

CURSE THE FUTURE

by debbiechan

Disclaimer: I don't own DBZ. If Bardock really belongs to anyone, he's Bardockgurl's. (Her obsession inspired this story).

Warnings: Cursing, sexual situations, violence

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Chapter One

I know his name, *Bardock*, and that others of his kind envy him.

The scene always comes to me with scalding clarity, as if it's a hole seared by a laser into my regular field of vision.

The soldier walks into the room with his reputation, and all eyes glance discreetly at the powerful figure. He is a third-class, with black hair that spikes comically in all directions--a Saiyan hair-growth pattern usually seen in merchants and drudge-workers--but the narrowed eyes are those of an alert warrior, and the hard, handsome face belies the hair. "Beet!" he calls to the bar-mistress, "Get your ass here now! Bring anything--if it's wet, I'll drink it!" A deep scar jags across one cheek. His mouth smiling in faint, grim acknowledgement of his admirers, he strides toward the mess table. His is a fluid elegance not seen in other men of his bulk and breadth. Unwrapped from his waist, his fat brown tail follows the progress of each broad thigh, waving with the indolent beauty of a living weapon.

Is this the Bardock who one day will kill me? I swear I can take the bastard; whenever I see him, he is more concerned with the bar-mistress than the murder of Kannasans. There's got to be a weakness somewhere.

The problem with foresight, though, is that it's reliable. Memory--always misty, usually fanciful, and any old made-up thing can become a memory. My visions slam me with no mercy. I can be flying through a drill or eating my morning meal or squatting taking a crap in the ravine behind the disciples' tent, and wham, my world shifts into another, all uncertainties doused by harsh red-gold light, and I know I am seeing the future.

Bardock hurling a fireball at my face, his fingers loosening, the open palm behind the death-blast. The man is going to kill me--I'm more sure of that than I am of my own name.

Master says that Kannasans who have trouble remembering our own vid-com access numbers or faces of our cousins and childhood friends tend to have better passage into

foresight. All I know is I came to this camp because my commander pegged my talent and sent me here. I was so glad at first; the most admired men on our world are those with foresight. But I have no mate because I do not have time to court one. After combat practice and hours of meditation, all my evenings, for years now, are spent on this one tedious assignment--writing down my visions.

Bardock fucking, Bardock fighting, the mighty, crazy-haired man preening in his bath, biting gnats and burrs out of his tail. Or his red planet, Vegetasei, seething against a cool backdrop of stars. And his people, the monkey-tailed Saiyans. The visions are always hued red in the heat of Vegetasei's close suns, in the passion of its inhabitants.

"Heard the news?" The sour-looking Saiyan seated next to Bardock swigs green liquid from a container as big as his own jug-shaped head. "You've got another kid ready to be shipped out."

"I heard, Toma." Bardock looks annoyed. "Beet! Move your ass!"

"Fifth one so far with a low power level. They can't all be Raditz, I guess."

"That kid's no prize either," Bardock answers. "Don't be so glad that your own boys weren't shipped out. Before you know it, they'll be leaving their tech schools and joining the army. Two more Saiyans here who look like you, Toma? I'm not looking forward to it myself. Bad enough I had to look at Raditz's ugly face until he transferred to the palace."

I'm not sure why this scene is the one I see most often. I've scrutinized it for clues, and all I have been able to come up with is that some Saiyan infants are judged strong enough to enter Vegetasei's school system and army, and the rest are sent off planet in pods, perhaps to fend for themselves? The ways of these brutal people baffle me.

Master says that images of other species are rare in our kind, that the beings I sense must somehow have their fates irrevocably locked with the Kannasans. For the past generation, a few Kannasans have been having visions of our planet's destruction, but these hundreds of gory stories, when pieced together, have not helped our leaders develop a strategy to avoid the holocaust. I've got rare foresight--I don't see Kannasans dying. I see living Saiyans, those horrible monkey beasts who are supposed to one day claim our world. So maybe I can save it.

