



Dana Littlejohn

DAUGHTERS OF THE COSMOS

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Published by Dana Littlejohn, 2022.

This is a work of fiction. Similarities to real people, places, or events are entirely coincidental.

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Daughters of the Cosmos

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Blurb:

Takasa, Goddess of the Sun, left her mountain home consumed with bitterness caused by her long-endured loneliness. The elders in her tribe fed her a potion to put her to sleep for a thousand years to wait for the one who would be able to save them from her wrath. Would his power be enough to help them?

Luneria, the Goddess of the Moon, saw that Rubani, the God of War, was in need of advice. She offered her assistance and watched out for him during his campaign. Rubani was charmed by her wisdom, knowledge and beauty. He wanted her to be his wife, but had no idea if Luneria would leave the sky to live with him among the people.

Was there a way for the goddesses to have their happiness without losing their positions?

Prologue



In Hebra, Egypt, the tribe of Takasa, Goddess of the Sun, lived in harmony with their ruler and the land. The people called themselves Takasians in homage to the goddess. Takasa raised the sun daily, letting it shine on them without clouds to block its brightness and warmth. The goddess communed with her sister Luneria, Goddess of the Moon, to ensure the moon would rise to allow the Takasians to see by its radiant glow.

Takasa chose the tallest mountain in the land for her home. The villagers called it *Goddess Peak*. She descended each night to rest in a cave at its foot so the goddess of the moon could reign. The Takasians were grateful for their goddess's efforts, and they feared her just as much as they loved her. The people were diligent to nurture their goddess's sweet demeanor whenever she came among them. They knew her awesome abilities could plunge their world into everlasting gloom by taking away the sun's light and heat, in a blink of an eye if she had a mind to do so. The people and their goddess lived in peace for many eons until one rare morning Takasa came down the mountain to visit her people.

"Look! Look! The goddess has come down from the mountain to grace us with her presence. Praise Takasa, Goddess of the Sun!" a singer yelled.

"Send a messenger to the village for more dancers to help us entertain her," someone shouted.

As the goddess approached, the singers resumed.

"What do you think you're doing?" the goddess asked, standing among them.

Her angry tone stopped the people in their tracks.

"We...we are honoring your greatness by singing songs of praise, goddess," one of the singers replied.

"We are exalting you for all the wonderful things you do for us," another said.

"And you call that praise?" Takasa yelled, walking among them. "All that I do for you and that is all you can do for me?"

The entertainers fell to their knees, quaking before her.

"Forgive us, goddess!" they cried. "We only meant to please you!"

Standing in front of a singer with a hand on her hip, Takasa pointed a finger at her like a chastising parent.

"I raise the sun every morning. I put it to sleep every night. I fill the clouds with the rain you need for your crops, and *this* is what you have for me? I tell you it is not enough!" Takasa ranted.

"We did not mean to offend."

"What must we do to honor you properly?"

"Tell us what we must do to please you and it will be done."

"There is nothing you can do that can please me now. I am angry!"

Takasa suddenly grew to the size of the mountain she called home, and her head changed into that of a lioness.

"Now you will be punished for enraging me," the lion's head said.

Takasa reached down and gobbled up the people closest to her. The Takasians scattered, screaming. Before they could get far, Takasa caught them one by one and ate them whole. The woman that went for the dancers watched the exchange between the goddess and her people from a distance in horror. She let out her own scream and then took off in a dead run to the village to warn the rest of the inhabitants.

"Tempest! Tempest!" the woman shouted running into the elder's hut. "The goddess is infuriated. She has given herself the head of a lion and is eating the people in the heat of her anger!"

"What? That is awful!"

"What can we do?"

"Come. We must go to see Oling. He will know what to do."

Tempest and the woman entered a joining room where an ancient-looking old man sat wrapped in a blanket staring into a fire pit. They sat across from him, and Tempest nudged the woman, encouraging her to speak. She bowed her head.

"Oling, we have somehow angered our goddess. She is eating the people in her wrath. We seek your knowledge to make amends with her," the woman said, still trying to catch her breath. "Tell us what we must do."

Oling let out a knowing grunt and nodded. "It was written a long time ago that this day would come. Praise Dunia, Goddess of the Cosmos! I have lived long enough to help fulfill the prophecy," he said, lifting his hands.

The women looked at each other then back to Oling.

"Prophecy? Tempest said with a raised brow.

Oling nodded. "The prophecy states Takasa would raise the sun one morning but before the day was done, she would descend upon her people, fiercely angry, and consume them. The source of her fury does not come from her worshippers, but from within," he explained palming his chest. "Loneliness eats at the peace in her heart. It is the cause of her rage. We may not have caused our goddess's fury, but it is our duty to ease it."

"Oling, how do we help her if she is eating her people?" Tempest asked.

"Yes, Elder. The goddess is extremely angry. Getting close to her would mean our death," the woman chimed in.

"We must give Takasa her deepest desire," he told them. "She is in need of a mate."

"A mate! Of course, you do not mean one of *our* men. We are but simple humans. Surely there is none among us who is worthy to be the companion of a goddess?"

"No, Tempest, you are correct," Oling agreed. "No one among us is equal to our goddess or worthy of her physical love."

"Then how are we to find a man for her?" the woman asked.

"The prophecy continues to say that a thousand years from the day Takasa attacks her village, a male child will be born in the distant land of Uganda. It is well known that their sun god, Olcolm, comes to Earth often to dally with his people. In a thousand years, he will leave a child behind. That is the babe we seek. He is the chosen one and the *only* one who will be able to..." he searched for the correct word and then offered them a soft smile. "Shall we say, *handle* Takasa, as a goddess *and* as a woman. Because of his godly bloodline, only he will be able to calm her wrath and ease her loneliness."

Tempest groaned and the other woman scoffed at Oling's words.

"How will we survive for a *thousand* years waiting for the child to be born?" the woman asked. "When she is done with the people outside of the village, she will come for the rest of us," she shouted pointing at the door. "No one in the tribe will be left to have children to be around in a thousand years!"

Oling held up his hand. "Peace, my daughter." His tone remained soft as he turned his attention back to Tempest.

"You must make the potion of the gods for her to drink. It is an old remedy whose ingredients are listed among the ancient scrolls. It will cause her to slumber while the years pass. Be sure to use pomegranate juice in the mixture. It will

sweeten the drink and hide the telltale taste of the herbs. She will not suspect a thing. Afterward, we must pray to Dunia and ask for her help on what to do next.”

With a slight bow of acknowledgment, Tempest left Oling’s chamber, followed by the woman. After consulting the scrolls Oling referred to, they gathered enough ingredients to make the elixir in a large enough portion to accommodate Takasa’s current enormous size. When it was complete, they transferred it into a barrel and put it on a cart to pull behind them.

The goddess had eaten the villagers that were near her home. When she spied Tempest and her accomplice, she walked toward them.

“Goddess Takasa, where are you going?” Tempest yelled.

“I am going to the village to devour the rest of you unworthy people. I have no more need of you. Since you are here, I will begin with you,” she said and reached for them.

“If that is your desire, goddess, I am but a lowly human and cannot stop you.”

Takasa hesitated, retracting her paw.

“Yes, that is true. You are a mere human, and I am a goddess. My will shall be done.”

“Yes, goddess. You are very wise. Although you are still angry with your children, we do know our duty toward you. It is such a very hot day, would you accept this barrel of pomegranate juice to quench your thirst before you take the short walk to our community, great and powerful goddess?”

Takasa did not shrink in size, but she did change her lion’s head back into that of her beautiful face.

“It is true my anger remains, but I will accept your offering, for I find that you are correct. It is hot and I am thirsty.”

She reached down to the cart, grasped the container, and drank the juice. The effect of the drugged liquid took hold by her last swallow. Takasa dropped the empty drum. It splintered upon impact. The women squealed as they jumped back out of the way of the flying debris. As the goddess held her head with her massive lion’s paws, they changed back to her normal dainty hands. Her colossal height decreased rapidly to be proportioned to Tempest and the other woman. Takasa stumbled back and forth until her knees buckled, and she fell into Tempest’s arms.

“Quickly, make the light,” Tempest directed.

The woman nodded and lit the lanterns attached to the cart. The sun lowered quickly as the goddess lost her ability to keep it aloft. Together Tempest and the woman lifted Takasa onto the cart and pulled her inside her cave. Following the path, the women took great care to lay their goddess on the silk-covered sleeping area. Tempest and the woman returned to the cave entrance and went about sealing it. It was tedious work and took several days to complete. Finally, the women were done and they followed the torches in the distance to lead them home.

"It is done, Oling. The goddess sleeps the sleep of a thousand years," Tempest said, appearing before him.

"You have done well, my daughters. We have been in darkness the last four days, but we are ready. Go in peace to get your rest. Your job is done," Oling told the other woman then turned to Tempest. "Come, the rest of the elders are assembled in the town's center. We must join in the prayer to call the supreme mother. I fear the people cannot take another day of darkness."

Tempest followed Oling to the heart of the sacred sphere where the others were praying to the heavens. She added her voice to theirs. As their requests were made, a shooting star crashed into the circle's center. All around it fell backward from its force. When the smoke faded, a beautiful woman stood in its place. The goddess's long hair wrapped about her shoulders like an ebony cloak. Luminescent skin glowed in the firelight of the many torches and eyes that sparkled like stars stared down on them with confusion.

"Why do Takasa's children pray to me, the Goddess of the Cosmos?"

Tempest stood up at Oling's nudging. "Goddess, the prophecy has come to pass. Takasa woke up this morning and, consumed by her loneliness, she had eaten many of her people. We have given her the potion of the gods. She now sleeps in her cave of rest to await the birth of the descendant of Olcolm."

Dunia smiled. "Ahh, so the time has finally come. The goddess of the sun has worthy worshipers, indeed. You have done well following the instructions laid down long before your births."

"We prayed to you, supreme mother, for your help. We are in need of your wisdom," Tempest continued. "We do not wish to have a thousand years of darkness while we wait for our goddess to rise."

"I see. What is your need?"

"We realize it is Takasa's duty alone to raise the sun, but humbly ask that you intercede. We would like you to raise the sun each day in our goddess's place until she awakens."

Tempest bowed low after her request and the others followed suit.

"Ahh, and what will Takasa's children do for me during this time?"

Tempest looked to the other assembled elders. They looked at one another before turning confused looks on her. Tempest's mouth opened and then closed as she paused to consider her words.

"We can show you the same reverence and adoration we bestowed upon our goddess. Our most gifted singers will present songs of love and gratefulness to you as the sun rises. To thank you for communicating with the moon goddess so we are not left in total darkness each night, our most talented dancers will dance for you at night when you bring it down."

Dunia smiled and the area around the people seemed to brighten.

"Your offered homage pleases me. I accept."

"Thank you, goddess," said Tempest and the gathered Takasians in unison.

"I will raise the sun in my daughter's place until she awakens and is able to resume her duties and I will communicate with my daughter Luneria so she will continue to raise the moon," the goddess announced and then disappeared in a dazzling beam of light.

* * * *

"My lord, Uganda has sent a courier to speak with you."

Mpinga, the tribe's current chief, nodded and waved him in.

"I bring you greetings from my chief, Banori of Uganda," the messenger said with a bow.

"Send my greetings back when you return, messenger. What word do you have for me?"

"Chief MPinga, we believe we have the child you seek."

MPinga's smile could not be contained when he leaned forward.

"Really? Praise Dunia, Mother of the Cosmos! My people have waited a thousand years to hear those words! Tell me of the child."

"He is a unique child, for sure! Even as a babe he exhibited gifts we had never seen before. His mother died in childbirth and his father a while later at war. The women in the village banded together to care for him."

MPinga leaned back, interlocking his fingers listening intently.

"The boy has golden-brown eyes that almost glow when he looks directly at you. He is stronger than any child we have ever encountered and when he cries..." The messenger paced back and forth as he spoke. "His body changes into animal form until he is calmed! His abilities seem to be enhancing as he ages. He is a toddler now, but..." He stopped in front of the chief.

"Yes?" MPinga urged.

The messenger sighed. "The truth is the people fear him. The women no longer want to care for him. We don't know what to do. It is common knowledge that the Gandins have been looking for an extraordinary child and we hoped he was it."

