

The female's mouth filled with the taste of copper as her head met with the hard floor once again. Painfully, she opened her eyes, seeing an open palm swinging at her face. Searing heat and pain flooded her senses as the boney hand collided with her cheekbone. This had been the second beating this week.

A hand grabbed her neck, lifting her to her feet, almost choking her. She could feel his breath on her face, hot and musky, the stench of booze filling her nose. Amber eyes meet his brown, and she knew she had really pushed it this time.

"The one reason you're not dead, Inarya, is because you're valuable." His grip tightened around her throat. "If I wanted to I could snap your pretty little neck." Inarya could feel his eyes running down her body, and it made her skin crawl. "Now what do you say?"

"I'm sorry." Inarya spluttered, barely able to breathe. She felt him grab her lekku, pulling slowly, and her vision flashed as she screamed out in agony.

"You're sorry, what?"

"Master!" Inarya's voice was panicked "I'm sorry, Master."

"Good girl." He let go of her neck, letting her fall into a heap on the floor. "Stop defying me. Having to punish you like this hurts me just as much as it hurts you." His hand softly stroked her already bruised cheek. The Twi'lek froze at his touch, the beatings she could take, but not this. This was a whole different type of torture.

He cupped her chin, bringing her head up to look at his face. The Human face was old, a greying beard cover his cheeks and chin, deeply set lines crossing over his skin. His brown eyes were traced in red from the amount he had drunk. "Such pretty eyes" he spoke gently, his thumb caressing her cheek. Inarya clenched her body, wishing him to stop. He turned to the door, standing up, removing his hand from the female's face "Ziare!"

From the doorway a slight frame of a woman appeared. Her hair was long and grey, twisted into an ornate bun on the top of her head. Although her face now showed her years of abuse underneath, one could see the traces of the beauty she once possessed.

"Master Drake?" Her voice was soft and homely, and as her eyes fell on Inarya, she brought her hands to her mouth. She could see that Drake had not been forgiving this time.

"Take her and get her cleaned up." He turned and walked to the back of the room. "Maybe tomorrow she'll show me why I have invested so much money into her." Then he walked out of sight, leaving the two women alone. Ziare hurried over to the young Twi'lek, taking her arm and putting it over her shoulder, slowly pulling the broken youth to her feet.

"Inarya, why do you push him like this?" The Human was the closest Inarya knew to a mother. "One of these days I am not going to just be treating your bruises. I'll be burying you." The pair walked from Drake's quarters to the one of the side rooms, where long silk drapes hung from the

roof and large plush pillows covered the floor. Slowly and gently, Zaire placed the battered Lethan on the pillows, draping a silk sheet over her, making sure that the door was locked behind them. Inarya's hand ran over her naked skin to her lower chest. She felt her ribs, noting that three of them were broken. She curled into a ball and wept silently. They were not tears of sorrow or fear, but tears of anger that had begun to fill her, twisting her into something ugly.

"I am going to kill him."

"Shush, you mustn't say things like that. He has eyes and ears everywhere in this place." Fear was etched into the voice of the older woman. She came over, carefully wrapping a hand around the alien. Inarya sat up, pushing her arm off of her, wincing in pain, her eyes meeting hers, hate was swirling in the deep amber of her eyes.

"I don't care anymore. I am not going to be his property. I will make him pay, for everything. He will suffer." Her fists were clenched, her long nails digging into her palms.

"You mean it don't you?" Inarya said nothing in response. Zaire got to her feet and looked down at the Twi'lek. "He keeps a knife under his pillow. You know how paranoid he gets," The Lethan turned to the Human. "Inarya...if you fail...he will kill you. No matter how valuable you are to him. If he can't keep you under control then you are worthless to him."

"I'd rather die than live like this any longer."

