

Arden

By Shadar, edited by Brantley

Asteroid Arden, Rim Confederation, 17th Sector

Jaren Strikebolt was awakened like everyone else when the GravSim failed. The entire asteroid, fifty miles in long and nearly twenty miles in diameter, began to spin around in big, lazy circles as the many nuclear drills and pumps distorted its weak gravity field.

His comm began to buzz before he made it out of bed.

"GS3 has gone down again," the tech on the comm-link announced. "Looks like we're going to need that core transplant now whether we like it or not."

Jaren cursed under his breath. Core transplants were damned tricky, to put it mildly. Screw it up, and the explosion could shatter the asteroid into pieces, killing everyone.

"Do you have a call in for a VeITech?"

"Yeah, someone's supposedly on their way with a new core. ETA is less than two hours. Their Tech was fortunately close to us when we called. They are asking for your help."

"I'm a Guardian, not a TechMech," Jaren protested. "Why do you need me?"

"Don't know. Dispatch simply asked for help from someone with Supremis blood. Core transplants normally require two techs but they only have one who can get here in time."

"But I don't know a damn thing about repairing mass stabilizers, let alone handling a core."

"Look. Just be there." The comm chirped as the tech rudely clicked off.

Jaren dropped his comm back onto the nightstand and collapsed back onto the pillow, the old anger coursing through him. He was a Guardian, not some slave that the techs could order around.

But having been born half Aurean and half human, he'd suffered from human bigotry as far back as he could remember. His only consolation was that it would have been far worse if he'd grown up on an Aurean world. There they put all the Halfen, as they derisively referred to his kind, on the front lines of every conflict, using them as cannon fodder to soak up enemy fire before their elite troops engaged.

Here on Arden, a human mining colony, he was the local representative of a small elite police force composed of hybrids like himself. They called themselves Guardians. You could find them on worlds that Velor didn't think rated Protectors, or that shunned them in hopes of maintaining their neutrality in the war between the Enlightenment and the Empire. His own case was a bit different...

Drifting as he was in a half-awake state, he found his thoughts traveling back to Marsten, back to the neutral world where his mother had been the top-rated gymnastic competitor when the Aureans arrived.

Marsten was a major planet, not some piddling asteroid, with an advanced economy and a powerful military of its own; it had thought it could take care of itself. But its defenses had been overwhelmed in days by the Aurean battle group. Once on the ground, the occupying Aurean soldiers began slaughtering soldiers, police and government leaders as they consolidated their hold on the planet. As usual, the soldiers began to rape and pillage as they used that horrific violence to force the survivors into submission.

Given that the Aureans were immensely powerful beings, it was seemingly impossible for a human woman to survive such a rape. If the helpless woman's body wasn't crushed or gutted like a trout during the assault, the Aurean's final release would usually blow their heads off. Given that human flesh was as soft as pudding to them, it was more about spreading terror than about the pleasure of sex. It was just as bad with the female soldiers, who seduced men with their pheromones, only to prove their superiority by turning their manhood to pulp with

their inner strength, then finishing them off by breaking their pelvises with their immensely strong legs, or hugging them so tightly that their ribs were crushed against their deceptively feminine chests.

The Aureans left piles of naked, torn bodies in the streets. His mother had had the good fortune, if one could call it that, of becoming the victim of a young Aurean who was on his first deployment. Hardly older than her own sixteen years, the young soldier, who had never been with a woman prior to that day, had taken pity on her. She couldn't know what it meant, but he'd been wearing some looted gold ornaments. Between that and her strength as a gymnast and the Aurean's uncharacteristic gentleness, she'd survived her rape. Barely.

Then the Velorians heard about what had happened, and took pity, sending a team of Protectors that drove off the Aureans and freed Marsten. They didn't have to convince the new government that the previous government's neutrality policy had been unwise and futile, and stationed a Protector on their world to ensure that the Aureans wouldn't return.

An unusually long eleven months later, Jaren and his twin sister Jara had been born into a world that didn't want to be reminded of that violent Aurean attack. Despite the helpless nature of their mother's rape and their innocent birth, many people held their Aurean blood against them.

They both suffered from outright bigotry, even as men lusted after Jara. She was beautiful beyond the boundaries of anyone merely human, and he was handsome to the same degree, both of them looking more Aurean than human. They were both rated well over 100 MHI (Maximum Human Index), which meant they were more than a hundred times stronger than was humanly possible. Even worse, Jara been born with the Aurean lust for both combat and sexual conquest, which made her life among the peaceful people the Aureans despised as Frails even more painful.