"Indeed, we are, but my tribe has encountered many babies over the years. All special in their own way. We took them in and raised them, but none were the child we sought. However, this child that you speak of seems to have the most unique qualities I have ever heard. This child sounds like the one that we seek. I will send a representative back with you to bring him back to us."

"Thank you, chief MPinga."

Chapter One



MPinga headed to the village center. The other elders were already assembled on their knees in an incomplete circle. MPinga joined them to fill it and they called to Dunia in unison. On a brilliant beam of light, she appeared.

“Greetings Goddess. The prophecy has been fulfilled,” the chief told her.

“One thousand years have passed already? Takasa’s children have done well. My daughter will awaken and raise the sun herself. To her, it will be as if she slept one night. The potion has cleansed her mind, leaving her somewhat confused, but otherwise unchanged. Though her anger will remain she will not be able to grasp why she is angry. Are your people ready to receive her?”

“We are, Goddess Dunia,” MPinga stood to answer her. “The child from the prophecy is now a man. He has been taught to control his gift and has been instructed in ways to worship and praise our goddess, and how to please her as a woman as well.”

“You have done well, Takasians. I am proud of you. The night has just begun. Place him in the cave with Takasa and you may start your celebration.” In another flash of starlight, she was gone. MPinga turned to the others.

“Send for Solarion.”

One of the elders left and soon reappeared with the young man. Solarion, taller than most of the men in the circle, passed them with a confident stride and a nod of greeting. The elders, one by one, offered him a bow as he moved past them. He stopped in front of Chief MPinga and made his own bow.

“I am here, MPinga. What is your need?”

MPinga stood before the young man smiling. “You have been trained in our customs, educated by our scholars and those of our neighboring tribes, and instructed in the ways to love our goddess for the last thirty years, Solarion. How do you feel?”

“I feel ready, my chief.”

“Good. The time has come for you to fulfill your purpose. The great mother has said our very own goddess will perform her duty and raise the sun tomorrow. She will not know a thousand years have passed. If you mention it to her, the

knowledge may prove disastrous, for her anger has not subsided. It may make your task that much harder. You must get her to welcome you as her mate and companion.”

“I understand, MPinga. I will do all I can to ensure her acceptance of me. I will make you proud.”

MPinga gripped the young man’s shoulders. “I know you will.”

The elders walked with Solarion to the cave. The barrier had eroded over time making it easier for the men to remove what was left covering the opening. MPinga disrobed his protégé and left his clothes folded just inside of the cavern. With another bow, the men turned to leave him to deal with the goddess. Feeling the walls as he walked, he touched a torch. He concentrated on his gift, and it burst into flames. With the light guiding him, he spotted other torches along the corridor and lit them all in the same way.

Solarion stepped into a large room, and the hall’s dim light cast a warm glow over the area where Takasa slept. He walked over to her and pushed aside strands of hair covering half her face and smiled.

“The goddess of the sun is far more beautiful than the stories have said,” he muttered. He sat and then leaned over to touch her lips with a soft kiss. “Awaken, my beautiful goddess. It is time we met,” he whispered into her ear.

Takasa stirred and her eyes fluttered open. She gasped, sitting straight up, her anger in full blaze.

“What is the meaning of this? How dare you enter my chamber?” she yelled.

His deep voice was gentle but firm. “Peace, goddess, I am Solarion. I am here to worship you.”

“You *should* worship me. I am your goddess! However, this is not worship. This is an *intrusion*! You have no business in my sleeping chamber. You shall be punished for disturbing me.”

Takasa pushed him back. Solarion fell to the floor, where he remained. He kept his tone calm in contrast to her fury.

“I know you have no power at night, lovely goddess, so you cannot punish me at this moment. I have been raised and trained to be your companion and to love only you.”

Her laughter rang with ridicule as she scooted to the edge of her bed. “Really? What makes you think you are worthy to be with me, *Solarion*?” she asked

with an air of superiority. "I am a goddess. You are but a mere man," Takasa added with a scoff, tossing her feet over the side.

He smiled up at her. "That, I am not, beautiful Takasa. I have human *and* god blood coursing through my veins. I am the son of Olcolm, the Ugandan sun god. I can assure you we are well-matched. There is no other like me. That is the reason I was chosen for you."

* * * *

Takasa stared at the intruder laying on the floor in front of her. His tone rang with such confidence that it irritated her.

How dare this Solarion presume to know me so well. He claims to be the son of a sun god, but he is a mere human!

Solarion pushed himself up to stand. She was taken aback as she noticed his nudity. Takasa's heartbeat sped up as her gaze lingered over his form. She swallowed hard before they met eyes again.

"There was no reason to impede your vision of what is already yours," he explained, meeting her gaze.

He yanked Takasa to her feet, pulling her close to his body. She gasped at the abrupt contact. Before she could protest, Solarion placed her hands on his chest. She could not stop the sound that escaped her next. He moved her hands over his chest, guiding them with his own. Her fingers pressed into the muscle as they pushed through the soft curls. Solarion let out a low growl. The sound sent a shiver up her spine.

Solarion lifted her hands. They were dwarfed by his large ones as he moved them to rest on his cheek. The hair there was just as supple as the ones on his chest, covering most of his face. Willingly she traced the fullness of his sensual lips. Hanging on both sides of his face were long dark braids. Without thinking, Takasa fingered the tips as they lay on his broad shoulders. Against her better judgment, she looked into his face. His soft smile reached the most beautiful golden eyes she had ever encountered. Looking at them seemed to ease her anger.

"All that you see is for you, my goddess. I offer you all I have and am. My mind, my body, and anything else you want or need from me already belong to you."

He seemed to be waiting for a reply, but Takasa remained silent, stunned by his words. Solarion lifted her gown over her head without hesitation. His eyes feasted on her nakedness, and he smiled.

“The goddess of the sun is equally beautiful in face and in body,” he stated.

Slowly, his hands skimmed over her heating skin. He left her shoulders, arms, waist, and belly tingling by his tender touch. Takasa closed her eyes to further enjoy the sensations he’d awakened coursing through her body.

“Let me worship this beautiful body of yours so that you can take your rest in my arms. You will rule the people by day, and I will rule you at night, worshipping your body with my own. Each night you will sleep in my arms, exhausted from the love I will show your body.”

Takasa’s eyes popped open. Anger flowed through her like a rushing river. When Solarion brought his mouth down to hers, she shoved him back with all her might before he could connect to her.

“How dare you! What makes you think you can rule over me? I will not allow it,” she yelled. “For such insolence, you will be punished.”

Takasa called forth her power but found she was unable to grow to her monstrous size within the confines of the cave. Breathing hard with her eyes darting around, she shifted her head into that of a lioness, and the dainty hands that had caressed Solarion’s face and chest were now sharp lion’s claws.

Takasa stood before Solarion, waiting for the fear to appear on his handsome features, but he didn’t appear to be impressed or afraid. He turned his back to her when the transformation was complete. Flabbergasted, she ran around him to face him again.

“You dare turn your back to me?” she growled.

Solarion remained silent. Takasa let out an angry growl as she launched herself at him. Anticipating her pounce, Solarion sidestepped out of the way. Takasa landed on her face on the floor before him, yelping in pain. He approached to help her, but she snatched her paw away. Scooting away from him, Takasa crouched low on all fours. She roared her fury and initiated her strike. Once again Solarion moved out of the line of fire. Before she could get her bearings from the last assault, Takasa leaped into another unsuccessful launch.

“Takasa, cease your attack on me or you will force me to restrain you,” he told her.

“*Restrain* me?” she shrieked in disbelief.

His calm tone was like fire to her temper's short fuse. She lunged forward, only to miss him again. Landing face down on the bed, breathing hard, Takasa banged her paws at her sides, screaming out her frustration. She jumped to her feet, readying herself for her next attack, and then sat back down with a gasp.

Solarion moved swiftly toward her, as his own change began. The braids she had fingered just moments ago had become a full-grown mane and his hands, massive lion's paws. By the time he reached her, Solarion had the head of the king of beasts and his golden eyes flashed like bright flames. She stood, but Solarion caught her paws in his and pushed her back to the bed with his full weight pinning her in place.

Takasa grunted as she landed on her back with the wind knocked out of her. She growled in frustration, but the sound was drowned out by Solarion's massive roar. Wide-eyed, Takasa stared into his blazing eyes for a long time. When the quick rise and fall of her chest slowed, her goddess features returned.

"How—How is this possible?"

The lion stared down at her for a few moments before Solarion's handsome features returned.

"We are more alike than you know. I was born to be with you, Takasa. No other is like me. I am here just for you, to be your companion and mate."

His words were controlled and his voice gentle. He hesitated for only a second, and then brushed a soft kiss across her lips and neck. She pushed against his hands but couldn't move his arms.

"Cease this, Solarion. I don't want it. I don't want you."

She hoped he believed her words because she wasn't sure she even believed them.

He stopped kissing her. "Why do you resist me? I am only here to love you. I can give you everything you need."

"I don't need anything from you."

He scanned her face and his eyes widened. "You *fear* me."

"I fear nothing," she rushed out. "I—I am the goddess of the sun. I rule all that the light controls."

He smiled. "I wish you no harm, beautiful goddess, and I want nothing from you except your acceptance. My only mission in life is to please you. I will be a companion and mate if you would have me. I merely want to be by your side while you rule, not rule in your place." He dropped another kiss on her neck.

“And when you return here at night, your body will be mine to please and worship with all the love I have for you.”

“Solarion—” His name rode a breathy gasp.

He kissed her quiet. “Take what I am offering you. Let me love you. There is no hidden agenda and no need for you to be alone. I am here. I am already yours.”

Her breathing picked up as his kisses crossed her collarbone. Solarion’s insistent grinding made the moisture build between her legs. Takasa’s eyes closed, and she stopped pushing against his arms. Solarion’s powerful legs pushed hers open as he slid down her body, searing it with kisses. Although she enjoyed his touch, she was still torn.

“Solarion, you must cease,” she panted in a whisper.

“Your voice says one thing, goddess, but your body says another. It cries out to me, you know. It wants me. It needs me. *You* need me. However, if it is true that you wish me to stop, I, of course, will do so. Will you allow me to continue touching you?”

Solarion stopped moving completely. She immediately missed his touch and his soothing voice. His words comforted her, somehow. Her gaze shifted toward him. His eyes were trusting and held no signs of malice.

Could this handsome human really give me what I need if I just stop fighting him?

Her body seemed to think so and it has never led her wrong when it came to lovers. Takasa took a deep breath and nodded to give her consent. She gasped at the titillating sensation his beard left when it rubbed across her belly. He lingered there for a moment to leave butterfly kisses before he moved lower. A shiver of anticipation raced through her body when his chin grazed the sensitive skin over her pelvic bone. Solarion continued his descent, pushing his face into the downy hair between her legs without hesitation. She moaned.

Lost in the growing ecstasy, Takasa hadn’t noticed Solarion had released her hands until she reached for his head. His tongue snaked from his mouth and seared the delicate folds of skin as he lapped them. With another loud moan, she opened her legs wider, inviting him in further. Solarion took his time, licking her at first, but her groans of pleasure seemed to spur him. He slipped his hands underneath her, gripping her bottom delving into her core even more. Solarion lifted her hips from the bed and pulled her to him, feasting on her. He licked and sucked her carnal center drinking the essence pooled there.

“Oh!”

He kneaded her bottom as he licked her most private place. Takasa's juices flowed with her elevated excitement, her senses on fire. She had never experienced pleasure in the magnitude Solarion gave her. Her climax was close. She could smell it and yearned for it with all her being. Tremors of ecstasy traveled the length of her nervous system. Yanking at the silken covers, consecutive mews of pleasure left her chest, leaving her lungs almost empty.

Her muscles tightened, locking in place, and then she exploded from within. A high-pitched squeal burst from her throat, a sound she almost didn't recognize as her own. Its intensity shook her limbs and left her throat raw. Takasa gripped a handful of Solarion's braids, holding him in place, but there was no need. He seemed to know what to do. Wrapping his full lips around the pulsating tip at the top of her vulva, Solarion applied a gentle sucking motion on her pleasure center. Lightning rods of euphoria shot through her body, the aftereffects left her shaky and exhausted. When her blissful tremors ceased, Solarion released her and moved up her body again, leaving a trail of kisses in his wake.

