

Chapter 2

Planet Gulao - Galactic Year 6038

Cell awoke in a sweat. He had been having that nightmare again. He hated to think of this reoccurring dream. He swung his feet over the edge of the bed. He was still tired. He leaned his arms on his knees and planted his face in his hands. Cell rubbed his face vigorously with his hands. Then Cell lifting his head ran his hands back through his black hair.

He checked the clock "4:15" he said in that early morning daze. "Well I got to get up in fifteen minutes anyways." he said to motivate himself. Flicking on the lights, Cell grabbed his patched and dingy shirt. Throwing his shirt over his shoulder and putting his arm in he bent down for his pants. He picked them up and brushed as much dirt off as he could.

"It's no use" he thought "they'll just be dirty again in a half hour." Stepping into his pants he reached for his belt. His belt made him think of his dream job.

He wished to go and fight for the Zishen. He loved their smooth robes that flowed as they moved offering freedom in motion. The belt was key to their outfits. Their belt held the robe on and supplied them with their basic necessities for combat. The most distinguishing feature of a Zishen Warrior, or a zig as the resistance named them, had to be the two foot blade suspended from their belts tucked snug into the sheath. The zig had reign over who and what they wanted. They were the cause of great pride to those families who could afford to support a zig. Their family must support them while they are in action but the fame and honor were worth the financial burden to their families. The zigs are also the only people eligible to hold governmental positions. Once they move up they are rewarded for their service and are given wages. To be able to become a zig was the dream of every schoolboy.

Cell's stomach reminded him he should get down to breakfast. He ran down the stairs to find his father at the stove filling his plate. "Hey, you got up," a voice said from the corner. Cell turned to see Lit his younger brother sitting at the small round table. His plate was half full and his mouth was overflowing.

"You better Eat up." said Endo, Cell's father, as he made his way to a seat.

“Yeah we gotta get those macks milked,” Lit reminded Cell in between bites.

“I’m awake am I not? Where’s a plate?” Cell asked

“Gene washed them last night,” said Endo as he lifted a sausage to his mouth. “The plates should be in the cupboard.” he mumbled through a mesh of teeth and food.

Cell grabbed a plate only to see two pancakes and a mack sausage left on the stove. “Hey who ate all the sausages?” asked Cell.

“We didn’t have many left Cell, sorry.” said Lit as he shoved his last two sausages down his throat.

Cell sat down and quickly ate what he had for a breakfast. As Cell gulped down the last of his juice he wondered what the Governor lived like. His thoughts were gone fast as his breakfast. He arose and pushed in the last of the four chairs around the table and followed his father and brother out to the pasture. In three steps he was out the back door and into the fresh morning air. Every morning Cell awoke Gulao would have a fresh clean scent.

As the sun appeared over the horizon Cell could see Lit chasing a few macks towards the barn.

“Why do you always have to case the macks Lit?” asked Endo for what he thought might be the thousandth time.

“I love to case the macks.” Lit replied as a grin formed on his face.

“Yeah but you casing them makes them whoop.” Endo said with a hint of annoyance in his voice.

Lit put on a stupid face and said “Duh, that’s what makes it so much fun.”

“Grow up already,” said Cell.

“Well why don’t you just go do your chores Mr. Mature,” replied Lit.

“Yeah and while your at it don’t forget to feed the macks today,” said Endo then pointing to Lit added, “and you get to help him today Lit.”

“Why?” questioned Lit.

“It might just teach you to respect the macks a little more.” said Endo.

“Fine.” said Lit reluctantly as he followed Cell into the barn and picked up the spare shovel.

“This isn’t to bad,” said Cell as he started shoveling feed into feeding troff.

“Yeah but this is on top of me cleaning the stalls when were done.” said Lit.

“You’ll live,” said Cell unsimpetheticly.

Macks were an easy animal to deal with. These docile creatures would come in for dinner if you just opened the creaky barn door. A large group of macks had assembled themselves for milking already. The macks had a whole pasture they could eat, but the Galactic Safety Standards Committee required every mack to be fed enriched grass that was designed to keep them healthy and free of common diseases.

The day's were long, but Cell and his family made a living. They were able to live off their farm and made some money selling their produce at the market in town. The produce never went for much considering the whole planet seemed to farm. It was good soil but the costs of Galactic shipping had gotten expensive as the Zishen imposed heavy taxes to fund their bureaucracy.

Cell and Lit were two normal boys living on Gulao. Cell knew he wasn't really Lit's brother he had been adopted when the Redonn Resistance has destroyed his home and ruthlessly killed his parents. He didn't remember anything from his previous life. Lit was like his brother, they both adopted when their parents were killed during the war. To often there was another Redonnai attack that left hundreds of kids parentless.

Cell was relaxing in the barn loft one afternoon. Lit ran into the barn and leaped on the ladder. Lit only hit every other

rung as he climbed. “Guess what we learned in school today?” He said excitedly.

“What?” Cell said annoyed his silence was now gone.

