

Part III - Our Love Ones Don't Rest In Peace

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Karufr

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It was fitting for the situation when the dark of the night took over what was once the a beautiful and rich world full of blue and green was now a jagged realm broken only by pillars of smoke rising into the night sky. In the distance ships of the Iron Legion swarmed the air. Bombs fell like rain and exploded into showers of red and orange. Hundreds of fires filled the canopy. And the Harpy's sensors picked up secondary explosions under the surface sending deep vibrations moaning through the ground. The few civilian ships that tried to break air to escape the madness were swiftly pursued by interceptors and shot down.

"This is not only a military strike, this is genocid." Kara said from the pilot's seat as they raced through the sky toward what ever remained of the Great Hall

Rian could say nothing to acknowledge what they saw. But he he exactly knew what to do to. For the sake of Taldryan he had to save as many who have survived the ongoing assault.

In less than half an hour, the Harpy reached the Great Hall, hovering down onto the surface behind the ruins of a collapsed building. They slid out of their ship and immediately hid behind a wall. "There, the entrance to the basement levels of the building seems to be intact." Rian said pointing at the staircase leading into the belly of the Ziggurat. Downstairs it was dark, none of the emergency lights were active bathing the corridors in front of them in eternal darkness. Even the soft yellow blade from Rian's lightsaber only barely pierced the surrounding darkness only a few feet ahead. Their steps were slow and cautious though they knew this place for several years now but rubble from the ceiling made their progress hard. They reached another staircase. "This one should bring us close to an auxilary repair-bay."

A few minutes later they reached the doors to the hangar.

"Locked." Kara whispered. "And no way to bypass it."

"There are several ways to bypass a lock."

"Yeah but that's blast door, I doubt your lightsaber will make it through fast enough, or did you hide a pack of detonite somewhere?"

"No, but there are other ways, stay back."

Rian took position before the door, the backsides of his hands forming an arrow in front of him. Closing his eyes, he shaped the door in his mind, the parting between them. The metal started to ache and groan as the Equite began to tore the two wings of the door apart in his mind. Then as his hands burst apart the door did loudly as well, its wings now hanging lose from its hinges.

"You see."

"Yeah, and more than anything else I heard it." she replied as they entered the hangar. "Luckily there was no one inside."

"Luckily there are ships in here instead, can you try to get one running while I search for survivors?"

Kara looked around, from the look of it the hangar has mostly been used to store spare parts except for both of the Clan's JV-7 Delta-class escort shuttles. "I will try my best but I can't work miracles." "That will do. I will call you when I found some surviv-." Rian stopped in his tracks. "Kara take cover."

Suddenly the lights of another shuttle came into view brushing over and past the open hangar bay.

"Who was that?"

"I don't know, probably another squad of Legionnaires. I will go and take a look."

"Are you insane? It was a miracle we made it this far into the Great Hall and now you are going straight for a face-to-face showdown?"

"There may be members of Tal whom they will take prisoners."

"And what if they are not and shoot you down? Rian, we already lost our friends since we joined Taldryan seven years ago and I'm not going to lose you too."

Rian grabbed her, pulling her to him. For a single moment, when her curves pressed against his form there was nothing but the two of them in the universe, no betrayal, no destruction just the two of them. Then he kissed her deeply. "I won't die, not today."

A single tear ran down her cheek. "That's not that much reassuring. Now go. Go and save them."

She swallowed. "Before there is no one left to be saved."

Rian gave her another gentle kiss then turned to leave through the same door they entered the hangar, his Lightsaber lit in his hand.

Reaching the top level of the Ziggurat again, Rian reached out warily with the Force, delving into the surrounding darkness for any traps set up near his position. In the near distance blasterfire was audible... and the humming of lightsabers.

His senses now on high alert, he spied around a corner to see a mid-aged man spinning his crimson blades around his body. Breaking into a run to help the other man surrounded by enemies, Rian thrust his blade forward, impaling one of the Legionnaires from behind. Calling his blade back into his hand as he jumped over the felled warrior he took position back to back with the one that revealed himself to be no one but Andrelious Mimosa Inahj.

While well trained the Legionnaires proved not that much of a competition for the two equites and soon the ground beneath them was lined with the bodies of dead Legionnaires.

"Andrelious, I am glad you are here. Have you seen any other survivors?"