But how--when all I see is that Saiyan strumpet with the brassy hair standing over Bardock with a steaming pitcher? Even the drinks these monkeys imbibe are hot.

"Bababeet! Unless Bardock will pay you more than I do, get back here and fetch these trays!" her boss shouts across the room. Raucous Saiyan laughter. The beasts are so loud. Visions of them wound my senses. My kind communicate through telepathy or in a singing language that wafts out our gills with bubbles. I'm cursed with having to witness Saiyan vulgarity.

Bardock grabs the girl and kisses her. This part sometimes skips three or four times in a single vision, the image repeating in a choppy sequence of stills--probably because the stupid event means so much to the girl. *She doesn't spill her pitcher, though. Her tail, wrapped around her waist under the military issue chestplate that even army bar-mistresses wear, moves in a slight but perceptible writhe at the kiss, threatens to unfurl but doesn't. The Saiyan soldiers hoot and whistle, and then Bardock releases her, slaps her rear,* and the scene is over.

If I only had more visions of the Saiyans in actual battle, I might have hope that our people could stop them. Instead, I get these infuriating, everyday, familial details. I know Bardock's son well. Raditz is a mongrel--the guys in his squad taunt him constantly about not being pure-blood Saiyan. Raditz decks them occasionally, but Saiyans insult or punch one another so much as a matter of course that I don't think Raditz cares one way or another if someone calls attention to his genes. He's a real cocky adolescent who lets his spikey hair grow past his knees in a defiance of class. Saiyan hair doesn't grow--at least not until very late adulthood, when some elite class males sprout facial hair. Raditz shaves his brow in the style of the royals (such is the fashion among third class wannabe youth) so that there's a sharp hairline point dividing his brow, making his masculine face heart-shaped and almost pretty. He shuns the soldier regulation uniform, wears only the armor over short pants, and shows a lot of skin. A bracelet around one thigh. I think the bracelet is a Dunajin decorative item, a nod to his half-Saiyan mother. I know all about her, unfortunately. So many visions of that damn Bardock fucking so many females, but she stands out--daughter of an alien concubine but herself not a whore, some sort of tech in the army, big white teeth and bigger white breasts, her sleek black and slightly longer than average Saiyan tail always coiling around Bardock's legs, whipping between his buttocks, as he humps her.

Rrrrgh. If only I had one hundredth of the mating pleasure this Bardock does. Most Saiyan soldiers are happily mated to one partner, and so Bardock is an aberration. He's a slut. Given his fondness for girls who serve food and drink, it's no wonder his children have tested at low power levels. Saiyan society is elaborately structured--with their so-called "elite" holding higher positions in the military, and the various lower castes pouring the drinks, peddling the merchandise, and carrying out the trash. At the top of all echelons is the royal family. Interestingly, because of a reoccurring vision involving Raditz, I know a little about them too.

The king of all Saiyans is Vegeta. When I had my first (and so far, *only*--even though it reoccurs) vision of this leader of the monkeys, I flew to Master with the news, but Master was unimpressed. I detailed everything--the long cold corridors of the palace, the red squiggles that signified royalty on the king's armor, the amethyst pendant at his chest, the man's stern visage, his fastidiously groomed goatee. I thought perhaps our people could send a spy to infiltrate the court, to somehow assassinate Vegeta.

"Vegeta does not concern us," Master told me. His thoughts wafted to me through the humid air of an unusually warm evening on our planet. I sensed his serenity, his total unconcern. The winter season was encroaching, and soon it would be time for hibernation

and for the many visions of extended sleep. "Toru, my dear servant, the planet Vegetasei is well beyond the reaches of Kannasa's ships. I have sensed the Saiyan king myself on occasion, whenever I scope for broad influences in our galaxy, and trust me when I say he will never even know of our people. His involvement in the attack on Kannasa will be nil. This king is but a mere--"

"But Master," I communicated, the bubbles sliding past my gills in exasperation, "Why did I see him? My foresight is not as vast as yours! What does this mean? Didn't you tell me the beings I saw would be important to our people?"

