Sitting on a storage crate, its side marked with the impacts of stray blaster shots, Tali Zorah vinced as Koliss Welcott touched her sensitive lekku with a wadded cotton ball dipped in antiseptic, the sensation rather stinging.

“Ouch, vatch it, vill you?” She muttered, turning her head to the side and pulling the lek in his hand taught as he continued to clean the minor cut she’d suffered during the battle.

“You want me to look at these or not? It’s not my problem if you get an infection…” He muttered, rummaging through his heavily depleted satchel for a band-aid as the Twi’lek grunted something in her native tongue that he interpreted as resignation.

“This one’s on you, Velcott. You know that?” She stated as her yellow eyes scanned the ravaged battlefield before them, the refugees having already been evacuated to a more secure area after the attack.

“What?! How’s this MY fault?!” The medic snapped, suppressing the urge to yank off the band-aid just to spite her.

“You trustedt those damn slavers and look vhat they didt. Luredt those Iron Throne bastardts here and usedt the commotion to steal one of Our ships and escape.” Tali muttered bitterly, the former slave having no love lost on a bunch of thugs looking to enslave others for profit.

“Hey, look here lek-head, I didn’t want to treat them. They just struck a good deal and I didn’t know they were slavers…” Koliss began his defense.

“I toldt you they vere, but you didn’t listen!” Tali interjected sharply.

“Yes, you did and I didn’t trust your gut. I’m sorry for that, but you had had a rough day and just starting to accuse those people of being slavers…”, he paused to sigh and shook his head, “In any event, I didn’t have reason NOT to trust them and, if you’ll recall, they fought to protect the refugees just like we did.” The medic stated as calmly as he could manage considering the day he’d been through so far.

For a moment the Twi’lek remained silent, clearly contemplating his words rather than spitting back a sour response. “Hmph, fine. They didt fight vith us. But you can’t be sure if they didn’t do it just to save their own hides.”

“Does it matter? Without their help, we might be dead by now and so would a whole lot of others.” Koliss shrugged as he moved from her lekku to her shoulders where a near miss of a blaster bolt had left a cauterized gracing wound.

“I guess not, but still. Out of principle, you shouldn’t trust them. You don’t know vhat it’s like…” She paused for a moment as old memories flooded back into her mind, memories she’d hoped to bury so deep they would never resurface. Battling them back with a sheer force of will, her demeanor visibly darkened and when she spoke again, it was more of a broken whisper. “No-one should know vhat it’s like…”

Koliss had to fight back his instincts of rebuttal, knowing that this was not the time for a philosophical debate on right and wrong. Instead, he stopped cleaning the wound and simply laid his hand on her shoulder, giving it a soft squeeze as if to say he would be there for her.

Turning her head to the side to catch a glimpse of his face from the corner of her vision, Tali touched his hand with the tips of her fingers, offering a weak smile and a faint nod as a thank you. “I just…”, she began, but trailed off for a moment, “I just cannot understandt vhat makes someone vant to do such a thing to another. Vhy do these people think it is acceptable to collar others? To deny them their free vill? To make them do their bidding for no compensation?”

“Isn’t that what governments do?” Koliss quipped in an attempt to lighten the mood, but only earning himself a sour glance from the Twi’lek.

“I’m serious, Koliss. Please don’t joke about this.” She muttered, though he could sense that she hadn’t taken offense of his poorly-timed humor.

“To be honest, Tali, I don’t know. I guess some people like the power and the control. Others probably just don’t even think that others have emotions or rights. And some…”, he sighed, “Well, I’ve seen enough scum in my life to know that some people just enjoy making others suffer.”

Tali turned her head away to stare into the distance where the smoldering wreck of the attackers’ shuttle still lay. “Yeah, I guess you’re right.” She agreed. “But the others? Maybe ve can make them come aroundt…”

“We? What do you mean We?” Koliss perked up, noticing the Twi’lek’s choice of words seemed to carry a very involving ring to them.

“Vhat? You ove me. This vas all your fault, remember?” Tali replied.

“Wha…? We just ha…” Koliss began to stutter a reply when she turned her head to glance at him with a cheeky grin.

“Yeah yeah, very funny lek-head…” He muttered, returning to the task at hand, the Twi’lek letting out a soft, short chuckle.