Worm Dreams

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/1262.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Hetero (F/M)
Fandoms:	The Murderbot Diaries - Martha Wells, Murderbot (TV)
Relationship:	Dr. Bharadwaj/Dr. Ratthi
Characters:	Dr. Bharadwaj, Dr. Ratthi (Murderbot Diaries), Dr. Arada (Murderbot Diaries)
Additional Tags:	Trauma Recovery, Found Family, Slice of Life
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-11-04 Words: 4,964 Chapters: 1/1

Worm Dreams

by jotc

Summary

As a therapy exercise, Bharadwaj visualizes the offspring of Hostile 1, a small worm she names Scree. Despite being imaginary, Scree becomes quite important to her. Ratthi provides worm powers and other benefits.

Notes

Chat in the Rarepair Rendezvous channel led to asking if familial relationships counted, which somehow led to joking about Bharadwaj and Hostile 1 found family. In the time I would have spent typing how that was a bit of a hard sales pitch even for crack fic, this idea popped into my head :)

Written for Murderbot RarePair Rendezvous 2026

She had no reason to be nervous. Therapy was going fine. Therapy always went fine, although sometimes she asked to use one of the quiet rooms so she could sit by herself before leaving. That was normal.

“How’s the pain?”

What an embarrassing question. It was important to answer honestly, Bharadwaj reminded herself.

“The pain’s not bad, really. But I react to it intensely, because it reminds me of how I was injured.” The last few words came out shaky.

“What specifically do you think of when you’re reminded?”

“The worm. Its smell. Flying through the air.”

“You’ve mentioned the worm a lot, which of course is only natural.”

“Of course.” Bharadwaj smiled stiffly.

“I’d like you to try a visualization exercise. I want you to imagine making friends with the worm.”

“It tried to eat me!”

The therapist smiled at her. “Yes, and that’s the issue, isn’t it?”

Bharadwaj’s cheeks flushed.

“I know it sounds counterintuitive. And yet, it’s a time-honored technique. This type of visualization doesn’t need to be strictly logical or related on a literal level to what the worm might be capable of. Rather, it’s a way to calm yourself and to provide more positive associations for difficult imagery.”

“I wouldn’t even know how to start.”

“Let me give you an example. Sometimes people with chronic pain visualize their pain as an angry biting dog, and then they imagine petting and calming the dog.”

“I don’t think anything could have calmed that worm.”

“Perhaps, but your imagination is boundless and unlimited. You don’t need to conform to the events as they actually happened. For example, you could imagine petting the worm and soothing it so it goes to sleep.”

“I suppose I can try.” She wrestled with the thought, then burst out with, “Can’t I imagine being rescued instead?”

“You actually were rescued, right? And yet the worm still haunts you. I think you need to deal with the worm directly.”

“…okay.”

“Please be open to a wide variety of visualizations, no matter how silly or improbable. Remember, you’re communicating with the part of yourself that views things in simpler terms. Friend or foe. Safety or danger.”

“Okay. I understand.”

“And it’s all right if visualizations involve a bit of abstraction. You are in charge here. Just play with the ideas.”

“I’ll do my best.”

#

Bharadwaj imagined the worm as she’d seen it in that brief moment after it burst out of the ground and before it bit her. Immediately her palms began to sweat.

“You tried to eat me.”

The worm said nothing.

“I imagine you were hungry. But what on earth do you eat when humans aren’t around? We never had time to finish the survey. Maybe there are giant birds which land? Maybe you just eat smaller, underground creatures and an entire human seemed like an unexpected windfall?”

It just stared at her from the corner of her room.

“I’m coming at this from the wrong angle though. My therapist said not to be limited by what actually happened. So what if…you were genetically engineered by the corporations.”

Was it hungry now?

“And then you were abandoned. An experimental bioweapon intended for inter-company warfare. You were too powerful, too unpredictable, too wild to be used as originally intended.”

Did it just move its head? She couldn’t tell.

“And then…SecUnit…it didn’t feel any hostility toward you. No, sorry, that’s a bit glib. I don’t know what it felt. But it didn’t know your situation, and any hostility it might have felt was most likely a reaction to you trying to eat beings in its care. To trying to eat…me.”

She was sure it had moved.

“I’m sorry, I’m so sorry, I just can’t. This wasn’t your fault but you’re so enormous and you look like you would try to eat me all over again.”