Two layers of transparent eyelids lifted past the old, swollen orbs atop my mentor's head. He looked at me with the softest, most green centers of his naked eyes, and spoke with his mouth to emphasize the thoughts he was sending me. "Dear Toru, you will have many glimpses into the life of Bardock. Vegeta is his king. You were given an illustration of Bardock's loyalty to the palace, nothing more. You told me yourself that Bardock's son Raditz was being considered for the position of guardsman in the royal court. Concentrate on *Bardock*. He is the Saiyan coming here. He is the Saiyan who will command the attack on Kannasa. I want to know everything you see about *Bardock*." Master paused, as if considering whether he should offer me the next assignment. "If you perchance see anything of the Icejin kingdom, linger on those images. Whatever comes to pass, we must continue to hide our people's gift of foresight from all outsiders, but particularly the Icejin."

The winter came, and with it, the long hibernation. I curled into my bed those moons, and what should I dream of for endless days but *Bardock, Bardock, Bardock*. My clearest vision was one where Bardock was having an altercation with his long-haired son. It came to me often that winter, and still comes, whenever I feel angry myself. Just yesterday I dropped my morning ration into the mud, and as I cursed and reached to retrieve the noodley mass off the ground with one swipe of my webbed paw, I heard the warrior's low, angry voice.

"*You are a disgrace to your squad, Raditz.*" In this scene, Bardock's voice is clipped but oddly restrained. He doesn't yell the way a lot of Saiyans do. His fierceness reveals itself well enough without histrionics.

"*I'm not cutting my hair, father,*" says Raditz. His voice is equally quiet, almost as melodious as it is menacing, and his smile is defiant. If not for the image of his tail, tall at attention, the tip level with his head, and the hairs bristled, one wouldn't know the two Saiyans are on the verge of blows.

"*No son of mine is auditioning for a position in the palace looking like a half-naked Dunajin whore.*"

"*Don't talk to me about whores, father.*" Raditz' fists clench, but the first blow he delivers is a verbal one. "*You're a bigger whore than my mother ever was.*"

Bardock strikes at that, and there's a blur of punching. If I could only slow down the vision to examine the techniques--but these Saiyan move too quickly for me. They are born warriors, unlike my people who are only now, in this generation, studying the art of self-defense. We are adroit, clever enough warriors (and I boast a great fighting ability myself), but we are a people who must practice war, strategize war, and rehearse methodologies of fighting. These Saiyans lurch into combat as easily as breathing air. The scuffle is over as soon as it's begun, with Bardock standing over his bloodied son.

The big man heaves a sigh and smiles slightly. "The luck of our ancestors be with you, son," he says, "because there's no fucking way anyone is going to let a girl-haired mutt like you anywhere near the royal family."

Raditz wipes his battered brow, decides to press the gash above his eye with the heel of his hand. Blood is running into the eye and past his cheek. He looks seriously pissed. "I'm not coming back," Raditz says. "I'm done with stupid purging missions. I'm going to work in the palace, and I'm going to eat the finest meats and bed an aristocrat Saiyan woman who will breed my high-class brats. For the life of me, I do not understand why you stay here collecting scars."

The man and his son are preposterously strong, even for Saiyans--that much is plain to me. I suppose that on the basis of that strength alone Raditz secures the coveted position at the palace, despite not getting the haircut which his father stipulated was prerequisite for such a fancy position.

