

Chapter 2 — Redo From Start

Cato was impressed with how well the two Sydeans were taking to existence as postbiological life. He was aware that was some sort of chauvinism — a bias against, not System natives, but those who hadn't been raised to be postbiological from the beginning. More than a few natives of Earth or the asteroid belt that he'd known, raised on the surface or in rotating habitats, hadn't found the transition too dramatic but had still ended up as a single person in a single body, even if it wasn't a biological body.

For those who remained completely digital, there were issues with knowing one was in a virtual world — and having complete control over it. Finding life too easy or meaningless, they dissipated in hedonism, vanishing forever into an orgiastic simulation. Even if they didn't go that far, some still lost themselves to other behavioral sinks, deprived of motivation, interest, or some other vital spark.

Though perhaps the sisters' facility with their new form was simply a result of the intense culling the System imposed on people. Anyone who was weak-minded, unsure of themselves, or unmotivated ended up dead before too long — let alone before reaching the higher ranks. It wasn't particularly praiseworthy if people like Onswa and Arene, or Raine and Leese, were simply the surviving few percent.

At the same time that he instructed the sisters on the intricacies of digital existence, he was slowly building up his industrial base. Nothing about the process was particularly hard, save the decisions. Risking time and materials to find deposits of useful material as opposed to spending those same resources building less effective mechanisms.

Even if he was alone on a moon with an atmosphere that was little more than a faint haze of methane, he didn't want to lose track of time. Perhaps it didn't matter, as he didn't know how long it had been, or even which planet he was orbiting. For all he knew it had been years or centuries since he had encoded his gestalt and sent the sisters off to the rest of the System. The organic primer he'd supplied was good for at least that long. But Raine and Leese might well be waiting on him, in desperate straits and needing something he could provide.

His solar flower only had the smallest optical sensors, but he'd landed in sunlight and without regard to the planet, so the sensors only saw a few stars and the local sun. One that was circling around in the sky rather than sinking toward the horizon. If it weren't for the local gravity, something around a fiftieth of Earth's, he would have thought he'd landed on a comet.

For several weeks the only allowable resource investment was in void ecology: growing additional solar flowers for power — since the slow march of the sun wouldn't land him in darkness for months yet — and sending burrowing tendrils through the ice and gravel until he had enough mass to set up more advanced facilities. Only then did he feel like he could spare the time and effort to send up a micro-satellite, jetting along on a tiny methane engine since a simple chemical rocket was by far the cheapest option available.

Once it had gotten high enough to send back a proper feed, Cato had to double check to make sure that the sensors were functioning properly. It wasn't the riotous colors of the moons orbiting the planet, since they were quite similar to the kind of patterns found on icy bodies like Eris or Makemake back in Sol, but it was their position. All six moons he could see were in a polar orbit, something so completely improbable he suspected the System had done something.

His moon wasn't under the System's sway at the moment, very obviously so, but that didn't mean that had always been the case. He could be wrong, and having an improbable number of moons in perfect polar orbits was simply a quirk like Luna's unusually large relative size, but his gut feeling was that it was artificial. A quick survey didn't reveal any technosignatures on the moons, so System magic was more likely. The System had shown the ability to overhaul enormous swaths of land, so adjusting nearby moons was entirely possible.

The question would be why, aside from the polar orbits actually offering a night sky with multiple moons in exactly the same phase — something that featured heavily in art and virtual worlds but never in base reality. It was a silly reason, but the System was entirely performative. It was structured to create a reality centered entirely around fighting monsters and without complex technology. Reformatting the night sky fit perfectly into that fantasy.

Cato could still be wrong, but if the System had reached the moon once it might again, and that meant that long before he revealed his presence he needed to set up an insurance policy further out. He couldn't *operate* from other planets, not with a communications delay of hours and a materials delay of months or years, but it would be a good backup. Besides which, not every world would be like Sydea, and events might take months or years anyway. A proper industrial base far enough away that even augmented System folks couldn't spot it was a worthwhile investment.

He sent the feed to the sisters' aestivation, which they had altered to re-create the original base he'd made over Sydea — with a few tweaks. It was larger, with garden areas that hadn't existed in the original, but still overtly technological. The windows showed the moonscape from the sensor feeds, blank and bleak as it was, but by the time he entered their aestivation after launching the satellite, they had replaced the outside view.

