

NOR'UD

Nor'ud pinched herself for the umpteenth time, still not able to believe that she wasn't dreaming. She had never believed that she would graduate after the accident, she hadn't believed that she would walk again, never mind graduate from the college.

Her grandmother Lay'la had never walked again after breaking one leg, and that was only, what three hundred and fifty odd years ago. The doctors said that she was now too frail to withstand the operations necessary, they had told her, when she asked, "was Lay'la going to be able to walk again" that three hundred and fifty years of being cooped up in a frame that gave her some mobility but didn't allow any exercise, had caused muscles and bone to waste away to the point where they could not even take Lay'la out of the frame.

Nor'ud checked herself again to ensure that she was ready for duty, trying to ignore the scars that her mother said were badges of honor, and looked at her orders again, She was to report for duty as the Guardian of the Meet in the human month and year March 2001 and then to report for the usual three month temporary placement, they hadn't said who with, before being assigned to her own permanent station.

The citation she had received after the accident was in her personal casket as was the photograph of the two human children she had saved from a savage river Dart in flood. She had refused a photograph of the rock that had broken both her back legs and pelvis when she had used the tree holding the rock in place, to give the children something to cling to until their parents could get to them. She did not want to be reminded of the ninety three metal sections used to rebuild her smashed bones, that was the past and she had her future to look to.