Whether these scenes are happening in actual time or are snippets of a possible future, I cannot say. Perhaps Bardock's son is at King Vegeta's palace even now, as I type these words into my journal. The visions of the palace have been coming to me for the past three winter seasons. Master's interest in them is still lackadaisical, but he has encouraged me to continue writing. He and the other elders are pouring over my notes on the Icejin lord I've begun to sense in one scene, goading me to try to uncover more about him. But my talent is limited. I can not strain beyond the scene that comes to me. And here it comes again (oh how it always comes late in the evening, predictably as the need to throw my blanket over my shoulders as the evening cools):

"Raditz, Son of Bardock!" calls an authoritative voice. Raditz struts, a little self-consciously, away from a long line of Saiyan warriors. His arms are crossed, and his expression is affected boredom. Youth everywhere are the same--they appear invincible merely because they have worlds of possibility before them. They can imagine (even if they can not see) infinite futures for themselves--all heroic. They think they are bold and individualistic beyond the reproach of those already trapped in mundane destinies, but their fears show plainly--at least to me. I have empathetic talents that allow me to receive emotions as well as pictures. Raditz wants so desperately to be chosen above his peers.

"You get the job, pretty boy," announces a giant Saiyan. He's got a tuft of brownish hair on his mostly bald head, and his moustache signifies that he is an elite with some seniority. He is twice as big as Raditz, and like Raditz, his legs are bare. No identifiable

clothing marks him as a royal guardsman, but I know from having perused my visions that he is Nappa, son of an esteemed line and personal bodyguard number one to the heir of Vegetasei. *"Follow me. Our king is giving audience to some distinguished lizards and a pink blob. Prince Vegeta is there. Do not speak unless I tell you to."*

My vision follows Raditz who follows Nappa down a long, stony-walled corridor to the heart of the palace. Codes are pecked on jewel-colored buttons, identifications are verified, heavy metal-plated doors are elevated, one after another, until the corridor opens into a huge room with a high ceiling.

Nappa slides into rank beside a row of Saiyan soldiers, maybe a dozen or so, standing at attention. Before them is a peculiar scene--a corral of couches and chairs with satiny pillows, a low table with decorative food offerings (pink carcasses of some creatures I've never seen before except in this vision, bloody little circles of meat sitting on spongy masses of bread), a tall pitcher of steaming brew--but no one is touching the delicacies or sitting on the couches. King Vegeta is standing, in all his imperial presence, dark hair rising wickedly to a single point a full foot's length above his haughty brow. His stalwart form looms over his guests, who are standing as well. Standing next to King Vegeta is his miniature--a pointy-haired boy I know is the prince.

"Our presence here is just show," Nappa's voice whispers to Raditz, who has joined him in the implacable rank of guardsmen. How tedious it must be to have to communicate without telepathy when silence is required! "Our king is stronger than all the Saiyans in the palace put together. But whenever the boy is out of his father's sight, our job begins, do you understand? You will not be introduced. Your very presence here speaks of your worthiness as a soldier. Listen and learn. There is not much else to know except that you are one of thirty rotating guardsmen for our Prince Vegeta."

There are three guests--one is the frail, long-tailed lizard who is so unremarkable I scarcely notice him; another is also of a lizard species (although he doesn't look it--the man is a tail-less humanoid with green hair in a long braid, a jeweled headband circling his brow, sparkling baubles at his ears--but I can tell he's reptilian by the barely perceptible scales on his blue-green flesh); the third guest is the pink blob. What they say I scarcely notice because every single time I have this vision these days, I'm swept away, almost as if by a physical blow that knocks me dizzy, by the presence of the little prince.

Master is not interested in the little Vegeta, of course. He is never interested in what interests me. He tells me time and again that my talent is drawn to Saiyan royalty because of vibrations from their incredible physical power, the ferocity of their monkey emotions, their impossible vanity and self-absorption. He says that I must avoid the pull, that they are not important in the grand scheme, that it is the reptilian Icejin who so carefully guards his aura that I must zero in on.

I try, but even now as I review this vision, I sense nothing new. There goes the pink blob, as always, for the display of food. He is a gross creature, nubbed all over with warty-looking bumps, making breathy noises as he slurps the little meat-cakes. Why he

accompanies the tiny lizard lord and the other, the bluish dandy decked out in jewels, is beyond me. His lips smack loudly as he eats, and I wonder how is it that such boorishness is allowed before the Saiyan king?

