

Part 26. Naltag

Making it to the surface prove difficult, but not insurmountable.

Naltag gave Kilah a scrambler, and activated per's own.

Having three scramblers would have been grand, but two was all, and improvisation was required.

If this doesn't work, they'll just send another emissary was Naltag's comforting thought.

Putting two scramblers in close proximity to each other was useful in cloaking a third party, and the trio escaped compound through a repairman auxiliary access panel.

Naltag wanted to go, but didn't. Leaving the compound would be an end to per's research, and a violation of the observation clause:

Watch, record, inquire, and do not interfere.

Aiding Jeremiah and Kilah's Escape was interference of the worst kind. Displacing them from what they knew, to put them out in the unforgiving wilderness.

Although, when is subjects life was at risk, interference was encouraged, especially if the mission was also in jeopardy. Since Naltag had little or no Mission without Jeremiah (or Kilah for that matter), per so no choice but to interfere.

Everything hinged on Jeremiah. The child might choose to finish interment, continue on a path, and end the relationship with Naltag. Or, the child might choose the unknown. Either way, they were bound to one another.

Underscored by the pale light outside, Jeremiah's skin appeared pallid. His hands remained in a curled position, most likely from gripping the suction machine. He shu led behind Kilah, holding her shi dress as a toddler would follow a er its mother. He seemed like an old man instead of a ten-year-old old boy.

The child is gone, brain tossed about like a ball.

Naltag walked the two children to a makeshift shelter within the husk of a metal monster. While outlining their options, per watch Jeremiah. He never focused on any one thing, and he never focused on what Naltag said. Yet, at the end of per's words, a spark of the old Jeremiah lit up his face.

The child tightened his jaw, stood straight, and gave the resolute nod per was used to seeing. Then the wandering eyes returned, and even Kilah couldn't inspire Jeremiah to speak for hours a er. There were moments when it seemed like he was trying, but he gave up, making circles and the dirt with his finger.

Naltag was only slightly worried about a child. Some of his reactions would subside once the meds le his system. A er a few days, per would be able to make a diagnosis of the child's physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

In the sand, Jeremiah drew increasingly large circular designs.

[Continue reading next part](#)