The worm bared its enormous mouth full of cilia and slime. Bharadwaj screamed. The worm disappeared.

Her sister rushed in. “What’s wrong?”

“Just me,” she managed to say between gulping air. “It’s nothing. Just me.”

#

Maybe the visualization exercise would go better with company. All of PresAux had met to share a meal and many of them had lingered to chat or simply work on projects in each others company. Now while she was surrounded by friends might be a good time to try again.

And maybe it was too big a goal to befriend the exact worm which bit her. Maybe she should start smaller. Maybe the worm which attacked her had been protecting eggs, just like the pair they saw later on mating above the hopper.

She shuddered, remembering just how stressful that time was. How they’d all turned to SecUnit for protection, ignoring the fact that just minutes before, they’d been talking about whether or not they’d be better off without it.

“Is everything OK?” Ratthi asked quietly, his gaze kind.

Bharadwaj smiled awkwardly and then just told him the truth. If she couldn’t tell PresAux, who then?

Ratthi’s eyes lit up. “Starting with a baby is brilliant! Imagine if an egg stuck to your clothing and came back to Preservation with you and grew up there.”

“I think I’d have noticed,” Bharadwaj said, laughing a little. “Those weren’t small eggs.”

“Oh, but it’s out of phase with our universe. Just like Flight Officer Kogi in episode 338 of Sanctuary Moon. Thus it's invisible until it hatches.”

“Is it now?” She smiled, amused at Ratthi’s story spinning. A silly suggestion, but wasn’t there an inherent silliness about this whole exercise?

Arada joined them. “You should definitely start with a baby. Babies are always cuter, even among insects. I know it’s partly the big eyes, but I also think there’s something in our brains which is called to forgive and protect babies of any species.”

“It’s true, babies can get away with anything.” Bharadwaj remembered the time her niece had stuck a finger in her eye, moving so fast that she hadn’t even had time to blink. Not to mention many, many incidences of yanked hair.

Arada added, “Also it could imprint on you, like a baby bird.”

“How do I get it to imprint? Just be there when it hatches?”

Arada nodded. “Then feed it by hand and make sure it smells you.”

“All right,” Bharadwaj said, feeling a bit shy. She let her eyes drift out of focus again.

She visualized the egg. The egg wriggled, a hole formed, and a small worm crawled out. Sticky and new, it wriggled its body as it tried to move. Bharadwaj held out her hand, offering it a tiny morsel of imaginary freeze-dried insect pellet.

It sniffed both the pellet and her finger. Or at least, that’s how Bharadwaj chose to interpret its laborious wriggle towards her followed by the position of its head and its open mouth.

It took a messy bite of the pellet, crumbs flying. Bharadwaj held still for the bite, then dropped the rest of the pellet by its head. The baby worm gulped the rest of the pellet whole and shook its body, perhaps to aid digestion.

Bharadwaj smiled, charmed at the little thing’s efforts. How nice that she wouldn’t have to clean up imaginary crumbs.

“Oh, you should make it telepathic,” Ratthi said. “Remember how smart they are? The parent worm killed the SecUnit that hurt its eggs, but left Seccy alone.”

An excellent suggestion. They would need to communicate.

Hello, little worm, Bharadwaj said, focusing intently.

The worm wriggled its head in her direction. *Mama.*

#

“What’s this?” Scree swung her head from side to side.

“The clean greenhouse. Here we grow food which is safe to eat without additional processing. It’s a good place for you to crawl and grow.”

“Tunnel time!”

Scree was bigger now. Bharadwaj took her everywhere. She was growing rapidly, and without the opportunity to absorb Preservation culture slowly by interacting with peers, she turned to Bharadwaj to explain everything. Bharadwaj found herself narrating many aspects of everyday life. Sometimes Scree’s questions startled her and left her groping for answers. It was strange to see her own culture through the eyes of an outsider.

It was oddly soothing as well. Soon she couldn’t imagine going anywhere without her small companion.

Scree dived at the ground and, with a combination of wriggling to displace soil and opening her mouth to eat, filter, and excrete it, disappeared underground with remarkable speed. Bharadwaj smiled, her mood lifting with vicarious enjoyment.

Scree shot out of the ground several meters away and leapt into the air, snapping but not quite catching a small ripening tomato.

“I’ll cut some up for you,” Bharadwaj said. “That and the rest of what’s in here, so you can taste it. If you don’t think it’ll make you sick?”