Vegeta is talking and pays no mind to the slobbering monster, but his son notices it. The boy's bottom lip protrudes slightly in response. The expression would look like a pout of disgust on any other boy his age, but on Prince Vegeta, one can only read *disdain*. Here is pride incarnate. And not unseemly pride--the boy obviously has reason to hold himself apart. Even without the red crestmark signifying his station on the ostentatious armor, or the little red cape under imperial epaulettes, the boy's presence speaks of extreme distinction. Genetic engineering has hallmarked the Saiyan elite with intelligence and strength, but even for a royal, the prince's features bear rare refinement--skin so smooth and golden-brown that it seems to glow like the inanimate beauty of precious metal, nostrils in delicate symmetry, an imperious thin-lipped mouth, dark hair tinged with maroon that rises in a perfect flame--the hair pattern of kings--above a thoroughbred brow. The tiny body already boasts of power unmatched among the elite; it stands muscled and lithe, bearing all its weight with indisputable dignity. I somehow know what others in the scene don't--that the boy is twice as strong as the king.

I'm not sure what else it is that distinguishes the boy, but I'm tempted to say it's something akin to *purity*. I'm not talking about innocence. I've watched the boy in other visions, not even six standard years old, incinerating servants who have displeased him, killing as readily and naturally as he would sip water. He is Saiyan, no doubt there. A born murderer. But there's an intelligence at work behind those black eyes, a drive and intensity that seems to emanate from his spirit in one cold beam. I wonder about his destiny and where that cold beam will be directed. I feel as if it could knock the whole galaxy off course.

Concentrate on the Icejin.

*"I can not speak for my father in all matters," the little lizard is saying. His voice is delicate, detached--I have to strain to hear it. It's as if the Icejin thinks himself too important to bother projecting his words in a commanding tone like King Vegeta's. "The treaty between our kingdom and yours has worked for a long while, but I am **Lord** of this quadrant now, and I expect my own plan for the Saiyan role in occupations will expand on that of my father's...."*

Blah, blah, blah. It is at this point I am sometimes distracted by a shift in the time sequence of my vision. Something happens to superimpose another time period onto the scene. It's hard to describe how this happens exactly, but the colors change. The usual reddish and sepia tones that underscore all my visions of Saiyans shift into something brighter. I suspect the source of the shift is the little prince...?

The second the words about "my own plan for the Saiyan role" leave the lizard's lips, Prince Vegeta responds in some emotional way that triggers my own vision to start skipping. Strangest thing--the boy's hair flashes from black to gold to black again. The

stony walls of the palace room seem to dissolve, and the couches, chairs, and table with the pretty food stand in a bluish-green outdoor setting for a moment. Globe-headed blue trees sway in a strong breeze. I hear the damndest voice, one I can not place, say, in the most melancholy way: *"I am the last one."*

Is it possible? Tonight I am getting the very strong intuition that whoever speaks those funereal words is a Saiyan. *A Saiyan--the only one of his kind left in the universe?* Master is right--the key to their defeat is here!

I try to open my mind to more reception, but I'm so confused. An overlapping of sensations at the base of my brain tells me that this future is as yet undetermined. The boy prince is the disturbing variable in all this; from his vibrations alone, I sense life and death, good and evil, redemption and defeat. The cold beam of Prince Vegeta's energy throws sparks at its tip--it forks like a dragon's tongue, whittles into a pointy shape--what? Is it now the head of an old-fashioned weapon with a shiny blade? The foreground goes black, except for an electric blue slash made by the sword as it slices through my entire field of foresight!

Whatever power the boy has, it's charismatic. The Icejin lord, even though the species is not telepathic, has sensed it in a second. For the first time I can see the lizard clearly in the vision. He wears whitish armor--or perhaps it's his own exoskeleton--and there seems to be a persistent slime glistening on the exposed parts of his pale flesh. I can't read his emotions exactly, but I notice that he can't take his eyes off the prince. He is drawn to the boy's potential, and he wants him in his own army, under his thumb. He wants.... I feel a twinge of nausea--the lizard's pitch of desire is foreign to my species.