"That's Uriva," Raine confirmed Cato's suspicion the moment he emerged onto the observation deck of their virtual station. The globe below looked far different from Sydea, lacking any truly vast oceans or, for that matter, mountains, more an interconnected sprawl of shallow seas and hilly plains. It looked like an old planet, one that hadn't had a major geological event in a long time, though he had to keep in mind his suspicions about the System overhaul applied to surface geography as well as orbital.

"Good to know we've ended up where I had hoped," he said, as the analysis programs rendered the view into a proper map. "Have you given any thought to talking to your other versions?"

"I think that would just be too strange," Leese replied, her tail flicking back and forth. "They — we? — should know we exist, but it's probably for the best if we stay separate."

"And I don't think I would want to merge with them even if we could," Raine added. "That reconciliation thing. Now that we've been on the other side of the digitization process, I think it just sounds like going mad."

"Most people think the way you do," Cato agreed. Given enough time, he had enough tools in his database that he could probably figure out how to reconcile Sydean neurology, but it wasn't something he was going to push on them. "We'll do the branch method, because if you're going to want to move deeper into the System with me, there will end up being lots of you working in parallel."

“That feels less strange,” Leese said for the two of them. “As long as it’s all forward. Ahead of us? It’s not too weird. Work on this planet, then on another planet. Or I guess once we’re ready to go down we might end up preparing for another world, but that’s not too unreasonable?” Raine grimaced at the tortured reply, but neither of them seemed too upset by the prospect.

“That’s the spirit,” Cato said, trusting that they were generally right. The good thing about coming to digital life so late – Raine and Leese were, despite appearances, over four decades old – was that most of what made a person had settled in. There wouldn’t be too much divergence between the different instances. “I’ll try and get in touch with them as soon as I can.”

“We’ll raise the framejacking,” Raine said, still pronouncing the unfamiliar word oddly. “We’ve still got so much to figure out. And get used to.” She lifted a hand and snapped it like Cato had subjective months earlier, becoming Urivan. Amusingly enough, the various carapace colors of the Urivan race included the orange and white of the two sisters, so they could keep that much at least.

“Still a little weird,” Raine said, her claws shifting awkwardly, the gripping limbs clicking against the notches on her shoulders where they rested. Cato found the Urivan form, of pseudo-humanoid bug creatures, to be fairly odd, though he didn’t have sufficient genetic samples to do any analysis for System nonsense — the sisters forms were from a kinematic model, rather than a genetic one at the moment. He probably shouldn’t suspect everything odd was System-altered, as the universe produced plenty of oddities on its own, but he would probably be more right than wrong if he did.

“When we get more infrastructure we can put together some android frames for you, and those might help more,” Cato reassured her. “The virtualization here is quite good, but base reality is still the best test. Still need to get some samples of the actual biology before I’m comfortable sending you down there, but that can probably be done without tipping off the System.”

While he still wasn’t going to let the System have access to any unguarded bioweapon technology, it already had plenty of opportunity to study the frames of anyone who had survived the initial apocalypse. By picking carefully through the various common and public biomods, he got a library of what could be considered safe biotech to use. If the System could look for specific gene sequences or the like, it could flag any of Cato’s creations as being of Earth-origin, but he hadn’t yet seen any evidence of that kind of thinking. The closest he’d encountered was Uriva’s total embargo on warframes, but that seemed related to System-jamming and the associated quest rather than any deeper analysis.

While his factories built factories, he tutored the sisters and toyed with gene designs for some stealthier surface drones. Nothing that he’d be putting himself in, let alone Raine or Leese, but some semi-autonomous creatures that could get him the information he wanted. Surveillance, profiling and sampling, everything that he would need for his ultimate goals, all of it hidden inside innocuous animals. Innocuous as the System allowed, at least.

The radiofrequency lizards he’d given to Raine and Leese, which could communicate by bone induction, were a great test case. The System description didn’t even include the fact that they could process radio waves, or that the vibrations they caused were intended to be used to communicate. It seemed likely he could hide other creations in plain sight, as if the System

didn't seem to quite understand what an information transceiver was so long as it remained organic.

Some kind of plant seemed like it'd be the best bet. While an animal would be mobile, bouncing signals off satellites was far superior even to birds, and optimizing plant biology for the energy demands was not too difficult. It wasn't like chlorophyll and its analogues were all that inefficient, and while normal plants would never be able to spare the power, naturally evolved biology had severe energy constraints on the chemistry it could explore. Cato had no such limitations and the expertise of some extremely bright people to draw on.