The result was that she'd been the first one to join the Guardians; once she had reported to her assignment, Jaren never expected to see her again. He had signed up a year later, and after his training had been posted to this lonely rock on the very fringes of Enlightenment space.

The Confederation's capital planet, unimaginatively named Forstnuworold by its settlers centuries ago, had its own Protector, Sidri'ka. So did Odernuworold, its sister planet in the same stellar system; her name was Shay'na. But Sidri'ka was senior; indeed she was one of the first Protectors although not *the* first. That meant she had broad latitude in interpreting Velorian policy as it applied to the Rim planets and asteroids.

Jason had never met Sidri'ka, never even set foot on Forstnuworold, or even in its system — Arden was in a neighboring system a short jump away. Out of sight, out of mind. But he'd been given to understand that she winked at the Guardian presence, in any case. He'd been worried that she might find out about him, but the recruiters had told him not to worry. She had been serving in the Confederation for many years, long enough to appreciate that its leadership knew better than Velor how to manage things in their jurisdiction.

The High Council back on Velor might have taken exception. But the Council was thousands of light years away, and it was a long journey from Velor to here, even at the speeds — faster than the Scalantran ship and insystem shuttle that had brought him here — that Velorians could travel. All the Council knew about what was going on in the Rim Confederation was what Sidri'ka reported to the Messengers, and Halfen never figured in those reports. She knew people like Jaren, knew what they were and where they were coming from, literally and figuratively. She was said to keep her head, and her counsel.

Jaren knew he was safe on Arden, yet also that he was alone of his kind. Many people on Arden distrusted him, as they did anyone with Aurean blood, but most managed to put their fears and prejudices behind them. The miners were glad he was there. Privateers, some armed with obsolete Aurean weapons — not heavy GARs, fortunately — had been targeting the wealthy mining asteroids in the Confederation's second system. Jaren was the only man on Arden who could stand up to them; so far, he'd stopped a dozen such raids. He might not be welcomed into most people's homes or trusted around their daughters, although he'd anglicized his surname, but at least the miners respected him.

Rising from his bed, he told himself for the thousandth time that respect was enough. It wasn't love or admiration, but it was more than most hybrids got.

He quickly got dressed as he thought back to the last VelTech he'd met. The man had had the usual blonde hair, bright blue eyes and chiseled jaw of a Supremis, not to mention the kind of tight, muscular physique and superhuman endowment that drove women wild. But he was always covered in grease along with any number of hazardous chemicals. Given that he was invulnerable, he didn't bother about the chemicals he left in his wake.

Jaren had watched him working in hard vacuum, his stained coveralls safely stashed on the pressure side of the airlock. He'd never seen a man as well hung as that Vel, nor as strong. He'd twisted a maze of foot-thick steel beams back into shape and then welded them with his heat vision.

As impressive as his physique was, the man himself was disappointing when Jaren met him. He hid behind a wall of haughty arrogance, ignoring the women who surrounded him as they were drawn by his pheromones, all of them wanting what they could never have. Not without his wearing gold, which he did not have. The only ore on Arden was xintanite, the secret of Vendorian steel, much in demand by the Confederation, and the Scalantrans.

In contrast, the Protector he remembered from his home planet of Marsten had been engaging and warm (not that he'd ever personally met her). He'd seen enough of her interviews on the holo to know it wasn't an act. People said Protectors were all like that. They were strangely approachable despite their mighty powers and they understood the value of humility and the need to avoid bruising male egos any more than necessary. Because of that, everyone who met a Protector in person fell in love with them. Some said it was just their pheromones, Jaren knew otherwise.

Every Protector he'd seen, in person or in an image, was not only impossibly strong, but they were stunningly beautiful as well. Smart too, as well as friendly and engaging. Too friendly, if the rumors were accurate.



Not so Velorian men. They were all assholes as far as he was concerned. Jaren assumed that was due to their insignificance in the eyes of their creators, the enormously powerful Galen. The Galen's only goal in creating the Velorian race was to engineer a race of powerful Procreators who could replace their own infertile females. And given that Galen sex was more like a nuclear detonation than anything else, their mates had to be immensely powerful and invulnerable, not to mention endlessly willing.

