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Another Perspective

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Palian enjoyed the privilege of being an only son of his father Varial of the household of Sedal. Among all the tribes of the planet of Yipanee, an only child was looked upon as a gift from a higher power. In the tribe of Tilak, the majority of only children were known to grow up to become successful in high positions. Palian's period of being immersed in the cultural beliefs of the Tilak by passing through the Encinada Gardens and other places was intended to be first phase of his eventual development into a sage among the ranks of the Tilak. Although he was only twelve years of age, his knowledge of tribal law was already better than that of a young adult. The nature of Palian's intellectual development was of such a high standard that Varial was convinced that he would become a sage before reaching adulthood. As Varial led Palian through the neutral zone of the Encinada Gardens, they encountered a group of Omulae who looked at them. They ignored the gaze of the Omulae and proceeded through the gardens until they reached a plantation of berry fields. They picked berries from a tree with the intention of gaining enough of them to last for a week. As he was picking berries, Palian could not help but admire the generosity of Haleo, the man who was responsible for building a collection of gardens with a span that could almost match the size of several cities.

Half a century ago, Haleo was aware that he was biologically unable to have his own children. As a result of this, he was willing to give away the immense amount of property he owned to people unrelated to him with the goal of achieving peace for Yipanee. He divided the Encinada Gardens into five zones with a proposal of giving a zone to each of the warring tribes of Yipanee and allotting another zone to a state of neutrality where all people would be able to pass through it. He promised each of the tribes that they would be able to inherit a portion of his land provided that they would go into negotiations for peace and end several centuries of war between the tribes of Tilak and Horane on one side and the Lomanae and Omulae tribes on the other side. Although he was not a member of any of the main tribes as an independent land owner, he succeeded in bringing them to the negotiation table. After several months of negotiation, a deal was reached. The Tilak, Horane, Lomanae and Omulae agreed to end hostilities on the provision that they would be given an equal portion of the Encinada Gardens. Each of the tribes signed a peace agreement and ownership of the gardens was passed from Haleo to the various tribes. After having filled his own basket with berries, Palian was curious to know why a man of the nature of Haleo would have been willing to negotiate with the Lomanae and Omulae. As a member of the Tilak, he had been raised with the belief that the Lomanae and Omulae were treacherous people who could never be trusted.

"I still can't understand how Haleo could have trusted the Lomanae and Omulae. How could he have negotiated with them without a fear of being killed?"

"Do you really want to know why?"

"Yes, I want to know."

“Haleo promised to let them practise their black magic at night in the zones that would be given to them. He knew that if he made this promise, they would not kill him.”

Upon hearing these words, Palian was shocked. For many years, he had been brought up with the view that Haleo was a great man with a moral conscience. The thought of him agreeing to the practise of black magic seemed almost unthinkable.

“You’re telling me that he sold out his morals for a peace deal.”

“Yes, that’s what he did.”

“I never knew that. Nobody told me that Haleo did this.”

“You never knew of it because the deal was a secret.”

“If it was a secret, how can you know that it’s true?”

“Mirala, the lady who was ostracised from the Omulae told me this.”

Varial filled up his basket of berries and the two of them made their way home. Varial was hoping that Palian would never discover that what he told him about the rival tribes was a lie. The Lomanae and Omulae tribes never practised black magic whether in the night or in the day. The story of Mirala was also a lie. Mirala was in fact a member of the Tilak tribe who pretended to have changed her allegiance from that of the Omulae to that of the Tilak. Varial knew that as long as Palian never interacted with members of the rival tribes, he would never know the truth about them.