Master said once, "Icejin are users of the worst kind."

I do wonder what Kannasans truly know of desire. We are beings isolated from most of the galaxy, absorbed in our own politics and philosophical ruminations, innocent of galactic intrigues except for what we hear from occasional travelers or what talented visionaries like myself see when certain ships breach our planet's orbit. The psychic strains of some species are too strong not to sense, and almost as much as the sexy, angry Saiyans, the Icejin people have slammed me on occasion with disturbing vibrations--if never complete images--that are impossible to ignore. Theirs is a planet too distant for even my Master's senses, but even more than their power, their calculating lust for dominance oppresses everywhere. And this one Icejin--he travels in a huge ship and visits Vegetasei so often. Wait. How do I know this?

Concentrate on the Icejin.

New foresight! I hear very clearly what the lizard is saying to the king: *"You will bring your son to me in seven days. No one else is to accompany the prince but yourself, Vegeta. My men will draft a clause in the treaty, if you wish, but I expect you will honor my request without argument?"*

"Two guardsmen--" King Vegeta begins. His voice is so different it startles me. The arrogance is gone. The voice is still deep and imperious but it sounds almost panicked. "The prince should have two guardsmen with him. It would be unseemly for the heir of Vegetasei to be seen without guardsmen. Take two, any two. They will serve you well. They are the strongest warriors in the palace."

"King Vegeta!" It is the handsome lizard man decorated with jewelry who speaks now. He's offended. The globes at his ears glisten as he tosses his head. "My lord was very clear as to the stipulations of the treaty. Details can be drafted only when--"

"Shhh, Zarbon, no need to get contentious. Vegeta is only concerned for his son's welfare." The lizard lord smiles, clearly amused that those around him have become unnerved. "Of course, Vegeta. Two guardsmen. Choose them yourself. I can't tell one Saiyan from another. In seven standard galactic days, when the planet Tabb is successfully occupied by your Saiyan forces, I will send for you. You will bring the prince and two other--" His white hand makes a sweeping gesture towards the line of guards at the door. "guardsmen you call them?" A soft chuckle.

So now I know. Master will be pleased with my new information. I am not sure of the lizard's name, only that his men, drawn from all species all over the galaxy, think of him as *Lord* and fear him. I know from what Master has told me that the Icejin species are sadistic (unlike the Saiyans who are simply murderous), that they would rather bleed a victim into a living white husk than kill him. And now I also know that the Icejin lord has a lurid interest in the little prince of Vegetasei. My curiosity begs me to focus on the boy's energy, to witness his reaction to the dialogue between his father and the Icejin, but my repulsion over the whole thing keeps me from sensing more.

It is time for bed, although I am too tense to sleep. Drills commence early tomorrow, even for me--the great visionary prodigy--*especially* for me; I command a large battalion. To see my men honed into combat readiness, challenged beyond the limits of our kind, has become my obsession. We Kannasans so need to shed our dreaminess and take on pure physical engagement if we are to oppose these monkeys! Even as I become increasingly frustrated over our ability to confront Bardock's kind, I want my men to hurt the Saiyans, truly humiliate them, when the time comes. If I could only get past my soldiers' ridiculous superstitious fears of the monkeys--! Some of my men have visions themselves. They whisper to one another about apes the size of buildings, colossal monkey men who can shoot fireballs out of their mouths. What utter nonsense. These are but bad dreams. They do not have the talent for foresight I do. They have not seen these Saiyan men face to face. Bardock, Raditz, the balding brute Nappa. I know these warriors personally, and I can take them.

Blast this whole night into oblivion! I will not be able to sit still, let alone sleep, until I have spoken with Master!

Next time: Turo returns, despondent, after his meeting with Master. How has Lord Frieza discovered the secret of Kannasa? What else will Turo witness with his incredible gift? That will be it--only 2 chapters! debbiechan