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## Destination (Part Four)

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## Destination (Part Four)

*Katherine Haynie*

*I thanked him as I turned to leave. He called to me before I reached the door. "You know, you really must be crazy." I turned back to him and smiled as I walked out, calling from the hallway, "Yup, just like everybody says, right, Tal?"*

*As I walked into our room, I saw Calia lying in bed, quiet and still. I could tell that she wasn't asleep though, not yet. I couldn't blame her. I knew I wasn't going to get any sleep tonight. I changed into a nightgown, and grabbed a sturdy linen sack from under the bed. I sat on the edge of Calia's bed and sorted the things in the dresser, choosing a few important things to pack. Calia still said nothing. Anything that needed to be said had been said long ago.*

*A few hours later, I was all packed, and Calia had fallen asleep. I went to her and looked down at her sleeping face. Even in sleep it looked more troubled than usual. My stomach turned inside out in a knot. I pushed away those feelings and tried to compose myself. I knew that I was doing what had to be done. I tapped her awake and hugged her. I whispered in her ear that I would never forget her. She was still mostly asleep and was dreaming again a moment later. I set the letter that I had written to her on the dresser. On top of it, I placed one of the two rings that I had always worn. In the letter, I told her that I had always loved her like a sister and that I would always carry her in my heart. I repeated that this was the hardest thing I ever had to do, but that she knew I had to do it. I promised to return someday. I wanted to see her children. I signed it with the nickname that she had given me when we first met as children.*

*On the way out, I passed through the kitchen and stuffed some kelatose in my bag and gathered as much lenta fruit I could find and shoved it inside, too. I grabbed a handful of gribble and chewed on it as I walked out of the Centre and away from the Unitan. I took one last glance over to the window of the room where Calia was sleeping and then walked off toward the shadowy midnight forest.*

\* \* \* \* \*

The morning sun warmed her back as she sat on the log, stared out into the distance and wiped the last of the lanta juices on her sleeve. There was a rustle in the bushes to her left as a cream and brown striped gecko jumped out of the branches and ran across the ground and into a hole. She stared at that hole for a moment and then stood up and stretched her arms and back. She had a long trek ahead of her. Behind her was a lifetime—and her best friend. Ahead of her was the world.