“I've waited my whole life to be with you, Takasa. You honor me with your juices. The pearly dew of a goddess...there is no better drink! Now that I have tasted you, I desire you even more. Please! Beautiful Takasa, I beg you. Allow me to adore your body now that I am here. I need you. I want you. Don't deny yourself what my body can do for you. Let me love you,” he pleaded.

Takasa gasped, stunned by his reaction, and dazed by the overwhelming joy her body experienced. She panted, trying to catch her breath. Her body begged her to let him have her. Every inch of her wanted him. She nodded, giving in to her desires.

“Yes, Solarion, yes!”

“Yes!” he growled.

Solarion positioned himself over her, adjusting his erection to poise before her drenched opening. Once aligned, one controlled push buried his staff inside her. Her body opened, welcoming him, and she surrendered to the increasing feelings of joy overtaking her.

“Oh, Takasa, the feel of you is glorious. I've wondered -dreamed- of this moment and, mmm, it was worth every minute of that wait. You are incredible!”

Takasa's mouth was agape, but her voice was gone. Solarion's words increased the pleasure he gave her body, sending her mind into a lustful tailspin. He stroked

her, a slow steady motion at first, and then faster and faster, bending, rolling, and arching his back, pressing himself deeper into her. She felt every inch of him sliding in and out of her. Every movement was better than the last. He was an amazing lover. Gentle kisses moved from her cheeks to her ear.

"You feel magnificent, my goddess," he whispered. "Each night when you return to your cave to rest, I will make love to you like this. It will only get better and better as we spend more time together. This is only some of what I offer to you."

"Mmm..." *Glorious!*

Takasa wrapped her legs around his narrow waist, and he fell into her even more. He stroked her with strong, deliberate movements.

"Oh!"

"Your cries of fulfillment are like kisses on my soul. Give yourself to me, beautiful Takasa. I will be your treasure chest of desire. Reach inside and all you need will be given to you," he panted.

Solarion's promise caressed Takasa's heart with its conveyance of love. His exquisite command over her senses spoke to her body, expressing the same message to her flesh. She moaned again, clawing at his back.

A low deep roar escaped him. "I am here to please you. That is my only function. Have your way with me," he continued, pumping faster.

She met his powerful thrusts with one of her own. With an unexpected groan, Solarion leaned back, and then reached behind him, hauling her legs up to rest on his shoulders. Takasa gasped, wide-eyed.

"Solarion, what—what are you doing?"

He smiled. "Enhancing your pleasure, my goddess."

With her legs up and her bottom raised high, Solarion continued pushing into her silken tunnel. The penetration was more intense, and he was right. Her pleasure soared, taking her to new heights of enjoyment. Solarion delved deeper and deeper into her until Takasa let out a satisfied scream that left her chest tight and her throat sore. As her body convulsed around the hardness of his arousal, Solarion threw his head back and the lion in his soul showed itself when he let out his own release with a joyful roar.

Chapter Two



Takasa woke to the sound of soft purring. She turned and smiled seeing the peaceful look on Solarion's face. As she watched him, her grin began to fade.

Who is this man? How did he come to be here with me?

Rising to her feet, she stood over the bedding looking down at him. As she inspected his body again and couldn't help but smirk. The torchlight enhanced his masculine beauty. His muscular arms were relaxed with one underneath his head. The other lay beside him where it had fallen when she moved from underneath it. Long thick legs were bent at the knee as he lay on his side, and the tool that had given her so much pleasure earlier slept against his inner thigh. Solarion looked as peaceful as a babe. Her body tingled, remembering how he felt between her legs.

Takasa leaned forward to push back the wayward braids that hung on his cheek. As she reached out to caress his cheek, he stirred. Solarion tilted his head to look up and his lips spread into a dazzling smile.

"Your touch pleases me, goddess. It not only strokes my skin but the spirit within me," he admitted.

His confession slid over her aura like silk against the skin. The very sound of his voice enticed her and moistened the area between her legs again. Takasa struggled with the thought of returning to his arms but forced the feeling away as she pushed out the words that must be said.

"You must rise, Solarion. The time has come for me to raise the sun."

"Of course, my goddess."

Without hesitation, he rose and grabbed her gown. She allowed him to dress her. His hands glided over her body as he did so, and the memories of their time together entered her mind. He retrieved her brush from a nearby vanity and smoothed her hair.

"Tonight, I will show honor and praise to your body once more...if you will have me," he whispered near her ear.

Putting a soft kiss on her neck and hugging her one last time from behind, Solarion spun her around to face him and bowed low.

“You are ready to perform your duty, goddess.”

Trying to shake off the rush of ecstasy his embrace left behind, Takasa walked away from him leaving her sanctuary without a backward glance. She took the long tunnel that led to the cave’s entrance. Takasa could hear the villagers singing as she neared the exit. When she spotted Solarion’s clothing on the ground, she paused. Without a word, he dressed. She was almost disappointed. Stepping outside, she held out her hand and Solarion accepted it. With her other hand, Takasa reached up to the top of Goddess Peak, bringing Solarion with her. As they ascended, the sky brightened. When she reached the top, the sun seated itself in the eastern sky.

Takasa took her place upon the golden throne and Solarion disappeared into the home she occupied during the day. She went about clearing the sky of lingering clouds. Her storerooms were always filled with the best fruits, meats, loaves of bread, wines, and chocolates the villagers had to offer. Once the food was in her possession it never spoiled. She thought of calling Solarion to tell him what to prepare for breakfast, but before she could do so, he appeared.

Solarion placed a golden tray holding a large silver goblet along with several portions of meat, cheeses, and fruit before her.

“Your breakfast, my goddess.”

“This looks wonderful, Solarion. Thank you.”

Solarion nodded then stood quietly by until she was done eating. He cleaned the area silently then disappeared again. From her throne, she caught sight of Solarion through a window cleaning the gold and mahogany furniture in her home. She shifted her position to watch him. He walked through the other rooms pausing periodically to move things around or wipe things down. Suddenly he stopped short and walked up to a picture. Takasa smiled, recalling how much she liked the picture. It represented how much she loved and protected her people. Abruptly, Solarion left her line of sight. Takasa sat back and frowned.

Why was I so angry with them?

“Goddess Takasa, I have drawn a bath for you. If it pleases you, I would like to cleanse you now.”

Solarion’s voice broke into her thoughts when he appeared at her side moments later. Takasa nodded. Solarion extended his hand to help her down the dais into her home. She entered the bathroom and let out a soft gasp. The jeweled mirrors and golden tub were polished to a dazzling sparkle. Steam rose from the

water, scenting the room with sweet-smelling perfumes and leaving a light mist on the window just above the tub.

"I learned to make these bath salts in my youth. Its unique fragrance is made just for you. The aroma is almost as pleasing to me as your natural scent is."

Solarion pulled her toward the tub, helped to disrobe her, and then lifted her over the side to submerge her into the water.

"There are many beautiful gifts displayed around your home, my goddess," Solarion mentioned as he soaped her body. "One room is almost filled with baskets of dishes made of the finest gold, silver, and bundles of clothes in the corner made of the finest silks and linens I have ever seen."

Takasa remained silent, enjoying the movement of the soft sponge as it swirled across her back. She smiled when the circular motions glided over her shoulders to her chest and breast, tickling her nipples.

"Though I marveled at the skill of our people when I noticed the age of the prizes in your custody, it made me sad."

Solarion's statement gave her pause, pulling her from the rising bliss. She turned a raised brow to him.

"What was it that saddened you, Solarion?"

"I know it has been many years since you have allowed the Takasians to show their devotion to you in that manner. That thought is what made me sad. I left the room wondering why."

Takasa was taken aback. "How do you know that?"

"By the gifts in your possession, my goddess. I have only seen that style of clothing and the pattern on the dishes in the scrolls the Takasian people keep to tell our history. That tells me it has been a very long time since the Takasians have been allowed onto Goddess Peak to honor you. What the Takasians create for you is documented, but never repeated. What they make for you is *only* for you."

Takasa sighed.

"Surely the presents brought some kind of happiness, or you would not display them throughout your home."

"Yes, Solarion, you are correct. I did like them, I just..." Takasa turned back around with a sigh.

He paused for a moment. "The people were concerned. They didn't know what they did to anger you nor how to make it up to you. That is why I was sent to you."

"I don't know either, Solarion," she confessed in a low tone.

Solarion poured water over her shoulders, rinsing the soap from her body. Takasa said nothing as he helped her from the tub. With a light touch, he dried her then redressed her before returning her to the throne.

"It would seem I have much to think about," she muttered.

Solarion gave a slight bow then left her alone.

* * * *

"Takasa, my love, are you well?"

She nodded with her eyes closed. "I am merely in thought, Solarion."

"It is well past the time to set the sun."

She looked around. "So, it has. It would seem that my notions have distracted me from my task."

He knelt before her resting his head on her lap. "If I have done something to displease you, I will rectify it immediately."

Takasa smiled. "No, Solarion. You have been wonderful."

"Are you simply not ready to rest?"

"No, Solarion, it's not that either. In fact—"

She hesitated for a moment and then jumped to her feet. Solarion sat back on his haunches, looking up at her.

"Solarion, I want you to assemble the people. I wish to have an audience with them."

"As you wish, my goddess," he said, coming to his feet.

Solarion took her outstretched hand and they walked to the mountain's edge. Takasa reached over the side of the mountain to lower him to the ground. He ran to the village straight to the elder's hut. They jumped to their feet when he entered the main hall.

"Solarion! What has happened? Why is the sun still high?" MPinga cried.

Before he could answer, the others bombarded him with more questions.

"Have we managed to anger the goddess again?"

"Is she not happy with you?"

"Will she ever set the sun? This is surely the longest day of the year."

"Did you not please her?"

"Was your training not sufficient?"

“Are we being punished?”

MPinga held his hands high. “Peace, my people. Be silent. Indeed, the sun has never been in the sky for this long and we are worried, but we must allow Solarion to speak. Bring water! Surely he has come to share what we do not know.”

Solarion let the chief pull him to a chair. Someone passed a cup to MPinga, who offered it to him. He gulped it down.

“MPinga, I must confess, I know nothing more than you do. I have done all that I know to make the goddess happy, and I believe she is. These last few months have been wonderful.”

“Then why—”

“Takasa has sent me to assemble the people. She wishes to speak with you. That is all she has told me.”

MPinga nodded. “It will be done. You may return to the goddess to tell her we will gather at the foot of the mountain immediately.”

Chapter Three



When Takasa and Solarion descended the mountain, the Takasians were ready to receive her. He stayed one step behind her as she approached the villagers.

“My people, your reverence pleases me. Not long ago, I was angry at my children for reasons I cannot remember, but none of that matters now. The presence of Solarion has erased my wrath and increased my joy. I am grateful to my children for finding a way to have him sent to me.” Takasa paused to extend her hand to him. “I have decided to take him as my mate. Tonight, I will contact the supreme mother and ask her to make us one.”

Solarion took in a breath as he stood beside her. Takasa’s declaration brought her people to their feet, clapping and cheering.

“I realize the sun has been up much longer than usual. I have decided to do this once a year to mark this day. Consider it a day of celebration. From this day forward, for a short amount of time during the year, the days will be shorter and the nights longer,” she explained, then pulled Solarion close behind her. “This way I will have more time with Solarion to...rest,” she added with a smirk.

The Takasians applauded again and Solarion smiled in agreement.

“Return to your homes, my people, and let the festivities begin. The sun will set shortly,” Takasa announced.

When the last of the villagers made it back to the village, Takasa lowered the sun. They waited in the darkness until the distant sound of celebration reached them. When the stars blanketed the sky and the moon was full in its place, Takasa left Solarion standing at the base of the mountain. She fell to her knees with her arms open wide and her head bowed.

“I pray to the Goddess of the Cosmos. Mother, come to me,” she said in a soft tone.

Moments later a shooting star landed just before her. When the light dimmed, Dunia’s smiling figure stood before her.

“Hello, Takasa, my darling daughter. You may rise.”

Takasa stood and walked into Dunia’s open arms.

“Hello, Mother.”