“Well you know how everyone always talks about the horrible things that the resistance does.” Lit started, “ In school today, my history teacher taught us about the start of the war. He started the history right before the resistance attacked Redonn. He told us how the Redonnai had overthrown the loLit Zishen government and put the king in charge of running their planet. He claims that the Redonnai forces fled when they Zishen sent for an ambassador to negotiate with them, but before the Radonnai left they attacked the cities loyal to the Zishen. When the Zishen arrived most of the citizens were dead or gone.”

“Yeah I remember learning that.” Cell started, “The only part that I don’t really understand is why the Redonnai attacked their own cities. Why would you destroy your whole planet, then just leave? The whole planet was destroyed, if the Redonnai had taken over the government already wouldn’t most of the cities still be standing. The other thing that doesn’t seem right is that even the palace of the prince was destroyed. Completely leveled it to the ground. Also I read that among the dead where the prince’s daughter. That just doesn’t make sense.”

“Well maybe they were just trying to coverup the horrible things they had been doing?” proposed Lit, “You have heard all the horrible things they have done to their prisoners. Just last month they captured a Redonnai prison ship. It was all over the news. Their were hundreds of prisoners that had been left to starve to death in their cells. Most of the prisoners had been captured while away on vacation, during their captivity they had been tortured for information on what the Zishen influence was on each of their planets. The government came out with a statement on how to remain safe while traveling. Do you remember that Cell? Who knows what else the Redonnai are capable of especially if they will just leave their prison camps float adrift after they are done with them.”

“Yeah I remember that. Good thing a zig scout found the station floating out in space only a day after it was said to be abandoned.” Cell said, “Well the resistance is the biggest known terrorist group in galaxy. They have attacked unsuspecting peace loving planets to raid them for weapons and food supplies. I don’t know why the zigs can never find them.”

“We talked about that today too.” Lit replied “The resistance is always on the move, but they set up training camps for their recruits. These recruits would go through intensive

training to learn the Redonnai war tactics. They are even suspected of forcing people into training. They use some kind of brainwashing technic.”

“Yeah I remember hearing interviews of some zig that have fought with Redonnai.” said Cell, “He said they had the most original blade fighting abilities. That’s what makes them so deadly. One of them said he wished they didn’t have to fight them hand to hand.”

“What do you mean there isn’t any other way to fight them.” Lit replied, “How else could they fight them. War tactics have improved over the last few millennium, but unless they are going to kill them from afar they wont have much more of an advantage.”

“Don’t they teach you anything about galactic law in school.” Cell said, “At one time the galaxy used projectile weapons, like lasers and stuff, to defend itself from an invading force. However, in 2021, the Galactic Resolution for Public Safety banned the use of lethal projectiles by ground forces. Something about the alarmingly large percentage of civilian deaths during war. This resolution made it so no bystanders would be killed by off target projectiles.”

“Yeah I remember that,” Lit said laughing, “Only because of the outcome of their solution.”

“Yeah, the proposed solution was that every soldier must wear suit that if hit by and EMP bullet would freeze up. The disabled soldiers would then have to return to their home planet and be decommissioned from the army. This was thought to be the solution for all death during war.” Cell said as if he was telling a favorite story. “The suit system as it has come to be known, worked very well till the 2045 farmers revolt on Guppy 5.” Lit started to snicker again as Cell recalled the story. Cell continued “The police were armed with EMP weapons, but they were slaughtered upon the pitchforks and with household cutlery wielded buy farmers incidentally not required to wear EMP suits.”

“Oh yeah,” Lit said as he recalled his history class.

“By the year 2050, all military forces where trained in hand to hand combat. The military still used EMP weapons against ground assault vehicles, so the ground assault vehicle became virtually useless until late in the next century when Fritz Fem developed a stun cannon.” Cell said.

“Oh like the police still use today?” Lit asked

“Yeah they have a better model now, but it is about the same thing.” Cell said.

“Well I need to go finish cleaning the stalls.” Lit said.

As Lit descended the ladder from the loft Cell started to recall all the matches he and Lit had been to. On Gulao, Cell and Lit would go to matches every chance they got, but they were from a small farming planet, so the fights were not always the most exciting in the galaxy. Occasionally, a few good fighters would come to the space port in Erature. The opportunity to watch skilled fighters was rare. Cell recalled always wanting to learn how to fight, but he was too busy on the farm and his family didn't have the money so he could take lessons.

Cell had always watched the fights intently. Sometimes trying to imitate the more difficult moves many of the zig could execute. The zig would often enter bladeing matches. Fighting offered the zig a chance to practice the skills and gain prestige. Prestigious zig would easily move up into the bureaucracy of the Zishen Government. Cell wanted a job in the government. He lay there in the loft dreaming of the day he could sit at a desk all day working for the government. It would be much easier than working on his farm, and working for the government Cell could travel around the Galaxy. A mack wooped in the barn below, bringing Cell back to the reality he was stuck on his parents farm

with no way to escape the dull repetitive cycle that was called a day on the farm.