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”So, what did you see in your journey, young Matu?” Moicha asked.

“I saw a field of grain, some animals grazing, and poultry pecking at the ground. Me, walking about, tending my land, being happy.” Matu said.

“That is most interesting and seemingly a good vision. Where was this?”

“I don’t know.”

Matu woke abruptly. He had slept briefly. They had been taking a short rest along the roadside before continuing on.

“What?! Matu, are you OK?” Rexx asked.

"Huh?"

“You spoke out loudly. Is there something wrong?”

“Oh. I, uh, was dreaming...remembered a vision I had as a child a long time ago.” Matu shook his head to clear his thoughts.

“And…”

“Um, it’s what I want to find here...family...home, a farm...happiness. How did I see it so long ago? Not counting all of the changes that we have been though, I mean.” He shook his head again. “Whoa. How did I know that...or, foresee that...or…” He trailed off.

“Farsight?” Sendi ventured.

“Huh?”

“Well, you know hindsight is looking at what we should have done...maybe you we’re looking ahead at what you should be doing.”

He looked at her intensely. “Wow, you are deep!”

“No, really...maybe, you’re just seeing along your path...where you’re supposed to be going. Maybe a question is what is your heart’s longing...what do you really want out of life...something like that?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, it’s what your destiny is, isn’t it?”

“Do we actually have a destiny?”

“Why not?”

“I mean, sometimes it all just feels so random.”

“Is it random, or is it just small diversions, things that we need to go aside to experience something, to satisfy a momentary want, or answer a question, so that we can come back to what we are really moving toward...is that really what it is?"

He just stared at her for a moment. "How would we know? I mean, if we are on a path or not."

She just shook her head. "That, I don't know."

Rexx interjected. "I guess if it's a path, you're either on it or not. If it's random, then nobody knows...so, does it matter?"

Sendi thought a moment. "I guess it doesn't matter. But, if you feel a need for a particular direction, then that is a direction that should probably be favored. Like, where are we going here and why...is it a path? But, it's what we are doing."

"Yeah, we are going somewhere. Matu, you're sort of leading in this direction. And, I guess Sendi and I are just following along." Rexx paused a moment. "Understand, that we are totally willing to follow you, and I don't think we really have any other destination." He turned to Sendi. "Do we?"

She shook her head. "No. I can't think of any. I really have no idea where to go."

"So, to agree with that, neither do I. But, you seem to have a destination and we want to see where that goes."

"Speaking of which, navigator..." Matu said. "There's a split in the road ahead, which way do we go?"

"Oh, yeah...gimme a minute." Rexx checked the laptop. "OK, to the left, in about a kilometer, there's a bridge and then the road continues across this valley. To the right, the road continues along the river a long way until it's narrow enough to ford and there it wanders back to rejoin this main road."

"So, I guess we go left."

As they approached the bridge, Matu slowed the car to a halt.

Rexx looked up from the laptop. "What's up?"

Matu and Sendi were silently staring ahead. Matu pointed. "The bridge..."

They got out of the car and slowly walked toward the edge of the river.

"What happened?" Sendi asked, as they looked over the smoldering wreckage.

"It looks like it was hit with a bomb or maybe some kind of missile...recently, too." Rexx guessed.

"What...who...?" Sendi questioned. "...why?" She shook her head. "We're pretty much out in the middle of nowhere. What? Why here?"

Matu lightly touched a piece of the broken bridge. He went quiet and his gaze defocused. He was silent for some minutes.

Rexx and Sendi watched and waited quietly.

After a while, he turned and looked back toward their expectant faces. "This is what I've been feeling. Someone or something is attacking here...our home."

"Do you know who? Rexx asked.

"Or why?" Sendi added.

Matu shook his head. "No." He sighed deeply. "I get anger...or maybe, it's hatred... towards here, but I don't know why or from who."

"Can we do anything to help?"

He looked at her and sighed. "I wouldn't know where to begin."

After a long pause, Rexx asked. "So, where do we go from here?"

"I guess we go back to the crossroads and take the longer way."

At the crossroads, Matu asked. "Is there anything else on the map for this way?"

Rexx scrolled through the map. "I don't see any problems. There are a couple of side roads and some small settlements, but they are minor and shouldn't give us any problems in following the main road back to where it joins with the road from the bridge."

Matu glanced at the gauges. "We should probably backtrack a bit and fill the gas tank, not knowing what might be ahead." He sighed, shaking his head. "More time lost."

Sendi stared at him a moment. "What do you mean? Are we in a hurry?"

"Yeah...I thought we were just looking around to find what was right." Rexx added.

Matu sighed and paused a few moments. "You're right. There is no hurry. It's just that with this attack on that bridge, I got this sense of urgency. There's something I have to do that's important that it be done soon. It's just that I have no idea what it is."

"I understand." She said.

"And, it's frustrating me that I don't know what to do."

"You often ask us to take a break and ground ourselves when we're feeling these kinds of things." Rexx offered. "Maybe we should do something like that...just for a short while, you know, not to aggravate your sense of urgency. What do you think?"

"Yes." He said, reluctantly. "You're probably right. We'll go get gas, maybe get something to eat, relax a bit, and see where things are at."

Sitting at a roadside picnic table, they sipped some tea and tried to resolve their feelings.

"Now, I'm not getting this feeling of urgency that you have." Sendi started. "I feel sadness and confusion about the bridge being destroyed. Understanding the hardship for the locals and wondering why, as there doesn't seem to be any rational reason for the attack. There's no way it couldn't have been some kind of accident, is there? I mean like a vehicle carrying some explosive chemical having a collision of some kind. Do you have any feeling like that?"

Matu thought a moment. "No, I don't get the feeling of an accident. I do get a strong sense of hate...but, against who...and by whom...I don't know."

