david aes \avon mai \note drafts

dictation notes

additional notes to avon mnao: confrontations with ankemet and ankimet, consider the issue of team mating. individual confrontations are .... in the middle crisis, following av’s introduction into the court of avashara, the confrontations between that and the approach by cheniko is filled with confrontations with suitors

she slipped out of the room, moving off down the hall. emerging from among the columns, she made her way out onto a balcony overlooking the heart of the valley. from there she could see through the structure. though contained, it was lavish with open space. just off in the distance she could see the sky painted in brilliant colors as the sun came up.

the temple of dreaming was an impressive place. it seemed to extend over the crests of the hills, down into the valley and out along the cliff tops looking out over the ocean. it was all one structure, loosely woven. passing through, it was hard to tell where the out of doors ended and interior spaces began. it was a maze of dressed stone, with arbors and gardens flourishing throughout in parkways and atruims. there were water courses interlaced with the patios and corridors, interlinking linking pools, fountains and waterfalls threaded generously about the entire establishment. everything was bounded together by sweeping arcades and colonades. the broad columns soared, towering over everything, supporting the private residential suites nested above the public facilities and accessways below.

although it was a massive architecture, it was a work of art. it had been designed to frame each setting within itself exquisitely. bringing out dynamic of line and form, a lushness of life set before a severity of stone.

the most impressive of these sights were attached off of some major room or hall. the entire place was tiered and balconied it could have been seven levels deep at points. the way it stretched and covered the land though, she could not have known it if she had not spent some time exploring it.

they had only been there about a week, settling in, finishing up the last of their business. extracting themselves from the life they had lived in the aegis. anvea had only explored a little, in the time she had free. it was a delightful place. she could have gotten lost for days, and yet somehow she had found it easy to get wherever she had actually needed to be. it took her a little while to figure out that it was arranged in vast concentric ovals. a sectioned sphere of nested shells. in some ways it resembled something that grown, rather than built. it had such an organic quality to it.

technically, what it most seemed to be was an arcology. it was different from the arcologies of earth. earth’s arcologies were massive structures encompassing malls and parkways, layering business and residential spaces within its folds, but, although this appeared to be the center of life here, there was nothing materialistic about it. for one thing half the people walked around completely nude. it had surprised her not to have noticed that right off, as if they had been dressed by their attitudes. the attitude was sort of infectious. she had been tempted to strip down and wander among them. after all she was one of them. yet, she had inhibitions. she had resisted the urge to frolic in the pools. they did not seemed to need bathing suits here, and as far as she could tell, it did not cause a problem. which was strange to her.

presumably, people could get used to anyting in time. they had simply grown up with this. it made her regret what she had missed not growing up here. but only until she thought of what she had not missed. deftly she turned that thought away.

this was her last day here. it would be time to go to the center of the dhen. to what made this the temple of dreams. a gateway onto the threshold. she had thought at tone time that she would never experiencing anytihing more impressive than space flight.

of the things she remembered about the world of her origin, it seemed strange that she would have forgotten about this. maybe to a child’s mind the wonder of traveling from point to point without crossing intervening space had not seemed so special. a child’s world was somewhat surreal to begin with. but then, as a child, her world had been turned into a nightmare. so perhaps it was not so strange that she did not remember this.

it was nothing more, really, than stepping up to a doorway and going through. except this kind of door required a special key, a trained mind.

avon had an advantage in that regard. their potential for psi was no greater than that of humans. their advantage was that so many of them were awake to that potential. psionic access was so widely distributed among the population, that even those naked and unnamed in the wild were able to use this unique form of transportation.

humanity had not exactly been comfortable with the idea of an entire civilization gifted with psionic ability. especially not when the eerie resemblance between human and avon was taken into account. but then changes had come to the human race, the potential of the mind had been waking up for almost a thousand years. adjusting to it had brought turmoil. perhaps meeting this odd race when they did had been the only thing that had kept humanity from tearing itself apart.

while humans—as humans have always tended to do—took the discovery of psi and used it as the basis for a new technology, a new science with which to explore the universe, they had never dreamed of anything to compare with this accomplishment of avon art. (the temple of dreaming, the threshold)

the gates of the threshold were the centerpiece of every population center. every city, every town, was built around one. according to rumor these gates were woven over the entire surface of ao’ajea, and went on to touch the surfaces of hundreds of other worlds that humans had never reached. a theory supported by the presence of ruins discovered on worlds where fragments of avon civilization had been found co-existing, oddly enough, with human beings that had developed isolated on these worlds for tens upon thousands of years.

because ao’ajea was the only world with active gates that human civilization had come into contact with, ao’ajea had become a center of communication and trade, the hub of intercourse between the two races. in a way, it had led to ao’ajea becoming a power in the association of establishments comprising the heart of a human empire in space.

by a tacit agreement, human and avon civilizations limited the contact between their respective spheres of influence to this world. the human empire was still relatively unstable, being composed largely of new colonies established by terrans emigrating from earth, and worlds they had discovered with native human populations that had long established their own civilizations, founded on unique interpretations of humanity. organizing the whole into one socio-economic structure had been a difficult proposition. but the effort had succeeded in the realization of another improbable prospect, interstellar warfare.

in contrast, avon civilization had endured for thousands of years, connected to one another by the threshold, sharing a thriving, dynamically stable culture. avon culture had given the worlds of the threshold strength that the human aegis could not compete with. it also had denied them the experience of war and mass destruction that humans excelled at.

not to say that avon were innocent of the arts of war, they just concentrated on a more personal level. individuals devoted themselves to excellence, to attaining an ideal embodiment of lethal efficiency. avon had little practice in massive warfare, but could create angels of death, like her mother.

