

# *ENTRANCE*

## **Chapter VII**

*“Matthew!” exclaimed Regis in a loud whisper, “We thought that you were dead!”*

They decided that the Reidforcians, who were probably monitoring the transmitter, thought that they were in the Processing Room; and that they were right where he wanted them, there would be no rush on their part to act.

To their right they saw long drapes hanging from one end of the room to the other and from the ceiling to the floor. They were dark blue with thick pleats. Upon exploring the drapes they found them to be impenetrable; there were no seams or separations.

A glossy green board covered the wall to the left. No exit there.

In front of them was the throne of Lord Froth. Behind the throne were loosely hung drapes purple in color with gold trim. The drapes hung from a golden rod with figurines on each end duplicating the helmets of the Reidforcian guard. Behind the drapes was a blank wall.

In the center of the room was a triangular shaped table with massive armchairs. This was the table where sat the greatest and bravest of the Reidforcian army. Strewn all about the room were the decomposing bodies of these great warriors who had fallen at the hands of our small force.

“Hmmm, it looks as though we are stuck.” Turning to Conrad, Joseph said, “Hey Conrad, you’ve been in here before. Do you have any ideas how we can get out of here?”

“Come to think of it, I do know a way to get out of here,” Conrad began to

remember. “There are buttons on the underside of each arms on the throne. I think what we need to do is push both buttons at the same time, and then a staircase will appear under the throne.

Joseph took the right side and Mark took the left. On Conrad’s command they needed to push the buttons at the same time. “

OK ... NOW!” Conrad ordered.

They pushed the buttons under the arms of the chair and then a deep groan began to shake the throne room and the royal chair began to move backwards exposing a stairway leading down into a dark abyss. They gathered up their tools and equipment. Joseph and Denise put on the atmosphere suits and shouldered the now repacked backpacks. Mark and Dr. Xelco picked up the CPU, and loaded it onto Mark’s back. They tied it with some ropes that they had taken from the decorations on the drapes. The CPU continued to give off the faint signal from the transmitter now in the belly of the whither showing that the whither was still in the Processing Room.

Conrad picked up one of the helmets. He wanted the translator thinking they could use it for study later on. He made sure he had as many Reidforcian weapons as he could carry. They debated on whether to bring a complete uniform, but dismissed the idea because of its weight; and because they no longer needed it as a disguise.

Denise noticed a larger triangular key hanging from the belt of one of the slain guards who looked like he was a high ranking officer. She took it off and attached it to her own belt. Around her neck she put the Key of Rashtad.

Conrad led the way down the dark dingy stairway.

“Be careful, the way is dangerous and there are small interrupters on the walls. If you touch one you will notify them immediately of our location, and you also might get fried,” Conrad directed the group. “Just stay in the middle and you’ll be fine.”

The darkness swelled over them like a giant wave. The same mist they had encountered outside the gates filled the corridor and made it impossible to see, even with the helmet lights turned on.

As they crept forward the groan of the throne moving back into position rattled the

walls around them. When they reached the bottom of the stairs Conrad warned them to stop and wait. Just then a rushing noise rose up from in front of them and blew past. When the noise died down, the mist that had surrounded them disappeared. The way was now clear.

An yellow light coming from a continuous light bar in the ceiling now lighted their way. Down the hallway they walked. Silence pervaded the air. It seemed like an eternity when before them rose a massive door. The surface looked like wood, but when they touched it had the cold feel of steel. Massive hinges extended from the sides into the center where the now familiar inscriptions on the triangular shaped medallion left them wondering what to do now.

“Denise why don’t you read the inscriptions on this door,” Joseph said with expectation.

“Yeah, write down what it says so you can tell us. In the mean time we’ll check out the hallway to the right and see what we can find,” Conrad said in an authoritative voice.

“Wait, did you say that Denise could translate the symbols on the door?” Dr. Xelco asked.

“Yes I can,” she replied. “It just takes a little while.”

“That’s amazing!” Dr. Xelco said in astonishment. “How did you learn how to do that?”

“I don’t know, it just came to me,” Denise replied.

“Don’t you remember I told you that when we were in the Moulton Chapel?” Joseph jumped in.

“You told me so many things, I guess I just forgot. It’s still pretty amazing though,” Dr. Xelco responded.

Denise began to study the inscriptions while the others checked out the hall to the right. She took out her C-Tablet and wrote down what she was translating.

At the end of the hall was a door smaller than the first but made of the same material. The door was propped open slightly and a light shone through.

