

# Haunted Recollections

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Jai'de shot upright and looked around slowly in confusion. Sinking slowly to the floor in a crouch, she deliberately slid her hands over herself, taking stock of what weapons she had, if any.

Exhaling on a soft sigh of relief, Jai'de was soothed to find that she had her whip coiled around her hips and her daggers in their sheaths on her thighs. Taking a moment to note how out of place that was, considering only moments ago she had been asleep and didn't usually keep her weapons on her, she started a careful survey of her surroundings.

The room she was in was a small bedroom that she remembered from her past. *Impossible!* Jai'de thought. *I haven't lived here in years!* Slightly panicked, Jai'de started to quickly move through the rest of the small apartment. If she was here, she had to find Jae'mi and ensure the small girl was safe. Her worst fears slightly allayed when she was unable to find the small Chiss girl, she found her attention drawn to a small window overlooking the street below. A brawl between 2 rival gangs was playing out on the street below her. Illuminated by a streetlight, she could see the sharp flash of the blades they were wielding. Jai'de started to feel a strange sense of *deja vu* pass over her. With her skin crawling, she started recalling the events of this night, 4 years ago.

Fearful of what was coming next, Jai'de quickly moved around her old apartment gathering a small bag of necessities. Slinging the bag over her shoulder, Jai'de looked around the small apartment one last time, and cautiously opened the door to the hallway. Quietly, and with purpose, Jai'de made her way to the back stairwell. She wasn't about to make the same mistake as last time and take the front stairs where she encountered 3 men from the Zygerrian Slavers Guild. She couldn't allow them to get their hands on her again, she would NOT go back.

Carefully making her way down the stairs, pausing at each landing to sneak a look at the landing below, Jai'de discreetly made her way down all 12 flights of stairs. At the back door, she paused again, taking a deep breath before slowly prying the door open. As she slipped out the door into the shadows, she felt more than heard a movement behind her.

Cursing herself for her delayed reaction, Jai'de felt the man's hands wrap around her waist and lift her slightly off the ground. Reminding herself not to panic, she let her body go limp in the man's grip and felt it loosen slightly. Reaching the ground with just the tips of her toes, she was able to gain the tiny amount of leverage she required to contort and flip herself over the man's back. Landing lightly on her feet, in a slight crouch, Jai'de got her first look at the man. Before her stood Movan Ne Dago, the Zygerrian slave trader responsible for killing her parents and bringing her to Nar Shaddaa as a small girl.

"Learned a few new things since the last time I saw you, *little whore.*" Ne Dago sneered at her, clearly not expecting her sudden movement.

"If you only knew" Jai'de said with a hint of a smirk. Reaching for the force, Jai'de cloaked herself, hoping to get a distinct advantage over Ne Dago. If she lost to him, it would mean going back to the Slavers guild and her former life and that wasn't an option for her.

Sensing that Ne Dago was about to make his move towards her, she tensed and prepared for her attack. She couldn't afford to move even a second too early or she would lose her advantage. As Ne Dago lunged towards her with all the grace of a charging bull, Jai'de pivoted lightly on her feet and released the neuronc whip from her hips, flicking the switch to engage it.

With a deft flick of her wrist, she was able to wrap the end of the whip around his left ankle and allow the powerful electrical charges to deaden his entire leg. As he started to lose his balance, she was able to wrap the end of her braid around his wrist and drag her to the ground with him. Twisting slightly, Jai'de was able to fall on top of the Zygerrian and slide her daggers out of her boots, releasing her grip on the whip. Yanking roughly on her braid, Ne Dago was able to pull Jai'de off of him enough to roll himself on top of her, knocking one of her daggers from her grip. Blocking the fist Ne Dago aimed at her face just a little too late, Jai'de saw stars burst behind her eyes.

"Thought you weren't allowed to damage the merchandise Ne Dago? Won't your boss be upset when he sees the cut on my face?" Jai'de taunted needlessly.

"Zeltrons sell well, pristine condition or not." he sneered at her. "You should remember how well."

Repressing a shudder at just how right he was, Jai'de was able to drive her remaining dagger into his side to the hilt. As he reared back in pain, she quickly ripped the blade from his side and swiped it across his belly, just barely cutting the skin. Rolling back away from her, Ne Dago created some distance between them while he held a hand to his side and glared at the small Zeltron woman on the ground in front of him.

