

## Chapter Six: Real Training

As they materialized back home, Breylin stood looking towards the sky.

“Ardax was the ultimate advocate. Everyone looked up to, and respected him. You replacing him is a disheartening task for you. Your kind never saw you as a leader, did they?”

“Not really, but they never saw me looking like this. I think my Adonis-like physique could command leadership.”

“His name is Ardax, not Adonis. That may be one of your advocates, but we have Ardax. Resect your environment. You could never return as Ardax. A Razon could never survive in the primitive atmosphere for longer than a wik. Your physique wouldn’t be your statement of power. Your confidence would be.”

He forgot where he was, and who the people were. His dreams of grandeur were moot at this point. Aeon-Zannas had no compassion, or were tolerant to mishaps. He had to adjust. He saw Breylin’s gloom, and went closer to her. He put his hand on her shoulder.

“I’ve never seen this side of a Aeon-Zanna before. The despondent Aeon-Zanna. This must devastate you.”

Breylin took a second to respond, but she covered his hand, and turned to him.

“Ardax was... my companion in combat, and also affection. I decided not to say anything until I got you back to advocate status. I volunteered to restore you. Renmehl thought he made the decision, but I was always there to fix you. Now I know you’re just Derrick Santos, and I was wise in my choice to delay my reveal.”

Derrick was very surprised Breylin had any capacity for affection. She was a hardened, war bred killer. She looked as if she enjoyed killing. Then he realized she only killed him to make him better, and she killed her squad mate because of her staunch leadership. She wasn’t bred for violence, she just did her job very well.

“Breylin, I know I’m not Ardax, and now you do too. I understand your dark feeling. And we do something on Earth called compassion. I already know in your race, compassion is synonymous to weakness, but before I was Razon, I was human. I can’t, and won’t abandon my compassion. You may want to blow my head off from my admission, but I’m here if you need any comfort.”

Breylin looked at him, and felt incredibly strange.

“If I told a true Aeon-Zanna that, they would punch me, and tell me not to show my feelings. I just told you how I truly feel, and instead of you avoiding me because I told you I thought you were someone else, you laid your speculated safety on the line to tell me you care. I won’t blow off your head because you care. I will... well, I have to make you the advocate. Go to T, and do not say you are Derrick Santos, learn singularity denseness manipulation, and return. When you come back, we will perform the Xanax ritual, and your training will become difficult, but you have Ardax’s essence, so you will get through this.”

Derrick was relieved she didn't kill him. He knew nothing of the Xenax ritual, but became determined to make him the advocate. He knew he would be in a new world of hurt, but if he helped Breylin, it would be happy receiving the pain. Derrick was Razon on the outside, but human on the inside.

"I'm traveling to T. Will you be alright here?"

"Razons internalize, Derrick. I will be fine. Just keep your statement true, and learn under T. I will make you strong enough to defeat Skargisch."

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Derrick went to Renekost to see T. T was manipulating certain matter's age processes. He accelerated volatile matter to its half-life to observe the residue anomalies across the surface.

"T, I'm back."

T turned to see Derrick, and automatically accessed his recent memories.

"Breylin doesn't know The Movement well enough, Derrick. You don't have to tell me anything, your mind already did."

"So you know. We have to keep this a secret for Breylin's safety."

T looked at him.

"I must commend your species, Derrick. You were abducted against your will, shot multiple times terminally, went through a devastating genus process of transformation to look the way you do now, went against the Rezleks, found out Breylin made a mistake, found the true Ardax was dying, and through all that trauma, still want to protect the Razons, and also your harsh trainer. You aren't vengeful. You still want to help."

"I have been living in dirt for years, and the Razons were the only ones to show me who I could be. I know they thought I was their advocate, so now I have to step up. I can't be angry at forced revelation. I'm actually grateful. I was contemplating clocking out...ending my life before they took me. This is just my harsh wake-up call. I have to protect the Razons, and primarily Breylin." Derrick made his decision. It was time to pay for his realization.

Breylin has shot you multiple times, and has broken many of your bones. Why are you compelled to help her?" T asked.

