

Zayn in Ayden

A Resistinean's journey to destiny

by

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Chapter 1.

Into the unknown, tired to the bone

In Stearth, a planet similar to earth in shape, size and symbiotics, probably a twin of our world, but far away in a distant galaxy.

“You won’t pity me if you are a colonialist, supremacist, racist, fascist, or if you subscribe to the mainstream media narrative. You would not believe it if I told you that since 1948, a refugee crisis that displaced 700,000 Resistineans then, persists to this day with a loss of control of over 80% of our ancestral land.”

Zayn, a weary, solitary soul, looking much older than his barely 20 years age, is trudging away from a weather research station that stands back like a dot in the background. His shaky steps are taking him further into the vast, barren expanse of the shivering, ice-blanketed land of Citcaranta, an uninhabitable continent. As if to distract his weary gait, the relentless winds howl and swirl around him from every direction.

“About 200,000 homes (150,000 last year alone) demolished, and 900,000 Resistineans detained since 1967, including children and women, with many held without trial or charge.”

The harsh, unforgiving landscape stretches out endlessly, devoid of any signs of light, life, or shelter, leaving him feeling utterly isolated and small against the immense, unforgiving forces of nature that buffet him on all sides. The biting chill of the air cuts through his thick but tattered clothing, adding to the overwhelming sense of vulnerability and despair that permeates his every movement.

“That in the last 10 months, about 200,000+ of my people have been killed, another 2 lakhs injured/disabled, one-and-a-half million have been forced out of their homes in the 25 miles long and 5 miles wide land area, roughly the size of Loss Waygas.”

Yet, despite the dark and desolate circumstances, Zayn presses on, his determination and will to reach his intended destination driving him forward into the unknown, unyielding vastness of the desert.

“You would not believe me even if I showed you proof of illegal restrictions, witnessed and condemned by neutral monitors, such as checkpoints, barriers, and permits to control our movement on our own soil.”

As he trudges through the endless expanse of icy desert, Zayn's weary feet feel like leaden weights, his eyes sunken from the relentless glare of the frozen region. The world around him is a barren, lifeless canvas, painted in shades of white and gray, devoid of even a hint of vibrancy. The cold air stings his face, its bitter bite a constant reminder of his isolation.

“Yet the mainstream media labels us as radicals, and proclaims the massive bombardment done by Evileyl as its right to self-defense. Against who? Citizens resisting oppression of a country with no army, navy or air force of its own.”

Minutes blend into hours, as he pushes forward, driven by a glimmer of hope, a promise of a haven that beckons him like a mirage, at the end of the horizon. His body screams for respite, his mind numb from the monotony of the frozen wasteland. Suddenly, a bright light hits his face, and from standing aghast a moment ago, he turns wide awake with a shimmer of hope piercing through his eyes.

"I bear no resentment for your biased view of Resistineans. For you are entangled in the web of mainstream media's propaganda machinery – that limits your understanding of the world, and serves the interests of a powerful few.”

And then, like a whispered secret, he sees it – an oasis, a haven, a sanctuary.

As Zayn emerges from the icy grip of the desert, the soft sunlight envelops him like a warm embrace, coaxing his exhausted body to relax, to let go of the tension that has become his constant companion. The lush green expanse stretches out before him, a vibrant kaleidoscope woven from threads of emerald and olive, a feast for his starved senses. The air is alive with the sweet scent of blooming flowers, their gentle fragrance nourishing his soul like a balm.

The horizon, once a narrow slit of gray, now expands into a vast, sweeping arc, a canvas of blue and gold that seem to stretch on forever. Every breath is a revelation, a reminder that life still pulses through his veins, that his heart still beats with a rhythm that echoes the symphony of the universe.

As Zayn walks through the oasis, the soft ground beneath his feet is a gentle caress, a soothing balm for his battered soles. The trees, tall and green, their leaves rustling softly in the breeze, seem to whisper secrets of a world he thought he had lost forever. The sound of running water, a gentle brook that babbles and chatters its way through the heart of the oasis, is sheer music to his ears, a melody that seems to wash away the fatigue, the pain, the despair.

In this blessed land, time loses all meaning. The weary man's every moment blends into a seamless flow of peace that rejuvenates his body and soul. He wanders through the oasis, drinking in its beauty, its

tranquility, its life. And as he walks, he feels the weight of his journey slowly lifting, like autumn leaves rustling to the ground, leaving him light, free, alive.

Rejuvenated in the blink of an eye, he discovers a sense of purpose, a reason to keep moving forward, to keep pushing beyond the boundaries of his endurance. The oasis is more than just a refuge; it is a reminder that even in the darkest, coldest of times, there is always hope, always a promise of a better tomorrow.

As he basks in the serenity of the paradise, he feels the soft padded paws caressing his back, sending shivers down his spine. He turns around, and his heart skips a beat as he sees a young lion standing behind him, its piercing eyes fixed on him. With a blood-curdling shriek, Zayn lunges forward, his legs pumping furiously as he runs like a lunatic towards the nearest tree.

