

## Part 23. Naltag

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**Things were changing for** the child, and quickly.

Da listed offenses and accusations. Jeremiah, as per ordinance, stood listening to an elder without interruption.

Naltag watched the one-sided exchange from the confines of the cloak.

"Easton, plus more tomes. Adds up to no good." Da held up a thick tome, but Naltag couldn't make out the title. "Too many, too swi ."  
He shook his head. "Elders talk. Councilmen decree you're to be re-conditioned."

Jeremiah's eyes fluttered rapidly. Beyond that, his expression remained fixed. It was a calm born of careful breeding and reinforced messaging, Naltag now knew.

"A er, you'll be reassigned. Might be best."

Marme released her electric mixer, which continued grinding fativa powder on its own. She quickly recovered.

Da continued, "Stay clear of Kilah. Mustn't sully sister."

Jeremiah nodded. Naltag detected increased moisture levels in the child's eyes. Kilah was the button, nay the hammer on the wall of his conditioning.

Before the Big Talk, Marme had subdued Kilah in her dorm, using a sleep pattern algorithm that streamed from the wall interface. Light blue hues scrolled across the screen, accompanied by soothing sounds and gentle commands.

"Close your eyes."

Naltag nearly closed per's eyes. Only the cloak allowed per to resist the lull of the algorithm. Kilah dri ed o in seconds.

She wouldn't learn about her brother's fate until later.

Thinking on it, Naltag sighed. Tomorrow morning, Jeremiah would be deep in the womb of re-conditioning.

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