

Part III (cont.)

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During the half an hour wait, most of the group took the time to sit and talk. Satira and Relero sat by themselves a few feet off from the rest speaking in the language they were most comfortable. As they spoke, Relero handed Satira a satchel. She grabbed it eagerly and got up, walking away from the allies and the foes. After about twenty feet, she broke out into a run.

They others all looked at Relero, confused looks on their faces. They all had one question on their minds.

“Where is *she* going?” One of them finally voiced.

“She’ll be back in about ten minutes. Don’t worry. She’s not running out on us,” Relero divulged.

And to prove him right, she came back exactly ten minutes later, only in different clothing.

“You left to go *change*?” Yamcha commented

Satira just nodded, quite pleased with herself.

“Why?”

“Well, for one thing, I’m much more comfortable in this than in what I was in the clothes I was in before. And the more comfortable I am, the more attention I can pay to something much more important besides my attire. Wouldn’t you rather I pay attention to taking down their shields than trying to get comfortable?”

“Yeah, I guess. Sorry I asked.”

“It’s alright, you had every right to. I’m sure it made me appear vain and arrogant. Everyone had the right to ask questions of someone who’s more concerned of their looks than their life.”

“You took that rather well,” Ten commented.

“Actually, it’s this badge that is really important,” she said, pointing to her right breast.

The crest consisted of a gryphon lounging comfortably in front of a light source that was surrounded by shadow rings. The gryphon itself had a wing covering a corner of the light, but one ray managed to glimmer in front of him. His front paws were crossed and his wings were held out from his body only slightly.

“What possible importance could that stupid thing have?” Vegeta growled.

“It tells them of my rank and abilities. A gryphon is used for only the upper levels and one with a light is for those with the strongest of abilities. Very few people have this badge,” she said, pointing to Relero’s badge, which only had a gryphon.

“Out of curiosity, what’s used for those under Relero’s abilities?” Ten asked.

“A drake wrapped around a sphere for uppers, just a twisting drake for those lower. If you’re less than that, you don’t get anything. And as for the question pestering you right now, you’re the same as Relero, but you’d have to go through a lot of ceremony to get the emblem.”

“Is it worth it?”

“Considering that no one else on this planet would get the symbolic value, no, not

really.”

“Hey, Sati, I think that they’re here,” Relero whispered into Satira’s ear.

Satira (Sati would be her nickname.) glanced in the direction he was looking and didn’t see much, but when she stared at the underbrush near the already visible group, she could make out shapes of others.

“I do believe you are right Rele,” she answered out loud.

“How is he right?” Gohan inquired.

“Look in the undergrowth near the group,” Satira instructed rather than explain.

“There are more people there!” Goku exclaimed.

“Those are the more difficult and talented ones,” Relero said.

“They were who we were waiting for,” Satira claimed.

Five men emerged from their hiding places in the forest to the right of the foes and joined their comrades who stood on the edge of the plains, which spread out endlessly to the left of everyone.

They spoke to the appointed leaders for a few moments. They used hushed tones, which, along with the distance between the foes, made it impossible for even the sharpest of ears among the warriors. At least one of the five mages who approached their allied forces kept an eye on their foes the entire time.

By the stance and the body language, the mages were emitting a sense of wariness and nervousness. They were very visibly tense. They were shifty uncomfortably from foot to foot and would steal nervous glances at their foes.

‘Guess I can’t blame them,’ Ten thought, ‘they don’t look all that physically strong. The weakest of us could take out three or four of them without effort.’ Ten pointedly looked down at Choazu.

: Ouch! Remind me to never become your best friend. You certainly have no compunctions about putting them down in your thoughts.: he heard in his head.

: What did I tell you about reading my thoughts without my permission? : he sent back.

: And do you remember my response to that? I know for a fact that I taught you more than just how to shield your body from physical attacks. I suggest you start putting up the other kind of shield up. I know they look like they are weak. Hell, their ki reading is only slightly higher than that of a normal human with a desk job, and they couldn’t even lift up a couch between any two of them, let alone some of the things you guys could.:

Ten took her advice and slammed up a shield just as she did, but she also added shield over all the others as well, besides Relero, who was doing quite well on his own. No sooner were they up, then they were hit with an extension trying to connect with the warriors’ minds to take control of them. However, the extensions hit the shields and didn’t go any farther. They couldn’t.

