* Apocalypse
* Two truths and a lie

The artificer stood at her control panel, looking toward the sky of The Blight. A few minutes or so out and the sun would finally reach her Z-12 Speeder. The modified workshop and all her research would be molten metal along with her, the constant apocalypse of Blight’s sun once again melting the glass land to an ocean of fire. She looked at the comms console, emergency beacon light flashing again, again, again. The sky was still empty but for the growing amber light of the sun threatening her back.

“Five weeks running…” She sighed, twisting at her Lekku. She stepped down, climbing the ladder to her workshop in the trucks main bay. The crystals laid there, prototype after prototype. She looked at the case of final prototypes, the blaster next to it. She ran her fingers across the metal, lifting it into her hand. “It was a good run. Almost made it, ma.” She lifted the barrel to her head, finger wrapped around the trigger. “At least they never found us…”

She heard the sharp static-laden burst of the comms system chopping in, her hand beginning to tremble. Slamming the blaster into the holster at her waist, body shuddering in fear and revulsion and exhalation, she scrambled the ladder back up and slammed on the communication headset.

“This is Aylon Erura, your signal is unclear! I am stranded, I need immediate pick up! The sun is coming!” Her voice sounded raspy, the heat of the truck stripping out the moisture. “Please! Please! This is Aylon-“

“Aylon. Message received. Name, Work’t. Mission, save you. Coordinates locked. Prepare self. Run, run!” She saw the sensor lock moments into the message, a Class B Escort shuttle painted midnight black slamming through the atmospheric distortion cause by the blighted sun toward her vessel. She slid down the ladder, grabbing her datapad and the case as she rushed toward the truck’s exit hatch. The scream bustling in her chest finally escaped as she reached the hatch, pushing only to find it fused. She punched it once, twice. Nothing. Then she went blind, a spark of iridescent white across her vision. She twisted her ahead away, hearing the sound of the heating torch slicing the hinges. She expected the door to slam down and crush her but suddenly paws were upon her and pulling her up. She opened her eyes to the hazy impression of an Ewok of all things, wearing a set of blast armour and furred entirely in grey around the edges of the white spot burnt into the middle her vision.

“Run! Run!” The Ewok screamed and she recognised the voice from the shuttle. This was Work’t and she had no time to question why her message had been received or why Work’t was out here. No time to question why he risked his life to drag her from her vessel. He pulled her and she followed, sprinting forward down the exit ramp that had been somehow disengaged, pulled down awkwardly as if torn from its socket instead of deployed. She shook her head, sprinting for the Escort vessel.

Had she had time to question it, perhaps this story would have ended differently.

The distance to the shuttle wasn’t long but the sun was almost cresting now. The ground, sharp glass dried unevenly made sharp cracking noises as she followed the Ewok, barely keeping pace with him in her state. Every breath scratched her dry throat rawer and rawer, leaving her tasting blood. She worried they wouldn’t make it.

Suddenly, the ramp was in front of her. Blinding harder, trying to clear the tears from her brutalised eyes and feet heavy the pair ran panting into the Escort, the door slamming shut. The vessel immediately shook from the heavy impacts of engines firing. Aylon knelt, panting. She waited for Work’t to say something, her vision still swimming. Lifting her heavy head, vision swaying from the shock of using so much of her dwindling reserves, she found him staring with pitch black eyes at her. Her head ached from the heavy pound of the engines.

“You bring case. Heavy look. Why?” He shook his head. “Could kill you. Slower.”
She nodded, thinking she understood the question. “My research samples.” She rasped. “I have found a new type, formed here under the glass. I will ensure you’re rewarded for this, Work’t. Thank you.”

“All here?” He said. “No data? How make more?”

She stood, swaying but enthusiastic. “Don’t you see?!” She pulled the data slate. “This! This has all my notes. She turned back, looking through the window. “Thanks to you, I’ve done it. I’ll be rich. You’ll benefit of course.” She laughed, the noise more a distressed coughing sound then a true noise of joy. Her pale-yellow skin tinged darker by the glowing orange glow behind the ship. She saw her truck catch the edge of the fire through the view port at the back of the ramp, the land speeder starting to melt.

“I’ve done it.” She said, smiling. “This’ll make it all right.”

The wall suddenly glowed lighter, red instead of orange. She blinked, confused in the moments before the blade of Work’t’s blade slid neatly through her midriff. It disappeared, a snap barely audible over the ship’s engines as he disengaged the blade with a snap, stepping forward and sliding the pad out her hand. He held her up long enough for metallic hands to take the case from her. She fell backward, looking up at the looming shape of a B2 battle droid holding her life’s work and the diminutive Ewok holding her research as she tried to breath, finding the components required absent from her chest. She tried to say something, anything as she realised what he held.

A Lightsaber. A damned Arconan.

Work’t watched the life drain from the eyes of the Twi’lek, reaching down and pulling at her collar. Sure enough, he found and removed the insignia of three long bars encased in a circle. He clipped the lightsaber back to his belt and turned to Solution, the droid offering him the case.

“Place workbench store. Dispose this.” He gestured at the body and began walking up to the cockpit as the Escort sped out of the light, back into darkness. “Done here.”