

FROM CHAPTER III

TRAPS AND BETRAYALS

"Friend!" Colton called quietly. Friend looked over his shoulder and stood up. "I cannot go with you and Mister Curtis. I need to find the people who live in these woods." Friend spoke in a normal volume voice, which to Colton sounded like screaming in their current circumstances. "I don't know where you think we're forcing you to go, but you should come back to the safety of the campsite at least until morning." Colton looked around, ready for something to jump out at any second. "You people are here for greed, and I won't be a part of that. Besides," Friend continued as he pointed at the ground, "I am nearly certain that the people who reside here have already been watching us."

Colton leaned back at the accusation. "Greed? What do you mean? We set out on this adventure to establish communication with other societies. We seek to only trade and share, not steal." Friend tilted his head as he looked up at Colton, measuring his words. "You speak true, and therefore I must wonder. Are you a very good liar, or have you been deceived?" Colton let the words hang in the air. "What do yo—"

"Well, well, well. I have to say I was a little nervous we wouldn't find you lot in this darkness, but all that racket made it easy indeed." Colton turned to see several darkly clad figures had completely surrounded their group, and at the front of the strangers was the speaker: Terran.

Colton uncoiled his whip in an instant as his companions did the same with their own weapons. "Terran, what are you doing out here?" Colton asked as he bided his time to analyze the situation unfolding before him. Terran's lips curled up into a cruel-looking smile. "It's not obvious? I've come to show my appreciation for being interrupted earlier," he sneered as he pointed to Imbrose. "Very brave of you to bring your goons." Imbrose taunted. "Though I suppose it makes my life easier. This way I don't have to hunt them all down after I'm done with you." "Curtis won't be pleased to hear you're out here trying to hurt his own people. Even if you do manage to kill us, he will have your head," Colton warned as he counted twelve assailants. Bad odds, he thought to himself. "Who do you think sent us? Your usefulness is at an end, Mister Cobb," Terran said as the group of mercenaries began to close around them. With a massive effort of concentration, Colton silenced his mind and reached out to connect his thoughts to Imbrose. He hadn't tried to use his ancestral abilities for so long now, and the connection caused him to develop an immediate headache. Go for the four on your right. Ember should follow. I'll take out the two on my left and we'll have to see where it goes from there, Colton thought toward his friend.

Leave the idiot for me, Imbrose replied simply, then with a flick of his wrist he threw his dagger at the first man to his right, kicking off the engagement."