“Why have you called me, child?”

“Mother, the prophecy you mentioned to me in my youth has come to pass. I do remember being angry, but I do not remember why.”

Dunia nodded but said nothing.

“I have thought over a great many things since that first day I woke to find Solarion in my chambers many weeks ago. Some things are still confusing, but one thing is clear to me. Solarion is the man you spoke of, and he has made me happy since that very first day. I can no longer contemplate an existence without him. I wish to have him as my mate and companion.”

Dunia’s smile lit the area in starlight. “I am pleased with your decision, Takasa. Your request will be granted.”

“Thank you, Mother, but I have one more thing to ask.”

Dunia gestured for her to continue.

“I have made this day one of celebration among the Takasians. I would like to lower the sun sooner for a time so that the nights would last longer. It will give me more time to spend with Solarion.”

The supreme mother grinned again. “Your sister must agree to such an appeal. It is she that rules the night.”

Takasa nodded. “I understand.”

Dunia looked up to the moon. “Daughter, come to me.”

A bright beam immediately extended from the sky down to the ground. When it faded, the goddess of the moon stood before them. The young goddesses were tall and lovely as their mother, the only difference in the sisters was Takasa’s skin was a lovely, bronzed color burned by the sun, and her sister’s pale skin glowed with the iridescent gleam of the moon like their mother’s. She offered her mother a small bow then walked into Dunia’s embrace.

“Hello, Mother, Sister,” she greeted then hugged Takasa.

“Greetings, Luneria.”

“You called for me, Mother?”

“Your sister has chosen a mate for herself. I have accepted him, but she needs something from you as well. Takasa has asked that the days be shorter and the nights longer this time of the year, so that she may get to know her chosen mate. What say you to that?”

Luneria thought for a moment and then turned to her sister. "Will you do the same for me when my time comes to choose a mate? I would like the same to enjoy my mate at night."

She nodded. "I will, and gladly."

The sisters hugged again.

"I agree, Mother. I will give Takasa six months of long nights and shorter days starting now, in the autumn, and then I will have the same for the other six months of the year. Now that the prophecy has been fulfilled for her, perhaps it will not be long before I will have my own companion," Luneria said happily.

Dunia turned to Solarion and extended her hand. "Come, Solarion."

He stepped forward and greeted Dunia with a low bow.

"Good evening, supreme mother."

Dunia nodded in greeting. "You are a human, Solarion, but you are also the son of Olcolm, God of the Sun. Only you are worthy of this position. I am pleased she has accepted you as her mate."

"Thank you, goddess."

Dunia touched both sides of his face, and the area around them brightened for a short while as if it were daytime again, and then the night returned.

"Solarion, you and Takasa are now equals," Dunia announced. "As she is the goddess of the sun, you are now the god of the sun. I have cleansed you of your mortal blood so that you will not die, and your power has been enhanced. Go and celebrate your union. The longer nights begin tonight."

"Thank you, goddess." He bowed again and returned to Takasa's side.

"Thank you, Mother. Thank you, Luneria."

Both Luneria and Dunia nodded, and then returned to their places in the sky.

* * * *

In their private chambers deep within the mountain, Takasa undressed Solarion with care. For a time, she lay beside him gliding her hands over his skin, admiring his naked form. Goosebumps rose beneath her fingertips. His nipples hardened when she came in contact with them, and his member sprang to life. Takasa grasped the magnificent piece and stroked it until it reached its maximum girth.

Solarion's satisfied moan sent shivers down her back. Leaving the top of his erection with a light kiss, Takasa finally broke the silence between them.

"You are now a god, Solarion. My mother has made you my equal so that we share in each other's love for a lifetime."

"*Love*, my goddess?"

Takasa giggled. "Surely, by now you know that I love you."

Solarion smiled. "Although your actions and behavior toward me spoke for you, you have not said the words aloud until now."

Takasa adjusted to look at his face. "I admit that it was fear that stopped the words from coming forth, but I am no longer afraid of *us*."

"I am pleased to hear that. I do not want you to have fear of what our relationship could be."

"We are alike now. Surely your adulation for me will change somewhat," she teased while playing with a stray braid.

Solarion chuckled and wrapped his arms around her waist. "Nothing can change who I am, Takasa. I was born for you. I will love and worship you as I have always done. Now I have all the time to do it. I would have it no other way," he assured her between gentle kisses.

He scooped her up and then turned to lower her onto the bed. She wrapped her arms around his neck, pulling him down on top of her. Solarion kissed her again and tiny electric currents ran along Takasa's skin. When he released her mouth to move his kisses south, she was already breathless. Complete love and happiness saturated her being at the thought of them being together forever. Abruptly, she pushed him back as a sudden thought pushed through the blissful fog surrounding her mind. She studied his face and raised a brow for a moment.

"Solarion, now that you are the god of the sun, is it your desire to take on my duties?"

He looked into her eyes for a long time. Love and sincerity shined back at her from the beautiful golden orbs. Finally, Solarion smiled and caressed her face.

"The rising and setting of the sun, allowing it to shine on the harvest and enhancing the clouds so that the rain could fall, all of that and more is the job of the *goddess* of the sun, my love," he said, offering her a tender kiss. "If you desire a day away from such duties, I will gladly do them so you can rest, but *my* job is to *please* you." He ran his fingers down her face. "Making you happy is all that matters to me."

Relief flooded her senses. She hadn't realized that the possibility of Solarion taking her place would bother her until he confirmed he wouldn't. Solarion continued kissing her, moving down her torso and lower until his beard tickled the inside of her thighs. He wasted no time tasting her, licking, and sucking away the moisture that was already there. A guttural moan slipped from her lips as he took her into his mouth. The low growls and purr-like sounds coming from Solarion pleased her.

Takasa loved that Solarion enjoyed showing his love to her physically in this manner. She gripped a handful of his braids and his noises of obvious pleasure increased. His strong hands were everywhere at once, caressing and massaging her torso, legs, and bottom. Lightning strikes of pleasure electrified every area he encountered. The combination of his exciting touches and his tongue's direct assault on her pearl of pleasure left her teetering on the brink of rapture. Takasa tried to express this, but her throat was tight and dry. The words would not come. Her senses were heightened with every nerve ready to explode in delight. She licked her lips and tried again.

"Solarion..." she managed to whisper.

"Yes, my love, I know...*now*."

He climbed over her and pressed his erection just inside her drenched opening.

"Now, my beautiful Takasa, we will consummate our union as equals," he declared.

He held her hips steady and pumped into her. Her slick core swallowed his rod over and over, satisfying her need, bringing her closer to fulfillment. Takasa shifted below him as he ground into her harder, deepening his penetration. In no time, her cries of enjoyment reached a crescendo under his skill. Takasa tossed her head back and forth, screaming her joy as she sank into oblivion. The force of it almost robbed her of consciousness.

"Yesss," Solarion hissed.

He slowed his movements to a stop, giving her a chance to catch her breath. Takasa's silken tunnel squeezed his still-hard staff as her climax washed over her. When her panting ceased, Solarion stroked her once more. Exhaustion didn't stop the incredible feelings from building up again. Their lovemaking was wonderful before, but now that they were the same, feeling him inside her was extraordinary. He drove forward with long, deep strokes, pushing her into the covers.

Solarion cried out loud and unashamed at each forward thrust. Dropping random kisses on her forehead and cheeks, he muttered words of love and pleasure.

Takasa's body trembled as a huge shockwave of delight rolled within her. She gasped as the euphoria overtook her senses. Her mouth dropped open and her high-pitched squeal of pleasure filled the room. Solarion pounded into Takasa in frenzied fervor, screaming his love for her until his body locked in place. An almost violent shudder, signifying his release, shook his body as it silenced his shouts.

Even when his breathing returned to normal, Solarion lay on top of her for a long time, leaving gentle kisses on her neck and shoulders. With a deep breath, he rolled off her body, lying beside her. Takasa positioned herself into his embrace. She ran her fingers through his downy chest hair and sighed.

"Solarion, I always knew of the prophecy, but I have feared it since my youth," Takasa confessed.

"Why, my love?"

"It spoke of a man that would come to *tame* me, control me, and even rule *over* me. I didn't want to be managed or led in any way. I didn't want a mate if that is what it would cost me."

She paused, but when he remained silent, she continued.

"My mother said it would not be as bad as I thought. I was just a child at the time so I didn't believe her, thus my fear remained."

Solarion raised himself higher on the bed and pulled her up with him. He kissed her on top of her head and then turned her face to his.

"There is no need to fear me, my love. I was taught to please you as my goddess and my woman. It is all I know and all I want to do. I would have gladly spent my life mortal doing so. However, thanks to you, I can do so until the *end* of time."

Solarion's pledge warmed Takasa's heart, increasing the love she felt for him.

"The end of time is a very long time, Solarion. I am a demanding goddess and require your touch often. Surely you have learned this during your time with me," she teased.

"Yes, I have noticed that. Lucky for me I now have days to match my endurance," he countered, a mischievous edge to his grin.

"Are you sure you are up for such a task? You may become weary over time," she asked, with a raised brow.

He chuckled and caressed her face. "Lovely goddess of the sun, I have never been so confident of a thing before. Have you forgotten already? I am the son of Olcolm. I have the strength of a lion."

Chapter Four



Jasiri, the Supreme God of Buganda, moved back and forth, covering the entire area of his personal chambers. His hands pressed against his ears as he shook his head.

“My lord, what’s wrong?” the woman on his bed asked.

“The people cry out to me. Their voices continue to grow more insistent.”

“What is their need?”

“They’re asking for my help, of course, but I am conflicted about what to do.”

The woman sat up. “I do not understand.”

Jasiri stopped before her. “As you know, I usually never get directly involved with what goes on with my people. Though it bothers me to see them unhappy, the land is at war. Both sides pray for victory, but only one prays for the destruction of the other.”

“Don’t they realize if you were to do that none of them would survive?”

Jasiri smiled. “Of course not, sweetheart. They are only human. Their knowledge goes only so far. The Zincka tribe is destroying my chosen people and ravaging the land needlessly. They have become wild over the last few years and disrespectful of the gods.”

“If that is the case, my lord, then they should be punished.”

“Yes,” he said thoughtfully. “The Gandi tribe do remain loyal, and their praise and gifts never end,” he muttered barely hearing her suggestion. “Frankly, they are no match for the Zincka. They are builders and gardeners, not warriors. If the fight continues as it, is they will be completely wiped out. I would like to help them.”

Jasiri’s thoughts deepened as he continued to pace until an abrupt thought struck his mind and he spun to face his companion.

“Retrieve my messenger.”

“At once, my lord,” she said and left the room.

Almost instantly, a man appeared bowing at his feet. “My lord, how may I serve you?”

“I need my brother. Find him and send him to me.”

With a nod, the messenger hurried off to do his bidding. Jasiri strode to his seat in the throne room muttering and nodding. His brother arrived moments later. He, too, bowed low in Jasiri's presence.

"Rise, Rubani, and greet me."

He opened his arms and his younger brother walked into them. They stood eye to eye smiling at each other when Jasiri released him. He extended his hand offering Rubani the seat beside him.

"I need your help, brother."

"What is your need, Jasiri?" You know I will do whatever I can for you."

He sighed and his smile slowly faded. "This I know. The people pray to me for help, Rubani."

"What's wrong?"

"The Zincka are ravaging the land. They attack the Gandi tribe without thought or reason. There doesn't seem to be any real conflict between the two tribes. The Zincka simply wish to conquer them because they are a peaceful tribe, and they want to add more land to their own holdings."

"I see."

"They are a people without peace in their own land, divided on whom to follow, and they have rejected the guidance of their elders," he ranted, as he stomped on by his brother. "Unlike the Gandi people, they have no honor or respect for their gods either." He sighed and sat heavily on his throne. "It was not always so, Rubani. All the tribes in Buganda lived in peace with one another. It has changed these last few years and I cannot allow it to continue," he added with finality. "Your services are needed once again, brother."

Rubani nodded in agreement. "What would you have me do?"

"More than a century has passed since I have had to send you to Earth. It is time to perform your duty as God of War and lead the Gandi people to victory. When you return, I will reward you. You may have anything in my power to give."

Rubani smiled. "Even without the offer of a reward, you know I would honor any request you would make of me."