The two hitting one another caused a sudden, bright white light to appear for a few seconds in front of everyone. This resulted in a few of them flinched while the others widened their eyes in surprise.

Vegeta took this as an attack gone wrong at the last moment. This angered him, so he rose up into the air and threw a retaliation attack before anyone could stop him.

His attack landed in the center of the thirty-five people, creating a large cloud of dust when it hit the earth. When it cleared, all but ten were left littered around, very much dead.

“Congratulations, you’ve managed to get rid of half of our opponent, too bad it was the weaker half,” Satira barked at Vegeta as he floated back down.

“How the hell did those ten live, they shouldn’t have. How?” he shouted.

“Because they put shields up. If we can read the energy coming toward us, we can create a shield against it on the spot,” Relero calmly replied.

“Then why didn’t they all do that?”

“It takes some longer than others to read the energy. At the speed that that attack was traveling, most mages wouldn’t be able to defend against it,” Relero explained.

As he stated this, the other fifteen who had been hiding in the trees walked out. Satira waited for them to reach the dead bodies and start absorbing their souls before she slung the crossbow no one had noticed from her back, aimed, fired and quickly reloaded three times before one of the arrows bounced off an energy shield. The arrows that were shot before the shields went up went directly into the hearts of the men that they’d been intended for with a sickening ‘thump’.

“Damnit, I was hoping I would be able to get more before they did that,” she stated under her breath when she saw the arrow deflect off the shield.

The remaining twenty-two looked at their recently fallen comrades a few seconds before falling in on them like wolves, stealing the soul just as it left the body.

“They turn even on themselves. They aren’t going to be very difficult to beat, are they?” Kuririn said optimistically. Satira and Relero stole a glance of worry at each other. And when Satira looked at Ten, she could tell that he knew too. Every time someone died, someone else would be getting stronger, unless the body was completely destroyed.

Satira and Relero started the arduous task of breaking through the shields, though the others just stood there till Satira yelled at them after she had broken through three of them.

“Well... Are you going to do something or just gawk?”

“What do we do against the shield?” Goku asked.

“Just hit it until it goes down. Either they’ll lose the energy to keep it up or we’ll find the weak spot, either way, it works in our favor,” Satira was actually yelling at this point, her usually controlled temper on the brink of breaking.

Goku blinked a few times at her before entering into the fray that had started before Satira had ‘favor’ completely out.

Tenshinhan stood there even after Goku left, not because he was worried, but because he didn’t know which path to follow. On one hand he had the techniques he’d been recently taught. On the other was that which he’d known most of his life. He stood in a fork in the road and didn’t know quite which way to go.

: Combine them. Do what you are most familiar with, but attempt to do that which isn’t quite as second nature yet. If the less comfortable one starts to get in the way, drop it and just do the familiar.: he heard, but it wasn’t Satira, it was Relero. For some reason that voice sounded dead on the same as the voice he heard when he’d been trying

to get Satira out of unconsciousness. He looked over at Relero in confusion, but the only answer he got was Relero tilting his head toward the fight, indicating that Ten join in.

With that, he started off after the person nearest him who wasn't already preoccupied with somebody else trying to beat down the protections.

While he was throwing punches and kicks that were actually quite ineffective, hence no ki attacks, he searched for the dark spot on the shield that would only be visible through the eyes of mages. This was the weak point that, if attacked in anyway, physically or with energy or any sort, it would dissolve the entire shield. As a precaution, it was moved around rather quickly to avoid any contact.

Unfortunately for the guy Ten was attacking, he wasn't moving it quick enough for Ten to not see it and attack it. Ten sent a punch through it right into the guy's face, sending him flying, only to land on his head with a crack. He didn't get up, so Ten took the opportunity to send a Dodon Pa at him, incinerating the body.

Most the others had as much success at Tenshinhan had, but only Gohan and 18 had actually hit in the correct spot in the protection to bring it down without help. This was interesting in itself, because it was very highly unlikely that someone could find it by chance.

Satira and Relero were still standing off, concentrating. However, there was a pair of mages approaching them with their swords drawn. Tenshinhan made a move to stop them, but was stopped by a mind-voice, and another mage jumping in his way.