Palian closely examined a mosaic that was only recently given to him by his father earlier that week. It consisted of a glowing sword hovering over a landscape of mountains and plains that were in darkness. Several years ago, his father explained the story behind the image of the glowing sword. Over four centuries ago, Yipanee was ruled by a tyrannical race of people called the Isiari who originated from the underworld below Yipanee. The Isiari enslaved the tribes of Tilak, Horane, Lomanae and Omulae for four hundred and thirty years under a military government that used magical spells which placed the whole planet under a condition of darkness. Under the reign of darkness, the Isiari possessed heightened sensory vision which enabled them to see objects in darkness and from a long distance away. The Isiari were able to see activity in the external world under any kind of conditions or circumstances with clarity but this was not the case with the tribes who were subjugated to their rule. The other tribes did not have access to ordinary forms of light and were not able to see without the limited number of busal diamonds that were available. As a result of this, they were without the means of defending themselves against the Isiari. One day it was alleged that a man named Giraltomeos from the Horane, discovered a means of seeing through the darkness of each day. On that same day, he broke free from his captivity and was able to locate the residence of the head shaman of the Isiari. When the shaman was away from his home, Giraltomeos broke all the tools of magic that he used. After this was done, it was alleged that the sun was restored to Yipanee. The outbreak of the sun resulted in a weakening of the power of the Isiari and a restoration of the ability of the tribes to properly see themselves in the span of day light. A few days after the restoration of the sun, Giraltomeos began a successful rebellion against the Isiari. In the space of a few months, the forces of Giraltomeos were able to expel the Isiari from their territories

without any trace of them being seen ever since that time. The sword in the mosaic represented Giraltoleos.

Palian put the mosaic back on his desk and noticed something completely different outside his window. A condala bird perched on the balcony outside his room. Its feathers were a resplendent combination of light and dark blue colour which blended well with the light of the sun. Palian admired its beauty. He came closer to the window. He reached his hand out and the condala flew away. It was heading toward the Ecinada Gardens. Palian wanted to leave his home and search for the condala but he remembered the instructions of his parents. They would be away for the whole day and told him not to leave the house. As a young boy, he realised that he was obliged to obey the orders of his parents but his fascination with the condala was getting the better of him. As each second passed by, the beauty of the condala was pervading his emotions. He could not stop thinking about it. The condala was a bird far more beautiful than other creatures and one that was rarely seen outside of the Ecinada Gardens. The only times that Palian ever saw these birds was when he would go berry picking with his father. Palian could no longer hold back his curiosity. He left the house and headed for the Ecinada Gardens. After almost forty minutes of walking, Palian was at the neutral zone. As he passed through different sections, he saw quite a variety of birds and other animals but saw no sign of a condala.

Suddenly, he heard a tweeting sound that was familiar to him. It began with a low volume tweet followed by a succession of high volume tweets that were melodic. Palian recognised this as the sound of a condala. He headed eastward into a section marked with blue and white checkered flags without realising that he was passing into the zone that was allotted to the Omulae. He made his way through dense shrub into an open paddock where crops and marking sticks were placed on various parts of the land. In the distance, he saw a condala at the base of a tree. He began walking in the direction where it stood. Without any warning, he trod on one of the patches of land with a marking stick allotted to it. In the space of a few seconds, he fell down into a pit and landed on his backside. The fall was very painful and Palian struggled to lift himself up. Despite the pain he was feeling, he realised that none of his bones were broken. He looked at the hole that was above him. It was the width of his body in standing mode. He began shouting for help but there was no response. Palian started to assume the possibility that he might not be rescued. He kicked the wall surrounding him several times in frustration. His only thoughts were guilt and regret. He felt guilty about having failed his parents through disobedience. He also regretted having been so stupid as to look for a bird that meant nothing to him. He stopped kicking the wall as his anger subsided. In the space of a few seconds, his mind began to clear. He could hear footsteps. There was someone on the ground above him.

‘Help me. Get me out of here. I’m trapped.’ Palian shouted out.

In less than a minute, a head appeared in the hole that was made through matted grass. A full layer of the grass was removed to reveal the features and body of an Omulae. The sight of the Omulae immediately brought a sense of fear upon Palian but he realised that the Omulae would be his only hope of being rescued.

‘What are you doing here?’ the Omulae asked.

‘I was searching for a condala and fell down.’

‘You’re not supposed to be here.’

‘What do you mean? I’m only walking through the gardens.’

‘This is not the neutral zone. This section belongs to the Omulae.’

‘I wasn’t aware of that.’

‘How can you be ignorant of that? The signs are very clear. Every section marked with blue and white flags belongs to the Omulae. You are guilty of trespassing into Omulae territory.’