Jasiri smiled and clapped his brother's shoulder. "I know as much, but it would please me to gift you. You must leave soon. The Gandi army is much smaller, but what they lacked in strength and numbers they make up with heart. However, they will not survive much longer if you do not intervene."

He nodded. "I understand. I will leave immediately."

* * * *

Rubani left Jasiri's room and caught the night wind by the light of the moon as it descended on their people. He looked to the sky and received a nod of approval from his brother and then his face faded into the heavens. Before Rubani turned away, he saw another presence glowing from the face of the moon. A wide grin could easily be seen, and the moon seemed to shine even brighter. Blinded by its glow, Rubani turned away and walked toward his people. He entered the camp just as the sun broke the horizon.

"Awake my people!"

Immediately they did so. The people quickly gained recognition for who he was and what was happening. They fell to their faces and sang praises to him and Jasiri. The leader of the army stood up and addressed his people.

"Our prayers have been answered. The mighty Rubani, God of War, has come to lead us to victory. A gift sent by the supreme god himself! Our devotion to the gods is rewarded!" He turned and bowed low to Rubani. "Great one, you honor us with your presence. We will follow you to the end. What would you have us do?"

"The people of Zincka are not an honorable tribe. My brother, the Supreme God, sent me to help you destroy them. The armies of Zincka are large and powerful, but Jasiri has spoken of our victory, thus it shall come to pass. Gather your troops, we leave at once."

Rubani led the army to a small Zincka camp broken off from the larger groups. He attacked immediately. Heads flew in the wake of his assault. Blood splattered and bodies fell to the ground at his feet with each arch of his blade. The Gandhi people followed his lead. No Zincka could match his skill, and none survived his attack. Rubani turned to his people when the siege was over.

"You have fought fearlessly and with honor, but those qualities are no match for skill. I will train you to be better. Dispose of the fallen and keep what is needed from the enemy. We will rest now. Training will begin at first light."

* * * *

"All praise Rubani, the God of War!" Cheers went up as the army marched on. "Mighty in battle! Tireless in the fight! Attacking many men! Winning every fight!"

The army continued to shout as they arrived at their camp. The people left behind to protect the camp joined in the cheering. Rubani stood before them and raised his hands.

"Silence, my people. We have been fighting for weeks now. Many Zincka men have fallen at our feet but at the cost of many of your Gandhi brothers. Pray for their souls. You were a peaceful people with no experience with war, but you have hardened your spirits and learned well. Your skill has improved greatly over these many weeks. I am proud of you. Rest now, my people. The next Zincka camp is a few day's walk away."

The men retreated to their tents and the camp was silent moments later as sleep claimed them all. Though his followers slept, exhausted from the past days of grueling fights, Rubani did not. With a sigh, he went over the last conversation he had with Jasiri. When the supreme god said something would happen, it came to pass, but with so many losses to the Gandhi tribe, Rubani couldn't help but wonder how.

As he stared up at the moon a bright moonbeam landed on him, and the undeniable feel of a caress touched his face. He reached for his cheek but felt nothing against his fingers. Yet, the feeling of someone holding his face did not cease. He closed his eyes to enjoy the sensation.

"Mighty Rubani, God of War, do not be discouraged. I can help you."

Rubani opened his eyes and looked around. The beam remained on his face, and he realized the soft, seductive voice spoke through it. He closed his eyes again and listened.

"Your people have suffered great losses because you fight your enemy when they are at their strongest. You must launch your attack by the light of the moon. It will be difficult at first. The Gandhi tribe feared the night, but the Zincka share that weakness. The people trust you and will gain strength from your strength to help them persevere. Lead your people in a nocturnal battle, Great God, and you will have the victory."

Rubani absorbed the words and opened his eyes again. The area around him glowed brightly. The beam that focused on him faded as it retracted. Shifting his gaze, he followed it skyward. A lovely face smiled down at him.

“The humans seem to believe that it is a man on the moon, but I see now that they are wrong. It is a woman, *a goddess* with wisdom as well as beauty, that rules the night. I thank you, goddess, for your advice. I will heed your words of wisdom.”

The illumination seemed brighter when she smiled at him and then her face faded away leaving only the moon behind. Rubani contemplated the goddess's words a little longer, then jumped to his feet and rallied his warriors. The men were sleepy and worn out from previous skirmishes, but they swallowed their fears and apprehension to follow him.

Rubani led them into the enemy's camp with the light provided by the moon. The Gandhi ambush had taken the Zincka off guard. After their initial shock had passed, they gathered their forces and the fight was on, but it wasn't enough. The Gandhi warriors never lost the upper hand. The battle raged through the night. Their confidence level heightened as they watched their leader ravage the enemy, leaving a path of dismembered bodies in his wake. The once mild-mannered people took their place at Rubani's flank. Their attacks emboldened as they gained strength from the god of war. Many of them fell to the more skilled Zincka, but when the skirmish ended Gandhi was victorious. The people celebrated immediately with a triumphant shout for their leader. Rubani let them rejoice briefly, and then he raised his hands to quiet them.

“Come, my people. Let us honor our dead and then claim the spoils of war.”

The men nodded acknowledging his order, and then pulled their dead into a pile to offer them as a burnt sacrifice. Afterward, they continued across the Zincka land.

“Take a look, my people. This is why you fight. No animals roam free for hunting, and no crops will grow on this soil. Hardly any vegetation grows at all. The land is almost desolate.” Rubani waved his hand toward the area and shook his head. “The Zincka had truly destroyed this land. It is past time to put a stop to them. We must go to the source.”

Rubani led his weary warriors through the heat of the day but allowed them to rest that night. As he also rested, Rubani looked toward the moon. When the face of the goddess appeared again, he stood and walked away from his sleeping people.

“Greetings, lovely goddess.”

“Greetings to you, God of War.”

Rubani smiled and dropped to one knee. "I bow to your wisdom, and I thank you for it. We were victorious because of your wise counsel."

"You are very welcome. Rest, Rubani, you still have much to accomplish. Your journey to the village will take a few days more."

He chuckled. "You honor me with your astute guidance. I will rest. I'm sure I will need my strength when I am before the leader of the Zincka tribe." Rubani returned to the campsite. "Will you continue to watch over us during the night?" he asked before he lay down.

A moonbeam reached down to caress his face. "I will be here," her voice whispered gently.

* * * *

As the sun crested the horizon, Rubani and his entourage entered the Zincka village.

"I would see your leader at once," Rubani said, walking up to the first person he saw in the village.

The frightened young man scurried away and returned swiftly with several older men. A tall regal-looking man just entering his prime led the pack. He stood before Rubani boldly staring at him. Accompanying the young leader and sticking close to his side stood an aging male in similar clothing. The older man took one look at Rubani and fell to his knees.

"My Lord, forgive us! Have mercy on this land and my people."

The young chief jumped back aghast. "Father, what are you doing?" he yelled. "Have you lost your mind? Get off your knees." He looked frantically between his father and Rubani. "Why do you kneel before this man? He is not your lord! I am lord and leader here. You owe this man no respect. He should be kneeling to me!" he ranted pointing at Rubani.

"Be silent, Muruso!" the older man screamed. "Don't you know the God of War when you see him? He is everything the legends have said. Tall, handsome, large in build, and powerful to behold. See how his skin is like copper and his eyes like amber, just like the scrolls told you in your youth? Show your respect. He is a god and the brother of the *Supreme God* Jasiri himself!"

Rubani looked between the men.

“Rise, old one, and have no fear of me. You seem to know the law of the gods. Why doesn’t your leader?”

The chief sputtered with fury. “How dare you address him and not me. I am the ruler here.”

The old man did as Rubani asked, answering him with downcast eyes.

“My lord, my son has only been the leader in our land for the last five years. We live under his rule now. The people are duty-bound to follow him.”

“And I do not believe the old tales my father spouted when we were children!” the chief interjected angrily. “My brother may believe those old wives’ tales the elders droned on about in our youth, but I do not. I am the only lord here! We have no need of the gods. You should fall on your face and pay homage to me!”

“Silence, Muruso, have you gone mad?” his father stated yanking on Muruso’s garments.

“Be still, old one,” Rubani said, holding up a patient hand. “Let your leader speak his mind,” he added calmly.

The old man nodded and took a step back. Rubani turned and addressed Muruso, his words calm and to the point.

“I have been through your land. It is clear to me now that you are disrespectful to the gods and have destroyed the soil with your lack of knowledge. You make no use of your elder’s wisdom. I have conquered the armies you sent to put an end to the Buganda people, so you could conquer their territory. We are here to claim what is now theirs and no longer yours. Do you wish to challenge me for that claim?”

Muruso’s overconfidence put a smug look on his face as he listened to Rubani. He openly looked Rubani over with a sneer on his lips. It was true that Muruso stood as tall as Rubani with a strong and powerful build, but a mere mortal would never be a match for the god of war. The look of arrogance in Muruso’s eye told Rubani that he would accept his challenge.

Muruso yanked at the clasp that held his majestic cape around his shoulders. When it was released, he threw it disrespectfully at his father. Rolling his shoulders and flexing his large pectorals, he pushed his chest out and then charged Rubani without warning. Anticipating such a disgraceful attack, the god of war calmly stepped to the side and pushed Muruso forward letting his momentum take him to the ground.

The Gandhi army and the Zincka that had begun to gather in the village center backed away to give them room to conduct the challenge.

Muruso scrambled to his feet and threw the first blow wildly aimed at Rubani's head. Again, Rubani dodged and tossed his opponent to the dirt with even more force. The gasp from the growing crowd seemed to elevate Muruso's anger. He clambered to his feet quickly and ran into Rubani's abdomen with his head, knocking him to the ground.

Rubani grunted as he hit the dirt. The smile on Muruso's face twisted into a sinister scowl as he throttled Rubani with blows to both sides of his torso. Rubani stopped the reign of punches by grabbing Muruso's arms and lifting them away from him. Holding Muruso tight, Rubani regained his footing and tossed the disrespectful chief across the soil into the people.

"Cease your attack on me, human. You are no match for the God of War," Rubani spoke calmly.

Muruso's eyes flashed with fury as he looked up at him. Rubani drew himself up to his full height then landed a challenging glare on the chief. Muruso's eyes widened as he looked into the shocked faces of his people. He leaned down, grabbed a handful of dirt, and growled. Abruptly he launched himself at the god of war, tossing the dirt into Rubani's face. The horde of bystanders took a collective intake of breath at his actions. Blinded, Rubani fell to the ground for the second time with Muruso on top of him. They rolled around for a short time with Muruso landing punches wherever he could.

"Enough!" Rubani shouted, shoving his attacker off him.

Rubani rose and moved to where Muruso fell. He leaned forward, grabbed a handful of Muruso's hair, and smashed his fist into Muruso's jaw first on the right side and then again on the left. Blood splashed from his mouth. Muruso grunted loudly when he dropped to the ground again.

Muruso tried to say something, but the words could not escape as Rubani lifted him by the neck until he was at his full height. He beat against Rubani's arms trying to free himself from the grip restricting the airflow to his windpipe that stopped his speech.

"Muruso, you fight without honor, you don't believe in the ways of the gods, and you are an incompetent leader. You are unworthy of your position as chief."

Without another word, Rubani squeezed Muruso's throat until his kicking and punching slowed to a complete stop and then threw Muruso's limp body to the ground one last time. He turned to address the deceased ruler's father.

"What do they call you, old man?"

He stepped forth. "I am called Nori, my lord. How may I serve you?"

"Nori you are once again chief of this land. It is now a part of the Gandhi territory. Are you fit to lead your people?"

"No, my lord, I am not. I have aged past my time of leadership, but I do have another son, Ocuri, who is capable."

Rubani's gaze swept across the Zincka people. "Does Ocuri have knowledge and love for his gods? Would he seek the advice of his elders?"

Nori nodded. "Yes, my lord, he will."

"So be it. I will leave men from the Gandhi tribe to live among you to ensure this village remains within their holdings. Offer women to those who want them and give them a place to call their own, for they have found favor with the gods. It is my wish that you welcome them with open arms. From these men, you will learn how to rebuild your land. Bury your dead now and make my wishes known to your people."

"Yes, my lord. Consider it done." Nori nodded and strode off.