"Breylin did all of that to make me understand my own fortitude. She knew Ardax could take it, and didn't ease my training. She inadvertently showed me my life fears were unfounded. She opened my door, and now I have to step through it."

T went to Derrick, and placed his hand on his shoulder.

"If you are ready to step, let's have you learn temporal singularity weight displacement."

Derrick and T began the training. Derrick had to learn how to distribute tons of weight across the time spectrum to lighten the mass for a certain amount of time.

“How long can I displace this weight, T?”

“An il can be parsed infinitely, so even if the mass has a limited existence-span, you can lift it for the time you need. In your terminology, the mass just becomes dark matter heavy at the end of its existence. Just train to manipulate it for the time you need to handle it.”

Derrick got the technique down eventually, and was lifting massive boulders with ease. T had to move to the next phase. Derrick mastered the technique of controlling the smaller infinities within the larger infinity.

“Are you proficient at lifting inanimate objects?”

Derrick telekinetically lifted the entire lot of boulders.

“I think I’ve harnessed the concept, T. I understand the astro-physics.”

“Then you are ready to try to lift an animate, Njejx?”

Njejx came to the aid of T, and saw all the boulders floating.

“What is your request, T?”

“Just stand there with a lower center of gravity. Ardax will attempt to lift you.”

Njejx stood in a braced stance to make himself difficult to lift.

“An animate is much more difficult to lift than an inanimate. Animates have fluid coursing through their body in which you must control. Understand this complication and try to lift Njejx.”

Derrick thought it would be easy. Njejx was a mere fraction of the weight of the smallest boulder. He could have thrown him without the use of The Movement. That was the point of knowing Njejx wasn’t a rock, and harnessing the weight aspect was the easier part of manipulating matter.

“Stand normally, Njejx,” T said, and turned to Derrick. Now I think you understand the lifting of a living entity constitutes more than mass weight temporal spectrum spreading.”

“If the advocate could do it, I must learn to do it,” Derrick said.

“You can continue your trans.mitigation training, Njejx. Bring me a krex of flugeneese in containment.” T turned to Derrick. “You will began to lift small animals designed to regenerate after you excessively decompose them with a violent cacophony.”

“When I do what?”

“Explode them, Derrick. Blow them up.”

“I’ll blow them up?! That’s kind of callously morbid.”

“For an il,” T said. Flugeneese regenerate instantly when destroyed.. We have trained with them from the beginning. I’ve decomposed way more than just a krex of them.”

Njejx brought a cage with eight of these cute little fur balls. He placed them in front of T.

"Those things are cuddly, T," Derrick said.

"Those 'things' multiply at an exponential level, and can cause nourishment supply depletion to all of Razo quickly. We have no clue if they can expire with their involuntary regeneration, so these 'cuddly' things will destroy every inhabitant on this sphere if we do not segregate their gender designations." T told Derrick in so many words he didn't need to feel bad about using the flugeneese for training.

"Well, I guess a rat is cute to someone," Derrick said, and began to concentrate.

He got deeply into state, and a flugeneese began to quiver. He tried to pick it up. The creature's eyes got big, and with a tiny screech, it exploded.

"That 'fur ball' must have been very heavy to you," T said. "Now do you understand the cytology of an animate exponentially augments your Movement abilities?"

"This will take forever to master, T."

"Forever doesn't exist anymore for you, Derrick. You have mastered the fourth dimension. Stop time until you get this correct."

Derrick did know how to stop time, so he did.

"Do you understand my instructions?" T asked.

"It's been a while, T. I've mastered it now."

T was curious.

"How long had you ceased time?"

"Around fifteen chinaks," Derrick said

"You ceased time for two and a half vods?" T asked. "A vod is the equivalency of a Gregorian year in your previous environment roughly."

"Yes, I'd say about that long. Organic fluid is a very tricky substance to manipulate, but I think I have it now."

Derrick telepathically picked up a flugeneese from the cage, and began to spin it.

"I also learned gyro- centrifugal propulsion of an animate."

