



**SCRIBBLERWORKS**  
official website of **SARAH BEACH**

*This editing sample is from Karen Middleton's novel **The River of the Alien God**. Used by permission.*

## Chapter One

The rising sun shone upon the Sanctuary River that stretched downward from the western mountain range and sustained all of fledgling humanity. From his wooden balcony, Robert Byikasa watched the sun make its way to illuminate the entire River. The life-giving waters reflected the colors of the changing sky before turning to their gemstone blue when the sun reached past the horizon. Even the River itself came to life and awakened for the day.

The sun rose higher and revealed Citadel Neil in the distance, the second bastion of humanity on this alien planet. That Robert Byikasa could see the walls of Citadel Neil testified more to the height of their fortifications than to Neil's proximity to the River.

Byikasa felt a connection and affinity for Citadel Neil, but far stronger was his identity as one of the River People. The connection and affinity for the Citadel extended only to the point that he belonged to the same species as the people in the Citadel. The ancestors who settled in the two areas shared the same history, but humanity had diverged significantly since then. This connection and affinity had a much deeper and profound sentiment than the humans remaining on Earth would feel toward each other.

The bulk of humanity resided in only those two areas, the Citadel and the River. None of the aliens dwelled among them, although the aliens dominated this entire planet. Robert Byikasa would be astonished if the total population of humanity surpassed a million into two million. Recent events during his teenage years plus the historical events had proven the fragility of human existence on this planet.

The sun had passed the horizon. The colors of the River had steadied for the day. Gazing at the waters, he thought about the River, its history, and its future. The His eldest son Kenji had recently returned, having completed his studies in the Citadel and having learned all he could know about the alien nation, Zohlem. Robert had a beautiful plan in mind for the culture of the Sanctuary River. The River People and the Zohlem nation could become more culturally connected than they were currently, and what he knew could only add to the cultural depth and beauty of the River. Today, he needed to bring this suggestion to his eldest son.

The familiar footsteps of his wife Miranko were heard sounded behind him. Only Miranko knew what he had in mind. Robert turned and smiled at her. Neither needed to say a word. Robert walked toward her, and together they went into their home to the dining room where their children waited for them.

Breakfast consisted of rice and vegetables grown along the River. The River People took great pleasure in knowing that they provided all their own food. Robert Byikasa and his wife Miranko Alvarez-Byikasa sat close together while their two sons, Kenji and Esteban, also the eldest and youngest, sat on the right and their two daughters Berta and Renata, the middle children, sat on the left.

With a curious expression, Esteban observed his elder brother beside him between bites of food and between bits of conversation along the table. The age gap and the years spent in two

**Comment [S21]:** Implies humanity is a young species. This is contrary to what you have in following paragraphs. You might want to find a different word for this spot.

**Comment [S22]:** Not sure that repeating the same wording in the second sentence works. Find a second way of expressing it.

**Comment [S23]:** Again, not so good to use this here. Also -- are you talking here about Byikasa's OWN feelings? Bring it back to him, make it personal.

**Comment [S24]:** The sentence is confusing regarding time. If there were "recent events" in his teenage years -- how old is he? This has not been established clearly, so we know how old he might be. Again, referencing "historical events" implies a long residence on the planet, so the above "fledgling" reference is even more unsuited to the actual conditions.

**Comment [S25]:** Delete these two sentences; you already set this visually above. Don't repeat it here.

**Comment [S26]:** Be specific that you are talking about HIS son.