"Praises to Lord Rubani, God of War!" the Gandhi people chanted as Rubani turned to leave the village behind.

Chapter Five



Rubani and his army returned to the Gandi village where a celebration awaited them. The villagers believed whole-heartedly in their triumph and prepared for their return. The people built a place of honor for the god of war to thank him. They sang songs of praise to him and to Jasiri as he sat on the dais. They served their best food and wine and offered their most beautiful women to lie with him. Rubani stayed for a while indulging in his people's gratitude, enjoying their admiration, but after sunset, he returned to the heavens on the west wind to his brother's side. Jasiri greeted him with a smile and open arms.

"Well, done, Rubani. I'm very proud of you. You have never failed in your role as a war god. Come, the merriment has already begun. You are the guest of honor."

Rubani smiled as he entered the room. Jasiri kept exceptionally talented humans on his mountain home. They were all around the room playing music, singing, dancing, juggling, and tumbling as entertainment. He took his place in the chair next to Jasiri's throne and looked around. This gathering with the gods and goddesses was much more elaborate than what the humans had done for him. Though Jasiri claimed the mountain as his home, he allowed other gods besides himself to share his summit's riches. Rubani spotted them all in attendance enjoying the food and drinks while lounging about with their mates or a human that may have caught their fancy at the moment.

As Rubani scanned the room, he noticed the obvious look of love, lust, and happiness on the faces of his brethren. Between festivities, the gods that took sanctuary on the mountain usually stayed to themselves. At that moment he realized there was something missing in his long life. A servant approached and kneeled before them. Extending her silver tray, she offered the deities her gift, two large golden goblets.

"Thank you, Belani," Jasiri said, taking one.

Rubani took the other and clanked his cup to Jasiri's and they took a long drink in unison. Rubani's gaze lingered on his brother. Jasiri had a lovely petite human in his lap. He caressed her feminine curves openly while speaking softly

near her ear. The excitement and joy at his attentions were evident in her smile. Rubani opened his mouth to ask Jasiri a question but decided against it. He swallowed his query with another gulp of his drink.

“Rubani, what’s wrong?”

Rubani chuckled to himself. “I see nothing gets by the Supreme God of Buganda.”

Jasiri sent the woman away and had their goblets refilled. “No little brother. It doesn’t. This is *your* celebration and you’re the only one not celebrating. Tell me what bothers you.”

Rubani straightened himself and turned to his brother. “Jasiri, the party is wonderful, and I thank you for it.”

“You are most welcome, but that is not your problem. Speak from your heart, Rubani. We are brothers.”

Rubani swirled the liquid in his cup. “Well, you said upon my return you would reward me.”

“Ahh, yes, your prize for a job well done. I have not forgotten, my brother.”

“It’s just, what I really want you may not—”

“Nonsense, Rubani. Ask for what you want, and it is yours,” he said excitedly.

“Well—I want the Goddess of the Moon for my wife,” Rubani blurted out.

Jasiri’s smile disappeared. “What?”

“The Goddess of the Moon is beautiful and wise. Her counsel helped me against the Zinkca.”

“Ahh, yes! I had the pleasure of meeting her some years ago. Luneria is very enchanting. She is like her mother in many ways.”

“Yes, she is. I want her.”

“We have many humans on the mountain at the moment to serve us. Can’t you use them to sate your lust?”

“I have had my share of great passion with several humans to answer my body’s need for physical love, but it is not just physical love that I seek.” A deep airy sigh escaped him, unintentional, yet uncontrollable. He dropped his attention to the inside of his cup. “I find myself contemplating the idea of children as well. I want a mate who is my equal, someone who will compliment me to pursue such an option,” he added.

“I see.”

"My army had suffered much against the Zincka even after my training. The goddesses' wise words helped turn the tides on the battleground toward our victory. She watched over me each night. I could almost feel her gentle touch in the moonbeam she sent to shine over me," he added, touching his face dreamily. "She is intelligent, wise, and beautiful. That is a companion worthy of having. I want her to be mine."

Jasiri sighed, holding the cup in his lap. "Rubani, I cannot *give* you a goddess. I can offer you one of my humans, *any* human who catches your eye. If it's children you seek, I left a few in many humans. If you want I can—"

"No, Jasiri. I don't want a human!" His voice elevated with his frustration. "I apologize, my lord. Please forgive my outburst."

Jasiri offered him a sad smile and touched Rubani's hand. "No apology necessary, brother."

"I just don't... Humans are sufficient for dalliance from time to time, Jasiri, but not to keep. Not for me. I want someone who can be with me for eternity. Her beauty will not fade in my sight. My lust for her would never diminish. I want the Goddess of the Moon to be mine," he repeated with finality.

Jasiri sighed even deeper, then put his goblet down. "My apologies, Rubani, but I cannot grant that wish."

"Surely there is something you can do to help. Can't you appeal to the Goddess of the Cosmos on my behalf?"

"Dunia is a goddess of great power. She is not easily persuaded."

"But Jasiri, *you* are the Supreme God of Buganda! Surely your position can grant you an audience."

Jasiri burst into laughter. "I can assure you that my position will mean nothing to Dunia."

Rubani lifted a brow. "You speak as if you have a history with the goddess."

Jasiri smiled. "Indeed, I do. We know each other...very well."

"Then I ask you, Jasiri, could you use that history as leeway to ask a favor? I would just like an introduction."

Jasiri gave him a reassuring smile. "Very well, Rubani. I will speak with Dunia and ask her to speak with her daughter. Remember, our kind are not subject to my command as the humans are. I cannot guarantee anything. The Goddess of the Cosmos has her own mind, believe me," he said, and his smile widened.

"I have no doubt," Rubani agreed with a chuckle. "Thank you, Jasiri."

* * * *

Jasiri left before the festivities ended. He walked past the chambers set aside for the other gods and goddesses that called the mountain their home, on his way to its highest point, his private sanctuary. All the magic of the gods and goddesses flowed through the mountain. The very air at the crest pulsed and crackled with their combined power. When Jasiri entered the space, the area immediately brightened welcoming its ruler. He stood in its center with his arms wide and looked to the heavens.

“Dunia, I ask that you grace me with your presence.”

Almost instantly, the summit blazed in brilliant starlight as Dunia descended from the sky on the tail of a comet. When the light faded, she stood across the dais before him as lovely as he remembered. Her bronze-colored skin appeared luminescent in the light of the moon and her smile dazzled him as it always did. Dunia’s ebony hair sparkled with the light of a thousand twinkling stars as it hung over her shoulder in a long braid. Her slender shoulders were bare except for the tiny strings that held her gown in place. The shimmering silver material fit her curves exceptionally and moved fluidly around her as she walked over to him.

“Jasiri, it has been too long,” she said, stopping before him to caress his face. “You are as attractive as I remember. This skin of yours is like the finest chocolate the humans have to offer with a body only befitting of a god.”

Her fingers slid over the silken material covering his shoulders. Before her hand moved lower, Jasiri blinked his eyes and his shirt disappeared. Dunia gasped softly, giggled, and then continued to explore his torso, purposely teasing his nipples as she did. Her long fingernails circled both until the centers of his flat bronzed discs stiffened, hard like pebbles. Jasiri moaned. Their eyes met briefly before he took her hand away from its task and kissed it.

“Indeed, it has beautiful Dunia. Have you forgotten me in our time apart?” he teased.

“Oh, no, Jasiri. It has not been *that* long,” she answered with a laugh.

“Perhaps after tonight, I will be blessed with your attendance more often.”

“That would depend on why you seek to see me now, Jasiri.”

Jasiri spun her so she faced away from him then pulled her body into his.

"Do not presume to know me so well, beautiful Dunia. Maybe I just wanted to be in the company of one as lovely as you."

"So, I am wrong, Jasiri? You have called upon me for companionship only this evening?" she asked with a chuckle.

Jasiri muffled his laughter as he wrapped his arms around her slender waist.

"That is indeed my intent however it is not my only reason. I must confess to another motive as well."

"Mmm-hmm, and what might that be?"

"I need a favor."

"*A favor?* What would the Supreme God of Buganda need from the Goddess of the Cosmos that he could not get for himself?" she asked over her shoulder.

He brushed his lips just beneath her ear and spoke softly. "That which I have to ask is something only you can do, my beautiful goddess."

"Hmm, I am curious to know what that is, Jasiri. Ask your favor."

Jasiri kissed her shoulder. "My brother has fallen for your daughter, Luneria. Not only has he done me a great service, but he is my brother, and I would like to see him happy." He placed another peck on her ear. "He thinks she can do that. Can you convince Luneria to take him for her husband?"

Dunia pushed herself out of his embrace and turned on him. Her playful smile vanished.

"No, Jasiri, I cannot. I do not dictate who will be the mates of my children. They choose their own lovers, whoever pleases them whether he is a human or a god."

"I was under the impression that it was prophesied by you before the goddess of the sun was even born, who her mate would be."

"You are well informed, Jasiri. However, though Solarion was destined to be hers at birth, Takasa had to make the final decision to accept him. I must give Luneria the same choice," she told him and walked away.

Jasiri pulled her back into his arms. "Wait, wait, wait. I'm not asking you to do all of that."

"Aren't you? I had no prophecy for Luneria, only Takasa. Luneria has to find her own man if she wants one. I cannot choose for her," she continued.

Jasiri resumed his trail of tender kisses. "I'm not asking you to *choose* Rubani for her," he stated softly. "But surely, as her mother, you can sway the odds in his favor somehow."

"Jasiri, you are asking me to interfere with my child's life in ways that I promised I wouldn't. She must be in charge of whomever she spends eternity with," she forced out.

Although Dunia protested his words, Jasiri recognized that his actions were welcomed.

"Darling Dunia, I understand your plight. I would never ask you to do something you have agreed not to do. But are you telling me you cannot do *anything* to help my brother at all? Surely, you, her wise and beautiful mother, can get Rubani an introduction. My brother is worthy of your daughter, and he would make her happy."

"Well, I could speak with her and tell her how wonderful your brother is," she said breathlessly. "Perhaps it will be enough for her to agree to an introduction, but what will you give me for my help, handsome Jasiri?"

She spun to caress his cheek. Jasiri smiled and brushed his lips against hers.

"Oh, there are many things that I can do for you, Dunia. I remember your body well."

He captured her lips letting her moans of pleasure and surprise escape into his mouth. Her body shivered in his hands, and she boldly rubbed herself against the bulge that stood rigid between them. Jasiri made a small gesture behind her back and the clouds in the vicinity disappeared allowing the stars to shine down even brighter upon them. He continued to kiss his way down her throat and then reached up to caress her breast. When Dunia moaned pleasurable he wiggled his hand again. Jasiri twirled the goddess and then pulled her toward him, so they landed on the softness of a bed that had appeared at his will.

"My beautiful Dunia, I want this night to be different from the last we spent together so many years ago."

Jasiri passed his hand in front of her gown, and it vanished. He grasped her warm, hanging breast. His erection throbbed against her behind. He slid his hands over the naked curvature of her torso and across the roundness of her hips rubbing his staff between her firm cheeks.

"Tonight, my beautiful goddess, you will mount me and ride until your desire is released," he told her.

Her body trembled against him as Jasiri hoisted her up then slid her onto his erection.

"Ahh!"

Her pleasurable cry sent shivers down his back. Dunia threw her head back and gripped his chest to brace herself. Jasiri pierced her damp core over and over. Her delicious dark nipples hardened to tiny pebbles before his eyes. She screamed again, a sound of obvious bliss when he reached up to suck one into his mouth.

Light from the night sky twinkled above them, stars shimmered and danced. As his excitement grew, Jasiri understood what his brother meant by making love to an equal. It had been almost a century since he made love to a goddess. He'd almost forgotten how glorious it was.

"Oh, my lovely Dunia. The touch of a goddess is like no other. I have missed our time together," he told her.

"Yesss," she hissed. "No human can match what you do for me, Jasiri."

Dunia gripped his shoulders as she rode smoothly on top of him. She wiggled her hips and ground onto her, taking over control of the rhythm. He released her breasts and they bounced over him when he fell back against the covers. She moved his hands and leaned over to let her breasts hang over his face.

"All you had to do was call me, Jasiri, like you did this evening when you had an ulterior motive."