He settled on an inoffensive, deep-rooting and thick-leaved plant with purple flowers, only slightly tweaked from its original form. It had been created for luxury primitivists resorts, where there was meant to be no visible technology for the people pretending to live a savage lifestyle. That meant he had something that could be put in a pot inside a city or planted somewhere in the wilderness and not look particularly out of place. It was tempting to try and make some portion of it useful to incentivize people to spread it, but he had to remind himself that cultivation was practically unknown within the System. People didn't even have herb gardens so far as he knew.

After his experience with Sydea, he found the food situation to be one of its most insidious changes. Not only were the lower ranks dependent upon System mechanisms for basic sustenance, but food couldn't be farmed and expanded and driven to marginal cost. At least until the highest ranks, where apparently food became irrelevant — and by then, people were already trained to be roving murderers. For the highest ranks, obviating all food requirements flipped around to be an unacceptable *lack* of constraint as there was no reason powerful people needed an actual civilization. They could roam and kill and destroy what they wanted without suffering any consequences.

In a way it wasn't much different from certain behavioral sinks that postbiologicals ran into, where they'd vanish into a virtual world forever, but at least that was frowned upon. Not the expected endpoint of all interaction with reality. A process that created killing machines and then set them atop all of creation was not what Cato would consider a good idea.

Cato was glad he had something to distract him from his own musings, as otherwise the urge to glass planets and damn the consequences might have become far too compelling. Tutoring Raine and Leese at least reminded him of the humanity — or whatever the species designation of choice might be — of the individuals inside the System. Though Cato did worry he wasn't exactly the best person to induct someone into the realities of postbiological life. He'd been raised entirely inside a community meant to accustom people to that transition and couldn't help but wonder if he'd skipped a few steps along the way.

"Orbital dynamics are weird," Raine said, wrestling with the control stick of her fighter craft.

"They sure are," Cato agreed over the radio link, though such calculations were really second nature to him. Virtual worlds aside, he'd probably spent far more time outside gravity wells than inside.

"You can keep 'em," Leese said cheerfully from inside her lab, where she was studying the progress of Cato's radio plant.

All of it was virtual, of course. He still only had enough factories to make more factories and add a tiny bit more computronium, but simulating basic physics and genetics was well within the capabilities of the aestivation. Cato had suggested the two sisters try to take up some hobbies since they couldn't work *all* the time, but he had been thinking something closer to their System origin when he did. Blacksmithing and leatherworking, or the like.

Instead, Leese had jumped headfirst into genetic manipulation and Raine had turned into a flight junkie, both atmospheric and vacuum craft. He hadn't tried to dissuade them. On the contrary, he was glad that their chosen paths would be useful in the future — though he was fairly certain such a consideration had influenced their choices. Cato didn't quite understand their attitude toward him, but he had to respect whatever loyalty it was.

"Still working on getting our actual orbital infrastructure up," he said, glancing at the progress report on the microsats he'd been sending up. They were tiny things, barely more than optical sensors and whisker lasers, but enough to start building up a rudimentary observation network. "We'll get you some real craft eventually," he continued. It would be insanely irresponsible to spend mass and energy on such a thing, until it wasn't. Exponential growth meant personal craft went from impossible to practically free in a very short amount of time. "Most of them won't work inside the System though, I'm afraid."

"I can always get wings," Raine said absently, vectoring off to whip around some improbably close-together asteroids in her simulation. "Maybe not for Urivan bodies though. There are *some* races that already have them, and with augmented bodies..." She trailed off as she targeted her virtual pursuers with railguns, sending hypervelocity projectiles sleeting through the void of space.

"Won't be *too* much longer before you can head back down, I think," Cato said, doublechecking the timeline. "Too bad I had to start completely from scratch. If I'd been able to use the double-size warframes like I wanted, I could have shaved months off the startup."

"I agree," Leese said, frowning as she dismissed the lab and its information readout with a flip a finger. "Something in my gut wants to get down there as soon as I can." Cato didn't dismiss the sentiment. Even in the postbiological era, the mysterious processes of intuition were correct more often than was statistically plausible, so instead he rearranged a few priorities. The change only advanced the timetable by a week at most, sacrificing orbital coverage for landing ability and biologics, but a week wasn't nothing.