Tenshinhan looked at the interfering mage in annoyance and a little confusion. This one didn't look like much. She was a scrawny little pre-teen that was not even five feet and barely had a muscle on her. Her hair was scraggly and her clothes looked three sizes too big for her. But she had a strong and solid shield surrounding her. She glared at him with gazed-over eyes.

: Hey, Tenshinhan, you think you can do me one favor. Could you only knock the one your facing out instead of killing her. I'll explain later. A little busy right now.: He heard, this time from Satira. She had an axe and was busy dodging and blocking the thrusts and strikes being sent her way by the mage, who attacked with a sword. He nodded, though he doubted she saw him, so complete was her attention on her assailant.

He turned to the girl, who was standing there waiting for him. He decided to take her protections down before her did anything else. This only took him about ten seconds. She was barely moving her weak spot, as though she didn't even have control over it. He charged toward her and gave her a soft tap on the chin, which sent her to the ground, unconscious. Tenshinhan sighed in relief when he bent down and checked her pulse, to make sure he hadn't killed her. Besides the small stream of blood on her face and the fact she wasn't conscience, she was fine.

He looked at the rest of his friends to find them all finished with their own battles. Then he looked at Satira and Relero. Relero was driving his sword through the chest of his opponent, sending energy through it to dispose of the body.

Satira was having a harder time, though. Her opponent had knocked the axe out of her hands but instead of just killing her, he decided to play. He threw his own sword to the side and grinned down at her with evil intentions. Satira just smiled back at him, mirroring his expression. This caused the man's brows to furl in confusion. He expected

cowering, maybe even begging. Instead what he got was an energy drake rising from under the ground below the man's feet.

Too late, he recognized his mistake in not shielding beneath himself. The drake slithered around his body, constricting and burning skin as it wrapped itself around the man's neck. The man let out a gurgling scream before the drake flashed brightly, leaving nothing left of the man when it dimmed enough to see again.

The drake looked over at Satira quick before it dissipated in front of her. She sighed, but quickly remembered the girl she had only minutes ago asked to be spared. She ran over to Relero, who was already at her side, looking down at her in concentration.

"Is she alright?" Satira asked, speaking so everyone understood.

"Why did you not want this one killed? She's not very much and she looks like she hasn't eaten in weeks," Ten asked, wanting an answer.

"She most likely hasn't. She was under coercions. That's why she was dazed," Satira explained, as promised, as she wiped the blood off the girl's face.

"She's also Relero's blood sister, and being he's a Sworn, her death and coercion was grounds to call feud," Satira continued.

"Huh?"

"Relero is Sworn, which means he has given his oath to our goddess, till even beyond death. One of the perks, if you want to call it that, I wouldn't, but he does, is that he feel no physical desire whatsoever. That's why I said he wouldn't be attracted to 18 before. There is no way he would want anything from her, unless she killed this girl here. Then he'd want her dead. He'd track her to the ends of the earth and try to kill her, though he wouldn't likely win, she'd have a hard time. That is calling feud. Feud is unstoppable rage and desire for someone's death. That's all he will ever desire for in his life," Satira managed this without taking a breath, but took a deep one once she finished.

"So this entire thing was over this girl?" Gohan asked.

"Ah, no, the entire battle Relero had was over her. Everything else was to save your asses. These people planned to place coercions on most of you. You are known for your fighting abilities, which is very attractive to them. They also knew of Tenshinhan's previously hidden talent. If we hadn't come here, they would have trained him, only to kill him to steal his energy once he was adept at using it."

"Then why earth?"

"They have no interest in earth. The planet we're from has much more second plane energy than earth could ever reach," Relero claimed.

"But you're planet isn't hers," Goku said.

"Huh? Oh, that, um, well... that's not exactly true," Relero stuttered, looking nervous.

The others stared at him, while Satira more or less glared. "Would you be so kind as to explain?" she bit out through clamped teeth.

"Ah... but you know I could get in trouble."

"I won't tell if you won't."

"Fine, but you have to promise I won't get caught on this one."

"You won't," Satira said.

