

Five Moons - Revolution

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she was arrogant about being Anozan. "Toron made a terrible mistake and the High Council went right along with it. Now all Anozan will pay the price for it," Raven continued her argument. "Toron made no such mistake," Peroh, the High Council's advocate, argued. "He simply gave the good humans the gift of Tesseract." "But it was a test as much as it was a gift," Raven turned his argument back on him. "Yes, it was," Peroh admitted. "Which the evil humans failed miserably. They wrecked it!" Raven seized the opportunity to counter this folly. "Admittedly, we thought that all was lost, but then Toron found Leaf in the Wind. Iyo, herself, chose him for his warrior's spirit. Leaf in the Wind saved the Five Moons. Leaf in the Wind changed everything. He is a true warrior, in the spirit of Kilka Mesch," Peroh argued. "In the spirit of Kilka Mesch?! That is next to blasphemy! Dallas Blake, the human that you call Leaf in the Wind, is by no means a warrior by the ancient measure and certainly not of the impeccable moral standing to be compared to Kilka Mesch," Raven countered. "So you say. Yet, Leaf in the Wind did change everything," Peroh refuted her argument. "Yes, he did! He got Iyo pregnant! He polluted the bloodline! This cannot be left to stand! We are not humans! We are not half-breeds! Our lineage is pure! We are Anozan!" Raven argued. "Enough of your evil intolerance!" Toron finally had an end to what he was hearing. "I cannot believe that I am hearing these words from another Anozan! Your arrogance goes before you like black smoke! Arrogance is an evil that I thought we Anozan had left behind us long ago until just now when I heard your own vile words." Raven sized up her opponent. Toron, though of average height and build for an Anozan, had the most piercing steel-grey eyes that gave him a powerful presence. His salt-and-pepper gray hair and strongly masculine face made him look distinguished and wise. Add to all of that a deep, resonant voice. Toron was a powerful orator. It was never her intention to draw him personally into this debate. Now it would be a real fight. Toron looked around the Great Hall of the People and out to the trillion-or-so Anozan watching by way of quantum-com, drawing up his thoughts. He began slowly, "We were once a glorious people. We moved like lightning and spoke like thunder. We were, and still are, masters of all that we survey, but that is quickly fading into the past. Our numbers were once like those of the humans. We once numbered well into the sextillions, but now there is barely a trillion of us left. And why is that? The very advanced quantum technology that gives us great power robs us of ambition and makes us lazy and weak." "And then there are those humans. Yes, they truly are a mix of good and evil, but in the beginning, so were we. When I went back to see how they had fared, they were at war... with each other, no less. We endeavored to help the good humans defeat the evil humans once and for all and settle that for all time, as we had done ourselves long ago. Anyway, that was the plan. With the humans, that was not exactly what happened. They did end the war alright, but even that was not at all what we expected." "So, yes. I am sorry to say that the gift of Tesseract was misused by a few evil, arrogant, misguided humans. They crashed it and killed most of their crew. Into that disaster, Aeyo went. She saved four of the humans as moons. Once more, the evil humans did their best to destroy the ship and kill the crew, but Aeyo saw the beauty in the good humans and so she alone defended them. When the High Council ordered us to end the mission, Aeyo complied but left her own moon, Iyo, behind to continue the fight." "As a punishment for Aeyo's disobedience, the High Council ordered her moon, Iyo, to be bound to the network of the ship, the Five Moons. Even so, bound to the network, Iyo fought to save the humans that Aeyo had stored as moons. She fought to save the ship and the mission. After we had prevented the evil humans from flying the ship into a star, they dragged the ship back to their space docks. There, they intended to destroy the ship as well as the moons. And they would have succeeded too, but for Iyo." "Iyo refused to give up. In that incredible chaos of humans in the wake of that terrible war, indeed, at the very Gates of Hell at the very last second, did I find hope -- a single leaf in the wind. In that sea of chaos and despair, that single leaf in the wind was our only hope. I found Leaf in the Wind, but Iyo chose him. He is a human of exceptional integrity and warrior without equal amongst the humans. Iyo was determined to save this mission. It was only by her tenacity that this worked at all." "Nothing went according to plan, but the outcome was far better than any of us could have possibly imagined. Dallas Blake found the four moons that Aeyo had saved and restored them to their biological human form. Together, they not only saved Emma, but they also saved Sophie. They not only saved Sophie, but they also saved her whole people from extinction. Dallas Blake and