Palian began to cry. He could not keep his face straight as he looked at the Omulae. He was filled with fear. A fear that he would be punished by a rival tribe was getting the better of him.

‘Are you going to leave me here to die or am I going to be prosecuted?’

‘You’re not going to be punished. I’m coming down to help you.’

A rope was extended down to the bottom of the pit. The Omulae used the rope to climb down the pit. After the Omulae made contact with the ground, Palian took a step back. It was obvious to the Omulae that Palian was afraid.

‘I’m not going to harm. I’m only here to help you.’ The Omulae said.

‘Why would you want to help me?’

‘I’m doing it because I believe in forgiveness.’

‘Are you serious?’

‘Yes, of course I am. Forgiveness is part of our culture.’ The Omulae took out a crystal which illuminated the pit. A small plant with a form that spiralled upward from the roots appeared in the centre of the pit. It was in perfect condition and subsequently gave Palian the impression that it had been spared the direct impact of him falling down on it. The Omulae was in disbelief. ‘This is quite astonishing. How were you able to fall down and not land on it?’

‘I don’t know. It must have been the way I fell down.’

‘There must be more to it than that.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘I’ve rescued Omulae youths who’ve fallen into these holes over the years. After I found them, they always landed on a plant.’ The Omulae turned around and offered his back to Palian. ‘Hop on my back. I’ll carry you up.’

Palian did as he was told and the two of them reached the surface. The rope that was used to return them to the surface was attached to a stick that was driven into the ground. The Omulae untied the far end of the rope from the stick and wound it up before placing it in a bag. He removed his jacket and handed it to Palian.

‘You’ll need to wear this.’ He said

Palian took his advice and put the jacket on. He was fully aware of why he needed to wear it. It was a well known fact among the Tilak that the Omulae regarded trespass into their territory as a great insult to their culture. Throughout the history of the Omulae, members of rival tribes who trespassed into land or zones allotted to them were charged according to Omulae law with the ensuing result of a trespasser or trespassers either being heavily fined or incarcerated. As Palian was aware of this, he began to respect the Omulae who rescued him. He previously lived with a stereotypically image that the Omulae never forgive those who do wrong against them. Now he was discovering how wrong this stereotype was. The Omulae led Palian out of the zone allotted to his tribe and guided him back to a section within the neutral zone which was marked with a white flag that represented neutrality. Without Palian being aware of it, a friend of his called Jaspinal was observing him from a long way off. Jaspinal was immediately aware of Palian wearing Omulae clothing and talking to an Omulae. He hid himself in the bushes and continued to observe what was taking place. Jaspinal could see Palian talking to the Omulae as he took off the Omulae jacket and handed it back. As the conversation between the two men was taking place, Jaspinal could only shake his head with disgust.

‘I owe you so much. I’ll never forget what you did for me. Is there any way that I could pay you back in return?’ Palian asked.

‘You don’t have to give me anything but there is one favour that I ask of you.’

‘What is it?’

‘I would like you tell others in your tribe that we are a forgiving race. Can you do that?’

Palian was slow to react but did manage to give a respond to this request. ‘I don’t know if I could do it. Many people in my tribe think so negatively about your people. From a young age, the members of our tribe are taught that the Omulae and Lomalae are perverse people. We’re literally brought up with a negative stereotype about you. I was a believer in this stereotype until today.’

‘I understand what you’re saying. If your people are brought up with negative stereotypes about us, those stereotypes will be hard to break.’

As they were talking, a small swarm of wasps was entering the neutral zone from the west. The Omulae drew Palian’s attention to the wasps.

‘This is a bad sign.’ The Omulae said.

‘How can it be a bad sign? It’s just a swarm of insects.’

‘Do you know what kind of insects they are?’

‘No, I’ve never seen them before.’

‘Have you heard of the reign of the Isiari?’

‘Yes, my parents told me a few stories about how they ruled over us.’