“Alright. When I was twelve, and on my first mission with two others, we came across a mage who had a baby in his grasp and was using second plane energy to physically change her body. She was only a few days old, so he was limited in how much he could change her without killing her. The only things he had managed were her senses and a tail. She was unconscious when we found her and killed him. We knew of the saiya-jin and of their appearance. The three of us decided that taking her there would be the best choice, being everyone on our planet ostracizes Changelings. We took her there and left her on her own. She awoke from her unconsciousness there, and the first thing she would have experienced with her new heightened senses was the saiya-jin. Hence why she can tell what one smells like when compared to a human, or any other race. Her tail is extremely sensitive during a week, slightly less than actually, out of every month. This is because of the lack of anything else to become sensitive during this time. Very highly common in monkeys,” he finished, waiting for the questions to come rolling in.

“I’M CHANGELING. I don’t think I like this,” Satira’s eyes bugged out as she stated this.

“I don’t blame you.”

Before anything else could be said, the girl Relero was propping up in his arms started to awake. Her eyes opened and she looked around, still groggy.

“Where am I?” she asked in a soft voice.

“Does it matter, you’re going to be home soon.”

She looked at the speaker, “RELERO!” She clasped her arms around his neck in a grateful hug, starting to cry into his shoulder out of relief.

“I’m here to, kachara*,” Satira said from beside Relero.

Basdora looked up and saw her older friend. She smiled at her and pulled her into her clutches as well. She sat there with her one arm around her brother, still crying on his shoulder, her other arm around Satira, who was desperately trying not to fall on her face and laugh at the same time.

She eventually gave into the second, which made Basdora look up from her brother’s shoulder and look at her friend. She realized the predicament she’d place Satira in and let her go so she could get her balance.

“Your pretty strong for a twelve year old, Bas,” Satira said.

Basdora just gave a weak smile. She finally came out of shock well enough to realize that there were other people around.

“Who are these people?” she questioned, clinging to Relero in fear.

“They helped us. They won’t hurt you, I promise,” Satira reassured her as Relero held her, petting her head to calm her.

Basdora searched the faces of the gathering as if she was checking their souls.

“That one can control second plane energy,” she claimed after a moment.

“Yes, I realize that. I’m here for a reason not to just help your brother. That would be pointless. He would have done fine on his own,” Satira answered.

“Ah... Satira, shouldn’t we be doing something?” Relero asked discreetly.

“Yeah, that’s right,” Satira jumped up with a smile on her face. She started building a portal with barely hidden glee.

“You’re leaving?” Ten asked.

“We have to. Satira as well, we have things to attend to back home that makes this,” he pointed at the carnage; “seem like barely anything,” Relero explained.

The portal was up by the time he finished. Relero just shook his head.

“It’s amazing how she can take forever when doing a task if she’s reluctant, yet she does the same task in seconds when she is anxious.”

“Then, I’m assuming I’m done,” Ten said to Satira, ignoring the last snide comment Relero had made.

Satira just nodded her head in a way that said she wasn’t sure about it.

“They let me stay longer than they truly wanted me to because I asked them and because they knew you needed my knowledge for the time being. You’ll do fine on your own now. You know what is dangerous and what is safe and you aren’t on a planet with that much second plane energy anyway. You’ll do more than fine on you own,” she stated, following Relero and Basdora through her portal after finishing the last sentence. It was only a few seconds before it disappeared, leaving no evidence of even being there at all.

Everyone but Ten and Choazu left seconds after it disappeared, some even before Satira had gone through.

Ten stood there for a while, thinking about what to do. Choazu, being the friend he was, just stood and looked out into space, waiting for Tenshinhan to come out of his thoughts.

Tenshinhan finally came out of his dark space and looked down at Choazu. At least there was one person who he could count on. He jumped into the air, yelling to Choazu as he went.

“I’m heading home!”

Choazu just shrugged, happy that at least Tenshinhan had disposed of the problems that were plaguing him before, and jumped into the air after him, following the one person he’d never abandon.

* Kachara is a term that Mercedes Lackey came up with, not I, except its spelt Kechara. In her novel, the word means beloved, I, however, changed the meaning slightly to be more along the lines of dear or darling, something you would call a child.

Disclaimer- I don’t Dragonball. I mean no disrespect to those who do by writing this. I don’t make money off of it, and don’t have enough for it to be lucrative for anyone to sue me. Kachara, and the concept of the changeling are both owned by Mercedes Lackey. I also don’t mean disrespect to her, for she is, in my opinion, one of the best American authors out there.