

Ethereal - Chapter 9

Cameron and Kuval both willed themselves to Gi and were suddenly floating above the planet. Kuval looked across to Cameron and communicated.

“We are not alone.”

Cameron concurred.

“Yeah, I feel it too.”

They cast around for a glimpse of whoever was observing them. They wouldn't go down to Edard's lab until they felt that the coast was clear.

Suddenly Edard was beside them.

“Come down, don't worry about the Russians. We will go directly to my lab, they can't follow. We have erected a magnetic field around our buildings, preventing access from the astral plane. Unless your physical body or your clone is in that building you are unable to enter. It is a security measure. The field serves as a barrier of protection for anyone while they are travelling.”

The trio projected to Edard's lab. He firstly introduced Doctor Kuval to his clone and quickly ran through the transformation process with him. The three then transmuted into physical form and rose almost simultaneously.

Cameron and Kuval initially found it difficult to communicate mentally, instinctively wanting to talk, however they soon had the hang of it and moved naturally into mental conversation with Edard, though they had to continue to communicate verbally when talking to each other.

Edard extended his hand to Kuval and they shook.

“Welcome to Gi Doctor Kuval, I have wanted to meet with you for some time now. I'm sure you will be of great assistance to this historical coming together of our two planets. A reunification of sorts, considering we are both human.”

Kuval smiled and bowed his head slightly.

“Thank you Edard, this is indeed a great honour. I will do my very best to help in any way I can.”

Edard turned toward a door in the opposite end of the lab to the door by which they entered.

“Please follow me gentleman, we have a small group assembled in the auditorium to discuss our plans for the future.”

They followed him through the door to a large room resembling a university lecture room. Situated at the front of the room was a large table surrounded by twelve chairs, with four Gian men and two Gian women already seated around the table. They all rose as the three entered the room.

They walked over to the table, Edard indicating each of them as he said their name and introduced them to the group one by one.

“Doctor Gates and Doctor Kuval, please meet Aland Croate and Petril Manse from our leadership team, Helgis Harlsed and Thorsen Herben from our scientific team and Agert Malson and Rickel Norstad from our astral and interstellar defence team.”

They all shook hands as they were introduced and resumed their seats as Edard continued.

“In front of you bolted onto the table you will find a round device and a pair of head phones. This is a digital translator device with an algorithm programmed into it, which converts English language to Gian and vice versa and for the duration of our meeting we will use this device, so as to alleviate any potential confusion between us all trying to communicate mentally.”

He moved to his seat at the table and opened the meeting.

“This is a monumental occasion for all of us and our two worlds. I don’t think even we around this table can imagine how this meeting will change our peoples’ lives and the future of our worlds.

We both have a great deal to offer the other and if we proceed with care in the coming years, I believe we can enhance the lives and the safety of our people immeasurably.

Now the first thing we probably should discuss is who, from our friends on Earth, we should bring into the initial discussions and planning.”

All agreed and proceed to discuss the pros and cons of who to initially include. Whether they should be from a range of countries, should they be scientific, political or military? or perhaps all three. It was to be a long meeting. The discussions went on for so long that they would eventually retire for the night to resume the next morning.

Edard invited Cameron and Mahajan, they had all decided it would be simpler and more friendly to address each other by their first names, to dine with he and his family at his home that night. An invitation they both readily accepted, eager to experience this alien world in physical form, outside the confines of the laboratory.

As they entered Edard’s home, they were met by Lili his beautiful wife and their children, daughter Alia and son Deitor. Alia was in her twelfth year and already displaying the beauty of her mother and Deitor was fifteen the same age as Cameron’s son Zane when he was killed.

For Cameron, the horrific memories of the loss of his family were just under the surface, and seeing Deitor brought back the painful memories of his loss.

Edard and his family had gone to a lot of trouble to ensure that their guests had a memorable night. He had the translator installed into his home for ease of communication, with smaller earpieces for hearing instead of the cumbersome head phones, and Lili had prepared a main dish from the meat of the Gian equivalent of a cow, they called them Elkabeast, a domesticated species, native across the planet. Cameron found the meat very tasty, a cross between venison and beef he thought. They called it Bael.

The evening was very pleasant, although after meeting Deitor and seeing how happy and close Edard’s family was, Cameron’s thoughts kept sliding back to his family and his feelings of great loss were difficult to keep at bay.