‘Those insects you are seeing are called wasps. They represent two kinds of warnings in regard to the Isiari. The first warning is their ordinary presence as a swarm. Their

formation as a swarm indicates that the Isiari are preparing to come back from the underworld to attack the tribes of Yipanee. The second warning is the appearance of the Isiari with a red aura surrounding them. This warning will indicate that the Isiari are already present among us. The warning we are given now is to prepare us for the coming of the Isiari in a few days. All the tribes need to make preparations to leave the Ecinada Gardens. ’

‘I believe what you’re saying but what you’ve told me is something I never heard of. My parents told me the Isiari were defeated and would never come back.’

‘Your parents were right about them being defeated. They were soundly defeated but the signs and symbols associated with them will always be the same.’

‘I can’t understand why our leaders have hidden this information from us for so long.’

‘They hide the truth because they have a mentality of denial. After danger passes by, they try to pretend that it will never come back. We cannot afford to ignore this situation. The Isiari are invincible on level terrain. We have to make preparations to leave.’

‘How can I do this?’

‘Ask people from your tribe and those of the Horane to read history books concerning the symbolism of the wasps. You need to warn as many people as possible about this symbolism. If they can read history books and observe the behaviour of the wasps, they have a chance of being reasoned with.’

‘Where can we possibly go?’

‘The Kapur Mountains is the only region where people can be safe from the Isiari.’

‘I’ll tell my people what you’ve told me but I’m not sure they’ll listen. You know our people are biased against you.’

‘Just do what you can. I’ll be going now. I’m going to meet up with the Omulae leaders and work out an evacuation strategy for tomorrow.’

‘Before you go, there’s something I’d like to know.’

‘What is it?’

‘What’s your name?’

‘I am Yalonari. Who are you?’

‘I’m Palian.’

Yalonari shook the hand of Palian and then they waved farewell to each other. After Yalonari disappeared out of view, Jaspinal departed from the bushes and confronted Palian. A look of immense dissatisfaction was on his face.

‘I’ve caught you, you’re a traitor.’

‘Don’t call me a traitor. I’m not a traitor.’ Palian responded

‘Stop telling lies. I caught you talking to an Omulae.’

‘What’s wrong with that?’

‘You know you’re not supposed to be talking to them.’

‘Even if it’s a matter of life or death?’

‘I don’t know what you’re talking about.’

‘That Omulae who you saw just warned me about a danger that is threatening all of us.’

‘What danger? There’s no danger.’

‘There is danger. The Omulae pointed out to me the presence of a swarm of wasps. This is a warning sign to us that the Isiari will return.’

‘I don’t think they’ll be returning but even if they do, we’ll be able to handle them.’

‘We can’t handle them. We need to flee to the Kapur Mountains.’

Jaspinal simply shook his head, turned around and walked away. Palian spent the rest of day meeting up with members of both the Tilak and Horane. He warned them about the threat of the Isiari returning to attack them and urged them to read history books from the Central Library of Tilak Culture. Palian received only two kind of responses from those he talked to. People either completely ignored him or listened attentively to his warning for a little while before rejecting it as false. Those who listened to him for a short period of time seemed to give a certain sense of credibility to Palian’s warning. Those families who were open to Palian’s message seemed to only be listening to him on the basis of tribal loyalties. As soon as a member of any of these families asked Palian about his source, Palian informed him that he gained this information from an Omulae. This kind of response immediately caused members of either the Tilak or Horane to discredit the warnings that were given to them. Towards the end of the day, he thought about speaking to the chiefs of both tribes but decided not to do it. It became obvious to him that if the general public would not heed his warning, there would be no way that the highest ranks of the Tilak and Horane would listen to him. After his parents arrived home that evening, he did not talk to them about the threat of the Isiari. He would need to prepare for the following day to work out the kind of words that would be required for him to persuade his family to depart for the Kapur Mountains.

As Palian observed his father removing the last few weeds he could find from the backyard garden of the family house, he felt like telling his father that his actions were a waste of time but decided not to do it. Instead of being provocative, the idea of referring to what was happening as being a hypothetical situation came to his mind.

‘I’ve got a question I’d like to ask you.’

‘What is it?’ His father answered.

‘If an Omulae gathered others from his tribe to head to another region and asked us to join him, would you heed his advice?’