"Fine. I'll make the arrangements." Zaire turned her back to Inarya. She could tell that her friend was upset without needing to see her face. She couldn't blame her. Zaire had raised her, nursed her when she was sick, fixed her when Drake had broken her. To her, it would be like losing a daughter. She left the room, leaving Inarya alone for the night. The Twi'lek laid there, staring up at the ceiling, both dreading and wishing for morning.

It was a few hours after dawn when Zaire returned, bringing with her a dress Drake had requested the Twi'lek wear. Zaire helped Inarya into it, an uneasy silence between the two of them.

"Please rethink this." Were the only words that came from the Human's mouth before leaving Inarya in the quarters of the Slave Master. He sat on the end of the bed, waiting for her, his eyes moving up and down her. They reminded her of slugs leaving slimy tracks over her skin. She shivered in disgust, backing up against the door, feeling the wood touching her flesh.

"Now are we going to be more obedient today?" He got up, walking over to her, and stood inches from her, so that she could already smell alcohol on his breath. He placed one hand on the door next to her head while the other slipped past her hip, twisting the lock on the door.

The male's hand slipped down from its position on the door to her shoulder, creeping its way down her arm. Inarya fought against herself. She wanted nothing more than to slap his hand away but she knew that she had to play nice for a few minutes longer.

“Yes, Master.” Her voice was shaken as she spoke. Her eyes never left the floor.

“Good.” She felt him pulling her hand towards the bed and her body reluctantly followed. She laid down on the bed, feeling his weight on top of her, and clenched shut her eyes. His mouth was at her neck, and she could feel his breath against her skin. He kissed her, his mouth leaving wet marks on her crimson flesh. She felt bile coming up from the pit of her stomach as his hands moved over her body.

*Hold it together, Inarya.* She thought. Her hands reached up above her head, slipping under the pillow. Blindly, her fingers dug around, seeking out the coldness of the metal dagger. His weight on her was unbearable. His mouth moved to her, forcing his tongue down her throat. Inarya felt her fingers touching the tip of the dagger and pulled it from its hiding place, slashing the male across the face.

Immediately, he stopped, pulling away from the Twi'lek seeing the knife in her hand. He grabs her wrist with one hand pinning it above her head. His eyes filled with rage as the other grabbed her throat.

“You ungrateful little bitch! After everything that I have done for you, you try and stab me in the back!” Drake’s hand was wrapped round her throat, completely cutting off all air supply she had. She panicked, frantically swiping at him with her nails with her free hand. The room around her was getting dark.

Blindly, she struck out again. She could feel her nails meeting flesh. Carving them deeply across his face, Inarya felt him let go and cry in agony. She felt the air rush back into her lungs. Her surroundings came rushing back to her. Drake was still on top of her, clutching his eye, moaning in pain. Inarya, pulling strength from somewhere, pushed him off her to the floor below. The Twi'lek knelt up, grabbing the knife with both hands, and jumped from the bed, driving the blade into his flesh. Screaming, she pulled the knife from him before driving it back.

Her rage took over. She felt his warm blood splash over her face as she lost control. Her hands dug the knife deeper, tearing away chunks of meat from his bones, coating her hands in his blood. She carried on till her muscles told her to stop and the blade of the knife hit nothing but the wood flooring beneath her. Her eyes looked down, seeing that she was kneeling in a pool of blood. Drake’s body barely resembled that of a Human, more like a butchered mess on the floor. Inarya got to her feet, her body covered in viscera. Her eyes looked down on his corpse in disgust, spitting at what was left of him.

There was a pounding at the door. The Twi'lek gripped the knife hard walking over slowly turning the lock. She raised the knife above her head, stopping inches from Ziare’s neck.

“What happened?” The woman’s eyes looked over the blood soaked female. Her hands came to her mouth. She went to take a step in the room before Inarya’s arm came to stop her.

“I wouldn’t.” Inarya’s voice was different, her face was different. Zaire could see a darkness in her

that wasn't there before.

"He's dead, isn't he?" Inarya nodded not speaking. "So now what?"

"Now." Inarya looked down at the knife. "I kill the rest of them."