He left a kiss on her left breast, and she drew back wearing a wicked grin.

"But I think after having you like this again it will be I that will call upon you and I, too, will have an ulterior motive," she added with a giggle.

Dunia fell forward so her face hovered above his, took his mouth in a searing kiss, and then pulled away as she moved over him again. She bounced her bottom driving the tip of his throbbing lance into her over and over. The feeling ripped a yelp of joy from his lungs. Dunia's pumping and gyrating on top of him quickly increased his enjoyment. Her bated moans rose to mingle with his as she suddenly pushed herself to a sitting position.

Jasiri looked at her with awe. Her lovely features twisted exquisitely as she bit her lip, caught within her passion dance. She returned his gaze, her eyes glassy with lust. He moved his hands all over her. Her skin felt supple, like the softest, finest silk, and her radiant beauty captured his breath swelling his heart.

"Yes, my beautiful, Dunia," his voice huskier with passion. He pressed her all the way down each time she lifted off him. Their bodies made that delicious squishing noise he loved so much. "I can feel your desire building inside you."

Dunia nodded, responding to his words, grinding on top of him again. She continued to glide effortlessly over him, encouraged by his words.

“Yes. There it is! Release your passion upon me, Dunia! Drench me with your sweet nectar.”

Dunia obeyed his carnal command and screamed as her climax overtook her. The sky erupted with shooting stars and comets, acknowledging their goddess’s orgasm. Her body went limp as she succumbed to the bliss showing on her face. Leaning forward to hold Dunia close, Jasiri easily reversed their positions. He was completely engrossed in the sensations she instilled in him, and he wanted more. His throbbing shaft remained hard as he rolled Dunia to her side and re-entered her soaked tunnel again.

“My dear, Jasiri, your lust is truly mighty and has no end. I am exhausted from loving on you,” she mentioned in a gasp.

“Have no fear, lovely Dunia. I will do all the work this time.”

He moved with fluid motions rocking back and forth inside her softness. A husky moan rose from her, and the silken sheets gathered in her hands. A primal groan came from deep within Jasiri and it filled the chamber when he recognized it as his own. He delved into her with precise rhythmic thrusts. Dunia lifted her hips into each to meet his frenzied drive. Jasiri released his seed with surging force moments later. Dunia sent up her own moan to join his and the sky erupted in celebration once again. Locked in position, he stayed on top of her for long moments breathing in her essence and enjoying their closeness. When he caught his breath, Jasiri rolled off her and pulled Dunia into his arms to stroke her hair.

“That was wonderful, Jasiri.”

“I’m glad you are pleased, Dunia,” he said from behind her. “It has indeed been too long since we have joined. Perhaps that has been my error. I plan to make amends for it if you will allow me.”

“Of course, darling. When a god and goddess make love, our magic is sprinkled down to the people, and they benefit from the joy we give one another.” She sighed and snuggled closer to him. “Now tell me, Jasiri. How can I help you?”

“I want my brother to be happy, Dunia. He believes your daughter can do that. If you could arrange a meeting with her, I would be very grateful.”

“Is that all? Just a meeting?”

“I believe a meeting is all that is needed. If you can facilitate that, I’m sure my brother can convince Luneria to be his. He has a gift of persuasion similar to his brother’s I would say,” he added with a chuckle leaving a kiss on her shoulder.

“Well, I know firsthand of *your* powers of persuasion,” she replied with a young girl’s giggle, wrapping herself in his arms.

“I would consider it a personal favor,” he urged, dropping a kiss on her earlobe.

“Hmm... The Supreme God of Buganda would owe me a personal favor?” She turned toward him and smiled. “Well, how can I turn down an offer like that?” she asked with a sly grin. “I will speak with her.”

“You are amazing. Thank you, Dunia.”

Dunia wrapped her arms around his neck and pushed him onto his back.

“Now that we have taken care of business, why don’t we spend some more time with you showing me how grateful you are for my help.”

He smiled and brought her face down to his until their noses touched. “Who am I to deny the Goddess of the Cosmos from what she wishes?”

Chapter Six



“You called for me, Jasiri?” Rubani asked, entering his brother’s personal chamber.

“I did, Rubani. Several days ago, at your party, you asked me to speak to Dunia. I will tell you that our conversation went well. I have seen her several times since and the lines of communication remain open,” he said with a grin as he extended his hand toward a chair.

Rubani accepted his invitation. “Your conversation was productive, I trust?”

Jasiri’s smile widened. “Oh yes, we even got around to talking about you.”

Rubani laughed. “I’m sure it was difficult to think of me while in her presence.”

“Indeed, it was, but I managed. I received a message from Dunia not long ago.”

“Did it say anything about me?” Rubani teased.

“Yes, among other things. Dunia has spoken to her daughter and Luneria has agreed to meet with you.”

Rubani’s heart rate soared, and warm energy pumped through him the same way it did when the moonbeam touched his face.

“Yes!”

Jasiri raised his hands up. “Hold on, Rubani, you must understand that this is not an instant match. This is just an introduction. You must convince the goddess to be yours on your own.”

He nodded. “I understand, Jasiri. I thank you and the goddess for your help just the same.”

“You will go to the mountain’s peak, and she will come to you tonight after she has raised the moon.”

Rubani gasped. “But Jasiri, no one is allowed up there but you.”

Jasiri smiled. “That is true, and it is mine to lend. Consider it my gift to help you in your efforts for all the god of war has done for me.”

Rubani’s eyes widened. He opened his mouth to protest again. Jasiri held his hand up.

“I insist.”

A thrill of excitement whipped through him, and he couldn't seem to stop smiling. “You have my thanks again, Jasiri. I will wait for sundown in my chamber.”

He hugged his brother again and returned to his personal rooms. His human servant bowed as he entered.

“Greetings, my lord.”

“Greetings, Astari.”

“Would you like me to play for you tonight?”

“Yes, thank you.” Rubani liked her music and she played for him often. Going toward his seat he hesitated and began to pace instead.

Luneria has driven me to distraction.

His loins harden with the anticipation of being near her. He had never seen a goddess so beautiful, beyond comparison.

Wisdom and beauty...I could ask for nothing more!

Rubani laughed at himself and sat heavily in his chair. He had never been so giddy for a woman before.

But then Luneria isn't just a woman. She is a goddess, capable of keeping my mind and body stimulated for all time.

Rubani gripped his growing erection, stroking it more.

Jasiri has mentioned often that when the bodies of god and goddess connect in a lovers' embrace the sensations are amplified! The pleasures shared cannot be duplicated by humans.

Astari stopped playing music long enough to fill his golden goblet with wine and hand it to him.

“My lord, are you in need of my services?”

Rubani thought for a moment as he accepted the cup and then nodded. Moments later she stood naked before him. Her hands glided over her breasts pinching and rolling her nipples between her fingers. Astari stepped closer to open his shirt as her hands slid across his chest. Leaning forward she kissed his pectoral muscle then gently sucked his nipple into her mouth. Rubani let out a groan and then closed his eyes. His human was taught how to please him and knew exactly what he liked.

Mmm, I wonder if Luneria's hands will feel as good. No, hers would feel better. To mate with a goddess would be much better. The goddess will be able to satisfy all my needs.

While he was in thought, Astari opened his pants and pulled free his stiffening member. As he raised the goblet to his mouth, she took him into her mouth. Sucking the head of his erection vigorously. She moaned loudly in obvious delight.

Would the goddess pleasure me like this?

Astari learned this particular task quickly and never hesitated to do it for him. Rubani looked into his lap and her eyes locked on his. A pleasurable groan rose within him. Smiling, he tilted his head back again and took another drink. A vision of Luneria in Astari's place hardened his member even more. Astari moaned again as she increased her suction and stroked his sac more.

"Mmm," he moaned, gripping the arm of his chair.

He lifted his hips pumping into her mouth. She held the base of his staff firmly as she twisted and turned her jaw over him using her tongue to tease the oozing tip. Astari knew exactly what to do and when. If she continued at her pace his climax would be eminent. He couldn't wait to share such a feeling with the goddess. Thoughts of Luneria grew with his desire, then suddenly his eyes popped open.

My erection was caused by thoughts of Luneria, not Astari's administration.

He looked down at Astari's bobbing head.

I will be offering the goddess all that I have so she will be mine. Shouldn't that include my passion and my seed as well?

The pleasure Astari provided reached incredible heights, but he stopped her head, nevertheless.

"You may stop now, Astari."

She looked up at him with confusion wrinkling her brow. "Is something wrong, my lord? Have I displeased you?"

He looked at her over his cup as he took a sip of his drink, seeing the lustful look in her eye, and smiled.

"No, Astari, you have done well, as always." He pulled her to her feet and kissed her forehead. "I must confess that I will soon have a goddess to satisfy all my needs. I will no longer need you in this capacity."

The bewildered look remained on her pretty face, but her lord had instructed her to stop, he knew she would not complain. Astari nodded and redressed.

Rubani stood allowing her to return his shrinking erection into his pants and straightened his clothes as well. She then went back to her station and resumed playing. Rubani listened until he finished his wine.

“Astari, prepare my room for company. Dinner and wine for two, as well and then stay with the other humans tonight.”

Astari stopped playing immediately and bowed. “Yes, my lord.”

Astari went about her task and Rubani made his way to Jasiri’s sanctuary. He watched intently as the sun finally dropped below the western horizon. As the sky darkened, the moon brightened overhead. Moments later a bright beam descended from the moon to land in front of him. When its glow dispersed, the goddess of the moon appeared in its place.

Luneria’s tall and elegant body looked stunning in the twinkling black dress that accentuated her curves. Starlit ebony hair sat on her shoulders framing sand color skin that glowed luminously. Rubani stood in silence, finding her even more beautiful than he had first thought. The need for the goddess exploded within him.

Luneria said nothing as she looked at him. Rubani’s whole body blazed in awareness as she openly ogled him. He looked down into her sparkling brown eyes and smiled. The look of raw passion he saw there held him in place as she approached. She reached out slowly and caressed his face. He gasped at her touch. Her hands lingered, soft on his skin. When she used her fingers to trace his lips, he closed his eyes to enjoy her touch. Luneria continued to explore his body, gliding her fingers over the silken material of his shirt across the hardness of his chest. A shiver raced up his spine and goosebumps rose on his skin. Boldly, she continued lower and brushed purposely against his blatant erection. Abruptly, she stroked for a moment before returning slowly to his chest.

“I believe formal introductions should be done before we get to know each other further,” she said. “Don’t you?” she added with a slight grin.

The dulcet tones of Luneria’s voice drew Rubani from the sensual fog she wrapped around him. His eyes popped open. She took a step back and smiled.

“I am Luneria, Goddess of the Moon and daughter of the Goddess of the Cosmos.” She offered him a small courtesy.

“Yes, of course. I am Rubani, God of War, brother of the Supreme God of Buganda,” he replied with a slight bow. “Would you like to return to my chamber so we can get to know each other better?”

"I would like that."

"Again, I would like to thank you for your wise counsel during the siege with the Zincka. Without it I would have lost many more men needlessly," he said leading the way.

"You are an exceptional warrior. It was amazing to watch you while on assignment. The Gandi people are all the better after being in your presence. They have learned much from you and are very grateful. Surely, they will pass the knowledge on to the next generation. It is an honor to be trained by a great warrior like yourself."

He smiled, warmed by her words of praise. "War will come to them again, but not for a long time. It is inevitable with humans, but Jasiri has spoken of a hundred years of peace for them."

"That's wonderful. I'm sure they will continue to praise the names of Jasiri and Rubani during that time."

When he and Luneria arrived at his chambers, he was pleased to see the job Astari had done. She had gone above her normal cleansing duties and made some wonderful changes. Golden silk cloth covered the table and a few candles burned brightly in its center. Multi-colored rugs lay across the floors, and other lit candles flickered around the room, romanticizing the atmosphere. On his bed, in the far corner, a large red silken spread shone in the glowing light.

Rubani was amazed at what a few small changes could do for his chamber and decided to reward Astari for her outlook. He would find her a worthy mate and honor them both with plenty of gifts to thank her for taking care of him these past seven years when he returned her to the village. Astari stood by the table dressed in a more subdued outfit waiting for them.