Male Velorians in that period didn't seem to have had any useful role beyond siring daughters who were always much stronger than their fathers. Daughters who the Galen celebrated for their beauty and fertility, right up to the point where the Galen themselves disappeared.

Divorced from their reason for being after the Galen left, the Velorian race stumbled around for a while before turning its mighty daughters loose into the universe – first as Companions to the rich and powerful on hundreds of human Seeded Worlds, and later as Protectors for human and even alien worlds. Their men mostly remained on Velor, except for Messengers sent to bring word and sexual succor to Protectors, and focused their diminished self-worth on largely useless bureaucracy and politics. The few Velorian men who did work off-planet were obsessed with proving they were superior to mere Terrans (the polite term, as opposed to the impolite “Frails” they unwittingly borrowed from the Aureans).

Sighing resignedly, Jaren boarded his flitter, knowing it wasn't going to be fun working for one of those assholes. But fixing the GravSim was more important than any bruised feelings he might suffer.

He began to fly down the central cavern toward the entrance tunnel that led to the surface. The GravSims were inside the pressurized space of the hollowed-out asteroid, and likely the VeITech would arrive without a ship given he was coming from a nearby asteroid. That meant he'd use the man-lock.

As fate would have it, Jaren was halfway to the air lock when he received an urgent summons: a man was threatening his wife with an illegal energy weapon. The local cops weren't going to put themselves into the crosshairs of a weapon

that could vaporize them. He hit the Accept Call button on his specially equipped flitter, and it accelerated violently as it changed course to head directly toward the crime scene.

Once there, he spent the better part of half an hour trying to talk the miner out of his condo, but in the end, he had to use his speed and strength to save his wife. He crashed through the front door to disarm the man. Given he had to move faster than the bad guy could pull his trigger, the would-be killer ended up with broken hands and wrists along with metal fragments stuck in his eye from the exploding door. That and blown out eardrums from the shock wave. There was a price to be paid for crime, and sometimes payment was due before the courts could pass judgment.

Jaren imploded the energy weapon before crushing it into scrap and then headed back toward the man-lock, pushing his flitter's antigrav to the limit. He arrived to see that the sequence timer on the air lock was still blinking. Someone had cycled through from the outside during the last five minutes. He punched up the coordinates of GravSim3 and headed directly toward it, figuring the tech would already be there. Vels could fly faster than any flitter.

He left his flitter in hover-park while he dashed into the heavily-shielded GravSim building, only to skid to a stunned halt when he saw the tech floating in mid-air while reaching one arm up into the Annihilation Zone of the still idling GravSim. That was the region around the core, which seethed with a type of white-hot energy that could eat nearly any form of matter in seconds.

He was amazed, not just from the penetration of the annihilation zone, but from the fact that the tech was a stunningly tall blonde female. She was buck naked.

Turning her head, the exotic blonde looked at him with the overly large, bright blue eyes of a Velorian as she ignored the horrendous energy that was coursing down her arm. Bits of stray energy flux sent her hair billowing out behind her like spun gold. Like all Vels, she had an incredibly tight but curvaceous body, along with oversized boobs that were immune to the forces of gravity. Her skin was the shade of burnished gold and she was heartbreakingly beautiful. But most

impressive of all, she was calmly enduring energies that would have vaporized stone or even the most exotic ceramic nano-metals.

She was slowly undoing the Vendorian steel nuts that held the bottom of the core chamber closed, her hand disappearing into the energy again and again. Normally, these kind of Vendorian steel nuts required a huge power wrench to undo, given each of them had been tightened to several thousand foot-pounds, yet she was undoing them with her bare hands as if the huge nuts had barely been snugged up. Jaren's jaw dropped further as he watched a stray tentacle of energy as it snaked down her arm to tease one of her nipples before retracting back into the cloud.

"If you're here to help me," she said in a strong Velorian accent, "then get rid of those clothes and get over here. Burnt clothing just carbons up the core."

Jaren found himself rooted in place as he stared back at her, unable to move. "Are you really a tech? I mean, you don't look like any tech I've..."

"Trust me, not all Bravas are male. Some of us girls got cheated out of the good genes as well."

"Jesus," Jaren gushed as his face grew red. He was sounding like some kind of schoolboy. "Your genes look pretty damn good to me."

She smiled. "My, my, a compliment. From an Aurean no less. Be still my beating heart."