“I think I can make this out.” Denise referred to the notes she was taking. “It says

‘To enter you must know the secrets of Reidforcia for within these walls reside the spirits of the emperors of the past. To fail is to suffer a most heinous death, but to succeed is to know the future of things to be.’“ Denise finished reading her translation.

“Are you sure?” questioned Dr. Xelco.

“She’s gotten us this far, hasn’t she?” responded Joseph

Next to the large inscription were two smaller triangles that appeared and then disappeared every twenty seconds.

“What do you think that was all about?” a startled Mark spoke up.

“There’s more information on the bottom of the door,” commented Denise. “Let me see what it says.”

As Denise inspected the rest of the door, Conrad suggested that they check out the doorway that lay to their right.

“Stay here we’ll be right back,” Conrad said softly.

Joseph went with him, still not totally sure about Conrad’s loyalties.

Just as they approached the door they heard the now too familiar sound of the clamoring footsteps of the Reidforcian guards marching down the hallway.

Everybody froze at the sound of the marching feet first as they got louder and then grew softer as the guards moved past the other side of the door; then absolute silence. They looked at each other and waited until they were sure the hallway was dead silent.

“Do you think they know we are here,” whispered Conrad.

“I hope not,” responded Joseph. “I think the hallway is clear now. Let’s see where we are,” Joseph continued as he stepped out into the hallway.

“What do you think you are doing Joseph,” Conrad exclaimed in a shallow voice.

“Just seeing where we are. Come on let’s check this out,” Joseph replied glancing back for a second.

Out in the hallway he realized that this looked very familiar.

“Get Denise, I think she can help me out here,” Joseph said leaning back through the doorway.

“WHY?” questioned Conrad.

“Just get her, OK?” Joseph seemed a little irritated as he reacted to Conrad’s reluctance.

Conrad motioned for Denise to come over to the door. She came over to where Joseph was and looked out into the hall.

“Joseph, this is the hall where the prisoners are kept. I think that door over there is the cell where we found everybody,” Denise said with a smile on her face.

“I thought this was the same hallway. I just wanted to make sure I was right. Thanks Denise,” Joseph smiled at her to show his gratitude to her. “Would you help me make sure that this is the cell with the other humans, OK?”

“Sure, is it clear?” Denise asked as she moved past Joseph towards the slightly opened door

“Clear.” Joseph replied.

They moved slowly and quietly down the hall to the door with the Terra emblem on it. She took the Key of Rashtad, and inserted it into the slot on the door. The door swung open and inside, to their delight, sat Regis Fisbon and the others with a look of astonishment on their faces.

“How.... Ah.... I....,” is all Regis could muster.

“Come on let’s get out of here. Quickly!” ordered Joseph.

Regis and four others, Regis Fisbon, Thomas Reikof, Yendor Remlap, Maxwell Linden, and Somat Donley crept out of the cell, and followed Joseph and Denise down the hallway to the open door. As they left the confines of the cell, they realized that they were now free, and began to celebrate and hug each other.

“Settle down, the guards aren’t that far away,” Joseph cajoled them.

When they reached the relative safety of the second hallway, Regis immediately recognized Dr. Xelco.

“Matthew!” exclaimed Regis in a loud whisper, “We thought that you were dead!”

“Well, it appears that you were wrong, and that’s good for me,” responded Dr. Xelco. “By the way Regis, how have they been treating you?”

“About as bad as ever,” Regis laughed as he approached Dr. Xelco and embraced

him.

Denise returned to the inscription and reviewed her notes on the C-Tablet.

“I think I’ve got this figured out,” Denise interrupted the reunion. “The next time the two smaller triangles appear we should push on them at exactly the same time. This will activate the time lock sequence. After a period of three seconds I have to put the Key of Rashtad into the slot that will appear in the center of the emblem. That should open the door. After that I don’t know for sure what is next,” Denise concluded her evaluations.

The group slowly and quietly crept back to the large door. Denise, Dr. Xelco, Regis Fisbon, and the other newly freed prisoners waited for the triangles to appear again. Meanwhile Mark, Joseph, and Conrad studied the map on the C-Tablet trying to figure out where they were and how to complete their plan of escape.

“According to your map, we could easily go through the prisoner’s hallway, then across the courtyard and out the side exit putting us very near to where you left the ZX/2,” Mark pointed out apparently trying to make Joseph feel dumb for not having noticed this earlier.

“That’s true, however that was the way that Denise and I entered the compound so they will probably be waiting for us at the gates, and possibly at the ZX/2,” Joseph stated with a grin of satisfaction for having logically answered Mark’s inquiry.