“I have an iron stomach.” Scree had learned that phrase while observing a meal several days ago and had immediately taken to it. She now justified eating bits of anything she came across that way. And indeed she did seem to have an iron stomach, in one case spitting back bits of wood with no sign of distress, simply saying they weren’t very tasty.

(If only Scree were real, they could have learned so much by observation.)

Bharadwaj gathered some vegetable for her family, washed them in the greenhouse sink, then took a clean knife and cutting board from the mini kitchen which had been put in specifically to allow these temptations to be indulged in. She cut up a tomato, part of a cucumber, a bell pepper, a spicy pepper, and added a few leaves of mint. She offered Scree bites as she ate.

Her uncle Vivan poked his head in. “You’ve been a while, are you doing all right in here?”

“I’m good. I took time to do my therapy exercises.”

He nodded approvingly. “Good choice, getting that done surrounded by all these good green plants. If you don’t need anything, I’ll be inside.”

After he left, Scree said, “I could bite him.”

She wasn’t angry, just full of energy. Bharadwaj shook her head firmly. “We don’t bite friends and family, honey.”

“I could though. I have teeth.”

“Those are cilia. And yes, you could bite him. But I hope you won’t.”

#

“You’re in pain,” Scree said.

“It’s not bad.”

She wriggled in a way which managed to convey skepticism. She was now as thick as a picnic basket and as long as a bed.

“It really isn’t though. I’m nearly healed.” Bharadwaj ran a hand over her side. Her skin was still bumpy and mottled where the great worm’s cilia had pierced her. The company’s MedSystem had repaired her skin but nothing could restore it to its former smoothness.

“What happened to you?”

“I’ll tell you when you’re older.”

“When will that be?”

“I don’t know. You’re growing so fast.”

“If anyone tries to hurt you, I’ll chomp them.”

Bharadwaj smiled. “That’s sweet, honey. Just make sure you stay safe yourself.”

“Nothing can beat me! I’m faster than all of you. None of you can even dig.”

“We can, with gear.”

“Maybe,” Scree said in a sulky tone.

“We dug the foundation for this house.”

“I already said *maybe*.”

Bharadwaj laughed.

“I could have dug the foundation faster.”

“I guess that’s true. It’s a pity you weren’t around to help us.”

“Why am I the only one who’s different? Everyone else looks the same. Everyone else can touch each other.”

“You’re a little bit magic. And you came here from someplace else.”

“Where?”

Bharadwaj pulled up a star map and pointed out the star system.

“It’s a nice planet.”

“Is that where you got hurt?”

A chill ran down her spine.

“How did you know that?”

“People talk when you’re not in the room. It was the company’s fault, right?”

“Yes,” Bharadwaj admitted. “That’s not something you need to worry about though.”

“When I get bigger I’m going to chomp them all.”

What a fun thought. She imagined an enormous Scree burrowing through the middle of the company’s headquarters and scattering them all.

Except the company would retaliate.

“I don’t want you to get hurt. You’re safe here on Preservation, so just stay here with me.”

“When will you tell me the rest though?”

“How about when you can stretch from the northwest corner of this room to the southeast one?”

“I’m going to burrow through the soil and eat lots of bugs! I’ll be big enough by next week.”

“I suppose you will,” Bharadwaj said a bit wistfully. “You’re growing so fast.”

#

Scree played hide and seek with the other children, although they couldn’t see her. Scree could still see them and point them out to Bharadwaj. Scree played catch with them too, although she couldn’t touch the ball. She just burrowed and leapt after it, letting the tip of her head collide even if she was out of phase and couldn’t influence anything. She loved to listen to human conversations as well. Wherever Bharadwaj was, Scree lurked nearby, soaking up everything she heard.

She grew fast. And soon she stretched from corner to corner.

“I’m old enough now. I want to know why I’m different. Why all the other children are human and can’t burrow. Why I’m the only one who can’t touch people.”

Bharadwaj knew it was time. During her last therapy session, she’d had a very interesting conversation with her therapist. Bharadwaj had said she wasn’t sure how much to tell Scree or how soon to do it, and her therapist had said, “But of course Scree is just an aspect of you. So you tell her when *you* are ready.”

And that had been an odd way to think of it. It was so easy to forget that Scree was simply part of herself given a different shape and form.

In a way, it was the opposite challenge some parents had. While some parents struggled to remember their children’s independence and separate identity, Bharadwaj found herself struggling to remember how much power she had over this bright, funny, creative companion who had come to enliven her days.

