



The Art of Loyalty

Written by Mystic Alara Deathbane, dossier #12681

Sweat and inescapable thoughts took over Alara's head. She tossed and turned in agony despite being in complete safety. It was one of those damn dreams again. The dreams where her father's and mother's faces haunt her like a Force ghost. Their screams and cries echo in the darkness of the half-Sephi's mind, as do the horrific cries of her panicked younger sister.

"HOW COULD YOU?!? HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME?!? AFTER MY WEDDING DAY!"

"Shadow..." Alara spoke aloud to her memories. "Shadow! I said I was sorry! I can't bring them back! I can't..." The Dark Jedi began to sob in her sleep. She could practically smell the lurky texture of that forest Mykyr where the two sisters battled over the death of their parents. Shadow fighting for her beloved family, and Alara fighting for what she thought was her's... Shadow was all she had, but in that moment she had her younger sister no longer.

The dream's contents of Shadow swirling her sabers in fury suddenly came to a stop. Her face looked down upon Alara's pathetic body that lay on the ground before her. The Battlemaster's lips curved carefully around the words that still haunted the Mystic to this very day:

"What do you mean? You think someone is coming for you? No no, Alara. Why would they? You have no family now."

"I REALLY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR US!" Alara heard herself shriek, slamming her eyes shut as tears poured from her cheeks. It was happening in her mind all over again. Fear and expectancy of what happened next churned in Alara's belly until she began to feel sick.

"THAT WAS THE LAST TIME YOU'LL EVER TRY TO CHOOSE MY HAPPINESS FOR ME!" Shadow boomed. Suddenly Alara felt impact upon the base of her skull.

At the crash of lightning from Judecca's sky, Alara awoke and jumped from her sleep. She panted heavily and began to wipe the stream of tears that soaked her face. The eldest Marauder expected to wake up at her dormitories in the Shadow Academy, but quickly realized she was in fact on her sister's couch instead.

"Shadow's cabin..." Alara muttered, still trying to wake up from that horrid dream. She looked to her right and saw the familiar fireplace with only burning embers remaining inside. Loki, Shadow's anooba, was to her left at the base of the couch. His bright yellow eyes flickered in what light still remained in the room.



“Sorry to wake you, Loki. I’m alright now.” The blonde laughed half-heartedly at herself. However, Loki didn’t seem to believe what the half-Sephi before him had said, and let out a whine as he drew closer to her feet. He sat there and placed his front paws on her feet; the usual sign of affection he showed to Shadow and Alara. This forced a smile upon the girl’s lips. She gave Loki a reassuring pet on the head. The creature mumbled in pleasure, and pushed gently towards her petting hand. He hopped up briskly and gave the guest a large slurp on the face as his tongue curled around her nose. Deathbane made a chuckle while trying to evade Loki’s tongue from entering her mouth by accident.

“Thanks Loki. You’re a sweetheart.” Alara pet Loki’s head once again and gave him a hug around his striped neck. The warmth of the anooba’s body comforted her fears. Her anxieties began to fall away like dust softly descending from light’s view to the ground.

I suppose this is why I enjoy animals so much. Their very touch seems to change the very fabric of your reality... like unraveling the tight knots in string, or perhaps moreso the needle and thread that sews it all back together when it’s falling apart. They’re so loyal.

Perhaps it was the Imperius moon that shone through the cabin’s curtains, or perhaps it was just being up so early from such an awful dream. Whatever it was, Alara’s mind grew intensely thoughtful. She remembered the sequence of events that occurred after that fateful fight in her dream. She managed to get back to Ohmen in one piece after Shadow had left her behind. And when she returned, the Battlemaster *forgave* her survival by allowing it as the Force’s decision. However the two were still no longer family as far as she was concerned. It was months after that before Shadow even spoke to her without a harsh tone in her voice, whether on Tacitus Athanasius business or not.

Alara continued to pet the creature before here that was now resting his head on her feet and slightly. *But I know why she did it. She was completely heartbroken. She thought she had lost whatever family she had, and thought she had lost me in the process too. She had a much better childhood with them than myself. Perhaps things would have been different if I wasn’t given away.*

But she still was thrown through the door as a childhood. She still was taken by mercenaries to pay her father’s debt. She was still treated like she was nothing to her parents. Now they were dead. Long dead.

It wasn’t until I met Wyn that I began to see the Light in life again. The Light of the Force.



Before Wyn, she was a complete mess. Or rather, she caused further messes. Any chance she had, Alara would allow the Dark Side to overtake her and destroy through her. Whether it was a Tacitus Athanasius target, or perhaps even a stranger in a back alley somewhere. She would cause massacre whenever she had the chance. It fueled her. Alara, at that point in her life, was not Deathbane anymore; meaning that she had not conquered death this time as she did in her past. The death of her parents conquered her sister, which in turn caused Alara to be conquered as well.

“Alara? Everything okay?” Shadow stumbled sleepily from her bedroom down the hall. She wore one of Brandon’s large baggy shirts. The younger sister definitely had bed head, and her lower abdomen seemed to reveal she was pregnant more and more each day as it continued to grow rapidly. The Battlemaster rubbed her eyes, and sat on the couch next to her sister. Tsume, Shadow’s loth wolf, walked towards the group and sat at Shadow’s feet much in likeness to his fellow canine companion Loki.

“I’m alright now, sis. Sorry if I woke you. I had a bad dream.” Alara rubbed her forehead and placed her left hand on her sister’s belly. “How are you feeling? Shouldn’t you be resting?”

“Don’t be such a worry wart,” Shadow smirked, “I had to come check on you. I’m fine. The baby is fine too.” the mother to be rubbed her round abdomen lovingly.

“I’m okay, and glad to hear you two are as well. Get some sleep sis. Just some silly dreams.” Alara reassured her younger sister, and motioned to help her stand up.

Shadow looked at her sister, and with a smile shook her head. “Nope, Deus and I will stay out here for the night. I’m sure he won’t mind being close to his sister and to his furry siblings.” Loki at this point perked his ears up and nuzzled into Shadow’s leg. The Battlemaster let out a laugh and pet the anooba before her.

“Well okay, I won’t argue with that. Here’s some of my blanket.” Alara tugged at her woven blanket and pulled it over Shadow and Deus, careful to be sure her side was covered. The Battle Team Leader turned on her side to face Alara, and pulled her legs underneath her. She rested her face upon the back cushion of the couch. “Thanks sis. Good to have you here.”

“I’m glad to be here.” Alara smiled back. She mirrored her sister’s position and allowed her eyes to flutter back into sleep. Her Sephi ears could hear the canines below their feet shifting back to rest as well.

“Alara?” Shadow spoke softly.



“Aye?” Alara opened her eyes briefly, only to observe her sister’s being closed as well.

“Really. We are glad you are here. Both Deus and I. Now we can be a family like we always wanted to be. I have a great feeling about us now. All that happened before is behind us.”

Alara’s eyes closed tightly both with sleep and with happy tears that built up in their corners. She reached for her sister’s hand and gripped it in a caring squeeze. “Thank you. Let’s get some sleep now.”

The two half-Sephis faded back into dozing, both with smiles and comfort from the other.

Conquered by death or not, perhaps it was all meant to happen to give me this new-found life. It feels good to finally belong somewhere. I have cause to be loyal. I have those who are loyal to me. Family.

All the challenges, all the awful corruption that happened; they were all just strokes on the painting that create this image. We may not have gotten here in the way we wished to, but it made us who we are. We are together in this moment now because of it. In this beautiful masterpiece, we have captured it: the true art of loyalty.

