Hawk took Lola’s hand. She reached up and touched his face with her other hand.

“Promise me.”

“I promise,” Hawk replied.

Lola smiled. She slowly closed her eyes, and she was gone.

Dr. Goodfellow walked over to Hawk and the girls.

“It seemed she was holding on, so she could say goodbye,” Goodfellow said.

Hawk, Karri, and Saleena stood there with tears running down their cheeks.

“I know it’s too soon. But would you girls like to see the life your mother gave to you?” Dr. Goodfellow asked.

“Yes, please,” Karri replied with tears in her eyes.

“Come with me.”

They walked over to the other side of the sick bay. There in a small bed, were two small babies.

“What are you going to name them?” the doctor asked.

The girls leaned closer.

“I think we will name them,”

Chapter 21

“Falcon and Kala. After my real parents,” Karri said.

“They sound like good strong names,” Goodfellow replied.

Karri and Saleena turned and faced Hawk.

“Uncle, could you please help us do something?” Karri asked.

“Yes, of course. What is it?”

“Could you please help us bury mother and father on Serenity?”

“Of course, Buck told me he buried Marc in a shallow grave close to the house. It was only a temporary one. Do you know where you would like the graves to be?” Hawk asked.

The girls thought for a moment. “Yes, we know just the spot,” Karri and Saleena said together.

“But first, we have to go to town. We hope you understand?” Karri said.

“Yes, I understand. Stay with the good doctor for a few minutes while I talk to the Admiral about something.” Hawk gazed at Goodfellow, “You wouldn’t mind, would you?” Hawk asked.

“It would be my honor,” Goodfellow replied smiling.

Hawk nodded then walked over to the intercom by the door. Just as he was about to call the bridge, the door opened and the Admiral walked in.

“How is Lola? And the babies?” he asked.

“The babies are doing fine sir, I’m afraid Lola just died a few moments ago,” Hawk said.

“I am so sorry. Is there anything I can do for the girls?” he asked.

“As a matter of fact, there is something you can do. If you don’t mind sir.”

“What ever it is, consider it done. What do they want or need?” the Admiral asked.

“First of all sir, they would like to bury Lola and Marc on Serenity. Second sir, is for them and myself.” Hawk requested.

The Admiral looked at Hawk with a knowing and understanding expression on his face.

“I was just going to ask them if they would like to stay on the Searcher with you?” Asimov said with a smile. “Besides, they’re family. We don’t leave family behind.”

Hawk smiled.

He walked over to Karri and Saleena.

“I better introduce you to someone Saleena. Saleena, this is Admiral Asimov. Admiral this is Saleena, my other niece,” Hawk said with a smile.

“Saleena, I’m very happy to meet you. I’ve heard so much about you,” Asimov said bowing to Saleena.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you to sir,” Saleena said with tears still in her eyes.

“Admiral, would you like to meet our new brother and sister?” Karri asked.

“Yes, I would really like to meet them,” Asimov said.

Karri and Saleena walked the Admiral over to meet their brother and sister.

“Karri, Saleena, I was wondering...Would you two and the babies like to stay here on the Searcher with your uncle?”

Karri and Saleena glanced at each other for a moment, then smiled.

“You mean to live on the Searcher and go with uncle Hawk? We would really like that Admiral. But we have something to do first. If it’s okay with you?” Karri asked with pleading eyes.

“Your uncle already told me about burying Lola and Marc on Serenity. In fact, if you and your uncle would like to, why don’t you three stay down there for a few days. You know, to say goodbye to all your friends,” the Admiral said smiling.

Saleena and Karri walked over and embraced the Admiral.

“Thank you so much sir,” Saleena and Karri said.

“Oh, there is one condition though. I’m ordering you to stop calling me sir. You can call me Asimov or Admiral,” Asimov said with a grin on his face.

The girls started to laugh.

“I’ll order a burial detail right away. They will meet you by the house. There, you can tell them where you want the graves dug,” he said.

“Thank you Admiral, for everything,” Hawk said.

Asimov smiled and waved his hand on his way out the door.

Hawk, Saleena, and Karri looked over at Dr. Goodfellow.

“Thank you doctor for everything. We really appreciate you taking care of our mother and delivering the babies,” Karri said as she walked over to Goodfellow and gave him a kiss on the cheek, followed by Saleena.

Goodfellow’s face turned red.