“You’ve gotten so big,” she said a bit wistfully. And then, immediately contradicting herself, she added, “You’re still so young.”

“Chetna knows how her sister died. Arturo knows that his grandmother has a fatal illness. The other children are told things even when they’re hard.”

“You’re right. It is time.” Bharadwaj thought for a moment, and then began fairy-tale style.

“Once upon a time, my friends and I came to a planet to look for things they needed.”

“You can say resources. I’m not a baby.”

“Hush. These people had been told that the planet had no large fauna.”

“That’s me. I’m fauna.”

“We’re all fauna. But hush. Sadly the company had lied. And so the people walked trustingly into the place where your parents hunted for food.”

“I bet they made all kinds of noise. I bet my parents heard them.”

“Yes, just like you.”

“Did they go *chomp?*

“Yes. That’s how I got these scars.”

“That’s what happens if you make noise around a hungry worm. I would have bit you too if I didn’t know you.”

“Yes. It wasn’t the worm’s fault.”

“Did you fight it?”

“Not me. But we had a SecUnit with us. SecUnits are part human, part construct. It fought and killed the worm in order to save me.”

“It’s a shame the SecUnit won.” Scree gave her a sidelong glance as if assessing her mood.

“I guess it depends how you look at it. SecUnit saved me and I’m glad of that. I don’t blame the worm either though. I would say the real shame is that the company put us in that position.”

“Yes. The company is awful! I’ll chomp them if I ever meet them!”

“Don’t, honey. I don’t want you to get hurt.”

“I won’t get hurt, I’m fierce! I’ll bite them and make them sorry. The company killed my parents and hurt you too.”

Bharadwaj thought of all the firepower that corporations commanded and how little one worm, however fierce, could do. And then she thought she could save that part of the story for another day.

#

Bharadwaj reminded herself once again that she had nothing to be nervous about. Therapy was going to be fine.

“You mentioned you’d put quite a bit of time into the visualization exercise. How’s that going?”

“Great! It’s helped a lot with the anxiety reaction I was getting from the pain, or from any time I felt the scar tissue tug.”

“I’m glad to hear it. You said you’d visualized the worm as a child in your care?”

“Yes. Well, not the exact worm who bit me, but essentially. I’ve been taking her everywhere. She’s been a delight and getting to know her has helped a lot with the worm-related anxiety.”

“That’s excellent. You say you’ve been bringing her everywhere?”

“Almost everywhere. I sent her to the terraforming continent so we can have privacy for today’s session. She’s so big now, and she’s learned how to fly! That’s one of her skills… that’s a bit of a story, I guess. Some friends of mine helped me develop her extra abilities.”

“I’m curious why you didn’t simply stop imagining her for the duration of our session?”

“That seems a bit rude, don’t you think?”

“To your visualization?”

“Yes. How would you like being blinked in and out of existence like that?”

“…in general, people don’t report that their visualizations mind such things.”

“Well, Scree would. She has things to do.”

“Those things being…?”

“She’s helping terraform. Her digestive system can filter out a remarkable number of toxins.”

“…I see. Well, you’ve certainly embraced the assignment! Most people just engage in this sort of visualization for short periods at a time. It does seem to be helping though? I can see you’re holding your shoulders in a much more relaxed way.”

“I’m a bit stressed knowing Scree is hours away from me, but yes. Having her around has been very helpful.”

“…do you see this worm as an entity independent of yourself?”

“Not, of course not! I’m well aware that she only exists in my imagination.”

“Ah.”

“But in my imagination, it takes four hours for her to reach the terraforming continent. So it is what it is.”

“I see. In that case, I appreciate you making arrangements in advance. Moving on to other topics…”

Was it her imagination or did her therapist look slightly stressed? Bharadwaj frowned but shook it off. There was no point worrying over who approved of Scree. Scree would face

enough challenges given her unique situation.

#

The time went fast and Scree grew faster. Bharadwaj had come a long way. She would say she was almost entirely healed. And yet the thought of partnered sex left her anxious and tense. She'd found a potential partner, one who knew of her recent trauma and had promised to be patient. But Scree (now an adult, albeit a young one) had concerns.

"I don't want you to be with anyone without me there," Scree had said. "If they're mean to you, I'm going to chomp them."

"No one's going to be mean to me."

"Then why are you so nervous?"

Bharadwaj hesitated.