the crew of the Five Moons also saved Micah. Micah will save thousands. They even saved young Jacob, which we all thought was impossible. The High Council was so pleased with all that Iyo had accomplished that we freed her from the Five Moons' network." "Yes you did, and then she got pregnant by that very warrior of such high integrity that you spoke of," Raven argued back sarcastically. Toron glared angrily back at her. "Yes. Like I keep saying, nothing went according to plan, but everything worked out for the best. Our mission was to join with the humans, to reinvigorate our people, to regain our destiny. I would say that Iyo accomplished that in a very unique way that none of us ever expected. How many of you would have so willingly become the humble servant of your own people? Iyo did!" "Iyo betrayed us all!" Raven countered, even more incensed about it than when she began. "Shall we then all beget half-breeds? Is that what we are to become? We won't strengthen Anozan blood. We will pollute it and dilute it until a true Anozan can no longer be found. Oh, no! I will not stand one cetra for that. I will fight to my last breath to ensure that never happens. I demand a Rindar be taken." That surprised everyone. In human terms, Rindar was the equivalent of a Vote of No Confidence. The High Council took a private recess to discuss the matter. "Rindar is a ridiculous waste of time," Zuzann stated flatly. "I agree. It is pointless," Toron argued. "Rindar stands no chance to succeed." Tianna and Korin both agreed. "I see this differently," Hotep, Chief High Council, argued. "This unimportant issue will tie us up for months if we do not stop it. I say we hold the Rindar, which has no chance to succeed, and put an end to it now." They took a vote. "So be it," Hotep announced when they returned from recess. "Tomorrow at this same time let the vote of every Anozan be cast yea or nay for Rindar. Until then, the Council stands in recess." ~ Toron stood very quietly once more in the center of the Five Moons' shadows. All he could see were the shades of Evil all around him. They were moving against him from all sides. When he once more opened his eyes, he wondered how Raven's Rindar fit into this vision. None of it made sense. Then he remembered Dallas Blake's own words: Hope for the best, but plan for the worst. When Toron first made the time-space ring for the Five Moons, he was afraid of what evil humans might do with it. So, he had taken special precautions not to put it on the common Anozan network of time-space rings. In fact, he had taken some very elaborate security precautions... to protect the Anozan. But now his concern was for the safety of the humans and Iyo. But what could they do if Raven was serious about killing Iyo? As good as Dallas Blake was, he stood no chance against the advanced technology an Anozan commando would wield. Only Toron could protect them now. When the Five Moons mission first began, Aeyo had hidden an Anozan artificially intelligent computer, an AIU, onboard the Five Moons. It had served other purposes along the way. Now Toron would stretch its capabilities to the limits. Toron closed his eyes and let his mind reach out to it. {Five Moons AIU, load the Security Protocols file,} Toron commanded. Aboard the Five Moons, the Anozan AIU found the Security Protocols file and loaded it. {Security Protocols loaded,} it responded. {Five Moons AIU, your priority task is to protect the Five Moons,} Toron commanded. {My priority task is to protect the Five Moons,} it confirmed. "Hope for the best, but plan for the worst," Toron reminded himself. He was busy late into the night. ~ Exactly on schedule, the Rindar was officially opened for voting. For the equivalent of one whole Anozan day, the voting continued. It was all done on the official Anozan military computers via quantum-com. It was as absolutely secure as their highly advanced encryption and DNA identity enforcement could make it. The whole time, Toron was busy. Noah, Supreme Commander of the People's Fleet, entered the High Council Chamber at the appointed time. All of the High Council once more sat to hear the results. "High Council, I do hereby certify that a true and accurate vote has been taken," Noah announced. "Please display the results," Hotep instructed him. The results came up for all to see. Barely 21 billion Anozan had voted No Confidence. All the rest, 1.216 trillion had voted to retain the current High Council - a resounding victory for the High Council, just as Hotep expected. Despite the fact that his side had prevailed, Toron looked at the election results with some sadness. So many Anozan had sided with Raven. That surprised him. He had thought better of his own people until this very moment. *We are a million years older than humans. I thought that we were also so much the wiser. I thought that we had put such evil behind us. I am ashamed to note that so many have not.* "I proclaim the vote complete," Supreme Commander Noah announced. "All eligible Anozan that chose to vote have been counted. I confirm that the current High Council has the confidence of the