“Thank you. I’m just sorry I could not save your mother as well,” Goodfellow replied.

Hawk walked over to Karri and Saleena.

“It’s time to go. We have to meet Buck, Wilma, and the rest of the burial team at the house. Have you girls decided where you want to bury Marc and Lola?”

Karri nodded.

“Yes uncle. We would like to have them buried on the mountain. Next to the male wolf and the mother bear,” Karri said.

“Very good choice. All right, the mountain it is,” Hawk replied.

Hawk, Karri, and Saleena went back to Serenity. The burial team was all ready there, including Buck and Wilma.

“I’m so sorry to hear about your mother, girls,” Buck said.

“As am I,” Wilma replied also.

“Thank you so much for everything that you’ve done to help us and our parents,” Karri said.

“All you have to do is point out the area in which you would like Marc and Lola buried. We’ll do the rest,” McGregor said.

Karri and Saleena smiled.

“We think it would be better if we went up first. We have some friends up there that might not like you digging up the ground in which their leader is buried,” Karri suggested.

“I think you girls are right. We don’t want the burial party to get attacked,” Hawk agreed.

“As you wish,” McGregor said with a confused look on his face.

“Uncle, can we go up there now? So we can explain to them what will be going on,” Karri asked.

“Yes, I’ll take you girls up there first,” Hawk said.

“Then I would like you to come to town with me first. So you can say goodbye to some people.”

“All right uncle.”

Hawk, Karri, and Saleena climbed into the shuttle and headed for the mountain. They landed in the same spot as they had always landed. Soon they were met by the wolves. Karri explained to them that there was going to be some strange people coming up to bury Marc and Lola. For them to leave them alone, and not to harm any of them. That they were friends. The female wolf understood and barked a few times to acknowledge Karri’s request. Karri embraced the female wolf. “I have to leave for a short time, but I’ll be back,” Karri told her. Karri climbed back into the shuttle and they headed for town next. They landed on the out side of town and walked in. As soon as they got into the heart of town, the townspeople gathered around them. Many brought gifts for the twins, some brought their condolences for the girls.

“Welcome back,” a familiar voice said.

Out from the back of the crowd walked Marie. Karri and Saleena ran to her and embraced her.

“I am so glad you girls are safe. Buck and Wilma told us what happened on the mountain,” Marie said.

“Thank you. We wanted to come down and ask everyone if they would care to come to Marc’s and Lola’s funeral up on the mountain. We know it’s a long way. But, we think they would have loved it up there. You will come, won’t you?” Karri asked.

The townspeople stood there and nodded their heads in approval.

“We’re here to take anyone that would like to come, up there.” Just then three more shuttles arrived. A man stepped out. “These shuttles are for transporting your friends up the mountain. By the Admiral’s orders,” Lt. Conradt explained.

“We’re not really dressed for a funeral,” Marie said looking at the blood stained dress she was wearing.

Karri and Saleena looked around.

“It doesn’t matter what you’re wearing, just as long as you come,” they said together.

At first the town speople was a little hesitant about going to a funeral with dirty or stained cloths on. They wanted to show their respects better than that.

“Could you please give us thirty minutes, to get cleaned up a little?” Marie asked.

Karri and Saleena smiled. “Of course.” Marie smiled and started to run towards her house.

McGregor caught up with her. “Marie, why don’t you let me take you? By the time you get to your house and back it would be more than thirty minutes,” McGregor said. Marie smiled. “Oh thank you, I would really appreciate it.” McGregor and Marie climbed into one of the shuttles and lifted off, heading in the direction of Marie’s home.

Hawk, Buck, and Wilma just stood there watching everyone running to their homes.

“That was very nice of the Admiral,” Karri said.

“Speaking of the Admiral. I’ll be back as soon as I can,” Hawk said.

Chapter 22

Hawk left in a hurry.

“Where is uncle going?” Saleena asked.

“I really don’t know Saleena,” Buck replied with a concerned expression on his face.

About thirty minutes later some of the townspeople emerged from their homes. They were dressed in suits and nice dresses. Karri and Saleena smiled. Buck and Wilma looked at the girls.

“Looks like your parents were well loved, for people to get dressed up that nice,” Buck said.

Karri and Saleena were looking up towards the sky. “Where is uncle?” Saleena asked.

