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**This scene was actually written when I was putting the proposals together for the last three Summoning books (which became two) in August of 2006. I didn't include it because as the story developed it became evident that Jikata should meet the others at the ship raising. HOWEVER, I did REFER to the scene as one that both Luthan and Jikata saw in their prophecies...but didn't come true. Enjoy!**

The rain fell softly, a scatter of drops that Jikata actually enjoyed. She sensed no pollution in this rain like there would have been on Earth.

Luthan didn't even grumble as he draped himself in a slicker and took out an ugly hat – not white – not her White Knight now, her cowboy hero of the white hat – and plunked it on his head. They rode for an hour before the dreary day and lack of conversation wore on her nerves.

A rumble of thunder alerted her that she'd better find a warm and dry place to take cover, soon.

The lightning struck no more than five feet ahead of her in the middle of the road. Her volaran didn't rear and she was supremely grateful. Then five women stood where no one had been before. Jikata blinked, but even on second – and third – sight, they remained Caucasian – one small and silver headed, one voluptuous red head with a wide streak of silver Power, a blonde dressed in Chevalier leathers, a brunette wearing modified medica robes and a dark-haired green eyed witchy looking woman.

The little one – sporting what Jikata knew to be a baton on her left hip, a Marshall! – stepped forward. Jikata's mouth dropped as she saw the woman spread her fingers in the old Vulcan greeting of "Live Long and Prosper." "Greetings, Earthling Alien," the woman said in English with a slight accent. "Welcome to Lladrana. Home of the Dark."

The redhead closed her eyes in obvious horror. The blonde stepped forward and before Jikata could check Hope, her volaran had pranced toward the woman – as had Luthan's. The blonde accepted the volaran's whickered and mind greetings as if this happened all the time. Stroking Hope's nose, she looked up at Jikata, smiling, and spoke in English. "Don't mind Alexa, she has a warped sense of humor."

Since the little woman was now laughing her head off, gasping "Did you see the look on her face? Priceless! Priceless."

The blonde said, "I'm Calli Guardpont, the Volaran Exotiques." She shot a look at Luthan. "We understand that no one has told you of the rest of us."

Jikata's mouth had dried. "No."

Every one of the women frowned. The curvy red head thumped Alexa on her back, nearly sending her to the ground. "We have a rule among us," her voice was the best of those who'd spoken so far, rich and with depth. "We stick together. We're a sisterhood. Others may manipulate and lie to an Exotique, but we never do."

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Jikata could hardly believe that.

The redhead continued smoothly. "I'm Marian, second in the line up, from Boulder, Colorado." She touched the golden band around her forehead. Jikata knew that meant the woman was a Sorceress, had built a Tower with her Power and Song. Impressive.

She curved strong, elegant fingers over the small woman. "This is Alexa Vauxveau, the first to come, last year, formerly an attorney in Denver."

Jikata could hardly credit that. But Alexa, now sober-faced, nodded. "That's right. I'm the Marshall's Exotique," she gave a half bow, "and I speak to you, the Singer's Exotique. " She grimaced, glanced around at the others, "Marian and I probably have the most in common with you as we were pretty much alone with the Lladranans after we were Summoned. It's harder, then."

The blond circled Jikata's volaran and looked up at her. "It's always hard. I'm Calli Guardpont, late of the Rocking Bar T in Colorado, the Volaran Exotique and third to come." She raised a hand with horse hair and drool on it to Jikata to shake. Jikata hesitated, remembering past connections, but did. At the touch of the woman's fingers the sound of an echoing gong shuddered through her.