“Actually, since they had the CPU, I would have to guess that the ZX/2 is inside of the compound, most likely in the courtyard. It’s a big enough area for them to work on it there.” Joseph offered.

Conrad studied the map, and concluded, “Since beyond the hall to our right is the guards’ living quarters that way won’t help us much. Why don’t we see what’s behind the large door in front of us? It may be another way for us to escape.”

Just then the small triangles appeared again and Denise pressed them. “Look,” she said quietly, with excitement. “I was right, there’s the indentation I told you about!”

She slowly and carefully inserted the Key of Rashtad and gave it a little jiggle. The door moved back slightly and then slowly slid behind the left hand wall revealing a large room with a blue transparent dome in the center. Inside the dome was a large chair; made

of the same material as the throne of Lord Froth, covered in purple with gold trim. On the front of the dome was a small golden triangle that had one of largest diamonds any of them had ever seen.

Seeing the size of the diamond, one of the newly freed prisoners, Thomas Reikof, ran toward it, attempting to take it. As soon as Thomas touched the medallion on the dome he froze in his tracks while blue streaks of lightening engulfed his body and then he disappeared into thin air with a loud scream of terror. Then silence.

The door shut behind them with the thud of a solid door.

“Where did he go?” was all Regis could muster.

“I don’t know,” Joseph said quietly as he moved slowly towards the dome.

“Don’t get too close or you may disappear as well,” warned Denise.

A dim blue light came from somewhere in the walls and lit the room. Upon inspection, the room appeared to be an ancient burial ground. It was round with a domed shaped ceiling. Starting at the side of the door and continuing on around were glass bubbles containing the dehydrated remains of what they ascertained to be the carcasses of the rulers mentioned on the door. Above each of them was an emblem and below an inscription. The room was very large and the ceiling very high.

“What significance do you put on the statement on the door and the triangles on these orbs?” asked Yendor Remlap, one of the prisoners, as he walked slowly around the room examining the grotesque creatures floating in the slime.

“I think there is a relationship between the triangle on the door and these emblems here. For instance, the first inscription says, ‘To follow Zorak to his final home is easier than one would think’,” Denise translated the inscription in front of the first creature.

“He must have been known as Zorak,” Mark interjected.

Denise just looked at him, “I would say that’s obvious.”

Denise continued as she moved to the next orb, “Durab is the king who fought for his kingdom and he will conquer you as well.”

She read the third inscription which read, “Death will follow those who would defy the great Sema Lah.”

On the fourth these ominous words were inscribed, “Yug has decreed that the Potentate of Reidforcia will never fall, to challenge him is to die.”

And on the fifth and last, the most threatening of all, “These are the word of Kellbora, ‘Those who would seek to find the truth in the words of the Kroleg, will have only themselves to blame, for within understanding can only come self-destruction, for at your own hand will you die’.”

“I wonder if that has anything to do with what happened to Thomas. He went for the dome and vanished. So, what connection do you think there is between the words and what happened to him,” Regis asked no one in particular as he himself was examining the green bubbles on the wall.

“Perhaps there is something on the dome itself that could give us a clue?” he continued.

Denise moved slowly and cautiously towards the dome in the middle of the room careful not to come into contact with it. The surface of the dome was translucent and it waved with the movements in the room. Inside the dome and next to the throne, in a case, were several of the blue orbs similar to the one that Lord Froth was holding.

“Do you think it’s some type of energy field?” Denise asked anyone.

The blue translucent dome looked as though one could pass their hand through it, yet what had happened to Thomas, made Denise very leery about getting too close to it. She gazed at the lettering on the emblem and her eyes began to enlarge as she read on.

“What does it say?” asked Yendor.

“I think we’ve met our greatest test of all,” Denise said quietly and slowly. “I have no idea how we are going to solve this latest puzzle.”

Suddenly the room went dark and then a blaze of light shot up from the middle of the dome; within was Lord Froth!

Just as quickly as Lord Froth appeared in the dome, he vanished. The room returned to the way it was before Lord Froth made his entrance and then swift exit.

“What was that all about?” questioned Yendor.

“I think the dome is a conduit through which Lord Froth moves from one place to

another,” surmised Dr. Xelco. “I think maybe the staff he carries allows him to move from one place to another, using the dome as the focal point. It would then stand to reason that if we could get access to the dome we might be able to transport ourselves anywhere we want, assuming we can control it.”

“That’s the problem,” Denise added, “According to the emblem on the dome a special key is needed to access the dome. Without it anyone who tries to use it will die, probably the way Thomas did. It also needs some kind of code to control where the dome can take us.”