The very first organic drones went down soon after. He couldn't mimic a native mosquito-analogue and instead had to scavenge material from fights. Spilled blood, severed appendages, or outright deaths were all targets for his creatures, though Cato only got the data dumps. After flat-out eating people and carrying brains it shouldn't have bothered him, but the carrion-eater approach felt strangely ghoulish.

Despite any reservations his simple scavengers got him genetic samples from dozens of Urivans, as well as plants and beasts from the surface to round out his biochemical profiling. That led to intense cloning sessions to fine-tune blood and tissue, and start tinkering with the protein chains to create properly augmented versions — as well as allow Raine and Leese to try correct virtual bodies and even meat bodies once again.

The Urivan frame was very different from the Sydean one, which was obvious to say but less obvious to experience. The largest difference, from Cato's perspective at least, was that Urivans had an entire additional set of limbs over Sydeans. The gripping claws that extended from the back and rested on the shoulder were tremendously strong, but lacked dexterity. They were perfect for holding onto shields, or for that matter bracing spears or polearms.

It likely would have been too much to expect Raine and Leese to adapt to the new style of fighting in new bodies, all in under a month, but they'd dredged out some assisted learning overlays from the databanks and essentially programmed in some artificial muscle memory to bridge the gap while they adapted. Cato should have thought of that himself, but had missed that particular trick since he was using one of the many onboarding rubrics that had been created for people who were newly digitized for one reason or another.

Once he had the most basic skeleton of satellite coverage, orbiting at over a hundred thousand miles from the planet's surface to avoid the System's tech-killing aura, he started broadcasting to the surface. He didn't know if there was anyone to receive, and there was no way that he could receive a reply, but he could at least send a message.

"This is Cato, broadcast only so no need to reply. We'll be down soon. Be careful and stay safe."

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The words buzzed through Raine's skull, nearly making her drop out of [Blazing Step]. She glanced back at Leese, and by mutual agreement they slowed to a stop, dropping down onto the slopes of the volcano. Waves of heat battered them from a nearby lava flow, and they slipped behind a handy boulder to shield them from the heat coming off the molten rock.

"He said *we*," Leese mused. "I can't think of anyone who that might refer to except for us. The other us. But why?"

"There's probably no point in speculating," Raine said with a shrug. "We can simply ask when he does whatever it is he needs to do. At least we know that it worked now. But is there any reason we should delay Platinum?" She gestured toward the volcano, where they had just finished one of the last quests required to prepare for their city defense and ascension to Platinum.

"I'd rather not," Leese said, and Raine agreed. If anything she'd feel better if they could present themselves to their patron as full Platitudes, a full rank above where they'd been when they'd first encountered Cato. Especially since they had some requests to make, after having had months to advance and to think.

They were wildly wealthy for people who had only been Golds for a few months, but they weren't going to be Golds for long and they had nowhere near the equipment peak Golds usually had. Even with all their advantages, they just hadn't spent the *time* to kit themselves out properly, or to find quests that gave special rewards, and regular essence tokens went only so far in finding the best gear. No matter how good their base abilities were, they still needed to be equipped properly for the best results.

With Cato's global coverage and ability to spot things in even the most remote locations, they could hunt down rarities and start making up for their deficit. Plus, if they could get a restock of the rations Cato had made, it would go a long way toward easing the troubles of traveling around the various worlds at both Gold and Platinum ranks. Though it did seem like they could make Platinum on Uriva.

Town defense quests, while necessary for ranking up, were not a common occurrence. Not least because nobody liked being *in* a town under siege by monster forces, especially since if the defenders failed the entire town could be destroyed. Even if people evacuated in time, that was people's homes gone, years of time and resources wasted. Raine estimated each one had over a hundred town-stones invested, and losing would mean hundreds more Urivans would have to ascend to Gold to replace it.

Of course, Uriva *did* have quite a few Golds. Far more than Sydea, and enough of them at the peak of the rank that a town defense quest had been created of its own accord. Raine had noticed it when checking the pylons in the local town Nexus, and hadn't believed it at first given the supposed rarity, but she was hardly going to protest. Just the thought made her pull up her status to double-check the quest.