He slung the flugeneese, and hit Njejx in the head with it while he was concentrating on his manipulation of making the leader of his flugeneese shrink another.

As it bounced off his head, Njejx peered at Derrick. Derrick waved at him with a smile.

"You are definitely not Razon," T began. "Razons do not poses a 'sense of humor' inherently. Do not expose yourself carelessly. Derrick. Although that was kind of funny, don't repeat it away from training."

T was happy Derrick understood singularity weight chronology displacement separation in all matter. They kept lifting, and spinning many things. In-animates, and animates alike.

“Go to Breylin, and tell her you are almost ready. When you return from replenishment, you will master mind manipulation,” T said.

“Is that the last thing to learn, T?”

“To defeat Skargisch, yes. You still have much to learn, but that isn’t necessary at this point. When you defeat our immediate antagonist, we will finish. Go to Razo for now to replenish. Expect the unexpected, and we will finish later. Breylin needs to give you one more thing to complete your final task.”

Derrick was about to ask about T’s ambiguous request, but knew T wouldn’t clarify anything. He just said farewell, and traveled home.

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Derrick materialized in his stark room with the gray walls. He knew he had to talk to Breylin, so he located her.

*She’s in the training area. Why should I be surprised?* Derrick thought as he went to training.

Breylin was avoiding a slew of mini-attackers. They were action figure sized, but swarmed like wasps. As they enveloped her, she slung herself into the electric barrier frying them all, including herself. As she revived, she saw Derrick’s amazement.

“What?” she asked as she stood amongst the charred mini-warriors.

“You just killed yourself in order to beat them. That works in training, but what about real battle?”

“You never really understood what our training rounds consist of,” she said. “Every training round or weapon is not authentic Aeon-Zanna weaponry. No other psychical ammunition can disrupt our physiology. Our training rounds are real to everyone else.”

Derrick realized why the Aeon-Zanna Razons were the protectors.

“The Aeon-Zannas must be revered as gods on this sphere.”

“We protect every Razon existing. We are designed to protect. If we cannot fulfill our calling, every Razon will die. We are not god-like, just tougher, and built to defend,” Breylin said as she reset her training scenario.

As Breylin prepared herself for another army of mini warriors Derrick spoke.

“I can lift Skargisch. I’m almost there.”

“A Brawzak isn’t a pushover. Skargisch can resist your temporal manipulation.” Breylin began to avoid the mini’s projectile attacks.

“Like I said, almost. I’m learning thought control later.”

Breylin back-flipped to avoid the barrage, landed in the splits in the middle of them, and swept her legs to sling all of them across the mat. As they were disoriented, she began to crush them.

“You understand Skargisch has two minds. One controlling the mental while the other maintains the physical. This will not be easy for you. Why do you think Ardax left to prepare? This was going to be difficult for him. Do not treat this defense as trivial,” Breylin said with concern.

“What do you have for me to complete my mind manipulation training?”

Breylin knew this was coming. It was her reason to distract herself with training.

“In order for you to become familiar with another mind, I have to share my mind with you. So, I read your mind, and he knows you are Derrick Santos.”

Derrick became confused with her statement.

“Yes he does. How did you know he knew? How does this mind share work?”

“I know you wouldn’t say anything to him, and since he told you about the Xanax ritual, he knows we must perform it in order for you to progress.”

“I know Xanax is a palindrome, but that’s about all I know.” Derrick said. “What is this ritual you keeping so shrouded from me?”

Breylin had to reveal the ritual, but Derrick living in his world would take it as not a scrupulous scientific act, but an erogenous practice.

“The reason Xanax is a palindrome is the ritual is closed within itself. We have to share and absorb essences. It is a mental process dealt through physical transfer through the Aeon-Zanna apparatus of execution.”

Derrick was still confused.

“What, we fight closely?”

Breylin had to show him. She grabbed his shoulders, turned him, and led him to his quarters.

“The reason I am pushing you to your room is this begins the ritual. You must enter the chamber first.”

This was getting stranger to him. He stopped walking and turned to Breylin.