people." Hotep stood to declare, "All the members of the High Council are privileged to continue in service to the people." That is when the lights went out. In the darkness, there were dark figures moving all around and pulse-pistol fire. The five members of the High Council and the Supreme Commander of the Anozza Fleet each quickly called up time-space rings, created stable wormholes, and stepped through them, thinking that they were escaping to a safe place. Instead, the military technician in Raven's band of rebels had hacked into the Anozza time-space ring network. He redirected them all into a large, secure stone hall nearby, intending it as their prison. Using his military priority, the technician then locked them all out of the network. All of their wonderful, supposedly secure, advanced technology had been used against them. *** "What just happened?" Hotep asked Toron. "We were redirected. They took us prisoner," Toron replied as he pulled the pieces of a small time-space ring from under his robes and quickly assembled them. "What are you doing?" Hotep asked him. "I am protecting us," Toron told him. "With such a small ring? How so?" "This ring is not in the network," Toron answered as he completed his assembly. "But that ring is much too small for us to escape through," Zuzann complained. "It was the largest one that I could fit under my robes," Toron told her as he worked. Toron powered it up and formed a small stable wormhole. His android, Ryesah, at the other end, pushed weapons through the open wormhole. Noah and the others scooped them right up. Then Ryesah pushed through the first of three sections of a much larger ring. She pushed the last piece through just ahead of the lights once more going out, but Toron had thought of that, too. By his small ring's lights, he pulled a tiny blue android dragon-bird from under his robe and sent it on its way through the small wormhole. "Go to my Aeyo," he whispered as it disappeared on its way. While Toron scrambled to get his larger ring assembled, Ryesah just kept pushing bundles of emergency rations and water through the smaller ring's open wormhole. Hotep, Korin, and Zuzann kept moving them out of the way to make room for more. At one point, Ryesah pushed through a very compact air processor and then a compact waste processor, both reduced to modules that fit through the small ring. Ryesah kept pushing survival supplies through the small ring while Toron worked on the larger one. Their jailers suddenly realized that something was going on. The jailers opened the door at the far end of the large stone hall only to find themselves under attack. Noah and Tianna took out the two guards but not before they sounded the alarm. Toron managed to get his larger ring assembled just in time. Suddenly, the small rings' wormhole dissolved. Then Toron found that he could not form a stable wormhole any longer, even with the larger, more powerful ring. He could still form a protective time-space bubble, so that is what he did. "What is happening?" Hotep asked him when he saw the look on Toron's face. "They discovered that I have a private ring, so they distorted space all around us to prevent our escape. Their next move would have been to overpower us from all directions. I prevented that by forming a time-space bubble to protect us," Toron informed everyone. "They can no longer send their troops to overwhelm us. We are their prisoners but at the same time we are not." *** Raven was waiting for word to advance when the rebel leader called her. [Raven, advance your troops,] he told her. "Send the troops to kill Iyo now," she commanded. Five heavily armed Rebel Commandos formed a stable wormhole and walked through it. *** They stepped into a room of surprisingly familiar construction, but without any visible doors. Anozza are used to this. They purposely build structures with time-space folds to confound the unwary. One of the commandos scanned the space and pointed at one wall. They all moved toward it. Without warning, they suddenly came under heavy fire from beyond the time-space fold. Their personal shield packs were all that saved them. They were left with no choice but to beat a hasty retreat back through the ring. *** "They were expecting us!" the leader told Raven as they returned. "It was an ambush." "But how could that be?" Raven asked Mathuse, her second in command. "It doesn't matter how. We need to send an overwhelming force. We have the layout now. Next time, the squad goes right for that hidden door and takes out whoever is beyond." Raven stood there and fumed while Mathuse organized that. He assembled his men right in front of their ring, now with a specific plan to handle the hidden door. Mathuse signaled the ring technician. A wormhole opened and the troops streamed quickly through. *** This time, the troops ran straight for the hidden door, shields on full forward, guns blazing. They breached the hidden door only to find themselves in yet another room in a building on a distant planet. This time, they came under heavy

fire from gun ports all around them. With their personal shield-packs set to full forward, they lost four men before the rest retreated back to the first room. Their leader, however, managed to toss a small explosive grenade behind him as he retreated. Moments later, it exploded. The gunfire ceased. Very carefully, the leader sent a man forward. The man sent a small spider-bot beyond the hidden door. What they saw surprised them all. All of that gunfire had been from some simple, automated gun emplacements. They had all been put out of commission by the grenade. Beyond them was a building... an Anozan building. But this was supposed to be a human starship. Something was seriously wrong here. The leader went forward himself. Sure enough, beyond the hidden door, the automated guns were now in shambles and the walls of the room blown out in places. He stepped through one such large hole to look at his surroundings. Now he was certain - this was an Anozan building on an Anozan world, not a human starship on a human world. He and his men dragged their dead and wounded comrades back through the open wormhole. *** "We lost four good men to a ruse!" he reported angrily to Mathuse as they returned. "It was not a starship at all." He sent Mathuse the video to see for himself. Mathuse was furious. "How could this happen?!" he shouted at the ring technician. "I do not understand," the ring technician told him. "It was clearly used by Toron and Aeyo to access the Five Moons. It is clearly labeled 'Five Moons' and its history file clearly shows them using it to do exactly that." "Damn Toron!" Mathuse cursed him. "He hacked that ring. He set us up." Then Mathuse had an evil thought. Mathuse turned to his commando leader. "Find Aeyo! I don't care if you have to hunt her to the ends of the universe but find her. Find Toron's wife too! No excuses. Bring them to me, alive! I will find the Five Moons one way or another!" Two separate teams of commandos left through the ring. Raven listened as her people worked the problem. What she heard so far had been the brute-force approach, but was there another more elegant approach? She could see that Mathuse was still working this problem in his mind. She needed to give him time to do that. Raven's ring technician also continued to work the problem with his own ideas.

My own people, Anozan not humans, came in the night to kill me, to kill my unborn child, to finish an ancient evil. Only Dallas Blake, wounded and bleeding, stood against them, but he did. It was all that we could do to just fight for our very lives, but that was not the end of it. The evil ones had kidnapped my father.

How much worse could this get? To rescue my father, the Five Moons would be pitted against unknown forces with technology a million years more advanced. A whole Merc rebellion was coming to a boil out beyond the Seven Pillars, right where the Five Moons needed to go. It was led by Dallas's arch nemesis, Sarsen Tabbot. And then we would have to cross the Great Rift into unknown Anozan space.

But the Five Moons is more than just a starship. It is the Nexus of Fates. It chose each one of us for a reason. Its last choice could blow this whole thing wide open.

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