[Defend Okrik Town. Begins in 16 Days, 7 Hours. Recommended Rank: Peak Gold]

The cracked ashen gravel of the volcano shifted underfoot as a distant roar announced one of the wandering elites emerging from within the caldera. Raine and Leese grimaced at each other in shared memory of how painful it had been to deal with, and Raine's armor was still scorched and half-melted from the fight. Some monsters were just worse than others.

The two of them took off again, hastily vacating the area so they didn't have to fight another. Both of them needed to repair equipment, and maybe even buy some replacements. Neither of them yet had a signature or growth weapon, nothing special that would hold them through many future ranks. Cato's original equipment had been replaced by some C- and D-tier, Gold Rank purchases — barring the special spears, of course.

Below them, the burnt and blasted volcano landscape gave way to a late evening jungle, the crackling of fire and heated stone turning to the hiss and growl of stalking predators. Sydea had only one Platinum dungeon, but Uriva had entire Platinum zones and towns to support delving them. Of course, the zones were nearly empty, as even on Uriva there weren't too many Platins at any given time, but that they existed at all was fantastically useful.

As Golds and non-Urivans they attracted more attention than they were comfortable with in the frontier towns, but there wasn't anything they could do about that. The quests for the Platinum zones were only given out at the towns in question — or the Temple or Training Halls, and they hadn't yet dared go there. At Platinum they'd feel more confident dealing with other Platins who might well be hostile toward off-worlders.

The town at the edge of the [Churning Jungle Conflict Zone] was considerably more tolerant. The Urivans there barely gave Raine and Leese a second look as they passed through the outer gates. Unlike Gosruk, the boxes of the buildings were all decorated in the colors that Urivans preferred, some even holding sprays of flowers or ferns, showing how well-off the town was. Raine knew that simply unlocking such decorations took a number of town upgrades, not to mention a certain amount of upkeep.

They proceeded to the Nexus to turn in the quest, offering the claws they'd harvested from the [Molten Obsidian Koro-ete]. It had taken three of the things to get enough, actually, simply because the stupid beasts kept *breaking* their claws during the fight. But they'd collected them all, and in return the pylon gave them a [Crystal of Wall Reinforcement], which according to its description could only be used during a town defense. As soon as Raine and Leese received their rewards, the quest updated.

[Town Defense Preparation Quest, Final: Retrieve three assault emplacements from the Dungeon of Charged Steps]

"Again?" Leese protested, aggrieved. Raine snorted. They had been to that dungeon three times, and each time they had hated it. The shifting, *timed* maze in each floor was an exercise in frustration, and nothing there was even interesting to fight, so it was simply a grueling race through lightning-charged, tight corridors. It was bad enough for them, so she couldn't imagine how bad it would be for unaugmented Gold Rank parties.

In fact, trying to get all the preparation steps done before the deadline would have strained any peak Gold party, and it was only the ability to act as if they were somewhere in Platinum that allowed them to finish with time to spare.

"Well, at least we know how to do it," Raine said with resignation. "Guess we'll add [Crystals of Insulation] to our supplies." Leese just sighed, and the two of them left the Nexus, slipping past a party of Urivans to shop.

The next time they heard from Cato was nearly eight days later. They had everything they needed for the defense quest, and merely had to wait out the countdown. Which wasn't to say they were idle, but they didn't venture far from the rooms they'd claimed in [Okrik Town].

"Hello again, Cato here. I've got you located, and communications should be possible within the hour. There's a nice, remote hill southeast of you I can send deliveries to, but no warframes for a while. The Urvan god was a lot more proactive than the Sydean one, and I don't want to draw attention either to me or to you."

"We've got to talk to him about his definition of soon," Raine said, somewhat irritated. It wasn't as if they could dictate to their patron, but she'd been expecting some kind of update in a more timely manner, once he'd made contact. She found herself irrationally jealous of their other versions, who had to have been under his direct instruction the whole time rather than running around on Uriva.

"It *would* have been nice to hear more often," Leese agreed, but bumped Raine's shoulder in admonishment. "Though he's right about not drawing attention. The Bismuth was bad enough, I can't imagine facing an actual *god*."

Raine grunted, but couldn't argue with that. She was well aware that despite their relative power they were very far down in the hierarchy, and what was worse they were fairly obvious. There weren't many Sydeans around, and that was never going to change with Sydea disconnected from the System.

"Well, let's go to that hill," she said instead, doublechecking her new armor and upgraded storage pack. Not that she expected to run into trouble, but it never paid to be unprepared when leaving the confines of a town.