Through the evening Edard noticed his new friend’s periods of melancholy and after dinner, while Mahajan discussed medicine with Deitor, the young man’s intended profession, he guided Cameron into the garden under the pretence of showing him some of the native fruits.

“You seem a little unhappy at times tonight my friend, is there anything I can help with?”

They were communicating mentally again, and Cameron knew that his thoughts would be difficult to hide.

“It’s my family Edard. Seeing how happy you are with yours, my thoughts keep going back to my loss. I would give anything to have them back.”

Edard put his hand on Cameron’s shoulder.

“Of course I know the circumstances of your loss my friend, I couldn’t think of any pain worse than what you are experiencing. If we can spend some time together tomorrow after the decisions have been made, I would like to talk to you alone again, perhaps I can help with what you are going through.”

“I’m not sure anyone can help with the loss my friend, but I’m happy to talk to you about it. Why not now, how can you help?”

Edard paused in their walk.

“Cameron, what I will discuss with you requires some big decisions and we also have some big decisions to make tomorrow. I can’t discuss it with you until after the meeting, you’ll just have to trust me on this.”

“OK Edard, it can wait until tomorrow. As I said, I don’t think anything or anyone can alleviate my grief at the moment. Maybe they can only be dulled by the passage of time.”

The next morning the meeting resumed and over the ensuing few hours an overall plan and blueprint for the alliance of the two civilizations was agreed. It was decided that, during the initial stages of the process, no elected Politician would be chosen and no country favoured. The inclusion group would be kept to just four initial recruits, chosen for the skills and qualities they could offer this civilization-changing project. Those from Earth chosen to join the Gian representatives were;

A particularly brilliant molecular biologist from America, chosen for her work in human genetics and the slowing of the aging process, thus the prolonging of quality human life.

The Governor General of Australia, who happened to be an ex-military leader. He was chosen for his leadership, humanity, fairness and influence on other world leaders.

The Secretary of the United Nations, for his position of authority and influence with the major countries of Earth.

And last but not least, Earth’s preeminent scientist and physicist, chosen for his unique insights into most fields of science and his leadership in the field of quantum physics. It was also noted that he was confined to a wheelchair and severely restricted by his rare condition, and it would surely benefit, not only him, but human kind on both planets to have him in a perfect body once again.

The group decided that the four would be enough for the first stage of the process and would help with future decisions on the inclusion of people for the next stage.

It would fall to Cameron and Mahajan to convince the chosen four of the validity of the monumental undertaking. They decided that their first ports of call should be the two scientists, as they would be more likely to listen to their initial approach with an open mind. And their strategy would be to secure an audience with the physicist first. Their thinking was that if they could recruit him, his reputation and standing in the scientific community would open the way to securing the cooperation of the others.

Following the meeting Cameron’s thoughts turned to the conversation he had with Edard on the previous evening, regarding his deep feelings of depression over the loss of his family. Edard had implied that he may have been able to help in some way. Maybe the Gians had some sort of mind treatment which relieved their crippling grief, he didn’t want to forget Sally and Zane, but this feeling of despair which came over him quite often took him to a very dark place, a place he dreaded to go and could use help staying away from.

He sought Edard out and found him in conversation with Helgis Harlsed. He paused in his approach and loitered out of earshot, planning to wait until they had finished their discussion.

Edard saw him and beckoned him over, both he and Helgis smiling in his direction.

He joined them at the end of the table. Now speaking mentally.

“I’m sorry to interrupt. I was wondering if I could catch up with you Edard, for that private chat we discussed last night?”

“Please Cameron join us, let us go to my office. I was just asking Helgis to join us, I hope you don’t mind. I haven’t discussed your issue with her, I wanted to check with you first. Helgis is an expert in the process which may assist with your quandary. You will have a big decision to make after our discussion, and Helgis will have all the facts which will help you make that decision.”

Cameron looked from one to the other of his new friends. This process, whatever it was, seemed complicated but he wasn’t sure if he wanted to put his private feeling out to a group of people. He thought for a moment and decided that if Edard recommended Helgis’ help then he would accept it.

“Yes thank you both for your concern. Please lead the way. If your remedy can ease my loss, I will try almost anything.”

Edard smiled and patted Cameron’s shoulder.

“Very well then, come my friend. This would be a major step for you. We will see if you are willing to take it.”