"I'm a completely different species than you. You can't scandalize me by talking about sex. Also I'm literally you."

Bharadwaj laughed. "I suppose. And yet I remember when you were as small as my finger."

"Out with it! Or I'll chomp your toe!" Scree playfully lunged at her foot, then rolled away.

"It's not the situation, it's just me." Bharadwaj waved her hand toward herself. "I know I'm healed, but part of me keeps wondering if I'll panic. There's really nothing to worry about though. Even if I do panic, everything will still be fine."

"I still want to be there."

In the end, Scree wore her down. Besides, it was hard to exclude a creature who could tunnel through walls. If Scree wanted to come, she would, whether she had permission or not.

#

She met her potential partner in a restaurant to discuss the final details of their arrangement. Scree watched her from the corner.

Bharadwaj took a shaky breath. "We should discuss something first. I've been putting it off because it's a bit personal and I don't tell everyone. But you should definitely know before we're intimate."

"Yes?"

"I need you to be all right with a third party observer."

"You're already with someone? I thought…"

“No, no, it’s not like that! I’m talking about an imaginary creature who accompanies me routinely.”

“Routinely? You mean it’s with you right now?”

“Yes.”

“Can it see me? No, stupid question. Why haven’t I met it before?” He looked around as if he could spot whatever she was talking about.

I could chomp him.

Hush. He needs time to absorb what I’m saying.

He needs a good chomp.

“As I said, it’s a bit personal. I don’t introduce her to everyone.”

“Her, you say. Have you been talking to her while you’re with me?”

“Occasionally, yes. She sometimes has questions or comments regarding life on Preservation. We save longer discussions for in private.”

“You don’t believe this creature is really here, do you?”

“No, of course not! But she’s still a third party, so it didn’t seem right to proceed with intimacy before discussing it.”

“It’s just you though. If she’s not real, it’s just you using your imagination.”

“I know that,” Bharadwaj said, beginning to feel a bit frustrated.

“I guess I can see why you asked? Most people wouldn’t visualize another partner during sex without including the other person in the fantasy.”

“Oh, it’s nothing like that. She won’t be participatory in sex at all.”

“…is she sexy?”

“To me? No, not in the least. She’s a very attractive worm though. I’m she will appeal to others of her own kind, once she’s able to meet them.”

“Is this some kind of role play?”

“In a way, I guess? It was recommended by my therapist. It’s just for me though, not something I want others to join in on.”

“Did your therapist recommend engaging in this role play during sex?”

Bhradwaj’s face grew warm. “We didn’t discuss that.”

“Yeah.”

I could chomp him.

I’ve got this.

Bharadwaj forced a smile. “Perhaps we’re not quite the right match. Or perhaps I’m not quite as ready as I thought.”

She’d meant to make this an easy parting, but the relief on his face still hurt.

I could still chomp him.

At least Scree could still make her smile.

#

Ratthi’s warm gaze fell on her. “How are you doing?”

“I’m all right.”

“Do I sense a but?”

“Well…it’s embarrassing.”

“All the more reason to pick me to confide in, then.” He smiled wider, his eyes dancing. “It can’t possibly be any more embarrassing than my own escapades. Come on Bharadwaj, be a true friend and don’t leave me being the only one to live in constant mortification.”

She smiled back. “Scree is cock blocking me.”

Liar!

Bharadwaj laughed.

“Do tell!”

I would have cock blocked you but I didn’t need to. That guy was an asshole.

He wasn’t an asshole. We were just poorly matched.

Because he needed a good chomping.

Ratthi watched curiously as her face went through various expressions. Bharadwaj explained, “Scree’s just teasing me about it.”

“What happened?”

“I’ve been nervous about sex since the incident. Now that I’ve healed, I was hoping to see how things go. We’d already discussed that I had recent trauma and he said that was fine, and that he’d be honored to be part of my healing. But he couldn’t deal with Scree being present.”

“He wasn’t the one for you,” Ratthi said instantly. “You need someone who appreciates Scree.”

“You don’t think it was odd of me to insist on her being there?”

“Odd? Sure, but who cares? You must have had a reason.”

“She’s an adult now, and she wanted to be there to protect me. And it’s not like she’s going to take prurient interest in it, any more than we did when that pair mated on top of the hopper.”

Ratthi took her hand. She worried it was sweaty but he just squeezed gently.

“Bharadwaj. You know I’d be happy to help you test drive your newly healed body.”

