Judecca

Wilderness

39 ABY

Snow blanketed the forest ground as the darkness of night veiled the world. Firelight from a window in a small cabin flickered from the fireplace within. Away from disturbances caused by politics, wars, and other disputes; Shadow Nighthunter was sitting in front of the fireplace with a mug of hot chocolate with marshmallows in hand. The cold never bothered the Sith, for she in fact enjoyed it’s icy bite now and then. However, she enjoyed the nice warmth of fire as well, along with the nice, warm feeling one gets from drinking a wintery beverage. In truth, warmth was the only comfort the Sith had in her lonely life.

A muffled woof was heard by her feet, and the Sith looked down to find both anooba and vornskr deep in their dreams. She smiled, and reached down to gently rub the vornskr’s head. Though she lacked human companionship now days, she was grateful for the company that the two canines provided.

*Oh, I can’t help but wonder what I would do without these two.*

Shadow smiled as she retracted her hand and continued to look into the flames once more. Yes, she was perfectly fine alone with her two beasts, but deep down she had a deep longing to be with people who she had been close with. Most of all, she missed her former apprentice, Brandon Tarsus. Both had become extremely close, and when the Obelisk had left sometime after being knighted, she had secretly come to miss him. The Obelisk had brought light into her dark life, and had even caused her heart to flutter with secret affection. She had kept such emotions in check, however, but now she had come to regret it. All she could ever want for any kind of gift was to be with her apprentice again, and perhaps open her stone-cold heart.

Shadow sighed at the thought of Tarsus, and couldn’t help but feel the warmth slowly dissipate. To try and distract herself, she got up from the rocking chair and went over to the window to look at the snow. The trees dimmed the normal, ghostly shine from the fallen snow, and seemed to amplify the stillness of the woods. This was the life, Shadow preferred when she had free time. Living away from the chaos of Palatinean business was just fine. In the woods, she could train and meditate without being disturbed and she was at peace within nature. However, nature couldn’t bring peace to her now aching heart. The Sith for once was hating the loneliness.

“Somewhere out there…you’re flying around…picking fights…and getting the girls,” she said to herself as a small tear slid down her cheek. “I hope you’re doing alright, my apprentice…you better be happy…and the Force forbid that you do something stupid and get yourself killed.”

This time, Shadow couldn’t help but chuckle as she remembered all the trouble her apprentice had put her through. The Obelisk had acted childish many times, and had driven her to near insanity. However, he had also been quite a gentleman as well. Though she was a serious, cold-hearted Sith assassin, the Obelisk’s personality had won her heart. He was what she had lost during her years as a Jedi apprentice.

A sudden knock at the door broke Shadow from her thoughts, and she quickly made her way to the door. “Who is it?”

“A-a courier…ma’m,” came a male voice. “I’ve…a package from an…anonymous…person.”

Shadow was a bit taken back, for never had anyone sent her anything. She quickly opened the door, and found a freezing Rodian shivering at the door. “Goodness, sir. Please come in before you catch a cold.”

The Rodian shook his head as he quickly handed her the package. “Thank you, Lady Nighthunter, but I must get back to the city immediately.”

“Well, if you must insist…though I’m really surprised you even found me out here…let alone come out here in the first place.”

“Well, the letter that accompanied the package had directions for reaching your dwelling here.”

“Well, I’m very grateful for you coming out here…hold on one second.” Quickly, Shadow went to the pot of still-hot cocoa, and poured the contents into a mug before returning to the door. “Here, take this. It’ll keep you warm.”

“Thank you for your kindness, Lady Nighthunter. I shall not forget it,” the Rodian said before he took to his speeder and sped off.

Shadow smiled as she closed the door. Cold-hearted she normally was, but even her old Jedi ways warmed her heart now and then. Plus, she was also very anxious to see what was within the wrapped up package.

*I wonder what it could be? Only a few people know how to find me.*

Returning to her rocking chair, she placed the package on her lap and began to open it. The wrapping was quick to come off, and the minute she opened the container, the Sith was dumbfounded. Inside the box was a stuffed vornsker plushy, and around its neck above the small scarf, was a silver necklace with a silvery, star-based snowflake charm. In the middle of the snowflake was a silvery jewel that had a pure, starlight shine to it.

“Oh my…who…who sent this?” she asked herself, the Sith half-expecting a sudden answer. She noticed a folded piece of paper underneath the plushy, and pulled it out to read. As her eyes scanned the words, the Sith couldn’t help but smile. The gift was from none other than Tarsus himself, the Obelisk having explained how much he missed her, and that he had been keeping her in his thoughts every day. He explained that the stuffed animal was his way of giving back her lost childhood, and that the necklace was had reminded him of her cold, yet good heart. He wrote his apology for not having been able to return, and that he hoped to one day visit her if not return to the clan.

Tears began to fall again as Shadow felt her heart melt with warmth. She removed the necklace from the plushy and fastened it around her neck. The flames from the fireplace made the jewel shine even brighter to Shadow’s delight. She then grabbed the stuffed animal and held it closed to her, not wanting to part with it. She closed her eyes, and let both the flame’s warmth and the warmth of her apprentice’s gift sink into her very being. She didn’t feel so quite alone then, and at one point felt as if Tarsus was with her right then and there. Though his actual presence would’ve been the best gift, this was a definite close second.

*I love you, Brandon Tarsus…you’ll always be in my heart.*