Using all of the flexible, well-toned muscles in her small body, Jai'de was able to execute a perfect kickover into standing, grabbing the handle of her whip as she went. Deactivating the whip and re-coiling it around her hips, she kept a close eye on the movements of Ne Dago. She sauntered over to her disarmed dagger with the exaggerated roll of her hips that was common amongst her species. Hyper-aware of his movements, Jai'de kicked the dagger up into her outstretched hand, sliding both daggers home into the sheaths hidden in her boots, preparing to run.

Noticing Ne Dago's eyes flick to something over her left shoulder too late, Jai'de felt the small tranquilizer dart hit her lower back as she started to pivot. Ne Dago's taunting and self-congratulatory laughter was the last thing she heard as she faded out of consciousness.

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As Jai'de slowly regained consciousness, the familiar smell of a brothel assaulted her senses first. Forcing down her first instinct to devolve into complete panic, Jai'de feigned unconsciousness while she focused on her breathing to calm down. When she was finally able to bring her rioting body back under control, she slowly sat up, taking note that her wrists were bound behind her back and her left ankle was chained to a nearby wall. As her eyes grew accustomed to the poorly lit room, she noticed a small group of 4 very young girls huddled across the room from her. Of the 4 girls, 3 of them couldn't have been any older than 8 and the 4th; a tiny, inexplicably beautiful Chiss girl, was barely old enough to walk.

Taking advantage of her ability to control her pain level, Jai'de dulled her pain receptors and dislocated her shoulders so she could rotate her arms over her head and bring them back in front of her. Taking a moment so she didn't over-exert herself, she carefully leaned against the wall and forced her right shoulder back into its socket, repeating the process with her left. All 4 of the girls were watching her with curiosity in their eyes.

"Please, will you help us?" one of the older girls asked nervously. "We were taken from our families and brought to this place. I overheard one of the guards say they were going to sell us."

Knowing she couldn't possibly leave the girls behind, Jai'de didn't bother to answer the little girl, choosing instead to find a way out. With her hands in front of her, Jai'de was able to reach up and pull out the small, razor-sharp blade shaped as an ordinary hair pin she kept hidden from her braid. Deftly cutting through her bonds, she was able to start working on the lock at her ankle with the pin.

Free from her restraints, Jai'de took a moment to stretch and increase the circulation in her hands and foot. Assessing the room, Jai'de started to explore, testing for any weaknesses in the walls or door she could exploit to free them. Not finding any weaknesses in the walls or door, she sighed audibly and sat back on the edge of the small bed to think.

*"There will be a guard that will check on us soon."* A small and unfamiliar voice said telepathically.

*"How do you know?"* Jai'de responded in kind as her eyes locked on the tiny Chiss girl.

*"It's the same each night,"* explained the small girl. *"They will come and tell us horrible stories of what is going to happen to us and then leave us for the night, making sure we barely get any sleep."*

*"When the guard comes, hide in the back corner and do not watch what is going to happen."* Jai'de said suddenly out loud.

Patiently Jai'de waited, praying the small girl wasn't mistaken. She forgot how advanced young Chiss were and was always surprised by how intelligent they were. About 10 minutes had passed when she finally heard the telltale sounds of someone approaching the door. As the handle on the door turned, Jai'de focused on the pheromones inherent to all of her kind and directed them to the young male human guard that was entering the room. She loathed using the repulsive pheromones, having had to use them many times over the younger portion of her life when she was enslaved, but she was smart enough to recognize that in some instances, they were necessary. She wasn't about to let an opportunity like this pass her by when she also had the young girls to get free as well.

As predicted, the guard wasn't familiar with Zeltron tricks and soon was staring at her with interest. Jai'de rolled her eyes in disgust with herself and beckoned the young guard over to her. When he was within range, she snaked out her leg and swept his feet out from underneath him. As he fell, she followed through with her other leg, kicking out and connecting squarely with his head. Once the guard had hit the floor unconscious, Jai'de started binding his hands together and chaining his ankle to the wall as hers had been. Realizing that she had to find a way to gag him before he awoke and called for help, she looked around for something to gag him with.

As she scanned the room, she felt a small hand push something into her hand. Looking down at the small sock in her hand, she shrugged and stuffed it into the guard's mouth hoping that it would muffle him enough.

