Dasmen Tore

#9676

Call to Arms Fiction: Week One:

Cog In the Machine

 It was a job. Simple as that. No other emotional or mental investment besides what was necessary to function and carry out the task. Protect. Serve. Eliminate. All technical terms meant to imply something truly greater than the lingo entailed. But they managed to make the workload palatable. Digestible. For many, it was difficult to stomach the onslaught of violence and military might. For others, it was just another meal.

 Dasmen Tore stood at a distance from the rest of Plagueis forces, observing the rapid-fire construction and arrangement of forces and equipment. Ships. Cannons. Artillery. Were they planning to strike down the entire cosmos? It seemed like it. As much as she was sure the members of the clan would disagree with her, this was the largest amount of manpower she had ever seen cultivated in a pocket of square miles. It was almost overwhelming. Almost. Key word.

 She felt sweat collect on the dark nape of her neck, her black hair becoming scraggly against her skin. She was not nervous, but she was warm. The uniform provided to her felt constrictive, overtly formal. She felt more like a doorman or a butler than a hired mercenary. Didn’t matter. She was meant to blend in, and any contrary actions could result in punishment from the higher-ups. What were they called: Wrath? Dread Lord? Fairly dark, brooding names. Dasmen expected nothing less.

 Letting the heels of her boots skip away from the dust of the earth beneath her feet, Dasmen walked in a calculated manner to a row of ion cannons being fitted and charged by grunts smaller in stature to her. She did not intervene. The expectations for her always changed: The Wrath always had some sort of menial chore to do for her. Not this, though. This would be the first time that the Kuati would have the chance to prove her power on the battlefield. She knew that Selika Roh – that damn vesper of a woman, so disgustingly enigmatic – did not particularly think of Dasmen as anything other than a hired hand. That was manageable. Dasmen was not a person who let casual barbs or a condescending tone get under her skin. Not in regards to most comments, anyway. They had to be specific to hurt. Fortunately, people didn’t get in her way.

 One of the soldiers working on the cannons must have noticed Dasmen simply standing there, observing the scene of mounting defenses and fortifications. He was an engineer – a Subjugate. Dasmen could tell by the blue coveralls and jumpsuits. All individuality stripped from him. Dasmen had at least avoided that fate.

 “Hey,” he warbled from behind his helmet. “Are you here to help out or what?”

 Dasmen said nothing. Her hardened gaze, however, seemed to take the Subjugate aback, and he returned to focusing on a particularly stubborn non-functioning cannon without saying another word. Above her head, the almost bird-like screech of a fighter accompanied a blur of steel and engine flare as the fleets began to complete their formations. Out of the corner of her eye, she could see masses of faceless troops emerging from shuttles and evacs. Medics. Gunners. They’d be the first to die.

 Not Dasmen, most likely. She had survived worse. No one in Plagueis had been subjected to her stories – she was not much of a raconteur, anyway. For the duration of the military set-up, she stood back and watched. Noting every detail, keeping in mind every slight move and shuffle. It was useful to her. As a protector of the Zealots, she had always been required to keep a sharp eye and ear out. The smells got to her, too. Corroded metal. Pungent white smoke. The occasional whiff of fuel from a fighter just lifting from the ground.

 It was a job. And Dasmen, upon receiving further orders, would carry that job out.