‘No, of course not. The Omulae can never be trusted.’

‘What if it was a warning that the Isiari would be coming back.’

‘I still wouldn’t believe him. The Isiari were defeated a long time ago. They won’t be coming back.’

Varial placed the last few weeds into a basket and threw the content of the basket into a nearby bin. The two of them entered back into the house where they saw Palian’s mother talking to one of the messenger’s from the Tilak. Upon seeing Varial, the messenger turned his attention to him.

‘I’ve got good news for you.’

‘What is it?’

‘Many Omulae and Lomanae are evacuating from their posts at the Ecinada Gardens. They’re also leaving their homes and permanently moving to the Kapur Mountains.’

‘You’re joking aren’t you?’

‘I’m not joking. I’m telling you the truth. Their neighbourhoods are almost empty. Just travel to one of their towns and you’ll know I’m telling the truth.’

‘Why would they be doing a stupid thing like that?’

‘They believe that the Isiari will be returning to take over us again.’

‘You don’t believe that rot about the Isiari, do you?’

‘No, never. I’ll never trust the Omulae and Lomanae.’

‘Are people taking over their homes?’

‘Yes, members of our tribe and those of the Horane are occupying many of their homes.’

‘Are there homes that haven’t been claimed?’

‘Yes, there are still Omulae and Lomanae who haven’t yet evacuated but are preparing to do so.’

‘If that’s the case, my wife and I will head down to one of those neighbourhoods. We’ll be claiming a few houses for ourselves.’ Palian’s father turned his attention to Palian. ‘You’ll need to stay in the house until we come back.’

Palian responded by nodding in agreement despite being convinced that he would not be keeping his promise. Palian’s parents followed the messenger to the front door of the house and left. Palian took a look out through one of the windows in the kitchen. The messenger made his way to the house next door while his parents departed on a horse with his father on the front of the saddle. Palian found a pen and several pieces of blank paper on a table. He started to write down a message.

Dear Father and Mother,

I am leaving for the Kapur Mountains and will not be returning. I'm sorry that I am doing this but you've left me with no other choice. The coming of the wasps is a warning signal to everyone that the Isiari are returning. They are too powerful for us to resist them. If we do not head for the Kapur Mountains, we will all be wiped out.

Yours Sincerely,

Palian

Palian collected a reasonable supply of food and drinks which he placed in a bag. After collecting all the valuables that would be necessary to sustain him, he walked out the front door and left the house. He walked past many of the homes which rejected the message he proclaimed on the previous day. Going past each house which rejected his warning was so painful for him that he felt like crying but held himself back. He opened his wallet to find out how much money was available. He had a collection of notes which added up to three hundred paradolas. This would be just enough money for him to buy a ticket to any destination of his choice from the carriage station in his town of Dumaroon. If he were to buy a ticket to the Kapur Mountains, it would cost two hundred and thirty paradolas and he would still have seventy paradolas left to buy basic essentials at the Kapur Mountains. After about twenty minutes of walking, he reached the carriage station. He was about to enter the station to buy a ticket but saw a family he preached to on the previous day approaching a grocery store. They were the Yunal family who consisted of Romanalos Yunal, his wife Yumalis Yunal and their five young children. Romanalos was steering the horse at the front of the carriage while his family were inside the carriage. They parked the carriage outside the grocery store. Palian remembered this family as being more open to his message than the others. They were initially open to his message but eventually rejected it as false. Palian observed the actions of the family. Romanalos went into the grocery store and came back a few minutes later with a few cartons of drink which he loaded into his carriage. This left the impression upon Palian that they were going somewhere. The likelihood of them changing their minds and regarding the return of the Isiari as real, came to Palian's mind. He approached their carriage and caught the attention of Romanalos.

'Are you going somewhere?' Palian asked.

'Yes, we're heading for the Kapur Mountains. We reconsidered our position and we've realised that you're right. Thank you so much for telling us the truth.'

'What made you change your minds?'

'I took out a history book from the central library. I looked through it last night. It revealed important facts to me about the Isiari.'

'What did it reveal to you about them?'

