*The screeching sound of several Peko-Peko filled the air, accented by the panicked bellows of Kaadu as they scrambled to avoid the razor talons of the bird-like beasts. Gungans shouted as they grabbed their cestas, atlatls, electropole, and boomas to defend the heard from the azure invaders. Shi’Dan sat atop her mount with her electropole in hand, fending off a Peko-Peko that came far too close to a clutch of eggs.*

*Pain shot through her back and head as she was knocked off of her Kaadu by a blow from behind. With a groan, she glanced behind her long enough to see an older looking gungan with a scar across his face mounted on a one eyed Kaadu with a cesta in his hand.*

*Around her more gungans came in from her surroundings, engaging in combat with her comrades. Time was almost slowed for her as she helplessly watched several invaders on foot steal eggs from the nests as Peko-Peko swooped down to do the same.*

*Her attention turned back to the ragged bandit above her as he raised his cesta, bringing it down at her neck…*

Shi’Dan woke with a start, covered in sweat and breathing rapidly. It had all been a dream, but so real. She swore she could feel the pain from that surprise blow. With a groan, she got to her feet and rubbed her eyes, blinking away the fog in her mind as she stepped outside of her hut. It was a bright beautiful day, not that horrible gray ominous sky from her dream.

She partook breakfast with her parents before heading down to tend to the Kaadu flock. She sighed as she lay against her resting companion’s flank. It was boring work, but she knew it was necessary. That dream troubled her still. It was so vivid and she remembered it so clearly.

The soft sound of rustling grass drew her attention back to reality. A shadow cast from the towering purple hued gungan standing in front of her. “You look to be deep in thought.” He crouched down in front of her, a concerned look replacing that goofy smile usually on his face.

Shi’Dan sat up a bit, crossing her legs in front of her as she shook her head slightly. “It’s nothing. Bad dreams.”

The male finally plopped on his butt, rubbing his chin. “Oh. What was this dream about?”

Shi’Dan picked at the grass as she told her dream to Jel’Ki, the male nodding to show he was listening. Silence fell between the two once she finished telling the tale. Jel’Ki shrugged and stood. “It’s just a dream Shi’Dan. If you have it again though… Then I’d be bringing it to your father and the boss. Sometimes our dreams are more than dreams.”

She looked up to him and nodded slowly. He extended his hand and pulled her to her feet. “C’mon. Let’s go get some lunch! It’s been way too long since we’ve hung out.”

She stopped worrying about her dream after that, comforted by her friend. At least until that night when the dream repeated once more. She had little choice but to follow Jel’Ki’s suggestion and go to her father and the Boss.

Her dreams were dismissed as no more than that. A nightmare. She was angered at such a disregard for the dangers that she had felt looming in the near future. She took it upon herself to prepare for what would come. Traps were set along the nesting grounds, hidden by the keen eye of a hunter.

Finally, the day came. Stillness was thick in the air that morning as a dense fog settled on the nesting grounds. The herd was kept close until it dissipated, leaving a dreary gray day ahead of them. In the distance, the screeches and caws of the Peko-Peko began to draw closer.

Before they had even seen the first bird, Shi’Dan directed her companions onto their Kaadu and to take up arms and shields. It was still and silent for several long moments with several Gungans doubting the severity of the attack.

The screeches grew louder and louder. The sky was filled with sapphire blue wings, diving down at the Kaadu and Gungans. Only those who drew too close to the nests were bothered with. Shi’Dan’s breath caught in her throat as the moment that haunted her drew nearer. A decisive strike at the Peko-Peko diving at her left it bleeding on the ground, rapidly approaching it’s death.

With a kick to her Kaadu’s sides, the beast sprinted forward just in time to avoid the blow that would have dismounted her and sealed her fate. The bandit behind her sneered as she turned around, her shield up at the ready. The bandits were thinned out by her traps and pitfalls. They would not overwhelm her companions this day. All she had to worry about now… was dealing with her demon in front of her.

The two clashed, pole to shield in violent blows until the bandit struck out at her mount. The Kaadu screeched in pain and fell to the ground, throwing its rider. Shi’Dan broke her fall with a quick roll. The bandit reared his Kaadu around, ready to deal a fated death blow to the young female in front of him.

Before he could make his strike, a Booma hit him from the side. The bandit was taken off guard by the burning pain searing in his side. Before he knew it, several more Kaadu mounted with Gungans were on top of him. Shi’Dan sighed heavily with relief. The hunters had returned.

The bandits were ultimately pushed back by the hunters and shepherds. Those left alive were interrogated ruthlessly and turned over to the proper authorities. They had planned to raid the nests in order to have an easier time raising the young Kaadu.

Life returned to normalcy for a time after the raid. Shi’Dan was assigned to defend the herd more often than she was assigned to go hunting. Her father and the Boss kept her dream a secret from the other Gungans. She herself had done so as well, mostly out of fear of the others believing her to be a prophet or something silly like that.

Much of her time went to setting traps around the nest, carefully marking the location and type with little trinkets or setting up sticks and stones in certain patterns. She had, of course, informed her fellow shepherds of the meanings of the patterns and trinkets to avoid any of her own kin being caught in the traps. Thankfully, the most ever set off were a few predators or wayward people who had gotten just a little too close while wandering around.

She tolerated this meager existence for a year or two before coming to a decision. It was time to go out into the world on her own, away from her clan and parents. Away from the boring duties of watching the Kaadu and making a name for herself, to prove to her father and the Boss she was worthy of being out there hunting.