

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Negotiations begin~

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Argan sits across from 'Cecil Stedman' and considers the human man carefully. With Kregg busy seeing to the aliens who thought they could invade Earth, Nolan and Anissa are the two Viltrumites who Argan has at his back, flanking him on either side.

In comparison, this 'GDA Director' has the two strongest members of his Guardians doing the same for him. Argan believes they call themselves 'War Woman' and 'The Immortal'. It's interesting, The Immortal had been missing an arm after that last battle... and yet, it has already been reattached and seems to be fully functioning once more.

Meanwhile, War Woman is of significant interest to Argan, as he can only think she would likely produce strong Viltrumite Babies. She is, after all, the strongest human on Earth from what Nolan had told him.

Speaking of Nolan... Argan doesn't quite know what to make of his daughter just yet. Maya was weaker than he'd been expecting. But to her and her father's credit, she had supposedly just awakened to her true heritage. Perhaps with time she would prove to be capable of more... Argan hoped so, otherwise they would almost certainly be trading individual power and strength for raw numbers.

Here was what his people did not know... Argan was more than willing to make that trade if it led to a proper Viltrumite Resurgence. The strongest

would still rule, but he would take a million weaker Viltrumites over keeping their population below a hundred out of some misplaced idea of 'purity'.

Perhaps that was why his father had considered Nolan's mission a failure, if it had taken eighteen years to produce even the hint of a proper Viltrumite. But Argan would not give up quite so easily as Thragg had. No, Maya was the future of their species... he would make sure of it.

Besides, she had already passed his first test when she'd gotten back up and kept fighting. That was more than enough to gain his favor for the time being... and there would be more opportunities in the future as well.

"Earth is... grateful for your assistance today."

For now, Argan must focus back on the present. It would seem the time for studying one another had come to an end. Either that or this 'Cecil Stedman' had been making some sort of power play where he tried to get Argan to speak first. If that was the case, it had failed.

Tilting his head to the side, Argan just hums.

"We were happy to help. Your native protectors were doing the best they could with what they had."

It is as much of a compliment as he can possibly muster, all things considered. The aliens invading Earth seemed to be relatively weak without their technology and armor. And yet, with the armor they still weren't very threatening, at least not to a Viltrumite.

Neither War Woman nor The Immortal seem to take the compliment the way Argan intends it. Eyes narrow, lips purse, and jaws clench. Tch, if they

find insult in his words, that is their own fault. Cecil, meanwhile, seems to be more pragmatic.

“The Flaxans are causing us a lot of problems, there’s no doubt about that. Their invasions have come unprovoked and without warning and based on our scientists’ analysis, they have decades to prepare while we have only days. They’re advancing too fast for us to keep up.”

Argan smiles grimly.

“That will not be a problem going forward.”

Cecil’s eyes narrow and he sits back in his chair, crossing his arms over his chest.

“Yeah. Heard about that. You sent someone named ‘Kregg’ through the Flaxan portal with a couple other of your kind. You aren’t worried about them at all? The time dilation alone means they might be over there for years.”

Raising an eyebrow, Argan shakes his head.

“Worried? Why would I be? General Kregg no doubt has things well in hand. He will deal with your Flaxan problem once and for all, no matter what it takes.”

He catches a flicker of something in the GDA Director’s eyes, something curious.

“General, huh? And what does that make you, exactly?”

Ah, of course. Titles. By all accounts, Argan should not shy away from bandying his about. He is Grand Regent of the Viltrumite Empire, after all. Except... there is no Viltrumite Empire anymore. It has all but ceased to exist. Technically, Kregg is no General at this point either, Argan had simply had a slip of the tongue.

No matter. He merely dips his head, keeping his expression mild.

“I am leader of this expedition to your world. You may call me Argan.”

A single brow raises on the scarred human’s face.

“Not a General yourself?”

“Technically, even Kregg is no longer a General. He gave up the title when he joined our expedition. We are not a part of the standard command structure of the Viltrumite Empire any longer.”

All true, of course, though Argan can feel both Nolan and Anissa reacting minutely behind him. Hm, hopefully they are controlling themselves enough that he is the only one to notice... but he will not count on it.

Cecil certainly looks even more suspicious than before, that’s for sure.

“So what, you’ve been sent here to Earth and given absolute free rein to do whatever you want here?”

Argan tilts his head to the side.

“... Yes. That is correct.”

The human lets out an explosive exhale in response.

“I hope you can see why that might worry a few of us natives. Nolan already told me why your ‘expedition’ has come out this way. You and your forty-one friends are all here to do what he did... pick up a human, start a family, pop out some hybrid kids. I’m not necessarily opposed to some healthy cross pollination *within reason*, but Earth has to look out for itself... and it’s not about to bend the knee to you or your Empire.”

Argan holds up a hand before Anissa can speak, the sound of her mouth opening followed shortly after by the sound of her mouth closing. Whatever she might have said... it would not serve them well here. Cecil’s eyes flicker to the female Viltrumite for a moment before focusing back on Argan. His gaze is intent and focused for a human... and despite his obviously frail constitution, Argan is coming to respect his mind if nothing else.

“We did not come here with any intention of forcing you to bend the knee to us. Nolan has served as a sterling example of our species for these past twenty years, has he not?”

Cecil hesitates, glancing to Nolan for a moment before begrudgingly nodding.

“He has.”

“We shall emulate his actions. It will not just be Omni-Man at your beck and call anymore, but a multitude of Omni-Mans. In return, all that we ask is the right to settle amongst you. Though I feel I must correct you on one point.”

Leaning forward, Cecil clasps his hands in front of him, frowning.

“And what exactly is that?”

“I do not expect my people to settle for ‘a human’. Where possible, I would anticipate allowances for... multiple human mates per Viltrumite Warrior.”