"I'm just a hybrid. Which means I can't help you. I want to, it's not that, but I can't withstand that kind of energy flux."

"At least that explains your good manners. But don't worry, you just have to hold me up so I can reach deeply enough into the zone to pull out the core. This energy flux totally wipes out my ability to fly when my chest gets into it."

"I thought those cores were massively heavy?"

"This one isn't too bad. Only about fifty tons. You up for it?"

Jaren shook his head. "No way. I can maybe lift half that."

"Well, no problem getting it out. Once I get it loose, you just have to slow my fall until I get my flight back." She tilted her head as she looked puzzled for a moment. "But installing the new one that I brought with me is going to be more of

a challenge — I need you to hold both me and the core up inside the flux field while I install it. We techs always work in pairs when doing core transplants, but they told me you were strong enough to help."

"I'm sorry, but you heard wrong."

"Well, we have what we have. Unfortunately, there are no other Vels within three days travel time here. Your little world will be tumbling too fast for your humans to endure in less than half that time."

"They aren't my humans. I just work for them."

"Gee. He's modest too," she smiled brighter. "How refreshing. Now get over here and help me. We don't have a lot of time."

Jaren walked up behind her as he watched her floating in mid-air, his eyes focusing on the most perfect ass he'd ever seen. She had a deeply indented, sculpted back and gorgeously strong calves and shapely thighs. Her hair was glowing a dozen shades of gold as the energy flux teased it into floating upward and away from her back. He felt himself rising as a wild tingling sensation began to fill him. He had to close his eyes as he struggled to stay in control. His Aurean side was more than capable of going into a berserker frenzy if he inhaled too many of her pheromones or touched her skin. He was going to have to do both.

Like all hybrids, Jaren had taken a vow of chastity when he joined the Guardians, and he'd spent his life since then working to ensure his Aurean power never turned into desire. No human woman could survive his loving attentions, and any female Aurean he met would kill a Halfen like him if he so much as looked at her the wrong way.

But now he couldn't keep his eyes closed as his usual worrisome thoughts were washed away by stronger, more urgent ones. This was different. Velorian females were infamous for their insatiable libidos and athletic sexual capacity, all thanks to the Galen's intention of using them to save their race.

Bravas like this tech were the lowest genetic class of Velorians, the fixers and makers and technicians and teachers, all with strength indexes in the two or three-hundred range. Their mighty Protectors, the highest genetic class, could be as much as fifty times stronger than a Brava.

Weakling or not in terms of her own people, Jaren found it both humbling and alluring that this tech was likely many times stronger than he was. Not to mention completely invulnerable. Despite his long training and even longer denial, his body began to warm as he felt his manhood rising. He clenched his fists as he struggled to push those feelings away. He had to focus on his inner calm. To deny himself as he'd always done.

"No. Don't fight it," the Vel said as she glanced down at him with sparkling eyes, looking through the restraining fabric of his uniform. "Arousal will help make you stronger. Hopefully, even strong enough to help me. Assuming you have enough Aurean in you, that is."

"No..." he mumbled as he shook his head. "Must stay in control."

She laughed. "In control? Trust me, control isn't an option around me. But don't worry, I won't hurt you or let you hurt anyone else. Might even be fun."

Jaren gaped at her, intimidated by the lethal energy flux that enveloped her upper body. Even hotter than that, her sexy teasing was burning like liquid fire inside him. "You...you think this is fun?"

"In the end it will be. So here's the plan...you've got to grab my legs and lift me up. Once my chest is fully inside the flux field, I won't be able to fly. My volatai, my flight organs, are located in the base of my..."

"I'm familiar with Velorian physiology," Jaren interrupted.

"Good. Then you presumably also know how my pheromones will affect anyone with Aurean blood." She shrugged. "I'm also the most beautiful woman you've ever seen."

Jaren bristled as she boasted so shamelessly. So much for her humility, he thought, even as a part of him knew she was simply speaking truth. He'd always lived among humans.

"You also know I could compel you to fuck yourself to death if I wanted to, Aurean. Lucky for you, I'm more interested in saving this rock you live in. If you can rise to my demands that is."

OK, Jaren thought to himself, so much for their good manners, If you can rise...that was insulting.

"Fuck you!" he growled angrily. He didn't like her attitude. Not one bit.

