

Tanita looked out the window in awe and sorrow at the planet she used to call home. In a couple of minutes billions of lives will be lost. For 20 agonizing years she had prepared for this moment, every waking and sleeping second.

The last 20 years had been a rollercoaster. Her identity and place in the world had been challenged and shook to the core. She thought she was a human, but what humans had the ability to live for more than a couple of million years?! What humans had the ability to regress her body to that of an infant. Of course, nothing came without a cost, and as usual, the regression meant a form of amnesia, until she re-awakened. Why did she do this a couple of hundreds of years? Because she loved humanity, a part of her core still remembered that she was born of this earth, among the first humans to walk it. Then the lucky encounter had happened, born from misfortune as both Tanita and Crystal were on brink of death, they had found each other. Tanita saw a creature that was dying and without any thoughts or consideration to her own state, wanted to help out. Crystal saw the primitive creature, on the brink of death, and wanted to help out. As both of their consciousnesses faded — their bodies touched one another. A couple

of days after that and they awoke, but everything changed, for both of them. Tanita's understanding and view of the world expanded. She understood more of what was around her. Things around her had names, and properties and usages. It was clear what she could safely eat and could not. And as she focused on something, she realized that she knew a lot about it. She explored her surroundings with the curiosity of a child, absorbing and understanding her surroundings. An entire day passed until she remembered that she had been on the brink of death. With a newfound panic she started to check herself and mainly the wounds that had been on her stomach. There were no wounds in sight. Even her old wounds and scars were healed and had disappeared. As she was wondering what happened, Crystal started communicating with her. A voice in her head, a friend, a protector, a partner; once Tanita recovered from the shock she realized she would never be alone again.

Looking out the window upon Earth, she smiled. How she first met Crystal was a very dear memory. She had gained more than knowledge and a friend that day. Cry'tulians  
→ were interconnected telepathically and empathically.

They were a race that did not know of the concepts of privacy or secrets. It was weird in the beginning for Tanita. Time flew and she got used to it, to the point that she could not understand how the human society that was forming could do it without being interconnected. For cry'talians the greatest punishment was bannishment: all ties were severed with that individual and he was left alone. The pain of losing the connection to the hive, the loniless always had the same result: death.

As time passed and both Tanita's and Crystal's curiosity grew, they decided it's an itch that has to be taken care of. Regressing the human body a couple of years to maintain youth was not an issue, so they came up with a plan: take the regression even further. They chose a family whose child was about to be born dead or would soon die after birth, and take the place of that child. Most of the cry'talians thought of it as madness. Especially since Crystal will be so exhausted from the process that it would take about 20 years for her to wake up again.

The process was called "reincarnation" and after the initial trial run made by Tanita and Crystal, it was now a practice among the Cry'talians that chose to take a human host. Of course, Tanita stretched the limits, and Crystal would remain

Alicya

20 years

asleep even after recuperating. Awakening would be made at the age of 95, upon mortal danger to Tanita or by being awakened by another cry'dalian. The last option was only to be used in case of impending planetary disaster.

Unfortunately this is exactly what happened 20 years ago. It was a Tuesday like any other. Tanita in this life was known as Alicya. Funny thing tho, she used the name of Tanita in her online gaming and DND campaigns. Since she was little she knew something was off about her. It felt like she did not belong, that there was more to her story. She used to make fun that she was waiting for the mother ship to pick her up. She chose to work in IT: technology was simple it did what it was supposed to do. If it did not then either the data was incorrect or a human made a mistake in the implementation. She saw herself as the protector of mankind, from software bugs.

As I was saying, it was a Tuesday like any other, a day at the office. Alicya and her team were preparing a new functionality it was big, it was complex and a lot of things could go wrong. Alicya was excited for the new hunting ground. The functionality would make people's lives better, and she will be part of it, what could be more

# Alicya

exciting than that?! As she and her team lead were preparing to present to the client the technical solution and clarify some points, they passed by another meeting room, and Alicya froze in her tracks. She was looking fascinated at the people inside the meeting room (or so it appeared from inside).

Inside the meeting room there were 3 women: a blonde, a brunette and a red head. an & men. Alicya recognized the 2 men. They were from the top management of the company. It didn't take long for the people inside the meeting room to take notice of Alicya. The brunette, that seemed to be in charge blocked Alicya's field of view, drawing her attention, then invited her inside.

As she entered the room, she could clearly see the men were furious with her. One started apologizing in her name, while multitasking in disciplining her. To their shock, Alicya's focus was once again on the women, on something in front of them to be more exact. The brunette silenced the men with a stern look, then switching her attention said in a calm and somehow sweet and soothing manner:

- What is it child that caught your eye?

Alicya, yet again broken from the spell looked a bit panicked around the room. She had to explain herself, and she had to do it fast. With a trembling voice she started

Alicya

doing just that.

- Please forgive my... my rudeness and intrusion... It's just that... how can I explain? It's such a wonderful view... I thought I would be grey and senile before seeing such a wonderful gorgeous sight...

- What the hell are you doing? roared one of the men...

- The... the... the holographic interfaces... managed Alicya to say barely holding up her tears.

- Go on child, said the woman while silencing the men with a gesture

- The user interface is so intuitive, even if I don't understand or recognize the writing. Further more they also seem to have a vast array of sensors to enable you to see a heatmap of the human body, voice analysis, pupil reactions. And the flow of information, you are doing what the blonde woman is telling you to do, while she provides both of you with information. If I were to make an analogy you are the frontend, She is the backend, pointing at the blonde and She is the database.

The blonde woman smiled, got up from her chair and put a hand on the brunette's shoulder, signaling her to retreat.