Argan doesn't see why this would be so surprising or controversial, all things considered. There are only forty-three Viltrumites in total and the females will only be able to have one child at a time. It only makes sense that male Viltrumites will likely take on dozens of human mates, impregnating all of them as swiftly as possible. Otherwise, they will be at this for centuries. And sure, that is possible given their lifespans, but it's not *preferable*.

And yet, you would think Argan had just announced the annexation of Earth into the Viltrumite Empire from how Cecil, War Woman, and The Immortal all react. War Woman's eyes widen in disbelief, The Immortal looks disgusted, and Cecil... Cecil leans back again, gaze calculating.

“... Most humans prefer monogamous relationships, Argan. There aren't many human women who are happy playing second fiddle, let alone fifteenth.”

Fiddle? Argan huffs, the human's references lost on him. Although he can pick up enough from context clues alone, he supposes. Still...

“You say most. But there are billions upon billions of human females on this planet, no? Surely there must be hundreds of thousands who would not mind such an arrangement. And from them, I suspect we will find thousands that are worthy of mating with a Viltrumite.”

Cecil hesitates again but Argan is getting better at reading the human man. This time the hesitation is more of a considering hesitation... and so he is unsurprised when Cecil finally begrudgingly nods.

“You may have a point. So long as your people know that they can’t just force themselves on any human that strikes their fancy, we might be able to arrange something. A... program perhaps where single women can put in applications. That way it’s their choice.”

Yes, Nolan had been very clear about this part. Despite the vast amounts of corruption that existed in the upper echelons of this planet’s governing bodies, the average human being still thought they were free and had choices. Even as they were oppressed by the wealthiest and most influential among them, they clung to a belief that their choices were their own and anything less than that would be akin to slavery.

Viltrum had been no stranger to slavery over the millennia, and Argan himself didn’t truly feel one way or another about the institution. However, he wanted their relationship with the humans to be a valuable partnership, one where the humans were happy to have his people living among them.

This was a marriage of a sorts that they were negotiating here.

“I find that to be acceptable. So long as it produces results, we are more than happy to follow your lead on the matter, Director.”

Cecil looks like he doesn’t quite believe it. Like he’s still waiting for Argan to reveal his true nature or something. But this is exactly who Argan is. And it is who the Viltrumite People will be from now on.

After a long drawn out moment of silence, Cecil finally nods.

“Alright then. We’ve discussed what we can do for you and your people... now let us discuss what you and your people can do for us. You’ve already said we can count on a ‘multitude of Omni-Mans’ from now on. That’s a great start, but I’d really like to hammer out some details.

Not to mention I'm certain you didn't bring so many of your people all the way to our planet with the intentions of relying on our 'primitive technology' to live here. Sharing what you know with us, letting us advance our own technology to something closer to your level... that'd go a long way to setting some very worried world leaders at ease."

Before Argan can reply to any of that... the air suddenly shimmers at the end of the table. He looks over curiously but unafraid along with Nolan and Anissa, while Cecil rises to his feet and both War Woman and The Immortal bristle, falling into battle stances.

A moment later and a portal akin to the ones that he'd seen earlier that day forms at the end of the table, albeit far smaller than the ones on the street had been. Argan is unsurprised when Kregg steps through after a moment. After all, he'd never once doubted the other Viltrumite would succeed.

"Kregg."

Argan inclines his head to the other man, which Kregg returns with a wordless salute and a nod of his own. Then, he steps aside and allows a second being to step through. This one is a Flaxan... but unlike the soldiers, this one is unarmed and dressed in flowing robes and has their hands clasped in front of them.

"What is this, exactly?"

Cecil's distrustful gaze is focused on the Flaxan above all else and so are the eyes of War Woman and The Immortal. Kregg is the one to actually answer the question, however.

“The Flaxans have come to see the error of their ways. It took some time... years in fact, but those who once clamored for the invasion and conquest of your world have been brought to justice and removed from power. The Flaxans have replaced them with more... levelheaded leaders, those who understand that peace is always preferable to bloodshed.”

The Flaxan Diplomat, for what else can they be, bows their head at this before speaking in perfect, crystal clear universal standard.

“The good General is correct. A decade ago, the last time our war mongering leaders attacked your world, we were fortunate to have him and his companions return to show us a better way forward. Flaxa is now hopeful that we might be able to reach out a hand in peace to Earth... by way of our Viltrumite Guides. We are also prepared to pay reparations for past wrongs, of course.”

Those on the human side of the table blink in unison. Meanwhile, Argan is pleased with Gregg's work. He can read between the lines of course... the transfer of power was likely to be far from truly peaceful or clean. But in the face of three Viltrumites, Argan doubted the Flaxans had had any choice but to capitulate. And given Gregg had returned alone, it was obvious that the General had decided to leave the other two behind so that they could ensure 'cooperation' continued.

Hm, there was some value to the Flaxans and their portal technology. Not to mention the timestream differences and the fact that Viltrumite's enemies did not know about this other dimension where the Flaxans resided.

... Earth would be their new home, but Flaxa might just be useful in its own way going forward.

Looking to Cecil, Argan arches a brow at the scarred human male. It was up to him now whether they would 'accept' the Flaxans' overtures or not. Of course, Cecil would have to be a fool to say 'no' in the end. And as far as Argan could tell, Cecil was no fool.

Gritting his teeth, the GDA Director huffs and gestures to the end of the table.

"Take a damn seat."

Hm. Good. Things were going well. Everything was going according to plan.

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A/N: Kregg works fast... is what I would say if the handful of hours he was over there wasn't a decade lololol. The Flaxans were lucky Kregg was already learning from Argan's mercy.

Throw me a comment if you can but please leave a Like if you don't want to, it's the main metric I use to track whether a story is doing well or not!