They actually already knew the hill Cato was talking about, simply because it might feature in the defense quest when it finally engaged. Raine didn't know much about the details of the quest and there were no Platinums she could ask, but they'd done defense events in dungeons on rare occasion. Any local landmark could turn into a point that needed to be captured or destroyed, and they had made certain to survey the area.

It was late evening, the purple and orange and green moons glowing in the sky, and Raine craned her neck starting upward to try and see if she could spot one of Cato's machines. With her augmented eyesight, boosted further by her Gold Rank, it was far easier to pick out the specks of birds and distant flying monsters, though nothing stood out to her just yet. Though part of her wondered if any of the stars were actually one of Cato's creations, so very far away.

"And we're back! You'd be amazed at how finicky it is to get proper communications when you can't use anything that could tip off the System." Cato's voice came through the lizards they still wore on their heads, a sound that wasn't exactly a sound. *"Don't have worldwide comms just yet, but I'll work on it."*

"It's good to talk to you again, Cato," Leese said politely. "It's been months."

"Yes, unfortunately things do take time. I hope you haven't had too much trouble."

"Only the usual," Leese replied, glancing to Raine. "We were rather curious about the 'we' you mentioned. Did you, ah, make more of us?"

"Yes, I instantiated another version," Cato confirmed. *"I'm sure you're wondering why. At the time I didn't know whether you were going to be around when I was ready to contact the surface, that's part of it, but there's also the fact that you're my vanguard."* The term stiffened Raine's spine, as well as confirming that Cato had neither forgotten their contributions nor intended to replace them. *"It's you who go to new worlds and you're the ones who are reaching for ever-higher ranks. You surely don't want to sit here and muck about with local politics and all the risk that'll bring."*

"No," Raine said, wincing at the thought.

"And I come bearing gifts! Hang on, almost down." The moment he said that, Riane spotted a shadow against the stars, and a large oblong shape on vast cloth-like wings came into view. It glided down the last hundred feet or so, and landed ungently against the ground.

Raine and Leese approached it as mist rolled off from the cold surface, finding labels like *This End Up* and *Open Here* in System text imprinted on the black surface of the thing. Between the two of them they popped off the top of the craft and found a number of color-coded metal boxes wrapped in some black webbing. Half of them were red-orange for her, and the other half white for Leese.

"I have some new and updated Cato-spears for you to take, to set me up on new worlds, but that's simple enough. One set of boxes have a large number of rations for you, and a small number of pills. You can drop the old spears in the receptacle at the far end, there, since we don't want those going unaccounted for."

"We had been wanting more rations," Raine remarked, cutting the webbing as she unloaded the boxes from the craft, the contents not so frozen as the exterior.

“Well, these are special. Since I’ve had time to do more analysis, I’ve figured out some more things I can add to your augmented bodies without harm, and the rations have the raw materials for it. They’ll make your scales tougher – I’m not sure how tough, but enough to withstand a Gold-rank blow without System augmentation – and give you complete regeneration. Also improve your pain response and either give you a backup for or decentralize various organs. You’ll be much harder to kill and you should be able to eat anything.”

“That is a lot,” Raine said, blinking at Cato’s list as she cracked open one of the boxes to peer at the hundreds of rations inside. Enough to last for months, probably.

“We definitely appreciate the gifts, Cato,” Leese said politely, sorting through the goods as Raine began transferring rations to her storage pouch. It’d be a squeeze, but it would have been much harder if they couldn’t store most of the weapons in their actual Skills. “What is this?” She peered at a box that, when opened, had a row of what seemed to be young plants, broad-leaved and unremarkable.

“A solution for our communication problems,” Cato said happily, voice still buzzing through her head. *“Plant them outside the capital where the portal is, or in pots inside would be better, and near any town you can. Won’t give me global coverage, but it might at least let me talk with you on other planets thanks to the portal connections.”*

“Certainly an improvement,” Raine said, her previous irritation easing. She didn’t expect Cato to apologize for the lapse in communication, but what he’d sent along was an admission that it really was a problem. And it didn’t seem like they were to be replaced with their other selves. “We can place at least some of these before the defense quest.”

“Great,” Cato said, as Raine leaned over to inspect one of the plants. *“Hopefully all the changes will be done by then. Live changes take some time.”*