

## Shattered Plains

41 ABY

“Captain, report!”

“Captain! Captain Wyvern!”

“Cap’n!” A drawl followed.

Echoes and panicked voices filled her ears. Her head was ringing. She opened her eyes, but everything was blurry. Her lips were parched. She needed to move. To keep going. Someone was panicking. Wait. No. There was more than one. They were calling for her. In a daze, she blinked several times and tried to move, only to grit her teeth in pain. Her head hurt. She raised her hand to touch the side of her head and felt something damp.

The pilot brought her hand in front of her face. A faint smear of blood. The sounds of assault above in the skies were loud as she let out a sharp exhale to clear her mind. She tilted her head back and saw the silver wings of the ships zipping across the sky above.

‘*Silver wings?*’ She took in another deep inhale. Her entire body was screaming in pain. Her ship was grounded. There was smoke and sparks flying from the console as it crackled, the displays blaring red with warnings. The smell of burnt wire flared her nostrils.

“Get up. On your six.” Her head snapped to the side and it felt like her brain rattled in the skull like a jello. There was no one there. That voice sounded familiar. It had a heavy Chiss accent. Was that-

“Captain! Report!”

Evelyn blinked a few times before she responded to the comlink. “Wyvern reporting.”

There were collective relieved sighs. She had a job to do so she ignored the ringing and the pressure in her head. She was a soldier, and no crash was going to stop her. She looked left and right to check the wings of her ship. The left wing was fine but the right wing was gone. This ship was not getting into the air again. Her finger pushed the button to pop the cockpit open and she heard the click. Rising from her seat, her hand extended to push it up while she glanced around.

Well. Nothing pissed this pilot off more than being grounded. Her gaze changed direction to the sky and she saw the Clans, including her team, Siren Squad, were doing their best. For a moment, pride swelled in her. She was proud of her team until-

“Nisol, on your three!” She shouted into the com and watched Nisol’s ship narrowly dodge one of the MG-100 Star Fortress’ attacks.

“Thanks, Cap’n,” Nisol replied in his drawl. Evelyn watched the Sky Islands above. Enemy ships and her allies' ships. Her emerald eyes narrowed. Frustration started to grow and her jaw muscles tightened. They'd need to group at Corpse Fields and there Evelyn could see if she can get a ship to use.

“Dan’sol, you are in charge until I take to the skies.”

“Yes ma’am.”

Evelyn took a deep breath and climbed on top of her downed ship. Finally, she took in the surroundings on the ground instead of the sky. It was much messier on the ground than the skies. It was louder and much more emotional. The land was full of crystalized enemies and legions of Brotherhood Clan. There were dips and grooves in the land. Curved and straight trenches. Red crystals. Despite them being at war, Evelyn appreciated the beauty and irony that the crystals were red. It was as if this land was bleeding. The pilot checked her compass. She stared ahead at the path she needed to take before she started her way to rejoin the Brotherhood at Corpse Fields.

Her right hand unhooked a small silver-colored baton from her belt. Activating it, it elongated and became as long as she was tall. The hybrid ignored the idle chatter and orders of her squad on the comlink for now. Hopping down from her ship, she made her way to the forward operating base of the Brotherhood forces.

It wasn't long before she heard a long deep growl behind her. Her hair stood at all ends as she froze in place for a moment. She felt her heart thudding loudly in her chest. Slowly and carefully, she turned. A crystalized razor cat was six feet from her. Followed closely by three purified ascendent troopers. The crystalized razor cat launched upwards. Its claws extended as the razor cat leapt into the air and aimed to land on her torso. The moment the cat had leaped from the ground, the three troopers made a run to Evelyn.

Evelyn stumbled out of the way and jabbed at its side with her silver baton. The crystalized cat yowled, and the sound echoed off the trench walls. The pilot felt a sudden pain in her ribs as she was sent a few feet away from the impact of one of the trooper's punches. It took the air out of her. She struggled to breath, gasping. Still, she straightened up but her determination was met with the razor cat landing on her, forcing her to the ground as it bit into her arm. With a gasp, she twisted her body and flung the cat onto its side. Evelyn rolled up before jabbing downwards with her quicksilver baton again. The baton cracked through the crystals, shattering them and allowing it to pierce into the no longer beating heart.

She fell onto the razor cat's body with a pained expression as a boot impacted her back. She rolled just in time to see a sword slashing toward her face. Panic took over and her hands extended, only to watch as the ascendent trooper was sent flying, its mouth open in a shocked gape. The two remaining seemed less surprised at what Evelyn did but she was in shock. What

just happened? She looked around rapidly and didn't see any allies that were focused long enough to use telekinesis or looked in her direction. Did someone help her?

Her leg burned, not seeing the incoming attack in her distraction. At the same time, another had punched her in the face. Dazed, she clumsily grabbed her quicksilver baton and moved her body in the direction of the attack. One of the ascendent troopers kicked at the underside of her arm. Her grip only tightened in desperation to survive.

She jabbed upwards, the tip of the baton penetrating the underneath of their jaw, through the mouth. With a grunt, she pushed again, her muscles burning. The other end pierced through its skull with pieces of brain matter clinging to the tip. A swift kick went underneath Evelyn's jaws from another trooper and sent her reeling back with a yelp forcing her to release her baton. The body slid down the baton under its own weight as its blood engulfed the once shiny silver baton.

