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The dead haunted her. Sleep came in spurts, disturbed by the frightened cries of a small child. For once she wished for the mist, for all that it was frightening, she understood it somewhat. Death however, was new to her. As the small broken body invaded her sleep once more, T'Lin gave up on the attempt. She was tired and worn, and filled with hopelessness. Easing herself from the bed, she moved to the window and stared out into the rainy night. Flashes of lightening lit the sky, and yet the memory haunted her. Her arms came up in a protective gesture. She finally understood what Grace had tried to tell her. Satorians were ruthless and a female was less than nothing.

At dinner she had moved slow, but with a purpose, determined not to show Sorka how sore she was. She didn't want to give him the satisfaction of knowing he had hurt her, and she could tell it was working. He glared at her most of the night, his expression getting more ominous by the moment. He had said nothing, though, continuing to watch her. As the evening had progressed he had sent one of his men to his ship. The man had returned with a small girl in tow. The boys had at this time been sent off to meditate while the women cleaned up and the men talked. The child had been ordered to refill the drinks as the women had taken care of clearing away the dishes.

The child was so small, skinny, and bruised it broke T'Lin's heart. Scars from various lacerations covered the bald head. A dirty, sleeveless sheath barely covered the child, emphasizing the shivers and gooseflesh from the cold. Still the girl toiled on, paying little attention to the goings on around her. The only sign of awareness she showed was the occasional longing look at leftover scraps of food. Twice the child entered the kitchen. The first time T'Lin tried to get her name. Though she paused to listen, there was no verbal response. The second time, she offered the child some food. At first the poor creature looked at her dumbly, then with doubt. Finally she snatched the scraps from T'Lin and shoveled them into her mouth, chewing rapidly. She crouched where she stood, in a defensive position, as if she expected the treat to be taken from her. T'Lin quickly found her some more food. She reminded T'Lin of the Tucker's daughter Alex. Small, petite, and appearing for all the world no more than three or four. Was this the child Grace had mentioned? It had to be.

The little girl eagerly wolfed down all the scraps T'Lin gave her. But the time it took her to do so was enough to make Sorka wonder where she was. It took only a moment, but the Satorian entered the kitchen, took one look at the child, and let out a growl of anger. One hand came up, catching the child by the scruff of her neck. As he lifted her, T'Lin noticed the briefest flash of fear, then nothing in the child's eyes. Sorka shook the girl, though his words were directed at T'Lin. "This is mine. It eats when I feed it. How dare you contaminate it with your foul

ways. Stupid human female! You are nothing, just like this!" Again, he shook the girl. Both hands came up and wrapped around the child's throat. He grinned as a sharp snap rent the air. Then with a careless shrug he tossed the child to the floor. His eyes locked on T'Lin. "You ruined her, now you will replace her." With that, he stormed from the room. To him the child had truly been nothing, and all T'Lin could do was stare in horror at the broken bloodied form that used to be a little girl.

She shuddered as the cool air seeped through the window and wrapped around her. How was she to have known Sorka would kill the child? He and Vek had argued for quite some time. She hadn't been able to hear all of it, as Grace had sent her back to her room, but she had understood it. Sorka wanted her and Vek wasn't giving in yet. Shivering again, she rubbed her arms, certain the eyes she felt on her were those of the dead. She nearly jumped out of her skin when Grace moved beside her. "You couldn't have known he would kill her Pixie. It wasn't your fault."

"You warned me. I should have thought... realized... I'd been provoking him all night. She just seemed so helpless, so tiny... I thought I was helping. I didn't even learn her name."

Grace wrapped an arm around her. "She probably didn't have one. Girls, especially useless half-breeds, are rarely named. They are called Trata, which is Satorian for nothing. They don't even name them trash or crap, because those things have substance. If she had been full Satorian, her father might have named her. But usually they are given only the father's last name. When they are mated, then the husband names them, thus giving them some status, if he chooses. The same goes for those sold into slavery. A girl-child might be allowed a name if her mother is cherished, which sometimes happens, or if her father holds some affection for her. Again though, it is unusual."

"How do they survive if they are so careless with life?"

"I don't know. I imagine they are less destructive with their own females. I have never seen a full Satorian female. Usually there are just half breeds and slaves, and most of those appear to be children."

"It seems so senseless." T'Lin turned and buried her face in Grace's shoulder. "She's haunting me and I can't help her."

Grace curled her fingers into T'Lin's shoulders, pushing her back so she could look into her eyes. "Yes you can. Remember her as something more than Trata, and don't become her. That's all you can do."

T'Lin shuddered at the thought. "I'll call her Sorrow, because that's what I feel every time I see her." Turning back to the window, she pressed her face to the

cold stone ledge. "I have to get out of here Grace. He's going to kill me."

The older woman's silence felt like a death sentence.