'It revealed to me how ordinary and aura infused swarms of wasps indicate either the presence or coming presence of the Isiari. This book has given me the ability to realise that many of the things told to us about the Isiari are not true. Our leaders have lied to us.'

‘Yes, you’re right. That’s why so many people aren’t taking my warning seriously.’

‘My family are taking your warning seriously. Are you willing to come with us to the Kapur Mountains?’

‘Yes, I’m ready.’

‘Hop inside my carriage. I’ll collect the final cartons and we’ll go.’

Palian entered the carriage where he met the other members of Romanalos’ family. Yumalis, the wife of Romanalos was with her five infant children who consisted of three boys and two girls. They were completely silent, unable to say a word. Yumalis briefly looked at Palian before turning her gaze away from him. On the previous day, when Palian declared his warning to this family about the Isiari, Yumalis was the one who was most open to this message. She seemed to have been such a strong believer in what Palian said until her husband changed his mind and told Palian that he was not interested in going to the Kapur Mountains. Romanalos came back to the carriage with the final supply of cartons and they were off. Palian took a cake from one of his bags and offered it to Yumalis.

‘I’m offering this to you as a gift.’

‘Thank you.’ Yumalis said in response. She still seemed very disinterested in talking.

‘You look troubled. What’s wrong?’

‘I’m scared.’ She began to cry. ‘Our people are going to perish. There’s nothing we can do about it.’

Yumalis was silent for the rest of the journey. When they reached the base of the Kapur Mountains, the Yunal family parked their carriage in a vacant area of land where a small number of tents from the Tilak and Horane were set up. As the Omulae and Lomanae were residing within the upper regions of the mountains, the small number of families from the Tilak and Horane who decided to make the trip to this region, did not want to share their residence in close proximity to their rivals. As the Yulan family were unloading their cargo from a carriage, Romanalos stopped temporarily and opened up a passage from the history book he carried. He read through this passage and then turned his attention to Palian.

‘I just got an idea.’

‘What is it?’ Palian asked.

‘I remembered something. The book talks about a retreat of the various tribes to the Kapur Mountains. You may not have heard of this story but I’ve heard of it and other people have heard of it.’

‘What story are you talking about?’

‘I’m talking about the turning point in the war with the Isiari. Towards the end of the war, Giraltomeos is documented as having led the resistance to the Kapur Mountains and used busal diamonds as weapons against the Isiari to weaken and eventually defeat

them. The battles at these mountains turned the war around. Within a month, the Isiari were defeated and vanquished from our lands.'

'I don't think this story will make any difference. If they rejected our message before, they'll reject it again.'

'It isn't just a story. I can get a royally signed and authenticated copy of this story from the central library. I'll take out a copy and preach it to as many people as I can. We have to try to save our people. I have to go now.' Romanalos approached Yumalis. 'I have to make one final attempt to save our people.'

'Do you really think it's going to make any difference?'

'I don't know but I'll try.'

Romanalos loosened the horse from the carriage and departed. Yumalis responded by casting her head down. It was obvious to Palian that she did not have any faith in the likelihood of Romanalos having success in reaching out to his people. Yumalis and her children took their belongings which were offloaded from the carriage and set up tents for everyone including a spare tent which was given to Palian as a gesture of good will. Palian set up his tent and placed all his belongings inside it before unfolding a sleeping mat and going to bed. As he thought about Romanalos attempt to reach out to his people, he shook his head in disbelief. Although he never heard the story of his people retreating to the Kapur Mountains, he was convinced that the story would not be able to convince his people to take the threat of the Isiari seriously. He could not see how the authority of a documented book from the main library of his tribe would be strong enough to persuade his people to disregard the authority of their leaders. His negative attitude to his people was making him tired and he fell asleep.

