No Backup

Taranae sat, waiting as patiently as she could considering her circumstances. She felt degraded, being dressed as she was. The slave silks she had been forced to wear for this operation revealed slightly more skin than she liked, and her upper thighs showed with every step she took on her way to the room she now occupied. Of course, the disguise was necessary to give her the outward appearance of a common comfort slave and her hair, now beginning to grow past her shoulders had been put up on her head in plats and she now wore the hair in a ring around the top of her head like a crown. She growled to herself as whoever she was waiting for was taking their time reaching the room and time was short.

 With her head bowed, she smiled inconspicuously to herself as the door opened with a soft whoosh and a man in uniform walked in.

 “Make sure we are not disturbed,” she heard him tell the guard outside the door. “I want to make sure I get some *quality* time to inspect the merchandise.”

 “Understood Sir.” The guard replied as the door hissed shut behind him.

 “Now, let’s see what treasures you have to show me.”

 Taranae stood, and she felt the man’s eyes travel the length of her body from top to toe. His eyes lingered far too long on her scantily clad bosom for her comfort and she put on the act of trying to shyly hide her assets.

 “Coy too, I see.” He said. “I like it when slaves are new and still have to be broken in.” He gave a harsh, loud laugh as he spoke, and Taranae had to bite her tongue to stop her leaping at the man immediately and tearing out his throat. The mission she had been given called for stealth, and that would be gone if she attacked him right now. He walked slowly over to her and circled around her, his eyes covering every inch of her body.

 “So beautiful. And a redhead too. It’s not often I see one of your kind come in from the slavers. I wonder how on earth they managed to get such a beauty.” He slapped her hard on the rump and she let out a squeal. The slap stung, but nothing more. Inside, she seethed. Whoever this man was, whatever rank, he would die by her hands and the sooner the better. His hand suddenly clamped around her mouth and she put up her own hand, trying to remove the obstruction.

 “Yes! I like it when they fight back! Most slaves do, but they learn to accept their fate after a few times.” She struggled in his grasp as his other hand came around and caressed her breast.

“Nice and firm. You’re a good catch and you’ll serve me well.”

 He pulled her back harshly towards the table and onto her back. Laid across the table, he kept his hand on her mouth and held both of her hands with his free hand above her head. He climbed above her and reached down when she heard a rip. Taranae knew that this was not how she had expected the encounter to work. She was supposed to have the upper hand, but she had played her part and now she was in a very difficult position. Her lower silks had been ripped off completely and she felt the cool air of the room wrap around her bare legs and thighs. She knew what the man intended to do now and she smiled. All she had to do was to let matters take their own course.

 As she suspected, he climbed above her and grabbed her thighs. She lashed out with her foot, and the Force-empowered kick did its job. Her foot found the appropriate spot in his groin and her assailant’s eyes rolled back into his head as he fell sideways off her and the table, landing on the floor and grasping himself before falling unconscious from the sheer pain. Taranae had a feeling he wouldn’t be talking any time soon. She took stock of her predicament and decided that she needed to cover herself if she was to continue the mission. Grabbing her fallen foe, she quickly stripped him of his uniform pants and pulled them on over her own panties. She sighed with relief as she covered herself again and decided to take the blaster from the prone form. The grey uniform pants didn’t suit her and she swore to get something better to wear if the chance became available as her mission continued.

 Crossing over to the door, she tucked the blaster into the waistband of her pants and listened. She could hear a commotion outside and knew that the guard would be distracted by whatever was happening. She hit the door panel and the door slid open, revealing a sight of utter chaos. Smoke filled the corridors and the guard was nowhere to be seen. Taranae checked left and right, then taking out her blaster again, headed in the direction of the battle. A figure burst from the smoke and a lightsaber was raised, the tip aiming directly at her face. The yellow glow lit up a face that she was all too familiar with.

 “Don’t attack, Jai!” she screamed. The other figure eyed her intently before lowering the weapon.