“Hold up, Breylin. I’ve been doing whatever you’ve requested without question. Aside from the re-fit, I thought you knew everything. Now since I know you aren’t absolute, I have questions. What ‘physical’ thing are we doing to transfer essences?”

“We are physically fusing to connect our essences through liquidus substance transfer.”

“...What?”

Breylin turned him around to push him to his room.

“I have explained enough to you. Skargisch is coming, and we need an exceptional advocate. We must complete the Xanax ritual immediately, no questions.”

Derrick stopped asking, and just trusted Breylin's intent to do what they must to defend Razo. They arrived at his room.

"You must enter of your own volition. The ritual begins with voluntary accordance."

Derrick had a choice. Should he enter to be subject to an unknown ritual, or should he resist.

*Well, she can't eat me... or can she? She shot me many times, but it was to prepare me for the impossible. Maybe this ritual will complete what she has fought so hard to finish her sculpture of me.*

Derrick wanted to be the best to defend Razo. He had been skittishly cautious his whole life. This was the largest test of his confidence.

"Six of one, half a dozen of the other," he said, and walked in.

Breylin followed.

"Okay, Breylin. What is this ritual?"

"We need to touch bodies to transfer our secondary liquid. Our primary transfer is slightly more intrusive." She disrobed, and stood naked waiting.

He gazed at her body, and realized what the ritual was. He began to take off his gear.

As they were both naked, Breylin said, "I see you do not need any Xanax ritual stimulant to complete the insertion process."

"Breylin, you are beautiful. There is nothing else I need to stimulate me."

Breylin went to Derrick, grabbed him by his throat, and slammed him against the wall.

"This is an essence transfer ritual! This must be done for battle advancement for you! Do not mix this ritual with enamor! This is very difficult for me because you look like Ardax, and I cannot mutually transfer enamor to you! It will dilute the process! We both don't need this ritual tainted in any way!"

She dropped him and turned around. As Derrick held his throat, she spoke again.

"I hope you understand why I was being so cryptic with my explanation. You must learn the mind manipulation, so you need this ritual to accept original Aeon-Zanna mental cytology from one who has done it before. The ritual is not an exotic innervation, it's a chemical transfer. I have been battling my amorous feeling to control my actions to make this transfer as pure as possible. If we fail, you fail, and Razo fails. We cannot fail."

Derrick never heard rejection this way. He knew this had to be done, but his first encounter wouldn't be affection based. He couldn't just cut off his lust. He hoped she could.

"I'm not Ardax, Breylin. I'm that pudgy, skittish loser you abducted. Ardax died. I know we left before his demise, but he is not of this realm anymore. I'm sure he wants you to be the proficient warrior you have always been. I'm not Ardax, but I know he's waiting for you. Do this to make him proud. I can't cut off my lust. It's a human thing. I inherently like strong women. I do believe a native Aeon-Zanna defender can. Let's complete this ritual so I can beat Skargisch."

Breylin sighed.

“Stop making me like you, Derrick. I’m having enough problems with my affection of Ardax. Liking you doesn’t help, it hurts.”

Derrick knew this had to be done, so he tapped into her Aeon-Zanna to make her ‘liking’ a little less of a factor.”

“You’re good at deceiving Renmehl with your infiltration, but you are a terrible trainer. I thought an Aeon-Zanna would defend Razo at any cost. You’re letting your selfish desire destroy your vow to defend. You aren’t a true Aeon-Zanna, you just fake it like a mindless Rezlek would. You’re not Aeon-Zanna, you’re an impostor Razon.”

Breylin was never spoken to like that before. Aeon-Zannas were feared and respected. At that point, her pride overshadowed her ‘like’.

“I am an authentic Aeon-Zanna! I proudly would give my life to protect Razo!”

“I don’t believe you! I should get guard to kill you! An Aeon-Zanna completes every task! You’re letting a little thing like your emotions hinder you!”

That switched her enamor. She went to Derrick, and slammed him up against the wall. “Why you little Flugeneese nothing!” With her determination to prove she was a real Aeon-Zanna, they completed the ritual.