"Stay right behind me, all of you and stay as quiet as you can." She cautioned as she quickly glanced out into the hallway. Leading the girls swiftly down the hallway, Jai'de glanced around, keeping hyper-aware of any sounds or movements. Up ahead, she could hear noises that sounded like several guards enjoying the benefits of being holed up in a brothel. Figuring they would be too busy to notice them pass, Jai'de took her chances sneaking past the rooms.

Nearing the end of the hallway, she had to make a choice to go left or right. Hesitating a moment while she weighed her options, the tiny Chiss girl put a hand on her leg and tilted her head to the right.

"*Are you sure?*" Jai'de inquired of the girl.

The small girl only nodded and started heading down the right hallway. Feeling a familiar sense of dread in the pit of her stomach, Jai'de flinched visibly as she remembered what was about to come.

Only a few short metres in front of them, a huge door that had to be the entrance loomed in front of them. Desperate to turn the girls around and go back down the other hallway, Jai'de could feel her body head for the front door as if it didn't have a choice. In what felt like slow motion, she heard and saw the same scene that haunted her in her sleep over and over since this one fateful night.

Seeing the door out, one of the older girls broke into a run, forgetting to keep quiet. Out of the doorway that Jai'de never saw until it was too late, a couple of guards appeared and one reached out and scooped the small girl up, snapping her neck in the process. As the small girl was tossed to the side like a broken doll, Jai'de felt the familiar helplessness and rage build up inside of her. Reaching into her boots for her daggers, Jai'de suddenly felt vulnerable as she remembered they had been taken from her.

Reaching into the deep pit of rage she felt within her, Jai'de unleashed at one of the guards forcing his entire body into stasis. Turning her attention to the second guard, she saw he already had the other 2 older girls within reach and had just finished running through one of them with the long curved sword he was holding. Running with all of the speed she could muster, Jai'de threw herself at the second guard but couldn't get to him before he managed to cut the throat of the other girl. Despite all of her martial arts training and the force powers she could now wield, she still attacked him like a wild feral cat, devolving to her most animalistic nature with the rage and despair she was now feeling.

The guard unable to fend off her savage strikes started to back up and tripped over the body of one of the girls causing them both to fall to the floor. With a sound that could only be called a growl emerging from her throat, Jai'de grabbed ahold of the guard's sword arm and pushed his sword to his throat. Forcing all of her weight down onto sword, she drove the blade of the sword into his neck, cutting all the way to vertebrae of his spine.

Shoulders heaving with the deep shuddering breaths she was taking, she stood, placed her foot on the dead guard's chest and pulled the sword from his throat with a slight gurgling sound. As she stalked over to the guard she still had trapped in stasis, with eerie

feline-like movements, she could see the panic in his eyes. With terrifying calm and deadly precision, Jai'de disemboweled the guard and released her hold on him. As he collapsed to the ground, slowly bleeding out, Jai'de could feel the familiar haze set in over her as she strode on a mission back down the hallways.

As the haze cleared from her vision, she took stock of her surroundings. She was back at the front entrance of the building covered from head to toe in blood and who knew what else, but she had the familiar weight of her daggers and whip back on her body. She had no recollection of how she recovered them, but she was happy to have them back.

Startled by a small noise behind her, Jai'de looked back and saw the small Chiss girl crawling out from behind a table. Horrified by how she must look to the young child, she looked around uselessly for something to wipe off her skin. As she felt the small girl's arms wrap around her leg, Jai'de looked down shocked.

*"Thank you."* Was all the small girl said.

"Where should I take you to now, little one?" Jai'de asked outloud.

In a distant part of her mind, Jai'de felt something like a slight pull. Glancing down once more at the tiny Chiss girl that would soon become inseparable from her, Jai'de lost all consciousness.

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As her awareness returned to her, Jai'de could feel small hands shaking her awake.

"JAI'DE!" A familiar but scared voice shouted in her ear.

She opened her eyes, and saw the same inexplicably beautiful but older Chiss girl looking at her with worry in her eyes.

"I couldn't wake you up this time! I could hear you having the nightmare and no matter what I tried, I couldn't wake you up this time!" Jae'mi said with a tinge of panic in her voice.

"I'm ok." Jai'de reassured her. "I promise." She added as she caught the quick skeptical look Jae'mi shot her.

A little worried herself as to why Jae'mi couldn't wake her up tonight as she had so often in the past, Jai'de promised herself that she would talk to Teylas about it. Perhaps her master and friend could shed some light on the odd dream.