“I wouldn’t want to inconvenience you.”

“Inconvenience? Perhaps you haven’t noticed, but I enjoy sex.”

That drew a smile from her.

“You’re my friend. I enjoy your company, and I enjoy Scree too. I think you’ve taken a creative and inspired way of dealing with all this and I’d be honored if I can play a role in your healing.”

Her eyes teared up a little. “The sex might not be anything much worth getting excited about,” she warned him.

“If sex ends up being a source of difficulty, best to discover that with a friend, right?”

Say yes. I think this one won’t need chomping.

So she said yes.

They went back to Ratthi’s place. The sex was awkward. She found her breath growing tight at odd moments and flashes of anxiety coming over her whenever the scar tissue tugged. But Scree patrolled the bedroom, reminding her that she was safe, and Ratthi was patient and attentive.

He ran his fingers over her scars. “I know you gained them through a lot of pain, but they really do look cool.”

“I don’t mind them,” Bharadwaj said, feeling oddly vulnerable at the confession. “They’re almost reassuring, in a way. They let me know it happened, and that it really was as hard as it feels.”

“And they’re stylish.”

“If you say so,” she said with a smile.

She didn’t reach orgasm but she also didn’t have a panic attack, so she counted it as a win. When she hit her limit with testing herself, she told Ratthi she was ready to wrap up. They teamed up to bring him off quickly and then lay side by side while she relaxed.

“This wasn’t bad at all,” she said with relief, then realized it might not be taken as a very flattering reaction.

But Ratthi just smiled warmly. “You know, this wasn’t a limited time offer. I’m happy to do this again for as long as you think it’ll be helpful.”

That was the nice thing about Ratthi. He meant that just the way he said it. He didn’t want to date her and he trusted her not to cultivate romantic feelings for him either. It was just a sincere offer from a friend.

She drifted off to sleep feeling lighter than she had in days.

#

“Did you know my name means “Rubble stone that collects at the base of a cliff?”

“I did, but that’s not what I named you after.”

“What then?”

“The sound your parent made when it first saw us, only altered a little to be easier to say and more charming to human ears.”

“In that case, I’m probably called *food.*

Bharadwaj laughed.

“Except in a bad human accent. *Fud.* I’m going to be so embarrassed when I find more people like me.”

“You’re planning to look for them?”

“Yes. I don’t want to stay here forever. When I was little, I wanted to attack corporates.”

Bharadwaj bowed her head, knowing that desire came from her own revenge fantasies. Revenge wasn't worth it though. She just wanted a happy life for Scree.

“These days I want to find someplace with people like me, but with people like you too. Because I grew up with humans and I’ll miss them if I never see them again.”

“I’ll miss you too. But you might not miss humans as a species as much as you think. Not if your life is rich and full in other ways.”

“Maybe. I’ll see. I think we have a lot to offer each other though. My kind really are excellent at terraforming.”

“I’m just worried you’ll end up looking a long time.”

“That’s not bad either though, right? I could see a lot of the universe.”

“True.”

“There’s so much out there we don’t know.”

“I used to want to do that,” Bharadwaj said wistfully. “Maybe I will again someday.”

“I might not see you again.”

She felt like her heart was being crushed.

“Don’t look so sad. I won’t leave yet. When I go, I want it to be a happy thing.”

“Just promise you won’t forget me,” Bharadwaj managed to say.

“Never.”

#

She invited Ratthi on a picnic. Scree flew overhead, her great body stretching across the sky. The worm Bharadwaj had met on the survey hadn’t been anywhere near so large, but Scree would need the bulk to sustain her as she flew between the stars.

She had brought a tarp and soft blankets to put on top. No one else was close by. She and Ratthi embraced. The hot sun on her skin, the brisk wind evaporating her sweat, the hint of clouds overhead and the sight of Scree, so far away and yet close enough to reach, all of it helped her cast away her inhibitions and savor every moment. The taste of his sweat, the texture of his hair as she gripped the back of his head, the heat and the motion. She wasn’t afraid anymore.

After, they lay together and gazed at the sky.

Goodbye, Mama.

And then Scree was gone. Tears ran down her face. Ratthi wiped them away.

“She was such a big part of my life, and yet it’s hard to share her with people. Other than me, you were the one who knew her best.”

“You’ll find a way, in your own time.”

(Later, Bharadwaj drew her into a story book and read it to the children.)

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