“You know your uncle. He wouldn’t miss anything like this. He’ll probably go right to the mountain,” Buck said.

“Well, are you young ladies ready?” Buck asked.

“Yes uncle Buck.”

The Searcher personnel started to load the townspeople into the shuttles. After everyone was on board, the doors closed and the shuttles lifted off one by one. Each headed for the mountain. A few moments later they all arrived. The townspeople exited the shuttles and gathered around the two graves.

“Look, wolves,” Marie said.

“Don’t worry. They will not harm you, they are friends of mine, Saleena’s and uncle Hawk’s,” Karri said with a calm voice. She looked up in the sky one more time. “Where is he?” she asked herself.

Just as the funeral was about ready to begin, Karri heard something that sounded like Hawk’s ship. She looked up in the sky again and saw the WarHawk coming across the field. She smiled. The WarHawk landed a little way off as to not to disturb the townspeople. Karri ran over to it. The hatch opened and out climbed Hawk, and behind him was the Admiral. Karri started to cry.

“I’m so happy you found the time to come to the funeral Admiral,” Karri said in tears.

“I had to be here, for yours and Saleena’s sake. Besides like I said before, you’re family,” Asimov said embracing Karri.

They walked over to the site together. The services began. After about an hour the services were over. The townspeople loaded back into the shuttles and headed back for town. The Admiral boarded a shuttle with Karri, Saleena, Buck, and Wilma as it headed back to town. Hawk flew the WarHawk back to town.

A few moments later they landed on the outside of town.

“Hawk, why don’t you and the girls stay for a few days? So Karri and Saleena could make arrangements and visit before they leave. We don’t really need to be heading anywhere right now. It will do you and them some good,” the Admiral said.

“Thank you Admiral, but what about Falcon and Kala? Who will take care of them?” Karri asked.

“I’ve already found someone to take care of them for you for a few days. So don’t you worry about it, okay?” Asimov said.

Karri and Saleena smiled.

“Uncle, could we go up to the mountain for the last time?” Karri asked with pleading eyes as the shuttle landed in town.

“For some reason, I knew you were going to ask me that,” Hawk said smiling. “Of course we can.”

Karri and Saleena gave Hawk and the Admiral a hug.

“Thank you so much, Admiral, for coming. It meant everything to us,” Karri said.

“I wouldn’t have missed it for the world. You girls are so welcome. Now I must return to the Searcher. I will see you in a few days,” Asimov replied.

He climbed back into the shuttle and it lifted off, heading back up to the Searcher.

They spent that day visiting with their friends. That evening they headed for the mountain. They spent time playing with the wolf cubs and talking about Lola and Marc. After a few days they knew it was time to leave. They packed up their belongings and headed for the WarHawk.

“Before we leave uncle. May we stop in town one more time. To say goodbye?” Karri asked.

“Of course. But, we can’t stay very long,” Hawk said.

“Thank you uncle.”

They headed for town one last time. This time Hawk landed the WarHawk right in the middle of town. The townspeople came over. They knew that this was going to be the last time they saw Karri, and Saleena. Karri and Saleena embraced a lot of the townspeople. The last one to embrace them was Marie.

“I’m truly going to miss you girls. I want you to take care of each other, and that cute little brother and sister of yours.” Marie turned to Hawk. “Hawk, thanks to you and the crew of the Searcher, we can honestly call this planet Serenity now. Please, take care of yourself and take care of these great girls,” Marie said crying.

Hawk embraced Marie.

“If it weren’t for you Marie, I would not have been able to find Karri. I owe you a lot. If you should ever need anything, anything at all, you know how to get a hold of us,” Hawk said.

“Now my dear friends, it’s time for you to go. The Searcher will not wait forever,” Marie said with a smile.

Karri, Saleena, and Hawk got to the hatch of the WarHawk, they turned and waved to everyone. “Goodbye dear friends,” Karri and Saleena yelled together. They climbed into the WarHawk, the hatch closed, and they lifted off. As they left town, they flew over the mountain, the same spot where Finney lost his life. They looked down, and smiled.

Down below, at the bottom of the cliff, was a pile of rocks and tree branches. Under that was Finney, still alive. Every bone in his body broken. Not being able to move his head, all he could do was move his eyes to look around. But all he could see was darkness. He finally got what he deserved, he was buried alive.

THE END

Watch for my the next story entitled;

“HOME”