"Kark!" Evelyn needed that baton. She couldn't waste the time trying to pull it out. The third trooper, who had made the kick previously, made a slash at her and she stepped back before standing up. Her hand went to grip her electro-sword's hilt and brought it out. The trooper charged her, and her free hand instinctively went up. There was a flash of light. Evelyn flinched from the sudden brightness, dropping the sword as quickly as she'd drawn it. She was seeing spots. Another Force ability? Who was helping her? Why did they not give her heads up before using the Force version of flash bang?

The temporarily blinded pilot took a few steps back. Her body ached. The crash had been bad, but this was almost too much. Blood trickled down her arm from the razor's cat. Sweat soaked her body. Blood stained hair. Her blood. Her muscles were screaming. She wasn't a fighter, damn it, she was a pilot! Discomforted by the temporary blindness, she took another step back but her foot touched nothing. Her heart felt as if it was lurching as she fell.

Evelyn hit the ground and grunted from the impact. The drop had been five or six feet deep. Vision clearing, she looked up to see the trooper above the trench. Its crystalized arm pulled back before it fell forward slowly. With intent. The arm was going to pierce her. Her hands grasped at the dirt, trying to get out of the way. It was falling-

The bright lights of an assault ship blaster zipped past as a gleam of blue struck the trooper. The trooper fell onto her arm where the razor cat had previously bit into as she grimaced. The crystals on its body were scratching and piercing her. Her free hand pushed the shoulder of the dead trooper, slowly managing to push it off to the side. Evelyn let out a sigh of relief.

"Got 'im, Cap'n." Nisol's drawl voice rang through the comlink.

At least she always was able to count on her team. Kark. Everything hurts. She fumbled through her bag looking for her bacta canister. Evelyn started tending to the wounds that were minor enough.

When she was done, Evelyn's head tilted back toward the skies while catching her breath. She needed to get up there. Her team needed her. She slowly stood up and stopped when a shadow loomed over her. She raised her hands, preparing to defend herself but a moment later her shoulders dropped. The pilot sighed in relief. The pair were wearing the Brotherhood Envoy's uniform. They both reached down into the trench and helped her out of the trench. They had a medical droid, an IT-S00.2, with them and it went to work on her ruined left arm.

"How is it looking?" Evelyn asked. They were surrounded by comrades and allies at the moment. Bodies of the slain littered the ground. Enemies and allies alike. Creatures and humanoids. It was starting to become difficult to tell if the glisten was from the crystals or the blood.

"Not so good."

"I need to get back in the air."

"Then you'll have to run," they replied, pointing to the direction of the corpse fields. "We lost some pilots on the ground but their ships are still good to go."

Evelyn nodded. It might work. After the droid patched her up, she hated that she could still feel the impacts from the beatings earlier and that her muscles were still stiff. It didn't matter, though. She had a job to do. Leaning over, she grabbed her sword and sheathed it. She went over to the body that still had her quicksilver baton protruding through the deceased trooper's head. Her foot pinned the shoulder of the dead trooper so as her hands grasped the baton, Evelyn could yank it out. It took a few attempts but soon it was free. With a steadying breath, she started to run. Her muscles protested but at least her legs weren't so bad. She ignored them. She needed to get into an assault ship.

Evelyn opened the comlink on her wrist and managed to speak between breaths, "Stats update, Dan'sol."

"We lost Nisol and Jolyiel ma'am."

"Noted." Despite the callous response, she felt guilt. As a Captain, they were her responsibility. They had someone waiting for them at home. Evelyn had no one. There was Jax and Kob but they had each other. Arcona needed to be protected. The entire Brotherhood needed to be protected. Times like this, it was best to have no one at home waiting for her.

"Noted!?" Yelled Ka, the newbie for Siren Squad. "They were our comrades! They-"

"Reel in your emotions, Ka. Save it after the war." Even through the comlink, Evelyn was as stoic as ever. Her voice was emotionless.

There was a pause followed by, "Yes ma'am." Evelyn closed the comlink. Hopefully Ka wouldn't be a liability and danger to others.

Damn the Children of Mortis for clipping her wings. For burning her comrades' wings permanently.

They *will* pay.

Filled with determination, Evelyn started running. Without warning, she felt a sudden surge and was much faster than she originally was. Caught off guard, she lost her footing and went crashing down onto the ground again. Shards of crystals, broken weapons, and rocks itself tore her flight suit. Reports of people losing their Force abilities or gaining them were going through her radio.

*'That makes sense.'* The pilot pushed herself back up, committed to her mission as she felt the surge of the Force still lingered. It took her a bit to get the hang of it but soon enough she was darting over the fallen bodies of the field. They didn't bother her. It wasn't her first war.

The path was mostly clear. Any ongoing battles, she would run around it. She had made it. One of the ships looked good.

"Wyvern, come in." The voice belonged to Commander Draken Dragonbean of AEF forces. Evelyn quickly opened her wrist comlink.

"Sir, yes sir."

"You are in charge of both the Siren and Banshee squadrons now. Take them to the new coordinates and destroy those frakking Nightmare Machines."

"10-4."

Evelyn headed over to one of the ships and got inside. She saw the dried blood on the seat. The hybrid ignored it entirely as she lifted the ship into the air.

"Siren and Banshee squad, on me. New orders, we are to destroy the Nightmare Machines." They were joined with other Brotherhood pilots that can be torn away from the current location. The Nightmare Machines needed to be taken down as soon as possible.

For the Brotherhood.