 “Taranae! I didn’t realise you had been sent in under cover as a slave too.” She eyed Taranae’s choice of clothing.

 “Long story, Jai. Let’s save it ‘til later, ok?” she replied with a lopsided grin. “Where are you headed?”

 “Callus told me to head to communications.” she said. “Fancy an adventure?”

 “Sure. Let’s do it.” She replied. Together they headed off in the direction Jai’de had indicated led to the aft of the ship where communications was located. A mass firefight stopped their progress as Callus leaped from a side corridor and slashed his lightsaber across the chest of an adversary.

 “Go, now!” he shouted. “After this you should be clear to communications. We seem to have taken down most of the resistance here.”

 Jai’de and Taranae sprinted along the corridor, eyes never moving and watching for any signs of attack, but as Callus had said, most of the resistance on the deck was crushed and all they saw were bodies littered around. Rounding a bulkhead, they saw their target. They stopped and stared at the door with its broken access panel and fizzing circuitry.

 “This poses a problem.” Said Jai’de. “How do we get in there and signal the others that they need to board for the last phase?”

 Taranae looked around. “Wait, I have an idea.” Placing her blaster back into her pants, she walked to one of the walls where a vent was placed a few feet above them. “Jai’de, give me a lift.”

 Jai’de cupped her hands as Taranae stepped with one foot and lifted herself up to the level of the grille. As far as she could see, it turned right a short way through and they would be able to gain access to the room by cutting the vent in the next room. Taranae grabbed the vent and pulled, calling on the Force for strength, and the grille came away, buckling at the corners. With a little help from Jai’de, she climbed into the vent and began crawling. As she had seen, the vent turned right and she was glad to see that a vent cover lay ahead which led directly into the room, it just needed removal. She grasped both sides with her hands and pulled, the vent coming away neatly with hardly any noise.

 Poking her head through the vent, she took stock of her surroundings. They had bigger problems as three guards had set up a rotating cannon in the room aimed directly at the door. Her only chance was to crawl further and try to find another access panel behind the guards. Passing over the one she had opened, she was lucky to find another on the far side of the room, which she opened. Slowly, she lowered herself to the ground behind the guards and quickly moved behind a table to plan her strategy. She moved whilst crouched to a position just behind the trailing guard. Pulling out her blaster, she rose and put her hand around the guard’s neck. Her other hand came around the other side and clasped, throttling the guard without a sound. As the guard not guarding the cannon turned, Taranae let off a round of blaster fire that struck him square in the chest, killing him instantly. Now the cannon guard finally realised what was happening and quickly turned the weapon around on its tripod so that it pointed directly at her. Just as he was about to fire, Taranae gestured and he flew backwards into the door. His body hit so hard that there was a loud crack as his spine snapped and he slid to the ground in an ungainly heap.

 Taranae placed her blaster back into her pants waist and approached the door. “Jai’de, can you hear me?” she asked.

 “Yes I can Taranae. What do you want me to do?”

 “If we both concentrate, I’m sure we can get this door open. Are you up for it?”

 “Sure. Go for it.” She replied.

 Both Plagueis members held up their hands, palms facing the door and concentrated. Taranae felt the Force wrap her like a blanket and she focused all her power on the door, willing it to slide open. Jai’de did the same and slowly, but surely, the door slid inch by inch until a gap appeared wide enough to allow Jai’de entry. She approached the comms terminal and began to flick switches and buttons, bringing the communications online and opening a channel to the Action transport.

 “This is Jai’de. Lower decks are secure.” She barked into the comms.

“Understood, Jai’de. Are you alone?”

 “No, Taranae is with me. How fares the battle?”

 “Our forces have reached the command centre. We suffered some casualties, but we won out in the end. We have reinforcements coming aboard now.”

 As they listened, there were loud explosions, blaster fire and the whoosh of lightsabers. The rest of Plagueis had now boarded and there was nowhere to run or hide. The Transcendence belonged once more to its rightful owners.