



# YALDENNA

Yaldena reached the crest of the hill, stopped and stared, how, she wondered, had Centre got so huge and spread out in the short six months since graduating and moving to her permanent station. When she had moved out of student quarters in first summer, it had been a wrench to leave the familiar small cosy clumped together buildings behind. She got moving again, if she wanted to visit the library before the evening meal, she had best get a move on.

Sat at the big table next to Jan'ar in the main dining hall, she reflected that for the first time she really felt she had made the best choice from the two options she had been offered on graduation. It had been hard at the time to turn down the position of trainee librarian and she knew that Ran'al the Librarian had been disappointed to her choice but her sense of responsibility and duty had not given her much option, as much as she had wanted to spend her life surrounded by the books and the history she loved to delve into and explore, she would have felt guilty for the rest of her life at not accepting the duty she had been born to serve.

But now sitting next to Jan'ar, having caught up on all the gossip and his excited chatter about the experiments being done, to try to understand Sy'oni's unusual gifts, she found herself fighting to block out the calophony of sound crashing against her from all sides, and wondered if she could get away with making an excuse to leave the dining hall and eat in her room. She would be able to look at the books she had borrowed that much sooner and she was itching to hold the book which contained Liask's diary and chronicles. She was well aware that it was an unusual privilege to be allowed to take that particular book out of the actual library, and she had three days to make copies of the parts she wanted to study.

She suddenly realised that Jan'ar was saying something and she hadn't got a clue what!, He looked at her and started again. "I need some fresh air, lets go outside, its not that cold yet. He picked his plate and mug up without waiting for her answer and she gratefully followed suit. Out in the open it was blissfully quiet again and she realised that, once again, Jan'ar had known what was wrong and done something about it. They moved over to the grazing area as she said thank you and finished their meal in companionable silence.

Back in her room, laying out what she would need for her duty at the human gathering tomorrow and remembering all of Jan'ar's gentle caring ever since she first met him, she made another decision, when it was time, she wanted Jan'ar as her mate. If Jan'ar was willing she thought the geneticists would go along with her decision because the gene pool was considered to be large enough now. There was no time like now. She turned to the Comm desk and recorded her formal request to Jan'ar, and made sure a copy would go to the genetics people