"Rian, I thought you were off planet working for the Herald. "

"I did, but I broke up with my duties. Andrelious, tell me does any one else has survived the attacks?"

"I don't know about the others, but I saw them drag the bearded one away earlier, probably took him off-planet." His eyes switching between the Legionnaires shuttle and the face of the Taldrya.

Reading the other Equites eyes, he continued. "I can't help you, I gotta go and save my family and

that shuttle is going to help me."

There was a warmth in the otherwise cold eyes of the Darksider. "I understand you Andrelious. I wish you luck on saving your family."

"Good luck to you too." Andrelious said already walking over to the shuttle.

Rian waited until the shuttle took off and then turned for Spira Taldrya, if there would be any survivors, they would be in the bunkers slayn deep into the ground underneath the Great Hall, but how to get through them. His comlink buzzed. "Rian, these two shuttles aren't in a good shape, one's hyperdrive is completely inoperative, the other one, well it would work but it has a leak in the fuselage, so we could make a jump but it would burn down the hyperdrive."

"Can you fix it somehow using parts from the other shuttle?"

"I can try, but I won't make any promisses. Found any survivors?"

"No, they probably hid deep down in the bunkers."

"Maybe if I can work around a com signal. But for that I need to restore the emergency power if there is some at all."

"If you'd come down here again, you could use the powerplant from the other shuttle to activate the emergency com channel."

"Why haven't you said that earlier sweetheart. I am on my way."

When Rian arrived in the hangar again, Kara had already connected the other shuttle's engine with the local communications console. "I don't know how long that will work."

"It will surely work long enough." Rian said before typing the message into the com station.

"For any survivors from Taldryan... A working shuttle to get you off-planet is located in repair bay 37... I am Rian Taldrya and you are not alone..."

Part IV – A new Dawn

Deep below the surface inside the makeshift command center a solely display flashed to life with a single line of repeating text running from left to right.

"Major Rhy lance, you have to see this." A male Faleen standing close to it called for the newly appointed Consul of Taldryan.

"What is it Captain."

"Sir, we received a message from the surface."

The Consul watched the line for several seconds before entering a response to the message. Some might have seen it as a trap, to find the last of the so called Traitors to the Iron Throne but at the same time it was the most valued gift of all *Hope*. And as such the chance to get rescued soon wahsed away all doubts, all possible risks. Preparations were made while a squad of scouts was sent to the repair bay and finally when they reported back to the Consul the whole remaining members

of Taldryan started their ascend to the surface. And after what felt like an eternity the entourage led by the Consul who still kept an eye on the unconscious Zoron arrived in the repair bay when the first rays of the new day pierced through the dark grey clouds.

The moment Rhyllance arrived with Zoron strapped to the stretcher Rian immediately asked. "Is he okay?"

"He is for the moment, but it wasn't the best of ideas to transfer him so shortly after an operation."

"He is a tough man, he will survive. And where is the Consul?"

"I am the Consul now, master 's Howlader and Zoron have handed me the command over the Clan."

Rian bowed slightly, respecting the decision of his friends. "Then we should immediately get you off planet."

Within minutes everyone was aboard and the shuttle was ready to take off. "When we are gonna to make it through the blockade, I need every single gun of this ship manned.." Kara shouted back from the cockpit. "Whatever you see out there, as soon as it is chasing for us blast it from the sky, got it."

They made it half way through the atmosphere when the first fighters of the Iron Legion spotted the heavily armed escort shuttle. "There they come."

Kara banked the shuttle heavily to the right, evading the first tracing line of blaster fire before rolling over to the left again, bringing the first Interceptor in line with the backward turbolaser turret.

Green lines of super heated plasma connected with the fighter and turned it into a ball of fire. "Nice shot. But we aren't done yet."

Blaster fire from the other fighter struck their shields and immediately Kara rolled the ship again evading the second barrage of blaster fire. "Coming clear of the atmosphere, get me rid of that fighter so we can make the jump to hyperspace."

The shuttle waded left to right, up and down to make as hard a target as possible while at the same time giving the gunners the chance to get a bead on their interceptor. "There are more coming in closely from the left. Get it done guys."

"Got him." Came the immediate reply from the gunner seated on the turbolaser turret when he opened fire. The blast took off the right solar panel of the fighter, leaving it spinning in space.

"Good job, entering hyperspace now." Kara slammed the hyperdrive controller forward rocketing the shuttle in the unreal tunnel of hyperspace.

The End