

The emptied cup of wine clanked on the cheap plastic table with a dull sound, the slightly acrid aftertaste of the drink lingering on her palate as Tali stared blankly at the dirty floor of her apartment. Somewhere in the background music played, a transmission she'd not bothered turning off as she could barely make out the lyrics in her hazy state of mind.

A long soft sigh flowed past her lips, the Twi'lek feeling her pulse throbbing along her veins as the alcohol worked its predictable magic in her bloodstream, the mild buzz a welcome companion these days. She had never been much of a drinker, even if she had more reason than most to forget, but the recent events with the whole war between Lotus and the Iron Throne had left her more confused than before.

On one hand, she could not stand the Iron Throne's ideals one bit. She did not care an iota about whatever peace and security and strength they offered. All she cared about was the fact they wished to exterminate people whom they deemed inferior. That was the same poisonous mentality which bred slavers, her hated enemy. The utter disrespect for other creatures, their lives and even worth as sentient creatures with thoughts and emotions of their own. To people like Pravus and those who supported him, there was no compassion or empathy, only an illusion of sacrifice for some greater good.

But then again, what had the Lotus shown her so far? Their attacks, though targeting military installations as a rule, still had collateral. Those attacks were also justified by a greater good and though Tali could support that ideal more, she was not naive enough to not see the hypocrisy of choosing one over the other, when both merely stated Their cause was the better.

To be totally frank with herself, there was only one thing she cared about and that was the right of everyone to self-govern. At least as far as was possible within the broader set of laws. When someone else decided that another group of people, no matter for what reason, were no longer worthy of deciding their own fates, that was when she got a problem.

Where this left her, however, in these turbulent times was rather alone. Although the official sentiments of both sides, and those yet unaligned, seemed to mirror that basic ideal, she had seen that in practice none were quite so capable of upholding it.

Thankfully, some were. Her friends and a significant portion of people within Arcona seemed committed to it. She might not be loyal to everyone unconditionally, but she had a good feeling about the Shadow Lady and especially her friends. Zujenia, Koliss, Kelviin, the racing twins Kasula and Ysera... She knew that if it came to it, they would all stand by her side against whatever atrocity their peers might wish to commit, a thought which made her smile.

Yes, she nodded to herself, making her lekku dangle and sway, her loyalties lay with her friends. People whom, through mutually shared adventures, she could trust to do the right thing. No matter where this crazy and turbulent world would take her, she knew that by trusting in them and helping them out, she in turn would be kept safe.