"Now that's the spirit," she laughed. "I'll take your passion any way I can get it. Now get yourself ready to help me. Starting with those clothes."

Jaren angrily undressed, far faster than a human could. The Vel waited until he was naked, and then dropped down to land only inches in front of him, her back facing him. She leaned back into his arms, and then rose upward slightly again. Closing his eyes, Jaren kneeled down while wrapping his powerful arms around her knees, only to have her shove her ass backward to bury his face. His heart began to pound so hard it hurt, but he held her as tightly as he could to his chest while lifting her upward.

She was weightless in his arms at first, but that was quickly replaced by a normal woman's weight as her upper body penetrated the flux and her flight power deserted her. He felt her twisting herself powerfully as she undid the last of the massive nuts, and had to struggle with all his strength to keep his footing, his toes digging into the steel floor to keep from twisting until she managed to break that last bolt loose. The Vendorian steel nut hit the floor beside him as it gave off the high-pitched Ting that was characteristic of super-steel.

He felt her tugging on something, and then she suddenly grew unbearably heavy in his arms. He struggled with all his strength to slow her descent, but the core was far too heavy. His knees bent as he groaned, his veins popping as he put everything he had into slowing her descent. He crashed to his knees while toppling forward as the Vel twisted around in his arms.

She landed on her back while clutching the blackened core to her chest, the impact slamming her body halfway through the heavy reinforced steel deck.

Jaren scrambled back to his feet to find the smoking fifty-ton core resting on her oversized boobs, which were now more or less flattened against her chest. He reached down to grab the core, struggling to lift it off her, but he couldn't budge it. He was on his third attempt, muscles knotting, when she effortlessly sat up, the core still clutched to her chest. Her flight power had returned, enabling her to weightlessly float over to set the damaged core gently on the hard deck

next to the new shiny one. The entire deck sagged and then rebounded beneath Jaren's feet.

Spinning around to face him, the Vel walked lightly across the deck toward him. He stared at her, astounded that her breasts were now nearly twice as large now as they'd been moments before, and they'd been more than big enough to start with. Clearly she'd absorbed a portion of the energy flux and her body was now converting it to Orgone. He'd never realized that could happen so quickly.

His eyes traced down her body to her hairless crotch, finding that unlike a human woman, her sex was unimpressive. Just a nearly invisible slit in otherwise smooth skin. Almost prepubescent looking; a thought that started warning bells ringing in his head.

"You are strong, Aurean," she smiled as she reached out to wrap her fingers around his burgeoning erection, boldly gripping him so hard that it actually hurt. He gasped as she lifted him off the floor to dangle helplessly by that single organ, shaking him gently. "I think we might yet find sufficient power in you, halfen. Even if you are necessarily a virgin given the humans you live among."

Jaren swallowed hard, remembering with shame that moment with his twin sister before she left to join the Guardians. He wasn't exactly a virgin. There had been that moment of shared weakness when they discovered how indiscriminate Supremis sexual attraction can be. The social conventions of the Supremis had no prohibitions against such matings, but Jaren and Jara weren't truly Supremis. They'd grown up among humans and had adopted their morality, so their long night of uncontrolled passion had shamed them both. Jara had left that next morning and he hadn't seen her since, for both of them knew that in Aurean fashion, they'd forged a pheromic bond between them that could not be broken. A bond that was considered immoral on any human world.

"I don't even know your name," Jaren said, his mouth dry from his rapid breathing.

"Mae. Mae Val'lar to be exact. And you?"

"Jaren Strikebolt, at your service."

He bowed slightly in the way of a Guardian.

She released him from her intimate grip before walking over to pick up the new, shiny core, hard muscles tensing gorgeously across her tall body as she easily lifted its fifty tons. She held it high over her head as she walked back to stand over him, straddling him as he lay on his back on the deck. He stared up between her long legs, marveling at her strength and beauty.

"You should know, Jaren Strikebolt, that an Aurean's power is greatest while he is having an orgasm," she said, sounding almost clinical. "I need to get you to the edge of that, and you have to hold yourself off until I get this damn thing installed. Then you can finish with me any way you want."

Jaren tried to swallow but his mouth had grown too dry. He could only stare up at her as he felt himself getting hotter every second, his mind's eye always envisioning making love to her. Without thinking of the consequences, he rose to embrace her, his sinewy hands cupping her tightly, rounded ass as he pulled her pelvis against his with all his strength. Her perfectly rounded cheeks yielded like warm steel in his grip.