- And you could tell all that just from watching our holographic interfaces?

- yes... I didn't mean to intrude... But they are visible and shiny you know?!

# Alicya Thomas

The blonde smiled, and did some gestures in the air. The holographic interfaces became visible to the men.

- You are right, and to not make a fool of you, our tech is now visible to all.

Curiosity should not be punished, nor the ability to see or do something that others can not. Have I made our position clear, gentlemen?! Her tone was calm, yet contained a force in it that clearly stated no objections were to be had.

- So, my name is Golden Seryl Cecile. You may call me Cecile. May I know your name and birthdate?

- Umm... I'm Alicya Thomas. 21 January 1989, umm but what a strange question...

- And were you born in village Baia?

- Umm... yeah, my mother was on vacation and I came about a little early catching everyone by surprise...

- Thank the light I have finally found you. I am sorry child, trully I am, but the situation is dire and your input is needed. Look into my eyes.

As Alicya complied, unable to resist, Cecile's eyes became more bright, her irises turning to a bright blue, almost emitting light. Cecile's voice grew fainter with sounds that probably were words. Yes, they were ancient words meant to awaken from the reincarnation process. To remind her of her life as Tanita, host of Crystal.

Crystal was the Shai'ra of the cry'dations. Both of them were. Voices, feelings an empty space of the soul being filled. It all came back to her, mikenias of memories.

- Cecile my old friend, what is the matter? What happened in just 30 years for you to need to awaken me?

— Our worst fear will materialize in just 20 years.

"Tanita?" a warm voice came from behind her waking her up from her memories. "Are you sure you want to do this?" said Cecile with worry in her voice. "you know as well as I do that I must. you remember the dinosaurs and what we felt then as our sisters died. For the good of the many, it is the price I must pay. you will be the shai'ra in my stead. if I manage to survive this and recover, I will release you of your burden." said Tanita while still looking out of the window upon Earth. "yes, you are our shai'ra, the strongest among us. Leave someone else to do this!" pleaded Cecile. "stop this foolish talk! It is precisely because I am the strongest that I must undertake this. Don't worry, I'm a pain, you won't get rid of me this easily. I've had thousands of reincarnations, it may not be the same thing, but I will — survive and adapt. We always have" said



Tanita with more confidence that she felt. Of course she knew that Cecile felt that, and she knew the other woman chose to ignore the feeling and take into account only the words.

Cecile guided Tanita were the banishment ceremony was to take place. It was the first time in over a hundred millenia the ceremony was being performed. However it was only a partial banishment as the strings were cut from Tanita they were attached to Cecile. At the end of the ceremony the crytalian race was split into 2: those that had remained on the planet having Tanita as a Shai'ra and those on the ships having Cecile as a Shai'ra.

The pain Tanita felt was numbing, to such a degree she almost did not realize she had already been guided to her pod, and alone in space. Now Tanita's duty began: She had to shield the ships that had left her behind from the psionic waves of a planet dying from the impact with a planet killer asteroid.

Tanita opened a recorder. She had been a coward, afraid to take her goodbyes in person from her family and friends. They would have weakened her resolve and that would have killed everybody. She knew it was unfair to them they had did everything in their power

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to help her and support her. However by doing so they had also reminded her what she needed to protect.

"I record this message not as Golden Crystal Tanida, the shai'ra of cry'talians but as Alicya Thomas, born and raised on Earth. I apologize for this, I could not risk wavering in the face of this dangerous task I have to undertake. I have to create a shield around the ships and absorb the psyonice shocks that will come from Earth as the planet is destroyed. If I don't succeed in my mission the spheres that you are on will be affected. Cry'talians are vulnerable to loss, and at this scale it would be fatal. What does it have to do with the ships? You might think that even if the cry'talians aboard die, you would still make it somehow. If humanity would have been at the technological level to build it's own intergalactic ships without being tainted by cry'talian technology then perhaps you would be right. However that is not the case, and I will now reveal to you my last secret. I had kept it hidden so you would not have even a fleeting chance of guessing. The ships, the tech... they are all cry'talians. CRY'TALI'ANN'S not cry'talic. Each gadget integrated actually contains a cry'talian. Each ship is a group of cry'talians that have united their bodies to keep you

safe. And in order for them to do just that, I need to protect them from the psionic waves.

I love you, and I hope to be able to return to you alive and with my mind intact. However most of all I will do everything in my powers to protect you."

Tanita stopped the recording as tears filled her eyes. "I do this to ensure you survive" she said in a whisper to the void. Then she pressed "send" button and disconnected the communication system. She closed her eyes taking deep breaths, and allowed herself to swim in the field generated by those on the planet. She felt everyone: crydalian, human, bird, fish, animal, insect and plant. There was a lot of fear and panic, but also acceptance and harmony. She expanded her field ensuring to capture all emotions. She generated bliss to help with the panic and the pain. Then it happened. The asteroid hit Earth and destroyed it. More accurate would be "obliterated". Waves of pain washed over Tanita. Pain and loss hitting her in waves. It was unbearable. Hot tears appeared in her eyes as she struggled to maintain the shield. Nothing would pass her.

A few minutes passed, or hours or days Tanita did not know, but it was quiet and

she was alone. "Crystal?" Tanita asked in her head "Still here, but I don't know for how long... Tanita, I think I still have some energy to do a partial reincarnation before I fall to my slumber. It won't be much, probably I'll get you to the age of 5 if we are lucky. It will give you time to not dye of old age on me while I recover." said crystal. Tanita set the coordinates of the pod to the rendezvous point and then left Crystal to the partial reincarnation.

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