As Palian silently observed the Omulae elders kneeling in prayer within a reserved space of a higher section of the Kapur Mountains without any visible image before them, he could not help but wonder who they were praying to. Despite being told by his father from his early years that the Omulae and Lomanae pray to a single God without any kind of image that would represent how he really appears, Palian still could not understand their kind of worship. Each time he prayed either with his parents or with other members of his tribe, they always prayed in front of statues of the gods they worship such as Bavissa, Parclan and Hupana. Palian could not understand how the Omulae and Lomanae could attach a sense of identity to their God when they did not even have an idea of his appearance. All he could do was walk around to another area and continue waiting for Yalonari, the man who previously rescued him at the Ecinada gardens, to be finished in his meeting with Karolanos, the chief of the Omulae. Yolanari was also an intertribal negotiator for the Omulae with several years of experience in entering into negotiations with the Tilak and Horane on inter tribal disputes. Earlier that morning, Yalonari met up with Palian in a ground area which was reserved for the Tilak and offered him a free ride to a higher section of the Kapur Mountains. Palian accepted this invitation and the two of them hopped on board a lattisa bird which is about five feet as high and seven times as wide as a human body. The lattisa took them to the section where Palian was waiting in a matter of minutes.

Palian returned to the area reserved for prayer. He saw the elders lift themselves up from the ground and enter through the door of the room where Yolanari was in

conversation with Karolanos. Without even realising it, an elder dropped a token from one of his pockets before departing for the room. Palian felt like knocking on the door and informing the elder of the item which he left behind but decided not to do it. Although he was not a member of the Omulae without a good knowledge of their customs, he had an inner feeling that it was not ethical for a member of another tribe to disturb a meeting among the elders of the Omulae. Palian picked up the token that had fallen to the ground and looked at it. It was the icon of a circle surrounded by four dots. This was the central image of the Ecinada Gardens. The circle represented the generosity of Haleo while the four dots represented the main four tribes of Yipanee. Palian put the token back on the ground. He knew that the Isiari would be taking over the Ecinada Gardens with ease and could not see any way that they could be removed from that region. After a few minutes, the elders were finished in their meeting with Karolanos and Yulonari and departed out of the door. Palian made eye contact with the elder who dropped the token. He picked the token up and was able to give it back to the elder but the elder told him to keep it. After the elders were gone from the room, Yalonari appeared. He did not look to be in a good mood.

‘I’ll be needing your help.’

‘What would you like me to do?’ Palian asked.

‘I’ll need you to negotiate with your people. You need to ask the members of your tribe and those of the Horane to join us here. The elders have gained information that the Isiari are more powerful than ever before. Your people won’t be able to withstand an onslaught against them from where they are. If they don’t join us on this level, they’ll be slaughtered.’

‘I’ll try to negotiate with them.’

‘We have to go now.’

Yalonari led Palian to an area where dozens of lattisas were sitting down side by side on the ground. Yalonari mounted onto one of them with Palian behind him and they descended down to the base of the Kapur Mountains. They landed on an open space between the camps where the Tilak and Horane were stationed. Upon seeing his tribe and their allies, Palian felt a sense of minor relief. The number people who were present was more than double the number of the previous day. It was obvious to Palian that Romanalos succeeded in persuading more people to flee to the Kapur Mountains. Palian looked for Romanalos among the large crowd but could not see him anywhere. Yalonari gave Palian an object that was known among the tribes as a pingulla. It was an object that was predominantly cylindrical with the exception of the top of it which was the shape of a cone upside down. Within the cone area, there was a space for a fire to be lit. Palian lit the cone area with a match and the smoke started to come out of the pingulla. Palian was slowly shaking the pingulla up and down and then briefly to the sides as a means of communication to the members of the Tilak and Horane. The message he sent was that all the people gathered at the two camps needed to meet up with him at the point where he was located. Within a few minutes, the whole remnant from the Tilak and Horane were surrounding Palian and Yolanari.

‘My people, I have message for you. You need to listen to me. I admit that I am not an adult but I know the difference between what is right and what is wrong. I know the

difference between danger and safety. If you heed my words, all of you will be saved.' Palian said.

'What are you expecting us to do?' cried out a man from the crowd.

'I'm asking you to leave aside your personal prejudice against the Omulae and the Lomanae. We need to live together, we need to be able to live side by side.'

There were several people in the crowd who looked to be very agitated. One man from the Horane who appeared to be a few years older than Palian came forward to meet up with Palian but people within the crowd held him back.