"Unfortunately, Sendi and I know little of this world's politics...you, at least, are from this time and have a better idea of who is antagonistic with who. But, I guess that's not a lot of help here."

"Yeah, one would think. I know there was, or is, a lot of stuff going on between countries, but I hadn't really paid a lot of attention to the larger picture. I've been paying more attention to my personal needs." He paused a while. "I'm also beginning to feel some urgency about the upcoming solar issue. I want to get established and build my home...you know, be prepared."

"I understand. I've been having those feelings in the back of my mind as well."

"Well..." Rexx interjected. "I guess we'd better get a move on, then. Shall we get going back on the road?"

As they approached the place of the ford, they slowed to a stop. "This seems a lot deeper than it should be." Matu said. He got out and walked to the edge. "We'll be flooding the engine if we try to pass here." He looked around. "Wonder why it's so deep. Rexx, any weather issues with the river running this high?"

Rexx ran through several links on the laptop. "No, don't see any weather issues...oh, wait...here's something...seems there was a reservoir breech that drained down to the river...it's being repaired, though, but the runoff won't reside for some time...could be days, maybe longer." He looked up to Matu. "What do you want to do?"

"What does your map show for where this road goes?" He pointed upstream.

"It's just a small back road and it continues for a while and then turns away towards some small settlements. But, it does show what looks like another small ford just before it turns. The road on the other side is equally small and also turns away from the river just after that possible ford, but it continues down to here. Should we chance it?"

"I guess. We don't seem to have much else in choices." He shook his head sadly.

They continued up the road. There was an abrupt turn around a hill and then a border guard station lay ahead.

"What!" Matu exclaimed. "We're not any where near any border. What's up?"

Rexx scanned the computer. "I've got nothing."

They slowed to a stop in front of the barricade. A guard in uniform ambled out from the guard shack and wandered slowly towards them. He stopped just in front of the car and slowly lifted his helmet to meet their eyes. "Hi, guys!" He exclaimed cheerfully.

"Time Police!!!" Sendi exclaimed. "What are you doing here...and why?"

"Well, a little dual duty...first to check in and see how you are doing, adapting to your new world and all of that. And, secondly, to let you know that you are ahead of schedule. You're not supposed to be here yet. So, what do we do about that?"

"What do you mean we're ahead of schedule? Everything we've been doing is because of what we've been provided. How could we possibly be ahead of schedule?"

"We sort of thought that you would be spending more time exploring the locale...getting to know the populace...learning the lingo...that sort of thing." The Time Police explained.

"Well, Matu's had a sense of urgency about finding our home. " Sendi replied. "I guess, prompted by your prophesy of the upcoming solar event."

"Oh, guess it's partly our fault then..." He nodded. "We might have put too much emotion into your reception."

"So, what's the problem with us being here too soon?"

"Basically, there's a time frame that is in process and we are fitting you in...and...well...it's complicated."

"There's also this sense Matu's been getting about some sort of conflict and that's been adding to our urgency."

"Hmm...we see." He went quiet for a moment. "You are a unique group of people, quite unlike most that we have encountered...most interesting. We shall have to reconfigure some events. This make take some time." He seemed to go off into thought for awhile.

"Some time? Everything you do is always instantaneous...what do you mean by 'some time'?"

"Again, it's complicated. Also, there are some things that you have yet to...uh...acquire...that may not be the best way of saying that. It may be best to leave that for later."

"Say...did you have anything to do with that blown up bridge? Was that anything about us?"

"What? Oh...no. That was coincidental on the local level. But, it did provide an opportunity to intercept you for this meeting." He considered for a moment. "However, it is somewhat connected on the universal level. But, that is for much later, as well."

"What! Wait a minute, here! What do you mean connected? What's going on here?" Rexx demanded.

"Yeah, what?" Sendi echoed. Matu just looked stunned.

"Oh, again, we may have underestimated you. You see, when we first encountered you, Matu as well, we recognized your explorer attributes, and were encouraged to provide scenarios that would both satisfy and at the same time encourage your desire for more interesting adventures. At the time, we didn't foresee the fact that you were also quite adept warriors and have proved that fact in your many encounters. We must adjust accordingly."

Sendi went quiet for a few moments.

"Give me a minute to process this...do you mean that you are writing out our future as we act it in the present?"

"Well, yes." The Time Police paused a moment in confusion. "Oh, we see. You didn't understand that. Hmm, that does complicate things a bit...have to reconsider"

"So, how much of our future is predetermined and how much depends on us, what we are doing, and or whatever other factors are acting at the same time...that kind of stuff...?

"Well, tomorrow's events depend partly on today's actions. But, it also partly depends on today's sun setting and tomorrow's sun rising. There are a lot of factors. Part

of our job is to provide a path that will provide you with an opportunity that will help you develop all of the things you need to continue."

There was a long pause as the three looked in confusion towards each other.

"So, what do we do?" Sendi asked.

"Well, I guess we continue towards the next ford, unless you have a better idea." Rexx suggested.

Matu had a fierce look in his eyes. "I almost want to go back to the bridge to see what's really there."

"I understand." She said. "And I sort of agree with you. But, I don't really know what to do."

They turned back toward the guard station and the Time Police.

Nothing was there. Only the empty road and the river.

Rexx sighed. "OK, how about this...we go ahead to the next ford and continue back to the bridge road. Then..." He paused. "Then we can double back to the bridge and see what we can from the other side. Maybe, we'll find something and get some better thoughts about where things are at."

Sendi nodded. "That sounds good to me...Matu?"

Matu also nodded. "Yes. At least that gets us to the other side. Then..." He shrugged. "I don't know...we shall see."