His feet pound the soft land, and his breath comes in ragged gasps as he desperately seeks the safety of the towering tree. The lion's roar echoes through the oasis, sending birds flying and small creatures scurrying for cover. Zayn's hands grasp for the tree's trunk, his fingers closing around it like a vice as he starts to climb.

His legs tremble with fear, and his muscles scream in protest as he hauls himself up, his eyes fixed on the lion below. The big cat watches him, its tail twitching lazily, its eyes never leaving its prey. The man's hands move swiftly, finding holds in the gnarled bark as he ascends higher, his heart racing with fear.

Finally, Zayn reaches a sturdy branch and pulls himself onto it, his chest heaving with exhaustion. He looks down, and the lion's gaze meets his, a fierce intensity burning in its eyes. The young man knows he must stay silent, must not make a sound, or the feisty feline will be provoked. He holds his breath, his heart pounding in his chest, as the lion begins to circle the tree.

The minutes tick by, each one an eternity, as Zayn waits for the lion to lose interest and wander away. But the big cat persists, its eyes fixed on the man, its ears perked up, listening for any sign of movement. Zayn remains frozen, his eyes locked on the lion, his mind racing with thoughts of survival.

As the standoff continues, the young man's fear slowly gives way to a sense of determination. He knows he cannot stay in the tree forever, but for now, it is his sanctuary, his refuge from the predator below. He takes a deep breath, his eyes never leaving the lion, and prepares to wait out the siege, hoping against hope that the big cat will eventually lose interest and leave him be.

A devout believer, Zayn prays to his Creator – reciting the usual phrases and keeping the gaze downward. Thereafter, he thanks the lord for everything. As the sun dips below the horizon, casting a warm orange glow over the oasis, the darkness begins to creep in, like a gentle blanket covering the expanse. Zayn, exhausted from his ordeal, feels his eyelids growing heavy, his body succumbing to the fatigue that has been building up for several hours.

Despite the danger lurking below, his body betrays him, and he falls into a deep sleep, his head nodding forward, his arms wrapped around the branch like a vice. The lion, still prowling beneath the tree, looks up at the sleeping figure, its eyes narrowing slightly, but it does not stir.

As the night deepens, the oasis takes on a mystical quality, the stars twinkling above like diamonds scattered across the velvet expanse. The wind stirs, rustling the leaves along with Zayn's hair, but he does not stir, lost in a dreamless slumber.

The branch creaks softly in the breeze, but Zayn's grip remains firm, his body trusting in the tree's strength to keep him safe. And so, he sleeps, suspended high above the fertile ground, a tiny, vulnerable figure, at the mercy of the elements and the wild creatures that roam the night.

As the night's veil lifts, Zayn awakens to a breathtaking sunrise. The sky transforms into a kaleidoscope of colors, a magnificent canvas of pinks, oranges, and purples. The stars fade away, and the moon's soft glow gives way to the radiant sun, which rises majestically above the horizon. The oasis, bathed in golden light, awakens from its slumber, and the trees stretch their branches towards the sky.

Zayn, still perched on his branch, feels the warmth of the sun on his skin, and his heart swells with hope. He watches, mesmerized, as the light dances across the expanse, casting a mystical glow on the flora around. He fervently prays to his Creator again, not in the usual manner, but reciting all the phrases, and in absolute devotion.

As the sun rises higher, its rays illuminate the scene below, and he is met with a sight that makes his heart skip a beat. The lion, once a formidable predator, is now playfully pouncing on a middle-aged man, who is laughing and swatting at the big cat as if it was a mischievous kitten. Zayn's fear gives way to relief, followed by curiosity, as he watches the unlikely pair frolic in the shade of the tree.

The man with a youthful demeanor, seemingly oblivious to the danger that had threatened Zayn just hours before, is now rolling on the ground, holding his sides in laughter as the lion gently nips at his ears. The big cat's tail swishes back and forth, its ears perked up in a comical expression of joy.

Zayn's gaze darts back and forth, trying to make sense of the scene unfolding below. He wonders if he was still dreaming, or if this was some sort of surreal reality. The man and the lion continue their playful antics, completely absorbed in their own little world.

As Zayn watches, a sense of wonder creeps in, replacing his initial fear. He has never seen anything like this before – a wild predator, and a human, playing together like old friends. The man's laughter echoes through the oasis, mingling with the chirping of birds and the rustling of leaves.

Zayn's curiosity gets the better of him, and he leans forward, his eyes fixed on the spectacle below. He is eager to see how this unlikely friendship will unfold, and what secrets it might hold. As he watches, a sense of peace settles over him, and he finally feels a connection to this strange and beautiful scene with the voice of his grandfather echoing rhythmically: "You are the only one who can free us from the imminent doom."

With a sense of wonder still lingering, Zayn prepares to climb down from his perch, feeling a lightness in his being that he had not experienced in days. His limbs, once heavy with fear and fatigue, now feel revitalized, as if infused with a newfound sense of purpose. He takes a deep breath, savoring the sweet scent of the oasis, and begins his descent, his movements fluid and confident. The branch creaks softly as he steps onto the trunk, and then onto the ground, his feet touching the terra firma with a sense of gratitude and belonging.