'You want us to live with our enemies. You're a traitor.'

The man who was angry with Palian attempted to break free from those were holding onto him but could not do so. Palian simply looked at the man without being able to say a word. As the two of them were staring at each other, Romanalos reached the area where Palian and Yalonari were. He gave Palian a gentle tap and spoke to him in a low voice. 'I'll handle the situation. Leave it to me.' Romanalos turned his attention to the crowd.

'My people, please hear me. Half of you are here because you accepted a message that I sent to you as an elder of the Tilak. If you are true to the traditions that have been handed down through our ancestors, each of you will respect the message I am about to give.'

Even though Romanalos was speaking to the two tribes as an elder, the Horane who was angry with Palian was making rude gestures toward Romanalos. The tribesmen who were holding onto the Horane dragged the man away from the crowd before Romanalos continued on with his speech.

'A major custom that has been handed down to our people has been the tradition that each man's life is equivalent to the sides of a coin. One side of the coin has the sun shining on it while the other side creates a shadow. You must make a choice between seeing the path of light or staying in the shade of what is wrong. Half of you have heard the story of how the flight to the Kapur Mountains turned around the war against the Isiari. Now I will relate this story to those of you who have not heard it. This story is documented as being true.' Romanalos took out a book from the Central Library of Tilak Culture. He held the book above his head for everyone to see. The book contained the emblem of the Central Library of Tilak Culture on its front cover and a signature of Prince Parnol of the Horane on its inside cover after it was opened up. Romanalos progressed further by opening the book a few pages towards its end and began reading.'

After having spent only a month in the vicinity of the Kapur Mountains, Commander Paron and the Isiari First Regiment were succumbing to the conditions of being in an area of high altitude. The high oxygen levels on the mountains affected their respiratory systems to such an extent that their capacity to withstand the full blast of a busal diamond was greatly diminished. Many First Regiment soldiers were dying from simply one or two busal diamond blasts in the battles

that were taking place. Giraltoeos and his troops began using guerrilla tactics against the Isiari with great success. After only one month, the Isiari had lost more than half of their fighting force and decided to flee Yipanee.

He finished reading the book and returned his attention to the crowd.

‘The evidence has been presented to you. The Isiari could not properly handle high oxygen levels on the lower parts of a mountain area. If this account is true, the higher levels of oxygen on the upper levels of these mountains would be a protective safeguard for us against the Isiari. The advice I’m giving to you is clear. We need to flee to the upper areas. We are being supplied with the free transport of latissas due to the generosity of the Lumanae and the Omulae. We have to go now.’

After these words were spoken, the whole crowd proceeded toward the latissas, including the man who had a conflict with Palian. As people were hoping on board the latissas, Palian could see his mother in the distance. She was riding on a horse toward the Kapur Mountains. He immediately assumed that she changed her mind and decided to become an exile along with him. Although he was leaning towards this belief, a part of him was uncertain about her motives. By the time his mother reached the area that had formerly been used for camping, Palian, Yolanari and Romanalos were the only other people at the base of the mountains. His mother descended from her horse and embraced Palian.

‘I need to have a talk to you.’ His mother said.

‘What would you like to say?’

‘Your father sent me to reason with you.’

‘I won’t be listening to him.’

‘How can you do this? You have parents who love you.’

‘If I go back, I’ll perish with others from our tribe. I don’t want to die.’

‘The Isiari won’t be coming. They’re gone.’ As his mother spoke these words, a swarm of wasps with a red aura surrounding them could be seen heading towards Jiranti, the capital city of the Tilak. A tear fell down the cheek of Palian as he bowed his head down in frustration. ‘What’s wrong with you? You look upset.’ His mother said.

‘Take a look behind you.’

Palian’s mother took the advice which Palian gave to her. She could see a swarm of wasps with a red aura surrounding them enter into Jiranti. She remembered having read a book from the central library about this same warning several years ago. An expression of despair came over her face as she began to cry. In the space of a few seconds, she realised how blind she was as a person who could not be reasoned with until she saw the approaching destruction that she was warned about. The impending death of her husband and other members of the tribe filled her with intense grief.