"Your chamber is lovely, Rubani. I had expected your room to be very mundane and rough since you are a warrior. Most are not so much into the delicacies of making things beautiful to the eye," Luneria snickered "I'm impressed."

"Thank you."

Rubani led Luneria to the table and sat beside her.

"Greetings, my lord, goddess. May I offer you a drink?"

"Yes. Thank you, Astari."

He offered Astari a pleased grin. She could not hide her proud blush as she filled their goblets.

"My lord, will you need me further this evening?"

"You can lay out the food, Astari, and then you may go."

Luneria took a long sip from her glass savoring the liquid in her mouth. "This is delicious, Rubani. Your human chose a wonderful wine."

"Yes, she knows my tastes well. Astari has been with me for a few years."

Astari served their food then bowed to her god and his companion before she left them alone.

"So, tell me, what will you do with yourself for those thousand years, Rubani?"

He tilted his head as he raised it and took a sip.

"I don't understand."

"I'd like to know what you do between wars, Rubani."

He nodded and sipped his wine again. "Because we do not track time in the way mortals do, I usually pay little attention to it. I stay here and enjoy the gatherings that Jasiri has, and I train to harness my skill. When Jasiri summons me for my purpose, I answer his call and intercede where he commands. Only recently have I really become aware of the passage of time."

"How so?"

"Jasiri always has humans here that serve us and when they grow too old, he sends them back to the people and rewards them greatly for their service to us." Rubani sighed and raised his drink to his lips again. "I have noticed that he has been changing servants much more frequently and not because they have displeased him, but because their time here was up."

"How long does he usually keep his humans?"

"He has not kept one for more than ten human years," he answered. "He takes them when they come of age and sends them back after he tires of them. He returns them so they can choose a mate with a human if they choose to, and he gifts them generously for their service. Watching my brother and the other gods with their mates made me realize that I was in need of a companion."

"I see."

"I'd like you to be that companion, Luneria."

"Why me, my lord?" she asked seductively, crossing her legs so her skirt fell back to show them off. "Surely, the brother of the supreme god can have any goddess he wanted," she added in a teasing tone, sliding her finger around the edge of her goblet.

Rubani kept his eyes on her legs and attempted to speak but found he could not find his voice.

“My mother has told me much about you, Rubani. You are as beautiful as she has mentioned, in face and body. Is there no goddess in your midst who would have you?”

Rubani cleared his throat. “There may be, but I have not pursued them in that way.”

Her head tilted. “Really? Why is that?”

“If they had not interested me enough to make a play for their affections after all this time, I spent living among them, I see no reason why that would change now that I am looking for a life mate.”

She nodded in agreement.

He put down his goblet and stood pulling the goddess to her feet then took her drink as well. “You would be happy here with me, Luneria. I would do whatever it took to make it so.”

“Here? You would have me here with you at all times?”

“Yes, I would like that. Many gods and goddesses call this mountain home. You would share my life here enjoying the gatherings that Jasiri has and each other’s company for eternity.”

Luneria shook her head. “I don’t know if I can do that, Rubani. My life is in the clouds. As beautiful as this room is, I don’t think I would do well inside this mountain for too long.”

The panic in her voice gave him pause. He reached out to take her hand. “If staying here at all times is not to your liking, I’m sure I could survive you returning to the sky as often as you needed to. I would also come to you if that is something you wanted.”

“You would come to stay with me in the clouds,” she asked wide-eyed.

“If that is your wish, I certainly would,” answered with a smile. “I’m sure we can work out something to make us both happy. I want to spend my endless lifetime in your arms bringing joy to your lovely body. Allow me to do so,” he added brushing his lips across hers.

He brushed his face across her cheek on the way to her neck where he breathed in her scent and left a soft kiss on her slender throat.

“Seeing you and having you in my arms has only strengthened my love for you. You are the epitome of beauty, grace, and wisdom. You cast your spell up-

on me at first sight. I already belong to you.” He lifted her chin so that their eyes could meet, and he caressed her face with his fingertips. “All that I am will be yours if you’ll have me.”

She touched both sides of his face and smiled. “The choice to be with you is not a hard one, Rubani. I will accept you as a life-mate. You are honorable and handsome. I believe you when you say you will make me happy.”

He pulled her into a passionate kiss, silencing anything else she would say. She returned his kiss with equal hunger showing him that there would be no more words. Leaning her backward, he held the kiss as they fell gently onto the bed that had materialized beneath them.

His large body completely covered her voluptuous frame. Rubani made a conscious effort to remain gentle with his touch as he nuzzled her exposed skin, fighting his natural aggressive grasp. His hands and lips covered her inch by inch, everywhere at once, he wanted to touch and lick and kiss her all over. Her chest rose and fell faster and faster as his kisses glided across her large breasts. Rubani sat up enough to pass his hand across Luneria’s dress and it faded away. With her breasts now exposed to him, he hungrily attached himself to one. Luneria’s moans were like music to his ears as he kissed his way across to the other breast.

“I knew you would be all that I would need. Being with you will always be like this. I know it will. I will make it so.”

She nodded as he continued suckling her breast. Rubani continued kissing her torso traveling further her body down as her moans grew louder.

Electricity ripped through his veins as if in response to the heated sounds coming from Luneria. He kissed the warm skin of her belly and moved on down, but before his face dove into the sweetness of her core, she stopped him.

“Rubani, wait. I would like to have the first taste.”

Stunned, but happily so, Rubani honored her request. He rolled off her and slid up the bed to rest on the feathery pillows. Luneria smiled and climbed up his body until their noses touched.

“I’ve waited a long time to have a husband, Rubani. It pleases me to call you mine. I wish to see what I have,” she said with a light laugh. She leaned down and kissed him pressing her nakedness against the hardness of his body. Her legs folded into position on both sides of his narrow hips, and she sat up with her palms on his chest.

“You are indeed beautiful to behold, Rubani. Your body is large and firm,” she continued dreamily as she moved her hands across his chest down to his stomach playing with the hair there. She backed up, sliding her feminine wetness purposely across his already hard erection. “It holds the promise of pleasing my body greatly for a long time, but right now I will do what I can to please it.”

Lowering herself between his legs, she grabbed his tool firmly by its base and enveloped its length into her wet and ready mouth. His body rose off the bed, and he issued a groan as she slid up and down over the hardness of his sex.

Luneria slowed after a while taking her time licking and circling around the edge of the dark head. Suddenly she sped up and slowed down while she tickled his sac bringing him to the brink of insanity. Rubani encouraged her efforts by not holding back whispers of praise. His moans of pleasure and soothing words joined his unabashed screams of rapture. Luneria’s skill far exceeded that of As-tari.

“Enough. I must have you,” he growled through his lustful haze.

His voice was loud but not harsh, filled with his want and need for her. When she detached herself from him, he lifted her and quickly flipped her over switching their positions as gently as his inflamed body would allow. Again, he covered her body with his and looked down into her sparkling eyes.

“I want you to always be pleased with me. If I am not doing something that pleases you, I will look to your wisdom to guide me where I need to go.”

She smiled up at him and wrapped her arms around his neck. “Of course, Rubani. A good mate would always guide her lover to the right path for them both, but you know where you need to go right now. I’m sure no guidance is needed at this time,” she added, as passion-filled her gaze.

Rubani’s laughter vibrated the walls of his chamber. “Indeed, I do,” he said, finally connecting his body to hers.

Outside darkness edged its way across the fullness of the moon. The room darkened around them. Rubani continued to ground into her soft-heated core. Bliss started to consume him. Luneria held onto his shoulders and matched his every movement. Moments later the goddess sounds of ecstasy filled the room. Rubani continued to move inside her until his own cries rose in crescendo for all to hear. He rested his forehead to hers until he caught his breath. When he opened his eyes, he gasped.

“Luneria, darkness has settled all around us. Is this your doing? Are you unable to hold the moon aloft in your current state?”

Luneria chuckled. “There is no need for concern, my darling. I am fully capable of controlling the moon no matter the state I’m in,” she assured him in a teasing tone.

Rubani rolled off of her and pulled her into his embrace to face him. “Then why did you call for the darkness?”

“I wanted to bless the children of Buganda, so I allowed them to join in our pleasure. I called the darkness to cover the moon so that our joining would be reflected for them to see.”

The darkness started to fade as the moon was uncovered. Light-filled the room again. Rubani raised himself onto his elbow to look down at her.

“You mean, all of Buganda just witnessed our lovemaking during their celebration?”

“Of course! What better way for the people to celebrate their gods than by sharing in their love? The nation of Buganda will always remember that their war god came to give them victory and then joined with the moon goddess for his own reward. Every year on this night they will celebrate all that has happened.”

Rubani laughed happily. “You are wonderful, my goddess. I am looking forward to spending forever with you.”

THE END

Epilogue



Jasiri walked through the crowded room waving to the gods and goddesses in attendance as he took the corridor leading to his private chambers.

"I'm here, my love. Have they arrived?"

"Yes, darling, I'm sure they have. What kept you?"

Jasiri smiled and took her hand. "My dear Dunia, I had to greet my guests before just disappearing off with you and the others."

Dunia kissed his cheek. "You're such a social butterfly. Let's go."

Dunia pulled him from his quarters up the stairs to the supreme god's summit. Takasa and Solarion sat at a table in the distance. They stood as Dunia approached.

"Mother, it has been too long," Takasa said as she entered Dunia's embrace.

"Indeed it has, my darling daughter. And you, Solarion, I love the happy smile on my daughter's face. You are indeed a credit to your people."

Solarion hugged her as well. "Thank you, Mother. It is my life's wish to make her happy. It is an easy chore for me. Greetings Jasiri, how are you?"

"I am well, Solarion." He accepted the kiss Takasa put on his cheek. "You do look happy, Takasa. I am pleased to see that as well."

"Thank you, Jasiri. I know you don't need a reason for a celebration, but Mother said there was something you wanted to tell us. Surely nothing is wrong."

Jasiri shook his head as he joined them at the table. Dunia covered her daughter's hand to get her attention.

"Let us wait for Luneria. They will arrive shortly."

Takasa looked at Solarion, then went back to her mother. "She isn't here? I thought she was staying with Rubani."

"Usually she is, but they are spending time on—"

Dunia's explanation was cut short as a bright moonbeam appeared before them. When it retracted Luneria and Rubani stood in its place.

"Hello everyone. Are we late?" Rubani asked.

"Not at all. Please, join us," Jasiri said, extending a hand toward the empty seats.

Rubani and Luneria walk around the table offering hugs to their family before taking their seats. Humans appeared with food and drink. They walked around the table filling plates and refilling glasses. As the gods and goddesses ate, the humans retreated to the hall until needed again.

“Very well, Jasiri, we’re all here. Dinner with family is always wonderful, but I’m sure you summoned us for a reason,” Rubani said with a grin.

“Indeed I did. My beautiful Dunia has something she wanted to share with you all.”

Dunia leaned over to kiss him and then stood. “Thank you, sweetheart. As you all know, Jasiri and I have been spending a lot more time together since Rubani and Luneria became one.”

Rubani and Luneria leaned closer and kissed each other. Dunia smiled at them.

“Since it has only been a hundred years or so, I imagine they are still in the honeymoon phase.” Her family chuckled with her and she continued. “With both my daughters happy with their mates, I had the chance to focus on my happiness. I have decided to take Jasiri up on his offer and become his mate.”

“Oh, Mother! That’s wonderful!” Luneria said.

“Jasiri, I am so happy for you, brother,” Rubani said leaning over to hug him.

Jasiri stood and clasped Rubani on the shoulder. “Thank you Rubani, but there is something else.”

Dunia held Jasiri’s left hand and put his right hand on her belly.

“We would appreciate it if you guys could come around more often to get to know this guy as he grows up,” he continued, pressing her dress around an obvious baby bump.

A collective intake of breath from the family filled the area.

“Mother! I’m so happy for you!” Takasa shrieked.

Takasa and Luneria rushed to their mother’s side hugging her as Rubani and Solarion moved toward Jasiri.

“We are one big family now. This little one will need us all. He will be unique and his gifts will be a blessing to the people,” Dunia told them. “I am looking forward to you all being a part of his life and ours.”

The two younger couples circled the older in a group hug.

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