She floated from the floor, her hair rising further into the energy flux as he rose to guide himself to her. Any hesitation was now forgotten as he tried to thrust hard into her, only to find that she was too tight to even enter. He threw more of his strength into his quest, and then more, thrilling as she began to yield to him. He threw all his strength into a thrust that would have driven him through solid steel, and he was suddenly inside her. She gasped in startled appreciation as she gripped his ass with her heels and helped him take her all the way.

"Performed... like a true Aurean," she cried out breathlessly. "Now prove that you truly are one."

He went crazy on her as he unleashed all his strength without worry. She cried out in passion on every plunge, the force of his wild thrusts lifting her higher off the floor, the fifty ton core in her arms seemingly forgotten as she used her flight power to rise and then crash down on him, encouraging him to take her to her roots. He lost himself in his growing passion, the berserker frenzy of a mating Aurean carrying him away. Her cries of pleasure grew ever louder as he grunted like some kind of primordial beast as he attacked her with growing frenzy, each

of his thrusts combining with her flight power to shove her head and shoulders further up into the lethal flux.

He felt his hair sizzling as a riot of wild tingles began racing down his back, signaling imminent release. He went even crazier, lifting her higher and higher off the floor until her entire upper body disappeared in the flux. He felt her tighten herself around him until he couldn't move, her inner muscles vibrating at hypersonic speed as he struggled for all he was worth to move again despite her iron grip, his muscles straining like steel cables as an incredible surge of strength flowed through him, spreading outward from his groin. His legs began to shake from the strain as sweat poured off his brow, his muscles burning, only to have her suddenly pitch forward as the horrible weight disappeared.

His next thrust propelled her head completely through an inch-thick steel bulkhead. He lost it completely now, his berserker passion taking him as he pounded her upper body through a foot-thick steel beam. His entire world turned red as he exploded inside her, the force of his release launching her like a champagne cork. She tumbled forward to tear through yet another bulkhead to wind up smashed into the corner of the adjacent compartment.

And then everything faded from red to black.

He blinked moments later to find he was lying on his side on the cold deck. Mae was spooned up against his chest. He tried to roll her over to make sure she was OK, but he was so weak and exhausted that he could barely lift his arm. His heart was beating hollowly as a great weakness spread outward from his chest.

She floated round in his arms to face him, and gently kissed him, her breath sweet with the wildflower and honey scent of her pheromones. Her breasts felt huge as she hugged him until they flattened slightly against his chest, her firm nipples dimpling his skin. Her blonde hair enveloped them in a golden glow.

"You gave me all your Orgone back there," she whispered. "Now I need to give you some back so you can live."

"How do you...can you?" he gasped, finding he was having trouble breathing now.

"Simple. If I come and you don't, then Orgone energy will flow back into you. I've got more than enough for both of us now."

"Is the core... the GravSim...are we done?"

She placed her finger against his lips. "Sshh. All is well, Guardian. But we are hardly done. Now it is time for my body to sing for you."

Epilogue —two months later

Mayor Shilo Matson stood on the observatory deck as he watched the Guardian's new wife standing outside in hard vacuum.

As usual, she was provocatively dressed in a tight top and a tiny thong and little more, the view of her back side inspiring to say the least. Despite the vacuum and absolute cold, she looked comfortable and somehow very normal. He stared at her perfect back side, and knew that she truly was a star-child.

His mind raced as he found himself wondering what it be like to have the power to please a woman like that. His wildest fantasies began to play out in his mind, hopefully to continue in some vivid dreams. Like the rest of the men on Arden, he'd fallen in love with the Guardian's wife.

Jaren soon appeared to stand between the window and his wife, spoiling the mayor's outstanding view. He wrapped his arms around his wife from behind as she pushed off with her toes, and the two of them soared off into the blackness of space, accelerating so fast that they disappeared in an instant.

Turning away, the memory of her incredible backside still burning vividly in his mind's eye, Matson gave thanks that Mae had decided to come live on Arden. Between the Guardian and his very super wife, they no longer had to worry about the Aureans, despite their growing influence in this sector.

Together, Arden's protectors were invincible.

Sighing, the mayor returned to his desk and began his daily paper work, still dreaming of the impossible as he tried to concentrate on his work.

If only... if only... if only...

The End