***Niyolue’s choice***

*By Franc Kravos*

The two suns were shinning bright on the walls of the room. The white curtains were gently moving in the slow and fresh wind. There was a gentle sweet aroma, which smelled like the flowers found on the white beaches in the northern part of Fangrolyuin peninsula. The room was large, with a high ceiling and big open windows to let as much sunlight in as possible. On the walls there were purple plants with yellow blossoms that were moving in the afternoon breeze.

Suddenly through the doorway came a beautiful creature with purplish skin and long lushes white hair. Lightly dressed and showing lots of skin. On her head bestowed a purple jewel accompanied by little silver wear, which hugged the jewel in such a way it looked like it was floating. She sat down on a chair and looked in the mirror. Suddenly she inhaled deeply and took off her majestic crown, configured her free hair into a bun and took a moment to look at herself. Her gentle hands reached for a compartment and took out some seashells. In them there were paints, which she used to paint dark and harsh lines on her face. She began to feel disconnected and feelings of guilt and confusion came over her, but she quickly shook them off. She took off her clothes and dressed herself in a puffy black and red dress that covered her from head to toe. She felt a tight grip on her waist and a contracting feeling in her three hearts. Her lungs were working hard to get a breath of air. Nevertheless, she started walking. It was hard and she felt dizzy, but she pushed through it. When she went outside she was escorted to a ship.

She didn’t remember anything from the ride. It was like she fell asleep but was wide awake. When they finally arrived the contracting feeling didn’t go away. The building she entered was different from before. It was tall and made of steel with sharp peeks sticking out. She went inside and came forth a large dark door and looked at it for a moment. She took a breath and opened the door gently. The room was dim, filled with strange musky aromas. The creatures inside were wearing dark and puffy clothes, harsh black makeup and they had little to no hair. They wore many big and heavy jewels and weren’t ashamed to show off their gold. In the middle there was a table filled with a lot of food and drinks. Behind the table they sat, chugging and eating the food with half of it dripping or falling out of their big mouths. They talked with their mouths open, laughed as if there was no tomorrow and argued over the smallest things. Nobody actually noticed. The queen sat herself down on a chair that wasn’t made for someone like her. She was far too small and skinny. Having noticed her, they were annoyed and started to ignore her. Then she took the courage and stood up. The room went quiet. They were all looking with resentment, but before she could say anything they started to laugh. Their laugh was piercing and swinish. After a while one of them stood up, “Stop laughing like a bunch of imbeciles - Can’t you see she is trying to say something?” they went quiet and he sat down. “Thank you K-19,” she said. “Well since I have caught your precious attention may I not waste it any longer, because I know you all mighty and powerful beings have little time to give.” “You forgot wealthy” interrupted one of the attendances. “Yeah and let’s not forget extremely beautiful,” said another. “Honestly she looks quite horrible. Who would have thought, a Niyoltruck dressing up as a Katherin,” said a third. They all started to laugh again. The room went dark. She again felt a tight and contracting feeling in her waist. “She is foolish - and look she can’t even put on her makeup correctly,” they laughed even more. “She is just like her parents: dumb, boring and pathetic,” they laughed so hard they couldn’t breathe. Tears began to fill her eyes and she ran out of the room. When she came outside she began to fell dizzy. She fell to the ground and started crying. It began to get dark and cold.

But that was interrupted by a warm hand on her shoulder. “My majesty,” said her servant “tell me what has happened to you?” It took her a few moments to comprehend what he had actually said and when she did, she hugged him and started crying. He hugged her back and so the two sat on the floor for a moment. She began to speak even though it was even harder to breathe than before. “Do you ever wonder whether people would like you more or less if they could see inside you? I mean, I’ve always felt like the Katherines dump me right when they start to see what I look like from the inside – well, except K-19. But I always wondered about that. If people could see what I look like from the inside – if they could live in my memories – would anyone love me? At least I know my parents did – but they are gone now. Dead and they left me with an angry nation to calm before the Katherines punish them. I sacrifice myself for them more and more and yet they are never satisfied. I tried everything. I acted like them, I educated myself on their culture, I put on their makeup and I even dressed myself in this tight dress for them. But the Katherines only ignored and laughed at me. Can’t they see I am trying? Tell me By’youla; tell me what do I have to do?” There was silence and then By’youla said: “Queen Niyolue, can’t you see that they don’t accept you. It is because you aren’t them. You are you; you are a Niyoltruck and nothing less. Why would you sink so low just to please them? After all they did to us. My majesty, they invaded our planet, took our land, enslaved our people and killed the ones that rebelled. They have brought nothing but destruction to our land, our home, your home. But yet you stay blind. I know you have been raised to respect them, but you aren’t your parents. They were cowards that never rebelled, but you have the opportunity to do what is right for your people. Take my hand and we shall join the rebellion together.” She was in shock and started to think. It was hard for her to make a decision and the tight dress didn’t help. “But the people - they will be tortured and killed. We can’t let that happen. I will surely find a way for us to coexist - I just need more time. If I could just get them to listen,” she answered. “Niyolue,” he took her hand and looked into her eyes, “We are a race on a planet governed by two suns and two moons; we do not have to be governed by two nations – The Katherines don’t listen, they only consume and consume to fill their unquenchable thirst. But this is our chance to fight back and take what is rightfully ours. So take my hand and let’s make a change – together.”

They stared into each other’s eyes for a while and then she tried to stand up. She barley did and every step she took hurt her in the waist. She couldn’t bare it any longer. She lifted her fable arm and grabbed the collar. She wanted to rip the dress apart, but she hesitated. It was hard. Her hand started to shake and all she could think about was what would happen next. She almost let go, as if she was ready to give in, but then she took a small breath and started rip her dress apart. Finally she could breathe. Tears of relief fell on her dark face. She took her hands and cleaned her makeup off. She felt even more relief, as if she was shedding her old skin. She touched By’youla’s hand and he lifted her up. Her eyes looked back at the door. Finally she was ready to walk away. The two suns were shinning on her smooth purple face. He gave her the crown and she looked at it for a moment. Then she bestowed it on her head and began to walk with By’youla by her side.