to look at the two of them one might assume that they confronted a set of twins. in a sense they would be right. genetically they were identical, but the bond between them went deeper than that. they were of one soul. her mother had given birth to her as a daughter-self. it was what made them avon. exotic. it was what set them disturbingly apart from the humans with which they were genetically compatible. no one knew what made the difference. perhaps there was no difference, but merely a distinction in how two people had chosen to express themselves given access to the mind’s potential.

it was hard to regard her mother.

she had no name. they addressed her as avon, they way one would speak of a cat. she too had been known only by the name of her race, but to distinguish her from her mother, she had been given the illusion of a name. avonvea, familiarized over time by a contraction to anvea, and which translated acerbically as “one’s daughter, the pain”.

while avon was a loving parent, she was also very private about her history. it was incongruous that, being in essence one person, they were so distinct from each other. a lot of it had to do with perspective, but part of it was strangely no different than what any individual experienced dealing with herself. anvea could not think of anyone who did not have an amazing talent for hiding things from themselves. her mother’s only advantage was an independant memory cache. it was rare that she even thought of it. anvea simplly accepted that she was recognized as an extension of her mother. alien as that concept was to the humans she grew up with, she had accustomed herself to it before she could speak. but in spite of the rapport they shared, anvea had never really known much about the woman who had given her birth, and in whose image she had been conceived.

a person with the exceptional martial and psionic skills her mother possessed was exceptionally valuable, even in the aegis. avon’vai, like her, were seen as a valuable resource that avon traditions allowed the aegis to exploit. her mother had not been the first young vai to contract with the aegis military. in fact, a significant proportion of vai, and martially skilled but psionically untrained nai, were contracted to the aegis, both as representatives of avon interests in human society, and as students of the terrifyingly effective methods of human warfare. as individuals they had been attracted by the chance to explore other worlds, and experience other people.

when her mother had been drawn to the navy, she had not been able to leave her daughter-self behind. that was one of the reasons why anvea had grown up in two worlds—growing up in interstellar human civilization, but growing up avon none the less.

anvea had spent most of her life among humans, but avon had taken pains raising her to appreciate and understand the values of her native culture, as well as the human civilization to which she had been citizen since before she had even been born. her human and avon educations had been demanding, but in all honesty, not perfectly integrated. It had been a long time since she had given her biological origins any thought.

she had been quite happy with her life the way it was going. then she came of age.

now, in spite of a deep seated fear which had given her brutal nightmares at the mere mention of ao’ajea, she was back. she felt betrayed. forced by her own biology into confronting her avon heritage, into confronting the world where her mind and soul had been deeply scarred by tragedy. two things she had thought—that she had hoped—that she could forget. only, some things a person could never forget; things that life demanded be remembered. perhaps if she had remembered more of the life she had left behind, she would not have been so afraid to be here now. she could only hope that what had brought her back would prove capable of displacing that which had long gnawed at her core.

but, as a troubled mind tends to do, she had fixated on smaller, yet more annoying irritation.

“do you realize that i’m losing a year?” she asked petulantly. when her mother made no comment she went on. “i don’t even have to work it out.” in fact she did not. the ratio of ao’ajean years to terran years was almost precisely seventeen to eighteen. “instead of turning eighteen, i’m going to be turning seventeen, again, in about twenty-one days. so, i’ve been a whole standard year at seventeen, and now i have to stretch it out for a local year. it feels like i’m going to be seventeen forever.”

her mother stopped and looked at her. she couldn’t help laughing a little.

resting a hand on her daughter’s shoulder, she just shook her head, said, “anvea, if things go the way they are supposed to go, you are going to be seventeen for the rest of your life. you really haven’t been paying attention have you?”

anvea just looked at her and glared. “you have got to be kidding. i cant be seventeen for the rest of my life.” avon just shrugged and kept walking.

“technically, no. you cant be seventeen all your life. but your body is going to stop aging because... well, that s what happened to me. so, why argue with that. i’mean where is the bad side of that?”

“it s not,” she had started speaking before she realized that her mother did have a point. laughing shyly, she cocked her head and amended, “look, obviously i cant complain, nobody wants to grow old. but, i’mean, even on earth people don't have to grow old. not for a long time. i just meant, i don't want to be a child all my life. don't you think it would make a bit more sense, if you are going to stop aging, to pick something about mid-twenties?”

“well i’m sorry to say it s not subject to choice.”

“these days it doesn’t seem like much in my life is.”

avon just shrugged again. “i know you‘re not happy about being here, but believe me. what is going to happen to you is going to happen. when it’s over i think you will agree, that, when it happens it’s a good thing to be among people who understood what you have to go through.”

anvea looked at her sideways “i sure don't understand what s happening to me.”

avon ran her hand back through her hair, controlling her exasperation and retorted, “i don't see why you would you just don't pay attention”

anvea shot her mother another glare. “i think i’ve been paying enough attention. i know why i am here. i’m here to get laid.”

at this avon could not help it she broke out laughing. she turned towards her daughter. did not know what to say, turned away and then turned back. “this is not about getting laid! you have spent too much time among humans. obsessed with sex because you can’t confront it. you are here to learn how to deal with an intimate part of your being. to understand it, to accept it, to be able to use it and to be able to share it with someone else. you cant give something away if you don't possess it first. this is a necessary step on the road to self-possession.”

anvea looked at her perplexed. “why do i need to follow a special road to possess myself. i’mean i i always have that. that is there to learn.

avon put her hands on anvea’s shoulders, smiled a half smile, and said, “i can see you are going to have to do this the hard way.”